Universidade do Minho
Escola de Psicologia

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Human trafficking in Portugal: From perceptions to victims' support

agosto de 2019

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Human trafficking in Portugal: From perceptions to victims' support

Tese de Doutoramento em Psicologia Aplicada

Trabalho efetuado sob a orientação da
Professora Doutora Marlene Matos

agosto de 2019

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"La recompense suprême du travail
n'est pas ce qu'il vous permet de gagner,
mais ce qu'il vous permet de devenir."
(John Ruskin)

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I hereby declare having conducted this academic work with integrity. I confirm that I have not used plagiarism or any form of undue use of information or falsification of results along the process leading to its elaboration.

I further declare that I have fully acknowledged the Code of Ethical Conduct of the University of Minho.

TRÁFICO DE SERES HUMANOS EM PORTUGAL:
DAS PERCEPÇÕES AO APOIO VÍTIMAS

Resumo

O tráfico de seres humanos carece de pesquisa científica a nível nacional e internacional, ao nível das vítimas e do apoio que lhes é prestado. Através do desenvolvimento de quatro estudos exploratórios, usando análise temática, esta dissertação procurou aprofundar o conhecimento sobre esse fenómeno. explorando os discursos de estudantes universitários sobre o tráfico de pessoas, as suas vítimas e traficantes (capítulo I), e analisando as perceções dos prestadores de serviços da Rede Nacional de Apoio às Vítimas de Tráfico, sobre o apoio prestado às vítimas (capítulo II). Este trabalho visa também dar voz a 9 vítimas deste crime, que se encontravam em processo de acolhimento (capítulos III e IV), em relação à sua própria exploração e à experiência de pós-vitimação. Os resultados obtidos com o primeiro estudo empírico mostraram que a maioria dos participantes retratou a vítima como alguém puro e ingénuo (uma vítima ideal) e os traficantes como alguém muito diferente de uma pessoa comum. Os resultados do segundo estudo empírico mostraram que o apoio prestado foi percecionado como sendo muito complexo (envolvendo vítimas de diferentes idades, ambos os sexos, alvo de vários tipos de exploração [sexual, trabalho, mendicidade, escravidão]). O terceiro e o quarto estudos reforçam a dinâmica do tráfico de seres humanos, no que respeita às vítimas e traficantes e às circunstâncias de exploração. Os resultados revelaram que apoio foi retratado como adequado, sendo capaz de suprimir as necessidades mais básicas das vítimas (por exemplo, comida, abrigo, roupas). As vítimas confiam na polícia e nas instituições governamentais e colaboraram com o sistema judicial (através do testemunho), todavia não estão cientes dos seus direitos judiciais. Apesar dos progressos significativos no apoio à vítima, são necessários estudos mais aprofundados sobre o apoio formal prestado, especificamente às vítimas de tráfico, para assegurar respostas de assistência adequadas em toda a rede (seja no âmbito psicossocial, educacional, médico ou até mesmo judicial).

Palavras-chave: Apoio, perceções, tráfico de Pessoas, vitimação.

"HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN PORTUGAL:
FROM PERCEPTIONS TO VICTIMS SUPPORT"

Abstract

Human trafficking lacks scientific research at international and national level on the victims and the support provided to them. Thus, through an analysis of the literature on the subject and the development of four exploratory studies, using thematic analysis, this dissertation attempted to deepen the knowledge about this phenomenon, by exploring the discourses of university students on human trafficking, its victims and perpetrators (chapter I), as well as analyzing the perceptions from the service providers, from the National Network to Support Victims of Trafficking, about the provided service to the victims (chapter II). This work also aims to give voice to 9 sheltered victims of this crime (chapter III and IV), regarding their own exploitation and the post-victimization experience. The results carried in the first empirical study, showed that the majority participants portrayal the victim as someone pure and naïve (an ideal victim), and the traffickers as someone very different from an ordinary person. The results from the second empirical study showed that the support provided was highlighted as being very complex (involving victims of different ages, both sexes, target of various types of exploitation [sexual, labour, begging, slavery]). The third and fourth studies results reinforce, through victim's voices, the dynamics of trafficking in human beings, concerning victims and traffickers and exploitation circumstances. The results revealed that the support was portrayed as adequate, being able to supress the most basic needs of the victims (e.g. food, shelter, clothes). The victims trust the police and the governmental institutions and were able to collaborate with the judicial system (providing testimony) but they are not aware of their own judicial situations and rights. Despite the significant progress that Portugal has made in victims' support, there is a need to carry out a more in-depth studies on the formal support provided to ensure adequate assistance responses in the whole network (whether in the psychosocial, educational, medical or even the judicial arena).

Keywords: Human trafficking, perceptions, support, victimization.

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ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This dissertation was approved by the Ethics Subcommittee for Social and Human Sciences under the code SECSH 038/2016. Its task is to ensure and oversee the promotion of ethical patterns, and ensure the integrity, dignity, honesty and ethical quality in experimentation and research activities in the field of social and human sciences, conducted in the research units of the University of Minho.

APA ethical standards were followed in the conduct of this dissertation alongside with the fundamental principles of intervention of WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Interviewing Trafficked Woman, produced by the Health Policy Unit, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine with the support from the Daphne Programme of the European Commission and the World Health Organization (Zimmerman & Watts, 2003).

PUBLICATIONS LIST OF THE DISSERTATION

This work consists of the following original publications, corresponding to each chapters of this dissertation:

CHAPTER I

Fernandes, Â., Gonçalves, M., & Matos, M. (2019). *Who are the victims, who are the traffickers? Students' portrayals on human trafficking.* Victims & Offenders. Manuscript submitted for publication.

CHAPTER II

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CHAPTER III

Fernandes, Â., Gonçalves, M., & Matos, M. (2019). *Exploring human trafficking victimization experiences in Portugal.* Social Justice Research. Manuscript submitted for publication preparation.

CHAPTER IV

Fernandes, Â., Gonçalves, M., & Matos, M. (2019). *Trafficking in Portugal: Victims' perceptions about impact, formal support and post-victimization.* Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology. Manuscript submitted for publication.

INTRODUCTION

The Group of Experts on action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) *"(...) welcomes the setting up of additional specialized shelters for victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB), including men. Given the increasing number of presumed and formally identified victims of THB, GRETA considers that the Portuguese authorities should strengthen their efforts to ensure that all victims of trafficking receive adequate assistance and support, according to their needs. This should include measures to: provide a sufficient number of places around the country for all victims of trafficking who need safe accommodation and, ensure adequate funding and staff to work with victims of THB and facilitate the reintegration of victims of trafficking into society by providing them with vocational training and facilitating their access to the labour market.* [1] *"* Also*, "*(...) *invites the Portuguese authorities to continue taking steps to ensure that all presumed foreign victims of trafficking, including EU/EEA nationals, are offered a recovery and reflection period and all the measures of protection and assistance envisaged in Article 12, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Convention during this period. Staff performing identification should be issued with clear instructions stressing the need to offer the recovery and reflection period as defined in the Convention, i.e. not making it conditional on the victim's cooperation and offering it to victims before formal statements are made to investigators.*[2] *". Lastly, "(...) urges the Portuguese authorities to take steps to facilitate and guarantee access to compensation to victims of THB, and in particular to enable victims of trafficking to exercise their right to compensation, by making available free legal aid to support victims to claim compensation and include victim compensation in training programmes for law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges;*[3] *".*

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[1] Group of Experts on action against Trafficking in Human Beings [GRETA]. (2017, p.24). *Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Portugal: Second evaluation round*. (Council of Europe, Ed.). Strasbourg. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/16806fe673

[2] *Ibidem,* p. 28.

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 30.

Although in recent years, Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) has been the subject target of many studies in the international and national context, it is highlighted, in literature, the lack of studies that give voice to the referred victims and those professionals who assist them in the post-exploitation process. This work intends to be a contribution in this matter, in different levels: preventive – by studying the perceptions of university students about the victims and traffickers; interventive – by studying the perceptions of service providers about the support provided to the victims; and, remediative – by studying the perceptions of sheltered victims, on their exploitation, their needs and help-seeking and also the subsequent support process.

Legal Framework

To regulate THB, nationally and internationally, several instruments have been elaborated, approved and ratified, seeking to establish political commitments in the prevention and combat of this crime, bringing the legal systems of the states closer together, fostering research, cooperation and monitoring, as well as the articulation of knowledge and strategies and the optimization of resources. For the purpose of this work, only those developments that deserve greater international recognition will be addressed.

The first international definition of THB in the United Nation (UN) was referred in the Protocol to Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Woman and Children, often referred to as the Palermo Protocol, from 2000. Over the years, several directives have emerged from the European Commission aimed at committing member States to implement legislation in the field of combating and suppressing THB. One of the most important was the Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011[4] on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims: focuses on the protection of human rights by implementing protection and assistance mechanisms crime prevention and repression. This community legal instrument

[4] Directive 2011/36/EU from the European Parliament and of the Council, of 5 April, on preventing and combating trafficking in Human Beings and protecting Victims, that replaces the Decision 2002/692/JAI from the Council.

was intended to approximate the substantive criminal law and criminal procedural rules of the Member States in the fight against THB. The changes occurred in the conception of the victims and the awareness of the diversity of exploitation forms in the Palermo Protocol led to the recent normative development in the European context on different levels (social, political, legislative and legal). In that document, THB is defined as *" the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receptions of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs".* (p.6).

This definition features a list of acts (such as recruitment, transportation and others), followed by the methods used to enforce those acts such as, threat, use of force, abuse of power or a position of vulnerability. The definition also mentions the vulnerable conditions of the victim, which means that s/he has no real or acceptable alternative but to submit to the abuse. And even if the victim's consent is referred, it is legally irrelevant where any of the means has been used for the purpose of exploitation. In THB the exploitation includes, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services (including begging, slavery or practices like slavery, servitude) or the exploitation of criminal activities, or the removal of organs.

In Portugal, the changes on this subject started in 2007, when the crime was covered by the article 160º of the Portuguese Penal Code, which is part of the chapter on Crimes Against Personal Freedom, given by Law no.59/2007, of September 4. The Council Directive 2004/81/CE, of April 29, was transposed into national framework by Law 23/2007[5], and concerns the access to residence

[5] Law 23/2007, of July 4, Diário da República - I Série, N.0 127. Approves the legal regime for entry, stay, departure and removal of foreigners from the national territory.

permit issued to third country national who are victims of THB and decide to cooperate with the competent authorities. This legislative instrument also establishes that victims of THB are entitled to a reflection period with a duration between 30 to 60 days, notwithstanding of whether they express or not willingness to cooperate with the competent authorities. This law has the objective of enabling the victims to recover physically and emotionally and to make an informed decision about their options, regarding possible collaboration in the criminal investigation. This period may have a minimum duration of 30 days and a maximum duration of 60 days. During this period, the victim is ensured that if he or she does not have enough resources, subsistence and access to appropriate medical treatment, as well as psychological and legal support, as well as language translation, those services are available. Also, under Directive 2004/81/CE, as stated above, the victim has the right to remain in national territory and no expulsion measures can be carried out during the reflection period. After this period, a residence permit may be granted to the victim, even if the victim is in a situation of migratory irregularity or does not fulfill the conditions legally required to access to the residence permit. This concession is, in exceptional situations, depending on the need to guarantee or extend the stay of the victim in national territory for criminal investigation and/or to enable them to participate in legal proceedings. The residence permit is valid for a period of one year and renewable for equal periods (Matos & Maia 2015).

Regarding the concept of "*Human Trafficking Victim*", Portuguese legislation does not provide any specific definition, but according to law 368/2007, a victim of THB is someone to whom judicial authorities or the criminal police found evidence of the offence regarding trafficking in persons. According to Portuguese Legislation, the application of a criminal penalty is absent in the principle of free will. With this idea in mind, THB victims can be exonerated from crimes committed under exploitation based that idea on the lack of free will and exempting the victim from criminal responsibility based on a state of necessity (Matos & Maia, 2015).

The transposition of the Directive 2011/36/EU also produced amendments, through the Law 60/2013[6], following the Law 45/2011, of June 24 – "Asset Recovery Office" (ARO) where is stipulated the use of seized and confiscated funds and the proceeds from trafficking in persons can be channeled to support victims' assistance and protection programs (Matos & Maia, 2015). The compensation to victims of THB can be made through law 104/2009 of September 14, on compensation to Victims of Violent Crime, which establishes the right to all victims of crimes to claims a compensation (from the aggressor, or the state, if the perpetrator does not have financial means to compensate de victim). Another Law-Decree 120/2010 of October 2007 also allows victims to claim compensation for moral and materials damages, regardless of their nationality (Matos & Maia, 2015).

Scientific Background

This research is inextricably bound to theory and our aim is to produce knowledge that can inform practice and contributes to highlighting the difficulties in seeking help and in providing efficient support (in the optic of the victim and the service provider) in order to produce new informed strategies and to encourage further political and social change in this area. So, we frame our investigation in the context of Applied Victimology, anchored in the Critical Victimology, because we are trying to analyse the social context in which issues related to Victimology interwoven with questions of policy response and service delivery to victims of crime (Walklate, 2011; Wilson, 2009), aiming to examine the interactions between the victims with the police, courts, as well with diverse service providers (Wilson, 2009). We aim to gather data on how the social service and criminal justice system respond to crime victims, as well as examine the societal response to the problem, its potential impact on victims and models for

[6] Law no. 60/2013, of August 23, Diário da República - I series, no. 162. 30th amendment to the penal code, approved by Decree Law no. 5/2002 of January 11, and the first amendments to the laws n. 101/2001 of 25 August and 45/2011 of 24 June, transposing into national law Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April on the prevention and suppressing THB and protection of victims, and replacing Decision 2002/629/JAI, from the Council.

multidisciplinary and collaborative approaches for support the victims of this crime.

Concerning concepts and terminology in the victimological field, it is necessary to differentiate between the use of terms “victim” and “survivor”, to refer to individuals who were trafficked. Both terms are important and have major implications when used in the context of victim advocacy and service provision (Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2016; Okech, Choi, Elkins, & Burns, 2018; Volgin, Shakespeare-finch, & Shochet, 2018). For example, the term “victim” has legal implications within the criminal justice system and refers to an individual who was harmed as a result of a criminal conduct (Wilson, 2009). The laws in each country give individual rights a legal standing within the criminal justice system to those who are considered “victims” of a crime. Though, the term survivor is a term used in service providing organizations to recognize the courage and strength it takes to overcome victimizations or, in this case, the THB situation (Okech et al., 2018; Wilson, 2009). In this work, both terms are used in the context of victim identification and service strategies and we are aware that there is a conceptual debate under the effects of both concepts (Machado, 2004).

Figures of Crime

The dimension of THB is unapparelled and hard to access given the characteristics and nature of the crime. According to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, from United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2016), no country is immune to this crime. Victims are trafficked along a multitude of trafficking flows, within and between countries or even across different continents. However, the extent of THB within the EU is hard to assess because human exploitation can be hidden behind other criminal offenses, such as prostitution, irregular migration, property crime or even labour disputes (Europol, 2016; UNODC, 2016). Victims are often exploited in many different ways or may be involved in other illicit activities, resulting in cases of THB not being investigated or recorded as THB (Couto, 2012; Europol, 2016; Matos & Maia, 2015). The victim profiles also change according to the form of trafficking considered. Men and women are largely detected as trafficked for different forms

of exploitation (Zimmerman, Hossain, & Watts, 2011). Since 2012 and 2014, more than 500 different trafficking flows and 17 752 victims were detected (UNODC, 2016). According to Europol (2016), 70% of the identified victims and suspects in the European Union (EU) are EU nationals, and during 2013 and 2014, Europol registered 8 037 suspects of THB and 7 500 potential victims.

Despite the change in the detected trafficking victims' profile, in the last 15 years, most detected victims are still women and children. Most of the victims detected across the world are females, mainly adult women, but also increasingly girls. Most of the detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are females, and 35% of the victims trafficked for forced labour are also females, both women and girls (UNODC, 2018). At the same time, more than half of the victims of trafficking for forced labour are men. Men victims of human trafficking take now a larger share of the total number of victims than they did 10 years ago. According to UNODC (2016) in 2014, 28 per cent of detected victims were children and 21 per cent were men. With the increase of the identification of men among the detected victims, the share of victims who are trafficked for forced labour has also increased. About four in ten victims detected between the year 2012 and 2014 were trafficked for forced labour (UNODC, 2016). Most reported male victims are EU nationals originating from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia according to Europol (2016). The exploitation tends to take place in labour intensive and/or under-regulated industries such as the agricultural sector, the construction industry and hotel/restaurant/catering businesses. Despite this data on labour exploitation, trafficking for sexual exploitation continues to be the most detected form (UNODC, 2018). Trafficked workers use legitimate identification documents and often have legitimate permits which expire over time. The share of detected children has returned to levels last seen in 2009, after seven years of increases, still more than a quarter of the detected victims in 2014 were children (20% girls and 8% boys) (UNODC, 2016).

For detected child victims, the gender patterns for forms of exploitation are different. While boys – like men - are mainly detected as trafficked for forced labour, many are also detected as trafficked for sexual exploitation and for other

forms of exploitation (begging, child soldiering and forced criminal activities). Like women, most detected girl victims were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Nevertheless, one out of every five detected girls in 2016 were trafficked for forced labour. A significant share of detected trafficked girls were trafficked for other forms of exploitation (UNODC, 2018).

The detection of trafficking cases carried out within a country's borders has also increased significantly in the last 15 years (UNODC, 2018). From 2012 to 2014 – 42% of the detected victims were trafficked domestically (UNODC, 2016). This increase can be a sign that the countries are clearly detecting more domestic trafficking nowadays. Over the last ten years, the capacity of national authorities to track and assess patterns and flows of THB has improved in many parts of the world (UNODC, 2018). This data indicates that the shared understanding of the THB crime has evolved. In previous years the thought was that trafficking involve woman trafficked from afar into an affluent country for sexual exploitation. Today, the criminal justice system and the governments are more aware of the diversity among offenders, victims, forms of exploitation and flows of THB, so the statistics may often reflect this improved awareness (UNODC, 2017).

This increase in the detection of victims of THB can reflect positive and negative developments in the fight against trafficking in persons, as it can be a sign of enhanced efforts by authorities to identify victims or an increase and larger trafficking problem (UNODC, 2018). The number of detected victims has increased after legislative actions (amendments to legislation, enforcement of action plans, victim's protection and national referral mechanisms) have clearly contributed to improving the identification of victims and the effectiveness of criminal justice responses (UNODC, 2018).

Challenges to victim identification and accessing services

There are several factors that hinder both the identification of and the service delivery to victims of THB. Some of them result from the hidden nature of the crime, while others have a more systemic nature (Logan, Walker, & Hunt,

2009; Ramnauth, Benitez, Logan, Abraham, & Gillum, 2018; Villacampa & Torres, 2017).

It is extremely important for service providers to understand and recognize the potential barriers, so they can be better prepared to respond to them when working with THB victims. Due to the complexity of the phenomenon, perpetrators often operate unnoticed and the victims are not likely to self-identify as a victim of THB, often blaming themselves for their situation (Roe-Sepowitza, Hickle, Dahlstedt, & Gallagher, 2014). This makes discovering this crime more difficult because the victims rarely self-report (Tyldum & Brunovskis, 2005) and that will require more efforts from the authorities and society to uncover the crime.

Despite the evolution and the efforts to estimate the crimes of THB, its scope continues to elude governments, practitioners and researchers alike. Van Impe (2000) argues that there is no easy or a unidimensional solution to THB, since it is influenced by a complex set of factors, often working in combination with one another. He also concludes that control measures alone cannot stop the flow of trafficking and that the legal approach which relies solely on one type of legislation would be to narrow. The criminal nature of THB difficulties in data collection, the reluctance of the victims to self-identify and failure of other to recognize victim status hinders precise estimates of the incidence and prevalence (Greenbaum, 2016). Villacampa & Torres (2017) conducted a study with criminal justice professionals and victim service providers in Spain, in which they tried to explain the failure to of criminal justice system to identify victims of THB. They stated that the lack of police strategies aimed at identifying this type of victim; the existence of stereotypes regarding who can be considered a victim and their association with victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation; the 'transfer of responsibility' effect due to the designation of specialized police forces as the sole authority for identifying victims; and the erroneous conceptualization of the identification as an act rather than a process were hindering the identification of potential victims.

Van Impe (2000) and Poelmans, Elzinga, Ignatov, & Kuznetsov (2012) documented that is necessary to combine and balance punitive measures with

protection of human rights, stricter border control and the removal of the root causes of irregular movements, that must be agreed and coordinated between origin, transit and receiving countries, to increase victims identification.

There are also too many victims misidentified and treated as criminals or undocumented migrants (Connel, Jennings, Barbieri, & Gonzalez, 2015). There are cases where the traffickers are former THB victims themselves. For example, a 'Madam' in a destination country supervises women that are trafficked, and she organizes their activities and gather the money they make. It appears that often such 'Madams' were victims themselves, and after they had paid their 'debt' to their own 'Madam' they use the same method to earn money (Siegel & Blank, 2014). The 'Madam' leads the criminal organization and plans its activities. She gives orders to subordinates, coordinates the human trafficking, manages the prostitutes and controls the finances. The network she leads can vary from a small group (one or two members) to a sizable, internationally operating organization. In most of cases the human trafficking rings prefer this 'Madam' to recruit because of her experience with sexual exploitation; since she already worked in the sex industry as a prostitute and she knows all the networks (Siegel & Blank, 2014). Also, what makes victims also likely to move from victim to trafficker is fear of violence by their traffickers and a relationship of dependency. This is called the 'Stockholm Syndrome' whereby the victim identifies with their traffickers' view of the world and get sympathetic to them (Zimmerman, et al., 2011). Another reason to grow in position in the trafficking network might be that victims consider moving from victim to trafficker as a 'graduation' of their position within a trafficking business. It can result in improvement of the situation of the victim. Some victims are given the responsibility and forced by the traffickers to supervise other victims in order to involve them in the chain THB. Therefore, when the victims are discovered, policies may not treat him/her as a victim, but as a member of the trafficking ring (Cross, 2013). Victim's incorporation into the trafficking network is an option to reduce extreme violence against these victims and exploitation of them. This 'solution' is promoted by traffickers in order to refine their exploitation methods already counting with the direct experience of a victim who holds

privileged information. However, unfortunately, it also happens that trafficking victims often 'graduate' to trafficker because they have no other living options and no possibilities to escape (Europol, 2016). More and more victims are turning into perpetrators (UNODC, 2014), and the female suspects are often former prostitutes. We need to address the definition of dual victimization, for a better understanding of how the victim may consider the 'upgrade' in the trafficking ring as her only option. Dual victimization is a phenomenon in which the state, rather than protecting victims of trafficking, turns them into criminals. This is based on a parsimonious error from the state due to research deficiencies on criminals (Cross, 2013). Consequently, victims fear that the policies will not support them, which makes them more likely to go further in the network, occupying positions of leadership. In theory, when an individual has been coerced into a criminal act (robbery, drugs trafficking, theft) against his/her will s/he can preclude wrongfulness which involves that the individual cannot be accused. There are several factors that contribute to victim's decisions to be involved in the crime of THB: pressure from traffickers, 'debt bondage' which means continually increasing debts to traffickers and receiving some money to send to their homes, rising in hierarchy to earn more money and be treated less bad, fear for societal stigma and from the police, feelings of revenge for the pain the victim has been through (Europol, 2016; Zimmerman et al., 2011).

In some cases, victims are hidden behind doors in domestic servitude (Turner, Zimmerman, Howard, & Oram, 2014) and in other cases victims live in plain view and interact with people on a daily basis, experiencing various forms of exploitation (sexual, forced labour, begging, among others) in public settings and are not identified as victims due to lack of identification, training and awareness (Couto, Machado, Martins, & Gonçalves, 2012; Robinson, 2011).

The topic of identification of the victims was set as a priority by the European Commission (2012) in the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016, where was acknowledged that the identification of the victims is difficult, nonetheless people from various sectors of society could potentially encounter this crime. It is was also stated that is crucial to identify potential victims, so that we can best attend to the "five broad

needs" of a victim of THB, being those respect and recognition, assistance, protection, access to justice and compensation.

According to literature, there are four factors that maintain these victims in a trafficking situation, and consequently, of greater resistance to intervention (Couto, 2012; Logan, et al., 2009; Villacampa & Torres, 2017); they are the fear of retaliation by the traffickers (to the victim or even her family) (Ioannou & Oostinga, 2015) and the fear of deportation; second, the lack of knowledge (regarding their rights as a human being and victims of a crime, and even the services to which they may have recourse); thirdly, the isolation (fueled by the lack of social support, ignorance of the language and other cultural differences); and lastly, the physical and psychological imprisonment of the victims by restricting their movements and the intimidation by traffickers.

Though there has been some progress in the level of knowledge and social awareness of this issue, as stated previously, there is still a lack of research that allow us to evaluate and characterize THB at different levels. It would be necessary to give voice to the different actors (community, judicial system, service providers and victims) and access to their perceptions and meanings about the support and justice system. Such research may access information that influences the quality of the relationship between the victim/police/justice/service providers, which in turn may benefit the increased the identification of the victim, the convictions and the psychological recovery of the victim.

Victims needs and help-seeking

By researching on the subject, we will be able to better investigate and prosecute this type of crime while, simultaneously, the mechanisms to protect, assist and socially include victims of THB could be improved. Assistance and support to victims should be based on ideographic needs of each victim (Clawson, Dutch, Salomon, & Grace, 2009; European Commission, 2012; Le & Halkitis, 2018; Nguyen, Coverdale, & Gordon, 2017; Stanley et al., 2016; Zimmerman, et al., 2011).

Given the complexity of THB, intervention must be multilevel and multidimensional, based in proactive action (identification of victims, their protection and assistance in preventing and repressing this crime) (Couto, 2012; Couto & Fernandes, 2014). Thus, the contacts made with the victim should be considered as an opportunity to improve their well-being and should prioritize safety, be focused on their rights as a human being and be efficient at referral, transfer and care, which implies the existence of a well-articulated network of services and professionals (Dell et al., 2017; Le & Halkitis, 2018; Salami, Gordon, Coverdale, & NGuyen, 2018). The victim assumes the central place in the intervention and must be respected in his values and decisions and be informed about all possible alternatives and procedures to be adopted that will have to be negotiated in advance and can never result from decisions taken in his absence (Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Hornor, 2015; Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013).

Considering that victimization by trafficking usually involves the subjugation of victims to situations of high precariousness in terms of the most basic living conditions, physical and psychological aggression, intervention will necessarily have to cover different dimensions and materialize in several measures (Couto, 2012; Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013, UNODC, 2016; Zimmerman, 2003):

• Housing (hosting in specific structures and ensuring protection);

• Subsistence (access to basic living conditions (e.g. food, hygiene, clothing);

• Health (medical care: evaluation and treatment of physical and psychiatric health problems; psychological support: evaluation and intervention in terms of emotional recovery and cognitive, behavioral and interpersonal functioning);

• Legal support (counseling in the process of regularizing the migratory situation and/or in the context of the criminal process, in the face of their rights as a victim [e.g., request for granting the reflection period, a special residence permit, protection of witnesses]);

• Social support (economic support and / or access to other essential goods, support for educational (re)integration, training and/or labor and housing demand);

• Cultural support (access to translation services and practice of religious services);

• Assisted return (access to assisted return programs, with support in the (re) integration process in the community of origin or in another that the victim intends to integrate).

When supporting victims of THB, the victims must be at the center of any response. It is critical to create conditions of trust and respect, that will later help the victims to reclaim their lives and progress towards self-sufficiency and independence (Pascual-Leone et al., 2017; Sandhu et al., 2013). All the responses must address firstly the feeling of safety and support. When that is addressed the victim is more capable and willing to present strong evidence and testimony in the prosecution of perpetrators, thereby helping law enforcement and accomplishing importance justice restitution goals (Farrell et al., 2012; Greenbaum, 2016; Pocock, Kiss, Oram, & Zimmerman, 2016). In the support provided is extremely important for the victim to feel that the relationship between the service provider and s/he, isn't (only) in the interest of investigating the crime, but in allowing the victim to overcome their exploitation and reach independency.

Given that the risks and consequences for the physical and psychological health of victims of THB, often before the actual recruitment process, continue during transition and exploitation and may even continue until after (re)integration (Hossain, Zimmerman, Abas, Light, & Watts, 2010; Kiss et al., 2015), research underlines the need for them to benefit from a supportive intervention, appropriate physical and psychological evaluation throughout all phases and not only in the immediate aftermath of their exit from the exploitation situation (Contreras, Kallivayalil, & Herman, 2017; Hom & Woods, 2013; Rajaram & Tidball, 2018)

Thus, in an initial phase, the intervention should be based on the response to urgent health issues (e.g., infections, injuries, acute pain), as well as access

to resources to meet the most basic needs (e.g., nutrition, rest, shelter, protection). Subsequently the attention should be directed to the mental health problems associated with traumatic experiences through, for example, psychotherapy aimed at its reprocessing (Butler, Critelli, & Rinfrette, 2011; Hemmings et al., 2016; Hopper, 2017; Westwood et al., 2016; Zimmerman, 2003). These objectives should, however be bordered in integrated recovery and (re)integration programs (Clawson et al., 2009; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013; Zimmerman, 2003), since in the country of origin or in their reintegration into another context, the victims may no longer have access to health care for economic reasons. At the same time, the extreme attention given to the medication can lead to a misrepresentation of the problem, shifting the focus from a human rights issue to an individual problem and thereby penalizing the victims (Couto, 2012; Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Salami et al., 2018). The intervention requires, therefore, a culturally appropriate multidimensional response that incorporates, in addition to health care, legal, social and educational/vocational training for victims, as well as ongoing political and community awareness (Ramnauth et al., 2018; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013; Sandhu et al., 2013; Stotts & Ramey, 2009)

Numerous studies have been conducted concerning the best strategies for treating and managing mental health disorders, in THB practice (Freemire, 2017; Kiss et al., 2015; Salami et al., 2018). The treatment should be individualized to the client's unique experience. Being able to obtain an accurate accounting of trafficking history can lead to more effective treatment plans, recommendations and better overall outcomes and can also reduce the possibility for individuals revictimization. THB victims benefit greatly when provided with a safe, stable and predictable environment (Ottisova, Hemmings, Howard, Zimmerman, & Oram, 2016; Ottisova et al., 2018; Zimmerman, 2003). Understanding a patients' trafficking history helps to inform treatment and future interventions which can help break the cycle of re-victimization. Biopsychosocial interventions implemented can interrupt the cycle of victimization and re-victimization by addressing patients' multiple vulnerabilities

(helping patients to access available resources and assisting them with future plans), (Nguyen, Coverdale, & Gordon, 2017).

The Portuguese Context

Concerned with the support provided to the victims of THB, in the year of 2013 in Portugal, was created the National Trafficking Victims Support and Protection Network (NTVSPN). This network aggregates 22 governmental and non-governmental organizations, dispersed through the continent. The aim of this network is the prevention, protection and reintegration of THB victims using multidisciplinary and specialized interventions (legal, psychological and social support), as well as providing adequate referrals to other support services previously identified. Portugal has now four temporary shelters. The first shelter created in 2008 for women victims and their minor children, the second created in 2013 for men victims and their children, and the third was created in 2014, to woman victims and their children. The last one was created in the year 2018, specifically to minor victims.

Notwithstanding, there are few cases reported annually compared to what could be the reality. The lack of solid, reliable official and comparable data, is an issue that feeds the stereotypes generated by social media (Cunha, Gonçalves, & Matos, 2018). Portugal registered 1427 potential victims (nationals and foreign victims) between the years 2010-2017, but justice authorities only confirmed 281 (OTSH, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). In the year of 2014, there were identified 56 presumed male victims of forced labour in Portugal, from countries within Europe (OTSH, 2015). It's relevant to address that there were 14 male nationals identified in foreign countries that were presumed victims of trafficking recruited in Portugal. In 2016 there were identified a total of 264 presumed victims in Portugal, which in comparison with homologous period there is an increase in the number of identified victims (variation of 36.8%). Most of the identified victims were male (n=141) for labour exploitation, with only 14 female victims, for sexual exploitation. In the same period there were also 26 minors that were identified (OTSH, 2017). According to the OTSH (2018), when we compare the year 2016

with 2017, we can see that were registered 175 suspected victims of THB in Portugal. This data indicates that there was an overall decrease in the number of signs, with a negative variation of 33 percent in total (34 percent in identification in Portugal and 24 percent in identification abroad), however the number of minor victims identified went up to 45 (presumed) victims (OTSH, 2018).

These data corroborate Portugal's tendency to be a country not only of destination, but also of transit and origin of THB (OTSH, 2015) and regardless of nationality, the purpose is for labour exploitation, about 58% (RASI, 2017), which is why the Portuguese nationals enter these networks and are eventually exploited mainly abroad. A conclusion that is drawn is also that in cases of labour exploitation there is internal mobility, within Portugal, between municipalities, according to the seasonality of agricultural products (OTSH, 2018).

