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Modern Slavery: a System of Exploitation. Study on Vulnerability Factors' Dynamics

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*“Una società che rispetti tutte le libertà meno una.
Quella di sfruttare il lavoro di altri esseri umani,
perché questa libertà tutte le altre distrugge e rende vane”*

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Abstract

Modern slavery is a hidden social reality that still affects the labour force of European countries. In Italy, migrant workers are among the most vulnerable social groups to exploitative labour dynamics, because of various vulnerability factors. The thesis looks at modern slavery through the lens of social workers fighting against labour exploitation. Exposing the most prominent theoretical approaches, the paper distinguishes different concepts related to modern slavery and relevant public policies. With qualitative analysis, vulnerability factors are investigated empirically, describing all dimensions of exploitation in detail, its logic and its conditions. The paper describes the widest spread profiles of the victim, the migratory paths, the living conditions, the dynamics of ethnic networks, and the condition of dependency. It investigates the cultural perception of migrant workers towards conditions of exploitation, together with the role of public policies on migration, the role and attitude towards public services, and it analyses the possibilities to exit exploitation given by public programs to contrast modern slavery. The different vulnerability factors are subsequently analyzed in their interactions, aiming to describe causal complexity using Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). Distinguishing between necessary and sufficient conditions, the paper describes modern slavery searching for the most present combinations of vulnerabilities. Lastly, it is implemented a vulnerability assessment tool for the use of social operators and policymakers, by ordering vulnerability factors and assessing their role. Such operation follows proper theoretical interpretation and combines the findings of qualitative analysis with the QCA, proposing a new methodology for the assessment of hidden and causally complex social phenomena.

Keywords: labour exploitation; migration; public policies; vulnerability assessment.

La schiavitù moderna è un fenomeno sociale invisibile, ma che ancora oggi è presente in vari paesi Europei. In Italia, i lavoratori migranti sono tra i gruppi sociali più esposti alle dinamiche di lavoro sfruttato a causa di vari fattori di vulnerabilità. La tesi guarda alla schiavitù moderna attraverso l'esperienza degli operatori sociali impegnati nella lotta contro lo sfruttamento sul lavoro. Mediante l'utilizzo di diversi approcci sociologici, vengono esposti i vari concetti connessi alla schiavitù moderna e alle relative politiche pubbliche. Utilizzando l'analisi qualitativa, i fattori di vulnerabilità vengono descritti empiricamente, analizzando nel dettaglio lo sfruttamento, la sua logica e le sue condizioni. La ricerca descrive il profilo più comune della vittima di sfruttamento, i percorsi migratori, le condizioni di vita, le dinamiche delle reti etniche nonché le condizioni di dipendenza. Sono state inoltre indagate la percezione culturale dei lavoratori migranti rispetto alle proprie condizioni di sfruttamento, l'importanza delle politiche pubbliche sull'immigrazione, il ruolo e l'atteggiamento verso i servizi pubblici e le possibilità di uscire dallo sfruttamento fornite dai programmi pubblici di contrasto alla schiavitù moderna. Successivamente, utilizzando l'Analisi Qualitativa Comparata (QCA) vengono analizzate le interazioni fra i vari fattori di vulnerabilità, sottolineando la complessità causale del fenomeno. Distinguendo tra condizioni necessarie e sufficienti, la ricerca descrive la schiavitù moderna cercando le combinazioni di vulnerabilità più presenti. Infine, viene proposto uno strumento di valutazione della vulnerabilità pensato per l'uso da parte degli operatori sociali e dei decisori politici che permette di ordinare i fattori di vulnerabilità e valutarne il ruolo. Questa operazione segue una re-interpretazione teorica e combina i risultati dell'analisi tematica con quelli della QCA, proponendo una nuova metodologia per la valutazione dei fenomeni sociali nascosti e causalmente complessi.

Parole chiave: sfruttamento lavorativo; migrazione; politiche pubbliche, valutazione della vulnerabilità.

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in its goal number 8.7 asks to *“take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour [...]”*.

The Global Slavery Index, one of the main available global estimations of modern slavery, highlights that in Europe in 2018 there are still *“critical gaps in protections for groups such as irregular migrants, the homeless, workers in the shadow or gig economy, and certain minorities. These gaps, which are being actively exploited by criminals, need urgent attention from governments”*.

Such calls to actions bring the attention of social sciences on contemporary phenomena of extensive exploitation tantamount to slavery, today generally referred to as modern slavery. As such condition keeps afflicting people in every part of the world, there is still low knowledge on the actual numbers of modern slaves and on the causes and mechanisms behind the practice. Thus, it is necessary for social science to build deeper knowledge and understanding on how to fight it.

In this light, the attempt of the present dissertation is to analyze the conditions favoring exploitation of migrant workers in Italy, with particular reference to violations up to modern slavery. Such research question is focused on investigating possible causal combinations of vulnerability factors that favor the development of modern slavery, with the aim to fight it. The dissertation does not provide new estimates of the extension of this form of heinous exploitation but contributes to the analysis of how the different conditions leading or favoring exploitation develop and interact. Understanding what a phenomenon is and how it works is necessary to be able to correctly measure it and fight it. Modern slavery is indeed a hidden phenomenon and quantitative data are scarce and only partially reliable. The thesis possesses an explorative qualitative nature and should be regarded as a strong contribution to the present limited understanding. Indeed, there is small literature among social sciences that analyzes modern slavery conditions in western countries, as the biggest focus when speaking of vulnerability factors are usually the countries of origin (investigating phenomena such as population growth, poor economic conditions and high levels of corruption). Moreover, usually such literature and also NGOs' reports speak mainly of victims of trafficking (Bales, 2006). Thus, the dissertation brings an important contribution to this knowledge gap, setting the stage for further elaborations.

The methodology of data gathering is based on interviews to privileged observers. Social operators are found to be the most competent and informed sample through which indirectly study the conditions of exploitation and related vulnerability factors. Enabling to investigate different job sectors and geographical areas, social operators are a valuable source of information for a case study, even within a small-n sampling approach. They reflect a bias but well-informed perspective from where social sciences can start to understand and

explain what is defined as modern slavery, describing a partial but valid representation of what modern slavery is and how it works¹.

The research focuses on the Italian case. Italy is at the forefront of recent migration routes towards Europe (GRETA, 2019) and it enjoys a peculiar system of social assistance and integration towards victims of trafficking and modern slavery, able to specifically select victims of labour² exploitation (Degani, 2020).

Migrants are selected as the social group of interest because they are found at the center of vulnerabilities leading to exploitation in the contemporary globalized world (Villacampa et al., 2022; Xu & Jordan, 2016). Literature (Kara, 2017) shows how migration is involved in almost 50% of modern slavery cases. Furthermore, migrants are nationally oppressed, as they do not belong to the dominant class nor culture, enjoying a negative identity as non-countrymen (Probsting, 2015). The low-wage migrant workforce is defined as the archetypal exploitable workforce that is wanted in globalized capitalistic economies (Scott, 2017). In Europe, migrants are increasing their presence over the years and yet are only partially protected by the States legislations; in Italy, a relatively recent mixed migration flow has called the country to deal with a complex and heterogeneous phenomenon composed of different individual situations, goals and needs, while an emergency approach has been adopted to answer systemic phenomena such as exploitation and movement of people (Degani, 2017). Migration is highlighted in literature as a factor of vulnerability to drive working poor's experience (Carrieri, 2012; Gundogan et al., 2005). Yet, literature is weak on studying the connection between such situations and modern slavery, thus not efficient in its prevention.

The thesis begins with an introduction to the historical and theoretical understanding of modern slavery, followed by a description of the proposed definition, the elements of exploitation and the social conditions of vulnerability, in line with the most prominent sociological literature. Furthermore, it describes the European and Italian legal framework to give some necessary macro-level elements of context. Methodologically, the dissertation adopts a multimethod approach³, summing different analysis to dig into empirical data and formulate a causal interpretation of modern slavery. The methods used, built on a sample of around 20 interviews, are qualitative thematic analysis and Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), each developed in a separate chapter of the thesis. The first methodology uses the Nvivo software for Qualitative Analysis and deeply values and elaborates on every dimension investigated, describing to the readers the conditions of vulnerability. The QCA then extracts all possible causal combinations and reduces data complexity, with the help of the R software, to combine conditions into a coherent set of possibilities that

¹ Further details on the sample are described in paragraph 4.1

² The present dissertation generally adopts the spelling of American English. However, labour is left in its British spelling to reflect the use of sociological literatures (see paragraph 2.6) and international law language.

³ Multimethod research, differently from mixed methods, refers to the use of more than one technique of analysis, that can be qualitative or quantitative. Indeed, the nature of QCA is still open to debate.

lead to the outcome of modern slavery. The richness of the interviews is minimized into presence or absence of selected vulnerability factors, producing a vulnerability matrix and highlighting all those causal combinations of conditions that appear most dangerous. Considering both analyses, the thesis presents a theoretical interpretation of the causality behind modern slavery, using sociological theories to make order of empirical findings. Finally, based on the findings of the previous analysis and its interpretation, the thesis turns the analysis into an assessment tool, producing an instrument that can be used on field by social operators to measure the degree of vulnerability of a migrant worker, answering to the protective intent of the dissertation. The instrument also represents a valuable indicator for policy's priorities.

The thesis expects to give an important contribution to the knowledge of social science on modern slavery and to represent a valuable methodology to define a possible causal framework, select vulnerability factors and prevent them when studying hidden social phenomena. It also represents a guide for preventive policies and Human Rights legal understanding (Stoyanova, 2018), enhancing early identification of possible victims.

1. EVOLUTION OF THE SLAVERY CONCEPT

1.1 Historical perspective of slavery

Slavery is nowadays a concept difficult to define. However, the popular idea attached to the word historically refers to chattel slavery, which on the contrary is a very clear phenomenon where slaves constitute part of the property of a legal owner, an idea rooted in history and common to many human societies, described in books and popular tales. Adopting mainly a western perspective, as the present dissertation is embedded in Europe and Italy, the thesis shows how law, culture and religion have been used across time to differentiate owners from slaves, along clear lines that appeared natural and part of the divine order. War prisoners or descendants of slaves “naturally” became slaves and no right to exit such relationship was given to them except through the will of the owner, who was entitled to profit from their work. This sociological phenomenon existed since ancient times: societies with feudal or absolute monarchic systems developed justifications for the existence of slavery, enshrined in power distribution. The Spanish and Portuguese kings had the rights, endorsed by the Pope, to enslave any “Saracen and pagan” (Drescher, 2009). Before that time, feudal knights were not new to enslave prisoners of war and exchange them, both in the Nordic seas and in the Mediterranean, where western Christians could enslave Byzantine Christian prisoners.

Slavery was particularly present in borders area, where different cultures met and fought. Part of the reason is because societies gradually started to see their own members as impossible to enslave on religious and ideological grounds, whereas outsiders (for instance Muslims or native Americans populations from the European perspective) still could be, together with internal non-members such as heretics, Jews or ethnic minorities. Such feeling of brotherhood was indeed developed both in Europe and in the Islamic world where heretic communities, liable of slavery, were for instance the Shiites. The Mediterranean States could profit from their border position between different cultures, as did the Crimean Peninsula. Such commerce was in both directions and curiously, up to 1640s there were more European slaves sent to North Africa, than Africans sent to Americas. Such ratio totally changed in the second part of the seventeenth century with the full establishment of the Atlantic route between Europe, Africa and America.

By the sixteenth century (Drescher, 2009), European States saw such condition to be less and less present on their countries, but still persisted in few areas (as serfdom in Russia) or in foreign countries, as well as in their colonies. With the increasing of international relations the antislavery sentiment crossed borders, but still it met with the popular perception of normality of such practice: “*a matter agreed from the times of Adam*”, as from the Ottoman sultan’s words (Drescher, 2009). Additionally, also in the European enlightenment societies the “others” were still seen as possible slaves.

When the slave commerce turned between Europe and Africa to gain forced labour for the Americas, in the economy of sub-Saharan Africa slaves were a great source of wealth, something comparable to the role of

land ownership in Europe. Slavery was still present in many societies with which Europeans were now in contact. Thus, European colonial powers favored the system, building justifications for the exploitation of native populations together with slaves coming from Africa and, in lower numbers, Asia (Spain indeed turned Filipino islands into a great slavery base). However, no Europeans were brought to be enslaved in the new world because the exploitation of similar cultures became no more acceptable at that time. Moreover, both Iberian monarchies and England saw no favorable conditions to the enslavement of internal populations and the international balance of power in the Americas was helpful in leaving aside intra-European enslavement (Drescher, 2009). This, together with the developing of homogeneous country identities on cultural and religious ground, combined to the enlightenment ideals and to a new system of distribution of power, made it not possible for local lords to enslave fellow Christians or citizens of the same kingdom, without a specific will or agreement with the higher authorities. The rule of law that developed thanks to the European historical circumstances and environment favored the absence of slavery from the European continent while in the rest of their colonies it was still practiced. Yet, with the flow of time, such division between the center of the State and the periphery, or colony, shrunk providing conflicting situations such as the Somerset case trial where slavery was recognized illegal in the United Kingdom but legal in Virginia, arising public outrage and confusion.

Drescher does not attribute particular importance to slave rebellions (like the Haitian revolt), liberations or to the increasing of mixed populations in the colonies, but those factors did contribute to the creation of a liberation principle in the colonies that started to gain independence and evolve similarly to their former rulers. Indeed, in 1815 the Declaration relative to the universal abolition of slave trade was signed at the Vienna Congress among the victorious powers of the Napoleonic wars, which began an international domino effect for the abolishment of the practice: in 1833 was the British empire, in 1848 the French one and in 1861 Russia banished serfdom (the condition of being serf of the local master's feud). Also, in 1840 the first anti-slavery convention took place in London and reinforced the global anti-slavery effort. However, history brought forward two main problematic situations: on one side the need to proceed gradually and push towards de-legalization instead of eradication, and on the other the replacement of slavery with forms of forced, bounded or coerced labour.

Subsequently, as the anti-slavery effort became global, colonies switched from slavery to contract labour, even if trying to maintain a certain level of exploitation to their advantage, favored by the persistence of the slave relationship that was still seen as something totally natural from both sides of the labour relation. People were indeed subject to the risk of poverty and starvation, since a basic income was not granted from the owner outside the slavery relationship. In India or in the Sokoto caliphate of northern Nigeria, England pushed for emancipation through court cases in situations of runaways or rebellions, but did not directly favor a wider change of the social order to avoid any extended situation of conflict and public disorder (Brown

& Van Der Linden, 2010; Drescher, 2009). Such gradual de-legalization process was also common to French western Africa, where mass flees of former slaves represented a serious problem of social order. Moreover, contrary to the capitalistic theory of major productivity from emancipated labour, slaves still represented a consistent advantage for colonial economies. Arguably, England (more than others) promoted bilateral agreements to abolish slave trade and slavery while attacking slave vessels also because slave societies like the United States, Cuba or Brazil did enjoy economic advantages from its use. Gradually, the model for the evolution of slavery situations to contract labors became the Master – Servants Acts of the nineteenth century: such laws, strongly imbalanced to the advantage of the employers, didn't recognize the workers the possibility to form Unions or to leave a long-term contract for any reason, de facto erasing their newly acquired liberty to search for better-off labour conditions. Long-term coercion was central to the preservation of many economic situation of exploitation, including Belgium Congo and Portuguese Angola (which up to rebellions in the 1960s and 1980s kept a system based on forced labour). In independent Mauritania, a former part of French Africa, de-legalization was so ineffective that brought slavery existence well into the twenty-first century, since slavery was legally abolished in 2007, at its latest attempt. Similar ideas of controlling the labour force and limiting its freedom remained common throughout European countries (Boutang, 2002; Brown & Van Der Linden, 2010; Scott, 2017).

Thus, *"forced labor for public works remained a prerogative that many colonial states were long reluctant to surrender"* (Drescher, 2009). This idea was reaffirmed with the League of the Nations (founded in 1919) which did not initially provide any specific declaration against slavery, but a condition of *"just treatment"* for natives under colonial powers and *"fair and human conditions for the labour of men"* (Drescher, 2009). Only later in 1926, the League formulated a condemnation against slavery, without mentioning forced labour or forced marriage, following the logic of de-legalization and coerced labour replacement from colonial powers. It was a British representative, Sir Viscount Cecil, to further suggest that forced labour shall be an issue separated from slavery, with the last being part of the system of human rights of the League of the Nations (today evolved into the United Nations), while leaving forced labour to the attention of the International Labour Organization (ILO - borne in 1919). A two-head subjectivity developed, favorable to colonial powers' interests and still nowadays present in legal definitions. The first convention on forced labour (1930) from the ILO indeed provided the possibility of graduality in its eradication (McGeehan, 2012).

Remarkably, in the last century, two examples of slave exploitation need to be described: the Gulag system from the Soviet Union and the extensive workers' exploitation from Nazi Germany, with both systems guided by political reasons and productive needs. Similar to colonial powers, the Soviet Union used forced workers to bring industrialization in remote lands, like Siberia (Drescher, 2009). Nazi Germany clearly stated that civil coercion in time of war was a greater necessity than the *"international law of civilized nation"*, as from the words of the German governor of Belgium (Drescher, 2009). Deportation of Poles or Russians, for instance,

appeared as a real slave market, with high presence of malnutrition and illnesses. The Nuremberg Tribunal spoke of exploitation on “*greatest scale*” and of the “*most horrible and expansive slave operation in history*”, deemed part of the past but still present and justified on European soil.

The victorious powers of the World War II created the United Nations to replace the League in 1945 with still slavery to be condemned but separated from forced labour. The new, modern face of slavery condition, of equal exploitative intentions and mechanisms, is shaped not around a legal ownership right, but to a condition of coercion from institutions (State forced labour, for example in Uzbekistan’s cotton fields or North Korean labour camps) or private entities. In fact, nowadays, men and women are still exploited in precarious life conditions and moved in great numbers across countries (Reckinger, 2020), but they are less the *others* and more the miserable, the ones that are in poor conditions, without choices and means to survive and claim rights, not because of war or their ethnicity but because in extreme need of better life conditions. They are slaves trapped into imbalanced labour relations, easily replaceable on the job market and without due labour rights (Boutang, 2002). On the other side there is a portion of society that can use violent or coercive means, even if formally a State unique capacity, to build an exploitative system of modern slavery (Bales, 2000).

1.2 Slavery-like practices in International Law

The Slavery Convention signed in Geneva in 1926, and entered into force in 1955, defines slavery as “*the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised*” (Article 1). The juridical interpretation would tend not to recognize the need for legal ownership to be present, even if the debate is still open and the European Court of Human Rights does look for the presence of the right of ownership when judging on the presence of slavery⁴.

The closest concept to the idea of modern slavery present in international law are namely contemporary forms of slavery or slavery-like practices, which both describe the same conditions of treatment reserved to the legally owned slave. These are extreme levels of exploitation, inhuman conditions of work where people are humiliated, abused or treated as objects, without the real possibility to run away. Yet, the right of legal ownership has ceased to exist. Modern slavery does not have a unique definition and it is considered an umbrella term encompassing different practices, without clearly set boundaries or any judicial agreement. Different phenomena have been connected to the modern slavery umbrella term: one of the first attempt to systematize them was done as early as 1956 by the United Nations Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery which outlawed the so-

⁴ Without it, the Court would usually rule for the presence of forced labour (see the case “*Siliadin v. France*”, European Court of Human Rights, 26th July 2005).

called servile status: debt bondage, serfdom, the owning of a woman as a mean of payment and the exploitation of children (such as child soldiers or forced begging). Such a conceptualization aimed to give new instruments to fight slavery-like practices, but the proposed conceptualization did not achieve a unanimous definition nor ended the debate on the requirement of property rights in law judgements. Today, anti-slavery International, the oldest anti-slavery NGO, proposes 4 elements to define modern slavery: being forced to work through coercion or physical or mental threats, being owned or controlled by an employer through mental or physical abuses or threats, being dehumanized and treated as a commodity or property and being physically constrained or restricted in the liberty of movement. Importantly, modern slavery as an umbrella term is contested by those who argue that exploitation is so wide that the term slavery misguides policymakers to only focus over the most extreme forms of it (Scott, 2017). Nowadays, modern slavery is an expanding reality related to mechanisms of globalization that support inequality and so-called illegal economic migration (Bales, 2000; Kara, 2017). This process has made available to exploiters a big mass of people in need to a relative low cost compared to past expenses. Ownership was an expensive act, while today profit can last for a limited time, and it is easy and convenient to replace the workers with new ones in a vicious circle of exploitation. Exploiters have indeed no reason to invest in what is not their property and they can easily replace and substitute with minor expenses when 'burnt out'. Profits are therefore higher for exploiters and lead to expand the phenomenon. For instance, some author (Bales, 2000) calculates margin of profit rising from 5% to 50% between old and modern slavery.