Regardless of the investments made to improve victim's identification, referrals and assistance, Portugal seems to have a low rate of identified and assisted victims (Matos et al., 2017). Also, despite the guidelines outlined in the National Plans against Trafficking in Human Beings (NPTHB), there are no known studies for evaluating the effectiveness of victim's identification and support interventions, thus is not possible to determine what kind of support is being provided (quality, impact and effectiveness), as well the ability to identify, recognize and assist victims.

In the report of Trafficking in Persons [TIP] (2018), Portugal globally achieved TIER 1, that indicates that the Portuguese government recognizes THB, strives to address the problem and can achieve the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). It has, however, annually to continuously show progress to maintain its position. There were some recommendations to Portuguese government to address the difficulties and the loopholes that exist in the policy. According to TIP (2016), Portugal must try to increase efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses and convict traffickers. This idea goes accordingly with the work of Matos, Gonçalves, & Maia (2017) suggesting that the legislative advances, despite being recognized, are not accompanied by other practical changes, like implementing systematic training for all the police officers,

prosecutors and judges to improve trafficking investigations and, consequently, convictions. They advise specialized professional training of an ongoing nature; an efficient cooperation between various law enforcement agencies (on an international and national level). For the purpose of a more efficient criminal procedure they also instruct to make a clarification of the condition of the special vulnerability of the victim (e.g. in relation to the victim vulnerabilities, illegal status, the difficulties that they encounter on a social and cultural level).

As we stated above, the scientific, political and social interest in THB in Portugal has been increasing since it became an autonomous crime in 2007. Several studies have been carried out that elucidate this phenomenon, namely the study on trafficking in women for sexual exploitation of Neves (2011), and Santos, Gomes, Duarte and Baganha (2008). Focusing the aspects of understanding of the panorama of criminal proceedings (Matos & Maia, 2015; Matos et al., 2017) and the aspects of assistance (Couto, 2012). On the aspect of recognition of this crime by different social agents, the works on social service professional of Cunha et al. (2018), on courts and magistrates Lourenço, Gonçalves, & Matos, (2018) and Matos et al. (2017).

The aim of the work of Cunha et al., (2018) was to examine the knowledge of social service and justice professional regarding the characterization of THB and anti-trafficking policies in Portugal. They found that the Portuguese professional had, in general, good level of knowledge about THB (on the topics about THB idiosyncrasies and purposes, trafficker and victim profiles, criminal behaviours and victimization dynamics). On the other hand, they stated that there was a lower level of knowledge on THB trajectories and specificities. The knowledge was influenced by professional experience, previous contacts with THB and training on THB of the participant. They also advised the promotion of formal training about THB in different areas.

Continuing with studies on judicial arena, Lourenço et al., (2018) aimed to access the perceptions of the magistrates regarding THB (in general, the legislation and the Portuguese context, regarding the victims and traffickers). They revealed that the magistrates had adequate perceptions on THB, and those who consolidated their professional practice with information obtained through

formal and informal contacts and experiences with those involved in or victims of THB, had more acceptable perceptions. However, they also revealed gaps regarding their perceptions about THB that could be filled with training and formation adjusted to the target population.

If it is true that most of the authors try to analyse and characterize their dynamics, geographic contexts and analyse the processes of prevention, assistance and protection, combating and repression of this crime, it is even more certain that the identification of elements, especially of victims, is extremely limited, given the great difficulty in directly accessing those actors (Couto, 2012). Lastly, it becomes now necessary to evaluate the results of the preventive, interventionist and repressive policies and even specific actions undertaken up to now, considering the perspective of the victim and those who work directly with her.

By shedding a light and putting a scientific focus on this area of study, the present work intends to offer contributions in two stands: the social and scientific visibility of THB in Portugal and the importance of the research itself at a national and international level (mixed design, perceptions of community, access to stakeholders [such as service providers and victims], needs identification [in providing support and assisting victims], enablers of help-seeking by the victim [by their own perspective]).

This dissertation is a collection of interrelated empirical studies divided in 4 chapters: all the chapters correspond to the empirical studies developed.

The first chapter, from university students' perspective, discuss some ideas and concepts about THB, specially its actors (victims and offenders), through a qualitative approach. This research seeks to identify the perceptions of university students towards THB victims and traffickers. This study focuses on how they conceive the victims and the traffickers and how they understand their involvement in the trafficking networks. This study has a double objective: to reinforce that THB is a serious, complex and dynamic crime, and that is vital access perception on misconceptions and stereotypes that are in the community and that need reflective and critical thinking and clarification. We conclude by

highlighting some limitations of the study and advance recommendations for future research.

To satisfy our objective of accessing the support provided to victims of THB, in the second chapter, we carry out a mixed design study – quantitative and qualitative - with service providers of the NTVSPN. With this study we aim to capture the perceptions of support providers in Portugal regarding the TSH victims' needs, type of support that is provided, their understanding of the "condition of special vulnerability" and the barriers they anticipate to help-seeking and for providing support. The results allowed us to present a set of recommendations for future studies and practice.

The third and fourth empirical study, using qualitative research, was carried out through interviews with victims of THB, in order to bring new voices to the scientific attention: the voices of those who experienced THB. The study sample is a clinical-forensic one, constituted by THB victim's (9 volunteered adults, sheltered national victims of both sexes - 7 males and 2 females), aged between 42-67 years (M= 56.67; SD = 8.411). In these two studies, we aim to understand the factors that facilitate and inhibit the victims from help-seeking; identify their needs and analyze the perceptions of the victim about the psychosocial support that is available for them and, finally, about the judicial system. Specifically, in the third study we analyze and identify the experiences of the victims of THB in Portugal (the recruitment process, the challenges and barriers that victims face when they try to leave the exploitation). This study highlights how the control criminal strategies of the traffickers inhibit the victims to come forward with their victimization, and strong endorse the need to construct socio-cultural values that could influence positively the help-seeking and the hetero and self-identification of the victims. This chapter also highlights the need for preventive campaigns that are appropriately designed to inform the community, namely those who are most at risk.

The objectives that guided the final chapter were the attempt to promote and understanding of the configurations that trafficking takes on and, above all, how it translates to victims' personal experiences, in terms of post-trafficking perspectives of those who underwent that experience and the process of support.

Specifically, this study aims to expand our current knowledge and understanding on those services, namely:

a) How the support services are portrayed by its victims' users? (nature of support, characteristics, duration and victim's responsiveness of the same); how the police (National Guard, borders patrol and judiciary police) is portrayed (before, during and after the criminal complaint and the emotions associated)?
b) What is the perception of the victims regarding the structures, processes and support services?
c) How the judicial system is portrayed by the victim (namely, what does the victim know about it, what is the victim's involvement in the judicial process and emotions associated);
d) What was the impact of the trafficking experience on the victims, on a physical, psychological and social level?
e) Which coping strategies were mobilized by the victims to better recover of the exploitation?

The conclusion of this dissertation provides an integrated analysis of all the chapters findings. Point of converge and discontinuity in the studies are highlighted. The contributions of these studies to the field at the theoretical, methodological, empirical, practical and macro-social level, as well as their limitation and implications on real practice (public policies, prevention and intervention) are also reflected. We also provide new questions to serve as guidance for future research, as well as some final remarks.

Lastly, we need to address that some redundancy may arise through the chapters as a result of the structure of this dissertation. Each chapter, apart from the introduction and the conclusion, represents and independent piece of investigative work which was either published or submitted for publication for which we included a reference to its original publication.

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CHAPTER 1 - ‘WHO ARE THE VICTIMS, WHO ARE THE TRAFFICKERS?’ UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ PORTRAYALS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Abstract

Perceptions towards victims and offenders of trafficking in human beings lacks scientific research. The purpose of this study was to analyse Portuguese university students' portrayals of human trafficking victims and traffickers. This study included 199 participants that answered an internet survey (composed by two open questions). The participants' age ranged from 18 to 50 years old (M=23.23, SD=6.241) with most of the participants being women (65%). Thematic analysis was used to determine dominant themes and subthemes. The results revealed 3 main themes: Victim Portrayal and victimization dynamics; Traffickers portrayals and criminal dynamics; Trafficking dynamics. The participants report, commonly, the socioeconomic status of the victim as an important reason to understand why they accept job offers or are eager to provide a financial level for their family. In student's perception, the traffickers are aware of the victim's life conditions and, therefore, lured them with false promises of a better life. Despite that, 17% of the participants sustained an undifferentiated victim and trafficker portrayal; 6% of them reveal that they have no knowledge of human trafficking and underlying causes. The implications for future research, practice and public policy (preventive and informative campaigns) are addressed.

Keywords: Human trafficking, perceptions, traffickers, victims.

'*WHO ARE THE VICTIMS, WHO ARE THE TRAFFICKERS*?' UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PORTRAYALS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Introduction

Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) is a crime that violates the individual's most basic human rights and affects millions of people worldwide. It is a crime that can be committed by a single individual or within the framework of organized crime and its dynamics and dimensions are difficult to uncover (United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2016). According the Directive 2011/36/EU[7] (European Parliament and of the council, 2012), THB is defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or reception of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control over those persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. The exploitation in this crime shall include, as a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, including begging, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the exploitation of criminal activities, or the removal of organs.

The victim's consent regarding the crimes set forth in the previous definition doesn't exclude the illicit of the act. THB is a multifactorial and changeable crime (Couto & Fernandes, 2014) that involves the exploitation of vulnerable people who are traded by criminals as mere commodities to obtain profit with multiple and extreme forms of violence against its victims (Zimmerman, Hossain, Watts, & Stolz, 2011). The public does not easily recognize or identify when this abuse is happening; and when it does, the portrayal of both victim and offender is often accompanied by misconceptions and myths that perpetuate the ignorance on the subject (Allais, 2013). Several

[7] Directive 2011/36/EU from the European Parliament and of the Council, of 5 April, on preventing and combating trafficking in Human Beings and protecting Victims, that replaces the Decision 2002/692/JAI from the Council.

studies were carried out to understand the public perceptions (Bishop, Morgan, & Erickson, 2013; Cunha, Gonçalves, & Matos, 2018; Kamler, 2013; Lourenço, Gonçalves, & Matos, 2018;Oluniyi, 2012 and Robinson, 2011) and found that formal/informal education is a key component for the awareness about THB. They also found that public reaction is a very important aspect of trafficking in general, since vigilance and support from the public are also essential to the identification of potential victims.

As a result if the general public understand victims negatively, then organizations, governments and activists have an additional hurdle to overcome when fighting THB (Robinson, 2011). However, O'Brien (2016) found that, despite raising awareness plays a vital role in combating human trafficking, the campaigners still encounter another challenge to overcome, creating what he called *'heroes* and *villains'*, by placing the blame for trafficking on some factors, while obscuring the responsibility of others. The author also stated that these campaigns construct a narrow understanding of the problem through the depiction of the ideal trafficker and victim, which results in obscuring the real causes for THB.

THB always involves the exploitation of a vulnerable individual that can be a woman, a man and/or a child. According to Eurostat (2015), 80% of the victims of human trafficking were female (67% were women and 13% were girls), while only 20% of the victims were male (16% men and 4% young males). Young males were often not seen as THB victims, but research has shown that they are also targeted by sex traffickers and are also at risk for commercial sexual exploitation (UNODC, 2014). Although women still comprise most of the detected victims, there has been an overall international decrease of female victims over the past decade, from 84% in 2004 to 71% in 2014. The trend for detections of men as victims, in contrast, has been increasing over the same period, and more than 1 in 5 detected trafficking victims between 2012 and 2014 were men (UNODC, 2014).

The persons that are targeted by the traffickers generally live in adverse circumstances, which the recruiters generally use to manipulate them. Those vulnerabilities are not physical in their analysis but are rather evaluated by who

is considered more at risks and who is harmed. In other words, vulnerability is acquired by measuring who is most at risk for victimization and who is victimized. The relationship between those variables will determine who is most vulnerable (Walklate, 2011). However, one needs to keep in mind that being vulnerable does not necessarily translate to actually being a victim. This process is complex in its etiology, which explains why not all the people that live in poor socioeconomic conditions become human trafficking victims (UNODC, 2015, 2016; Walklate, 2011). To understand the causes beneath a victim's involvement in human trafficking, several authors (Clawson, Dutch, Salomon & Grace, 2009; Europol, 2013; Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010; Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013; Zimmerman, Hossain, & Watts, 2011) listed a number of factors that drives the human trafficking. They collectively called this the push and pull factors as they can be understood by how they repel or attract a victim to a human trafficking situation.

Human trafficking: Push and pull factors

Social and economic circumstances in countries of origin that influence victims and traffickers and facilitate the perpetration of human trafficking can be high unemployment, labour market not open to women and gender discrimination, lack of opportunity to improve quality of life, poverty, sexual or ethnic discrimination, escaping prosecution, violence or abuse, escaping human rights violations, collapse of social infrastructure and other environmental conditions, including conflict and war (Eurostat, 2015; Hernandez & Rudolph, 2015; UNODC, 2015; UNODC, 2016). Several of those push factors are found in the local environment of both victims' and traffickers, since they often share the same conditions (UNODC, 2014). The traffickers encourage the victims, often based on promises of a better life (Eurostat, 2015; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013).

There are also factors that lure some victims to a trafficking situation. Improved standard quality of life, better access to education, less discrimination and abuse, having individual and civil rights that were unattainable, better employment opportunities (such as higher salaries and better working conditions), the demand for cheap labour and commercial sexual services in the

destination's country and the established migrant communities or diasporas (Eurostat, 2015; Hernandez & Rudolph, 2015; UNODC, 2016). The demand for sexual services in countries where prostitution is legal and regulated affects the demand for victims of sexual exploitation. Cho, Dreher and Neumayer (2013) investigated the impact of legalized prostitution on THB inflows. Their empirical analysis, for a cross-section of up to 150 countries, showed that on average, countries where prostitution is legal reported larger human trafficking inflows.

While the term "human trafficking" may suggest some kind of movement from one point/country to another, at actual times no movement is necessary as this crime can be committed against an individual who never left his hometown. Individuals may be considered victims of trafficking, whether born in a state of servitude, transported to an operating situation; if they previously consented to work for a trafficker, or participated in a crime as a direct result of being trafficked (Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings [GRETA], 2013; UNODC, 2016).

Traffickers and victims

Traffickers exploit those who are vulnerable at multiple levels (economic, psychological and physical), and so are struggling to meet their most basic needs (Clawson et al, 2009; Fong & Berger Cardoso, 2010) and, despite being men or women, are frequently people known to the victim (e.g., family members, neighbours, friends, boyfriends, husband/wife or even people that have an influence in the community of the victim) (Europol, 2016; Eurostat, 2015; Siegel & Blank, 2014; UNODC, 2016). They may play a role through the different phases of the process (recruitment, transportation, harbouring, control or exploitation) and they often have a financial motive for their involvement in this crime (Siegel & Blank, 2014; UNODC, 2016).

The traffickers may also act through a network of entities with a legal background (like temporary work agencies, travel agencies, universities) and use social media sites to get in contact with children and women (UNODC, 2014). The internet is now a mean to recruit and allure potential victims, specially minor victims, through social media (Facebook, twitter, Instagram and other social

pages) (Jordan, Patel, & Rapp, 2013; Moynihan et al., 2018; Reid, 2016). Adolescents who surf the Internet can be tricked into sharing personal information or pictures that put them at an increased risk for becoming victims of human trafficking (Kotrla, 2010). The internet can be used as a mean to recruit and also as a mean to exploit the victims (being men, women, or even minors) (Moynihan et al., 2018).

Additionally, the Eurostat (2015) report has collected data on the sex of traffickers. The proportion of women involved in human trafficking between 2010 and 2012 was at approximately one quarter, while men were almost 75% of all the traffickers. Despite that, UNODC (2016) found out recently that the number of women that are perpetrators are increasing, when compared to other crimes. Most of women involved in the trafficking ring play an important role in recruiting and controlling the new victims (UNODC, 2016). Siegel and Blank (2014) also found that in some networks a woman is the head of the trafficking ring and plays a crucial role in the control and exploitation of the victims.

THB is often related to other criminal activities, such as money laundering, smuggling and labour abuses and because of that, it is often not investigated and recorded as an autonomous crime (Eurostat, 2015). This crime can diverge from individual criminal actors to well-adjusted and prepared structures that operate at an international level. Some groups control the whole process and have logistical bases and contacts at origin, transit and destination, in different countries which allows a quick transfer of many victims (UNODC, 2016).

Trafficking in Human Beings in Portugal

Hernandez and Rudolph (2015) examined the determinants of human trafficking victims' inflows into European countries based on identified victims' numbers and found out that human trafficking occurs within well-established migrant and refugee corridors and that the liberalization of border controls intensifies trafficking flows. It must be noted that not all the victims are international migrants, refugees or smuggled migrants. This makes the identification of the victims problematic and difficult. The recent enlargement of the EU and the flow of migrants that are crossing Europe made the number

of forced labour cases increase (Eurostat, 2015). This is particularly relevant for the agriculture, construction, manufacturing and domestic servitude industries in Portugal. Portugal is simultaneously a country of origin, destination and transit on the human trafficking chain.

Notwithstanding, there are few cases reported annually compared to what could be the reality. The lack of solid and reliable official data is an issue that feeds the stereotypes generated by social media (Cunha, et al., 2018). Between the years 2010-2016, Portugal registered 1252 potential victims (nationals and foreign victims), but justice authorities only confirmed 278 (Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings [OTSH], 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). In 2016 there were identified a total of 264 presumed victims in Portugal, which in comparison with homologous period, there was an increase in the number of identified victims (variation of 36.8%). Most of the identified victims were male (n=141) for labour exploitation, with 14 female victims, for sexual exploitation. In the same period there were also 26 minors that were identified as presumed victims (OTSH, 2017). This data on the phenomenon in Portugal reinforces the need to address this issue with the community, namely the young students that could be vulnerable to trafficking situation for labour exploitation when applying for a job. This was precipitated by the concurrent situation of unemployment in Portugal, in the last years, which was also a factor that could be driving victims to a trafficking situation (OTSH, 2015).

The few studies done on this subject (Balderas, 2006; Oluniyi, 2012) found that university students acknowledge the phenomenon of THB as a serious crime and identify several factors and dynamics of the crime. Nevertheless, the students have not encountered a situation where they had to face a human trafficking scenario, suggesting that although students have an opinion about the topic, the likelihood of coming across or experience human trafficking on a daily basis is highly unlikely. Oluniyi (2012) suggested that the school should also attempt to train students on interpersonal development skills on the recognition and teaching of this topic, in order to better identify and prevent human trafficking.

Before the actual National strategy to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, there were created, by the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, three major National Plans against THB, whose implementation started in 2007 (1st National Plain Against THB, 2007-2010; 2nd NPTHB 2011-2013; 3rd NPTHB, 2014-2017). The 3rd National Action aimed to strengthen victim's referral and protection mechanisms as well advocated that all universities should include THB in their curriculum. Doing so, the plan expected to target those individuals who were unaware of such a particular subject, and once individuals recognize the problem of human trafficking, they can recognize potential risky situations and are more likely to act (to prevent and to identify potential victims and perpetrators). By doing so, we expect to tackle one of the several factors of the low rate of identified and assisted victims: the lack of knowledge and awareness of THB in general.

Despite the recent national studies done on this topic (Couto, Machado, Martins, & Gonçalves, 2012; Cunha et al., 2018; Lourenço et al., 2018), Portugal still lacks research addressing public awareness of human trafficking in this specific population. There are gaps that need to be filled in the existing literature to further actionable knowledge on human trafficking. The multitude of factors that surround the recent international crisis invariably creates criticism, as well as advocacy, in the areas of victimization reform, policy change, prevention and training.

Gonçalves, Monteiro e Matos, (2019) conducted a quantitive study to examine the knowledge of university students regarding THB. The results revealed that the participants presented high levels of knowledge about the phenomena's dynamics, trafficker profile and criminal dynamics and THB' trajectories. Contrariwise, the students revealed lower levels of knowledge concerning THB' purposes, the victims' characteristics and the victimization dynamics, and THB' specificities in Portugal. The authors also stated that the knowledge was influenced by age, academic area and through contact with various sources other than academic institutions, which suggests a low compliance by the academic institutions with the third National Action Plan against trafficking in human beings, implemented in Portugal from 2014 to 2017.

Perceptions can play a vital role in the way human trafficking is dealt by the public. An individual's knowledge on a particular topic or subject matter may be positively associated with the outcome of an issue (Bishop et al., 2013; Robinson, 2011). Besides, the attitudes are straight influenced by one's perception's, and if one's perceptions are erroneous, the individual will be uncertain as to what is relevant and not, and can even not realize that a problem exists and, consequently, ignore it or even not prioritize it (Lourenço, et al., (2018). When it comes to victim assistance (identification, support and reintegration), it can be difficult because many of them are repatriated to their countries of origin, many returns to their homes and many are re-integrated in the countries where they were exploited, that is why studying perceptions is important. So understanding perceptions may give us a better idea of how the victims might be treated and are able to reintegrate into society, and also understand the myths that exists before social norms can be targeted by chances in prevent campaigns or policies (Bishop et al., 2013; Kamler, 2013; Nieuwenhuys & Pecoud, 2007; Oluniyi, 2012).

Aim of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyse Portuguese university students' portrayals of human trafficking victims and traffickers. This article focuses on how they conceive the victims and the traffickers and how they understand their involvement in the trafficking network.

Method

Participants

This study was included in a major project about perceptions on THB that had 223 participants answering an internet survey and, so, it is an extension of the study of Gonçalves et al., (2019). Because the main purpose of this study was to analyse the answers to the open questions that were made in the end of the survey, just 199 participants were validated. The other 24 who did not answer neither one of the open questions were excluded. Even if the participants

only answered one question, that was validated and considered when analysing the data.

The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 50 years (M=23.23, *SD*=6.241). Most of the participants were women 65,3% (*n*=130) and 34.7% (*n*=59) were men. The majority was students from social sciences courses 51.3% (*n*=102), engineer and technology 31.7% (*n*=63), medical sciences 10.1% (*n*=20), exact sciences 3.5% (*n*=7) and natural sciences 3.5% (*n*=7). Each participant was given a code to better identify the answers. The code is the order of the answer, the sex and the age of the participant (e.g., 1M23 means answer number one, the participant is a male and the age is 23 years).

Instruments

The data was collected through an online survey about THB. An email containing the authorization request for the development of this research was sent to all email services of the university. Participants were then provided with a link to the self-administered online survey inventory, where the main goals and the importance of this research, the target sample and data collection method were explained (using the Survey Creator program). Once the participants agreed to participate (via informed consent), they were directed to a demographics page, followed by the questionnaire survey. Once a participant completed the questionnaire, s/he was directed to a debriefing statement and thanked for his/her participation. The expected response time was approximately five minutes. The questionnaire was composed by 27 questions (answered by, true, false or do not know) and 2 open questions, namely, (1) what do you think that is the human trafficking victims' profile? and (2) what do you think that is the human trafficker' profile?

Data Analysis

Data was coded by the first author following thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012), using the QSR International Nvivo 10 Software. The answers were analysed based on the emerging themes, using an inclusive criterion, as each theme could be included in more than one category. An initial coding grid

was used to guide the initial coding's (e.g., individual vulnerability, structural vulnerability, demographic data), which were later refined and added as inductive codes emerged (e.g., Victims' portrayal incorporated the three codes discussed above). The final coding grid includes core categories, subdivided by secondary and more ideographic categories. Themes emerged from the data and interpretative work was necessary to identify them. To ensure the validity and credibility of the results, different strategies were adopted, including constant comparative analysis of the data and a dense description of the meanings found therein, further identified in the results section by a detailed presentation and illustration of each category with excerpts of the participants' speech. Additionally, an independent coder (the second author) analysed 40 per cent of the answers, randomly assigned, to ensure data reliability. After independent review by a co-coder, the fidelity rate was calculated using Vala's (1986) formula: F = 2(C1, 2)/C1 + C2. The number of agreements between the codifiers was divided by the total categorizations performed by each: 2(943)/963 + 983 = 0.97.

The result was a fidelity rate of 0.97, which represents an excellent level of agreement (Martins & Machado, 2006), allowing confidence in the results obtained. Coding discrepancies were discussed and resolved by the coders by consensus. A senior researcher (third author) audited the coding process.

Results

The results are presented according to the questions that guided the analysis: what is the participant perception about THB victims? What is the participant perception about THB traffickers? Three themes emerged from the answers that were provided: *Victim' portrayal and dynamics of victimization*; *Trafficker' portrayal and criminal dynamics* and *Trafficking dynamics.* Table 1 displays those themes in decreasing order from the most to the least mentioned. We need to address that the themes and respective sub-themes should not be interpreted as independent of each other, instead they are related and mutual dependent. Direct quotations from the answer's transcripts highlighting aspects

of those themes can be found throughout the text and each is identified by the participant code.

Table 1. Main Themes and Sub-themes

Theme	Sub-theme	Participants[a]	References[b]
Victim' portrayal and victimization dynamics		194	478
	Differentiated portrayals	179	454
	Undifferentiated portrayal	19	19
	Lack of knowledge	5	5
Trafficker' portrayal and criminal dynamics		161	243
	Differentiated portrayal	145	219
	Undifferentiated portrayal	15	15
	Lack of knowledge	7	7
Trafficking Dynamics		112	242
	Means of recruitment	55	71
	Facilitating factors	46	56
	Means of control	18	33
	Modus operandi	27	31
	Type of exploitation	14	22
	Relationship recruiter/victim	14	17
	Trafficking flows	9	12

a. Number of participants who mentioned the theme and sub-theme

b. Total number of references that integrated that theme and sub-theme

Victim' portrayal and victimization dynamics

Most the participants reported a range of characteristics representing the human trafficking victim'. We have 194 sources, with 478 references to this particular theme. From this theme emerged the following sub-themes: (a) Differentiated Portrayal; (b) Undifferentiated Portrayals; (c) Lack of Knowledge. Figure 1 displays the theme and sub-themes with the relations between them.

Differentiated portrayals

The majority of participants (89.9%) gave us a differentiated profile of the victim. Many participants focused on vulnerabilities that the victim present before the victimization as the causes for their involvement in the trafficking network.

Figure 1. Theme and sub-themes of victim' portrayal and victimization dynamics

That vulnerability could be a structural or even and individual one. When the vulnerability is referred as a structural one, they are presented as sociocultural factors, such as low socioeconomic level, lack of opportunities, social exclusion and even legal status of the victim. Concerning the references to the socioeconomic level of the victim, the participants state that the victims are poor, with no way of providing for themselves or even their families and because of that they look for new ways of turning their lives around *"Person with economic difficulties, desperate desire to change lives."* (112F25), and *"Low socioeconomic level person with need to earn money."* (142F42). There are even participants that state that the victim is from third world countries *"A weak person in monetary means,* [...] *they are people of third world."* (144M18). It was also mentioned the lack of opportunities (like lack of employment for the victims that are unemployed, lack of education) that the victim faces daily which makes the victim more prone to a trafficking situation, because they search in other places what they do not have at their home*. "A person who may be unemployed or with a low salary, who does not have enough money or support to study and take other classes that allows him to maintain a decent life."* (143F33); *"[...] usually in search of stable living conditions and salaries or new job opportunities outside their environment."* (15F34). Social exclusion (living alone, social isolation, being foreign, not knowing the language) was referred also as a vulnerability for the victim. They state that social exclusion is the vulnerability that allows someone to just 'disappear' without a trace *"Vulnerable, without anyone noticing his absence and not attracting much police attention."* (63M20) and *"An isolated person, because if something happened to him, like disappearing, no one would miss her, that is, there would be no complaint of his disappearance."* (95F18), and that can benefit the traffickers on a great scale. The legal status of the victim was also reported has a vulnerability, related with political issues (war and humanitarian crisis). The participants reported war as a factor that drives THB, because the victims want to flee from a country at war or with armed conflicts using money to escape and end up in a trafficking situation *"The victim is looking for something that they cannot obtain legally (e.g. escaping from a country at war) and is eager to pay to achieve that end."*

(182M25). There was only one participant that mentioned the Mediterranean crisis as a factor of vulnerability to a trafficking situation. Despite being only one, it is extremely relevant because of the economic, political and social conjuncture that Europe is going through, *"There are so many stories that are now known because of deaths that have occurred in the Mediterranean, which I cannot find words to describe such cruelty and violence.* [the traffickers] *are inhuman, it seems that they forgot that other human beings have as many rights as them."* (177F22). In these highlights that relate to the legal status of the victim, we also have the victim consent to be moved to another country or even pay for that purpose, despite knowing that she/he will work as a prostitute: *"The victim could be a person that is needing money, and is ready to do whatever it takes to get it, to survive, even if it means working as a prostitute or being a slave."* (16F19).

Regarding the individual vulnerability, the participants mentioned the naivety and poor decision making of the victim as a factor that drives the victim to a human trafficking network *"partly naïve and easy to take."* (18M20). The victim was seen as someone that believes in everything and lacks good judgments, *"usually people are looking for a better future, and they end up getting carried away by talks and promises of an improved future outside."* (166M30) and *"at a psychological level,* [the victim] *must be 'innocent' and 'naïve' to the point of being led by proposals of work, with little information, and too good to be true."* (22F24). This naivety of the victim, according to the participants, also make the victim more prone to be easily influenced and manipulated by the trafficker: *"Person with a fragile personality, naive, easily persuaded and manipulated."* (41M24). There are also participants who made references to mental or psychological problems (mental fragility, low self-esteem, cognitive deficits). The victim is seen as someone *"psychologically weak"* (74F18), and *"fragile on an emotional and psychological level."* (81F25). Another individual vulnerability reported by the participants was the lack of a social support. In conjunction with all other vulnerability factors, the participants understand that having a secure social support network can prevent the victim of being approached and even prevent the victim from being involved in the trafficking situation. They mention the lack of family support and other types of

support as an individual vulnerability. Consequently, by being from a dysfunctional family, or even not having family support to endure certain difficulties of life, can incline victims to a human trafficking exploitation, and prevent their identification as victims *"with needy families and a weak social support network."* (14F28); *"little support by family/friends."* (91F23) and *"persons without many interpersonal relationships, so that she/he can disappear without creating many problems for the aggressor."* (31F21).

Concerning sociodemographic data, the participants reported the features of age, the sex, level of education and the nationality of the victim. The victim was understood as a *"person* [that can be] *a child, young, woman or man [...]"* (108F48). Mainly the victims were portrayed as *"usually defenceless women or girls"* (97F10) and *"generally more women than men."* (178F25). There was no statement that mentioned that the victim could be exclusively a man. When the participant reported men as a victim of THB, they also mentioned the fact that most victims were female. There were also references that the sex of the victim can vary according to the type of exploitation. *"Sex will only make a difference according to the" branch of activity' of traffickers."* (122M24). *"Can be a person, both male and female, from children to adults, taking into account the purpose of trafficking in human beings."* (168F21).

The participants characterize the victim as "*a person with a low level of education, from all ages, that seek a better life in another place."* (102M23). Only one participant, despite answering that the victims had low levels of education, also detailed that there could be victims with high levels of education, but because of the particular living conditions could also ended up as a THB victim: *"I also consider that could exist victims with a higher education level, that end up in that situation for monetary or professional reasons."* (105F27).

Regarding the nationality of the victim, the latter is seen as "*immigrant"* (139M20), as someone that "*tends to live in a foreign country and not to dominate the language spoken in that country." (177F22)* and that every so often are illegal in the country, in search of better living conditions. In this subtheme, we can understand that some of the participants confuse the definition of the crime human trafficking with the definition of crime of illegal immigration *"go*

clandestinely to other countries and there occurs the trafficking situation without they themselves know." (25F22).

The participants also reported that the desire to improve one's life conditions was the motivational factor that drive the victim to a victimization by human trafficking. Trying to surpass the vulnerabilities mentioned above, the desire to provide for family, to improve life opportunities/conditions and/or even to flee from war zones were a motivational factor that could not be forgotten. *"Someone looking for a better life, either for himself or for a loved one"* (56F18). The difficulties that the victim face, undermine the dangers that present before themselves (job offers too good to be true, manipulation by the traffickers) and the desire to improve their life gains roots and leads the victim to victimization. *"Victims who often seek new opportunities and better living conditions end up suffering this type of crime."* (21F22) and "a *person who needs something to boost his life and eagerly awaits what makes him more vulnerable."* (119M21).

There were also references on the impact that a THB victimization has on the victim. The participants reported that the victim is *"a depressed person, malnourished and with signs of maltreatment."* (52F20); *"a person who lives in constant fear and fears for his life."* (45F23) and that is *"blunt and without plans for a better future; always afraid and suspicious."* (151M23).

Undifferentiated Profile

Nineteen participants gave us an undifferentiated profile, stating that the victim can be any person, with any characteristic, *"anyone can be a victim."* (194M19) and *"anyone who unfortunately appears on the 'traffickers' list"* (130M19). Despite stating that any person can be a victim, some of them related the vulnerabilities of the victim as a reason for victimization, mentioning that "*anyone can be a victim, but usually easily influenced or naïve people*." (131M18). Others also state that it is the trafficker who defines who is more vulnerable so as to take advantage of that factor to recruit: "*anyone* [can be a victim]*, because it is the trafficker who will observe according to their criteria which person is more vulnerable.* (47F25).

Lack of knowledge

It is appropriate to address that there were 5 participants (2.51%) that reported not having an opinion or not knowing nothing about human trafficking or his victims. *"I do not have an opinion on the subject."* (80F21) and *"I do not know if it is related with a specific profile. If it is, I do not know how to specify."* (50M22).

Trafficker' portrayal and criminal dynamics

Most of the participants reported a range of characteristics of the human trafficking offenders (161 sources, with 243 references). The following sub-themes emerged: (a) Differentiated Portrayal; (b) Undifferentiated Portrayal; (c) Lack of Knowledge. Figure 2 displays the theme and sub-themes with the relations between them.

Differentiated portrayal

The majority of participants (72.9%) gave us a differentiated profile of the trafficker. The participants listed some vulnerabilities that make the trafficker more prone to a situation of the particular crime, but contrary to what happens in the victim' portrayal, they only identified individual vulnerabilities (related to the living conditions and/or emotional traits) of the trafficker. In this sub-theme we have the subthemes: psychological and/or emotional traits, criminal history of the trafficker and previous victimizations suffered.

The participants regarded the trafficker as someone that is heartless, that doesn't care for human rights or even human life itself: *"The trafficker is someone unscrupulous and who wants to enjoy playing with the dreams of others. Are inhuman, it seems that they forgot that other human beings have as many rights as they."* (177F22). They even describe psychopathic traits to portray the trafficker as someone *"with great persuasiveness characteristics, with no emotions and empathy."* (142F42). Very manipulative, 'polite', giving the illusion that he cares for other people suffering. But this behaviour is only for show, this side is only an act, so that they can "capture" the victim in their schemes, as we can see through this highlight *"a person who initially shown*

highly available for any support from the outset very safe and professional. When the victim is then in his "power", become cold, calculative and unscrupulous." (125F23). Some of the participants only listed psychological characteristics, regarding the behaviour of the trafficker, suggesting someone who can control their behaviour to achieve some goal and that goal is the trust of the victim *"egocentric and narcissistic, manipulator, intelligent, socially capable, watchful, attentive, persuasive."* (127M42) and *"an unscrupulous person who takes advantage of others, without regret, remorse."* (123M26).

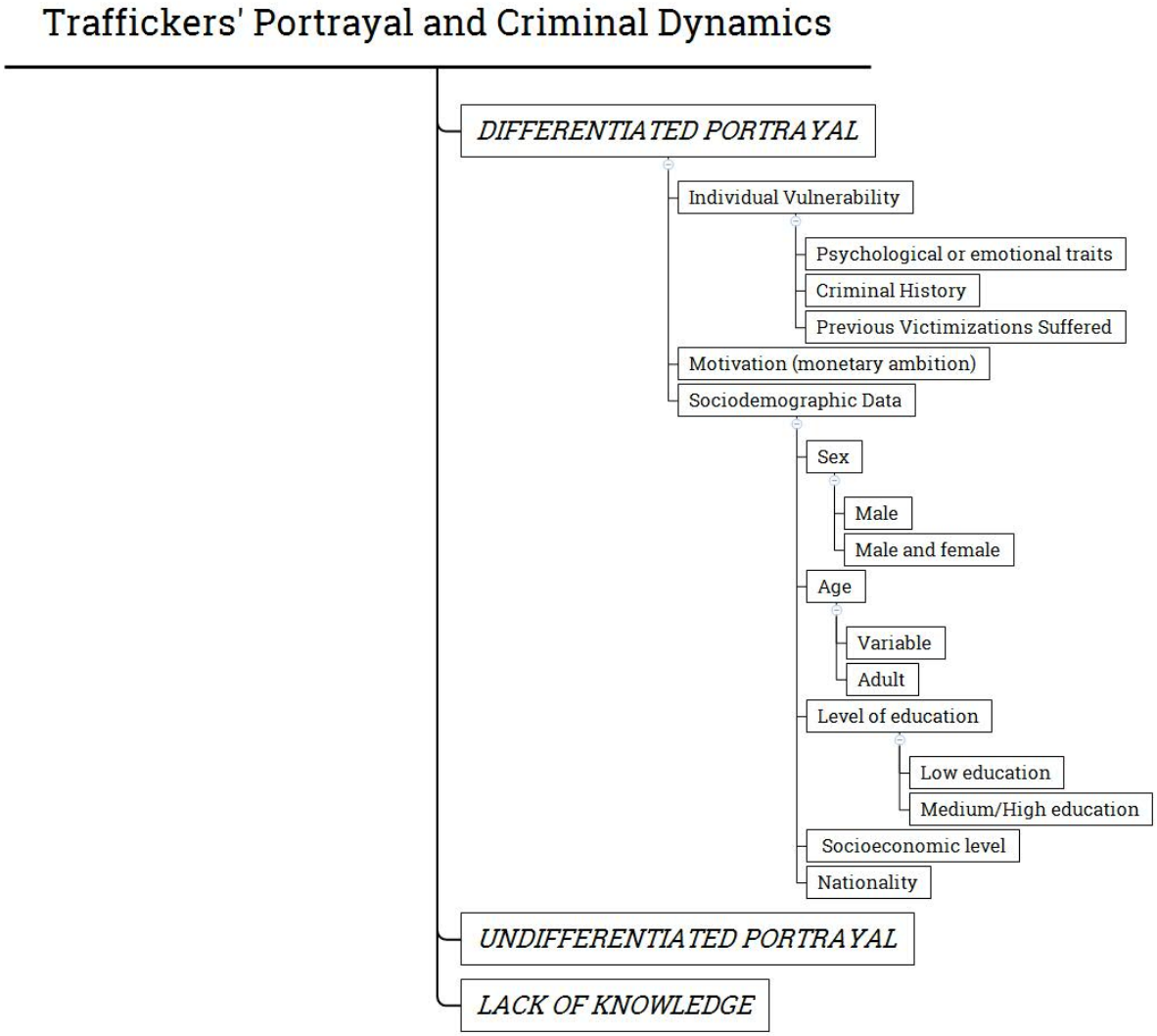

Figure 2. Theme and sub-themes on trafficker' portrayal and criminal dynamics.

There are also some participants that mentioned the possibility of the trafficker suffering from mental health problems, that somehow can justify why he is involved and commits this type of crime; *"it is probably someone very*

violent, because to practice such an act, he cannot be a person of good health on a mental level." (134M19). Eleven participants mentioned that the trafficker could be a *"criminal, aggressive, armed, violent, possibly with a record."* (115M45), *"related to other types of trafficking, and inserted in this underworld."* (149M18). The trafficker is seen as someone who also has *"delinquent bonds"* (173F22) and *"with connections to criminal networks, in addition to trafficking, such as trafficking in arms, drugs, etc."* (89F21).

There are also references to previous victimizations that the trafficker could have been victim, such as *"a history of maltreatment and abuse, without family ties."* (1F31), that somehow justifies his actions and enabled him to be an aggressor, *"disturbed person whose human rights were disrespected (probably in their infancy), which affected the rationality of the trafficker* (133M18).

The participants stated that the trafficker has financial motives to be involved in the trafficking network, being those financial motives to achieve easy profit, cheap labour or even to attain ambitions not achievable by legal means, the financial motives are the wheels behind the actions of the offender. *"In my opinion, that person* [the trafficker] *wants to make money, and human trafficking should generate a lot of money."* (130M19). The trafficker was therefore being seen as greedy, that *"aims to make money at any cost"* (182M25); *"a scammer, who only cares about money, without wanting to know the means to achieve ends."* (160M19), and as someone without respect for life and human conditions *"usually the abuser is a person with greed, ambition, unconcern for the other. It only aims at his goals, without considering the act they are practicing."* (5F19). Related to financial motives of the trafficker are also references to human smuggling, for example one of the participants mentioned that the *"human trafficker charges people a large sum of money to be transferred from the country."* (161M21).

Regarding the sex of the trafficker, the participants described that *"usually the traffickers are male"* (93F23), with some of them also indicating that the trafficker could also be a woman, in some specific exploitations or recruitments *"the women who are often essential as recruiter to gain the trust of the victims,*

especially when it comes to trafficking women for sexual purposes, they also participate" (128M50). In contrast to what happens with the portrayal of the victim (in which the victim can be a female and a male, but never only male), in the portrayal of the trafficker, the offender can be a male and a female, but never only female.

Related to the sex of the trafficker, the participants reported that the age can be variable *"between 30 and 50 years."* (114M47) and some of them only stated *"usually grown men"* (87F21). But the main idea in this characteristic is that the trafficker is seen as someone *"older than the victim"* (179F25).

Other characteristic that was reported on the trafficker portrayal, and related to sociodemographic data, was the level of education. Participants reported that the trafficker has a *"low level of education"* (26F22) and *"can be people with a low or a high level of education."* (49F18).

We have participants that mentioned about socioeconomic level of the trafficker. They reported that the trafficker *"seems to be rich, from upper class"* (101F34), "*with a business (legal or not)"* (105F38). They said that the trafficker may be *"able to finance their targets, showing to be able to help in some way the victims achieve a financial stability abroad."* (166M30), but that really doesn't mean that he is wealthy, because it can only be a disguise.

Looking at the nationality of the trafficker, only 2 participants stated that the trafficker is a "*foreigner"* (26F22) and *"usually is of the same nationality of the victim*" (15F34). These two opposite ideas clarify that the participants don't have a predominant idea about the nationality of the traffickers.

Undifferentiated portrayal

Regarding the data above, we need to address that only 15 participants (7.54%) gave us an undifferentiated profile, stating that the trafficker can be any person with any characteristic, *"I think there is no profile more suited to it." (130M19).* But despite mentioning that anyone can be a trafficker, some of them related psychological traits mentioning that anyone can be but mostly *"people with serious problems*." (132F22); "[a] *violent and manipulative person.*" (136F18) and *"someone is looking for satisfaction or money."* (140M19)

Lack of knowledge

There were also 7 participants that mentioned not knowing anything about the human trafficker (3.52%) *"I do not know."* (63M20).

Trafficking dynamics

This theme was referred by 112 sources and 242 references, englobing the sub-themes: a) means of recruitment; b) facilitating factors; c) means of control; d) *modus operandi*; e) type of exploitation; f) relationship trafficker-victim and the sub-theme g) trafficking flows. Figure 3 demonstrates this theme and its sub-themes.

Means of Recruitment

The majority of participants (56.3%) mentioned aspect of the THB dynamics. When the participants mentioned the mean of recruitment, they clearly state that the trafficker is aware of the victim' life conditions and vulnerabilities and takes advantage of them in order to achieve their goals through the exploitations of the victim. *"Predators who take advantage of the emotional and social fragility of the victims and seek personal financial gain through exploitation."* (14F28) and *"They are people who take advantage of the vulnerability of others to make money from exploiting them."* (158M20).

They also said the manipulation that the trafficker uses are in order to recruit and exploit the victim. *"The aggressor has good communication skills, including persuasion and even manipulation. They approach the victims, who they recognize as more vulnerable."* (184F21).

Apart from taking advantage of the victims' vulnerabilities, the participants also mentioned that the traffickers make promises of better life conditions in order to lure the victims to a trafficking victimization. *"It is usually the ability of enticing its targets well, showing to be able to somehow help the victim to reach the financial stability outside the country."* (166M30). This promise of a better life is soon after exposed as a lie when the victim reaches their final destination *"*[the trafficker is] *a person who goes searching for people in need and who shows to that people an attractive solution to their problem, or*

at least a solution with dignified living conditions, which will prove to be false, when the victim reaches the designated destination." (143F33).

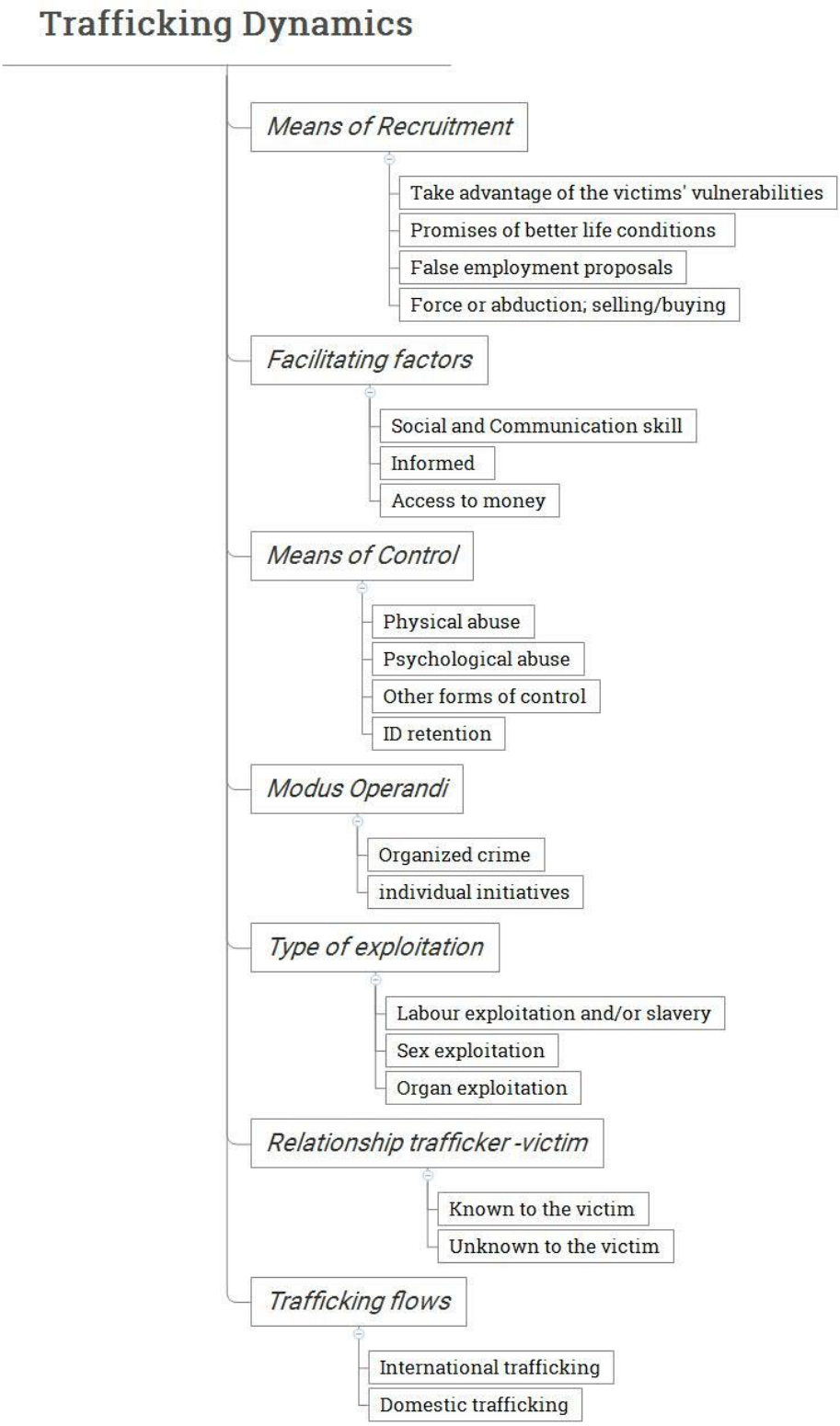

Figure 3. Theme and sub-themes of trafficking dynamics

The false employment proposals were the most common way of recruiting people, if they are adult, *"these people* [the victims] *are deceived by criminals who promise them a dream job and immense perks in another country.* (189F19). The use of force or abduction to recruit, selling or buying victims was reported, but they were reported concerning only minor victims. The participants reported that in these cases the victim can be *"children "sold" by their parents."* (59F18). And in most cases, they can even be *"abandoned" children* [that] *are kidnapped."* (6F23).

One participant alongside mentioning the kidnapping, also mentioned that the victims can be recruited through the internet by talking with strangers and providing personal information *"children simply sometimes walk on the streets alone and may be abducted (...) teens who talk to strangers, not only personally but also on the internet and give their personal data.*" (187F20).

Facilitating factors

The participants mentioned some characteristics of the THB dynamics that can facilitate the development of a 'relationship' between the trafficker and the victim. The main facilitator identified was the social and communication skills of the trafficker. They describe the trafficker above as having low levels of education, despite that they stated that the trafficker may give the illusion and appearance of being very polite and approachable, well behaved in order to lure the victim to their schemes. *"Very sociable, attractive and persuasive person."* (119M21) and *"insightful, ingenious, with great capacity for persuasion, with good communication skills."* (112F25). But shortly after accomplishing their goals, the masks drop, and they will become overpowering over the victim. *"A person who initially is very much available for any support, very safe and professional. When you have the victim in their "power" they will become cold, calculating and unscrupulous."* (125F23).

Ten participants reported that the trafficker is someone with influence (either social, political and/or economic) and has connections and that even sometimes *"are people with some power in the society."* (17F29), that had easy access to money (*n* =6), which enables their involvement in this crime. *"A cold,*

calculating, domineering person with a lot of knowledge and money that allows him to continue his "activity". (7F22).

Means of Control

The participants mentioned different means of the control of the trafficker over the victim, they referred physical and psychological abuse, other forms of control and ID retention. They mentioned that the trafficker uses threats, to the victim or their family, and control their movements and documents in order to force the victim to submit to the exploitation, leaving no ways for the victim to seek help. In this way, the victims become dependent and can't escape, with fear of retaliation to them or their loved ones. *"The victim has no control of her documents, or freedom of movement. She was recruited to do some kind, of work, being forced to do so. It may be being forced to sexual practices and she cannot contact the family or other people. If she wants to escape is threatened her and her family. It may have been beaten, deprived of food, water and other basic needs."* (192F22)

Modus Operandi

The participants reported THB as an organized crime, with different roles, depending on the stage of the crime, such as recruitment, exploitation or even transportation. This coincides with the idea of "*structured organizations"* (137M20), since there are several people and several phases to take into consideration. Nevertheless, two participants revealed that the trafficker may also take individual initiatives to recruit the victim, as we can see the statement of the participant 105M27; "*I'm not sure, but probably businesspeople, legal or not, who require large labour or people."*.

Type of exploitation

The participants mentioned various forms of exploitation (labour or slavery, sexual, and organ exploitation): *"The trafficker exploits the victim, forces them into forced labour, sexual exploitation and organ trafficking."* (100F22). Some of them also specified that sometimes the exploitation can differ

depending on the sex of the victim, *"*[...] *victims of sexual exploitation, in the case of female victims and, in the case of male victims, of labour exploitation."* (93F23).

Relationship trafficker-victim

There were 13 participants (6.5%) that reported that maybe the trafficker was known to the victim, and some of them, even specified that they could be family or friends, *"*[the offender] *often personally knows the victim through family relationships, friends or reside in the same location of the victim."* (114M47). But that relationship, most of times was only initiated by the trafficker with the single purpose of recruiting, as we can see by what the participant 47F25 said *"*[the trafficker is a] *person who tries to approach the victim using a conquest game to pass (lover boy) to the victim confidence and thus achieve what he wants."* There was 1 participant that mentioned that the trafficker was someone unknown to the victim.

Trafficking flows

Few participants (4.52%) regarded THB as an international crime. This subtheme is related with the sub-theme nationality of the victim, because they clearly state that the victim is foreign, so it involves the crossing of borders. *"Usually these people try to change from country in order to get some extra cash [...] Often being identified up and having to return to their home country.*" (161M21). Nonetheless, two participants reported that the trafficking situation can also happen domestically without the crossing of international borders, *"*[...] *a person looking for job opportunities they would not find in their country of residence (or in their place of residence, for those who are trafficked within their own country)."* (9M21).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyse Portuguese university students' portrayals of human trafficking victims and traffickers.

The student's portrayal of the victims traces a foreign young woman, naïve, with lower levels of education; living in poverty or seeking a job (looking for some opportunities that never come) desperate to supress the needs of her and her family, that accept any job offer that is presented to her, without questioning. In sum, they perceive that the TSH victims as the ideal victim (Korkodeilou, 2016), someone who is powerless and sympathetic, shifting the blame for the situation on the ingenuity of the victim. This result shows that the participants perception of the victim is of one who is weak, overpowered by an external cause and even at some level of fault or blame (Wilson, 2009). However, despite the vulnerabilities that the victim may experience, only the vulnerability *per si* does not constitute a mean of THB (Walklate, 2011). There has to be a situation where that pre-existent vulnerability is been abused to the extent that the victim's consent is negated (Pérez, 2016). It is for that reason that not all those with vulnerabilities are exploited and sometimes there are people who are exploited who do not belong to so-called 'vulnerable groups.

Inversely, they hold a portrayal of the traffickers as an adult male, older than the victim, vicious and without regard to human rights or human life in order to achieve his monetary goals; he is cruel, manipulative and is or appears to be wealthy. The trafficker is also someone with a criminal history that involves him in a world of crime. In sum, someone who is in a powerful position above their victims', the ideal and typical trafficker. With this idea, we can understand that they see the trafficker as someone very different from ordinary people. If so, it would be easy to recognize the deviant behaviour, and identify potential victims, however we know that this is not always so and that is why the there is a lack on victim' identification.

By understanding how the participants depicted the victim and the trafficker, it is urgent to educate to the real and concrete understanding of vulnerability in THB and the relation of the vulnerability with the exploitation. Despite the existence of a link between those who can be harmed, and those who put themselves at risk, it is necessary to take into consideration the personal, situational or circumstantial situation of the alleged victim (UNODC, 2013, Walklate, 2011).

The participants are able make a connection between vulnerabilities (individual and/or structural) and the victimization for trafficking in persons. They state that the trafficker is someone who knows the victim's life condition and takes advantage of that to recruit and exploit them. They understand the naïveté of the victim and the socioeconomic status as the principal motives that make the victims accept job offers that are deceitful. They also state the desire of the victim to flee from difficult life conditions as a way of not noticing the dangers that lie under the proposal of the trafficker. Individual and structural vulnerabilities (as such innocence and low socioeconomic status of the victim) were reported by the participants as the most important factors that driven the victim to a trafficking situation. Clawson et al. (2009) also affirmed that the victims dream of being able to provide for their families, and in pursuing their dreams, they try to obtain a job that fulfils their wishes. Because of this, they are lured to the trafficking network with job offers.

However, we need to clarify that being vulnerable or exposed to adversity is not the same as to be a victim (Walklate, 2011). The participants understand the victim as someone who can be harmed because of his/her individual risks or vulnerabilities and this only captures one dimension of the experience of feeling vulnerable (Walklate, 2011). Some participants sustained that the victim is under a trafficking situation because of their own liabilities, since their lifestyle renders them prone to victimization, entailing the risk of victim-blaming. If we keep these ideas in consideration, the preventive measures needed to adapt require to be taken in a micro/individual system. The preventive, informative measures that are needed to address THB should be made in macro/structural level, because of the complexity of the phenomenon, in order to reach the community as a whole and to demystify the preconceived ideas that exist (David, 2010; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2015). Understanding the individual vulnerabilities as the main factor of THB relay the capability, on the victims themselves, to resolve their own personal vulnerabilities, despite the need to convey changes in a political and social macro-structure (Weitzer, 2014).

It is important to note that some participants reported that the victim consented to be taken to another country as a way of escaping war, or other kind

of mistreatment. According to Fong and Berger Cardoso (2010), the trafficker exploits those who are more vulnerable in various different levels: economic, psychological or even physical, and take advantage of their incapacity for their own profit. People may decide to emigrate for various reasons: the dream for a better life, better education and opportunities or simply because they live in a war zone (UNODC, 2016). They may also emigrate due to the liberalization of border controls in Europe, and the establishment of migration routes along with the refugee scenario that we currently live in. All the mentioned factors need to be addressed in order to better understand how they help in facilitating THB routes to avoid detention (Hernandez and Rudolph, 2015). This perception indicates that the students probably confuse THB with smuggling, which are two different crimes. Therefore, a better awareness of the distinctions between THB and smuggling of migrants can potentially improve the identification and protection of potential victims and prevent their re-exploitation.

The digital world has not yet been referred to as a place where the recruitment of potential victims may occur. Just one participant revealed that the social media and internet can be a form of recruitment. This was surprising to us, given the digital era that we live in and the fact that nowadays the internet is a facilitator of contacts between recruiter and their victims, by facilitating the development of national and /or international THB recruitment and exploitation networks, by suppressing the physical distance to encounter potential victims (UNODC, 2014). In an era that gives so much relevance to the new emerging technologies, it is necessary to look at them with a critical eye and understand the possible misuse that can be done. It is important also because of the use of social media sites, apps, and other platforms, and it is therefore necessary to educate with regards to the dangers that may lure, beneath all those benefits, because neither the dangers nor benefits were mentioned by the participants. University students often relay in the internet to submit CV's and contact agencies to find job opportunities and to connect with other people, and as we understand that the internet can act as a facilitator in order to foster new relationships, there is also the need to identify and address the dangers that we have in hands. College students must have the capacity to understand which

technological developments can contribute to fighting and preventing THB, and they also need to be able to understand that even within the realm of technology there is always a mean to stop and fight against this crime, while also ensuring that the potential victim is protected (Gerry, Muraszkiewicz, & Vavoula, 2016), even when the potential victims are themselves and they are unable to identify it.

Despite these results that support somehow a narrow depiction, there were participants who gave an undifferentiated victim and trafficker portrayal. The participants that gave an undifferentiated portrayal may not be able to recognize or identify victims or traffickers, when encountering them. Despite the narrow depiction of the participants (about the victim or the trafficker), they were able to identity correctly aspects of THB dynamics, which can be used to potentiate victim identification. This undifferentiated profile and narrow depiction can be overcome by educative campaigns on the subject in order to develop or improve the knowledge of the community.

Some of them reveal that they have no knowledge of THB and his causes. This is an urgent matter that need to be addressed quickly even more when we are talking about college students. Within the III National Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (2014-2017) enacted by the Portuguese government, this subject was supposed to be addressed in classes within the national curriculum, with the premise that once individuals recognize this problem, they are more likely to act on it. As Bishop et al., (2013) stated, educating individuals about the issue during their public education may target those who are not concerned about human trafficking, or even are unaware of the real problem. Doing so, we can take preventive measures by advising how to recognize and identify potential risky situations, but we need to be cautious on how to address these campaigns so that the narrow depiction of trafficking victims and offenders does not perpetuate a representation of the trafficking problem that end up obscuring the key causes of human trafficking, therefore failing to adequately apportion blame (O'Brien, 2016).

The participants portray the trafficker as someone who is manipulative, coldblooded and with no regards for human rights. They justify that saying that

the trafficker is aware of the victim life conditions, and that they lure the victims with promises that turn out to be false, with financial motives only. The same is referred by Fong and Berger Cardoso (2010), when they affirm that the trafficker exploit those who are more vulnerable, in different levels, economic, psychological or even physical, and take advantage of their incapacity for their own profit.

Despite the participants understanding on how the trafficker may be polite and appear well educated, few of them noticed that the trafficker can be a family member, a friend or even acquaintance to the victim which is an added difficulty when attempting to identify and prevent human trafficking situations. UNODC (2014) clearly states that for the most part, the recruiters and traffickers were family members, boyfriends and friends. If the public does not understand that those who are closest to them can be harmful, probably they are not even aware of the dangers that can come from those situations.

Additionally, and despite that participants reported the sex of the trafficker, it is important to address the fact that there were only five of them that realized that woman can be traffickers too. This is especially relevant, because the last research and statistics report clearly states that the number of women in the role of perpetrator in a human trafficking network is increasing (Eurostat, 2015; UNODC, 2016) and investigations show women can play prominent roles within the human trafficking ring, and in some cases, they don't even answer to any men (Siegel & Blank, 2014). While traffickers are overwhelmingly male, women comprise a relatively large share of convicted offenders, compared to most of other crimes. Being of the same sex of the victim can also enhance trust, and women are commonly involved in the trafficking of women and girls in particular (UNODC, 2016). It is important to raise awareness to this topic, to change the predominant stereotype that the trafficker is always a man and the victim is always a woman. This misconception goes accordingly to the feminist victimology's that maintain that gender – socially constructed expectations, attitudes and behaviours associate with females and males, organized dichotomously as femininity and masculinity – is a central organizing component of life (Wilson, 2009). We need to consider the gendered aspect of

THB, but we can't neglect the male victims of this crime and we also can't neglect the increasing number of woman detected as a trafficker, a exploiter or even a recruiter (Siegel & de Blank, 2010; UNODC, 2016). That is way we need inclusive preventive campaigns, where both sexes are included.

When we look at the forms of control that the traffickers use, a small number of participants were able to identify properly the use of force (verbal, physical, psychological violence) and other forms of control, like ID retention. The control that the trafficker has over the victim and the fear that they create were also recognized, but in a smaller number when compared to the above. The participants mention the impact of THB on the victim, but that impact is rather focused physical impact and fear, leaving aside a whole panoply of impact reported in the literature (Abas et al., 2013; Zimmerman, 2003). It should also be noted that although the participants may understand THB as an organized crime, often mention that the trafficker acts alone. This gives us an idea that participants are unable to understand the nuances of THB when it is perpetrated individually or in organized crime. This idea needs to be addressed because by noticing the reasons that prevent the help-seeking of the victim, we can be able to recognize situations that we would not recognize without training. It is, therefore, extremely important to create training courses, formation and education in order to understand the dynamics of the THB and to be able to identify and, above all, prevent this crime. Another way to inform the community on this aspect is by using de media (Television and radio), to challenge the misconceptions about THB.

Conclusion and practical implications

These findings are helpful, not only because of the lack of previous research in public perceptions within this population, but because university students were able to identify the dynamics of crime and victimization and also their actors (victims and trafficker), despite there is a limited knowledge. They are able to understand that there are vulnerabilities allied to THB victimization, yet they reduce the crime to this vulnerabilities and actors (victims and

traffickers, focusing on exploitation), leaving other dimensions out of their discourses about THB (impact, identification of the victim and her reintegration).

This work can potentially influence future campaigns towards prevention by addressing some misconceptions that drive from this study, specially the gap between the victim and the trafficker portrayal, where the victim is seen as someone young and naïve and the trafficker as someone older than the victim. As advise by the government and the external Portuguese evaluations (GRETA, 2013, 2016, 2017) for combating trafficking, we need to promote the inclusion of this topic in academic curricula and promote awareness, in general.

The low number of identified and assisted victims and the low conviction rates for traffickers (Matos et al., 2017) are issues that need to be addresses, and despite the specificities of THB in Portugal, this study has significant implications within the European context. We suggest that by increasing knowledge among the students on the recruitment dynamics, vulnerable groups and different forms of exploitation, among other topics, we are able to clarify stereotypes and enhance the capacity to identify potential victims earlier.

Although our study was exploratory, it clearly calls for more studies to examine the differences between different samples to examine the perceptions on this phenomenon on a broad spectrum. Additionally, the present study should be replicated in other European countries in order to obtain comparative indicators regarding knowledge across various populations and also address perceived perceptions about other thematic (e.g., victims needs and challenges on the identification and assistance of the victims). There is also a need to address new and improved preventive and informative campaigns to facilitate prevention, identification of the victims and disclosure of human trafficking victimization situations by the public and to demystify myths that persist after 11 years of the implementation of the law in Portugal.

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CHAPTER 2 - HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS IN PORTUGAL: PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

Abstract

Trafficking in persons is an experience involving potential damage and demands qualified support. This exploratory study aims to capture the perceptions of support providers in Portugal regarding the type of support that is provided, the victims' needs, their understanding of the "condition of special vulnerability," and the barriers to help-seeking and providing support. The data were collected through an online survey, resulting in a sample of 27 professionals aged 25-71 years of both sexes. The results show that, on average, these professionals attended approximately 14 victims in the year prior to the research. They provided support, from housing (meals and shelter) to legal needs, to victims of different ages, sex and various types of exploitation. The participants identified that the victims' main need is safety and recognized that the needs of human trafficking victims are different from the needs of victims of other crimes (e.g., victims of domestic violence), namely, trafficking victims have difficulties in establishing a trusting relationship. The "condition of special vulnerability" theme was more peripheral in the discourses and mainly addressed the individual and structural vulnerability. The difficulties that the service providers identified when providing support were the lack of economic resources, poor interinstitutional collaboration and lack of collaboration by the victims. Fear of the trafficker, retaliation against themselves or their family, and the feeling of shame or embarrassment were identified as barriers to victims' help-seeking. The implications for future research and practice are addressed.

Keywords: Human trafficking, victims, service providers, perceptions.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS IN PORTUGAL: PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

Introduction

Human trafficking is generally referred to as modern-day slavery and affects virtually every country in the world (Europol, 2016; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2016). Referring to human trafficking as modern-day slavery highlights survivors' experiences of violence, victimization and economic exploitation; shapes who is perceived as deserving of services, both legally and socially; and advocates the use of the term as a way of navigating existing systems to access legal protection, drawing public and political attention to the issue (Nichols, Gerassi & Snider, 2018).

The first internationally accepted definition of human trafficking was created when the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children (usually referred to as the Palermo Protocol) in the year 2000:

> *"...the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation."* (UN General Assembly, 2000, p. 2).