Debt bondage, or bounded labour, is defined as *"the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or those of a person under his control as security for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited or defined"*. It is nowadays the most widely present form of modern slavery according to literature (Kara, 2017) and NGOs (Antislavery international). On the one side there is a creditor which lends money to somebody in need that has to repay it back with high illegal interests, often ending up in the severe exploitation of a slavery condition. Usually, the creditor also adds all cost of living, sleeping, etc. in order to profit the maximum, given the fact that no mean is available to the debtor to countercheck. The situation can last from less than a year (maybe a working season) to generations, passing the debt over to the children. For what concerns Europe, such debt mechanism is often used to pay back illegal transport or documentations. Yet, not always such debt mechanism is perceived as illegitimate by the debtor, which would otherwise not have been able to migrate at all. Sometimes, it may even be seen as a system to avoid a binding bank debt or a legal contract on which your permit of stay depends (O'Connell Davidson, 2013).

Different from slavery, as said above, the phenomenon of forced labour has been left to the conceptual realm of employment: indeed, the definition comes from the International Labour Organization (ILO) whereas the

UN human rights agenda focused on slavery. The ILO defined forced labour as *“All work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily”*. According to the European Court of Human Rights the difference with modern slavery shall be identified in the degree of exploitation and degradation that the victim has suffered, with modern slavery, which they call servitude, to be the highest form (Stoyanova, 2018). Also, the same author reports that the dimension of voluntariness has been ruled out of necessity from the Court in all cases of serious exploitative conditions⁵. The presence of coercion remains a distinct characteristic for the Court, which evaluated it also looking at the presence of particular vulnerabilities, such as the ones of migrants. No restriction of movement is required, as it is not a condition sine qua non for any modern slavery case. Others (Allain, 2013) state that the difference between slavery and forced labour develops around the concept of possession and its effects, which qualify the former but not the latter. However, it has already been stated how formal possession doesn't exist anymore and the present thesis underlines how the relationship between slave and master has evolved more undetermined and differentiated, making the case for an ambiguous boundary between the two exploitative situations which often entails the same social conditions and degrading environment. The present thesis considers all forms of forced labour as modern slavery, as explained below.

A different concept in the galaxy of modern slavery is human trafficking. Such term was conceptualize in the 2000 UN Palermo *“Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children”* which defined trafficking as *“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”*. This definition is quite precise in describing a process or action that must take place through certain means and for a particular purpose. It follows a logic of prosecution typical of criminal law, deeply focus on limiting international crime organizations and illegal immigration (Broad & Turnbull, 2019; O'Connell Davidson, 2015), as compared to a more general protection envisaged in human rights (Stoyanova, 2017). There are aspects of this concept which are unclear: first of all, the movement of the victim must be present even if theoretically, it is not necessary. Furthermore, trafficking also distinguishes itself from smuggling, where smuggling is intended to be a voluntary act (from the perspective of the migrant) and not finalized towards the exploitation of the smuggled. However, the dyad trafficking/smuggling, as the forced/voluntary opposition, does not easily apply to the whole range of different situations (O'Connell Davidson, 2013). Also,

⁵ A position applied throughout all the present dissertation for all cases of exploitative practices.

the author notes, both phenomena can potentially lead to debt bondage, where the creditor is either the trafficker/smuggler or somebody else back home. Critiques point out the use of trafficking as the major concept to persecute to the detriment of wider human rights due diligence, especially from States trying to limit migration fluxes (Pettinato, 2018; Scott, 2017). Also, trafficking victims are stereotyped, which reduce the capacity of authorities to deal with single cases (Villacampa et al., 2022). Finally, it is not clear how such concept relates to modern slavery: some activists consider it to be part of slavery (Anti-slavery international, that is the oldest NGO working on slavery) as its purposes aim to modern slavery practices, while some others consider it a distinct concept that can bring into slavery or not (Kara, 2017). Examples are indeed numerous of cases where migrants are not victim of trafficking, yet of labour exploitation: workers from the EU countries are even recruited from home to work in other EU countries (Human Rights Council, 2019).

Remarkably, domestic laws regulations mainly speak of trafficking, not modern slavery. The first case of a domestic law tackling modern slavery in its entirety was France in 2013 (Bourgeois, 2017), followed by the 2015 Modern Slavery Act from the UK (Broad & Turnbull, 2019).

It is easy to understand how the categories described can overlap in many cases: a person trafficked can end up in a situation of forced labour because of a debt to be brought into Europe, classifying such situation as modern slavery in all parts (from the trafficking) or just partially (if forced labour is 'particularly' heinous). Definitions from law are therefore partial and don't cover the entire spectrum of the sociological phenomenon at stake, leaving to the researcher the task to propose a coherent conceptualization for social science investigation. For the sake of clarity, the choice is taken to limit the thesis to adult workers, leaving aside the particularities of forced marriages, general sexual exploitation, and exploitation of minors, that all possess particular characteristics that deserve specific attention.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Present time debate & definition

Trying to focus on a conceptual minimum common denominator to define modern slavery, social scientists (Bales & Robbins, 2001) describe the effects on the victims. Bales and Robbins speak of the concept of ownership and control (*“any or all the powers attaching to the right of ownership”*), together with the loss of freedom, movement and of the ability to make decisions, without being able to specify the degree of such deprivations and being very attached to the functioning of chattel slavery. However, freedom of movement cannot be regarded as the only indicator for the presence of modern slavery: restrictions might take the form of absence of opportunity, of dependency on the exploiter or high level of disempowerment. Examples can be the case of prostitution, where some may argue that women choose to practice it lacking any alternative mean to survive, or the case of bounded labour, where workers may not be constricted in their movement, but lack awareness over rights and alternatives. Moving away from the formulation of ownership and control, one might regard modern slavery as a relationship between two or more people, with different forms and similar outcomes, that is exploitative in nature (Bales, 2006). If forms are influenced by the different socio-economic contexts, the effect is always a high level of degrading working and life conditions. Yet, there is no precise criteria to determine when a situation evolves into modern slavery or stops at a lower level of exploitation. For the purposes of the present work, the concept of modern slavery is used as an umbrella term for all such different kind of exploitations that share the highest degree of intensity. Kara speaks of different practices of the same *“system of dishonoring and degrading people through the violent coercion of their labor activity in conditions that dehumanize them”* (Kara, 2017). The focus goes on the degrading logic that modern slavery imposes on the workers. Some (Bales & Robbins, 2001) underline the imbalance of power as the central element to consider: this element can translate into a socio-economic *“state marked by the loss of free will where a person is forced through violence or the threat of violence to give up the ability to sell freely his or her own labor power”*, a symbolic system of differentiation and power distribution that sustains dynamics of dishonor of the slave, tantamount to domination (Patterson, 1982) but focused on the labour relation. Similarly to chattel slavery (Siller, 2016) modern slavery enjoys the power to use the slave, to control his or her actions, to profit and to eventually determine the duration of such condition. It appears as the sum of being controlled by another person, subjugated (O’Connell Davidson, 2015), and stolen from one’s own labour power under the threat of violence, which are common characteristics of many different definitions.

Modern slavery appears historically continuous to all practices of labour exploitation, such as the Master – Servants Acts, aimed at limiting the cost of labour and the freedom of workers to sale their labour power to find better off conditions on the market. The concept of unfree labour (see paragraph 2.5) describes exactly

this element (Brass, 2013). Furthermore, the concept of coerced labour (see paragraph 2.3) focuses on coercion as a mean of psychological or physical violence to achieve exploitation, underlining dynamics of domination (Linden & Garcia, 2016). By using the term modern slavery, the present thesis adopts the terminology recognized by the United Nation and other international agencies (Alliance 8.7, 2017; FRA, 2019), as well as by NGOs, unions and part of the sociological literature. It reflects an approach typical of human rights law, comprehensive enough to be attentive to State positive obligations and encompass socio-economic aspects that contribute indirectly to exploitation by favoring vulnerabilities (Stoyanova, 2017). The aim is to give it a wide perspective concerning not only exploitative dynamics, but also recognizing connected social characteristics of the life environment. The umbrella term is meant to avoid focusing only on extreme forms of lack of freedom or use of coercion, which may present nebulous boundaries. Thus, modern slavery should be read as an umbrella term that focuses over both exploitation and the social environment connected to the life experience of an exploited migrant worker. It should not be read, as some literature argues (Howard & Forin, 2019), as a sensationalistic and moralistic terminology picturing a dualistic reality of victims and exploiters, while ignoring structural and political perspectives over the existing socio-economic system, driving shame and outrage. On the contrary, the historical connection to the continuity of exploitation, the systemic and structural understanding of macro socio-economic determinants, as well as the complexity of exploitative forms that do not entail violence nor constriction, are all elements that indicate how modern slavery shall not be pictured simply as a cause célèbre, but as a multifaced and complex phenomenon of a globalized world. Calling it slavery shall not mean to sensationalize a complex reality, but to pose the accent on all the heinous forms that exploitation can assume and what it entails.

The sociological perspective is the most adequate to reason in these terms and to underline the role of vulnerabilities. Also, legal definitions do not suffice to delimit the phenomenon of interest because are too heterogeneous or too specific. Focusing on social causes and consequences the perspective adopted herein looks at modern slavery as *a situation of labour exploitation associated to a social condition of marginalization, dependency, and disempowerment. This association is produced by various vulnerabilities that concern the individual past and present, which can grow to maturity and turn into actual harm because embedded in a favorable structural framework.* Elements related to the structural framework are socio-economic conditions of a society and can be called macro vulnerabilities, as opposed to the micro vulnerabilities that relate to personal experiences.

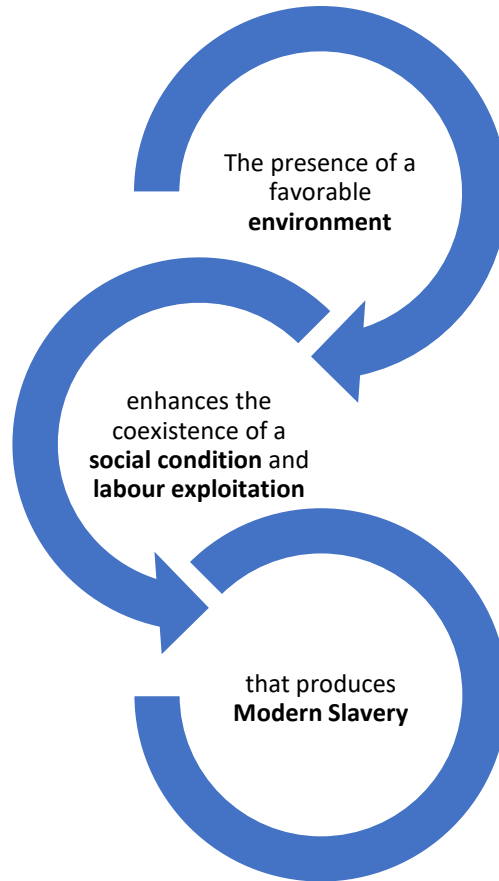


FIGURE 1: Definition framework of modern slavery.

As shown in Figure 1, both a social condition and exploitation must be preset to define a situation of modern slavery. The definition sees vulnerabilities associated with such a social condition and structural framework as the causal mechanisms that produce exploitation when combined and brought to maturity: when the existing vulnerability turns into a real situation of marginalization, dependency or disempowerment thanks to a favorable structural framework, it creates exploitation up to modern slavery. Theoretically, the mechanism feeds itself and exploitation further strengthens the social condition, creating a vicious cycle. Vulnerabilities consequently are the point of study of the present dissertation, the medium through which modern slavery is investigated.

The proposed definition is not limited to the old standard division between different ethnic communities or religions. What drives slavery-like experiences in the contemporary world cannot be war of conquests or legal enslavement. It is a framework of vulnerability that discriminates the poor or the marginalized, more than the others. Obviously, outsiders, foreigners and disadvantaged elements of society are still the *others* in many contexts, but the logic for exploitation has changed, as it is shown in the thesis. Importantly, the slavery relationship in its modern form can be entered with or without the use of violence and can continue

with or without its use or threat. Violence must be interpreted not only as physical, but also psychological, economical, or other forms. Furthermore, the definition enables the researcher to undertake a situated approach when investigating modern slavery, because these different sociological conditions differ in different contexts. For instance, what to consider exploitative can change according to the situation, even if a common base line is necessary (see specific chapters on exploitation).

The social condition results either from the status in society and/or the relation towards a master, an employer, a job (Hare, 1979) that a modern slave possesses: the first is a marker of a situation of marginalization, while the second indicates a situation of dependency, of being or feeling trapped, that is nowadays heterogeneous and multiform. Both are built on the disempowerment of the victim, which traps the victim in that situation, without instruments to find an alternative. Importantly, the relationship between the slave and the owner has evolved more complicated. Firstly, it is no more a personal relationship as for chattel slavery. A slave can continuously change master but remains in the same social condition because trapped, disempowered in such an imbalance relationship, in lack of alternatives. This is the additional modern element: no single master is required to hold the condition of slave in the society. Masters can have intermediaries to administer the modern slaves' labour, without the need to be present on the labour place. This does not exclude the presence of feelings of trust and recognition from the slave towards the master, and of paternalism from the other side, obliging the social researcher to look at this relationship as a continuum, more than a black and white phenomenon in many dimensions.

The condition and level of labour exploitation call into account working hours, payment, the environment of work and all other elements connected to the idea of using a person to its full potential to extract profit without due compensation nor limits. This reflects the degrading logic underlined by some authors, such as the "*subhuman working environments*" (Kara, 2017) or the presence of control and coercion finalized to the economic exploitation of an individual (Bales, 2000).

The second part of the definition, describing the causal mechanisms, underlines that slaves are "*valuable because they are vulnerable*" (Schierup et al., 2015). Vulnerabilities can differ in their nature, being related to personal traits and experiences, but they develop when exposed to certain social and structural dynamics. Macro dynamics are therefore central for vulnerabilities to mature into actual harm. Such association is a core interest of the present research. For instance, it is pointed out that modern slavery develops where part of the population experiences extreme socio-economic conditions (thus being vulnerable), while another part of the population enjoys the ability or opportunity of to use violence and exploit with impunity (Bales, 2006). "*A free laborer can enter or withdraw from the labor market at any time, but a slave cannot; he or she cannot sell his or her own labor power and thereby commodify it. This is true whether the period of enslavement is of a fixed or temporary duration or indefinite*" (Bales & Robbins, 2001).

Such definition covers a wide range of exploitative practices, from global women (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003) to people working in field camps (Reckinger, 2020), both humiliated and abused: they see a social condition made of disempowerment, dependency and marginalization, together with the experience exploitation by the host society. Slave-like exploitation involves subjugation and intensity of the violations, according to the standards of host societies.

2.2 The social condition

The present thesis articulates modern slavery as a social condition, characterized by the triangulation of marginalization, dependency and disempowerment.

Marginalization is meant as the loss of power and control over one's own way of life (Shared et al., 2000). It refers to the differentiation of social groups built on certain characteristics, which can be defined as vulnerability conditions. Being at the margins of society, implies that others are at the center and enjoy better socio-economic conditions, experience higher living standards and enjoy cultural hegemony (Shared et al., 2000). Their culture is the reference point for the entire society: public administration, education, access to opportunities are all vehiculated by it. Marginalization is often intended as a synonym for oppression or social exclusion, involving discrimination, unmet needs, illness or limited access to health care (Lynam & Cowley, 2007). However, if social exclusion drives conceptual expulsion from economic, political, cultural and social capital, marginalization underlines a dimension of restraint around low economic, political, cultural and social capital (MacDonald, 2008). People are trapped at the margins, unable to exit such low standards of living. An example may be the condition of African American women that are marginalized by the white men's culture that discriminates both women and black people, granting them fewer opportunities (Riphagen, 2008), at least until not completely integrated into their different cultural framework. Researchers can express marginalization looking at various dimensions, such as educational or working conditions, rate of imprisonments, discrimination practices, residential segregation and others, investigating the differentials between the marginalized and the general population. Similarly, the migrants' population of Europe may experience marginalization because of their lower standards of living. In particular, economic dimensions of migrants' exclusion may look for occupational ghettos, unregulated job security and hours, and no access to benefits (Schierup et al., 2015). Yet, researchers shall not reduce marginalization to the only economic theme, but should apply a wide welfare perspective, entailing access to equal possibilities and rights. Ideally, truncated citizenship overlaps with marginalization.

Moreover, the condition of dependency can be described as this imbalance of power existing between two actors. If we see power as the cost that a social actor is capable to impose or make acceptable to another social actor, dependency is the potential cost that a social actor tolerates (Ritzer, 2012). Such vision comes

from Emerson's micro-sociological theory, referring to a relation between two people, but can be adapted to a macro-social reality by analyzing how central such dependency is in a social group's living: the exploitative working conditions of migrants may be central to their living, having no other means to sustain themselves. Thus, the dependent actors become the members of a defined social group while the actor generating dependency is the society as a whole. Such dependency is necessary and central to the living of the dependent actors, which could be harmed if they lose their object of dependency, i.e. their exploitative job. In psychological literature, dependency is described as a multifaced concept with many forms: herein it is referred to as a submissive form of dependency, to which depression and distress are associated (Pincus & Gurtman, 1995).

Finally, empowerment is defined as the ability of people to access resources, the ability to exercise their own agency and to obtain wanted achievements (Kabeer, 1999). It is the ability to make choices in the hands of individuals who were previously denied it and to turn them into life-specific outcomes. The three components make up the concept itself, defined as the process to achieve them (Malhotra et al., 2002): resources are to be considered necessary but not sufficient conditions that make the choice available, agency is the capacity and power to actually control a life choice because of a meaning, a motivation or a purpose felt by the individual and finally achievements are the concrete realization of the choices taken into results. Agency in particular is to be recognized and valued by professionals and social operators working with victims of exploitation, as well as unions' members. The worker is never to be seen as a passive agent to save, but somebody to empower beginning from his or her own abilities and potential. Indeed, to alienate and objectify a victim of exploitation runs contrary to true empowerment (Howard & Forin, 2019). Being disempowered means not to have the possibility to make a choice without constraints because of an unequal distribution of power inside the society: migrants are often disempowered because in need to accept humiliating conditions of work, without the possibility to be protected from exploitation by the public authority. They have no access to resources (because they are marginalized), no capacity or possibility to take choices and cannot achieve desirable outcomes (because they are not self-dependent): that is why the condition of marginality and dependency cannot be tackled.

At the basis of agency there is the awareness of the situation together with the intention to act: elements that are in common with the concept of resilience (Brodsky & Bennett, 2013), making up the capacity to reflect and therefore moving to an achievement, an act. Yet, empowerment possesses a perspective more extended in time and space, entailing a shift in power dynamics and personal perceptions and understanding of social dynamics, while resilience is an ability more situated in time and space of a protective nature with limited power of change upon the environment or the status quo. Resilience will then play a role in the immediate aftermath of a situation of vulnerability, while empowerment, or disempowerment, will constitute part of the reason why such situation exists.

Marginality, dependency and disempowerment together build the modern slavery condition: their triangulation produces the intensity necessary to reduce people to mere goods for exploitation. Theoretically, these elements are separated, but in practice they are part of a concatenation which feeds itself, contributing to the intensification of one another. Furthermore, the perspective adopted in the present work sees this condition both as cause and effect of the highest exploitation possible: one could be trapped in marginality and disempowerment and end up under exploitation or become trapped into exploitation and thus experiencing such social condition. The presence of both exploitation and the described social condition is what is regarded as modern slavery.

2.3 Exploitation

Exploitation is at the core of slavery. Definitions (Scott, 2017) can be wide in their scope (reflecting a Marxist perspective) or have more restricted boundaries, as by the laws of a country. A definition proposed in literature (Allain, 2013) describes exploitation *“as a situation where somebody takes advantage, or profits, from another person with harmful actions or transactions”*. This is what could be called an unfair relationship between two people, to the detriment of the person subjected to exploitation. The question evolves in providing a valid measurement: shall the researcher adopt the perspective of individual perception or shall adopt some moral standard? Should the researcher follow a specific moral code or simply adopt the one characterizing the majority of a defined society, after providing a valid explanation? In order to avoid such confusion, reference must be made to legal standards, both national and international. Exploitation would therefore be present where either national or international standards are not met. For instance, a low payment for a certain work or service can be considered exploitative if it runs against the national minimum wage⁶ or ILO's standards⁷. The standards at stake shall refer to the specificity of each situation, from prostitution to marriage, from the job normative to the legality of a debt. Moreover, exploitation is a continuum (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015) that begins from the legally determined standard with increasing degree of intensity, where multiple exploitative dimensions can add up to become a condition of modern slavery. One can therefore picture exploitation as a linear function where exploitative conditions increase up to slavery: modern slavery situations begin when the elements of our definitions can be found, comprehending all situations of forced labour and sexual exploitation. Theoretically, chattel slavery

⁶ In Italy that would mean to run against the minimum wage prescribed in the applicable CCNL, as from article 603 of the Penal code.

⁷ In cases of contrast, the approach of Human Rights law should be followed, forbidding national standards to be lower than international ones (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015). Furthermore, it is assumed that in cases where a standard is higher than the international minimum but lower than the national one, the State's good faith is proven and can be considered truthfully protective: in these cases, exploitation shall begin from nationally determined values.

could represent the apex of this linear model, but such visualization shall be used carefully: all the different exploitative elements can add to one another in different ways and forms, so that the picture should be multidimensional. Clearly, payment cannot be the only nor main indicator of exploitation. Working hours, associated working and life conditions should be considered in their negative effects over the individual. Experiencing one or more of these intense conditions is a symptom of exploitation having reached the level of modern slavery: the degradation and dishonor attached to exploitation *per se* have become so strong to maximize the exploitative condition (Kara, 2017). The definition proposed by Allain underlines the link between exploitation and harm. This is either physical, psychological or social-communal, in the sense of degrading social relations and interests (Scott, 2017). Such understanding brings some authors to widen the scope of the definition, without limiting their understanding of it to legal requirements. The present thesis describes such approaches in the following theoretical paragraphs.

General indicators of job exploitation from the literature (ILO, 2012) are linked to the temporal dimension (excessive working hours), low working wages (often surrounded by fake or partial contracts), presence of threats or violence, abusive working and living conditions (meaning that they are uncomfortable and do not respect dignity in terms of security and hygienic norms), abuse of vulnerability. Degrading working conditions also entail psycho-physical conditions of stress created by lack of security during work and transportation to work, as well as the working environment of subjugation⁸ and constant threat or control (lack of free access to bathrooms, constant reminders to work hard and not lose time, etcetera). Degrading living conditions refers to unsafe, overcrowded and unhealthy housing, often without access to water, heat or electricity.

Importantly, coercion⁹ can be present or not, but it is not necessary to have serious exploitation. Often, coercion can be associated with the higher degree of exploitation associated with forced labour (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2020). Anyhow, it comprehends abuses, violence or threat of violence, both psychological and physical (such as threat of deportation or arrest), the reduction of freedoms, or the impossibility to freely change job, to move or behave. Those elements imply a certain degree of control but control itself is not the aim nor the mean of modern slavery, as shown above. Indeed, control is conceptually part of the link between old and modern slavery: possession granted a right of control over what was considered a private good, generating a significant reduction of autonomy in decision making. Such effects are still present not because of possession but because the dependency and disempowerment that are attached to the social condition of modern slavery. Being subject of modern slavery is about experiencing exploitation and the defined social condition, regardless of coercion.

⁸ Subjugation on the workplace entails control and domination.

⁹ Coercion on the workplace entails persuasion by force or threats.

2.4 Vulnerability

Both the social condition and exploitation constituting modern slavery are linked to vulnerability factors that favor their presence and turn them into actual exploitative dynamics. These factors have different characteristics and traits but need to be considered together to understand their functioning. So far, most literatures analyze them separately while the present dissertation gives a general overview and proceeds further to underline most harmful interactions. Furthermore, here it is considered the role of structural factors, or macro vulnerabilities, in developing vulnerabilities and turning them into the actual social and exploitative conditions of modern slavery. In this chapter the thesis presents vulnerability from a theoretical perspective, while chapter 6.1 presents different approaches to the measurement of vulnerability that have been developed.

In general terms, vulnerability is the susceptibility of an individual, a group or a system to suffer harm because of certain characteristics (UNDRR, n.d.). Such characteristics may vary according to the conceptual realm of what is under scrutiny of the researcher, ranging from physical, psychological, socio-economic, cultural or environmental factors. The root of the word comes from the Latin “vulnare”, to wound. Vulnerability is associated with the idea of fragility or weakness and may be subjective for each individual or group, always entailing an element of uncertainty, fragility and lack of agency that links it to disempowerment (Misztal, 2011). Also, it can involve factors at macro, meso and micro level which can interact in different, causally complex ways over different time frames. Being associated with lack of resources and income, it hits different groups in different ways. First conceptualizations came in the 40s from the field of disaster and hazard studies (Nguyen-Trung & Forbes-Mewett, 2019). The notion of risk society (Beck, 1992) put the accent on vulnerabilities in order to cope with the impact of modernity. Yet, given these difficulties and various usage, there is no single and clear definition for all context in which it is applied, suffering a semantic overflow (Misztal, 2011). However, such complexity and multidimensionality are also strength that help social sciences to select elements where to focus and deepen the understanding. Interestingly, the 3 concepts that make up the social condition required by this thesis’ given definition of modern slavery are all present into vulnerability theory: marginalization, disempowerment and dependency (Misztal, 2011). This last element in particular enjoys a special force according to the cited author, putting the focus on interpersonal sociological relationships (such as the labour one or some aspects of patriarchy).

Individual social vulnerability relates to the socio-economic situation of an individual who risks falling into material deprivation, poverty, discomfort or sickness. For instance, being unemployed makes you vulnerable to hunger. Referring to vulnerability into migration, the EU defines it as “*situation in which the person concerned has no real or acceptable alternative but to submit to the abuse involved*”(UNDP, 2016).

Such social vulnerability needs to take into consideration the resilience of the individual to cope against it. Resilience, different from empowerment, has to be taken into account when measuring vulnerability in a fixed time frame, since being unable to cope with difficulties is part of being vulnerable (UNDP, 2016). Particular attention must be put over factors that are associated with the realization of harm, their functioning and how to compensate their presence with the capacity of resilience. Parts of resilience are preventive, mitigation or coping elements that can stop, reduce or erase the harm or the vulnerability to which somebody is subject to (Buller et al., 2015; Olsson, 2018).

The aim of the thesis is to highlight the most effective vulnerability factors in order to prevent them to combine and produce real modern slavery experiences. As said, both theory and empirical findings from interviews to privileged observers, are used. Theory also comprehends available reports that specifically focus on vulnerabilities into migration, taking the perspective of victims of trafficking or general migrants. Some individual factors to highlight are the following (Buller et al., 2015; Diego-Rosell & Joudo Larsen, 2018; ILO, 2009; Patricia Hynes, Patrick Burland, Angela Thurnham, Jenniffer Dew, Lola Gani-Yusuf et al., 2019):

- Low language skills are synonyms of inability to be self-reliant and informed;
- Being young adults in extreme economic need pushed by family or community expectations;
- Presence of debt;
- Having experienced violence. Violence calls for other violence, and sets the expectations of rights lower;
- Migratory history. It is reported that decision to expatriate rarely comes from a singular decision-making moment. It intensifies in communities where somebody has successfully migrated, not sharing perils and actual conditions. The length of the process of migration is associated with higher chances of having experienced violence or a decreased autonomy and resources, both economic and psychological;
- Cultural expectations set upon young male can pressure to accept lower standards of labour, together with a deferential culture towards the employer, part of lower but socially accepted labour standards. Some authors speak of the imaginary of “good man” that unease young workers to ask for help and make them feel humiliated if their family members have to work. Their perceived social role pushes them to accept low labour conditions, to be a sort of breadwinner for the families. It also exists a victim blaming problem, where people are described as “greedy” because of social pressure: they are brought to be exploited to earn anything under the judgement of peers;
- Irregular situation for permits of entrance and/or stay;
- Irregular job and possibility to be blackmailed (withholding of documents or other dependency factors towards the employer);
- Awareness of local labour standards and information availability;

- Entering networks of exploitation and adaptation (as reported from the general theory);
- Low access and trust in public institutions .

Furthermore, the researcher need not only to consider individual social vulnerabilities, but to reflect on structural socio-economic vulnerabilities determined by a certain kind socio-economic system. Those macro factors relate to characteristics of the legal, socio-economic, cultural frameworks that are given and on which a single individual has no direct influence but is a mere subject. Migrants experience a particular set of labour market dynamics, laws and regulations to legally reside and access public policies, but also stereotypes, access to living conditions, as well as general resources and opportunities of the host society. On the other hand, migrants, and in particular migrant workers, enjoy less protection than citizens and are often left outside the attention or reach of public authorities. It is indeed proven, in literature (Moussa et al., 2022; Villacampa et al., 2022) and also highlighted by the Global Slavery Index, that good (national) governance is related to lower modern slavery presence. Strengthening the presence of Institutions and the legal framework relates to lower exploitation levels because protections are extended to those branches of society that are left out, i.e. marginalized.

Looking at the labour market, the literature (Buller et al., 2015) recognizes that exploitation is quite endemic in several economic sectors of present economy, describing a conscious system of abuse and exploitation. Indeed, freedom of workers, as far as changing jobs or bargain is restricted in several ways, to maintain exploitative conditions and enhance productivity for the employer. Examples (B. Anderson, 2010) show how migrant workers are good for Britain's farmers because of ethos, efficiency and dependency from the employer, a good guarantee of a labour force that stays in the job also when harvest becomes particularly harsh. Employers consciously praise migrants' reliability, signaling the existence of a widespread reality. Some economic sectors (Diego-Rosell & Joudo Larsen, 2018) are more keen than others to host exploitation. Usually, low-skilled jobs are the most involved and among them, the jobs located out of sight and/or that can be arranged into informal mechanisms. Indeed, this degree of isolation and informality, is quite high into agriculture, fishing, construction, logistics, caring, restaurants and so on.

More schematically, macro variables that we have found to play a role are the following:

- migration policies variables such as absence of State protection (in forms of inspections, prosecutions, victims' protection, and police inactivity), lack of legal channels for migration or high amount of documentation required (thus favoring illegality or possibility to be blackmailed from employers), endless and inefficient reception system;
- economic variables such as high presence of illegal contracts or underground economies, economic competitive pressures for low wages, mismatch between supply and demand that

favors vicious recruitment practices, economic segregation (both in certain sectors and under certain “contracts”), illegal debt mechanisms;

- Social variables such as welfare system linked to working contracts or residence permit, with a consequent lack of health assistance, urban segregation, widespread discrimination, presence of organized crime, corruption of public officials.

A very useful conceptual tool that is appropriate to describe this mechanism is structural violence. Structural violence differs from behavioral violence in that there is no direct act of harm but there is a system of inequality in power and/or resources¹⁰. The concept comes from the field of peace research studies and conflict prevention, but it applies also in other branches of social science. Johan Galtung firstly came up with the idea of structural violence to go behind the element of intentionality, analyzing the social conditions of South Rhodesia (Galtung, 1969; Weigert, 2010). To let people starving when policies could avoid it, falls in the definition proposed by Galtung, entailing a conception of positive human rights obligations upon the State. It perfectly fits with conditions of extensive exploitation of people. The author himself links the concept to social phenomenon like patriarchy, racism and class. Some critics (Parsons, 2007) underline that it must be distinguished from domination, a concept entailing marginalization and oppression, arguing that violence cannot comprehend such a vast realm of phenomena. However, herein the human rights approach adopted by Galtung is confirmed as the most adequate choice: States have positive obligations towards human beings and failing to respect them causes harm and should be categorized as violence. Violence should not be reduced to direct forms, but also to those passive, or indirect, actions, such as policies, which end up harming people or groups. Indeed, violence is built into institutions through mechanisms of persuasions and mystifications (see below), connected with the intensification of structural vulnerabilities generated by institutional exclusion from possibilities and access to welfare. This form of violence recalls the elements of marginality and dependency of the modern slavery proposed definition. Part of this logic are elements such as fear of deportation, inability to access the job market because of irregular status, lack of opportunities, unhealthy competition among exploitative realities (high level of interchangeable and flexible workforce), dependency from the employer for legal migration, exclusion from alternative economic possibilities as well as elements of discrimination, segregation or disadvantages of any nature. When such dynamics are so persistent and widespread, it is easier for extreme exploitation and modern slavery to develop.

¹⁰ A similar notion is institutional violence, describing acts generated by any branch of a State. Interpretations may widen the definition to include the acceptance and inactivity of the State in front of violence to classify it as institutional. However, structural violence is a more general and broader concept which better applies in the field of modern slavery and exploitation and so the choice is taken to focus on it rather than exploring and distinguishing the various institutional forms.

2.5 The logic of exploitation: the perspective of the individual

An interesting literature contribution on individual perspective on exploitation comes from the analysis of labour satisfaction (Beretta, 1995). The author describes 4 different approaches: one psycho-social, one coming from Durkheim's sociology, one from Weber's and one from Marx. If the first one points to the pyramid of need from Maslow, picturing a system of priorities for people, Durkheim describes the creation of a sense of belonging capable to maximize individuals' goals and satisfaction. Differently, Marxist literature affirms that satisfaction can only be found outside labour, being focused on the context itself more than the subject experience of the worker. Weberian approaches, differently, focus on the legitimacy recognized as a form of power. If workers recognize exploiters as legitimate because of different reasons, then exploitation is accepted, reinforcing the idea of a systematic nature, as a formal institution. Such formal power governs with the use of force, or the threat to do so, being more emotional than rational. Power must also keep reinforcing the norms and values attached to it, using symbolic power or the three legitimization typologies indicated by Weber (traditional, charismatic, bureaucratic). In particular, traditional power is said to last until it gives advantages to both parties, as it is the case with exploitation.

To the debate herein exposed, a further central element needs to be added: the subjectivity of the exploited, his or her personal sense and perspective on his or her own labour conditions. Indeed, making sense of one's own slavery-like condition is particularly difficult from an external point of view, especially when it involves a change of life of the subject involved because it is supposed that an alternative is known. However, such perspective enriches the analysis and contributes to the understanding of such social reality. To comprehend this additional element reference is made to the literature inspired by Bourdieu's sociology, in particular looking at his concept of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1992; Bourdieu et al., 2000; Dick & Nadin, 2011; Murphy & Esposito, 2002; Perrotta, 2014; Thapar-Björkert et al., 2016). According to this theoretical framework, misrecognition of an objective reality, such as exploitation, is achieved through granting legitimacy and acceptance to a specific social order, which comes to be seen as natural and common-sensical, making the worker committed to exploitative labour conditions (Contestabile, 2021). Contrary to Marx's false consciousness¹¹, misrecognition is interpreted as harder to change because it is a construct made directly from the ones who are exploited: there is no external influence that builds a false ideology, but the subjects themselves see no alternative possibilities and would not easily shift from a vision to another. In any cases, following the dominant rationale often brings concrete achievements and symbolic power to the exploited people, such as honor or prestige, thus strengthening the existing social order (as from the perspectives of Durkheim and Weber). An easy example are all the former slaves that gain authority and become managers

¹¹ Marxist perspectives are analyzed later in the thesis, confronting with Bourdieu's contribution.

of the newcomers, from the warehouse to the field camp. Yet, such new power remains what it is: a mere concession of the master, still part of slavery and its social condition.

What gives rise to the process of naturalization, or normalization, is the somatization of social structure as habitus. Habitus is defined by Bourdieu as the internalization of the external social conditions to which that specific individual belongs (Bourdieu, 1992; Bourdieu et al., 2000): managers and workers understand their social position to be the natural consequence of their own choices and merits. Habitus is the duty of “*playing with the rules*”, accepting the order of things and taking responsibility on yourself, making marginalization and vulnerability something given and not changeable (Lynam & Cowley, 2007). Attached to this, comes the associated system of choices, opportunities and capital: what is called symbolic capital. Thus, symbolic violence is the process through which social advantages and disadvantages are understood as consequences of one own’s choices, generating systemic self-exclusion¹² and misrecognition. In other words, symbolic violence is a kind of domination exercised upon an agent with his or her complicity (Murphy & Esposito, 2002), a gentle invisible form of violence (Thapar-Björkert et al., 2016). When the worker works more than legally established, symbolic violence translates it into added value for the labour market, making sense of exploitative conditions. Forced agricultural workers can believe their pay needs to be low because of the economic competition of the sector in which they work and that the piece rate paying system is the only possible one. However, exploitation should not be seen as a natural consequence of the economy, to which people need to conform, but as a wrong set of practices and an unfair distribution of opportunities typical of one economic system. Of course, people, in our case migrant, are active agents in the social order and act as they do because of some reasons (Perrotta, 2014): income difference between the host and the origin country may make exploitative conditions worth it. Moreover, the structural dynamics of immigration control policies set strict conditions for staying without the possibility to negotiate better opportunities, so that you are forced to make sense of a social order that cannot be changed. Therefore, the migrant comes to see himself or herself as a good worker, which could gain, indeed truly, by obeying to the exploitative logic and acquire more symbolic power. It is an entirely new socialization of the individual that comes both from other individuals and from institutionalized practices, where subordination is explained according to existing hegemonic symbols. Referring to this, Murphy and Esposito underline the importance of language and the possibility to analyze symbolic violence through it¹³. The example of violence on women can help us to better understand the phenomenon of beaten women that justify violence, precisely because of their socialization that cannot change if they are trapped into disempowerment, marginalization or dependency. They experienced violence because did not conform to hegemonic culture, being it the values and norms of a

¹² Social exclusion is different from marginalization, as exposed in the paragraph 2.2.

¹³ Using this approach is risky because cultures are always evolving and heterogeneous. What emerges in discourses and language can either be part of symbolic violence or an autonomous evolution of a culture. A baseline level, such as horizontal human rights adherence, together with a case-by-case analysis are necessary.

patriarchal society which must be recognized as such. Similarly, the situation of slave cannot change until they do not recognize the true nature of exploitation and escape the vicious cycle leading to modern slavery: in fact, interventions against slavery promote education against disempowerment, reintegration in the community against dependency and marginalization, as well as giving socio-economic security and respect of the rule of law to avoid causal variables of both micro and macro nature (Ramburn et al., 2018).

A different interesting contribution from the literature (Bales & Robbins, 2001; Králová, 2015; Patterson, 1982) proposes the concept of social death which describes how a victim of modern slavery sees the end of his own culture and history, no matter if the situation is permanent or temporary. It is more than the total absence of leisure time, extensive working hours or short sleeping time (Buller et al., 2015), reflecting a total dimension of disempowerment and incapacity to act. It may be connected to a territorialization of the victim, which sees his or her life bound to that place of work (Stoyanova, 2012) and the removal of the protection from his family, kin, community or nation of origin. The concept of social death can be traced back to the '60, when it was firstly used to describe part of the process surrounding death, specifically the treatment from relatives and friends, as opposed to the biological definition of death (Králová, 2015). When it was first used in the context of slavery research (Patterson, 1982) it was meant to underline the loss of connections with one's own past, cultural heritage, symbolic instruments and sense of belonging. Interestingly, the author underlines also the elimination of cross-generational links, meaning the impossibility for a slave to determine the destiny of one's own children and community. Generally, three elements are associated to social death (Králová, 2015): loss of social identity (meant as the self-understanding in relation to other people), loss of social connectedness and loss associated with the disintegration of the body, where social non-existence reduces the person just to a "*body to feed*" with no interactions with others. Indeed, losing social roles as well as sociality, being outside the law as a non-existing phantom in relation to public authorities, being stigmatized or segregated are all elements that describe a sort of non-person that is alone, forgotten and vulnerable, as the modern slave is. It produces a sense of hopeless and self-distrust. The socially dead is segregated in both time and space from society and thus dehumanized, becoming right-less in relation to the public sphere which ignores and exclude the subject, neglecting his needs and not acknowledging his life experiences (Elsrud, 2020). Remarkably, some (Králová, 2015) underlines how social death is a concept present into the genocide studies where a culture is meant to be destroyed as a whole.

However, the researcher must take into consideration an additional question that is whether the slave is happy in his or her condition. In this issue, the focus is not on the subjective perception of exploitation but on the conceptual idea of well-being that is adopted. In the writing of Amartya Sen (Burns, 2016), utilitarianism is attacked because too focus only on the subjective experience without giving any value to the sense of freedom, i.e. the objective part of well-being that should not be left aside. Thus, differently from utilitarian authors, Sen thinks that well-being is not only subjective (feeling happy) but also encompasses liberty, making

happiness a necessary but not sufficient condition for well-being. Liberty is seen as the capacity or substantive opportunity for individuals to pursue choices and actions that they consider valuable. A good quality of life is not only a matter of achievements but also of what one had the opportunity to choose from. Freedom is seen as a necessary but not sufficient condition for well-being as freedom does not guarantee a subjective sense of happiness. Sen does argue that people can adapt being “*happy slaves*”¹⁴, but they may not want to.

All three approaches hereby proposed are linked by the concept of empowerment as a theoretical opposite. Empowerment may lead to erase misrecognition and habitus, erase an environment of social death and bring freedom to a happy slave that did not choose to be so. By increasing resources and agency, promoting a stronger capacity to freely choose among different opportunities, people can achieve and tend towards better results, in terms of quality of life and labour conditions, that previously did not consider. Indeed, the thesis proposes disempowerment as part of the social condition that characterizes modern slavery: when migrant workers may freely exercise their agency, having alternative possibilities, as well as the capacity to make choice and to achieve better conditions they can reshape their imaginary and break the disempowerment that made them stuck into exploitation.

2.6 The logic of exploitation: Structuralist perspectives

Specific branches of literature reflect on the objective and systemic conditions of workers as a social group. Within this rationale, the question focuses on the understanding of how a system of exploitation is historically determined (labour regimes’ literature) and how it can work and be accepted on a macro sociological scale. Mingione (Ciccia, 2015) defines labour regime as the “*socially acceptable and spread form of work*”, putting the accent on the commodification of migrant labour. Others (Scott, 2017) believe that all commodified labour should be ascribed to harmful labour, adopting an extensive definition of exploitation. The employment relationship is put under scrutiny and analyzed in terms of labour purchasing as a commodity in exchange of money (Lier, 2007). In this perspective, the consumeristic society pretends not to see the systemic relation between low-cost goods and low-paid jobs, which are mainly done by migrant workers.