The crime of human trafficking always involves the exploitation of a vulnerable individual, and according to article 2 of the Directive 2011/36/EU, *"a position of vulnerability means a situation in which the person concerned has no real or acceptable alternative but to submit to the abuse involved"* (p. 6). In the context of human trafficking, "*vulnerability*" is used to refer to those inherent, environmental or contextual factors that increase the susceptibility of an individual or a group to being trafficked; however, vulnerability to trafficking is not fixed, predetermined or even fully "known" (Couto, 2012, Europol 2016;

UNODC, 2015). A real and concrete understanding of vulnerability will therefore almost always require a situation-specific analysis, because there is a link between those who can be harmed and those who put themselves at risk (UNODC, 2015). Vulnerability is not physical; in this analysis, it is defined by who is at risk and who is harmed (Walklate, 2011). The vulnerabilities can be personal (e.g., may be related to a person's physical and/or mental disabilities), situational (e.g., may be related to a person's irregular presence in a foreign country where he or she is isolated socially or linguistically), and circumstantial (e.g., may be related to a person's unemployment or economic destitution) (UNODC, 2015).

Human trafficking has been widely considered one of the most severe forms of violence against any human being, implying a significant amount of physical, psychological and interpersonal injury to the victim (Couto, 2012; Volgin, Shakespeare-Finch, & Shochet, 2018; Zimmerman, 2003; Zimmerman & Kiss, 2017) that can lead to the potential for developing multiple physical, psychological and behavioral symptoms that severely affect the daily functioning and well-being of victims (Adams, 2011; Borschmann et al., 2017; Hughes, 2003; Oram et al., 2012; Roe-Sepowitz, Hickle, Dahlstedt, & Gallagher, 2014; Turner-Moss, Zimmerman, Howard, & Oram, 2014; Verhoeven, van Gestel, de Jong, & Kleemans, 2013; Zimmerman & Kiss, 2017)..

Upon identification, the victims often present a number of complex needs and require extensive services and treatment representing a continuum of care (short-term to long-term assistance) (Davy, 2015; Hossain, Zimmerman, Abas, Light, & Watts, 2010; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013). Providers have conceptualized this continuum of care as having three phases: assessment and intervention, comprehensive assessment and case management, and social reintegration (Couto, 2012; Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Hodge, 2014). The objective is to help the victim progress along the continuum that begins at the inception of the crisis and moves toward a position of safety while passing through the phase of assessment and intervention that addresses the emerging needs. This results in a positive shift toward stability, finally achieving

integration into the victims' environment and beginning to thrive (Clawson, Dutch, Salomon, & Grace, 2009; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013).

Considering that victimization by trafficking usually involves the subjugation of victims in situations of high precariousness in terms of the most basic living conditions and physical and psychological aggression, intervention will necessarily have to cover different dimensions and materialize in several measures such as housing (hosting in specific structures and ensuring protection), subsistence (access to basic living conditions, e.g., food, hygiene, clothing), health (medical care, e.g., evaluation and treatment of physical and psychiatric health problems), psychological support (e.g., evaluation and intervention in terms of emotional recovery and cognitive, behavioral and interpersonal functioning), legal support (counseling in the process of regularizing the migratory situation and/or in the context of a criminal process, the defense of his or her rights as a victim, e.g., a request for granting a reflection period, a special residence permit or the protection of witnesses), social support (economic support and/or access to other essential goods; support for educational (re)integration, training and/or labor and housing demands), cultural support (access to translation services and practicing of religious services), and even assisted return (access to assisted return programs, with support for the (re)integration process in the community of origin or in another community in which the victim intends to integrate) (Couto, 2012; Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Clawson, Small, Go, & Myles, 2003; Dean, 2013; Denton, 2010; Hemmings et al., 2016; Oram et al., 2012; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013; Stanley et al., 2016; UNODC, 2016; Westwood et al., 2016; Zimmerman, Hossain, & Watts, 2011).

Given the complexity of human trafficking, intervention must be multilevel and multidimensional and based on proactive action—the identification and protection of victims and their assistance in preventing and repressing this crime. Thus, the contacts made with the victim should be considered opportunities to improve his or her well-being and should prioritize safety, be focused on his or her rights as a human being and be efficient in terms of referral, transfer and care, which implies the existence of a well-articulated network of

services and professionals (Hemmings et al., 2016). The victim assumes a central place in the intervention and must be respected in terms of values and decisions. This means that the victim should be informed about all possible alternatives and procedures to be adopted, which will have to be negotiated in advance and can never result from decisions made in the absence of the victim (Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Clawson, et al., 2003; Dell et al., 2017; Hornor, 2015; Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013).

Meeting the most basic needs, as stated above, is essential and can contribute to the development of a trusting relationship (Hopper, 2017). Setting goals (whether short and/or long-term) is the starting point of a positive future orientation, providing emotional restraint when assessing topics that are more intense (such as the trauma narrative and posttraumatic reaction to the trafficking experience) (Hopper, 2017). Using an empowerment approach, the victims' goals are often translated into recommendations for service providers or even the criminal justice system, amplifying their voices, highlighting their main concerns, and helping them advocate for themselves (Hopper, 2017; Hughes, 2003; Matos, Gonçalves & Maia, 2017).

After the safety and basic needs are met, the attention may turn toward the trafficking situation (including history and vulnerabilities). Addressing such histories may not be viewed as crucial to a successful treatment in many mental-health settings (Butler, Critelli, & Rinfrette, 2011; Wilson & Butler, 2014). This lack of awareness can result in a failure to fully understand the current issues and their context, to treat or make appropriate (trauma-specific) referrals, and can also lead to retraumatization with standard clinical procedures or the unintentional triggering of painful events (Butler et al., 2011; Hopper, 2017). Emphasizing personhood instead of victim status is the groundwork for the development of a life narrative that can shift from self-blame (beyond the perception of the self as a victim/survivor) to a view of the self as a person (someone more than just the sum of difficult life experiences) (Hopper, 2017; Kiss et al., 2015; Nguyen, Coverdale, & Gordon, 2017; Salami, Gordon, Coverdale, & NGuyen, 2018). By highlighting strengths and resilience, along with exploring coping strategies of personal strength that have been used in the past,

we empower the victim (Bonanno, 2004; Hopper, 2017). By doing so, the service provider can help the victim organize the resources for coping with the challenges ahead (Bonanno, 2004; Butler et al., 2011; Hopper, 2017; Salami et al., 2018).

Intervention with victims of trafficking is likely to be developed following approaches already tested and adopted in interventions with victims of other violent crimes (such as domestic violence, rape, abduction or torture), since by their very nature, they are also sensitive cases of trauma-centered approaches (Abas et al., 2013; Couto, 2012; Couto & Fernandes 2014; Ghafoori & Taylor, 2017; Hemmings et al., 2016). Dell et al. (2017) performed a systematic review with the purpose of taking inventory of the state of evidence and assessing the effects of exit and post-exit interventions on survivors of human trafficking. They found that there is a high variation in the types and purposes of those interventions that involve therapeutic, mentoring, skill-building, and other comprehensive programs designed to treat, rehabilitate, and/or reintegrate the survivor back into their family and community. Hemmings et al. (2016) also performed a systematic review to combine information on identifying and responding to human trafficking in health care settings and highlighted the lack of empirical evidence to support the identification, referral, and care of victims. However, they found a consensus regarding important aspects of care, for example, the benefits of comprehensive, tailored, and continual support for survivors of trafficking from the point of identification through to long-term recovery and the emphasis on trauma-informed and culturally appropriate care. To ensure more effective interventions, it is necessary to invest in the development of trauma-informed approaches alongside cultural competencies to be able to perform culturally appropriate interventions when serving multicultural populations (Gonçalves & Matos, 2016).Cultural competence, as defined by Cross, Bazron, Dennis, Isaacs, & Benjamin, (1989), is *"a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. The word "culture" is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behaviour that*

includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group. The word competence is used because it implies having the capacity to function effectively. A culturally competent system of care acknowledges and incorporates—at all levels—the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs." (p. 28). This idea should be closely linked to trauma-informed care, which is essential for managing foreign victims of human trafficking (Butler, et al., 2011; Hopper, 2017; Macias-Konstantopoulos, 2016; Macias Konstantopoulos et al., 2013). It is important that all service providers understand trauma and how trauma affects victims' responses to services and even criminal processes, and the individual task-force members' responses to victims (Ghafoori & Taylor, 2017; Hom & Woods, 2013; Nguyen, et al., 2017; Pascual-Leone, Kim, & Morrison, 2017; Salami, et al., 2018).

Education and training in basic information about trauma is necessary for all the service providers (medical, mental-health, and social workers; the legal and judicial systems); all staff of an organization or the people that have contact with the victim must understand how violence impacts the lives of the people being served, so that every interaction is consistent with the recovery process and reduces the possibility of retraumatization (Butler et al., 2011; Wilson & Butler, 2014). Trauma-informed care begins with understanding the physical, social and emotional impact of the trauma on the victim, along with the service providers (Dell et al., 2017; Freemire, 2017; Muraya & Fry, 2015; Salami et al., 2018). The care incorporates three main elements: first, realizing the prevalence of the trauma; second, recognizing how trauma affects the victim involved in the program or organization/system, including the program's own workforce; third, responding by putting this knowledge into practice (Butler et al., 2011).

The situation in Portugal

In Portugal, the changes regarding this subject started in 2007, when the crime was covered by Article 160 of the Portuguese Penal Code, which is part of

the chapter on Crimes Against Personal Freedom, given by Law no. 59/2007 of September 4. Presently, the criminal definition of human trafficking is *"Whoever offers, delivers, entices, accepts, transports, lodges or shelters any person for the purpose of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, forced begging, slavery, removal of organs or the exploitation of other criminal activities; by violence, abduction or serious threat; by fraudulent ruse or manipulation; with abuse of authority resulting from a relationship of hierarchical, economic, work or family dependence; by taking advantage of the psychic incapacity or situation of special vulnerability of the victim; or through obtaining consent from the person who has control over the victim."*

When we look at data from Portugal, the Annual Internal Security Report (RASI, 2016) indicates that the number of victims of human trafficking confirmed in Portugal increased fourfold from 2015 to 2016, from 32 to 118. The detected victims (victims suspected of having been trafficked) rose from 193 to 261 in 2015. Regardless of nationality, approximately 58 % of trafficking is due to labor exploitation (Observatory of Human Trafficking [OTSH], 2015), which is why Portuguese nationals enter these networks and are potentially exploited, mainly abroad. There is also internal mobility of the victims, according to the seasonality of agricultural products (OTSH, 2015). In 2016, 263 presumed victims of trafficking were identified in Portugal. These data indicate that there was an increase of approximately 36,8% relative to 2015. Most victims are subjected to forced labor, with 101 victims confirmed (93%) as being exploited in restaurants, the agriculture, and domestic service.

In 2017, Portugal remains a destination country (with 64 presumed victims identified for labor exploitation), a country of transit (with 32 presumed victims) and a country of origin (12 Portuguese nationals exploited in Portugal and 25 Portuguese nationals exploited in another country) (OTSH, 2018). Poor and uneducated Portuguese citizens, in the country's rural interior, are especially vulnerable to forced labor networks in Spain, which may extend into Northern and Eastern Europe (OTSH, 2017). Organized criminal networks operate trafficking rings in the country; some of them recruit victims in other countries to exploit in Portugal, while others recruit domestically to exploit

victims both in Portugal and abroad (mostly Spain) (OTSH, 2017). Although most identified forced labor victims, in 2016, were men (141 victims), authorities noted an increase in the number of females forced-labor victims in 2015. Authorities report that the traffickers bring women and children, many from African countries, to Portugal to claim asylum before bringing the victims to other European countries to be exploited in trafficking (OTSH, 2017).

Although the Portuguese government funded four NGO-operated shelters and multidisciplinary teams to assist the victims of trafficking (men, women and children), little is known about the services provided to the victims in Portugal. In fact, there are no studies in the national context on this subject. However, Portugal must provide adequate support and services that are adapted to the needs of victims and provide further training and guidance to the police, NGOs, social workers and the community in the identification of possible victims for different forms of exploitation (Group of the experts on action against Trafficking in Human beings [GRETA], 2017). This exploratory study intends to explore the extent to which the needs of the victims of human trafficking are being addressed through the perceptions of service providers.

Specifically, this study aims to expand our current knowledge and understanding of those services, namely, what services are being provided to victims of human trafficking. Do the professionals foresee barriers to help-seeking? What are the main needs of the victims, in the eyes of the service providers? Are the needs of those victims similar to or different from other types of victims? What are the challenges/barriers to providing services? How do the service providers understand the definition of "condition of special vulnerability" of the victims?

Methodology

Participants

The sample consisted of 27 participants, 17 females and 10 males, aged 25-71 years (M = 39.93, SD = 10.85) The participants' level of education was graduate (n = 16), master's degree (n = 7) and secondary education (n = 4). The participants were from social sciences (n = 12), psychology (n = 7), law (n = 2),

nursing (*n* = 1) and other areas (n = 5) that encompassed technical studies and police sciences.

Confidentiality

The biographical data requested did not identify the participant (e.g., sex, age, country). A code was assigned corresponding to the same participant in the various phases of the data analysis (P, for participant and a numerical number [P1· means participant 1]).

Measures

The technique used for data collection was the electronic survey. The reason for this choice was that it made it possible to contact all 23 support agencies that support victims of trafficking in persons, which are geographically decentralized across the entire country, and their respective service providers. It also guarantees the anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected as well as their restricted use for scientific research.

The instrument was built specifically for this study based on a literature review of the subject. The questionnaire was divided into five sections as follows:

i) Characterization of the participant (along with demographic data, we asked how the participant acquired knowledge about the theme and the participant selected his or her answer from at least three options [e.g., scientific paper, seminar, working directly with the victim]);

ii) Characterization of the victim assisted (type of victim [adult—men or women —or children], type of exploitation];

iii) Services provided by the institution [with three possible answers [not provided, provided in the institution and provided in collaboration with other institutions]) and 22 questions with a *Likert*-type scale (with five levels from strongly disagree to agree completely) alluding to the work performed at the institution;

iv) Perception of the victims' barriers in the help-seeking process (17 questions with the answer choices of Yes, No or Don't Know); and

v) Three open-ended questions on the dilemmas of intervention with victims of trafficking in persons, on the differences between victims of trafficking in persons and victims of other crimes (e.g., domestic violence, child prosecution and protection), and on the definition of 'special vulnerability' of the victim. In the last part of the survey, we also asked the participants to rank, according to their work experience, the needs of the victims of human trafficking from a list of 13 prearranged needs. The participants needed to rank the needs from 1 to 13, in which the first need was the primary need of the victim. We then analyzed the data and ranked the lists by the primary needs of the victims identified by the participants.

Procedures

This study was approved by the Ethics Subcommittee for Social and Human Sciences under the code SECSH 038/2016. The Subcommittee's task is to ensure and oversee the promotion of ethical patterns and ensure the integrity, dignity, honesty and ethical quality in experimentation and research activities in the field of social and human sciences conducted in the research units.

For the purposes of this study, a total of 23 agencies, including governmental (border patrol, judiciary police) and nongovernmental (social institutions) organizations, that are dispersed throughout the mainland Portugal that are part of the Network for Support and Protection of Victims of Trafficking (RAVTP) were contacted electronically via e-mail. The data collection took place between December 2016 and May 2017 and counted on the collaboration of the national rapporteur (representative of the state for issues on trafficking in persons) on human trafficking in Portugal to access the institutions (mainly because the three shelters contacted were safe houses and their addresses were confidential) and to disseminate the study in the network.

The inclusion criteria were as follows: at least 18 years old, with no maximum age limit, and being a service provider working in the network who attended at least one (presumed) victim of trafficking in persons regardless of sex (male or female) or the type of exploitation (sexual, labor, extraction of

organs, illegal adoption, begging, slavery and/or exploitation for other criminal activities).

There was no room for any financial/monetary compensation for the participants. Participants were informed at the beginning of the study (before giving their consent) that their participation did not entail any cost to them and that they were free to leave at any moment.

Data Analysis

The information collected for the study was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Descriptive statistical analyses were run on the data obtained from the first part of the survey (from part I to part IV) using IBM SPSS 22 software. It was considered that a qualitative methodology would be the most appropriate for the treatment of the open questions by means of a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) using the QSR International NVivo 10 software. The answers were analyzed based on the emerging themes, using an inclusive criterion, as each theme could be included in more than one category. An initial coding grid was used to guide the initial codings. The final coding grid included core categories, subdivided by secondary and more ideographic categories. Themes emerged from the data, and interpretative work was necessary. To ensure the validity and credibility of the results, different strategies were adopted, including a constant comparative analysis of the data and a dense description of the meanings found in the data, which are further identified in the results section by a detailed presentation and illustration of each category with excerpts of the participants' speech. Additionally, an independent coder (the second author) analyzed 40% of the answers, randomly assigned, to ensure data reliability. After an independent review by a co-coder, the fidelity rate was calculated using Vala's (1986) formula: F = 2(C1, 2)/C1 + C2. The number of agreements between the codifiers was divided by the total categorizations performed by each: 2(81)/82 + 87 = 0.96.

The result was a fidelity rate of 0.96, which represents an excellent level of agreement (Martins & Machado 2006), allowing confidence in the results

obtained. Coding discrepancies were discussed and resolved by the coders by consensus. A senior researcher (third author) audited the coding process.

As the objective of this work was to capture the perception of the service providers regarding the support provided to victims of human trafficking; 5 of the participants who did not have direct contact with the victims were excluded from further analysis in the second part related to the characterization of the assisted victims. To ensure the reliability of the results, we only analyzed the data of the participants who completed each section of the survey. Therefore, we have 21 participants who answered through section number three, 19 participants who answered through section four, and 14 participants who completed the survey through section five.

Results

The participants worked as services providers for an average of 7.30 years (*SD* = 8.17). They provided specific support to human trafficking victims for an average of 5.42 years (*SD* = 6.54).

How did the Service Providers Acquire Knowledge on Human Trafficking?

Almost half of the participants (*n* = 13) reported that they acquired knowledge about human trafficking exclusively through formal contacts. This included contact with the topic through reports, courses, academic conferences, direct work with victims and professional practice. Few participants (*n* = 2) reported an exclusive acquisition of knowledge on the subject in an informal and self-directed way (e.g., through personal knowledge, interaction with coworkers and the reading of scientific papers). Twelve participants reported having had contact with the theme in a mixed way, that is, through formal and informal contacts.

Characterization of the Assisted Victims

The participants reported assisting an average of 32.77 victims (*DP* = 34.01) over the years. Of these, on average, 13.36 (*SD* = 8.18) victims were supported in the year prior to this study. The participants reported having

provided support to different types of victims; eleven service providers worked only with adult male victims, three worked only with adult female victims and eight service providers worked with both male, female and minor victims.

Most service providers (*n* = 17) supported victims of more than one form of exploitation, and only five professionals worked only with one of the forms of exploitation. The forms of exploitation suffered, as mentioned by the professionals, were sexual exploitation (*n* = 13), labor exploitation (*n* = 19), forced begging (*n* = 10) and slavery (*n* = 8).

The service providers (*n* = 22) mentioned that the victims came from the European continent (Portugal, Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine), Africa (Angola, Cape Verde, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, and Senegal), India, Bangladesh and South America (Brazil).

Table 2. Type of Services provided by the institutions

Services provided	Total (*n = 21*)
Meals	18
Legal Support	18
Reintegration in the Community	18
Professional Reintegration	18
Essentials	17
Physical health (nurse, doctor)	17
Mental health (psychologist / psychiatrist)	17
Educational support	17
Accommodation	16
Translator	16
Assisted return	15
Nursery	8

Professional Perceptions of Services Provided

The duration of the institutional support provided to the victims varied between 0 and 16 months, with an average time duration of support of 5.76 months (*SD* = 5.52).

The type of services provided by the institutions is explained in Table 2. We can also see in Table 3, that the perceptions of the services provided by the institutions are positive overall. Regarding the type of service, the existence and usefulness of the intervention protocols, the involvement of the victim in his or her assistance process and the clarification of the process, and the interdisciplinarity with other organizations (courts and employment centers).

Barriers to Help-Seeking

Nineteen participants acknowledged a fear of retaliation against the victim or his/her family and a fear of the trafficker as the main reasons for why the victims often cannot seek help. The barriers least identified by the participants were a lack of social support and trust in the support system. Figure 1 shows the perceived barriers to victims' help-seeking.

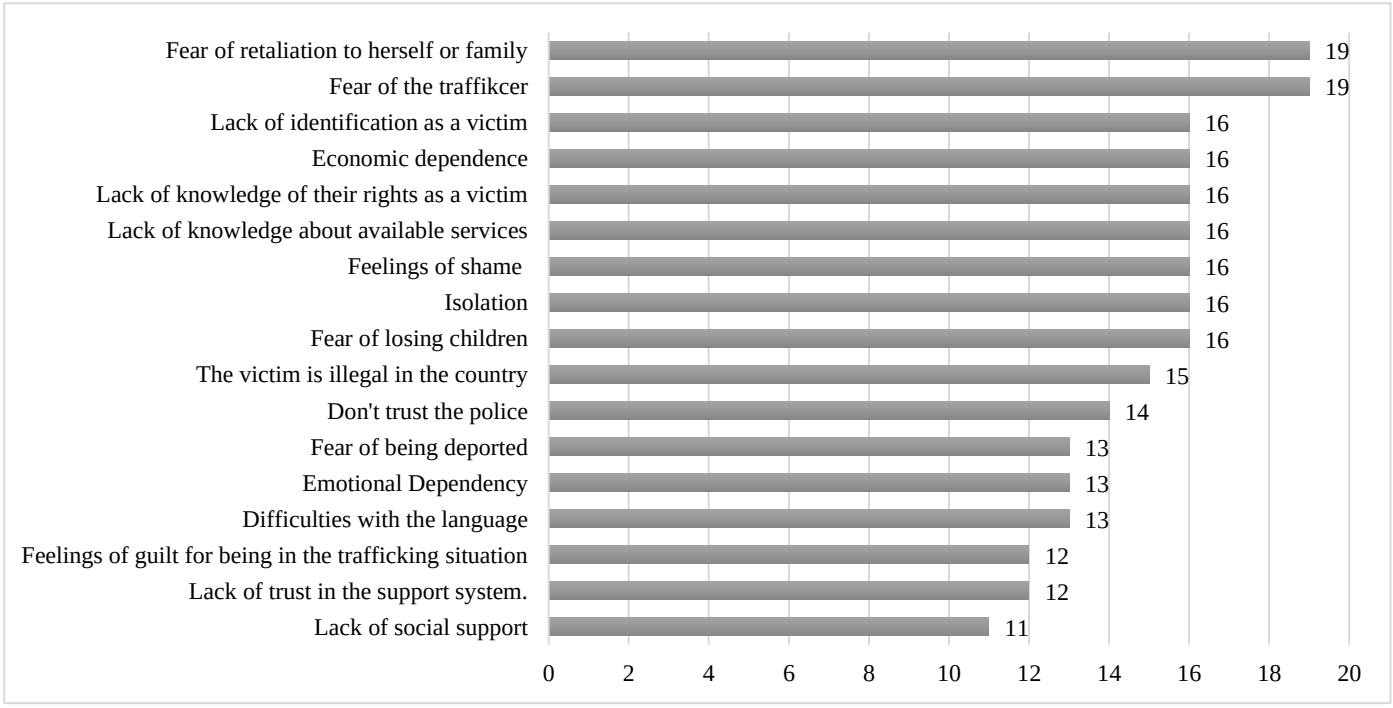

Figure 4. Barriers to help seeking of the victim (n =19)

Table 3. Perceptions about the service provided

Perceptions about the service provided	Disagree/Completely Disagree (*n*=17)	Neither agree or disagree (*n*=17)	Agree/Completely Agree (*n*=17)
The institution where I work can meet the needs of (presumed) victims.	2	-	15
The institution where I work has specific intervention protocols for (presumed) victims of human trafficking.	1	2	14
Specific intervention protocols for (presumed) victims of human trafficking are useful.	-	1	16
The problems of (presumed) victims of human trafficking are different from the problems of victims of other crimes.	-	3	14
The needs of (presumed) victims of human trafficking are different from the needs	-	2	15

Perceptions about the service provided	Disagree/Completely Disagree (*n*=17)	Neither agree or disagree (*n*=17)	Agree/Completely Agree (*n*=17)
of victims of other crimes.			
Human trafficking victim support services are responsive to their needs.	1	1	15
Human trafficking victim support services are tailored to their needs.	2	·	15
In the institution where I work the (presumed) victim is involved in its own support process (e.g. the support and the various phases of the process is explained to the victim).	·	1	16
In the institution where I work the (presumed) victim participates in decision-making (e.g. the victim is given the opportunity to choose and decide on certain	2	1	14

Perceptions about the service provided	Disagree/Completely Disagree (*n*=17)	Neither agree or disagree (*n*=17)	Agree/Completely Agree (*n*=17)
aspects of the support process, such as the choice of training area or professional reintegration).			
In the institution where I work there is coordination with governmental institutions (e.g. Border Patrol, Employment Center).	-	-	17
In the institution where I work there is coordination with judicial forces.	2	-	15
In the institution where I work there are internal rules/procedures on the intervention with victims of Trafficking in Persons.	2	1	14
In the institution where I work there is training on the human trafficking.	-	3	14

Perceptions about the service provided	Disagree/Completely Disagree (*n*=17)	Neither agree or disagree (*n*=17)	Agree/Completely Agree (*n*=17)
In the institution where I work there is multidisciplinary coordination.	3	1	13
In the institution where I work there is technical supervision.	2	4	11
In the institution where I work translators/interpreters have specialized training in attending to victims of Human trafficking.	5	6	4
The institution usually clarifies the (presumed) victim about their rights.	1	·	17
The institution provides the (presumed) victim with a period of reflection (up to 60 days).	1	5	11
The (presumed) victim is informed that the support/protection	1	2	14

Perceptions about the service provided	Disagree/Completely Disagree (*n*=17)	Neither agree or disagree (*n*=17)	Agree/Completely Agree (*n*=17)
process does not depend on the obligation to collaborate with the judicial processes.			
The (presumed) victim is informed that the support/protection process does not depend on the obligation to provide evidence.	-	2	15
The (presumed) victim is informed about the possibility of assisted return.	-	2-	15
The victim is informed of the possibility of compensation.	2	1	14

Victims' Needs

The participants listed first the feeling of security (economic independence, a place to stay); second, having access to physical health care; and third, the victims' need to know their rights as immigrants, as the primary needs that must be addressed first. The least recognized victims' needs were access to information/prevention campaigns, preceded by having educational support and access to education. The order of needs is explained in the pyramid (Figure 2) that graphically displays the list.

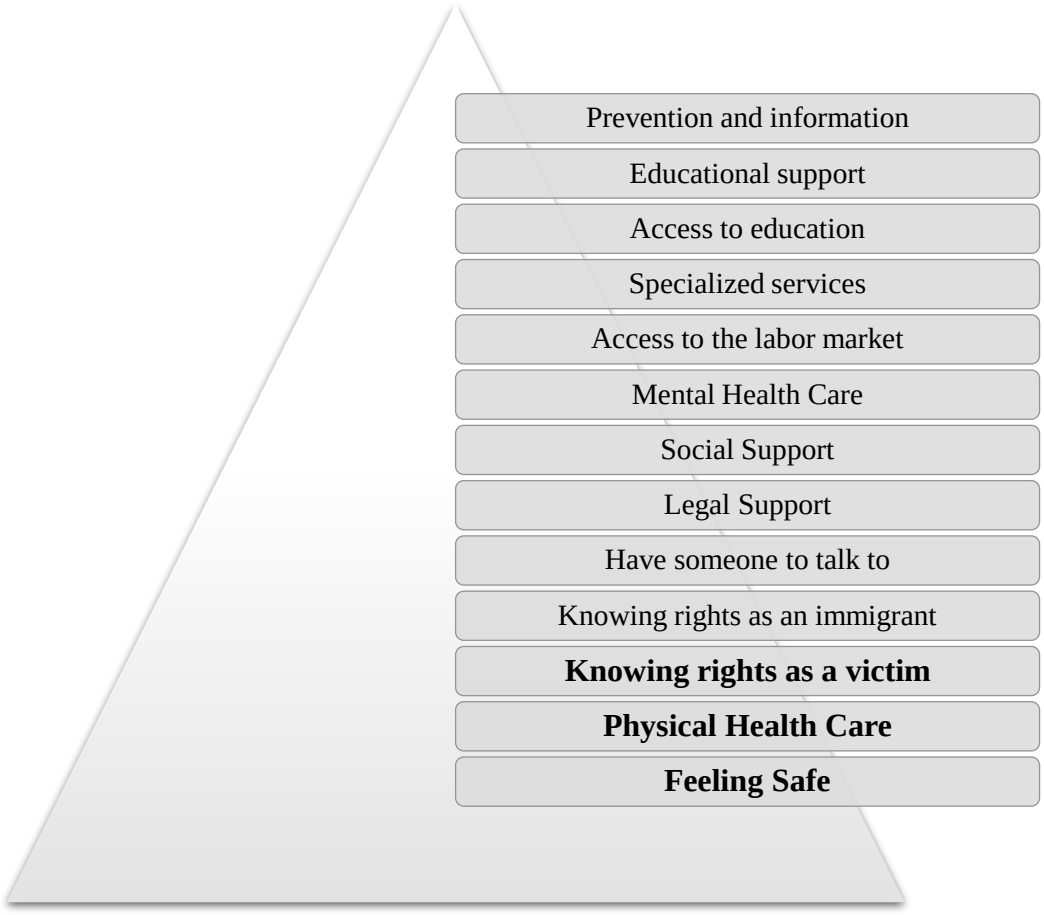

Figure 5. Pyramid of the perceived needs of trafficked people (n = 14)

When analyzing part (v) of the instrument, we relate the data to direct quotations from the answer transcripts, highlighting aspects of the themes that can be found throughout the text about the victims' needs, the similarities and differences in providing treatment, and the definition of the condition of special vulnerability of the victim. Each transcript was identified by the participant code. The themes were not mutually exclusive.

The theme that was mostly identified was the "barriers to providing support", followed by "similarities and differences in providing support to human trafficking victims versus victims of other crimes".

The "condition of special vulnerability" theme is more peripheral in the discourses and mainly addresses the individual and structural vulnerability of the victims. Table 4 displays these themes.

Table 4. Main Themes and Sub-themes of service providers perceptions.

Theme	Sub-theme	Participants[a]	References[b]	
Barriers to Provide Supporting			13	37
	Logistics		10	12
	Lack of information		6	8
	Lack of coordination		5	5
	Cultural aspects		3	5
	Lack of identification as a victim		2	2
	Individual characteristics of the victim		2	2
Similarities and Differences (trafficking victims/victims of other crimes)			13	28
	Trust		7	8
	Trans-nationality of crime		6	6
	Multilevel Impact		4	7
Condition of Special Vulnerability			12	17
	Individual Vulnerability		11	12
	Structural Vulnerability		3	3

a. Number of participants who mentioned the theme and sub-theme

b. Total number of references that integrated that theme and sub-theme

Barriers to Provide Support

When analyzing the barriers to providing services, we can assess that despite the ones related to differences in treatment, as participant 25 told us, the [*"Lack of economic resources"*] is the barrier that mostly prevents the institutions from providing the support needed through a lack of adequate funding. Some of the participants added that the lack of coordination between service providers and other entities crucial to the development of the support needed by the victims is a barrier that may be difficult for the whole process. Moreover, low cooperation from the victims is present and mixed in with these two difficulties [*"Lack of interinstitutional connections to allow rapid process execution. Closer associations with training and employment entities that allow a quick resolution of the life project."* (P26)] and [*"lack of cooperation of the victim"* (P6)].

Participants also identified a lack of /or poor logistic to the housing/shelter and accommodation of the victims. Despite the national network of support for male or female human trafficking victims, there was a concern about the safety of the victim and the service providers and the adequate response to housing the victims [*"The difficulty of giving answers to (possible) victims—about basic needs and others. The difficulty of safe accommodation*." (P6)]

Cultural aspects were also identified as barriers to providing support to human trafficking victims. Those differences may be on a linguistic level or an even deeper spiritual/social level [*"Language and cultural barriers and the bureaucracy of certain processes that delay their integration into society"* (P9)]. Language and cultural barriers, concerns about the safety of the victims, a lack of trust in the police and a lack of knowledge, whether of the general population or the service providers, were difficulties mentioned by the participants as having a great impact on the way that support is provided. The fact that the victim does not feel secure prevents him/her from collaborating with other institutions and organizations (whether they are support systems or judicial institutions), as we have mentioned above: [*"To transmit security and help overcome the fear that the victims feel during the whole process.*" (P12)] and [*"Lack of information on*

the part of the population in general, and of the service providers and criminal police bodies themselves." (P10)]. At the same time, the lack of knowledge of the victims regarding their rights and the lack of information by the population in general and even by the police can be a difficult barrier to overcome when working with victims of this crime.

Similarities and Differences (trafficking victims versus victims of other crimes)

According to the participants, trafficking victims' problems are somehow similar to the problems of domestic violence victims. However, the participants reported that there were some noticeable differences. One of the differences was that whereas domestic violence victims are running from only one perpetrator, trafficking victims may be running from a whole network of organized crime and may fear retaliation against their families. This results in more difficulties in providing safety, as participant 16 notes [*"Greater complexity in terms of protecting the victim and his/her family. The factor of transnationality and sometimes organized crime."]*.

Another difference concerned the impact on the trafficking victims, which may be more extreme than what happens with domestic violence victims, leading to a much more demanding and difficult process of support and reintegration: ["*Although all victims, regardless of type, have emotional and psychological wounds, in the case of victims of human trafficking these wounds are even deeper. That is why the work takes time; it takes the victim time to adapt to the new reality and to believe that we are a way of helping them start a new life."* (P26)].

Alongside this impact, participants noted that compared to Portuguese domestic violence victims, trafficking victims do not have citizenship and that was a factor noted by the participants, because it makes it harder to serve the needs of the victims: ["*The absence/partial existence of documentation delays the beginning of their life project, so reintegration into society is more complex and combined with posttraumatic stress makes the work of the teams difficult."* (P3)].

Another issue was that despite the support network for human trafficking victims, there are still some issues with the courts and the duration that the process takes. Because of the usual transnationality of this type of crime, sometimes the service providers lose track of the victim once he/she is reintegrated: ["*In the area of justice: delay in the face of legal obstacles and responses by the authorities in the countries of origin."*] and ["*The difficulty in locating them in later moments for procedural steps essential to produce the proof."* (P4)].

Another additional difference is the establishment of a trust relationship with the human trafficking victim. With regard to the healing process, the participants revealed that it is more difficult to establish a helpful relation with human trafficking victims than with domestic violence victims, and as such, the subsequent integration and healing may be hindered: ["*In our intervention, we assume that all cases are different, so all must be analyzed from an individual perspective and also be based on the needs of each situation. One of the great differences has to do with trust; in our experience it is more difficult to establish a relationship of trust with a victim of trafficking than in other situations."* (P1)].

The participants expressed that the higher safety concerns and vulnerability of the victims, along with the lack of information about their rights as victims and even the lack of knowledge of being a victim of human trafficking, were differences that change the focus of the intervention, as we can see from the response of participant 15: [*"These victims have specific characteristics that differentiate them in most situations from other victims of crime, are in a situation of greater vulnerability, rarely seek support and do not identify themselves as victims of crime. The focus of intervention is different from that for victims of domestic violence."*].

The Condition of Special Vulnerability

One of the three open-ended questions relate to the definition of the *"special vulnerability of the victim*". When it was mentioned, we can assess that the participants understand that the conditions of special vulnerabilities are personal/individual and/or structural, which enables the victim to experience

trafficking in persons. However, these vulnerabilities are not always nameable or measurable and may not be the same for all victims. They are described as a series of personal, contextual and situational particularities (physical, cognitive, social) that the victims may have, but they are not exclusive, and they diverge in their characteristics and origin: [*"Victims who, on account of their age, mental or physical illness, or lack of knowledge of the language, customs or place where they are, are liable to be more easily illegal without being able to exercise their basic right to defense"* (P3)] and [*"The very precarious socioeconomic and psychological conditions of the victims"* (P12)].

The service providers mention the victims' vulnerabilities as a cause of the victims' own victimization. They point out that the victim is in a situation where special protection is needed, under penalty of continued victimization and the possible existence of a secondary victimization. They argue that vulnerabilities will be different depending on the circumstances of the crime and list the specific care that should be considered, such as medical, mental-health and safety care (both for the victim and/or for their family members). We can see this through excerpts: [*"The condition of special vulnerability of the victim is that all victims who have special needs of protection, depending on their personal characteristics, the type or nature of the crime suffered and/or the circumstances that occurred, are particularly vulnerable to the continuation of victimization, secondary victimization, intimidation, etc., necessitating special care, especially in terms of care and protection."* (P7)].

Discussion

To our knowledge, this is the first study conducted in Portugal with professionals of human trafficking victims that assesses the service provided to the victims and that explores and explains this research gap.

When we asked how the participants acquired knowledge about human trafficking, we understood that they learned via direct exposure, while working with victims, and not through proper academic training, with few participants reporting educational courses. Considering the lack of intentional qualified training, the knowledge is experience-based instead of scientific and knowledge-

based. The data from this question are not congruent with the item about the perception of the service provided, in which the participants reported receiving education about human trafficking from the institution. Somehow, this training was not considered by the participants when they answered the question of how they acquired knowledge on the subject. This leads us to ask about the effectiveness and recognition of the training received at the institutions.

It is imperative that all the service providers understand trauma and how it may affect a victim's response to services (Clawson et al., 2003; Dell et al., 2017). The service providers should be developed with the goal of avoiding victim retraumatization, increasing the safety of all, and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of interactions with victims (Farrell, McDevitt, & Fahy, 2010; Farrell et al., 2012), and that can only be done with training and education (Ahn et al., 2013; Beck et al., 2015; Renzetti, Bush, Castellanos, & Hunt, 2015). When adequate training and education is achieved, the service providers may be able to intensify the efficiency and effectiveness of their interactions with the victims. Research shows that the training of service providers reveals major differences in the support provided and the number of victims served (Williams, Traylor, Detloff, & Williams, 2018). A lack of training and knowledge can also be a barrier to providing the services that the victims need, because it makes it more difficult to gain victims' trust (Hemmings et al., 2016; Pascual-Leone et al., 2017; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013).

Participants also mentioned assisting a variety of victims both from a demographic (adults and minors, men and women) and different type of exploitation (sexual and labor) perspective. Heterogenous and diverse targets along with a lack of specific knowledge and training may be a weakness in the provision of services. Clinical work with victims of trafficking human trafficking is a unique experience that has its own particular challenges, and each type of exploitation and each victim has its or his or her own subtleties that can bring about difficulties (Hemmings et al., 2016; Pascual-Leone et al., 2017; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013). These can range from issues presented by the client, the professional, the relationship between the two, or by outside influences (Clawson, et al., 2009).

Different factors can be barriers to the provision of services such as different cultures, types of exploitation and language barriers, among others. When these factors are not in the favor of the victim, they can bring isolation and may even reinforce the feeling of captivity that transpired when the victims were held captive. For that reason, the training of the professionals and the development of cultural competencies are crucial to providing adequate support and overcoming those difficulties (Clawson, et al. 2003; Pascual-Leone et al., 2017; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013). There is some consensus in the literature regarding the identification of the components of cultural understanding, namely, awareness/attitude, and knowledge and skills/competencies to work with culturally diverse populations, that are related to institutional resources capable of promoting and favoring culturally appropriate interventions. As such, cultural competence has implications for good professional practice in serving multicultural populations, and it is necessary to invest in the development of culturally appropriate interventions to ensure more effective interventions (Gonçalves e Matos, 2016).

Determining the needs of the victims is a crucial step for law enforcement and service providers (Pascual-Leone et al., 2017; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013; Williams et al., 2018). Given the complexity of the victimization by human trafficking, intervention must be multilevel and multidimensional, based on proactive action (identification of victims, their protection and assistance in preventing and repressing this crime) (Couto, 2012; Couto & Fernandes, 2014). The participants perceived the need of the victims to feel safe and secure as the primary one to be addressed. Thus, the contacts made with victims should be considered opportunities to improve their well-being and should prioritize safety, be focused on their rights as human beings and be efficient in terms of referral, transfer and care, which implies the existence of a well-articulated network of services and professionals (Dell et al., 2017; Le & Halkitis, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2017).

Meeting the basic needs of safety and establishing a trusting relationship with the victim takes a significant amount of time (Freemire, 2017). A comprehensive treatment also involves multiple aspects (outreach, screening,

and treatments, such as life training skills and crisis intervention programs) (Freemire, 2017; Hemmings et al., 2016; Westwood et al., 2016); programs that offer services for only a short period of time will be unsuccessful in providing adequate rehabilitation (Hemmings et al., 2016; Sandhu et al., 2013). With this in mind, we have doubts that the average time of support given is adequate for an individual and effective treatment plan. Victims of human trafficking have variable needs at different stages of their recovery process (Stanley et al., 2016; Zimmerman, 2003). In the immediate term, the victim often needs safety, clothing, housing and crisis intervention (Hemmings et al., 2016; Pascual-Leone et al., 2017; Zimmerman et al., 2006). After that first ground is covered, they may need physical and mental health treatment and some appropriate coordination between these (Hemmings et al., 2016; Pascual-Leone et al., 2017; Stanley et al., 2016). Very often, the victims need proper linguistic translators, legal assistance, professional reintegration and even logistical needs (transportation to treatment locations) that supplant the attendance of psychological needs (Hemmings et al., 2016; Pascual-Leone et al., 2017; Stanley et al., 2016). Regarding long-term assistance, victims may need help with job training, job replacement, education, family reunification, mental-health treatment and even repatriation (Clawson et al., 2009; Clawson et al., 2003; Pascual-Leone et al., 2017).

The services available to victims of human trafficking, according to the participants, range from emergency services (safety, housing, food/clothing, translations) to short/long-term services (legal assistance, medical care, mental health, education, financial assistance, job training, child care, reunification/repatriation), which agrees with the literature (Clawson et al., 2009; Clawson et al., 2003; Freemire, 2017; Hemmings et al., 2016). It should be noted that the provision of support does not imply that it must be provided at the institution. In fact, institutions can offer a wide range of support due to preestablished networks of collaborations, which enable them to cover the care that they are unable to provide, such as physical health (nurses, doctors, etc.), educational support, assisted return, reintegration into the community, professional reintegration and nursery services. For the participants, while the

needs of the victims did not vary based on sex or age, the level of need was reported to vary for some victims. The participants reported that victims of human trafficking present higher levels of trauma compared to other crime victims and have more difficulty trusting others. Several papers highlight the importance of following a trauma-informed approach when supporting human trafficking victims (Ghafoori & Taylor, 2017; Hemmings et al., 2016; Salami, et al., 2018). This approach includes a commitment to empowerment and victim safety and even recognizes the potential impact of multiple traumatic events across a person's life course (Hemmings et al., 2016; Salami et al., 2018). It emphasizes the necessity of avoiding retraumatization by ensuring that the victim is not pressured to discuss the details of their victimization before they are ready to do so (Hemmings et al., 2016); however, given the result that the average duration of support is 5.76 months, additional research on this topic is necessary.

As previously stated by the participants, traffickers use manipulation to ensure the dependency of the victim on the conditions of their servitude. This can distort how victims view and interact with service providers, thereby creating further difficulties in helping the victims work through their own experiences (Pascual-Leone et al., 2017). Consequently, the need for trust between the victim and the future service provider is undermined (Clawson et al., 2003; Pascual-Leone et al., 2017). Nevertheless, human trafficking victims and domestic violence victims are much more alike in terms of their victimization experiences than they are different. Roe-Sepowitz, et al., (2014) have demonstrated that domestic violence and sex-trafficking victims' service needs are very similar. Additional services addressing the factors that differentiate sex trafficking from domestic violence are also important to consider, requiring communication, collaboration, mutual respect and an understanding of the roles of each team member to assist the victim in a successful treatment. The emergency need (safety, having someone to talk to) was regarded as the most important one and needs to be addressed first, which agrees with research by Clawson et al. (2003), Reichert & Sylwestrak (2013) and Williams et al. (2018).

Given the complex needs of the victims and the spectrum of services required to address them, it is not surprising that the participants reported experiencing some challenges in assisting victims. A lack of knowledge and understanding regarding the crime among victims and even among service providers and law enforcement was one of the most common challenges. The fact that the victims often did not believe or understand that they were victims of a crime can be somewhat difficult to surpass when initiating the helping process. A lack of knowledge and understanding of what services were available was an additional barrier for service providers. Training programs for service providers and preventative and informative campaigns can help overcome these obstacles (Bishop, Morgan, & Erickson, 2013; Hounmenou, 2012; Renzetti et al., 2015)..

Another difficulty that was identified was the lack of collaboration between institutions. If on a service-provision level the collaboration somehow 'works' (due to preestablished networks), that partnership, e.g., collaboration with law enforcement or other institutions, is sometimes in itself a barrier that prevents the victim from getting quicker support. Service providers stated the importance of working together to meet the diverse and complex needs of human trafficking victims. According to Reichert and Sylwestrak (2013) and the Clawson et al. (2009), the collaboration between law enforcement and service providers has resulted in an amplified and improved availability of services for all victims. Thus, it is crucial to improve the collaboration of all the institutions that provide support to the victims (e.g., physical health services, social services, mental health service, courts).

The identification of a lack of interinstitutional collaboration as a barrier to the provision of support is not congruent with the responses given by the participants regarding their perceptions of the support provided. Although in the first stage (Likert items) participants mostly presented positive perceptions of good practices at an institutional level, in the open response question, they then ended up identifying barriers that do not seem to be congruent with the perceptions that have taken place. We can understand their positive perception as a result of existing social desirability that is then unmasked in the open

response stage, in which the participants could express their difficulties in particular and not in general.

There are also adequate perceptions regarding the possibility of compensation that can be given to the victims as well as regarding the informing of the victims of their rights, but no responses to the required compensation claims have yet been issued (OTSH, 2018). When questioned about the barriers that prevent victims from seeking help, the fear of retaliation against themselves or their families was the number one cause why the victims did not come forward and be identified. In most cases, the victims were encouraged to fear law enforcement, either as a result of corruption in their home countries or the traffickers telling the victims that if they are caught, the law enforcement will arrest and deport them (Clawson et al., 2009; Ioannou & Oostinga, 2015; UNODC, 2016). How can we surpass this barrier? The fear of the trafficker, the lack of self-identification as a victim and the lack of knowledge of rights are barriers that can be overcome with information campaigns and preventive and interventive measures in the countries of origin, transit and destination (Bishop et al., 2013; Couto et al., 2012; Robinson, 2011).

While much progress has been made since the creation of the four shelters and the network to support victims of human trafficking, there is an urgency to formally assess and evaluate those strategies, and it is vital and essential to document what works (and what does not) to provide more reliable and effective services.

Conclusion and Practical Implications

There were limitations in the realization of this study; more precisely, the difficult access to the institutions that are part of the network (even with the support of the national rapporteur on trafficking in persons regarding the authorization and dissemination) and the lack of participation in the study, which resulted in a small number of participants. There were institutions that remained closed within themselves and did not aim to contribute to this investigation. Because of the above, this also means that we cannot make an extrapolated

generalization of the data regarding the service provided to the victims of human trafficking in Portugal as a whole.

Trafficking in human beings is a criminal form of exploitation and abuse that can have a major impact (psychical, psychological, sexual, social, cultural) on its victim and the service providers must be the centers of response for survivors. Responding to victims' needs can be difficult and challenging, but it is essential that the professionals who work with this type of a victim adopt trauma-informed and culturally sensitive approaches, conduct comprehensive health assessments and belong to a reliable referral network (that may include law enforcement, police and other important organizations). New studies are urgently needed on the subject of interventions (type, duration, effectiveness) and on how training for the different professionals impacts the support provided. Using focus group studies with key stakeholders (social workers, lawyers, nurses, police officers, judges, victims), we can better understand the challenges of providing support, and we can also inform effective and efficient teamwork between collaborating agencies that serve trafficking victims, as suggested by Clawson et al. (2003). We can also establish a clearer referral pathway and contact and information-sharing protocols with other relevant agencies to suppress the difficulties that were identified as much as possible.

With these future studies, we can help identify similarities and differences in preexisting protocols, evaluate the effectiveness of training protocols and programs, and eventually develop skill-based training on how to work with trafficking victims. Working with human trafficking victims can be challenging on different levels and can also be a particularly complex task, especially due to the high potential for revictimization (Reid, 2010, 2013). In this study, we assessed the need for additional and continual training to offer guidance to service providers as they work with this distinct population, allowing the service providers to serve in a sensitive and responsive manner that addresses the population's specific needs.

One of the challenges identified was the lack of knowledge of the victims about their rights. Improving the victims' understanding of the criminal justice process can enhance their cooperation with law enforcement, which is essential

to suppressing this crime (Matos et al., 2017; Matos, Gonçalves, & Maia, 2019). These recommendations and suggestions for future research only aim to serve as a trigger for generating ideas and a discussion on how to serve human trafficking victims better and improve the existing network in Portugal, so we can be sure that the current and future needs of the victims are being addressed.

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CHAPTER 3 – EXPLORING HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCES IN PORTUGAL

Abstract

Trafficking in Human Beings victimization experiences lacks scientific research. This study aims to access to the experience of this victims', during recruitment, exploitation and identification. The data was collected through a semi-structured interview, resulting in a clinical-forensic sample of 9 adult victims (labour exploitation) of both sexes. Data analysis was done using thematic analysis and the theme Dynamics of Trafficking in Human Beings emerged, allowing to emphasize the dynamics concerning victims and traffickers (e.g. the deception used in the recruitment phase) and dynamics of exploitation (e.g. regarding working conditions and entrapment strategies). This study documented the hetero identification of the victims by members of the community. This should be considered, as it may be indicative that campaigns are having an effect by enhancing the victims' identification. The implications for future research and practice are addressed.

Keywords: Victim, human trafficking, exploitation, experience, dynamics.

EXPLORING HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCES IN PORTUGAL

Introduction

Although Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) has a multiplicity of contours that depend, to a large extent, of its purposes and of the actions and characteristics of its agents (Weitzer, 2015), it's possible to identify the presence of relatively common dynamics in the literature. Thus, numerous sources (Couto, 2012; Hughes, 2000; Ioannou & Oostinga, 2015; Musto, 2009; Santos, Gomes, Duarte & Baganha, 2008; UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014; UNODC, 2016; Zimmerman, Hossain, & Watts, 2011) conceptualize THB as a process which tends to involve various phases, such as recruitment, travel-transit, exploitation and re(integration).

The recruitment phase concerns the moment of contact with potential victims to persuade them and make them accept the proposals of the traffickers. Recruitment is a fundamental concept in the definition of THB and has been discussed in relation to individual and structural 'vulnerability' (Zimmerman, et al., 2011). In most cases these are based on deception, by using fraudulent promises of economically and socially appealing jobs (Couto, 2012; Perrin, 2010; Rosenblatt, 2014; UNODC, 2014; 2016) but may also consist of leisure proposals, marriage or sports opportunities in another country or region (Siegel & Blank, 2014). The proposal typically includes, in the light of the economic deprivation of the victims, the payment of all the expenses related to the trip and accommodation at the place of destination for an initial period, however the victim stays in debt with the promise of being paid as they receive the income from the promised activity (Couto, 2012; Weitzer, 2015; Santos, Gomes, Duarte & Baganha, 2008. Zimmerman et al., 2011) which never happens. However, there are situations in which the recruitment strategy is guided not by deception but by violence, like kidnapping, as well as others where families sell their children as a way of making some money (Hornor, 2015; Nagle, 2008). The literature reveals that the traffickers, whether men or women, are often persons known or close to the victim (e.g., family members, neighbors, friends, influential

people of the community) that can act in the different stages of the process and have an imminently financial motivation for the involvement in the crime (UNODC 2016; Zimmerman, et al., 2011). They also refer that the recruitment can be carried out by legal means such as employment agencies, travel or marriage, as well as through advertisements in the media, which reveals a more elaborate organizational structure (Couto, 2012; Couto, Machado, Martins, & Gonçalves, 2012; Rosenblatt, 2014; Siegel & de Blank, 2014; UNODC, 2014; 2016).

The second phase travel/transit concern the movement made by the victims and the traffickers, whether it's on or out of borders. The travel-transit stage begins after an individual agrees to or is forced to depart with a trafficker (whether he/she is aware of being trafficked or not). This stage may include one or multiple points of transit and ends when the individual arrives at the location of exploitation (Zimmerman, et al., 2011). Although not all THB situations involve a cross-border action, the planning of the trip, and the control of variables related to the entry on the country of persons in foreign countries (e.g., travel documentation) are aspects that are addressed and that take a lot more planning associating increased risk and costs to the operations (Arhin, 2016; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007). Therefore, in this stage the victim may be accompanied by a recruiter, other person of the network, or may even travel alone or jointly with other victims. Usually, when there is a cross-border, the victim travel with visas tourists, students or similar situations (Kangaspunta, 2015; UNODC, 2014); other times they are introduce illegally in other country through routes controlled by criminal associations, who use them for other illicit activities (Arhin, 2016; Hernandez & Rudolph, 2015). Transport can take place through various means, whether by land, air or water, there is often a combination of these means to avoid detentions (Kangaspunta, 2003; Zimmerman, et al., 2011). For those travelling illicitly, journeys can be arduous, even life-threatening, as trafficking agents aim to make maximum profit from each trip, willingly risking the lives of their "cargo" to avoid detection (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007). The travel-transit stage is also the time when many trafficked persons begin to suspect or even discover that they have been

deceived. Psychologically, the events that signal to the individual that he/she is in danger (such as confiscation of documents, confinement or threats of rape) may be considered the 'initial trauma' in what is likely to be a future chain of traumatizing events (Ioannou & Oostinga, 2015; Wilson & Butler, 2014; Zimmerman, et al., 2011).

The exploitation stage corresponds to the period in which the victims are subject to conditions of exploitation and control of their behaviors and movements. Commonly, it begins when they become aware of the situations in which they are involved, despite the involvement being voluntary or not. That is, despite a prior consent to, for example, work in the sex industry (often the case of THB for sexual exploitation - where women initially consent to sex work, but not under the conditions of slavery and total control of movements and liberty) (Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007; Jones, 2012; Zimmerman et al., 2011). These exploitations may include, for example, forced labour and debt bondage, sexual exploitation, slavery, with episodes of physical violence, psychological coercion or abuse, deprivation and confinement. These abuses may be accompanied by threats against individuals and their family members (Ioannou & Oostinga, 2015; UNODC, 2015). During this period, the victims are forced to work in an almost uninterrupted manner, in bad conditions (e.g., poor meals, sleep and rest) and without any of their incomes or with much lower than they produce, being the traffickers the safe keepers of the money. For victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation this phase usually involves practice of daily sex with many clients (Rafferty, 2013; Wilson & Butler, 2014), often without any possibility of denying their will or of protecting themselves against risky situations to their health (e.g., infectious diseases) or violence (Muftić & Finn, 2013). In this phase, the traffickers often employ a various number of control strategies that aim to maintain the exploitation and prevent the victim to seek help. These mechanisms pass, for example, by the retention of personal documentation (like the passport); by the use of physical, psychological and/or sexual violence or threats of violence to the victim or her family; deprivation or limitation of freedom of movement, a situation which end in isolation (Couto, 2012; Ioannou & Oostinga, 2015; Santos, Gomes, Duarte & Baganha, 2008; UNODC, 2104; 2016; Kleemans

& Smit, 2014), inducing the victims to a situation of economic dependence through a system of debt (responsibility for paying heavy travel, food and accommodation, as well as penalties for non-compliance with the traffickers' guidelines); by the threat to the authorities and/or their family; or for the abuse or assisted murder of other victims (Ioannou & Oostinga, 2015; Kangaspunta, 2003; Siegel & de Blank, 2014). At the same time, the high geographical mobility that these victims are often subject, the migratory irregularities in which they are often found, the lack of knowledge of their rights, lack of language skills, fear and feelings of guilt and shame that they often "carry" are factors that contribute to the maintenance of victims in this situation and to worsening the impact of crime (Arhin, 2016; Hernandez & Rudolph, 2015; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007, Zimmerman, 2003).

Challenges to victim identification and accessing services

In 2009, Logan, Walker and Hunter published the results of a meta-analysis on a set of empirical reports published in the United States on THB concluding that there are four main factors that support the maintenance of these victims in a situation of imprisonment and, consequently, of greater resistance to intervention: first, the fear of retaliation by traffickers and in relation to the police (e.g., extradition); second, the lack of knowledge of alternative problem -in particular with regard to their rights as human beings and victims of crime and the services to which they may be provided. Thirdly, isolation, fueled by the lack of social support, ignorance of the language and other cultural differences; and, finally, the physical and psychological imprisonment of the victims by restricting their movements and intimidation by traffickers. Feelings of fear and shame play a crucial role in this process, the main control strategy used by traffickers (e.g. victims are controlled through psychological means and less through physical violence, a more efficient strategy). Fear has enormous potential to constrain processes of reasoning and decision-making, making it impossible for victim to realize a possible escape (Logan et al., 2009). Other factors that constrain victims is their own lack of self-perception as such, for shame of being labeled as "victims," for fear of

stigmatization, and lack of knowledge about the support they can get from social institutions (Baldwin, Eisenman, Sayles, Ryan, & Chuang, 2011; Ijadi-Maghsoodi, Bath, Cook, Textor, & Barnert, 2018).

Impact of Trafficking in Human Beings

Many authors (Abas et al., 2013; Hossain, Zimmerman, Abas, Light, & Watts, 2010; Kiss et al., 2015; Stanley et al., 2016; Tsutsumi, Izutsu, Poudyal, Kato, & Marui, 2008; Zimmerman, 2003) emphasize that symptomatic reactions of THB victims, especially those who establish PTSD diagnostic, tend to be more serious than those studied in domestic violence, torture or armed conflict, nevertheless, with similar characteristics (Roe-Sepowitz, Hickle, Dahlstedt, & Gallagher, 2014): all constitute situations with the potential to threaten the survival of the victims, involve levels of chronic stress and a danger of permanent disability, as well as an inability of victims to predict or control events that may affect their health or safety (e.g., the time they sleep, the number of clients and conditions in which they perform the work). Some explanations for this situation state that food deprivation, sleep and rest, affect the capacity of the victims to think clearly and dramatically depress the immune system and natural mechanisms of body defense against pain (Le & Halkitis, 2018; Nguyen, Coverdale, & Gordon, 2017). The sensory deprivation to which victims are often subject (as a result of the excessive number of work hours; extremely high levels of physical and/or psychological violence exposed by traffickers; the use of narcotics, medication and/or alcohol [coercive or not]) (Doherty, Oram, Siriwardhana, & Abas, 2016; Goldberg, Moore, Houck, Kaplan, & Barron, 2017; Moore, Kaplan, & Barron, 2017; Rosenblatt, 2014) and, finally, the usual difficulty in accessing health services contributes to the worsening of this impact (Westwood et al., 2016). Whereas, often in situations of THB, the fight or flight instincts are repressed either because they are perceived as impossible or because, in practice, changing the exploitative situation may entail increased risks, victims may develop strategies (e.g. depersonalization, psychological alienation) to change psychologically the situation in order to make these circumstances less threatening, aversive or intolerable (Hopper,

2017; Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2018; Logan et al., 2009; Zimmerman, 2003). However, these same strategies may, ultimately, also have negative short, medium- or long-term effects on the physical and/or mental health of the victims.

According to Logan et al. (2009), the characteristic behavioral submission in victims of THB is invariably accompanied by cognitive changes, processes of distortion and distraction or alienation from reality. In the first case, the victims focus on their energy in the survival and/or surveillance of situations that may threaten and, in the second, fantasize or redirect their attention to distinct elements of the threat. Another mechanism is to rationalize the situation in order to make it more acceptable in terms of reducing their impact; victims will be able to minimize the damage caused by the situation, try to justify it (compare it with others who find themselves in situations even more accepting exploitation) or even nourishing the belief that such experience or sacrifice represents the promises made to their family, the contract they have established with the trafficker or that, simply, it is their destiny (Hopper, 2017; Okech, Hansen, Howard, Anarfi, & Burns, 2018; Rosenblatt, 2014). In situations where these processes are not feasible, victims may develop a psychological alienation, which is expressed in the loss of autonomy and in the feeling of withdrawal from the efforts to maintain their identity as a human being, leading to the view of themselves as mere objects, as if they were prepared to do everything that is required of them, without worrying about these life-threatening activities (Butler, Critelli, & Rinfrette, 2011; Jones, 2012; Rimal & Papadopoulos, 2016; Wilson & Butler, 2014; Zimmerman et al., 2011). However, this state is independent of the severity of exploitation and the objective degree of threat to the victim's life (Ehlers, Maercker, & Boos, 2000). Mental health necessarily implies a congruence between emotions, thoughts and behaviors, so when they are inconsistent, cognition attempts to reposition them to ensure some balance. However, the experience of THB naturally promotes this dissonance, which can greatly affect coping and decision-making skills, leading to higher and persistent psychological dysfunction. Thus, as advocated by Zimmerman (2003) and Okech et al., (2018) the victim produces a series of attempts to rebalance his/her

physiological and psychological condition that allows him/her to recover some sense of control over his life but, in the end, it also contributes to this same dysfunction and depersonalization. Once again, these reactions are applicable in situations of absolute closure or marked restriction of freedom of movements and since the survival of the victims is objectively dependent on their explorers.

Victims' identification and (re)integration

Considering that victimization by THB potentially involves the subjugation of victims to situations of high precariousness in terms of the most basic living conditions, physical and psychological aggression, intervention will necessarily have to cover different dimensions and materialize in several measures (Couto, 2012; Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Clawson, Small, Go, & Myles, 2003; Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013, UNODC, 2016), like housing (hosting in specific structures and ensuring protection); subsistence (e. g. food, hygiene, clothing); medical care (evaluation and treatment of physical and psychiatric health problems); psychological support (evaluation and intervention in terms of emotional recovery and cognitive, behavioral and interpersonal functioning); legal support (counseling in the process of regularizing the migratory situation and/or in the context of the criminal process, in the face of their rights as a victim [e.g., a special residence permit, protection of witnesses]); social support (economic, educational support, possible (re)integration); cultural support (access to translation services and practice of religious services) and assisted return (access to assisted return programs).

The (re)integration stage is an important step on integrating THB victims and can be best described using an adapted definition of "integration" originally proposed by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) (ECRE, 2002, cited in Couto, 2012): *'Integration [and reintegration] are 'long-term and multi-dimensional stages of either integrating into a host country [or reintegrating into a home country setting], which are not achieved until the individual becomes an active member of the economic, cultural, civil and political life of a country and perceives that he or she is oriented and is accepted'*. Since the removal from the situation of exploration (whether it was an escape, release by traffickers or a

rescue situation), the (re)integration of the victim is a phase that contemplates a set of actions aimed at its physical and mental health, as well as the defense of the rights of the victims to live into a new community or the return and reintegration into the community of origin. Is in this stage which official and civil society organizations operate, providing support in their referral and/or reception in protected structures, medical assistance, psychological, legal and, possibly, support in an educational level, training and/or labour integration, was well other services that may be needed (Clawson, Dutch, Salomon, & Grace, 2009; Clawson, et al., 2003; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013). Individuals trying to integrate into destination settings are likely to encounter barriers to care and stressors like those experienced by refugees and asylum-seekers. Research consistently indicates that refugees encounter high levels of social exclusion, discrimination and poor access to health services that negatively impact on health (Cary, Oram, Howard, Trevillion, & Byford, 2016; Hemmings et al., 2016; Ottisova, Hemmings, Howard, Zimmerman, & Oram, 2016; Ottisova et al., 2018; Sandhu et al., 2013).

Despite the (re)integration phase, little is known about the number of individuals who are re-trafficked (Adams, 2011; Zimmerman, Hossain, & Watts, 2011). After a trafficking exploitation, people often are left to be more vulnerable, while others may consider their experience in a better position to make a more informed second migration attempt. A few may become recruiters themselves (Siegel & de Blank, 2014). From a health perspective, re-trafficking fits within the evidence that shows past experiences of abuse increase future risk behaviors (Adams, 2011; UNODC, 2014; 2016).

Portuguese Context

The interest in studying in Portugal has been increasing since it became an independent crime in 2007. It started by analyzing and characterizing the dynamics and explanatory factors (Pereira & Vasconcelos, 2007), geographic contexts (Neves, 2011) and analyzing the processes of assistance and protection and prevention (Couto, 2012; Couto & Fernandes, 2014). The subject of combating and suppressing this crime (Matos, Gonçalves, & Maia, 2017; 2019)

the study of perceptions about THB on different populations (Cunha, Gonçalves, & Matos, 2018; Gonçalves, Monteiro, & Matos, 2019; Lourenço; Gonçalves & Matos, 2018), is the main focus on the last years. Despite that, it is even more certain that the studies with victims, are extremely limited, given the great difficulty in directly accessing these actors (Couto, 2012).

Portugal is simultaneously a country of origin, transit and destination of THB. In the year of 2015, there were identified 193 presumed victims of THB, comparing to the year 2016 when were identified 264 presumed victims of THB. So, there is an observed increase in the total number of victims (variation of 36.8%), influenced by the growth of registrations in Portugal (with a variation of 68.8%) due to three major incidents with more than 20 victims associated to each (Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings [OTSH], 2016; 2017). Also, in 2015, were confirmed 32 victims of THB (30 of them were identified in Portugal), while in 2016 the number rose to 118 victims of THB (108 were identified in Portugal and 10 in a foreign country; OTSH, 2016; 2017). The countries of origin of the victims are dispersed by four continents, Europe (Portugal, Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine), Asia (Nepal, India Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines), Africa (Nigeria and other countries) and South America (Brazil and Other countries;) (OTSH, 2017). Whilst examining the types of exploitation that occurred in Portugal, there is still a clear representation of (presumed) trafficking for labour exploitation purposes. This is indicated by the fact that out of 108 confirmed victims, 101 (93%) were victims of labour exploitation in the agricultural sector, where most of the victims are male (OTSH, 2017). According to official data in 2016, 79 (presumed) victims that received medical or psychological assistance, there were 69 (presumed) victims that were given shelter, 33 (presumed) victims that received legal assistance, 33 (presumed) victims were assisted with education and 23 (presumed) victims were reintegrated in the labour market. Moreover, 31 (presumed) victims were given residence authorization and 25 were aided to return to their home countries (OTSH, 2016). Depending on the needs presented, each victim may have received one or more types of support at the same time.