Marxist authors give a deep criticism of exploitation dynamics inside present-day capitalist economies. They represent a valid source of interpretation, and their contribution is relevant to the present dissertation. The first author that is presented is Tom Brass, whose analysis of exploitation being a constituent part of capitalism is of deep interest (Brass, 2013). First of all, Brass uses the concept of *unfree labour* to indicate the exploited worker. Unfree labour is connected to the idea of each individual’s labour power and the capacity

¹⁴ The concept of adaptation calls into account John Stuart Mill’s notion of contentment as opposed to happiness. Sen does not follow this distinction, framing as well-being what Mill simply calls happiness.

to sell it voluntarily by selecting the most convenient offer on the labour market which is taken away by the capitalistic employer to maximize his profits without due compensation. In Marxist words, unfree labour is the dispossession of one's own labour power. Coercion is not seen as a founding characteristic. The question behind the whole analysis is if capitalism and unfree labour are in contrast, as part of the literature argues, or not, actually feeding one another as Brass maintains. Citing former Marxist thinkers, for instance Karl Kautsky, Brass asserts that unfree labour functions as a "*labour reserve for the purpose of accumulation*".

Brass argues that capitalism, throughout its history, has avoided developing free labour especially where free competition would lead to losses for the employers. Deproletarianization, meaning the creation of unaware mass of workers under no class consciousness and no organized union, is a strategy historically used by employers in their struggle against the labour, or socialist, movement still in present days. It is apparent, the author continues, during time of crisis because it affects the majority of the working population, while in cases of normal economic conditions it hides involving mainly the most vulnerable and less visible sectors of the working class. Historical examples are many, also in present times: in today's India and Egypt, modern farms ensure unfree labour conditions by using debt mechanisms of bounded labour to keep wages down. Such dynamic shall not be regarded as archaic relations because they are still present in those modern economic sectors: if debt was once used to separate farmers from the land they worked on, now it separates workers from their labour power. Unfree labour is thus seen as a permanent character of economy, not as something that the development of a more mature capitalism would erase: such wrong assumption is based on a partial understanding of western development, Brass argues, where the need of a middle class to sustain the demand of production is strong. Nowadays, globalization has changed such logic: an Indian or Egyptian employer can produce goods to send to the west with no need of an internal national market. Workers are indeed just a cost and no more part of the consumers. Framing such consideration under Marxist terms, it can be stated the Keynesian development theory of bourgeois interest is no more actual. In this sense, migration can be considered an additional element that keeps wages down to the advantage of the employers of the host country: people in search of better economic condition, representing an attempt to balance the world distribution of wealth, constitute a source of unfree economic workers in need to accept low working conditions with high competition levels and the possibility to be blackmailed when illegally is present (Boutang, 2002). Thus, peak season of migration represents the apex for low wages and eliminates the risks of maintaining a permanent workforce that can develop class consciousness. On the other side, it can be seen how relocation of industries to search for lower labour costs goes to the detriment of the workers either of the country of origin and of the host country. In other words, the western employer gets the best of globalization, enjoying high prices and low costs, while third world workers enjoy the worst, and developing countries are stuck into underdeveloped economies dependent from exploitation by the West, the so-called super-exploitation (Higginbottom, 2010). This analysis is shared also by other authors (Ciccia,

2015) that see migrant exploitation as a systemic form of labour that sustains the capitalistic economy and the consumerist model.

The role of immigration into exploitation is also highlighted as a mean for value transfer (Probsting, 2015) from poor to rich countries, where western economies enjoy no educational cost, no social or welfare cost, while getting taxes or commissions (especially on remittances) and lower wages over the first two to three migrant generations stably residing in their territory. Thus, migrants represent an oppressed layer of the workforce, divided into external or internal surplus workforce. This factor is used to maintain exploitative conditions in two ways: enhancing bottom-race working conditions with locals in need of working and dividing the labour class into a downgraded and exploited group and a more protected segment of lower- and middle-class workers that enjoy better conditions and bargaining power, through policies and union representation. Happy migrant slaves are beneficial for wages to be kept low, producing racist views and an artificial antagonism that is kept alive to the detriment of all society, but to the profit of exploitative employers.

To better define what to consider unfree labour, Brass responds to what he considers theoretical fallacies: first of all, consent is not a decisive element because it fails to recognize power imbalances. Secondly, contract labour, or wage labour, is not equal to free labour, or hired labour. Indeed, the primary attribute of free labour is the capacity to sell freely one's own labour power, that means both to enter and to exit contracts without limitations, therefore not comprehending those contracts, as exposed in the historical paragraph above, used to bond workers not to freely sell their labour power. This is indeed the same of mechanism of debt and leads to serfdom: failing to recognize such a distinction, even in cases of temporary contracts, leads to perceive bounded condition as a "normal" intense control over workers.

The development of Germany and the USA can show us how capitalism has tried to keep workers unfree. In Germany, the Junkers landlords used contracts to reduce their workers capacity to freely sell their labour power to the highest bidder. Conditions ranged from the prohibition to leave without permission and the obligation, or expectation, for all the member of the family of a worker to work for free in the same company or camp. Furthermore, many Poles were blackmailed because their permit of stay in Germany was dependent on their condition of worker for that one specific employer. Brass states: "*German/local workers were too expensive and demanding for profitable conditions of the sector*". On the other hand, Frederick Douglass describes us how the slavery system of the USA kept wages down for employers, creating a competition

among all workers, slave or non-slave, based on slave wages¹⁵. Interestingly, one can notice how, at the time, the North of the Union disfavor migration from the south to avoid social unrest.

Differently from authors like Wallerstein and Negri, Brass supports the idea that unfree labour is present also in advanced capitalism countries, i.e. in the west or in the center of the capitalistic world and not only in its periphery. Taking for granted the author's logic, accepting the existence of exploitation into capitalistic systems, the next question becomes to understand if capitalism tries or not to reproduce it. To better understand, it shall be introduced the concept of primitive accumulation: the violent separation between workers and the means of production, which happens before the historical phase of the bourgeois revolutions, is deemed to become the norm during the development of capitalism. Inside primitive accumulation is enshrined the idea of labour power selling and economic surplus for the employer. David Harvey agrees on this idea, developing the concept of accumulation by dispossession, which underlines exactly this separation between the capitalistic class of owners and the working class¹⁶. Yet, Brass and Harvey do not agree on the next stage of job relations: if the first calls for the development of proletarianization and class consciousness to be achieved with the struggle of unfree workers, Harvey is accused to wrongly believe that dispossession (which Brass calls depeasantization, with a more historical perspective) per se produces such awareness, being able to freely sell their labour power. In Brass's logic, unfree labour and exploitation is a tactic against proletarianization, defined as the consciousness to be a social class and act as such¹⁷.

The underneath logic is that *"the replacement of existing workforce of free labour with unfree equivalents gives rise/enhance capitalistic profitability"*. Capital seeks to have the cheapest workforce and does not willingly improve people's conditions, which is historically brought by the process of proletarianization, or class consciousness. Unfree workers do not challenge the system because they lack class consciousness.

Focusing specifically on agriculture, Brass gives us a good example of how exploitation develops, based on US and England realities from the 50s and 80s. These sectors see the presence of gang-masters, intermediaries who administer and guide the unfree workforce. Their control extends to living conditions, payment, hours and transportation, representing a point of reference for all workers that cannot be ignored or disobeyed. Their function is to maximize profit for the true employer, the owner of the lands, and they

¹⁵ Two elements can be traced in this sentence: first of all, an explanation for racist feelings among white poor workers, uneducated and detached from class-consciousness. In the second place, we can notice again how chattel slavery historically relates to modern slavery, which eventually became the norm later in time.

¹⁶ Brass accuses Harvey of lack of clarity when he frames accumulation as imperialism in the periphery of the world and as privatization in the core regions of the west.

¹⁷ Following this reasoning, Brass does not take into consideration alternative economic systems, always searching for intra-ethnic class perspective, pushing critics to accuse him of eurocentrism. Indeed, the author deconstructs collective properties, for instance in south American contexts, searching for the presence or absence of the liberty to sell one's own labour-power. In this light, Marxist always see people as workers, not peasant, with the aim of proletarianization and not re-peasantization.

also enjoy competition among themselves. Such system, apparently pre-capitalistic, is on the contrary still present today in Europe and favored by the economic dynamics of the food sector and supermarkets that keeps prices of products low. Gang-masters are the instrument to coerce and exploit the unfree workers: coercion takes the form housing, kinsfolk free labour, debt, menace of deportation or physical threats, while temporary contracts protect the system from total illegality and hide the true working conditions. The State approach is indeed focused on the binomial legality/illegality and the common sense justifies low wages with the production mechanisms inherent to the agricultural sector and the selling of its products in supermarkets. This is a permanent and well-functioning economic reality which is not pre-capitalistic, nor a medieval or feudal context-specific violation of the law, nor a benign or voluntary practice, but the structural nature of an entire economic sector that makes the interest of consumers, supermarkets and, ultimately, of the capital itself. Thus, Brass theories are proven.

Adding on systemic contemporary labour market features, specific attention is worthily given to the issue of flexibility (Scott, 2017). It is connected to the Bordieuan concept of flexploitation, a hyper-exploitation that appears embedded in the present but at the same time exploits the future (harming the social relations of the worker) and damages the possibilities of single individuals. Even if such notion is usually applied on the general labour force, it still constitutes a valid concept for understanding modern-day mechanisms of exploitation for migrant workers, drawing a linkage between the notion of de-proletarianization, precarity and informalization (Wood, 2020). Wood analyzes flexibility farther than work-life balance and well-being, connecting it to power and control, similarly to Scott (see below). In his analysis, scheduling increasingly becomes a means of exploitation and control over a postindustrial workforce trapped in an imbalanced labour relation with the employers¹⁸. Paid work must be analyzed as a power relationship. Arguably, flexibility reflects a tendency, begun in 2000s, of employing on-demand workers making use of new technologies. Flexible scheduling is used to punish or upgrade workers and to enforce discipline, thus controlling them in a subtle way. This is an example of the importance of obscuring exploitation in front of the workers (see paragraph 2.5). However, it does not mean that workers are not aware and do not possess capacity and forms of resistance, such as sabotage or unionization.

Thus, such historically determined system of exploitation is set and maintained¹⁹, but the question becomes to understand how such system of exploitation is secured in society. If authors like Marx consider it granted

¹⁸ Wood, citing Burawoy, argues that the concept of hegemony owns less despotic work environment, while modern-day despotism on-demand does not, relying more on arbitrary power of managers.

¹⁹ Even if not the subject of the present dissertation, it is interesting to highlight a parallel between these Marxist literatures and feminist ones, where capitalism/patriarchy oppress workers/women while awareness raising (class consciousness/empowerment) is the basic to all forms of resistance to rebalance power relationships (on workplace/in society) and combat exploitative cultural assumptions and its acceptance (Glaab, 2018).

simply by the use of force and the need to have an income, Polanyi (Scott, 2017) underlines the role of harm²⁰ as a fundamental element since the industrial revolution, strong enough to relocate people and change their life balances according to the need of surplus exploitation of employers. The issue of labour is analyzed in terms of control over the workforce, overlapping this image with the linear function of exploitation: more control and more exploitation both correspond to chattel slavery. Scott drives the threshold of exploitation where a worker can no longer realize himself or herself outside the labour, growing interest and social relations. Personal agency of an empowered and self-reliant worker is hereby balanced against social control exercised over labour. Scott argues that control, either direct within the workplace or indirect inside society, can become so intense and harmful to constitute an element of exploitation also inside legal limitations, involving modern technologies, mobbing, extreme self-impositions, social expectations (work cultures), debt and even structural dynamics like precarity and labour market intermediaries. Capitalistic societies exercise control over the labour force by harmful practices in order to provide itself with profit made by exploitation. Those harmful practices are disguised and subtle, as they work better and are more difficult to combat. As shown below, this rationale overlaps with the concept of mystification (Burawoy, 2012). Solutions to harm are depicted both from public policies and law and from modifications to capitalistic structures, empowering unions and redistributing power in the labour relation (Scott, 2017). Other authors (Burawoy, 2012) farther elaborate on this element, focusing on the presence of subjective experiences, acceptance and individual positive attitudes toward the job tasks. Burawoy begins his analysis underling Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony and false consciousness. Indeed, the Italian thinker recognizes that unaware workers participate in the capitalistic economy and have no ability to criticize it, being subaltern to it (Smith, 2010)²¹. The workplace²² socializes workers to its functioning and distributes rewards to those who better conform. Such a game, as Burawoy calls it, is made by rules that all society accepts and recognize²³. This is what Gramsci calls hegemony, of a class over the other (Gramsci, 1971, 1975). Consent is produced around a certain kind of society, also thank to partial correction (unionism), rewards and somebody's success. Thus, Gramsci operationalized exploitation with images such as the subalternity and oppression. Subalternity applies to that groups with no political power inside society (Smith, 2010) and are therefore dominated by the social class that leads society (the bourgeoisie). Exploitation is a category of oppression, and consciousness is what makes it possible to drive the hegemony of a system. To break subalternity, the dominated need to take

²⁰ As said, harm is hereby considered either physical, psychological or social-communal, in the sense of degrading social relations and interests.

²¹ In Gramsci, subalternity is not only pictured for the working class, but also for those who do not experience political power in the globalized world, because marginalized on any ground. Subalternity is anyhow rooted in the economic nature of capitalism and it would be incorrect to consider it only culturally, as it is often misused in Anglo-American literature (Liguori, 2011).

²² Gramsci speaks of the factory, referring to post-Fordist societies.

²³ This framing of a game resembles Weber's analysis of job satisfaction, as well as elements of Durkheim sense of belonging.

charge, reflect on themselves and start to critic social dynamics (Liguori, 2011). The subalterns do not possess the capacity to analyze this dimension, because they lack consciousness and the capacity to contextualize historical mechanisms and comprehend them. What can be added to Gramsci is Bourdieu's idea of misrecognition, already highlighted above. Using symbolic power, such society is internalized into habitus and is accepted by each individual in it. Bourdieu goes from objective truth to subjective truth, making people socialized into it the least possible to develop awareness and class consciousness, in Marxist terminology. It is a complete reversal of the socialist revolutionary logic. The habitus of people, such as of migrants or women in Bourdieu's example, makes them totally submitted to exploitative conditions. Only unsocialized and educated young people may resist to it. Importantly, misrecognition extensively relies over individual preferences and does not recognize, according to Burawoy, the true value of hegemony, as vehiculated by social relations. However, adding to hegemony and correcting misrecognition, this last author proposes the concept of mystification as a necessary step for hegemony to deliver social domination. In his analysis, Burawoy considered the experience of State Socialism after 1989. In particular, he underlines how such socialist system produced more dissent than consent concerning the issue of surplus appropriation. In a capitalistic society, surplus is appropriated by employers, but workers did consent to it, because recognized as a fundamental part of the economic mechanism. On the contrary, in socialist societies, surplus is taken by the State "for the benefit of all", which however did not correspond with the everyday life experience. Actual exploitation is not mystified with success. With Bourdieu's misrecognition both socialist and capitalistic societies would have experience socialization, failing to distinguish between the historically victorious capitalistic model and the failure of State socialism. Mystification in capitalistic society is therefore better achieved using social relations and processes, without falling into the theoretical trap of the over socialized man of Bourdieu.

Looking to the problem of how to develop awareness or consciousness, Gramsci underlines the need of a political party to develop alternative hegemony, while Bourdieu would underline the need to disrupt the habitus of marginalized classes (through empowerment). Gramsci believes in the possibility for the marginalized and subalterns to become hegemonic by conquering political power, while Bourdieu has a more pessimistic and conservative vision of social change. Burawoy's concept of mystification runs more towards Gramsci's understanding, favorable to social change.

2.7 Migration and networks

To understand the role of migration in favoring vulnerability to exploitation, it is useful for the reader to consider basic notions from sociology of migration. In the present paper, migration is not analyzed per se but as a factor that explains possible vulnerabilities to labour exploitation and modern slavery, part of which is

already exposed in the previous paragraphs over exploitation and in the following paragraphs over the legal framework. However, it is useful to give a brief picture over the themes and reasonings of sociology of migration. Generally (Ambrosini, 2005), this stream of sociology poses the attention over push and pull factors such as forms of economic needs in the host country and contacts in the destination country. Dependency theories underline how inequality pushes workers to migrate towards better living and earning conditions, linked to the idea of a secondary labour market that exploits less protected workers, migrants in particular. Micro perspectives have highlighted the role of familiar strategies in combating poverty as well as personal preferences. Ethnic and households' networks mediate and adds explanatory power to such macro or micro approaches, underling the importance of those elements in shaping choices and opportunities.

Households are central to understand vulnerabilities in migration since they vehiculate expectations and migratory mandates. Transnational family ties are at the center of recent literature (Baldassar & Merla, 2014) that argues for the existence of asymmetric reciprocity (between who leaves and the family that remains), posing the attention over the need to favor communication and proximity for a better understanding and well-being of both sides, arguably reducing vulnerabilities and stress. Such literature shall not only focus on transnational female migrant workforce and consider different situations of family separation, as first sons or young fathers.

Moreover, part of the literature focuses on the importance of networks²⁴ and social capital, underlining the strong role of ethnic niches in distributing information especially relevant for the job market, vehiculating solidarity, identity, norms, jobs and educational opportunities (Carl Bankston, 2014; Xu & Jordan, 2016). Social connections are seen as assets that can translate into positive capitals or into adaptation and exploitative opportunities. Enclaves are examples of closed migrant communities that create parallel economies, often exploitative or marginalized, such as camps (Carl Bankston, 2014). Adaptation is particularly negative for migrant workers, stuck into underprivileged settings with a limited access to resources and opportunities provided by the network. Thus, ethnic professional specialization happens into low wages jobs while upward mobility is rare for first generations members with limited educational opportunities.

In general, migration and labour exploitation have always been framed as issues of integration into the labour market (Ambrosini, 2005), and while some argue for an assimilationist views of growing integration into the formal labour market across generations, Marxist authors (and structuralists more in general) sustain the idea of the reserve army of labour (Amelina & Horvath, 2017). Other authors describe a segmentation of

²⁴ The concept of groupism has come under scrutiny with the accusation to essentialize cultures, without due attention to specific attributes that constitute a group in a certain space and time (Brubaker, 2003). Attention must be given to the element unifying a community for a specific purpose, such as cultural idioms or organizational habits. Concrete example are a common language or interests (on the labour market). Groups need to be distinguished from categories, underling that a group needs mutual recognition, interaction and communication, while belonging to the same category of something is only a possibility to form a group (Brubaker, 2002).

labour market among standard jobs (for natives) and marginalized ones for migrants (Amelina & Horvath, 2017). Additionally, some perspectives focus on migrants' entrepreneurship over different generations, but it does not concern victims of exploitation. More recent literature underlines the linkage between exploitation and ethnic belongings (Ceccagno, 2017). Ceccagno analyzes the Italian Chinese community in Prato and deeply describes the process of ethnicization of the workforce. This is described as an efficient channel to select vulnerable workers, to exclude others and more easily administer an ethnic homogeneous group. The last characteristic is the reason why contractors, employers, or intermediaries usually follow ethnic lines when selecting the workforce. However, the author notes, ethnic groupism evolves according to local peculiarities, becoming a multi-layer embeddedness: narratives of stereotypical job abilities come into place in the host country, which is the subject setting cultural expectations and excluding others. Chinese people become hard workers, Africans become good farmhands, etcetera, mixing standards of the origin cultures with expectation from the host country. A further element is connected to space and time: in Ceccagno's experience time is colonized as much as possible, even if the author does not recall the idea of social death. Workers are exploited for long hours, have few moments to rest and basically no time for leisure. It reminds of Harvey's idea of time compression. On the other hand, space is compressed into a stasis where the workplace is the only place one visits except his or her house. The only exception is the intra-firm mobility where employers exchange workers for a limited time of low workload to share the most trusted ones and help themselves. The private space doesn't exist, and families may also live or work for the same employer or be separated for most of the day, sending children to private school with long hours, as in the case of the Chinese community in Prato.

3. INTRODUCTORY SETTINGS

3.1 Quantitative estimates

Given the fact that the modern slavery is a hidden phenomenon by its own nature and that modern slavery definitions are fragmented, it is hard to provide reliable estimates of modern slavery practices (Weitzer, 2015). In the literature (Patterson & Zhuo, 2018), various techniques are present to estimate the population of modern slaves as well as different administrative records that are particularly used specifically to detect human trafficking, being it the particularly salient in States' actions. However, important limitations of representativeness arise in this last field too (Savona & Stefanizzi, 2007; Weitzer, 2015), adding the additional problem of the presence of different national definitions from criminal law, creating a serious lack of homogeneity in data, up to the point where such measurements become in reality an indicator of how much efforts a State put into fighting trafficking and nothing more.