Aim of the study

There are some studies on an international level (Zimmerman, et al., 2011; Cary et al., 2016) and national level that report on the type and the dynamics of trafficking in persons and its causes (Couto, 2012; Couto & Fernandes, 2014; ; Neves, 2011; Pereira & Vasconcelos, 2007), the aspects of criminal proceeding (Gonçalves et al., 2019; Matos et al., 2017) and the perceptions of the pehonemena by different actors of the community and also within the support and justice system (Cunha et al., 2018; Gonçalves et al., 2019; Lourenço et al., 2018). Nevertheless, little is known internationally about the experience of the victims (Ghafoori & Taylor, 2017; Helfferich, Kavemann, & Rabe, 2011) and there are no studies in the national context that access to this population. The purpose of this study is to analyze the victims' experiences and to identify the characteristics of the exploitation by THB in Portugal, the barriers that prevent help seeking and also, the barriers the victims face when they try to leave.

Method

This study was approved by the Ethics Subcommittee for Social and Human Sciences under the code SECSH 038/2016. APA ethical standards were followed in the conduct of this study alongside with the fundamental principles of intervention of WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Interviewing Trafficked Woman, produced by the Health Policy Unit, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine with the support from the Daphne Programme of the European Commission and the World Health Organization (Zimmerman & Watts, 2003).

Proceedings

For the purpose of this study, a total of the 23 agencies, governmental and non-governmental and the three shelters for THB victims', dispersed throughout the mainland Portugal, that are part of the Network for Support and Protection of Victims of Trafficking, were contacted in order to publicize the study with the victims. This study counted on the collaboration of the national

rapporteur for human trafficking in Portugal to disseminate the study between the network. It's a convenience sample, since the study doesn't have the pretense of representation. The researcher who selected the participants for the study did not have any prior contact or knowledge of the participants, safeguarding the possibility of coercion or undue influence for participation in the study. The data collection took place between May and November of 2017. Only the victims giving their informed consent participated in the study. The inclusion criteria were: being a victim or presumed victim of THB; to be at least 18 years old, with no maximum age limit; having undergone some type of exploitation (sexual, labour, extraction of organs, illegal adoption, begging, slavery and/or exploitation of other criminal activities); having received support by the network; being able to communicate in in one of these languages: Portuguese, English, Spanish or French. There are exclusion criteria (e.g. disabilities) defined at the outset. It was incumbent upon the institution, the respective directors, to inform the researcher in advance of any situation that it deems relevant, considering the inclusion criteria and participation procedures. There was no prior screening of participants by completing tests, interviews, and/or other means of diagnosis in the study. There was no room for any financial/monetary compensation for the participants. Before giving their consent, participants were informed that their participation did not entail any cost to them, and that they could stop the interview at any moment.

Participants

The study sample is a clinical-forensic one, it follows from the fact that the victims come from clinical (medical support) and forensic settings (involvement with the judicial process) and are THB victims. We did not aimed to constitute a representative sample of the group of Portuguese victims, we aimed to access their speeches, either because it allowed us to understand and access their experience as a victim and allowed us for a greater enrichment of the understanding of THB from their idiosyncrasies. Hence, nine volunteered adult sheltered victims of both sexes – (2 females and 7 males), ages between 42-67 years (M= 56.67; SD = 8.411) participated in this study. Table 5 displays

Table 5. Data of the participants

ID	Social Support [c]	Marital Status	Form of exploitation	Level of education [c]	Age	Initial Identification as a victim	Social status [c]	Number of children	sex	Professional situation [c]	Duration of Support	Type of Trafficking	Victimization experiences [d]
1	Living alone	Divorced	Labour	1° grade	57	Hetero identification	Socially inserted	2	Male	Unemployed (looking for a job)	+ than 6 months	Domestic and International	one
2		Single		2° grade	49	Self-identification	Homeless	0	Male			Domestic	More than one
3		Single		No education	63		Homeless	0	Male			Domestic and International	One
4		Married		1° grade	55	Hetero identification	Socially inserted	2	Male		Until 6 months	Domestic	One
5		Single		1° grade	42	Self-identification	Socially inserted	3	Female		+ than 6 months	Domestic	One
6		Divorced		2° grade	62	Hetero identification	Socially inserted	1	Female			International	one
7		Single		1° grade	64		Homeless	0	Male		Until 6 months	Domestic	More than one
8		Divorced		1° grade	65		homeless	2	Male			Domestic	More than one
9	Nuclear Family	Married		1° grade	50		Socially inserted	1	Male		+ than 6 months	Domestic	one

[c] At time of recruitment

[d] This victimization experience refers to the fact that the participant mentioned being victim of exploitation more than once. It is merely the participant's time perception of his own victimization experience.

the sociodemographic data of the participants to reach a better understanding of the participants and their context. The information that is presented on the table was self-reported by the participant during the interview. That information is the perception of the participant of their own life experiences and victimization

Data collection

The data collection was done through a semi structured interview, carried out *in loco*, in the institution, by the first and second author, with the victims who agreed to participate. The semi-structure interview was built specifically for this study based on a detailed literature review on the subject, regarding THB dynamics (victim' vulnerabilities, recruitment, exploitation), impact, victim' identification (facilitators and inhibitors), support (needs assessment) and (re)integration. All the questions were defined before the interview. Therefore, the interview was divided with questions in 6 major sections: before-victimization; recruitment; exploitation; judicial process; support/(re)integration and impact.

To achieve the objectives of this study – to analyze the victims' experiences and to identify the characteristics of the exploitation by THB in Portugal, the barriers that prevent help seeking and also, the barriers the victims face when they try to leave, only the data that emerged from the section before-victimization, recruitment and exploitation questions was be analyzed. The interviews took place in the shelters or other place provided by the shelter institution, whereupon the researcher made sure to mobilize the necessary resources to stabilize possible emotional discomforts, since the shelter have at their disposal service providers who are familiar with the medical and/or psychological assessment of the participant. The interviews were audio recorded audio for later analysis. The recordings were used exclusively for the purpose of this study.

Confidentiality

In the study the biographical data requested in the sociodemographic questionnaire did not identify the participant (e. g., sex, age, country). A code

was assigned (the code was the combination of the order in which the interview was performed, the sex and the age of the interviewee). The code was necessary to correspond to the same participant in the various phases of the data analysis.

Analysis

The interviews were transcribed by the first and second authors, after training. The transition scheme was linear, and the type of transcription was naturalized in order to correspond to the thorough transcription of what was said and how it was said. This type of transcriptions advocates the preservation of the different elements of the interview other than the verbal content (such as non-verbal language, contextual aspects, and the interaction between interviewer and interviewee - or third parties involved) (Azevedo et al., 2017).

Data was coded by the first author following thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012), using the QSR International NVivo 10 Software. The interviews were analyzed based on the emerging themes, using an inclusive criterion (as each theme could be included in more than one category). An initial coding grid was used to guide the initial coding's, which were later refined and added as inductive codes emerged. The final coding grid includes core categories, subdivided by secondary and more ideographic categories. Themes emerged from the data and interpretative work was necessary to identify them. To ensure the validity and credibility of the results, different strategies were adopted, including constant comparative analysis of the data and a dense description of the meanings found therein, further identified in the results section by a detailed presentation and illustration of each category with excerpts of the participants' speech. Theoretical saturation was reached after 7 interviews; after that we conducted another two interviews to ensure that there was no novelty in the data. Additionally, an independent coder (the second author) analyzed 40% of the interviews, randomly assigned, to ensure data reliability. After independent review by a co-coder, the fidelity rate was calculated using Vala's (1986) formula: F = 2(C1, 2)/C1 + C2. The number of agreements between the codifiers was divided by the total categorizations performed by each: 2(617)/634 + 645 = 0.96. The result was a fidelity rate of 0.96, which represents an excellent level

of agreement (Martins & Machado 2006), allowing confidence in the results obtained. Coding discrepancies were discussed and resolved by the coders by consensus. A senior researcher (third author) audited the coding process.

De data analysis was guided by several questions, being them: i) How was the experience of exploitation? ii) How the recruitment happened (transportation and routes)? iii) How was the detection and identification of the victim? iv) What were the challenges and barriers to help seeking? and v) What are the feelings associated with the experience?

Results

To facilitate data reading, the results are presented according to the questions that guided the analysis. The tables 6, 7 and 8 present the themes and sub-themes, the number of participants and references of each theme and sub-theme. We need to report that the theme and respective sub-themes should not be interpreted as independent of each other, instead, they are related and mutual dependent. Direct quotations from the participants' transcripts highlighting aspects of the theme and nodes can be found throughout the text and each is identified by the participant identification.

Dynamics of Trafficking in Human Beings

Most the participants reported a range of characteristics representing the dynamics of trafficking in Human beings. We have all 9 sources, with 634 references in this theme. From this theme emerged the following sub-themes: (a) recruitment; (b) exploitation; (c) detection and identification.

Recruitment

The recruitment (presented in Table 6) is mentioned by the participants in relationship with their living conditions and difficulties at the time. They mention how the necessity for an opportunity was a relevant factor to accept the false employment proposals that were presented. Some of them had a previous relationship with the recruiter and later the exploiter (with previous labour relationships that did not raised "red flags").

Table 6. Dynamics of Trafficking in Human Beings – Recruitment

Theme	Sub-theme	Participants[a]	References[b]
Recruitment		**9**	**131**
	Transportation/Routes	*8*	*25*
	Vulnerability	*9*	*78*
	Structural vulnerability	9	67
	Lack of Knowledge on THB	4	9
	Trafficker portrayal and relationship with victim	*9*	*33*
	False employment proposals	*8*	*12*

a. Number of participants who mentioned the theme and sub-theme
b. Total number of references that integrated that theme and sub-theme

Transportation/Routes

Another sub-theme that emerged with eight participants and 25 references was the forms of transportation taken to the place of exploitation and even the different routes that took place under the time of recruitment and exploitation, when the participant reveal that they move from place to place in order to work under different conditions. The forms of transportation are by land, manly using private means of transportation (cars, vans) in order to evade detection, as the participant 7 mentioned *"(...) I went with him in the van."* The participants were recruited in Portugal, and exploited in the country, and some of them were recruited in Portugal and in Spain, were they frequently moved around to different exploitation sites *"we came here ... that we only came here in February* [Portugal]*... we were here in February and then we would start again* [in Spain]." (P1). Most of them that were exploited domestic and internationally, started the exploitation in Portugal, where they were recruited, as the participant 3 stated *"Noooo ... I went to Spain too, but ... here in Portugal first ..."*.

Vulnerability

The participants reported structural vulnerabilities (e.g. unemployment and professional instability) as the major motives to accept the offer that was

presented. Most of them were living alone, without social or family support, as some of them were inclusive homeless or almost homeless from at the time of the recruitment. The low level of education was mentioned also as a factor that impelled them to unqualified jobs (like those in the agriculture industry). The lack of knowledge on the subject was also a factor that rose from the discourse, because the participants mentioned that the fact, they did not know anything about the subject made them prone to victimization, by accepting without knowing the possible outcomes. The participant reported *"I was married, then I got divorced... I was wandering without working, you know what it is! Until I was looking for work. These gypsies then opened to me ... the proposal ... to look for people who were going to Spain to work. Well ... I had been looking for some time and I was alone ... and so I accepted it, but I it was bad to accept ... (mmm) also, I did not know anything ...* ".

There are references that mentioned the recruitment process to be very fast and without proper measure of what can come out of the proposal that it was being presented. We can see that through the discourse of the participant 7, when he told us that he was *"was begging from door to door. And after that, that person came to get me at* [place] *and I went to work for that person.*" And from the participant 6, when after leaving a legitime job in Spain, was approached by some stranger and accepted immediately the job offer that was presented, without a proper reflection on the conditions; *"So I came and went to catch the train in Spain, to come here. When I get to the station, I meet a gentleman who asks me if I want work. And I ask him, 'What for?' And he says to me, 'Oh, it's in agriculture.' I say, 'All right, so how much do you pay?';* [he said] *it seems that it was € 25 daily, and I provide bed and food. And I said, 'Okay then.' And I went."*.

Trafficker portrayal and relationship with the victim

The trafficker was only known to 2 of the participants; for the other 7 it was someone unknown, with several references of a gipsy community as the main exploiters, being here in Portugal or in Spain, with organized networks of exploitation. There were also mentions of individual initiatives of exploitation

perpetrated by couples (husband and wife) in private lands. *"There was one of the gypsies and gypsy brother. That they... when I had no job in Spain, for example, I had no job in Spain, he would deliver us to the brother, to the brother who also had their work in Spain. So, we do not stand still. We always had work."* (P1); *"They were gypsies."* (P3). *"They were a man and a woman ... you see? Yes, a couple."* (P2). When the recruiter and exploiter are known, the victim had a previous labour relationship with them that did not raised any red flag because everything was legal (the labour contract, the work and payments). Only after the exploitation had started, *"There were three of us, me, another worker and the man. Who was the contractor of that job! After we've finished that ... then he says: 'I do not have any more work. I'll be alone with just one of you. And he chose me. He said: 'Get ready, you're going with me. And that was when the exploitation started.'"* (P4).

False employment proposals

All the participants were lured to the exploitation with job offers that turned out to be false. They state that clearly in the discourse. They mentioned that the job offer was too good to be true, but at the time it was an attractive opportunity to turn life and start over. *"They promised work. They promised everything... home, food... everything that was good"* (P1).

After accepting the job offer and getting to the place of destination, they realized that after all it would not be as good as what they had promised them, and the participants felt cheated, unable to go back or out of that situation, due to the forms of control exercised by the trafficker: *"But when we got there everything upside down, nothing at all ... not even if we wanted to go away we could not leave ... we were tied, they beat us ... there was no chance no escape ..."; "I felt cheated"* (P1).

Exploitation

All nine participants focused on the exploitation aspect of THB, with 362 references to this sub-theme, explained in table 7. They enhanced the control

strategies, specifying different means of control that they suffered during their experience of exploitation.

Table 7. Dynamics of Trafficking in Human Beings – Exploitation

Theme	Sub-theme	Participants[a]	References[b]
Exploitation		**9**	**362**
	Control Strategies	*9*	*180*
	Control movements	9	38
	Isolation	9	38
	Physical Violence	8	27
	Fear	5	25
	Retention of ID	3	17
	Financial control	7	16
	Health care deprivation	6	15
	Psychological/Verbal Violence	2	4
	Conditions	*9*	*67*
	Barriers to Help seeking	*7*	*43*
	Type of exploitation	*9*	*31*
	Dehumanization of the victim	*7*	*28*
	Duration of exploitation	*9*	*19*
	Attempted escape	*4*	*12*

a. Number of participants who mentioned the theme and sub-theme
b. Total number of references that integrated that theme and sub-theme

Control of Movements

The means of control are wide-ranging, from control of movements, isolation, physical violence, fear, retention of ID, financial control, health care deprivation and psychological/verbal violence. In addition to being diversified, the control strategies were exercised cumulatively, so as to avoid the escape of the victim and prevent a possible request for help, as we can see through the highlight's; *"we were tied, they beat us ... ready ... there was no chance of running away ..."; they did not let us talk to them ... always controlled.* (P1); *"Go to the doctor, no! Even if I wanted to ... I wanted to go to the doctor ... or if I*

wanted a document ... they had to go with me ... they had my ID..." (P4) and "*(...) nor took me to the doctor or anything."* (P8). Or even if the participant was able to go to the doctor, or to another public service, he was controlled in an extent that the request for help was extremely difficult to do; *"They went with me, for example if I wanted to make an appointment ... he had ... she had to go ahead and take the ID ... the ID ... and give the person who was at the counter, for example. And then they kept him again."* (P4).

Conditions

The participants detailed that the conditions of exploitation were inhuman, without sanitary conditions, without a place to live in dignity, *"No conditions, so it rained as much as on the street ..."* (P7); where they went hungry *"Hunger, ah, how many times. I was often hungry."* (P3), cold and lived in isolation or constant pressure. The participant 1 reported the conditions when he arrived at the destination place; *"When I got there, they immediately put me in an old shack, without a mattress, to sleep with my feet on the floor or in one of those plastic panels. Some panels on the floor ... some blankets on the floor..."*. The same participant even reported to seek cloths in social institutions and in clothes containers in order to have something decent to wear; *"Anything... in Spain, we got a lot of clothes in the containers! For the Spaniards put a lot of clothes out there and picked up our clothes. And here in Portugal we went to... There is an institution there* [names the place] *that gives clothes and we went there to ask for clothes."* Even the meals, when there was a place and time to take them, were apart from the exploiter or other people, as the participant 3 stated; *"I never ate with them at ... I never ate with them at the table. Never! It was always off the table. They never... they were disgusted by us. (...) I would eat at the foot of the ... sometimes I would eat ... when it* [the weather] *was good, I would eat outside ... on an iron table and there I would put the soup dish or so and there I would eat. As soon as it was raining, when it was cold or so, I would be there at the corner of the fireplace, and I would eat like this ..."*.

Being always forced to undertake labour tasks, which had no time to start or time to finish, having an undefined schedule at the mercy of the explorer's

will; *"No ... when he wanted that job ... 'Ah, you have not finished this yet! I wanted to finish this! Come in here. 'Tatatata* [sound of someone beating someone] *... if I did not do that,... already implicating with me ... treating me badly ... he and his woman ... begins to treat me badly ... and I felt like: oh Jesus! my parents and my mother never treated me like this so much ... mistreating me... me badly like this ..."* (P4). The participant 5 reported *"It was to wake up ... work, work, work, until the evening."*.

Barriers to help seeking

The barriers to help seeking are associated with the control strategies, described above, as we can see with the quote from participant 1, regarding health care deprivation *"We never went to the doctor* (pause) *for fear that we would tell the doctor... they never took us."*; *"They took my documents ... there was nothing ... there were no documents!"* (P4) and isolation; *"So I was going to run away to where?!"* (P7) and *"I did not run away because I had nowhere to go."* (P8).

Type of exploitation

All the nine participants suffered labour exploitation, in the area of construction and agriculture. We can see through the highlights of the participants *"Because they promised work in agriculture (...) It was in agriculture, we picked up ... in May, it was the cherry, then came the tobacco campaign, picked tobacco, then it was the pepper ..."* (P1); *"I would dig the earth, and then when the land was dug and sown, I would split wood."* (P9) and *"I went with him, work, in the works he did ... put roofs, take old roofs, new ones ... he did everything."* (P4).

Dehumanization of the victim

Seven participants reported behaviors that indicated a dehumanization of the victim by the exploiter. We have 28 references on this sub-theme. Alongside with the bad living conditions and control methods used, the participant was treated as an animal, as property that was possessed by the explorer for his will

and use. As a merchandise, a human commodity. We can see through the extract of participant 8 that state; *"So, I slept there in a shack, there ... a shack that was his, that is a cellar that ... badly and badly, (...) there was even the potatoes I was watering! They were stored there in the cellar and there was a (hummm)... Look, I had it badly... there like a pig."* and *"they would not take me to a barber to cut hair, I had (humm), big hair, had beard ..."* (P8).

Duration of exploitation

The duration of exploitation can vary from months to years. It was stablished subjectively by the participants (and not confronted with the time of exploitation referred in their court and service provider files). From the perspective of the participants the exploitation had a varied time duration, from *"5 or 7 months."* (P5), to *"2 or 3 years."* (P2), but even to *"8 years"* to participant 3 and *"10 year, I think."* to the participant 1.

Attempted escape

Four participants reported and active attempted of escape. From those, two were successful and the other two weren't. Accordingly, the participant 1 reported that he tried to escape as soon as he saw the conditions at the destination place, but it was too late to ask for help, because we was assaulted physical and psychologically for trying to leave, which led to a sense of helplessness that prevented him from seeking help another time. *"I tried to leave and that was all, but I could not get; there were two (...) of the kind of two henchmen and they grabbed me and they did not let me get away, they did not let me leave ..." ; "I tried to run away, but there was no chance."*; *"It was at the beginning when I tried to escape there, they tied me up and hit me with a stick they had... there in a tiny little house, there they gave us ... they gave me a loading graft I've been three days ... 3 days there, closed! That's when I thought about it ... but there was nothing to do!"*.

Also, the participant 6 tried to escape and it was successful, but not at the first time. When she was successful, she reached to the police and was removed from the exploitation; *"Well, I walked, walked, walked to see if I could*

escape. I tried the first time. I've been caught. I said to me, 'I cannot be caught again!' It was one day; it was seven o'clock in the morning. I fixed myself, did not see anyone on the farm, and ran away. I went to GNR [police]*. The GNR then sent for the judiciary* [another police]*. That's when I filled a complain."*. There was another participant (5) that reported being assisted by a medical doctor and exerted the right to do so unaccompanied, so the exploiter had no option unless to wait in the waiting room. As soon as she found herself in the presence of the doctor, she exposed her situation and all the protocols were actioned and she only left the medical facility to go to a shelter; *"I had a medical appointment. And he had to take me to that appointment. But I told him I did not want his presence in the doctors' office. He was very angry! That he wanted to come in with me and I said no.; He was very angry, very angry, but he left me, and I asked for help. (...) From there the raids began. They started calling the social worker, they started calling ... and I did not leave the health center anymore. (...) They hid me there. He* [the exploiter] *was looking for me, if I was checked out or not, but they* [assistant staff] *said they did not know. (...)* [from the medical center] *I went to sleep for another house and then I came here."*

Detection and identification

Table 8. Dynamics of Trafficking in Human Beings – Detection and identification

Theme	Sub-theme	Participants[a]	References[b]
Detection and Identification		**8**	**91**
	Between signalization and removal	*5*	*37*
	Hetero identification	*6*	*35*
	Seeds of doubt	*7*	*14*
	Feeling of Guilt	*7*	*4*
	Self-identification	*2*	*5*

a. Number of participants who mentioned the theme and sub-theme

b. Total number of references that integrated that theme and sub-theme

Despite several seeds of doubt, which means knowing that something was not right, that they should not be treated like that, that it should have rights and that were not being fulfilled, many of the participants did not acknowledged themselves as victims. Consequently, so couldn't ask for help. Along with this idea, they revealed the feeling of guilt for being in the trafficking situation, which only reinforced the feeling of helplessness and made the victim think that he has no right to ask for help because s/he is in that situation at his own will.

Between signalization and removal

The paths that the victim experiences between the signalization, by proper authorities, and the removal from the exploitation, take a huge amount of time. The authorities often visited the campsites where the participants were being exploited, but did nothing to remove them from that situation, because the participants couldn't ask for help and was afraid of what the traffickers would do. We can see that through the quote of the participant 1: *"They appeared there 3 times, the judiciary police, 3 times. But in those two times that we were afraid, they* [the traffickers] *said: 'you say that you are well treated, or else after the police goes away, you go away for good ... and they* [police] *went away and there we were again... God knows how?"*. But after those times the police came again and removed the participant to the police station where he felt comfortable to talk at will and told his situation of exploitation; *"But this third time they* [the police] *went there (...) and took us to the police station. And then we talked at ease. The others did not speak, they were always afraid, but I and another boy we spoke the truth."* The participant 1 said that he was able to speak freely because the police put him at ease and gave him aid to leave the exploitation. *"But this last time I was there at the post. There I was at ease, they said to me* [police]*: 'look you will be welcomed in a house, where they do not see you, to be at ease, not to be afraid! They do not know about you and where you are! 'And then I told them. I told them everything. I told them what happened in all these years."*

There were participants that mentioned to live under exploitation and abuse for more than 9 months, since the police or other authorities talked with

them and had them identified. That happened in order to gather evidence to prosecute and to present evidence in court. The participant 4 mentioned his experience: *"And the afternoon arrived, and the police arrived at the house* [where he was being exploited]*. 'Can we talk here with you, please? Then I told him everything, everything that went from beginning to end ... and he says: 'All right. You wait and then ... '. And so, it was! After that I was there* [in the situation of exploitation] *almost, eight or nine more months."* During the time, between the identification and the removal from the exploitation, the participant took measures to ensure his safety, and that the trafficker did not had any knowledge that he had talked with the police.; *"The GNR, could not get me out ... I could not get out, that's why... I had to hold out all that time!"*; *"I had hope* [that the police would someday come] *... I was always hoping ... they* [the traffickers] *screamed at me! But I never opened my mouth to say anything."*

Hetero identification

Six of the participants were able to leave the exploitation because there was someone who reported that situation to the proper authorities. Sometimes the complaint is made by someone who lives close to the victim, like a neighbor, who does not see that situation as normal, and seeks help. In the case of the participant number 4, he often worked for other people from is neighborhood, but he was not payed directly, so that caused a red flag on the person that made the complaint, *"The owner of the job said, 'If you're the one working, why is he* [the trafficker] *entitled to your money?';* " *You are working, you are a hardworking young man ... this is not how you work here, to work here and he is entitled to receive, from you, this is not life!'". A*fter that the neighbor was suspicious and one time, after seeing that the participant 4 was beaten, acted and reported to the police, as we can see through the quote; *"The neighbor stopped the tractor and says: 'Oh man, what's on your face?* (pause) *... I said, 'I was taking some tiles up here. A tile fell and hit me in the face. He sees me and made me like that* [waved to him and smiled]*. He said: 'Wait there, I'll take care of it!' He went to the GNR, went there to tell everything he already knew ..."*.

Seeds of doubt

Despite knowing that something was not right; that there were rights that were not being held and despite the physical and psychological violence suffered, the control exercised over them, the majority participants do not recognize themselves as victims of THB, as we can see in the quote of the participant 2 *"It's not a matter of fear! I do not know, nobody asked me anything I did not tell, do you understand?"*. In fact, they do not recognize themselves as victims of any crime. Participant 1 stated; *"we worked but I soon saw that it was bad, because we were very hungry ...";* the participant 4 reported also *"no ... not at the beginning I never said anything ... I said everything mentally, with my buttons: 'this is not life, this is not my life. Only live here ... trapped, to live, just to do this ... work, work! ... I had no money to send to... to my family ... had nothing ...."*.

Feeling of guilt

The guilty experienced was also an element that constraint the help seeking of the victim and that affect the participant on their own victimization. Expressions like *"I was dumb in accept the proposal.*", reveal the victim blaming presented. One participant reveal that he saw the victimization as his own fault. The participant 6 revealed also the same idea; *"Ah! I blamed myself very, very much!".* The participant 8 mentioned that the fact that he had accepted the proposal was as if he was voluntarily going to his death; *"The worst that I have been through, with my own feet to my own death. I say always, I went to die.".*

Self-identification

Only two participants verbalized their self-identification as a crime victim, as acted actively to seek help. It was the self-identification that engage them in help seeking behavior wherever it took, because they knew they were being exploited. The quote from the participant 5 elucidated this idea; *"I was always closed at home. And I talked to myself: 'This is beautiful now! This is not right!' I tried to see if I could escape. I tried the first time. I've been caught. I said to me: 'I cannot be caught again!' It was one day; it was seven o'clock in the morning. I fixed myself, did not see anyone on the farm, and ran away."*.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to analyze experiences of TSH and to identify characteristics of the exploitation by THB in Portuguese victims. We also aimed to understand the barriers that prevent the help seeking and the hurdles that the victim face when leaving the exploitation. The results allow us to describe the experiences of Portuguese labour victims, exploited domestic and/or internationally.

The recruitment is aimed at vulnerable people, as various studies illustrate this idea (Cole & Sprang, 2015; Huang, 2017; Walklate, 2011; Zimmerman et al., 2011). All the participants were unemployed, looking for job opportunities. Four of them were homeless and saw in the job proposal a way to change their lives. This goes along with the literature that sates the traffickers aim for the most vulnerable person, in order to achieve their goal (Zimmerman, Hossain, & Watts, 2011). In the cases presented by the participants, situations of socioeconomic precariousness or vulnerability in terms of family history, although, as a background, there was a search for better opportunities to "fulfill the dream" on a more personal and/or professional level. Thus, in these specific cases, the balancing of the *pull* and *push factors* are essential to understand this dynamic. In Portugal the trafficking for labour exploitation has a greater expression, and as stated by Couto (2012), it could be necessary to assess if the general worsening of the conditions of life that has been registered in the last few years - constituting macro social scenarios structurally - are more favorable to recruitment and exploitation, (e.g., greater percentage of females in trafficking for the purposes of labour exploitation). These considerations support the need to analyze the phenomenon of trafficking through a multidimensional and intersectional grid (Hughes, 2014; Kemp & Raijman, 2014; Kempadoo, 2015; Rosenblatt, 2014) particularly in the which concerns the profile of the victims and the vulnerability factors, as it postulates that the intersection of the dimensions of sex, age, ethnicity/nationality and class, places women, young people and immigrants, belonging to ethnic minorities and coming from economically depleted or dominated by social contrasts (e.g.,, with high rates of poverty and precariousness labour market) (Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, &

Tomlinson, 2013) in a particular vulnerable position for discrimination, violence and exploitation. Vulnerability thus exceeds political, economic and socio-cultural forces, which has effects on various axes of the identity of the victims and constrain and weaken them in their options (UNODC, 2013; Walklate, 2011).

The routes taken by the recruiters and exploiters are both domestic and international. With years of exploitation and movement between countries (Portugal and Spain) not detected by the proper authorities (police and social services). How can we better identify these routes and the victims that travel between them? What can be improved in the authorities, so they can better identify the actors of this crime (both recruiter, exploiter and/or victim)? It is necessary to study the routes that appear in the national and international level, so we can better prevent, identify and combat this crime. Only by doing a multidisciplinary research (policies, investigative services, social services and other agencies), we can better fight this crime and attend its victims'. The routes established are sometimes camouflaged as legal routes and so not identified as criminal networks which difficult the identification (Cho, 2015; Mahmoud & Trebesch, 2010; Van der Leun & Van Schijndel, 2016). The fact that the recruitment and exploitation were domestic, the movement is somehow more difficult to identify because it can be seen as a normal movement between communities or places (Bishop, Morgan, & Erickson, 2013; Mahmoud & Trebesch, 2010; Wheaton, Schauer, & Galli, 2010).

The diversified control strategies that the participants reveal in their discourses proved to be an effective way to prevent the help seeking of the victim. The isolation, the use of threat, physical and psychological violence and the constant surveillance prevented the victims to seek help despite being in their home country where they know the language and could reach for help. This goes accordingly to the literature (Bick, Howard, Oram, & Zimmerman, 2017; Ioannou & Oostinga, 2015; Meyers, 2016; Oram, Stockl, Busza, Howard, & Zimmerman, 2012) where the control methods created in the participants a sense of captivity and helplessness that prevent them from seeking help. The diverse means of control, alongside with the inhumane conditions of the exploitation and the dehumanization of the victim by the traffickers, by treating

the victim as human commodity or even an animal, lead the participants to experience feelings of helplessness that compel them to remain in the exploitation. Even when the participant made an escape attempt (e.g. run), the controls strategies employed by the trafficker (psychical and psychological violence) led to feelings of helplessness and withdrawal of the participants to never attempt to escape again (Le, Ryan, Rosenstock, & Goldmann, 2018; Meyers, 2016; Wilson & Butler, 2014).

For the two victims who reached for help, the medical service providers and the police were able to remove immediately the victim from the exploitation and were able to provide the support. Greenbaum (2016) stated that the health care provider may, nonetheless, offer services and strategies aimed at harm reduction, even if a true exit from the exploitation is not feasible at the time of the medical visit. Also, a compassionate, nonjudgmental interaction with a health provider may ultimately lead a victim to trust the next provider and be willing to accept services at that time. This crime is a global problem, that demands an active response from the health care sector on identifying the victims of this crime when they seek medical attention (Baldwin et al., 2011; Macias-Konstantopoulos, 2016; Macias Konstantopoulos et al., 2013). However, the help seeking in unpredictable. We can see by the experiences of those 2 participants who tried to escape and weren't successful.

Despite knowing that something is not 'quite right', the victim does not see herself as such (as a crime victim), which prevents the help seeking and the removal from the exploitation. Alongside with the structural vulnerabilities of the victim, this lack of knowledge, the feeling of guilt (experienced by some participants) may suppress any desire or will to active reach for help, because the victim may see their exploitation and subsequent victimization as a punishment for their bad judgement, alongside with their incapacity to provide for their family (Hemmings et al., 2016; Jordan, Patel, & Rapp, 2013; Meyers, 2016; Zimmerman et al., 2011). The predominant hetero-identification, by the neighbor or other unknown person, potentially demonstrate that the informative campaigns had high value and relevance in providing public information/knowledge on this crime and in facilitating the identification of

potential victims that are exploited in isolated areas(Barrick, Lattimore, Pitts, & Zhang, 2014; Bishop et al., 2013; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2015; O'Brien, 2016), as like the victims exploited in the agricultural panorama in Portugal.