One of the few global estimates tells us that around 40.3 million people in the world are held nowadays slaves (Figure 2), considering forced labors together with forced marriage and other similar violations (Alliance 8.7, 2017). Such number was provided in 2017 by the ILO and the Minderoo Foundation's Walk Free initiative (Walk Free), a private entity that developed the Global Slavery Index (GSI). According to their collaboration, 24.9 million are forced workers, while 15.4 are trapped in forced marriage: overall 73% are female and ¼ are minors.

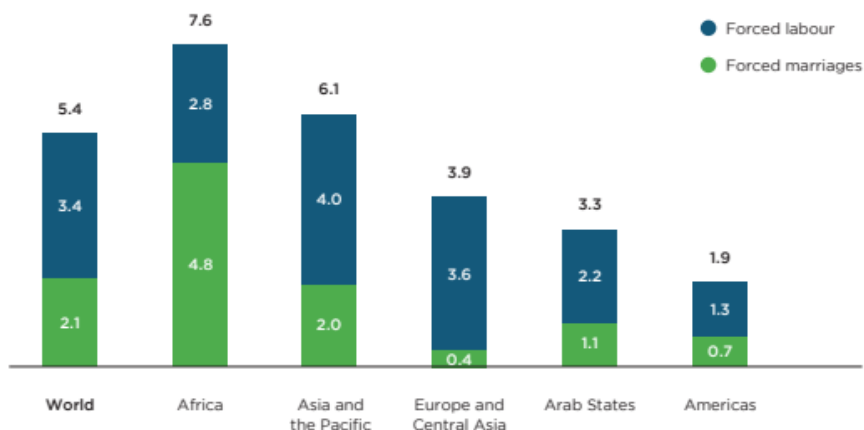


FIGURE 2: Regional prevalence of modern slavery (per 1.000 population), by region and category (Alliance 8.7, 2017).

If considering victims inside the industry of manufacturing, domestic work or agriculture, debt bondage makes up 70% of cases, while it drops to 51% on the overall 40.3 million. Yet, this calculation only considers international cases, leaving aside slavery inside one's own country, as well as in regions where data are no available, or more hidden forms, such as child soldiers. Anyhow, the picture in general provides a useful description of which are the job sectors that mostly welcome forced labour: domestic work (¼ of the total),

construction, manufacturing, agriculture and fishing. Males are mostly exploited in hard working jobs (with an increasing percentage: agriculture, forestry and fishing, wholesale and trade, manufacturing, construction, begging, mining and quarrying). 16 million are exploited by the private economy (57.6 % women, mostly in domestic work), 4.8 by sexual industry and 4.1 by States (work for purposes of economic development, military used for various jobs, etc.). Coercion takes mostly the form of non-payment of wages, threat of violence, actual violence and threat of violence to the family. Sexual exploitation accounts for 4.8 million victims, 21% of which are children, mostly in the Asian region. Africa is the region that sees the highest presence of general modern slavery situations, but when considering only forced labour, it is Asia and the Pacific region that becomes the most affected area. Unfortunately, the report does not truly divide the data among regions, so it is hard to provide a clear profile of the exploited victim of each region.

More recent estimations come from the 2018 GSI²⁵, where the Minderoo Foundation's Walk Free initiative used the data from 2017 adding few more national representative surveys, with the intention to focus more on western countries (Walk Free Foundation, 2018). Here violations have been better described and even if western countries appear to have quite strong normative protections, areas of interventions are still present at the margins of society, where people's vulnerability is high. Specifically in Europe and central Asia, the report finds 3.590.000 estimated people in slavery, representing 9% of total world slaves, dividing the number between a 91% in forced labour (comprehending prostitution) and 9% in forced marriage (the lowest of the world). Debt bondage traps 36% of the victims of forced labour, with a higher proportion of them being men. Turkmenistan, Belarus and Macedonia are the countries that see the highest prevalence of modern slavery, while in absolute numbers, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine are the worst performing countries.

Focusing on Italy, the 2018 GSI sets the number of modern slaves to 145.000. Additionally, descriptive statistics can be found from NGOs' reports or official public acts such as legal proceedings or inspections in specific economic sectors, as well as in administrative records, but obviously such numbers cannot be taken as truly representative and can be contradictory since they only look into a little part of reality, and they see high variations among them. However, a similar total estimate is provided by the Italian Ministry of Labour and the CGIL labour union, who found that in the agricultural sector at least a 10% among the irregular workers, meaning the ones who work with no legal contract, might be slaves (Osservatorio Placido Rizzotto,

²⁵ Data are provided by the US private company Gallup World Poll that runs surveys of households. 48 countries are part of the sample, while for the rest of the countries, they indirectly derive the ratio making clusters of countries according to similar characteristics. Such grouping is done without a specific methodology and can easily be contested. To derive the values in the countries that are not surveyed the procedure takes into account a series of macro-variables that are found associated with the presence of modern slavery in the surveyed countries, according to WFF experts (Diego-Rosell & Joudo Larsen, 2018). Such variables are grouped in 5 categories: dimensions of good governance, presence of nourishment, inequality, disenfranchised groups and armed conflicts. Remarkably, no European country is surveyed directly from the Gallup Polls, using two previous surveys for the UK and the Netherlands to derive the values of the rest of Europe, using the first for northern Europe and the latter for southern and central Europe (Walk Free Foundation, 2018).

2016). Such percentage is higher in the estimates from the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) cited by the UN special rapporteur on modern slavery few years later (Human Rights Council, 2019).

Lastly, Italy has set up the Italian observatory on anti-trafficking interventions –Green number against trafficking, which collects quantitative data of the people that enter its system. They assert, in the yearly report for 2020, that more than half of the subjects who activate the number to signal presence of exploitation (a total of 5.510 calls, comprehending not inherent ones) are anti trafficking NGOs, followed by the same victims and, in third place (10% of cases) by territorial commissions for asylum requests. Only 25% of calls are related to labour exploitation (mainly young men), when the vast majority concern prostitution cases. On average between 2018 and 2020, the events of rescuing people from modern slavery situations are around 70 cases a year, while the request to open such procedures in other territories (either because of security reasons or lacking resources) are around 50 a year. Total data (thus comprehending mainly prostitution cases) describe the 3 groups: sub-Saharan (Nigeria mainly), Bulgarians and people from Pakistan or Bangladesh. In general, victims are mostly young women, and most of the calls come from the north of Italy. Lastly, the green number provides an observatory of newspaper's cases of exploitation, as well as opportunities for conferences and sharing of best practices. Its role is undoubtedly helpful for NGOs.

The 2018 GRETA²⁶ report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Italy, speaks of only 1172 assisted victims, describing a picture mainly focused on trafficking for prostitution.

It is thus evident that estimates are weak, and the absolute numbers seem very low, reflecting the low number of law cases based on the relative penal provisions cited above and the partial knowledge limited to few economic sectors. The quantitative perspective is therefore not adequate to investigate modern slavery causes and mechanisms.

3.2 International legal framework

As highlighted above and supported in the literature (Degani, 2011), national and international law frameworks divide vulnerable migrants into a series of typologies that do not conform to the complexity of reality. Refugees, defined into the 1951 Geneva convention, trafficked people, defined in the 2000 Palermo protocol, as well as the various and different situations of exploitation and abuse, often combine and concern the same person in different forms and moments of time, a typical characteristic of the contemporary mixed migration fluxes. The great distinction between refugees and economic migrants is shrinking and thus the

²⁶ The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings from the Council of Europe.

language to use and describe the phenomenon must evolve to keep up with the system of violations and exploitation, which is malleable and easy to change.

International instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two Covenants of 1966 ensure that migrant workers are not unlawfully discriminate and enjoy human rights just like States' citizens. In 1990 the United Nations adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), which entered into force only in 2003 and is not adopted by any western country that receives considerable migration fluxes. The same principle is present in specific ILO instruments, such as the Convention number 143 on migrant workers, which also sees a very low number of ratifications in western countries. These difficulties of States in protecting migrant workers appear quite clearly also in the framework of the Council of Europe, which is insufficient in the protection of irregular migrant workers (Häusler, 2010)

Focusing on the EU, Article 5 of the charter of fundamental rights prohibits slavery, forced labour and trafficking. This last also sees specific attention in article 79 and 83 of TFEU. Article 153, furthermore, asks for the respect of minimum working and social conditions, further elaborated into secondary laws, such as the working time directive (2003/88/EC), the anti-trafficking directive (2011/36/EU) and the victims' rights directive (2012/29/EU). Another directive important to exploitation prevention is the seasonal workers directive (2014/36/EU) that states the right to equal treatment of migrant workers with nationals of member States, including pay, working conditions, leave and holidays. Also, adequate standards of living are indicated as a benefit that member States need to ensure. Another main instrument is the Employers Sanctions Directive (2009/52/EC) that focuses on dissuading employers to hire irregular migrants and to protect vulnerable workers through facilitating complaints and ensuring payments. The EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) checks the results of the directive and periodically highlights the main issues facing member States.

Such rights, excluding the EU charter's provisions, are not framed under human rights law, but it is important to highlight that the core labour rights, as the right to claim pay, the right to compensation and the right to access to justice, also apply to migrants in an irregular situation even if not specifically aimed at them. Similarly, the employers' duty to take measures for the protection of the workers' health and safety, stemming from international and EU law, concerns all workers (FRA, 2019). The EU however, suffers from the same difficulties of the international arena in specifically recognizing migrants workers' rights and peculiarities, while becoming very attentive on the fight against illegal migration (Degani, 2017; Häusler, 2010).

3.3 Italian legal framework

In Italy, to contrast slavery-like exploitation of migrant labour there are three important provisions from the Penal Code (article 600, 601 and 603), plus 2 provisions, article 18 and 22, from the Consolidated Act of Provisions concerning immigration and the condition of third country nationals (Legislative Decree 25.7.1998, No. 286). Definitions of exploitation are only found in the penal code, which is a good representation of the attitude of the Italian State towards the phenomenon. Marginally, literature points out a humanitarian approach, which is however framed in emergency terms (Degani, 2011).

Article 600 punishes slavery and servitude in the forms of “*power tantamount to ownership rights and continuous subjugation*”. It refers to treatment as objects, juridically or de facto, with no space for independent actions nor any degree of autonomy from the owner. Also, it requires the presence of violence, threats, deceptions or abuse of vulnerabilities. Sentences go from 8 to 20 years with aggravating conditions in case of minors, prostitution or trafficking of organs.

Article 601 punishes trafficking, even when entirely organized within Italian borders, with sentences from 8 to 20 years. It makes references to slavery conditions of article 600 and follows the international definition of trafficking. It does require the creation of a state of subjugation. Remarkably, the first condemnation under this article for trafficking aimed specifically at labour exploitation happened only in 2019. The aim of exploitation must be present in order for the crime to be recognized.

Article 603 of the Italian Penal Code defines serious exploitation at work with the presence of one or more of the following conditions:

- Repeated excessive number of working hours, outside the normal working time prescribed by the National Collective Agreements²⁷ (CCNLs);
- Low payment, in respect of National Collective Agreements’ standards;
- Violation of security and hygienic measures (ranging from small and uncomfortable working spaces to more heinous conditions);
- Exposing the workers to degrading working or living conditions, and/or to unlawful surveillance.

The perpetrator is punished with 1 to 5 years of prison and a fine between 500 and 1000€ for each worker (if entailing more than three victims the article prescribes aggravating conditions). The article itself aims to punish both the recruiter and the employer who take advantage of the situation of need (such rationale was only later extended to the employer). Anyhow, to pursue the owner is usually more complicated than to pursue the recruiter. Presence of violence or threats are considered aggravating circumstances for prison

²⁷ CCNLs are national contracts stipulated by representative unions and employers’ association, regulating working conditions for defined job sectors, thus guaranteeing minimum levels.

sentence and fine, indicating the most serious exploitation. In 2019 article 603 sees around 260 proceedings quite spread all over the country, 2/3 of which located in the agricultural sector (ADIR, 2021). Excluding this sector, exploitation appears mainly located in the north. Proceedings are steadily increasing, going from 142 in 2016 to 258, 580 and to 950 in 2019 (Servizio analisi criminale - Dipartimento pubblica sicurezza, 2021). In the same period, articles 600 and 601 see around 200 cases each year.

Even if the boundary between the three law provisions is discussed (Rigo, 2015), they are generally considered part of a continuum of violation, where slavery is the apex and serious exploitation comes right before it. Illegal work or partially legal labour conditions represent the beginning of such continuum.

On the other side, there are two important provisions for the contrast to labour exploitation belonging to migration law (law No. 286/1998). Both prescribe victims' protection in cases of formal recognition of the existence of exploitation, granting people temporary residence permits in order to put an end to exploitative conditions:

- article 18 is the most prominent legal provision. It grants a total of 18 months of permit, renewable, and the entering, that is mandatory, into the formal public system of social assistance and integration²⁸, with the aim to fight exploitative condition and disempowerment. Formally, no need to cooperate with justice is required, as far as the migrant is victim of serious exploitation and in a situation of peril²⁹ attested by police forces and/or legal authorities on proposal by NGOs (which is usually the case) or by migrants themselves;
- article 22 regulates labour relations. It prescribes sentences from 6 months to 3 years and a fine of 5000€ for each employed worker that has no legal permit of stay. It directly aims at the employer, without asking for exploitation to be in place. Yet, only in cases of exploitation the article prescribes legal permit of stay to the victim that cooperates with justice and makes formal complaint. It lasts 6 months and can be renewed into a work permit.

The system monitoring article 18 is based on 4 actors: the police headquarter, the prosecutor, the local authorities and the NGOs, the so called third sector. This system is responsible for the control and reception of exploitation victims, but with low resources, capacities and, often, intentions. Furthermore, local police authorities and prosecutors are supposed to have specific local memoranda against labour exploitation, developed together with mayors, but they are present only in some local contexts. Additionally, article 18 presents a whole structure of funding for building facilities and reception systems distributed on the different provinces. The system however is reported to be limited in its operation: this can be attribute to the fact that

²⁸ See paragraph 3.5.

²⁹ Direct reference is made to article 600 and 601 of the penal code, as well as to generic "conditions of violence or serious exploitation and risk of safety for leaving the job". Both elements are therefore considered necessary for the release of the permit. Article 603 is not cited because originally aimed to punish recruiters.

local politics may unwelcome the presence of migrants on the territory (facilities could be seen as a pull and stay factor for more workers to come) or also to the existence of criminal interests that might be weakened by the presence of such welfare services. Yet, a regulatory structure could limit the number of workers according to the need of a territory, decreasing the downward wage competition based on high numbers into the workforce. Also, it could represent an easy way to enforce awareness on rights and alternatives.

In conclusion, the combination of articles 18 and 22 is of limited use when dealing with cases of exploitation that do not have real safety risk or can legally pursue the exploiter. Yet, the Italian system does combine repressive measures with victim protection and assistance, as required in EU directives and international treaties (the Palermo protocol and the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings – Warsaw treaty).

3.4 Italian immigration law

As mentioned, the migration legislative framework of Italy is based on the Consolidated Act of Provisions concerning immigration and the condition of third country nationals (Legislative Decree No. 286/1998), also called Unique Immigration Law (Testo Unico Immigrazione –TUI). In general, the entry on the Italian territory (Morozzo della Rocca, 2018) is possible under conditions of economic stability and through a VISA permission, given the exclusion from specific lists of undesirable people, among which there are illegal migrants already expelled. Looking in particular at the regulation for working permits, the Italian text appears complex and intentionally intricate. It can be argued (Morozzo della Rocca, 2018), that the rationale behind the few existing permits, the periodical regularizations or amnesties procedures and the massive presence of illegal economies are made to favor a system of low protection and flexible workforce.

The system³⁰ prescribes the State to establish quotas for work permits every year, based on estimations on labour demand and with the cooperation of regional authorities and specific government bodies. With the use of consular authorities, the government fills in different lists for temporary, seasonal or permanent positions. In each prefecture is established an immigration office, which, according to procedures set up in article 22 of the immigration law gives the permits based on the quota assigned to that area. Conditions require having the contact with the employer prior the entry on the Italian territory. The employer can either select from government lists, or to call specifically somebody outside them, given the authorization from the local prefecture to hire somebody because the territory doesn't offer enough work supply. The employer can be a private citizen or a foreigner regularly residing in Italy and must show authorities a long list of documentation to attest adequate financial capacity, housing conditions and real working need. This

³⁰ In the present thesis, individual work (lavoro autonomo) is not considered since it does not refer to migrant workers in economic need. However, it is notable that it is also a very bureaucratic process that arguably discourages individuals.

bureaucratic procedure clearly favors in loco workers and discourage employers to hire from outside the EU. Lastly, when arrived on the Italian territory, the worker must go to the prefecture and register, showing compliance to law criteria in terms of proper housing conditions and job contract. Such system of quota actually turns into a system of amnesties, or regularizations, for workers already present on the territory, since the economy needs low wage working labour and government aims to regularize migrant present on its territory (Caponio & Cappiali, 2018; Della Rosa, 2021). The procedures are periodically available and the most recent one was made during covid. This last is particularly important since it is meant to answer the need of cheap labour in key economic sectors: it only refers to agricultural and domestic care workers without aiming to check marginalized or exploitative situations (Della Rosa, 2021). Also, only workers between certain dates can apply, obviously with proper labour contracts. After two years, in 2022, procedures are still in place and permits still lack, leading part of the public opinion to suggest that there was no actual shortage of workers, but of the usual surplus that used to keep wages low (Caruso & Lo Cascio, 2020).

Differently, asylum seekers enjoy specific law provisions. They are in fact separated from so-called migrant workers on the base of the existence of grounds of personal persecutions set out in the Refugee Convention of Geneva or of particular humanitarian conditions recognized by the Italian State (humanitarian permits). This branch of migration law deals with international protection and governs the existence of a network of hotspots that houses migrants who arrive through the Mediterranean Sea or the Balkan route and intend to ask for asylum. Here there is a first screening between people who are sent inside the formal reception system (first reception – former CPSA, CARA and CDA now generally called hubs) and people who will be sent to expulsion center (CPR – center for permanence and repatriation). The first group formally asks asylum to judiciary territorial commissions that evaluate the presence of the persecution grounds with a formal colloquium, with two degrees of judicial judgement. In cases of recognition, they are spread on the territory in smaller structures (former SPRAR, then SIPROIMI now SAI – system of reception and integration), and they have access to job formation and language courses aimed at integration into the Italian society. The system is not mandatory for local authorities and there are many cities which do not host any facility: indeed, the government periodically tries to promote them with the assistance of the National Association of City Halls – ANCI (Prefettura di Milano, 2017). SAI also appear underfinanced and often lacking adequate support from needed public services (NAGA, 2021). Times are often too long, and people can wait years between one communication from the public authority to the other (Degani, 2020).

The initial screening is usually summarily done, without due attention on traumas of people or their specific vulnerabilities. Yet, who presents the request for asylum benefits from a temporary permit of stay until the end of the process of examination and its eventual appeal (only possible one time because of law 46/2017, differently from any other Italian legal proceeding that gives two possibilities of appeal). Furthermore, both the first reception system and the SAI system see limited resources and structures, thus in need of

extraordinary help for hosting people: those are the CAS – center of extraordinary reception, which are spread in all regions and usually consist of big barracks or hotels selected by local authorities and prefectures. The CAS system is particular in lack of proper resources to offer integration possibilities and help to people in need (Morozzo della Rocca, 2018). In any case, both first reception hubs and CAS have strict rules and prescribe overnight stay inside the structures, with the penalty of being denied legal stay.

In conclusion, such brief description has highlighted how the system for labour migration and the system of refugees' reception are not set to protect against exploitation, nor they are thought to be. Yet, they might be considered parts of an economic-growth strategy (Probsting, 2015) that keeps wages low, in line with exploitative capitalistic dynamics (Brass, 2013; Cohen, 1996; Degani, 2017).

3.5 How to tackle modern slavery

The role of government in fighting modern slavery is central. Recommendations from the Minderoo Foundation's Walk Free initiative underline the need to support victims, ensure justice and coordinate efficiently between countries and stakeholders to prevent exploitation, entailing coordination capacity, supply chain monitoring in globalized economies and services for migrant workers in need (Alliance 8.7, 2017; Walk Free Foundation, 2018). Yet, it is clear how the presence of decent jobs as true alternative to exploitation can make most of the difference in fighting the practice (Degani, 2020; FRA, 2019). This logic reflects the role of empowerment in shaping new opportunities. Decent work should become a human right in the legislations not to discriminate between foreigners and citizens. Public controls need to be enforced, working both with police forces and stakeholders able to help victims of exploitations, without focusing only to punish exploiters³¹. Involving labour inspectors from the National Labour Inspectorate (INL) of foreign origins may help to enter cultural dynamics and be perceived close and reliable by migrant workers. Labour demand and supply need to meet inside safe networks, making it central to have public structures that are operative and fast, a better alternative over gang-masters. Awareness raising needs to be pushed together by unions and NGOs.