There were episodes when the time between the identification of the victim by the police and the removal of the victim from exploitation reached almost one year. Between the detection, identification and removal of the victim, is necessary to use a better approach and improve the referral system, together with the police, to gather evidence of the crime if necessary. The victim remained in the exploitation despite being identified as a "presumed" victim and that is an ethical issue, but most of all it raises questions of "human rights". The victim needed to undertake preventive and security measures, to defensed herself for the harm of being discovered that s/he collaborated with the authorities. It's necessary to access this issue and understand how the police investigation works so we can better serve the needs of security of the victim. Additional steps will need to be taken to rescue the victim as soon as possible from the moment of identification as a potential THB victim, to break the cycle of violence. Matos et al., (2019) clarified that the police has difficulty in rescuing victims earlier, because of the difficulty in collecting evidence later. They also mention that in Portugal the law foresees for the collaboration of the victim as an essential element to convict prosecution of traffickers, which may have contributed to how the police acted at these cases.Despite the THB crime being so difficult to gather court evidence of a crime, to prove and to prosecute, especially in Portugal we can't depended on the victim to gather evidence. We need to gather that evidence from other sources (Farrell et al., 2012; Farrell, Owens, & McDevitt, 2014; Verhoeven & van Gestel, 2011) or by other means so we can better serve and protect the victim that is under exploitation.

Limitations

The main objective of this study was to access to national and international THB victims' experiences in Portugal. Nevertheless, the participants were voluntarily Portuguese nationals, that suffered from labour exploitation and were living in shelter. It is important to point out the main

limitations of this study, particularly the difficulty in having direct access to victims (whether for security reasons or for the possible existence of some reluctance on the part of organizations to allow access to information on the intervention processes implemented in the absence of any control by institutional actors) (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2010; Couto, 2012 Weitzer, 2012). Although it was not intended to achieve a representative sample of the victims identified or confirmed in the national territory and of having been made multiple contacts in order to recruit a more substantial sample, the number of participants is small and thus prevent any generalizable conclusion. We also need to address the possibility that, in the process of selecting the participants, there has been some bias, that is, of the victims who were proposed to be interviewed by the institution, because in their view, the victim selected could be the one with more positive contributions in and are therefore more likely to be able to express their experience.

Conclusion and practical implications

These findings are valuable, not only because of the lack of previous research with these populations, but also because they shed light on a subject that is sensitive and that requires more research. This work is also helpful because it can influence future policies and even practices with all those who contact with the victim of THB (service providers, police and even courts), on how to deal with the victim upon identification and exit of exploitation. To be able to better understand their fears and their experiences, in order to be provide a better support (both social, medical and/or legal). This work can also influence policy decisions, regarding the use of the testimony of the victim as a major prove for court; it can inform new campaigns towards information and prevention to potentiate the number of identifications of the victims. Although our study was exploratory, it clearly addresses the need of more studies to examine the differences between different types of exploitation in the victimization by THB on a broad spectrum. THB is a criminal form of exploitation and abuse that can a have a major impact (psychical, psychological, sexual, social, cultural) on its victim's and for that the identification of this crime is crucial. Identifying the

victims that are under exploitation can be a huge challenge but is essential that the community, the law enforcement, police and other important organizations are aware of its dynamics and changes. It is essential to establish of a clearer referral pathway, contact and information sharing protocols with other relevant agencies, in order to suppress the difficulties that were identified as much as possible. There were institutions that did not contribute to this investigation. Despite the support of the national rapporteur of trafficking in persons on the authorization and dissemination of this study. This issue needs to be addressed and there is a necessity to strengthen the collaboration between diverse social, medical, legal entities and the academic field, to gather and improve data on this topic, with view to field application. Doing so, both sides, academic and community can succeed against this crime.

One of the challenges identified was the lack of knowledge of the victim about their rights. Improve victims' understanding of the criminal justice process to enhance their cooperation with law enforcement are essentials to identifying the victim and suppressing this crime (Matos, et al., 2017; 2019). These recommendations and suggestions for future research aim to serve as a trigger for generating ideas and discussion on how to better serve human trafficking victims and how to improve the existing network in Portugal, so we can be sure that the current and future needs of the victims are being addressed.

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CHAPTER 4 – TRAFFICKING IN PORTUGAL: VICTIMS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT IMPACT, FORMAL SUPPORT AND POST-VICTIMIZATION

Abstract

Trafficking in human beings is a serious crime with vast potential impact on its' victims. This exploratory study aims to understand, through victims' experiences, the impact and the subsequent process of help seeking and support. Specifically, we aim to expand knowledge about how the support services, the police forces and the justice system are depicted by trafficking victims. The data was collected in institutional settings, through a semi-structured interview, from nine adult sheltered victims of labour exploitation, of both sexes -2 females and 7 males. Thematic analysis was used, and three main themes emerged: Impact, Formal Support System and Post-Victimization. The support provided to the victim was portrayed as effective and adequate, being able to meet the most basic and immediate needs (food, clothes, shelter). The victims trust the police and the governmental institutions and were able to collaborate with the judicial system (e.g., testimony). Nevertheless, they are not aware of their own judicial situation. The fact that participants are not aware of their own judicial situation leads us to think that they may have a passive role in decisions that affect their lives. The implications regarding the help-seeking system and public policy are discussed.
Keywords: Human trafficking, post-victimization, help seeking, support, impact.

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TRAFFICKING IN PORTUGAL: VICTIMS PERCEPTIONS ABOUT IMPACT, FORMAL SUPPORT AND POST-VICTIMIZATION

Introduction

Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) has been widely considered to be one of the most severe forms of violence against any human being, implying a significant amount of physical, psychological and interpersonal injury to the victim (Oram, Stockl, Busza, Howard, & Zimmerman, 2012; Volgin, Shakespeare-finch, & Shochet, 2018; Zimmerman, 2003; Zimmerman & Kiss, 2017). As with other violent crimes, even in THB, the impact on victims differs according to the type of violence exercised, their co-occurrence, frequency and severity (Hughes, 2003; Roe-Sepowitz, Hickle, Dahlstedt, & Gallagher, 2014; Twigg, 2017). Given that THB situations are, as a rule, a combination of various types of violence with high degrees of severity that tend to co-occur and repeat themselves over time, they can end up presenting a high potential for developing multiple physical, psychological and behavioral symptoms that severely affect daily functioning and the well-being of victims. Also, given the frequent presence of threats to survival and the precarious living conditions in which many victims live on, these effects also tend to persist over time (Ottisova, Hemmings, Howard, Zimmerman, & Oram, 2016; Turner-Moss, Zimmerman, Howard, & Oram, 2014; Zimmerman & Kiss, 2017). Such aspects are predictors of poorer outcomes in general health and are a strong limitation on the social support necessary for a return to the family or community of origin present (Connell, Jennings, Barbieri, & Reingle Gonzalez, 2015; Hemmings et al., 2016; Wilson & Butler, 2014). As a result of the traumatizing and complex nature of THB, the mental health issues associated with this population are frequently complex and there is a high dregree of co-morbility of mental health diagnostics. Adding to this, many of this mental health problems do not present themselves untill after the more immediate needs have been met - such as seafety and shelter (Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Zimmerman, 2003).

While the majority of research on impact has focused on the health needs of victims of sex exploitation, the victims of labour exploitation have a unique

set of health risks due to nature of their work and exploitative conditions (Arhin, 2016; Doherty, Oram, Siriwardhana, & Abas, 2016; Turner-Moss et al., 2014). Those risks can be similar to the occupational hazards of type of work, but due to the dangerous and/or highly repetitive work, the health problems are often exacerbated by lack of security measures (like protective gear, difficult work conditions) and adding that to the living conditions they are forced to live in. Research carried out in this area (Couto, 2012; Hemmings et al., 2016; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013; Stanley et al., 2016; Zimmerman, 2003; Zimmerman, Hossain, Watts, & Stolz, 2011) reveals that, due to the cumulative effect of multiple traumatic episodes, trafficking situations indulge the presence of high comorbidity rates of physical, psychological and social damages that tend to persist over time.

All these aspects are, therefore, factors with implications for the therapeutic plan to delineate with these victims (Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013; Reid, 2010). Also, the lack of knowledge about where service providers are located, their restricted mobility, limited financial resources are major challenges for victims to overcome a trafficking condition (Clawson, Dutch, Salomon, & Grace, 2009). For these reason, it is often that the victims do not seek help until their mental or physical health is severely affected (Freemire, 2017; Ioannou & Oostinga, 2015). Considering that victimization by trafficking usually involves the subjugation of victims to situations of high precariousness in terms of the most basic living conditions, physical and psychological aggression, intervention necessarily will have to cover different dimensions and materialize in several measures (Couto, 2012; Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Hemmings et al., 2016; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013; Westwood et al., 2016; Zimmerman, 2003): housing; subsistence; health (medical and psychological); legal support; social support; cultural support; assisted return (if necessary).

Intervention with victims of trafficking is likely to be developed under approaches already tested and adopted for intervention with victims of other violent crimes such as domestic violence, rape, abduction or torture, since, by their very nature, sensitive cases to trauma-centered approaches (Abas et al., 2013; Couto, 2012; Couto & Fernandes 2014; Ghafoori & Taylor, 2017). However,

it is expected implications for the evaluation process, the intervention plan, its implementation and the analysis of its effects, considering the characteristics of THB victims. It should also be addressed that, although THB is a phenomenon with deep historical roots, public attention to it is recent, which means that at this stage there are no specific intervention models tested and validated with this population (Freemire, 2017; Villacampa & Torres, 2019; Ghafoori & Taylor, 2017; Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013; Zimmerman, 2003). Nevertheless, and in view of the diversity of the effects of this type of victimization, the understanding of the scientific community has been that the intervention should be based on a combination of different approaches and therapeutic modalities depending on the intervention phase and the type of consequences and needs identified (Borschmann et al., 2017; Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Hornor, 2015). Thus, the contacts made with the victim should be considered as an opportunity to improve their well-being and should prioritize safety, be focused on their rights as a human being and be efficient at referral, transfer and care, which implies the existence of a well-articulated network of services and professionals (Dell et al., 2017; Le & Halkitis, 2018; Salami et al., 2018).

It is often desirable to synchronize these approaches and modalities over time (e.g., to initially adopt a crisis intervention model that is individually worked and, subsequently, therapeutic model of constructivist nature and developed in group format), (Couto & fernandes, 2014; Freemire, 2017; Le & Halkitis, 2018). The strategies used in the context of intervention in crisis aim to restore the balance of the victim biopsychosocial functions, emotional stabilization and minimizing the potential of psychological trauma (Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Ghafoori & Taylor, 2017); in later stages of follow-up, strategies that address the work of deeper issues, such as medium and long-term emotional management capacity and personal identity, may be promoted (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012; Ghafoori & Taylor, 2017; Reid, 2010).

Consequently, a trauma-informed care is essential for managing victims of human trafficking (Butler, Critelli, & Rinfrette, 2011; Freemire, 2017; Hopper, 2017; Nguyen, Coverdale, & Gordon, 2017; Salami et al., 2018). Providers at different levels of care and stages in training may interact with patients and

provide them with safe spaces to talk about and process the details of their victimization (Nguyen et al., 2017). It is important that all service providers understand trauma and how trauma affects victims' response to services and even criminal process, and the individual task force members' response to victims (Hom & Woods, 2013; Pascual-Leone et al., 2017; Salami et al., 2018). Even if in an initial phase, cognitive-behavioral strategies are favored, aiming at restoring the balance of the biopsychosocial functions, emotional stabilization and minimizing the potential of psychological trauma (Freemire, 2017; Ghafoori & Taylor, 2017; Hemmings et al., 2016; Le & Halkitis, 2018) and in later stages of follow-up, strategies that address the work of deeper issues, trauma-informed care is essential (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012; Freemire, 2017; Salami et al., 2018).

The victim's heritage and cultural background can also directly influence in the feeling of shame and disgrace and can prevent the victim's identification and possible treatment (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, Isaacs, & Benjamin, 1989; Gonçalves & Matos, 2016). Also, cultural factors can influence individuals' beliefs about threats and response to danger can play a vital role in how the individuals respond to violent crimes (Gonçalves & Matos, 2016). With this idea in mind, service providers should remember that every culture has a different perspective and distinctive beliefs about the benefits of seeking help or different forms of assistance (Couto & Fernandes, 2014).

There are central tasks to restoring normality, the victims' sense of control over their lives and autonomy (Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Ghafoori & Taylor, 2017) such as: ensure the basic conditions of subsistence and security/protection of the victim; assist the victim in the processing of the memories and emotions associated with the trauma, facilitating their affective expression and validating the emotions, analyzing and reformulating their system of beliefs and personal meanings affected by the traumatic event, as well as in the execution /maintenance of behavioral changes that guarantee their survival and daily functioning, and; anticipate and prepare for the future, taking into account the need for victims in general to have control over what is about to happen, so that it is essential to be assisted in the construction of these scenarios and in the resolution of concrete problems (e.g., in relation to the

criminal process (Matos, Gonçalves, & Maia, 2019). The inclusion of the victim in the decision making process will favor a perception of self-efficacy and empowerment, in which the victim assumes the role of protagonist in the recovery process and becomes confident in the definition and implementation of an alternative project for his life (Bonanno, 2004; Salami et al., 2018). Psychological intervention thus assumes a primal role, in fact, according to Couto (2012) psychological support seems to be central to most, if not all, THB situations, since the impact of this experience tends to be particularly severe at this level.

There are several factors that hinder the victims' identification and the support provided. Some of them result from the hidden nature of the crime, while others have a more systemic nature (Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009; Villacampa & Torres, 2017). The fear of law enforcement plays a crucial role in preventing the identification and the help seeking of the victim. Victims are controlled through psychological means, what makes the fear a way to constrain the processes of reasoning and decision-making (Couto, 2012; Logan et al., 2009). When that happens, even in the face of a possible escape, the victims think that they don't have another choice another than submit to trafficker, or even can't escape successfully .They refrain from reporting to the police or seek help for many reasons, including embarrassment, emotional attachment to the perpetrator, economic dependency, fear of repercussions, either from the perpetrator or even from the authorities (because of their weak legal status, with expulsion as a potential outcome if they are foreign) (Ioannou & Oostinga, 2015; Reid, 2016). Victims of some countries or cultures that distrust law enforcement have a hurdle to overcome that fear, because in their home countries law enforcement and military are the primary perpetrators of THB (Demir & Finckenauer, 2010). The victims may have been conditioned to fear law enforcement by their traffickers to prevent them from seeking help, and they may perceive law enforcement as a threat rather than a source of help (Reid, 2016).The often-successful efforts of traffickers to convince victims that they are criminals and have done something wrong further enforce this problem, because the victims believes that they aren't eligible for protection services

(Poelmans, Elzinga, Ignatov, & Kuznetsov, 2012; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013; Reid, 2016). .

Portuguese Context

In the first evaluation report on Portugal, the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings [GRETA] (2013) welcomed the setting up of the legal and institutional framework for combating THB, including the adoption of national action plans against THB and the setting up of the Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings, however, GRETA (idem) considered that increased attention should be paid to THB for the purpose of labour exploitation, which had been on the rise in Portugal. They also noted the adoption of a national referral system for trafficked persons, but urged the authorities to ensure that, in practice, the identification of victims is dissociated from their participation in investigation and court proceedings. From this directive, the work of Matos, Gonçalves & Maia (2019) analyzed criminal justice process in THB in Portugal, aiming to understand the factors associated with successful convictions. In this work the victim took a central role in the judicial process, regarding the testimony (quality and detail), the collaboration with judicial authorities and even the impact of the exploitation was regarded to a successful conviction. These characteristics together were considered indicative of valid and credible reports, and it is necessary to ensure that the victim can participate within the judicial process, without further victimization, and only an informed approach about the condition of vulnerability of the victim and on trauma can achieve that.

They also underlined that front-line professionals should adopt a more proactive approach to the detection of victims of THB and increase their outreach work. There were also some advices. Concerned by the low number of convictions for THB in Portugal (GRETA, 2013), and the authorities were called out to identify gaps in the investigation procedure and the presentation of cases in court, with a view to ensuring that THB offences are effectively investigated and prosecuted, leading to proportionate and dissuasive sanctions. From this directive the work of Matos, Gonçalves, & Maia (2017) was done on the human

trafficking and criminal proceedings, to access the the discourses of professionals in the justice system.

Another area of concern was the absence of compensation awarded to victims of THB, and GRETA (2013, 2017) urged the authorities to address this gap through improved access to legal aid and increased information to victims about their right to compensation and the procedures to follow. Correspondingly, the GRETA (2017), recognized the efforts made by Portugal, since the last report and the improvements made, but advised to increase and document the use of victim services. Another advice was to be continuing to improve identification and assistance of trafficking, providing further training and guidance to police, NGO's, social workers, community for the identification of possible victims for different forms of exploitation (GRETA, 2017).

To have access to an in-depth understanding of any human experience, is vital direct contact with its main actors. In fact, knowledge of the phenomena whose nature is more hidden, only makes this need more pressing. However, and as would be expected, these are particularly difficult access groups, even though for different reasons (Okech, Morreau, & Benson, 2012; Poppema, 2013; Villacampa & Torres, 2017). Victims are not easily identifiable and often don't mingle in the same contexts to the majority of the population, so that, as a rule, contact with these only occur after their institutional identification and subsequent exit or rescue (Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013, Tyldum, 2010). However, even at this stage, many end up not wanting to establish any contact with institutional services or even talk about that experience, and when they do, it will only be in contexts that inspire them confidence.

For this set of reasons, most studies on THB do not include, in their samples, those victims or, when this is possible, access is essentially through institutional channels. As a rule, the entities are also restrictive concerning the access to spaces such as shelters (Couto, 2012; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013) In Portugal, this scenario becomes even more difficult, given that there is only four specific structures for the support of these victims.

Aim of the study

This exploratory study aims to understand, through victims' experiences, the impact and the subsequent process of help seeking and support. Specifically, we aim to expand knowledge about how the support services, the security forces and the justice system are depicted by trafficking victims.

Method

This study was approved by the Ethics Subcommittee for Social and Human Sciences under the code SECSH 038/2016. APA ethical standards were followed in the conduct of this study alongside with the fundamental principles of intervention of WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Interviewing Trafficked Woman, produced by the Health Policy Unit, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine with the support from the Daphne Programme of the European Commission and the World Health Organization (Zimmerman & Watts, 2003).

Proceedings

For the purpose of this study, a total of the 23 agencies, governmental and non-governmental and the three shelters for THB victims', dispersed throughout the mainland Portugal, that are part of the Network for Support and Protection of Victims of Trafficking, were contacted in order to publicize the study with the victims. This study counted on the collaboration of the national rapporteur for human trafficking in Portugal to disseminate the study between the network. It's a convenience sample, since the study doesn't have the pretense of representation. The researcher who selected the participants for the study did not have any prior contact or knowledge of the participants, safeguarding the possibility of coercion or undue influence for participation in the study. The data collection took place between May and November of 2017. Only the victims giving their informed consent participated in the study. The inclusion criteria were: being a victim or presumed victim of THB; to be at least 18 years old, with no maximum age limit; having undergone some type of exploitation (sexual, labour, extraction of organs, illegal adoption, begging,

slavery and/or exploitation of other criminal activities); having received support by the network; being able to communicate in in one of these languages: Portuguese, English, Spanish or French. There are exclusion criteria (e.g. disabilities) defined at the outset. It was incumbent upon the institution, the respective directors, to inform the researcher in advance of any situation that it deems relevant, considering the inclusion criteria and participation procedures. There was no prior screening of participants by completing tests, interviews, and/or other means of diagnosis in the study. There was no room for any financial/monetary compensation for the participants. Before giving their consent, participants were informed that their participation did not entail any cost to them, and that they could stop the interview at any moment.

Participants

The study sample is a clinical-forensic one, it follows from the fact that the victims come from clinical (medical support) and forensic settings (involvement with the judicial process) and are THB victims. We did not aimed to constitute a representative sample of the group of Portuguese victims, we aimed to access their speeches, either because it allowed us to understand and access their experience as a victim and allowed us for a greater enrichment of the understanding of THB from their idiosyncrasies. Hence, nine volunteered adult sheltered victims of both sexes – (2 females and 7 males), ages between 42-67 years (M= 56.67; SD = 8.411) participated in this study. Table 5 displays the sociodemographic data of the participants to reach a better understanding of the participants and their context. The information that is presented on the table was self-reported by the participant during the interview. That information is the perception of the participant of their own life experiences and victimization

Data collection

The data collection was done through a semi structured interview, carried out *in loco*, in the institution, by the first and second author, with the victims who agreed to participate. The semi-structure interview was built specifically for this study based on a detailed literature review on the subject, regarding

dynamics (victim' vulnerabilities, recruitment, exploitation), impact, victim' identification (facilitators and inhibitors), support (needs assessment) and (re)integration. All the questions were defined before the interview. Therefore, the interview was divided with questions in 6 major sections: before-victimization; recruitment; exploitation; judicial process; support/(re)integration and impact. To achieve the objectives of this study only the data that emerged from judicial process and support/(re)integration and impact questions will be analyzed. The interviews took place in the shelters or other place provided by the shelter institution, whereupon the researcher made sure to mobilize the necessary resources to stabilize possible emotional discomforts, since the shelter have at their disposal service providers who are familiar with the medical and/or psychological assessment of the participant. The interviews were audio recorded audio for later analysis. The recordings were used exclusively for the purpose of this study.

Confidentiality

In the study the biographical data requested in the sociodemographic questionnaire did not identify the participant (e. g., sex, age, country). A code was assigned (the code was the combination of the order in which the interview was performed, the sex and the age of the interviewee). The code was necessary to correspond to the same participant in the various phases of the data analysis.

Analysis

The interviews were transcribed by the first and second authors, after training. The transition scheme was linear, and the type of transcription was naturalized in order to correspond to the thorough transcription of what was said and how it was said. This type of transcriptions advocates the preservation of the different elements of the interview other than the verbal content (such as non-verbal language, contextual aspects, and the interaction between interviewer and interviewee - or third parties involved) (Azevedo et al., 2017). Data was coded by the first author through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), using the

Table 9. Data of the participants

ID	Social Support [c]	Marital Status	Form of exploitation	Level of education [c]	Age	Initial Identification as a victim	Social status [c]	Number of children	sex	Professional situation [c]	Duration of Support	Type of Trafficking	Victimization experiences [d]
1	Living alone	Divorced	Labour	1° grade	57	Hetero identification	Socially inserted	2	Male	Unemployed (looking for a job)	+ than 6 months	Domestic and International	one
2		Single		2° grade	49	Self-identification	Homeless	0	Male			Domestic	More than one
3		Single		No education	63		Homeless	0	Male			Domestic and International	One
4		Married		1° grade	55	Hetero identification	Socially inserted	2	Male		Until 6 months	Domestic	One
5		Single		1° grade	42	Self-identification	Socially inserted	3	Female		+ than 6 months	Domestic	One
6		Divorced		2° grade	62	Hetero identification	Socially inserted	1	Female			International	one
7		Single		1° grade	64		Homeless	0	Male		Until 6 months	Domestic	More than one
8		Divorced		1° grade	65		homeless	2	Male			Domestic	More than one
9	Nuclear Family	Married		1° grade	50		Socially inserted	1	Male		+ than 6 months	Domestic	one

[c] At time of recruitment

[d] This victimization experience refers to the fact that the participant mentioned being victim of exploitation more than once. It is merely the participant's time perception of his own victimization experience.

using the QSR International NVivo 10 Software. The interviews were analyzed based on the emerging themes, using an inclusive criterion (each theme could be included in more than one category). An initial coding grid was used to guide the initial coding, which were later refined and added as inductive codes emerged. The final coding grid included core categories, subdivided by secondary and more ideographic categories. Themes emerged from the data and interpretative work was necessary to identify them. To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, different strategies were adopted, including constant comparative analysis of the data and a dense description of the meanings found therein, further identified in the results section by a detailed presentation and illustration of each category with excerpts of the participants' discourses. Theoretical saturation was reached after analyzing 7 interviews; after that we conducted another two interviews to ensure that there were no new themes on the collected data. Additionally, an independent coder (the second author) analyzed 40% of the interviews, randomly assigned, to ensure data reliability. After independent review by a co-coder, the fidelity rate was calculated using Vala's (1986) formula: F = 2(C1, 2)/C1 + C2. The number of agreements between the codifiers was divided by the total categorizations performed by each: 2(617)/634 + 645 = 0.96. The fidelity rate was of 0.96, which represents an excellent level of agreement (Martins & Machado 2006), allowing confidence in the results obtained. Coding discrepancies were discussed and resolved by the coders by consensus. A senior researcher (third author) audited the coding process.

Results

To facilitate data reading, the results are presented according to the questions that guided the analysis. The themes that merged were "*Impact"*, *"Formal support system"* and *"Post-Victimization"* (Table 10, 11 and 12 displays the theme and sub-themes that emerged from the analysis, respectively). We need to report that these themes and respective sub-themes should not be interpreted as independent of each other, instead, they are related and mutual dependent.

Impact

Half the participants (n=4) reported symptoms that indicated a degree of impact during exploitation and almost all of them (*n*=8) reported symptoms during support (cf. Table 10).

Table 10. Impact: Theme and sub-themes

Theme	Sub-theme	Participants[a]	References[b]
During exploitation		**4**	**8**
During support		**8**	**75**
	PTSD symptoms	7	37
	Fear	4	16
	Control of movements	3	16
	Sadness	3	6

a. Number of participants who mentioned the theme and sub-theme

b. Total number of references that integrated that theme and sub-theme

This theme reflects the discourse on the impact that participants verbalized throughout the interview. It was split into impact during exploitation and during support (when participants reported impact before identification and after identification as a victim, when they were already with support). During the exploitation, the participants described a sense of helplessness that was still vivid in the discourse *"I lowered my morals and stayed in my quiet corner."* (P4).

During the support, almost the majority of the participants, reported symptoms of PTSD: *"I often have nightmares ...", "I even avoid thinking about things!"* (P2). They also reported fear of reprisals of the trafficker and control of movements, even when they are in the shelter: *"No, they know where I really am, that's why they know where I have the house ... they know my family, some that I have around ... that's the fear ... Well, they know where they are. They would get me there, and then, they would make me disappear, they would make me disappear..."* (P1) and even sadness: *"A person becomes ... sadder, emptier ... always thinking the same thing. I think a lot about the subject and then ... take my sleep and I'm sadder ..."* (P6).

Formal support system

All the participants reported a range of perceptions about the formal support system. We have all 9 sources, with 545 references in this theme. From this theme emerged the following sub-themes: (a) Judicial system; (b) psychosocial support system; (c) Referral pathway. (cf. Table 11).

Judicial System

Collaboration with police and court

All the participants mentioned the judicial system as being part of the formal support they received; 7 of them even mentioned to collaborate with the police, before, during and after the complaint be filled. The main reason to the victim's contact with the judicial system before the complaint was the police approach to the victim. Most times the contact with the police took place even before the participant could leave the exploitation: *"They had gone there many times, already."* (P1). The police returned to gather evidence of the exploitation, and the participant was able to report to the police what was happening: *"I told him* [police officer] *everything, everything that went, from beginning to end ... and he* [the police officer] *says: 'all right. You wait and then ... then we'll talk. 'And so, it was! And so, I was there almost, eight or nine more months* (P4). After the initial contact with the authorities, there were participants that remained being exploited until they were removed by law enforcement. Sometimes it took almost nine months: *"They* [the police] *were (hmmm), one day, they went there to be with me. They met me up in the hills with the sheep and had questions and one asked: "Do you want to get out of here?" I said: I could leave today, I'm sick of it!* [the police] *Okay, so you're going to wait a while and we'll come later ... we'll come and get you...* "(P7).

Another way to collaborate with the police was during the criminal charge, when the victims was taken into protective custody and presented before a prosecutor in order to gather their testimony. Most of the participants (n=6) mentioned that they were able to answer the questions from the prosecutor, even if they were difficult: *"It was there the GNR with me. The GNR took me to the police office so I said to them: 'I don't want to go there anymore, if I go they will*

beat and kill me.' And then it was when I came here." (P3). The participants felt the need to tell their story and weren't afraid to speak to the police: *"That's when I confessed everything! I have to tell you the truth, how it was and how it was not!"* (P3).

Six participants reported being in court after the criminal charge, but they did not know what it was or even in what stage was their judicial case: *"Look, when I went to the court. I was speaking and the other one was writing. I signed the first and last name, on one sheet and then I signed the name on another one, three sheets, which she* [the prosecutor] *then said: "These 3 sheets are now going to be delivered to the judge." But I do not know what's going on*. Only one participant had his judicial case concluded, with the conviction of the trafficker.

Feelings associated

There were feelings associated with the collaboration with the police and the court. The participants felt safe and secure to tell their story, and to share their victimization experience, and to answer the questions that were made by the prosecutor. Even if on an initial level they were scared and afraid of retaliations, the police were able to ensure them that they would obtain support and protection, and, through it, the participant could collaborate. The initial apprehension and insecurity were replaced by feelings of hope. Those feelings of hope were associated with the possible future: *"I went to tell you what happened, which is to see if ... I do not know! To see if it goes on. They* [the traffickers] *will see the evil they have done ... I am not afraid I will go forward ... I went* [to the police]*, I already knew for what it was! I had to respond, I had to say, what they were looking for, and I had to answer what was the truth and ... nervous, nervous ... as if I was to say something different but when I started, I told everything, and I no longer felt like this ..."* (P1). The participant revealed that fear was suppressed by the protective action taken by the police forces, which ensured the victim safety. *"I was afraid that going out. That they were there. That the gypsies were out and I was afraid to leave ... I was only afraid to leave, but Mr.* [social worker] *and other people from the police were there.*

They accompanied us, and I felt more at ease. Of course! And I felt more comfortable because two agents were with us." (P1).

Lack of knowledge

This suitable level of collaboration with the judicial system does not mean that the victim knew the situation of the criminal proceedings or was even aware of the stage in which their process was: *"I do not know ... I've been waiting, I do not know how it is ..."* (P1); *"At this moment, I know nothing*." (P8). In fact, only one participant knew that the judicial process ended with a conviction: *"five year of suspended sentence. I do not agree! I do not agree! I agreed if it was that they were inside the jail." (P2).*

Table 11. Formal support system: Theme and sub-themes

Theme	Sub-theme	Participants[a]	References[b]
Judicial System		**9**	**255**
	Collaboration with police	9	130
	Before the complaint	7	46
	During the complaint	6	45
	After the complaint	6	25
	Feelings associated	8	82
	(Lack of) knowledge on criminal proceedings	8	43
Psychosocial Support		**9**	**229**
	Perception and effectiveness	9	149
	Type of support	9	139
	Feelings associated	8	64
	Duration of support	8	13
Referral Pathway		**9**	**61**

a. Number of participants who mentioned the theme and sub-theme

b. Total number of references that integrated that theme and sub-theme

Psychosocial Support

Perception and effectiveness

All the participants mentioned that they were provided with some type of the support. The support was diverse and not very detailed. Nonetheless, we could assess that psychosocial support involved: housing, subsistence (access to basic living conditions (e.g., food, hygiene, clothing – *"I help with chores at home. Everyone helps, those who are there all help. (...) And I think it has already come* [financial help]*, that now appeared a postcard to go raise the post office. It must be the income."* (P1). Access to health services (medical care, psychiatric health problems; psychological support - *"I have to have surgery again."* (P3). Legal support (counseling in the process of regularizing the migratory situation and/or in the context of the criminal process, in the face of their rights as a victim [e.g., request for granting the reflection period, a special residence permit, protection of witnesses]); social support (economic support and/or access to other essential goods, support for educational (re)integration, training and/or labour and housing demand - "*Now I'm waiting to get a job. I'm waiting for a job. I also took a course."* (P6) and the assisted return (access to assisted return programs, with support in the (re) integration process in the community of origin or in another that the victim intends to integrate - *"They were now seeing, because I already said it was to go to my homeland...but they want to see if I can find a home here!"* (P3). However, there was a lack of description about conditions of the support provided. The participants only named them, whether they existed or not, but did not formulate opinions about them (e.g. whether it was appropriate to their needs, whether their will were considered).

Feeling associated

The predominant feelings of the participants were based on the fact, that they had someone to talk to when they needed, and the care and affection from the social worker. The feeling of safety was most important, as the participant 2 mentioned *"It's not a matter of food. I'll tell you what, it's not a question of ... food, it's not a matter of clothing ... it's not a matter of washing clothes. That's all, it's all a help. (...) Exactly! If a person needs anything; talk to the boss; talk*

to the person who is in the house, because when we talk... is by talking that we understand each other, is not it?". The participant 4 also mentioned that being in the shelter changed his life for better *"Changed ... yes, because I talk ... I have the freedom to talk to my colleagues who are there at home ... talk to our boss ... To free oneself ... is ... because, a person, a person will ... it will open gradually ...!" (P4)*.

Duration of support

Almost all the participants reported their perception about the duration of the support, which varied from two months until more than a year.

Referral Pathway

The participants refer several referral pathways, each with a different process of identification and removal from the exploitation. Either by hetero-identification or by self-identification, the process of victim recognition was in all cases an outcome from the coordination of various organizations: judicial authorities (*"To their* [police] *office. Then we went to the court ... afterwards here ..."* (P4), social and/or medical service providers (*"They started calling the social worker, they started calling ... and I did not leave the health center anymore."* (P5).

Post-victimization

All the nine participants referred the **post-victimization** period with 77 references (cf. Table 12), including plans for the future and some learnings as experiential experts (e.g., advices to other persons over their experience).

Table 12. Post-victimization: Theme and sub-themes

Theme	Sub-theme	Participants[a]	References[b]
Plans for the future and experiential experts		**9**	**77**
	Hope in the future	9	39
	Hopelessness	5	8

a. Number of participants who mentioned the theme and sub-theme

b. Total number of references that integrated that theme and sub-theme

All of the participants reported to have plans for their future. Nevertheless, those plans were clearer in the participants that have been supported for more time: *"Now I'm waiting to get a job. I'm waiting for a job. I also took a course. "*(P6); *"Can, can improve, because I have strength yet to improve my situation."* (P1).

The participants that have the support only until two months, have plans but they are not defined. The feelings of hopelessness and embarrassment for being exploited are still very present and creates ambiguous feelings, preventing those participant to see the future in a more clear and optimistic way: *"[...] because if I go this way ... if I arrive this way ... without a little money, for example, my children, I come with empty hands, it's a shame ... so ... at the end of it ... I can ... get a job here."* (P4).

Discussion

This exploratory study aims to understand, through victims' experiences, the impact and the subsequent process of help seeking and support. Specifically, we aim to expand knowledge about how the support services, the security forces and the justice system are depicted by trafficking victims.

The support provided to the victim was portrayed as effective and adequate. The participants (n=9) reported the justice system as essential the removal of the victim. They were confident in the effectiveness of the judicial system in solving their problems and the judicial system was identified as a source of help. This may be facilitated by the fact that these victims were Portuguese, exploited domestically, when comparing to international victims who, according to other researchers, see the law enforcement with distrust (Farrell, Owens, & McDevitt, 2014; Verhoeven & van Gestel, 2011). The participants were able to collaborate with the judicial system (e.g., providing testimony) and the judicial system was able to provide security and trust to these victims, preventing the secondary victimization that the literature has been calling attention. Protocols should be developed by force policies in order to avoiding victim's re-traumatization, increasing safety of all and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of interaction with victims. This is primordial when the victim express

that s/he is willing to testimony in court. Using a trauma-informed care, the provider is able to access the time of the day, the company to testify (whether s/he would a female or male agent) (Helfferich, Kavemann, & Rabe, 2011; Honeyman, Stukas, & Marques, 2016; Matos et al., 2019). This may be a small change but can affect the victim's feelings of increased control and decreased vulnerability, which can have a massive difference in the efficiency and effectiveness of interaction between the victims and the judicial system.

It can be very challenging building a rapport with a victim of THB. The law enforcement must understand the factors that may influence the victim in their interactions (Helfferich et al., 2011; Honeyman et al., 2016) be able to respond in a supportive and soothing manner. The crime of THB is challenging for the investigators, prosecutors and victims service providers alike. To reach a successful criminal investigation, there is a necessity of a suitable collaboration between investigators, prosecutors and a myriad of service providers (being them dependent on the victim's needs) (Matos et al., 2019). Successful THB investigations depend on overcoming such barriers to create a practical and functional cooperation. The task members need to be mindful that THB investigation are purposely victim centered, because the victim supplies the most critical evidence (their testimony) (Helfferich et al., 2011; Matos et al., 2017; 2019). The approach has to be related with the needs, phase and consequences on the victim. But for victims to participate and give their testimony, they need to be stabilized (mentally and physically) and first must feel secure and safe (Barnert et al., 2016; French & Liou, 2016). It is important to take into consideration that the victim participation as a witness is a very complex aspect, and can add additional pressure and result in (re)traumatization (Butler, et al., 2011). The law enforcement and the judicial system need to be informed on trauma-informed care approaches. They need to understand that the victims of THB may have extensive exposure to violence and psychological trauma, that they suffered under very difficult conditions that left them with a sense of hopelessness (that is aggravated by the guilty feeling of being responsible for their own suffering (Freemire, 2017; Hopper, 2017; Salami et al., 2018)). In this case, the professionals who accompany the victim and made her

feel safe, acted and gave evidence that these competences may be present, and if so, they should be disseminated. By providing with education to law enforcement on trauma-informed approaches and improving the victims' understanding of the criminal justice process, we can be able to enhance their cooperation with law enforcement to suppresses this crime (Matos, et al., 2019). The results allude to the efficiency generated by a suitable articulation between police authorities and civil society organizations (the network of psychosocial support).

However, we were not able to comprehend in what models the support was provided. We could identify that initially the adoption of a crisis intervention model was used (meeting the most basic and immediate needs - food, clothes, shelter) and was mentioned as effective and adequate to the needs by the participants. There seems to exist a network well-articulated of services and professionals on this level.

The primary concern of the victim service provider must be the safety and well-being of the victim, which was achieved (Greenbaum, 2016; Hemmings et al., 2016; Kiss et al., 2015), however the victim needs to be informed about choices of the services that s/he wishes to obtain, if s/he is willing to work with law enforcement and immigration (if necessary), and other options (Couto & Fernandes, 2014; Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013). The participants did no indication of those aspects, when they mentioned the support provided. They did not mention being informed of their legal rights or being asked about their support choices. Victim-centered approaches are essential, because they focus on empowerment rather than coercion or even dependency of the victim in the institution (Hopper, 2017). The fact that participants are not aware of their own supportive process leads us to think that they may have passive role in decisions that affect their lives. This victim's passivity in relation to his or her life project hinders adequate and effective support to the needs presented by the victim.

The empowerment of the victim in making their own choices, about their own life, can lead to an establishment of a trusting relationship that can get victims to being able to overcome their trauma and be reintegrated social, educational and professionally (Butler et al., 2011; Hopper, 2017; Okech,

Hansen, Howard, Anarfi, & Burns, 2018). Although there was room for training, courses and professional (re)integration, it was not clear from the participants' speeches whether they played an active role in this decision-making, or whether they did what the service providers advised them to do.

The participants reported behaviors of avoidance and fear of reprisals by the trafficker. The impact was described but in a lesser way than we had expected. This can be explained by the complexity of traumatic experiences and the fact that mental health is a complex issue and is still wrapped in some stigma. The feeling of guilt can play a major role here, in preventing the verbalization and awareness of the impact that the experience of THB had on the participant (Contreras, Kallivayalil, & Herman, 2017; Hopper, 2017). On the other hand, the fact that participants do not verbalize the impact can make it very difficult for supportive approaches to meet their real needs. Empowerment is needed for victims to self-identify as such and to recognize the consequences of THB and their own needs (emphasizing on needs) (Bonanno, 2004; Steiner, Kynn, Stylianou, & Postmus, 2018).

The verbalization of the participants about the duration of/and the support provided does not allow us to characterize to fully extent the quality and effectiveness of support provided. It was also not possible to understand if the victim support network has culturally sensitive services and whether they are being applied or not, as the participants were Portuguese victims and there was no need for translation and/or religious services, among others.

Limitations

The main objective of this study was to access to national and international THB victims' experiences in Portugal. Nevertheless, the participants were voluntarily Portuguese nationals, that suffered from labour exploitation and were living in shelter. Although it was not intended to achieve a representative sample of the victims identified or confirmed in the national territory and of having been made multiple contacts in order to recruit a more substantial sample, the number of participants is small and thus prevent any generalizable conclusion. We also need to address the possibility that, in the

process of selecting the participants, there has been some bias, that is, of the victims who were proposed to be interviewed by the institution, because in their view, the victim selected could be the one with more positive contributions in and are therefore more likely to be able to express their experience.

Conclusion and practical implications

This study opens new avenues for studying the support provided to victims of THB, both national and internationally. Specifically, because it can influence future policies and even practices with all those who contact with victims of THB (service providers, police and even courts) on serving the victims and repressing this crime. This study addresses the need of more studies to analyze the cultural competence of the network that we were not able to do. It would be equally interesting to understand, analyze and evaluate the existence of trauma-informed care interventions in the various service providers (doctors, social workers, judges, lawyers, police, among others). At the same time, it would be interesting to study if the trauma-informed approach has impact on the repression of crime in Portugal (if it enhances the involvement of the victim in criminal prosecution and/or if it helps different criminal police bodies gather evidence leading to a conviction). Another point that would be interesting to study is the type of psychological support that is provided in the network (the (in)existence of protocols or guidelines and the (in)existence of technical supervision). It would also be interesting to understand the effectiveness of interventions that are in practice.

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FINAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

"Discovering is to look at what everyone is seeing and think a different thing."

(Roger Von Oech, 1990)

The study of THB has been consolidated from the past twenty years on an international level and the scientific knowledge on the field is currently diverse. Despite the recent studies in the Portuguese context, there is still a lack of research on victims of THB and on the support system that was implemented nationally to aid the victims. Therefore, the first aim of this research was to understand the specificities, difficulties and challenges working with these victims.

The data from each study were already discussed individually in the previous chapters. Therefore, we do not intent to be exhaustive in the discussion of the results, but we rather intend to reflect about this work from its points of converge/intersection and/or discontinuity between the main findings from each study.

The results of the first study (chapter I) about victims and traffickers', using thematic analysis, showed that the participants portrayal the victim as someone pure and naïve (an ideal victim), and the traffickers as someone very different from an ordinary person. They understand the structural vulnerabilities (e.g., lack of employment) of the victim as the main reason that led to the exploitation, enabling the traffickers to be aware of the victim's life conditions and, therefore, lure them with false promises of a better life. Despite that, 17% of the participants sustained an undifferentiated victim and trafficker portrayal and 6% of them reveal that they have no knowledge of THB and underlying causes.

The second empirical study showed that support provided is very complex (involving victims of different ages, both sexes, target of various types of exploitation [sexual, labour, begging, slavery]). The participants recognized that the needs of trafficking victims differ from the victims of other crimes (e.g., victims of domestic violence), enhancing problems in identifying the victims, with establishing rapport with them, and alongside with the vulnerability s/he

presents, the unwillingly of the victim to participate in legal proceedings. The third (chapter III) and fourth studies (chapter IV), aimed to get a deeper knowledge of the experiences of 9 sheltered victims of human trafficking in Portugal reveled and confirmed the existence of the dynamics of trafficking in human beings, concerning victims and traffickers (e.g., the deception used in the recruitment phase) and also exploitation circumstances (e.g., working conditions, entrapment strategies). This study (chapter III) revealed the predominant process of hetero identification of the victims by members of the community. Despite the control strategies employed by the traffickers, some victims were identified and reported by neighbors to competent authorities.

On the fourth study (chapter IV), the results revealed a positive perception about the support received, by the victims. Having someone to talk to and the feeling of security were the most emphasized key elements of that process. The support was portrayed as effective and adequate, being able to supress the most basic needs of the victims (e. g. food, shelter, clothes). This study also informs us that the victims trust the police and the governmental institutions and is willing to collaborate with the judicial system (providing testimony). Despite this the victim is not aware of his/her own judicial situation and rights (e.g., the possibility to exercise their right to compensation).

We organized this final discussion around 4 areas: 1) key findings drawn from the empirical studies; 2) practical implications (from prevention, intervention and rights enforcement); 3) directions for future research and 4) final remarks.

Key findings

In this section we include the main findings of the studies conducted, in order to analyze, integrate and complement each other. The findings allowed us to widen our understanding about this crime, namely:

Dynamics of THB (recruitment, exploitation and identification of the victims by civil society, social service providers and law enforcement)

Recognize the realities of the lives of the THB victims and the reasons they may submit to the exploitation and understand the challenges and barriers they face when they try to leave are key aspect to prevention and to improve victim identification. The stereotyped profile of the victims and offenders in study 1 prevents victim identification, although in the study 3 the majority of victim's identification were done by someone else other than the victim. This can be explained as follows. Although participants had misconceptions of who is a victim and who is a trafficker, they were able to identify dynamics of THB (control strategies exercised and different forms of exploitation - labour, sexual, organs). Thus, even with misconceptions, when faced with a situation where the characteristics they know of the phenomenon are present (control strategies, among others) that raises a red flags, compelling the person to tell to appropriate authorities, if only for them to ascertain the situation.

As documented in chapter 3, the identification of the victim and their removal from exploitation is mostly hetero identification, which caused the victim to be helped. Raising social awareness for this crime may enhance crime prevention, as well as its discovery and repression. We see this in study of Okech, Morreau, and Benson (2012) where they indicate that the task of victim identification falls on local community members, social service providers, law enforcement personnel, and other first-line responders who can encounter them. However, there is a lack of awareness and inadequate provisions for public education and outreach aimed at understanding and identifying such situations (O'Brien, 2016). The victims are frequently neither recognized nor assisted because there is no education on the community and even in the health and law enforcement personnel who are not trained to identify victims, often viewed as illegal immigrants (Cunha, Gonçalves, & Matos, 2018; Lourenço, Gonçalves, & Matos, 2018; Renzetti, Bush, Castellanos, & Hunt, 2015)

In the chapter 3, there was a victim identification on a health care facility, which resulted in the victim being immediately removed from the exploitation. Health care providers are one of the only groups of professionals who see THB victims before they have even been identified as such. Poppema (2013) stated that the health care providers have a unique opportunity to identify and help the

THB victims while they are still under the control of the criminals who enslave them. Bohnert, Calhoun, and Mittel (2017) go even further and refer that medical schools are uniquely positioned to address this gap. And that all future physicians, regardless of the specialty, must learn to identify victims of THB and refer them to service providers. This idea goes accordingly with the guidelines in the 3rd National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (2014-2017), where was addressed the necessity of including the theme of THB in the curriculum of the universities. Ahn et al. (2013) clearly mentioned that a robust health care response, requires a workforce that is aware of the health impact of this crime; educated about how to identify and treat affected individuals in a compassionate, culturally aware and trauma-informed manner; and also trained about how to collaborate efficiently with law enforcement and case management.

Intervention with THB victims

There is a certain agreement in the perception of the needs of the victims between the service providers and the victims, regarding the need for the victim to talk someone about their experience. As Salami, Gordon, Coverdale and NGuyen (2018) stated, THB victims are a heterogenous population with diverse experiences, and thus their mental and physical health and treatment need may differ as a result of the experience of exploitation. Therefore, the treatment and care cannot be provided similarly across individuals and there are considerations that need to be made according to individual characteristics that may impact the treatment. Factors such as cultural background, level of acculturation, and language should be considered and explored, as these factors may increase differences in the course of the treatment. Obtaining an accurate history of the victim (on the recruitment, exploitation and impact) can lead to more effective treatment plans, recommendations, and better overall outcomes and can reduce the potential for individuals becoming re-victimized (Nguyen, Coverdale, & Gordon, 2017).

The treatment should be individualized to the client's unique experience. Being able to obtain an accurate accounting of trafficking history can lead to

more effective treatment plans, recommendations, and better overall outcomes and can also reduce the possibility for individuals revictimization. Human trafficking victims benefit greatly when provided with a safe, stable and predictable environment (Reichert & Sylwestrak, 2013). Understanding a patients' trafficking history helps inform treatment and future interventions which can help break the cycle of re-victimization. Biopsychosocial interventions implemented can interrupt the cycle of victimization and re-victimization by addressing patients' multiple vulnerabilities (helping patients to access available resources and assisting them with future plans) (Nguyen et al., 2017). To achieve that is necessary to adopt a trauma-informed care approach (Butler et al., 2011; Freemire, 2017; Hopper, 2017; Salami et al., 2018). Providers at different levels of care and stages in training may interact with patients and provide them with safe spaces to talk about and process the details of their victimization (Nguyen et al., 2017).

It is important that all service providers understand trauma and how trauma affects victims' response to services and even criminal process, and the individual task force members' response to victims (Hom & Woods, 2013; Hornor, 2015; Pascual-Leone, Kim, & Morrison, 2017; Salami et al., 2018). Education and training in basic information about trauma are necessary to all the service providers (medical, mental health, social workers, legal and judicial system), all staff of an organization or the people that contact with the victim, must understand how violence impact the lives of the people being served, so that every interaction is consistent with the recovery process and reduces the possibility of re-traumatization (Butler et al., 2011; Wilson & Butler, 2014). Protocols should be developed by force policies and service providers in order to avoiding victim's re-traumatization, increasing safety of all and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of interaction with victims. This is very important when the victim express that s/he is willing to testimony in court (Helfferich, Kavemann, & Rabe, 2011; Honeyman, Stukas, & Marques, 2016; Matos, Gonçalves, & Maia, 2017; Matos et al., 2019). This may be a small change but can affect the victim's feelings of increased control and decreased vulnerability, which can have a massive difference in the efficiency and effectiveness of

interaction between the victims and the different service providers and law enforcement. The law enforcement could provide the victim with the confidence and security in court proceedings, yet, it seemed to us that there was a certain passivity of the victim in his/her own support process, by not knowing the status of the judicial case and even in the decision making process (e. g. about professional (re)integration and education) regarding their future.

A trauma-informed care begins with understanding the physical social and emotional impact of the trauma on the victim (Dell et al., 2017; Freemire, 2017; Muraya & Fry, 2015; Salami et al., 2018). It incorporates three main elements: first, realizing the prevalence of the trauma; secondly, recognizing how trauma affects the victim involved with the program, organization/system, including its own workforce; thirdly, responding by putting this knowledge on practice (Butler et al., 2011). Surprisingly the victims reported few aspects related to the impact. The fact that not even the victims are prepared to speak may indicate that they were not educated for the trauma and feelings they may be experiencing. When using trauma-informed care, the services providers realize the widespread impact of trauma on victims and understand the paths for healing (they are able to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma and consequently reply by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices) (Freemire, 2017). This method priority is ensure the victim's safety and security safeguarding her against policies and practices that may unintentionally traumatize victims (Butler et al., 2011; Wilson & Butler, 2014. Progress cannot be made on more complex emotional issues when a person is at imminent risk or perceived risk of harm (Maslow, 1943).

A "trauma-informed" services and "trauma-specific" services are not the same, according to Butler et al., (2011). Trauma-informed services are informed about, and sensitive to, the potential for trauma-related issues to be presented in individuals, regardless of whether the issues are directly or obviously related to the presenting complaint or condition. They go even further stating that trauma-informed services are not designed to treat the sequelae of traumatic experiences, instead trauma-specific services are designated expressly to treat the symptoms and syndromes related to current or past trauma. Whereas each

individual's experience of trauma may be different, it is crucial to understand how it can affect the individual's coping mechanisms and lead to the initiation of biologically driven survival strategies (Ghafoori & Taylor, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2017; Okech, Hansen, Howard, Anarfi, & Burns, 2018). We need to consider that the majority of trafficking situations are the culmination of many traumatic experiences (Salami et al., 2018) that are often untreated. The trauma affects how the victims see themselves (as worthless or powerless), their worldview (no one can protect me) and even how they regard their relationships (altering their feeling of trust) (Cecchet & Thoburn, 2014; Pascual-Leone et al., 2017; Sandhu et al., 2013). The establishment of a trusting relationship with the therapist and the therapeutic relationship may be more difficult when supporting THB victims', given the betrayal that many trauma survivors experienced in their paste relationships (Reid, 2016; Rosenblatt, 2014). There are steps that must be given, in different times, when building a trusting relationship with the victim, and are essential for the victim to feel that s/he can disclose their problems to the therapist (Butler et al., 2011). If the victims, like our participants, are not willing to verbalize and talk about impact, that can prevent adequate support and delay recovery.

Although we want victims to talk about their victimization experience; the respect for the emotional limits of the victim and not pressuring him/her to disclose the victimization are essential in the construction of a trusting relationship. By making the victim responsibilities and even tasks clear, explaining the therapeutic process, addressing confusions and ambiguities can enhance the victim's feelings of safety and trust. Also respectful and consistent practice of informed consent and strict confidentiality are essentials (Butler et al., 2011). However, active consent can be a challenge because the service providers are often seen as authorities and some victims may have a tendency to be compliant while other may feel the urge to push back against recommendations in order to fell some sense of control (Hopper, 2017; Matos et al., 2017). The building of a rapport relationship is essential to support these victims.

By recognizing that freedom and self-determination are taken by the trafficker(s), a trauma-informed approach places the power of choice with each victim. This means that change (anything from leaving the trafficking situation, to accepting medical or mental health care, to replacing maladaptive coping strategies with more effective tools) often occurs at a different pace and by a different direction than a provider might hope. The assessment framework should be respectful of different frameworks and individual perspectives. The provider should work to become culturally informed, with "culture" referring to the victim background factors that influence a person's view of themselves and the world (Hopper, 2017). By doing that, the victim is treated as the expert on his/her own life (Butler et al., 2011). But to achieve this, the victim must have a significant role in planning and evaluating the services s/he receives; their preferences must be attended where possible in setting goals and developing treatment priorities. Doing this, the psychological assessment becomes a tool to be an empowering process for each victim. The victim is understood as a human being, with unique characteristics (interests, concerns, strengths, and roles) rather than solely a "survivor" of THB (Hopper, 2017; Kiss et al., 2015; Nguyen et al., 2017; Salami et al., 2018). By emphasizing on personhood instead of the victims/survivor status the groundwork for the development of a life narrative that can shift from self-blame (beyond the perception of self as a victim/survivor) to a view or herself as a person (someone more than just the sum of the difficult life experiences) (Wilson,2009).

By highlighting the strengths and resilience, together with exploring coping strategies of personal strength that have been used in the past, we empower the victim (Bonanno, 2004; Hopper, 2017). As Maslow (1943) states, without meeting the most basic needs, it is difficult to turn to emotional needs, especially mental health impact on THB victims, therefore needs assessment is often an initial step in assessment of survivors of THB. Meeting the most basic need, as the ones stated above (housing, mental and medical health, education and job training and legal need) are essential and can contribute to de development of a trusting relationship (Hopper, 2017). This aspect seems to be adequate in the support provided to the victims of these studies.

Setting goals (being them short and/or long-term one) is the beginning for a positive future orientation, providing emotional containment to assessment of the topics that are more intense (such as trauma narrative and post-traumatic reaction to the trafficking experience) (Hopper, 2017) is very important. This topic was one of the aspects where the participants were lacking in verbalizations, leading us to believe in their passivity on decision-making (regarding their life choices and treatment). By, using an empowerment approach, the victim's goals are often translated into recommendations to service providers or even the criminal justice system, amplifying the voice of each victim, highlighting his/hers main concerns, and helping them to advocate for themselves (Hopper, 2017; Matos et al., 2017, 2019).

In general, the victim trusted in the police forces, despite not knowing about the status of the judicial process. The profile of Portugal in this aspect is different from the international profile. May also be since the victims interviewed are all Portuguese, know the language and there is an overall social positive perception of law enforcement. We do not know whether foreign victims have this same perception about the police and the justice system. The involvement in the criminal proceedings is done with some obstacles (fear, insecurity before the judge, the need to speak repeatedly on the subject), despite referring the protective measures taken by the police. The police were able to provide a sense of security to the victim. Nevertheless, in order to improve the victim collaboration with the judicial process, the police need to have education and training on trauma-centered approaches to help to improve results for law enforcement, by leading effective investigative interviews of the victim and witnesses, maximizing the chances of cooperation with law enforcement, and helping to structure the search for evidence to present a trauma-informed story in court. That could turns those involved in the judicial process to better understand the effects of trauma and properly evaluate testimony and reliability in reaching a verdict (Helfferich et al., 2011; Korkodeilou, 2016; Matos et al., 2019, Risan, Binder, & Milne, 2017).

We need to take into account that the beliefs of the victim about the justice system affect how victims respond to the criminal justice system, both the

investigation and prosecution process (Matos et al., 2019; Salami et al., 2018). If it is true that the participants reveal to trust in the police, is also true that they reveal no knowledge about their own judicial process, the procedures where they participated, and even the status of the same. The Group of Experts on action against Trafficking in Human Beings [GRETA] (2017) reinforces this idea. They advised to ensure that the victims are offered with measures of protection and assistance and that the staff performing the victims' identification should be issued with clear instructions, regarding the needs to offer the recovery and reflection period, defined by the Convention. They similarly advise to not making the rights of the victim conditional on the victim's cooperation and offer the support and information about rights, before formal statements are made to investigators. This result highlights the need to improve collaboration between the judicial forces (judges, lawyer's, police officers, detectives) and the service providers in order to involve and keep the victim informed in their own legal process.

There are difficulties also on implementing laws. For example, according to the victims participated in the studies, there are no compensation records. That happened in cases where the process was still running in the court, or because the participant did not know if there was a compensation. GRETA (2017) urges the Portuguese authorities to take steps to resolve this issue, by including victim compensation in training programmes for law enforcement official, prosecutors and judges. For the results present until now, we can see that the GRETA (2017) report outlines a correct diagnosis of the THB situation in Portugal, regarding victims' protection and assistance.

There was another aspect, concerning the identification and removal of the victim that raises concerns. From the identification by competent authorities to the removal of the victim it took a long time. This is due to the need for criminal polices to gather criminal evidence so they can build a court case leading to a conviction. This issue raises a lot of ethical questions as Tyldum (2010) states, perhaps because it would be extremely difficult to defend ethically an investigation where we were to identify victims of trafficking, interview them and then leave them to continue a life exploited by traffickers, which happened

to four participants of our studies. To collect information about ongoing abuse, exploitation and coercion (if the victims are aware that this information is obtained - which was the case, because the police identified themselves as such), and then not act immediately to change their situation was likely to ruin any belief the victim had in any hope of being rescued. In this studies that didn't happen because the participants were hopeful that someday the police would come again to remove them from that exploitation, but that may not be the case with all the victims. And, if the main task of the criminal investigation is to identify victims in order to rescue them from traffickers, it will be very hard to legitimize putting cooperation with the police forces as a prerequisite for being assisted. We understand the difficulties of gathering criminal evidence to achieve a conviction in THB crime (Farrell, Owens, & McDevitt, 2014; Kangaspunta, 2015; Matos et al., 2019; Spohn, 2014), but the lives of those who are being exploited are at stake and every second that passes is another second of victimization.

In sum, THB in Portugal has several characteristics that are similar to what is known literature on the theme (e.g. dynamics of recruitment, control strategies and exploitation) that create barriers to the victim' help-seeking process and, consequently, contributes to the social invisibility of this crime and impunity in some cases, Nonetheless, it has also some specificities (e.g., the trust of the victim in the police forces) which can be enhanced in order to improve victim identification.

Methodological Reflection

The difficult access to the sample was specified alongside the development of this dissertation. As Tyldum states (2010). as long as we acknowledge these difficulties and make them explicit in our research, is possible to achieve good quality research. We decided to pinpoint this idea because this was a major issue in the development of the empirical studies.

The fact that institutions remain closed in themselves prevents a symbiotic relationship with scientific research and the production of knowledge.

This constraint, although concealed in each chapter of this dissertation, must be considered in future research. Although there are studies that inform us of this difficulty in accessing this type of population Tyldum & Brunovskis (2005,) and Tyldum (2010) and of the ethical considerations necessary for the development of research in this area (Zimmerman, 2003), we emphasize that in our case there were institutional barriers that almost undermined access to the sample. Despite the involvement of the national rapporteur on THB and the request made to the Committee on Equality and Citizenship (IGC) and the authorization to the development of the studies on the network that provides support to THB victims, there were too many obstacles to accessing the institutional actors of the support provided to these victims and the victims themselves. If it is true what Tyldum (2010) states, that most of our knowledge of THB victims is based on studies of victims who get assistance in shelters or other assistance programs in countries of destination or origin, and alert us to challenges accessing these samples, it is also true that institutions must be available and accessible to participate in the production of knowledge that will ultimately benefit its procedure and practices, particularly when there are authorizations and all the ethical and moral procedures associated with the investigation are guaranteed.

Practical implications

The main findings can bring us first-hand and useful information that might be helpful for policymakers, social services providers, the victims themselves and even the society. One of the main goals of this dissertation was to make some contributions for academic and professional practice. Given the complexity of the phenomenon, intervention must be multilevel and multidimensional, based in proactive action (identification of victims, their protection and assistance in preventing and repressing this crime). When providing support to victims of THB, this issues should be considered and all the efforts should be taken to ensure that the victims are with service providers who let them comfortable disclosing information (Hemmings et al., 2016; Salami et al., 2018). It is necessary to service providers to make acquainted

themselves with beliefs, values and cultural practices of their "clients" so they can be able to provide culturally knowledgeable care.

First and foremost, is important to continue educating the broad population on this subject in order to improve identification and prevention. The education of health service providers on this subject is a necessity, to promote awareness on this thematic and also to improve identification on the health services (Ahn et al., 2013; Dean, 2013; Hadjipanayis, Crawley, Stiris, Neubauer, & Michaud, 2018; Ramnauth, Benitez, Logan, Abraham, & Gillum, 2018). The fact that there are victims that came into contact with the health care service was a reality in our studies, therefore we cannot rule out the possibility of that happening again. We must be prepared and educated on how to deal with those situations without putting anyone (service provider, victims, or other) in harm's way.

Education on the nature, etiology and contexts of THB are a key component to inform professionals and policy makers on how they should best address to act to reduce and prosecute this crime. Until research reconcile all findings and the policy makers have a clear understanding of the nuances of THB, some victims may be unidentified (unable to receive support and the perpetrators will be able to run free and victimize others). Therefore, it is important that practices are driven by theory that is supported by good quality empirical research (Tyldum, 2010). The approach to THB crime is defined as the systematic focus on the needs and concerns of a victim to ensure the compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner (Zimmerman & Watts, 2003). A victim-centered approach seeks to minimize re-traumatization 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 (Burton, Cooper, Feeny, & Zoellner, 2015; Hopper, 2017; Steiner, Kynn, Stylianou, & Postmus, 2018; Walklate, 2011).

All professionals involved in THB cases must advocate for the victim. It will require patience, empathy and compassion, all fundamental principles of

the trauma-informed care approach. By educating those who work directly with the victim on how to deal with trauma, we can better consider ways of partnership around victim safety (Matos et al., 2017, 2019; Renzetti et al., 2015). While respecting the victim's right to make choices about his/her life, working together, service providers can help ensure that victims make informed decisions. For example, a victim service provider that is concerned about the safety of a victim might be able to ask their law enforcement partner to have a check-in meeting with the victim, without compromising confidentiality. The provider can encourage the victim to share the concerning information directly with law enforcement (Orme & Ross-Sheriff, 2015; Reid, 2013; Steiner et al., 2018).

Although prosecutors are responsible for ensuring that the victim is afforded their rights, it is also necessary that the victim is made aware of available services, it is also necessary to notify the victim of significant actions and proceedings within the criminal justice pertaining to their cases, notify the victim of crime about the victim compensation and even if there is necessity to access emergency funds, to receive restitution and compensation for unpaid wages. To better elucidate the victim, is necessary accompaniment to all criminal proceeding by a victim advocate or any other person providing support or assistance, in order to have the prospect to provide, prior to the sentencing of a defendant, an impact statement detailing the physical, psychological and economic impact of the THB crime upon the victim and/or their families (David, 2008; Farrell et al., 2012; Ferguson, 2012; Helfferich et al., 2011; Nichols & Heil, 2015; Reid, 2013).

Summarizing, only by integrating research and action on the level of awareness, prevention, and intervention it would be possible to aim for the eradication of THB and contribute to the implementation of the dignity of human being and their rights.

Directions for future research

This study has an exploratory nature. It started a pathway of research about victims and the service providers in Portugal and extended the research that is being made on an international level. Along the chapters of this dissertation we were able to discuss concepts, practices and inherent limitations. Consequently, future studies should focus on the victims (preferentially national and foreign) and other types of exploitation and their idiosyncrasies to continue inform the practice and to contribute do the adoption of preventive and interventive measures that meet the needs of these victims. Therefore, future research should address what is a successful case in intervening with the victims. If it is getting out of the exploitation, and/or the termination of symptoms, and/or ultimately, if it is (re)integrating the victim. Further studies are needed in the case of re-victimization by trafficking in victims who have been exploited multiple times. It is also necessary to study the effectiveness of the support (concerning quality and type of support that provided). It is urgent to analyze the trauma informed care competence among service providers and similarly, analyze the cultural competence among service providers, and the ability to care for foreign victims (with different cultures and backgrounds).

Studies with the police are necessary, as far as their knowledge on the subject, on the practices that are being used and their effectiveness. Regarding the victim's involvement in the criminal process, and factors that prevent or even enhance the victim's involvement in the judicial process.

Final remarks

We conclude this dissertation with a reflection on the paths made and how our research work evolved throughout this project. We began this work in 2015 and faced some difficulties, regarding the access to collect a sample (being service providers or gaining access to the victims).

Despite these difficulties we are convinced that these were positive signs for positive developments. We hope to continue to contribute actively to the recognition of this phenomenon by providing knowledge to inform the society, the service providers and the criminal policy of the actual needs of THB victims.

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“Primeiro sê livre; depois pede a liberdade.”

(Fernando Pessoa)