To comply with these recommendations Italy possesses a peculiar system of protection for workers' exploitation built upon victims of trafficking and serious labour exploitation, distinguished from the humanitarian and refugee assistance (Degani, 2020). This system was built during the '90s from the experience of social operators working on prostitution and victims of drugs, growing to expand their social mandate, their services, and their professional techniques and experiences (Giovannetti & Zorzella, 2020). Indeed, the name anti-trafficking can be misleading: in Italy, such system does not involve only proper victims

³¹ Digital archives of workers' welfare and employers' declarations are not cross-checked to find discrepancies, and different public agencies do not share their data for privacy reasons.

of trafficking as defined in the Palermo protocols, but also grew to comprehend victims of serious forms of labour exploitation. This last aspect has come under the attention of policymakers in the past 20 years when government started to fund NGOs providing specific assistance to victims of labour exploitation. The base of the system against labour exploitation is article 18 of Italian immigration law, together with recommendations from the national plan against trafficking and serious exploitation, based on EU directive 2011/36 (Consiglio dei Ministri, 2016). The system, called Unique program of uncovering, assistance and social integration is financed by grants from the DPO – Department of equal opportunities of the Council of Ministers: it divides Italy into 21 areas, roughly corresponding to the Italian regions and it asks to contrast prostitution, trafficking and serious labour exploitation, by finding (the so-called uncovering of exploitation) and rescuing (so-called taking charge - alias promoting social programs) the victims. Usually, these projects involve the regional and local authorities together with registered NGOs according to article 52 of the Italian immigration law, but the public bodies can sometimes lack proper administration role and will. Each of the 21 grants, roughly corresponding to the Italian regions as shown in the picture below, can shape differently its intervention and project, focusing more on one aspect or the other. The present dissertation makes reference to the experience of the 2016 – 2020 grants. Beneficiaries have access to house and recovery, health assistance, social, psychological and legal services, language courses, professional trainings and eventually voluntary repatriation. When the project also provides housing, it is not mandatory to accept, and it can vary according to risk of violence and personal characteristics.

The DPO also finances the Italian observatory on anti-trafficking interventions – Green number against trafficking, run by the city administration of Venice and from 2022 from the region of Veneto. This service provides knowledge sharing and public awareness raising, together with the possibility 24h a day to signal any person in need and to personally call for help, and it gathers victims' data to monitor and eventually be able to move people across services in different areas in case of need.



FIGURE 3: Visual representation of the Italian regional grants of the 2016 – 2020 Unique program of uncovering, assistance and social integration. Available at <https://www.osservatoriointerventitratta.it>.

In this research it is investigated mainly this line of funding, interviewing its actors. However, it is integrated the perspective with few interviews based on another system of funding specifically aimed at the agricultural sector, a system of grants called FAMI –Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (2014-2020) financed by the European Union through the ministry of the Interior. The FAMI system is mainly focused on fighting against unlawful intermediaries, the caporali³²: the SIPLA project from ARCI³³ and Caritas, the FARm project from the University of Verona, Diagrammi from CGIL³⁴, Presidio from Caritas and many others are examples of FAMI projects on the Italian territory. Those projects are based on the 3 years plan against labour exploitation in

³² Caporali are gang-master, illegal recruiters or intermediaries that manage the exploitation of the workforce for landowners. Importantly, it must point out that the existence of the gang-master recruitment systems is not a unicum of agriculture, since it exists also in logistics, construction and care services, and concerns all the Italian territory (Degani, 2020).

³³ The Italian Recreational and Cultural Association, a big association promoting civic and political participation.

³⁴ Italian General Labour Confederation, the main Italian labour union.

agriculture and caporalato (2020-2022) which sees 700 million as funds³⁵, a much bigger amount of money compared to the 24 million to the anti-trafficking funds (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2020). It is built by a ministerial table that gathers associations, public administration, police forces and unions. It aims to prevent, contrast, protect and reintegrate victims through a set of priority actions. Those priorities comprehend to plan and monitor agricultural workloads on territories, promote quality labelling (an initiative by the Minister of Agriculture, called network for quality agricultural jobs³⁶), promote quality housing conditions, create transports to job places, increase labour inspection³⁷ as well as referral and integration mechanisms. Such actions are to be defined in each region and local territories, within the multiagency network suggested by the national plan. It is prescribed a monitoring mechanism, the first of which happened in June 2021. This particular focus for fundings in agriculture is due to the characteristics of the agricultural sector: if in the overall market the level of illegal economy is 12.3%, in agriculture such level raises up to 16.9% in 2017. However, such value is lower than for the domestic and care sector (36.9%), commerce (24%) and construction (22.1%). This is also due to the presence of grey³⁸ working conditions, that pretend to give formal contracts and hides higher working loads. Also, it appears that certain nationalities (Africans, Pakistanis and Romanians) enjoy contracts with 50 working days a year, while Italians, Tunisians and Indians enjoy longer periods, maybe indicating a longer period of stay in Italy (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2020). The 3 years government plan against labour exploitation in agriculture and against caporalato points out that 73% of agricultural workers are men, and only few nationalities (Pakistani, Indians and Senegalese) are increasing women presence (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2020). Moreover, the total presence of foreigners in agriculture has doubled from 2008 to 2018 (from 3.5 to 6.4%). Interestingly, agriculture is not the labour sector that sees the highest percentages of migrant workers (personal care and services 26.9%, industry 17.9% in 2018).

Overall, even if Italy possess a quite extensive system of funds to fight modern slavery practices, funding by grants and projects can anyhow be read as a symptom of deficiency of services (Degani, 2020), because it does not give stability and sustainability over time, being they limited both in resources and time. The State either has too few resources, wrongly consider the problem to be temporary or lacks willingness to seriously invest to contrast exploitation. Perhaps, it is just a combination of all of those.

³⁵ Resources from the Labour Ministry are around 88 million euros, divided between FAMI and other funds for labour inclusion (FSE – European Social Funds, FNPM - National Fund for Migration Policies, PON – Operative Programme for National Inclusion), while other ministries provide additional resources for their specific mandates (the ministry of agriculture, the ministry of interior and ANPAL – the national agency for active labour policies).

³⁶ The network also functions as a list of virtuous firms that respect labour rights, among which potential consumers or big distribution companies may choose to commerce.

³⁷ Recent literature (Ceccagno, 2017) highlights how inspections are driven by big events of public domain, not by the risk of exploitation. Yet, they would represent an important instrument to ensure correct wage competition.

³⁸ Grey labour, as opposed to totally illegal black labour, is labour partially paid with legal contracts and partially not, hiding the true amount of working hours.

4. QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sample and interview design

Given the need to produce an interpretative framework for the vulnerabilities behind modern slavery, the research adopts a qualitative approach based on a small-n purposive sample³⁹ of privileged observers, or opinion leaders (Daniel, 2012). They are social operators of Italian NGOs working in the uncovering of exploitation, the most competent proxy to analyze a hidden social phenomenon within the universal and explorative logic of the research⁴⁰. Among the professionals working against labour exploitation, NGOs are horizontal to labour sectors and specifically focus over vulnerabilities and empowerment, unlike Union members and police forces, thus being the privileged observers closest to the general perspective of the thesis. Also, they are actors embedded in local contexts, capable of understanding the social reality in which they operate. Their experience is mediated and biased by their studies and professional expertise but represents a qualified and adequate perspective able to assess and conceptualize vulnerabilities more precisely than the ones affected by it (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2010)⁴¹. They are capable to capture socio-economic factors and reflect on elements of dependency or marginality, as well as awareness of labour rights, which is a considerable part of their job. Their approach is the result of the knowledge provided by cyclic public policies and direct professional experience. This sample thus matches the explorative rationale of the research and limits the representativeness of the findings, without cancelling the important contribution to sociological research. Importantly, the thesis looks for common points in their understanding of vulnerability, because those factors that are present throughout different experiences and contexts are deemed the most important ones⁴². The findings contribute to create an empirical knowledge that proves a possible interpretation of causality. Furthermore, as pointed out in the introduction, the thesis proposes a methodology to study a hidden social reality, digging into it not using a statistically representative sample (impossible to achieve) but a small and competent one that allows to explain part of such reality, which it

³⁹ A purposive sample is a sample of interviewees selected on the base of their knowledge about the phenomenon and population under investigation and not on their representativeness over a general population.

⁴⁰ Modern slavery is a physiologically concealed reality, where characteristics of the economic sector or geographical peculiarities often help covering exploitation. When keeping a framework of interest horizontal to such particularities, reflecting over general vulnerabilities and causality, interviewing victims is found impossible to do, especially with a limited amount of time and resources. Furthermore, victims bear the risk of re-traumatization through stress, sadness or anxiety (D. G. Anderson & Hatton, 2000; Dempsey et al., 2016) and NGOs, key actors to find them, were not prone to cooperate during Covid-19.

⁴¹ Victims tend to make sense of their world, as any other social group (Bourdieu et al., 2000; Burawoy, 2012; Smith, 2010). Focusing on their perspective would require a process of re-interpretation when the aim is to causally explain the phenomenon. Furthermore, the researcher should distinguish between people still in exploitation and people that exited it, alone or through the help of NGOs' programmes, who would expose different and possibly conflictual perspectives.

⁴² Therefore, differences among contexts and interviewees are not highlighted in the analysis. The small- n approach is not appropriate to speculate over such differences, while it suits the analysis of common points and understanding.

strongly needed. Such knowledge shall be further tested in future investigation, considering different samples and methodologies, but does constitute a more developed point in social science knowledge.

This approach allows to investigate modern slavery through the representation that social operators possess of the phenomenon. Since the phenomenon is a hidden reality, to investigate and understand it requires to put together different representations and interpret the way they differ or correspond. If the phenomenon “per se” cannot be known, the thesis proposes the representation that fits into the explorative general research design and that can represent the base for future analysis and comparisons that take into considerations different perspectives and versions of reality. Only by reading all of them, social sciences can provide the closest representation of reality. That means that all images of the phenomenon are to be studied⁴³. The thesis should however be considered a necessary first step that provides a sufficient knowledge to start fighting the phenomenon, as from the perspective of social operators. In any case, the interpretative framework that results from the thesis is a valuable tool in the hands of researchers to further dig into social reality, already possessing established point of reference (the vulnerability factors). Critical realism can be considered the closest epistemological approach, where reality and its categories can be known but only through partial images to be compared and interpreted (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). The pragmatic aim to fight the phenomenon also contributes to the choices taken.

Since the scope of the interviews is to find and conceptualize the various vulnerability factors present in a situation of modern slavery, the track of the interview considers both the possibility of lacking some dimensions or elements and the need to verify that what has already been found from existing literature is truly meaningful. As such, a semi-structured interview appears to be most efficient to both ends: the interviewer has the possibility both to follow the interviewee in the dimensions deemed most important by the same interviewee and to select the issues to investigate, directly asking questions or using probes and follow ups. The form of semi-structured interview has the advantages to have control over the environment (needed to respect people’s privacy) and be flexible in the questions’ order (Bailey, 2006).

Regarding the size of the sample, literature does not provide a clear answer. The number of the interviews depends on the nature of the phenomenon investigated and on the ability to build a coherent framework from the interviewees. To limit the number of interviews, reference must be made to the concept of saturation (Guest et al., 2006): the authors state that within 6 to 12 interviews (other authors cited in the same paper arrive up to 15) the researcher is usually able to extract the data he or she is looking for. Conditions for saturation is the careful choice of the sample (culturally competent over the investigated issue)

⁴³ Obviously, there might be conflicts between different images that need to be re-interpreted, as said before. For example, the relationship between unions and workers can be conflictual. If the first are accused of mobilizing stereotypes to gain mediatic attention (Howard & Forin, 2019), the second can be trapped in mystification and lack of class consciousness (Burawoy, 2012; Gramsci, 1971).

and a not being too heterogeneous, as well as having well-designed and clear interviews' tracks. Remarkably, these numbers refer to one context. Also, this finding applies only to the semi-structured interviews.

The sample selected comprehends 22 semi-structured interviews, spanning among the different regional Italian programs for uncovering, assistance and social integration. Beginning from the list of NGOs working in these programs (purposive sample), 10 out of 21 regional projects are analyzed through their social operators. By snowball sampling it has been possible to reach some who did not answer the direct mail⁴⁴, as well as adding 3 FAMI grants⁴⁵ specifically focused on agricultural exploitation. Such snowball approach also led to interview 2 union members, 1 policeman from the INL and 1 political activist that aren't social operators and do not follow the logic of grants but cover different, yet important, aspects of the uncovering of exploitation connected to the activity of NGOs (see paragraph 4.2.18). Geographically, Italy is well represented: eight interviewees are based in north Italy, seven in the center and seven in the south, ensuring a good geographical diversification.

Interviews are conducted on Zoom (alternatively on WebEx or Jitsi), always via video call except one case where the operator wished not to be video recorded. In the case of the political activist, the context has led the researcher not to register but only to take notes at the end of the conversation. There are three cases of double interviews to the project manager and one simple social operator of the same NGO, specifically requested by the same interviewees. The duration goes from 40 minutes to 1.45 hours, with an average of 1 hour. The sample is fully culturally competent, and saturation has been reached.

The moment of first contact via mail represents the first impression over the researcher and its activity and, therefore, it is important to create interest in the research and to give a professional impression. Most importantly, due mechanisms for data and privacy protection are exposed: all interviewees need to sign an informed consent both for data treatment and interview's participation (concerning anonymity, maximum length of information storage, data access). The form comes from the University of Milan-Bicocca ethical committee and is sent by mail to the interviewees prior to the online meeting, so that the interviewee is confident that his or her privacy is protected, building trust and confidence. The location of the interview is important because it shall be private and comfortable, free from interruption to let people relax. Due to Covid-19 all interviews have been conducted via digital platforms, mainly on Zoom or any platform where the interviewee was at ease.

⁴⁴ The percentage of direct answers to the researcher's mails has been low probably because of the COVID-19 situation. However, the sample covers a good number of the few organizations that fight labour exploitation inside the logic of the public programs, interviewing more than half of them. It should be considered that some regional programs do not see proper covering of exploitation outside agriculture.

⁴⁵ 2 in central Italy, 1 in the South. They are SIPLA Nord, SIPLA South and DIAGRAMMI.

Interviews per se are experience games (Cardano, 2011) between an interviewer, or researcher, and interviewee, or participant: the first is required to put the second at ease, in order to generate the most reliable responses he is interested in, without bias. Moreover, entering the interviewee's life and work experiences must be done with caution and with good reasons. In the present case, the researcher has to keep in mind that interviewing over labour exploitation and modern slavery can provide social workers with the risk of being identified or to release sensible information⁴⁶. To prevent this risk, the researcher must minimize any risk of harming participants or people connected to them by ensuring and clearly stating that:

- The participant is informed and is always able to participate and share data, pointing out the right to stop the interview at any time or not answering certain questions. In case of any distress, the interview would be stopped or reprogrammed, with the consent of the participant;
- Time is valuable, the interviewee must not perceive the interview as something not useful, but the opposite, returning positive feelings and thoughts to both participant and researcher. Clearly, no solution by the researcher shall be promised or pictured in any way, but the intention to bring more knowledge to benefit people must be clear to produce sincere answers;
- When it is not possible for the researcher to place him or herself in the social group or culture of the participant, it is important to appear empathic and show due respect, acknowledging the interviewees' point of view.

When the interview starts, the first ten minutes are central to remind such points and, consequently, establish a positive attitude from the interviewee and further build the needed confidence and feelings of solidarity. Informal starts are therefore used, introducing again the research (already described in the email), the privacy policy and thanking the interviewee for the participation. Throughout the dialogue, the interviewer lets people speak and listens carefully, showing interest and respect both with words and body language. Language exercise a strong influence in the setting of empathy and communication flow: avoiding abstract concepts or complicated constructs are important not to build a formal and bias relationship (Corbetta, 2014) with social workers that are not theoretical thinkers but on-field operators. Most importantly, the researcher shall never question the interviewee's answers or show disagreement, both not to bias the participant and because it would run against the aim of searching unexpected findings.

Concerning the track of the interview⁴⁷, the first element to point out is the variability of the order of the questions, which follows the conversation and tries not to stop the free sharing of experiences and thoughts by the interviewees. The track is organized in macro-themes as suggested by literature, and modified according to the findings. The interview begins in medias res asking the definition of modern slavery, building

⁴⁶ This is why it is not possible to precisely list names or NGOs involved.

⁴⁷ See Appendix 9.1.

from the absence of bias that develop over the reasoning and later dialogue. It follows a question over the interviewee's work experience and about the people he or she works with. Here, questions become more specific to understand how the organization of the interviewee works and to make an identikit of the people they encounter. After this, it starts the proper four thematic macro-sections: migratory profile, labour experience and exploitation, perception, sociality and services. The sections reflect the literature review provided in the chapters before, re-organized in themes in order to have a fluent conversation⁴⁸. Each section begins with a general question, followed by specific questions for each element deemed important, in the case some are left outside the first answer. Yet, with a wise use of probes the interviewer tries not to hurry up on the single specificities, giving interviewees the time to develop the answer and bring out the issue in autonomy. These subsequent questions may be introduced as follow ups when the issue of interest is only marginally touched, always trying to avoid categorical questions. To conclude the interview, a general question on policymaking is posed to the participants, framed in a generic way to let people think if to answer on the macro or on the micro perspective. Such questions refer to the paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 on the logic of exploitation. At the end of the interview, informal chatting takes place to let interviewees restore. Furthermore, the researcher asks for opinions and suggestions, as well as for new interviewees. Moreover, any dubious or incoherent answers are written down, as well as any sign of anxiety, threat, or of physical distress or harm. The researcher eventually notes any request to be informed about the research progress.

4.2 Interviews' thematic analysis

The thematic analysis (Ayres, 2008; Gibbs, 2007) describes the themes as they have come out from the semi-structured interviews, reflecting the richness of all information provided divided in subparagraphs. Interviews are analyzed using Nvivo (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2022) and subparagraphs reflect the main nodes of the analysis. They highlight some concepts that are horizontally present and extensively described in their differences and similarities, to highlight all vulnerability factors encountered that relate to and explain modern slavery. What is described herein is therefore what is considered relevant and linked to the experience of modern slavery, without the aim to touch all situations linked to migrant workers in general.

The section introduces modern slavery and exploitation as described by the interviewees, followed by all the vulnerability-related dimensions that theories and previous literature suggest investigating. The next paragraph, number 4.3, analyzes the main themes and connects to the above exposed theories and interpretations.

⁴⁸ The social condition is mainly investigated in the section over the migratory profile, but elements come from every thematic section. Factors of dependency come out of the section on services, as well as further inputs over perception. It follows the need to imagine a different categorization for the following QCA analysis.

It is important to underline that, as it is explained below, findings reflect mainly a migrant male worker reality, being them the focus and expertise of the interviewees. Only one NGO is found to specifically focus its programs over women, while all other contexts only marginally touch female exploited workers.

Quotations are written in *italics*, anonymized for privacy protection.

Additionally, two participants observations (Cardano, 2011) are undertaken after direct invitation by two interviewees: one is based on online periodical meetings among NGOs and the other reflects the experience of first contact with possible migrant workers to uncover. The notes developed during or after these experiences are part of the interviews' analysis and interpretation, contributing to the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon and are explained in subparagraph 4.2.17.

4.2.1 Definition of modern slavery

Concerning the definition of modern slavery, interviewees show a heterogeneous conceptualization. They underline different aspects according to their individual labour experience. Here, the research proposes a general description of the concepts that are used and of the differences that emerge among them.

A first element of discussion is the conceptual clarity of the wording "modern slavery". Indeed, part of the interviewees think that such terminology is debatable and lacks conceptual clarity, somewhat a journalistic terminology to indicate all kind of different forms of exploitation, which are more precise in their individual form. Someone used the word exploitation as a more valid conceptual alternative. On the contrary, another part of the interviewees underlines its potential as an umbrella term to keep similar practices all together and have a common understanding and framework of contrast, instead of dividing trafficking from exploitation, debt slavery from forced labour, etcetera. They refer to the experience of the UK modern slavery act. The reasoning of such an approach stands against the parceling of the services and policies, some acting only on one form of exploitation, some on others. Indeed, at present it is not possible for the different organizations or governmental agencies to run on a common path when dealing with a victim of a practice of modern slavery, always re-starting from 0 without considering if that person previously came in contact with other services or not.

Additionally, interviewees describe the idea of a continuum to describe exploitation, ranging from decent work (where labour is respected in its dignity and rights), exploitation, serious exploitation, forced labour and finally modern slavery. Violations sum up and present an increasing intensity, which is a core element in the definitions provided: for example, from exploitation to serious exploitation, as from article 603 of the Italian Penal Code, the degree of severity increases in time and space, as well as in the living conditions, on-job treatment, and others.

Furthermore, labour exploitation of migrant workers is described as something endemic to the Italian labour market, pointing out several low-skilled economic sectors. Exploitation is systemic and structural; it represents the normality to access the labour market and have a minimum level of income in many labour realities.

“lo sfruttamento lavorativo è un una conseguenza inevitabile - per quanto mi riguarda - di questo sistema economico perché se il profitto è la prima cosa, è chiaro che la deriva è quella lì.”⁴⁹

“[...] quella condizione nella quale il datore di lavoro non riconosce i diritti principali dell’uomo, quelli inderogabili alla salute alla sicurezza e al lavoro, al fine di ottenere un profitto e questo avviene negando tutti i principi inderogabili dell’uomo per negare i principi del lavoratore. Quindi non riconosce il lavoratore come persona ma come fattore produttivo.”⁵⁰

It is aimed to achieve the maximum level of profitability, without considering limitations provided by the worker’s rights, simply seen as a cost variable. People and policymakers are said to pretend not to see, as such conditions would only concern past historical periods or third world dynamics. Yet, it is something that damages all workers, including Italian citizens, it lowers quality of products and creates a race to the bottom that negatively affects all the labour force. It is intrinsically connected to the system of production and consumption: consumers are in a way responsible because they sustain an idea of daily routine and products based on exploitation (the low-cost tomatoes, for instance).

Such high intensity of exploitation goes further than merely an issue of unionization and collective rights, of bargaining of labour conditions and class awareness. Framing modern slavery as an issue up to unions and working rights is reductive in respect of the conditions it possesses and the specificity of the violation.

The image used to describe conditions related to it, is the one of being trapped. It links exploitation to the idea of precarity, the widespread presence of unstable contracts and imbalance of power, hold by an immediate and extreme economic need. In addition to this, which is a necessary condition according to the interviewees, there is the constant presence of subjugation or coercion. Psychologically based threats, in many situations without the necessity to use physical violence, enhance the constant abuse of authority and the use of deceptions, sustained by the incapacity to find alternatives that actually do not exist. In terms of empowerment, it was described as the losing of agency, or the capacity to act, meaning the possibility to decide over one’s own life.

⁴⁹ English translation: “Labour exploitation is an inevitable consequence -as far as I am concerned- of this economic system that puts profit in the first place, clearly making the way for such reality.”

⁵⁰ “That condition in which the employer does not recognize the core human rights, the fundamental ones concerning health and labour security, in order to profit. This comes with denying all mandatory rights and consequently labour rights. The worker is seen not as a person but as a factor of productivity.”

Subjugation is based on individual vulnerabilities and takes advantage of workers' needs and difficulties. The use of vulnerabilities by the employers is described as a willing and conscious capacity to weaken and exploit workers, to take control of people's life in order to make them dependent and obedient, unable to reduce the bargaining power between them and the employer.

“Chi recluta sceglie la vittima e ovviamente la sceglie perché -come dire- ha un una condizione socio-culturale bassa e quindi più facilmente fregabile... controllabile.”⁵¹

Dependency arrives to the point where an employer brings food to isolated migrant workers living in abandoned places in the countryside, where there is no school for eventual children if the employer does not provide transportation, nor work if the job is located far away. Deprived of autonomy and dignity, victims are unaware of their rights. Vulnerability is described as pluri-dimensional, meaning that it encompasses many different sectors of life.

Such dynamics concern particularly the migrant workforce because they are more vulnerable than others, according to the evidence of the interviewees. They are placed outside their culture and language; their cultures and uses are different, and they are unable to bargain on working conditions. Their vulnerability is reported as increasing, linked, among other elements, to the presence of debt, the possibility to be blackmailed of deportation and their extreme and immediate economic need. Migrants are trapped into exploitative networks, which provide exploitative jobs to answer their economic need, but make them subject to labour exploitation, frauds (both from employers and other migrants) and make them experience a social status that marginalizes them into ethnic networks and absence of alternatives.

One last element that is added by the interviewees is the feature of modern slaves to be invisible and elusive, which recalls chains that cannot be seen. When compared to chattel slavery, which is depicted as the highest form of deprivation of liberty, modern slavery appears not based on physical constrains of liberties, especially of movement, but on the contrary, it makes use of the high numbers of labour force in need, those vulnerable people that find themselves on the move and in search of work, easily interchangeable and replaceable on the labour market. Indeed, modern slavery is based precisely on their lack of alternatives to answer an immediate economic need. A person can go away, but the lack of opportunities or alternatives keeps him or her there, he or she is trapped into such condition of marginality and cannot actually change labour conditions. They are trapped into a system of exploitation. Such image of being trapped explains the reference to precarity and nomadism in agriculture that is made by interviewees. This is what makes it so difficult to find and combat, to describe and recognize both by the public and by victims themselves, driving a strong need of awareness (see sub-paragraph on migration). The proverbial chain is turned into a

⁵¹ “Recruiters choose the victim obviously because he has a -how to say- low socio-cultural condition and so easier to fraud and control.”

psychological constrain which cannot be seen from outside. Its complex nature makes it rich of different characterizations, sometimes overlapping and reinforcing one another. This character of multidimensionality depends on the different vulnerabilities on which it is based, acquiring different forms of exploitation, such as forced begging, prostitution or labour exploitation.

4.2.2 Exploitation

Necessity is at the core of exploitation, defined with a variety of examples. The necessity to work and sustain the family in the origin country, to start earning as soon as possible to have a small income or the necessity to repay a debt are all faces of the same problem, the condition of material deprivation that is behind the choice to migrate. Work is thus something to find as soon as possible, without the possibility not to accept bad conditions, because no other option is available. With respect to the migratory path, exploitation represents a focal point, through which people accept to pass considering it a mandatory element for their plans. It is seen as a period of time that is limited and unavoidable, a necessary step to later build a better standard of living. Their unskilled jobs are framed as *“lavori che gli italiani non vogliono fare”*⁵², picturing their destiny to pass through this experience. Inside the migratory path, working under exploitative condition is accepted because of a future prospect of a better life condition. This can take the form of a sentimental relationship in cases where the exploited worker is a woman deceived by a fake lover. Often, this results in a change of the initial migratory plan, making it longer in time and less economically fruitful than what was thought to be.

Linked to necessity, there is an issue of different perception and convenience, in respect of conditions of origins, that strengthen the acceptability of such lower standard of work into the host country. What must be underlined is that exploitation itself is a *“culturally biased concept”*, dependent on specific social circumstances of one’s own country. This entails how unions are known and perceived, the figure of the female worker, the importance of a formal labour contract, and so on. People’s comparison⁵³ does not happen between locals and them, but between the labour conditions in the origin country and the new ones, the more intensively the more time they spent in their origin country. Indeed, they feel distinct and are treated distinctly from local workers. Even their cost of living in the host country is way lower than locals’, as they arrange lower rentals, grocery and clothes of low quality without unnecessary expenses or costs. It is an important issue of perception that is further stressed into a specific paragraph.

⁵² “Job Italians don’t want to do.”

⁵³ It is important to remind that the dissertation only investigates adult people, who in the vast majority came to Italy after having experienced their country’s labour market.

“Vado a lavorare in un ristorante, faccio dalle 12:30 alle 14:30 e dalle 19:30 alle 24 e lavo le pentole, tutti i giorni fuorché il lunedì” “e quanto ti danno?” “€350” “È pochissimo non puoi andare. non funziona così qua” “No no va bene per me per me va bene” “Come fai a vivere?” “A me mi servono €10 per la ricarica, se mi serve una camicia vado al mercato €1 la compero, la signora mi dà da mangiare [...] sia a pranzo che a cena. Mio cugino mi ha chiesto €70 al mese per il mio posto letto, quindi cento servono a me, gli altri 250 li mando a mia moglie in Bangladesh.”⁵⁴

Again, such condition of exploitation is deemed to be systemic across the country and different job sectors. Interviewees speak of a structural phenomenon that makes the individual accept what is perceived as the reality, slowly decreasing worker rights. The lack of alternatives brings to exploitation also the most well-informed migrant labourers. Moreover, certain economic characteristics favors the exploitation of work:

- being, all or in part, an illegal economy;
- the double auction system that downgrades wage costs and favors downward competition;
- the externalization of services to small and opaque companies that provide workers;
- the presence of a great mass of exploitable workers, able to fast replace any demanding worker;
- high level of isolation and absence of fellow workers to confront with, nor any external inputs.

No clear indications emerge as to whether the duration of a job position is linked to exploitation. Conditions may apply to fast changing job positions (in the agricultural sector, for instance, where gang-masters may randomly select people living in camps) but also in cases of longtime job position for the same employer, for example in the textile or manufacturing. Duration is not a core element of exploitation because modern slavery is based on the possibility to fast replace workers and keep low labour conditions in the entire market.

Interviewees connect it also to dependency, i.e. the condition to be blackmailable, most commonly because of permits, wages or any other service provided by the employer. Employers are aware of the exploitative potential of dependent workers, as they appear to move consciously when searching for labour and when regulating it (some even take hold of workers' personal documentation).

Necessity and dependency clearly describe a strong imbalance of power.

Conditions are described as follow:

⁵⁴ “I go to work for a restaurant from 12.30 to 14.30 and from 19.30 to midnight, washing pots, everyday except Mondays. -For how much?- 350€ -It's too low, you shouldn't go, it's not like this here- No, for me it's good, for me it's ok -How do you live?- For me it's 10€ for the telephone fee, if I need a shirt with 1€ at the market I can buy it, the employer gives me food [...] both for lunch and dinner. My cousin wants 70€ for the rent of a bed place and the rest 250€ I can send home to my wife.”

- Low payments, ranging from 2, 2.50€ per hour to 4.50, 5€ in some economic sectors⁵⁵, from which parts may be decurted, withheld, delayed or repaid to/by the employer. Also, piece rate payment systems are widely used, especially into agriculture. Contracts (see specific subparagraph) are usually into place for a small amount of the labour time, to protect from inspections and allow migrant workers to have a legal permit of stay. Such grey form of labour, being partially legal and partially illegal (that would be black), does not guarantee a minimum wage, which is subject only to terms negotiated with the employer. The exploitative wage obeys to market rules among exploited positions, so that it appears meaningless to search for better conditions inside the same market;
- Long working hours, up to 10/12 hours a day, 7 days a week. This condition worsens every other problem by overextending it in time;
- Psychological and physical pressure and/or abuse, through insults, intimidations, menaces, or coercion. This includes surveillance and pressure to produce always at maximum speed, sometimes pressing each worker with earplugs. Cases of beatings, segregation on the workplace and free night duties are reported, as well as delay of lunch or toilet break until the meeting of a certain amount of production;
- Nor security, nor hygiene on the workplace. In the agricultural sector, temperatures during working hours can reach 40-45°C representing a serious health risk without proper precautions. Sometimes, security instruments may be bought from the employer, but in any case, there is no training for security measures. Distances are reduced as much as possible to have higher productivity in the minimum space, a factor particularly worrying during Covid-19;
- Poor living conditions, often connected to the same abusive employer. Houses are overcrowded and/or with lacking basic facilities and hygiene.

The presence of any or all listed elements enhance work rhythms that are exhausting and wearing. Workers are denied their rights, especially to social security, possibly abandoned in cases of health problems or incidents. All these conditions are characterized by a degrading logic that sees workers as costs to be minimized, adding to it the fact that the already low wages are weighted by many other expenses to sleep, do grocery, be brought to work and so on. Examples of workers that must halve their wage for living costs are many, sometimes entering a vicious cycle of debt not owning enough to cover the expenses, borrowing from the employer, working harder the following months to repay (when possible). They may pay the meal on the workplace, the transportation to the workplace, eventual bureaucracy to have a contract, and so on. All this logic produces exploited and degraded people and can lead to depressions, sickness, specific pains,

⁵⁵ Northern Italy is reported to have slightly higher wages on average, up to a maximum of 6€. As an example, lawful pays in agriculture should be around 9€ gross.

insomnia and trauma, in addition of being a crime per se. It is reported the promotion of drug use by certain gang-masters to produce more and not be tired.

“Qui molto spesso ancora il lavoratore viene percepito come non un lavoratore ma una persona a totale disponibilità del padrone in tutto e per tutto. Partendo da questa considerazione si ha diciamo la possibilità di fare qualsiasi tipo di violenza a quel lavoratore, sia psicologica quindi l'isolamento totale o il fatto che ti ricatto, sia di violenza vera e propria nei confronti delle donne lavoratrici.”⁵⁶

The use of physical violence is reported more marginal⁵⁷ compared with the widespread presence of economic violence (in forms of frauds or extortions) or psychological violence. Psychological violence is constituted by verbal abuses based on ethnicity and gender, harassments, humiliation, threats to personal or family security and denial of personal dignity. In cases of female exploited workers, cases of sexual violence are reported. Physical violence per se is used more commonly in isolated contexts where the employer owns the accommodation, or in cases of workers asking for better-off conditions but that is not the norm, since it is preferable to avoid people reaching the breaking point where they may seek justice or help and call the attention of public authorities. Indeed, physical violence is an extreme measure that can lead to conflict and push people to run away without notice. From the point of view of the exploiter, it has no sense to push workers so far, because there is always a replacement for the ones that do not conform to exploitative expectations. Cases where workers ask for their rights can be dealt with by hiring new workers, using threats or blackmails to keep the former away. Lastly, conflictual situations are present during stressful moments among workers, such as in the camps for lack of services or alcohol consumption, when labour opportunities are limited, or in situation of tensions between different ethnic groups.

These forms of violence are used to fragment the subjectivity of the exploited worker, making the person to feel sad, frustrated and depressed, incapable of changing his or her condition.

Surveillance is another key dimension. Gang-masters or employers themselves enforce wearing rhythms of labour, through direct control, incitements, using even cameras or earplugs to constantly prompt people. They ensure no time is wasted in resting, answering the phone, chatting, eating slowly. Workers may need to ask for permission to go the bathroom.

⁵⁶ “Very often here the employee is perceived not as a worker but as a person completely at the disposal of the employer, in all cases. From this consideration it comes the possibility to do any kind of violence to the worker, either psychological, isolation for instance or blackmails, or real violence on female workers.”

⁵⁷ It is important to note, however, that the source of knowledge, i.e. the social operators, can produce a bias among the experiences herein present: cases of extreme isolation and high control of organized crime are probably better hidden and less easy to grasp. Marco Omizzolo, Italian journalist and ethnographer, in his book (2019) “Sotto padrone: uomini, donne e caporali nell'agromafia italiana”, published by Feltrinelli, brings his own direct experience of situations under the control of organized crime. They see higher degrading conditions, such as feeding with leftovers of the employers and threats with weapons or guns. Such reality is underrepresented in the world presently invested as source.

“Controllati in continuazione al chiuso con telecamere con telefonini con auricolari. Nei campi invece controllati a vista dai caporali. [...] Sono collegati - credo che fisicamente la persona che controlla sia dentro l'azienda e parla dentro questo auricolare e quindi vedendo se le persone si fermano se hanno dei ritmi più... magari se corrono meno, vengono incitati a finire il lavoro, che devono lavorare, continuare a lavorare che il ritmo deve essere più alto.”⁵⁸

Some interviewees repeatedly use the concept of exploitation network, referring to the links that an employer possesses both in the host country (where to put workers to sleep, do grocery and how to reach the workplace) and in the origin country (debtors), who may eventually threaten the family of the worker. There are cases in which the wage is paid directly to the owner of the debt.

Exploitation is also linked to the geographic territory of exploitation, as described in the Identikit paragraph.

Food, when not brought from home but provided on the workplace, is described as very basic, both in quality and quantity: rice, ham (without distinction for Muslim people), or even just plain white bread (described as a Libyan exploitation remembrance). People are reported sometimes to live only with that one meal a day. In such cases, it is even stronger the sense of happiness when exploiters randomly reward workers with special meals, reinforcing a mechanism of dependency and fake perception. Water works similarly, but sometimes wells are present on the workplace, used even without the guarantee of potability. Breaks to eat are reported to be 15 to 30 minutes long.

For what concerns the relationship between colleagues, workers are reported to have preferences on ethnic grounds, consequence of the ethnic network through which they find economic opportunities. It exists a sort of competition between the different groups to gain access to workplaces, confirmed by the conscious preferences of the employers towards some groups in respect to others, as well as for certain individual characteristics (see below). Additionally, nomadism or frequent changes of employers are both factors that do not favor real connections. An interviewee reports that a feeling of solidarity is easier made on documentation and bureaucratic problems than on labour exploitation, as competition affects the possibility to work, as part of the wider ethnic competition. Increased solidaristic relations among colleagues, aware of the common situation, are one of the main aims of uncovering processes, especially when run by union members. Overall, bad working relationships among colleagues should be regarded as an indicator of exploitation, while on the other side, groups can have both negative or positive consequences in uncovering processes, as described in the subparagraphs 4.2.12 and 4.2.17.

⁵⁸ “They are controlled continuously when indoor, with webcams and cellphones with earphones. On the contrary, in camps they are watched over by gang-masters. [...] They are connected – I believe the person speaking and controlling is inside the same room and speaks inside the earplugs if sees people stopping or having lower rhythms... maybe they run less and so they are pushed to finish the job, keep on working and having high rhythms.”

Another important dimension that emerges from the interviews is the practice of discrimination on the workplace. Interviews report that employers possess ethnic preferences and tend to give most degrading jobs to the less favored ethnic group. This phenomenon can bring a difference in terms of wages between different ethnicities. Examples can be Chinese employers who put Pakistani or Bengalese workers in the most unskilled and wearing jobs or Eastern European gang-masters that do not allow Africans to sit close to them, but also entails the preferences attached to stereotypical job abilities linked to ethnicity (black people are more resistant, Bengalese people are more agile, and so on). Discrimination and racialization are undoubtedly linked to ethnic belonging.

Interestingly, to profile the employer is not something that interviewees can elaborate much. When directly asked, few characteristics emerge. In cases of non-Italian exploiters, the relationship between exploiter and exploited is direct and usually they share the same ethnicity. Here, more violence is reported. When the exploiter is Italian the situation is more heterogeneous and entails both situation of direct contact and not. Especially when there are gang-masters, the relationship with the employer is totally absent and labour directives are given by the gang-master, often of the same ethnicity.

In cases of female exploited labour the employer can be either a family member or a fake lover who exploits the work of the woman for free, using fake promises. Here, abuses on the female worker and segregation are stronger, and the exploiter may more easily use violence and threats.

Most importantly, what emerges from the interviews is a certain level of awareness among exploiters on how to manage exploitation and who to exploit. This holds true both in case of exploiter based in Italy and trafficking networks based in the origin country. It means that employers are aware:

- not to get too far from the workers' perception of what conditions can be acceptable to them;
- to understand who is need of work and cannot refuse harsh conditions;
- to know the importance of providing services and help workers, to make them dependent;
- to use fake promises, late payments, and threats to keep workers in a condition of dependency;
- to instill fears and false knowledge over public policies and eventual fines or deportation⁵⁹.

4.2.3 Identikit

Mostly, victims are reported young, between 20 and 35 years old. Age is a contested factor since individual histories often vary a lot according to the different socio-historical circumstances (such as an economic crisis or a war). An example of such situation is in the province of Foggia, where interviewees signal Italian adult migrants in their 50s, victims of the economic crisis related to the covid-19 pandemic. Anyhow, it appears

⁵⁹ Migrant workers hide during labour inspections, as highlighted also by (FRA, 2019).

that, on average, age is decreasing in respect of previous decades and Sub-Saharan are the youngest social group.

Ethnic backgrounds are differently distributed according to the economic sector and the territory in which they are located. Notably, except in some provinces where the economic exploitation presents a sharply predominant identity (such as the textile industry in Prato populated by Chinese people) or where there is a historical territorial presence of particular communities (Agropontino for Indian Sikh and Agroromano for newcomers) all ethnic backgrounds are found all across the country. Here it summarizes the main ethnic categorization with the related economic sectors that the interviewees report in their area of intervention. Higher cases of exploitation are reported in the first 3 groups. Most sectors entail unspecialized manual jobs where communication is basic. It shall not be read as a picture that cannot change, because it does.

- People of Pakistani and Bengali descendants. As far as economic sectors, they are met into shipbuilding, the textile industry (Chinese-owned textile firms in particular), agriculture, warehouses, food industry (Chinese-owned “All you can eat” chains are particularly signaled), street-vendors, open-air market, construction industry and manufacture. They are reported to substitute former workers from India in many contexts. Also, they earn a lower wage than Africans;
- Eastern Europeans, either EU members (Romania and Bulgaria) or not (Ukraine, Moldova, Albania). They are reported in warehouses, agriculture, construction, logistics. Macedonians are reported in Piedmont as an integrated community that attracts seasonal workers, often with Bulgarian passport (as they can enjoy double citizenship). In some context they are described as more profitable than Northern Africans because they work for the season, with no interest to fight for better conditions in the medium term;
- Sub-Saharan Africans. They are said to constitute the main group in agriculture but are also found into various economic sectors such as the textile industry, tourism, construction and logistics. They are signaled as a lower presence in Italian northeast because of historical and geographical reasons (the area is better suited to receive afflux from the Balkan route);
- Northern Africans (Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria) are found in agriculture both in the South and in the North. Historically they are longtime resident communities, such as in Foggia, Lamezia Terme and around Ribera in Sicily, enjoying better residence conditions (see subparagraph below) and appear to be more integrated. In general, they represent the more ancient component of the exploited population and are slowly being replaced, decreasing their presence in the worst labour conditions;
- Chinese workers are reported in the textile industry of Prato, Rome, Mantua and in Veneto, as well as in Chinese-owned business of different nature (industry and food). However, their presence is decreasing in favor of Pakistani and Bengalese people;

- Romani people are reported in Sicily into agriculture, as familiar units. They are described as nomads between Spain or France and Italy;
- Indian Sikh people are reported into the Agropontino region, stable residents since the '80s, working in agriculture and farming;
- Other groups are spotted as local limited clusters in some areas: people from Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq are signaled in northeast Italy coming from the Balkan route, Afghans also in northwest Italy, and Brazilians are historically reported in Mantua, working into construction.

The economic sectors taken into accounts are in general sectors constituted by unskilled job positions, wearing both in terms of physical and psychological effort and where language abilities are not central. A small part of the migrant workers follows the same career they were following in their home country, already possessing the necessary skills, for example in the textile sector. These findings are obviously influenced by the activity of the interviewees, given their expertise, the opportunity and possibility to actually investigate the job sector from outside. For instance, there are sectors in which investigation and uncovering becomes more complicated because they are more obscure, located in closed spaces, such as caregiving for women or the fishing industry for men. What is central is the ability to enter that economic sector, meaning to reach people, inform them and build trust to bring people out of exploitation. As an example, shipbuilding is nowadays only marginally touched by the NGOs and their projects, reporting serious difficulties in finding people that want to share their experience and work to uncover exploitative practices. Differently, agriculture is an open sector for NGOs, but the same open-air characteristic determines that the access to the field is guided by gang-master, which is definitely a vulnerability factor for workers.

“Siamo di fronte a situazioni dove il quadro diciamo dello sfruttamento per circo il 60% proviene dalla agricoltura, mentre il 40% si colloca, oserei dire, in tutte le attività produttive, naturalmente con percentuali più o meno piccole, logistica, manifatturiero, industriale, turistico-alberghiero e via così. [...] è evidente che il profilo delle vittime è fortemente caratterizzato da dove andiamo a puntare maggiormente l'attenzione perché le risorse non sono infinite e abbiamo dovuto fare delle scelte.”⁶⁰

The link between the territory of exploitation and the economic sector changes. In some areas the vocation of the local economy plays a central role: Prato sees mainly textile exploitation, southern Italy into agriculture. However, in other contexts (Ravenna, Pisa, big capital cities such a Rome and Milan, among the others) the situation is presented more heterogeneous and differentiated either because of a more mixed economy, either because of the lack of an historical stable migratory presence (such as Friuli Venezia Giulia)

⁶⁰ “We see that situations of exploitation comes 60% from agriculture and the remaining 40% from, I'd say, all remaining activities, obviously with different percentages, like logistics, manufacture, industry, tourism-restoration and so on. [...] It is evident that the profile changes according to where we go and act more often, because our resources are limited, and we must take choices.”

that can specialize into a defined sector. Furthermore, coverage of labour contracts and functioning monitoring bodies or unions affect the local economies on which they insist, influencing the presence of exploitation in the labour market.

The context of origin, urban or rural, drives migrant workers to be more vulnerable to exploitation. This is linked to language, as people from rural contexts may also have communications difficulties within their own community and more easily happen to be illiterate.

The educational level is usually low, with some exception that drives suspects on the actual ability of instruction to protect people. Language performance of Italian is usually low. Cases of English-speaking victims are reported, with no protective capacity. Italian dialects are reported for people of long stay or repeatedly seasonal workers.

Being young, their family profiles is either the one of the oldest son of the family that leaves the origin country, with the explicit mandate to maintain them with remittances, or a young father seeking to build a better life and eventually reunificate with his family in the host country. Additionally, there are situation of families who migrate all together, mostly reported for eastern Europeans in the rural sector of southern Italy.

For what concerns the permits that the victims possess, the main one is the provisional permit linked to the request for international protection that many migrants ask for, because it has long procedural waiting periods with 2 degrees of judgment (formerly 3) before the eventual denial is issued. When people are in Italy since considerable long periods, they tend not to have any permit because expired or because of illegal entry (reported in Sicily). The issue of permits and the eventual experience of the formal reception system is better described into a specific subparagraph.

4.2.4 The migratory path

The main driver of migration is the extreme economic need, often to sustain an entire family, which qualifies people as economic migrants. Initially, migration can be seen as something temporary in which people perceive to be, as a necessary time period to make enough money to later enjoy a better quality of life. This may take the form of a specific goal, such as a new home in the origin country, the financing of school for children, the developing of an initial capital to start a business, etcetera. Exploitation is perceived, and sometimes actually is, a moment of life to get through, almost inevitable. Even when there might be the awareness to be going into exploitative situations, it is not completely clear the actual conditions of exploitation, which may be soften by the idea to temporality.

The initial investment to migrate is both risky under an economic and psycho-social perspective, and it is often on one of the oldest sons of the family which agrees to risk a perilous travel with unclear conditions

and consequences, or on a young father. People start their trip following smugglers or traffickers' directions, financed by the family (see subparagraph on debt) sometimes having contacts of previous migrants or family members already in Europe. Trafficked networks are connected from origin to destination country.

It is common that the migratory path is distributed over a long time period, with stops in third countries to collect money for paying the next smuggler, trafficker or merely a means of transportation. It is a step-by-step process that may also not be clearly aimed to Europe, but North Africa or elsewhere. Eventually, experiencing harsh conditions and modern slavery, people may continue to migrate. The process consumes eventual initial resources that migrants have in the beginning, both economically and psychologically. Common to all countries crossed is the experience of push backs at the borders (or in the Mediterranean Sea). Stops are common in Greece (working into agriculture), Turkey, Libya (working mainly into construction, but also farming and female sexual exploitation inside connection houses) or anywhere else, especially when migration is not directed towards a precise European country, as the migrants wonder in search of opportunities driven by labour networks, social capital (often made up by traffickers) or personal relationships. By the large part, criminal networks are necessary to migrants to cross borders and move, under conspicuous prepayments, and thus they are commonly perceived and recognized as a service, possessing telephone numbers and all needed information. Indeed, the case of people starting the migration process as smuggling and ending into trafficking, is not uncommon. Furthermore, many people do not intend to settle in Italy, but to go in Germany, France, England or northern Europe, yet they are stuck in Italy by EU policies. Importantly, people flying directly into Italy with already negotiated jobs are not immune to exploitation because they may also fall into exploitative conditions in cases where the network they rely upon presents and exploitative nature.

Few nuances emerge following ethnic backgrounds:

- for eastern Europeans, especially seasonal agricultural workers, it is common the idea of a tough period of life meant to achieve a specific goal. Also, for them it is easy to return home during winters and commute on a seasonal base (by bus), especially if EU citizens. They also witness more of the popular Italian culture through television and arrive with high and wrong expectations of possibilities that impact on their perception even when there is a minimum level of awareness on the harshness of the job;
- Non-Europeans people from Asia and Africa, on the contrary, may more easily abandon their plans and turn into a stable presence and search for family reunification, after they achieve to build a good economic situation. However, they also possess an initial intention to return back, but it is often reported to change fast.

Such difference is due to the fact that it is more frequent and easier for eastern Europeans to visit their countries of origin, which usually enjoys better off socio-economic conditions and political stability.

The relationship with their families in the origin country is strong. In most cases, interviewees report that relations are easily maintained through technology. This relation is clearly psychologically helpful for people who find themselves alone in a foreign environment, but it is also a strong driver of social pressure. Indeed, they are often separated by a lack of clear communication: the families do not understand the difficulties their members encounter in Europe and have the sensation to be left behind notwithstanding their investment in them. In their perspective the initial idea of easy earnings is still valid, and they may start accusing the migrant, either brother or parent, of being selfish. On the other hand, the workers feel ashamed to communicate their difficulties and describe their failed migratory mandate. They fear stigmatization and disapproval from close relatives and community members. Any eventual difficulty or health problem can potentially be linked to their failure to send enough money at home. This pressure makes them more vulnerable to an immediate exploited job possibility and drives the culturally bias perception of exploitative conditions (see subparagraph on perception). Interviewees report cases of depression when family members experienced serious health problems at home, feeling responsible.

“La persona a volte anche per una paura di essere stigmatizzata, di essere quella che in qualche modo fallisce in quel sogno non ce la fa, non lo dice chiaramente. [...] – “mi devi mandare i soldi cioè tu sei là apposta per questo”. Io so che magari hai un lavoro che comunque vivi una vita sicuramente migliore di quella che viviamo noi qua.”⁶¹

Being this their migratory mandate, the public programs for uncovering, assistance and social integration cannot be efficient without providing a valid alternative to earn an income. Their lifestyle is lower and less expensive than Italians’ and even under exploitation they manage to send home some money, making exploitation convenient. Furthermore, the formal reception systems (either hubs or SAI) also fail to protect people and grant acceptable labour conditions. Lastly, programs for repatriation are not taken into considerations even when people suffer all the described difficulties, during the trip and in the host country, because their mandate and investment is too strong.

Finally, given the complex nature of such migratory paths, some interviewees pointed out that fellow social operators should not underestimate the capacity and agency of migrant workers, as sometimes do, because they experienced and went through very harsh conditions. Even if they fall victims of frauds, exploitative jobs

⁶¹ “A person sometimes, given the fear to be stigmatized and to appear the one that quits the dream, cannot admit it, they don’t say it clearly. [...] – “You have to send me money, because you are there for this reason”. Maybe be that I know that you have a job and you live a better life than us.”

or fake information they made use of a high degree of capacity to act in difficult situations, which should be recognized as agency and better enforced, not ignored.

4.2.5 Women particularities

As pointed out in the first part of the dissertation, the present thesis does not concern sexual exploitation and similar practices of slavery related to the female body. Yet, women are also exploited in non-sexualized economic sectors, in some of which they are the majority, like in domestic care. They experience the same intense exploitation, but it is often accompanied with sexual abuses, experiencing higher degrees of violence. This last element is particularly signaled for women coming already from personal situations of domestic violence or gender discrimination. Importantly, labour exploitation of migrant women is a limit to the present dissertation and to the given knowledge of social operators working in the field, calling for future investigations, because their economic sectors are less accessible (taking place in private homes or spaces) and knowledge is even more scarce. Apart from the present subparagraph, the general findings of the present thesis shall be read only with reference to male migrant workers.

Interviewees report two main typologies based on two different migratory profiles: a solitary migration that seeks redemption from past difficulties, and a family migration or reunification.

“Una volta arrivata in Italia o perché è arrivata attraverso un inganno, esercitato da potenziali datori di lavoro, o perché invece arrivata qua in una situazione, comunque, di precarietà anche proprio in termini di regolarizzazione, dopo si sono trovate in una situazione di sfruttamento lavorativo, qua ovviamente la situazione è cambiata. In qualche modo l’esperienza di sfruttamento un po’ per tutte ha rappresentato proprio una battuta di arresto nel percorso migratorio.”⁶²

In the first case, examples are reported of migratory paths specifically aimed to a job position, where the employer then turns into an exploiter. Similarly, situations of fake lovers are signaled behind the promise of building a family. In both situations, women are not regularized with their permit of stay. They are from a heterogeneous set of nationalities, from different age groups. One case of trafficking network is reported in northeast Italy, involving women from Georgia who are granted services (sleeping berth, request for permits and so on) and job places into caregiving, under the control of the trafficker. In general, women alone are exploited mostly into caregiving, fewer into agriculture⁶³ or restaurants. Their migratory plan is disrupted, making the victim unable to send home money nor to save it for future plans. The woman is segregated and

⁶² “Once arrived in Italy, either because of a deceit from potential labour employers, or because already in a situation of precarity, when they find themselves in a situation of labour exploitation that changes the situation. In some way exploitation represents a stop in their migratory projects.”

⁶³ Here, employers’ labour stereotypes push women more into more into harvesting than pruning.

threaten, deceived with false information, made dependent to the exploiter. Importantly, on the economic side, exploitation is structurally different from male exploitation, because the woman is not able to send money home and is not easily interchangeable with other exploited female workers. Exploitation can also involve a group of women. Moreover, the higher level of segregation determines a lower presence of ethnic networks.

On the other side, cases of family migration are reported. The main ethnicities are Eastern Europeans and Romani. Families are either entirely exploited in agriculture and live in rural areas or exploited in different sectors, which usually for the woman is caregiving. In the first case, interviewees report high levels of dependency on the employer, who sets the families to live into warehouses or such in isolated rural areas, easy victims of any kind of abuse and lack of rights. Payments for women may be just a little integration to the wage of their men. Cases of reunification usually happens when the husband has reached a perceived good standard of living, being the case of Northern Africans or old Indian communities (such as the Sikh people living in the Agro-pontino region). Yet, communities may still have not completely exited labour exploitation, thus involving women into it. A last element to highlight is the role of mother, which functions as an amplifier of vulnerabilities and dependency.

Given these characteristics, uncovering is more complicated for both typologies and sees less resources and attention, being a form of exploitation less known and more difficult to spot. Indeed, only one interviewee is specifically focused on women exploitation, as a member of an NGO that evolved from the world of the anti-violence centers. Women's uncovering usually happens when the woman experiences strong physical violence and realizes to be deceived, but not because of an awareness of being exploited as labour force, signaling a similar lack to men.

4.2.6 Permits and Reception system

As said above, the widest form of permit in 2021 is reported to be the provisional permit of stay linked to the request for asylum, which most of applicants are doomed not to receive⁶⁴. Lawfully, this is an abuse of the instrument determined by the convenience given by the long duration of the decision process and by the possibility to have one appeal, which has long waiting time too. Also, this instrument has increased after the abolition of the humanitarian permit, a national kind of permit that Italy used to give to nationals of certain developing countries which qualified as economic migrants, not eligible as refugees. In the long-run, people experience a mix of denials, working permits (mainly seasonal) and irregular situations, building a situation

⁶⁴ Interviewees refer to migrants staying in Italy, since, as described in official estimates, Italy is still a transition country towards Northern Europe.

of fragmentation and instability, reflecting their (partially) formal or informal labour positions⁶⁵ and helping to preserve it, in a vicious circle. Overstaying of permits (from work⁶⁶ to tourism kind) is reported in few cases, as well as migrants who ended their experience into formal reception system and are later “abandoned” by public policies. Ethnically, preferences for entering Italy with fake seasonal or touristic visa are reported for Indian Sikhs and Bengalese people. Importantly, requests of permit are made to a territorial office which calls back the person after examination. Given the extended times of bureaucracy, people are not usually in the same residence, to which letters are sent, but not even in the same area of Italy, moved following jobs opportunities. Interviewees signal delays and difficulties in following the process. Therefore, many permits simply expire.

“Regolari ma precari, ovvero brevi: la maggioranza sono richiedenti asilo e questo ci sembra una cosa non casuale rispetto anche allo sfruttamento.”⁶⁷

The few refugees who actually obtain asylum are anyhow not immune to exploitation, proving the limited role of permits against modern slavery. Similarly, the same conclusion can be drawn looking at Eastern Europeans who are member of the EU, protected by legality of their stay but still victims of exploitation. Thus, it is false the hypothesis that equates absence of permit to exploitation. However, the condition of having a permit undoubtedly gives the possibility to reclaim rights and potentially enter public services, as long as other conditions do not preclude such possibilities. Thus, having a permit is a necessary but not sufficient condition to have decent working conditions, increasing the bargaining power of the worker inside the labour relation.

With the asylum request, people are supposed to enter the formal reception system, but lack of places can be a reason not to be able to do so, as well as the intention to avoid limitations on labour activity. All ethnicities may pass through the system, especially the ones arriving within the big migratory routes of the Mediterranean Sea or the Balkans. First reception system is reported systematically underfinanced, while the situation is better for the SAI system, even if both of them are described as places from where exploitation spreads, sharing its networks and possibilities, instead of being absent. Services of integration and professional trainings are limited, and first reception houses are described as a “*parking for people*”.

Proper permits given by article 22 or article 18 of the Immigration Law are few. In particular, interviewees report that article 22 is a novelty and also lawyers hardly tend to apply it, unless precisely asked by NGOs,

⁶⁵ The issue is also linked to amnesty procedures and request for labour permits mediated by employers and intermediaries, as explained in the chapter on services.

⁶⁶ Official labour immigration fluxes are cited only by one interview as example of such situation of unlawful extension.

⁶⁷ “Regular but precarious, that is short: the majority are asylum seekers, and this is not a casual thing in respect of exploitation.”

which are indeed trying to increase its use. Furthermore, it must be considered that access to justice is low for people potentially under threat or in extreme need.

To find work, permits seem to have an unclear role. Sometimes reported as a difficulty for being hired, sometimes as irrelevant. Intermediaries are reported as central for undocumented migrants. Clearly, not having a contract increases the power of the exploiter and reduces workers' bargaining power. Living in isolated or segregated place is deemed an indicator of undocumented migrant workers. This holds particularly true for women exploitation, who experience higher levels of segregation. The possibility to be blackmailed for the absence of regular permits is a strong weapon in the hands of exploiters, reinforcing dependency and threats. Furthermore, false beliefs are used by exploiters not to respect labour rights, using permit status as excuses to pay in cash, totally or partially. This is again a symptom of unawareness of rights.

Moving to the policy level, one issue often brought by interviewees is the clear failure of the amnesty law approved during the pandemic to regularize the needed labour force of agriculture and caregiving. In itself, the logic of the law is limited to very specific conditions of eligibility (see chapter 3.4), showing the same rationale of the immigration law per se, i.e. not the protection of human rights but the control of numbers. Interestingly, some interviewees signal that caregiving amnesties were used to regularize agricultural workers, requiring less documentations.

The inadequacy of general immigration policy is taken for granted by interviewees, described as a policy developed without considering the existence of the exploitation market, with its unstable and precarious characteristics, as well as the hidden nature of a phenomenon that it doesn't aim to fight. The reception systems are a good example of this erroneous and inefficient logic: exploited workers do not tell their true stories to the territorial commissions for refugees' status, nor the part during migration, Libyan prisons or traffickers' abuses, nor the contemporary part of exploited labour conditions and degraded living conditions. Victimization of migrants is called into account by the interviewees. What comes out from this reception system are fake stories studied to avoid painful memories, not to admit being an economic migrant and to achieve the status of refugees, while the commission fails to examine the true situation of the person and recognize his or her situation of danger and exploitation, only aiming to expel somebody which will simply try other channels for regularization. Conscious of the given situation, NGOs in general act using all possibilities, sometimes helping to set up fake stories for the commissions or waiting to present a request for article 18 or 22 because the request for asylum is still into process and can give the person more time in a regular condition.

“Abbiamo messo tutta una serie di regole e cose che servono a proteggere noi non loro e che paradossalmente finiscono col facilitare chi da queste cose ci vuole trarre profitto.”⁶⁸

Interviewees connect migration policies to labour ones and, reflecting on the nexus between unstable residence permits and lack of rights, with the existence of a low-skilled exploitable workforce available to employers. They describe labour policies as consciously creating a workforce that has low bargaining power. Lack of controls over labour places, partial or fake contracts and low prices of goods are all symptoms of the lack of will into fighting a well signaled exploitation. Accessing the formal and protected labour market is a luxury that is left only to the luckiest ones, who possess not only proper documentations, but also other characteristics. Decent work employees are a subset of legally resident workers and of formally contracted workers. A formal job position is required in cases of work permits, a mechanism that enhance, yet alone not creates, dependency on employers, formation of fake or partial contracts and acceptance of exploitative conditions.

“E’ evidente quanto più io complico la faccenda, tanto più metto delle condizioni per cui fare una cosa è difficile, tanto più io metto nelle condizioni qualcuno di proporre delle soluzioni semplici.”⁶⁹

It appears evident the nexus between the complex bureaucracy and the perceived convenience not to exit the comfort zone of the exploiters’ services and system. That is connected, according to interviewees, to a system of classification of migration that does not answer to the reality of the phenomenon, forcing categorization into defined typologies that only covers a small percentage of reality (such as refugees or high skilled workers entering formal fluxes). In this way, migration policy denies a proper dignity to economic migrants who perceive their path as temporary, especially to the ones unable to refuse exploitative economic positions, and deprives all from the possibility to truthfully relate to Italian institutions, always under the risk of deportation or fines. That is why the less the institutions know, the better, disfavoring sincere storytelling to territorial commissions. Having a better relationship would potentially benefit both migrant workers and the Italian economic system, by fighting an exploitative labour market that lowers rights for all workers, quality of products, the tax system and human dignity.

Some of the interviewees also point out the role of the public opinion that dislikes migration, as a general attitude that makes migration policies inefficient and ineffective. Public fear of sharing welfare benefits, of increasing criminality and racism is seldomly cited as a general tendency that contributes to bad policy making.

⁶⁸ “We have put a whole bunch of rules and things aimed to protect us, not them, and that paradoxically end up helping the ones that want to profit from all of this.”

⁶⁹ “It is evident that the more I make the issue complicated, the more conditions I add to do something, the more I make somebody in the condition to provide easy solutions.”

4.2.7 Debt

With the concept of debt interviewees identify a sum of money given to the migrant by a creditor, to migrate and sustain his or her needs during that period. Indeed, in the interviews the issue of debt appears intrinsically linked to the migratory path, but it earns specific attention given the fact that it is a symptom of strong vulnerability. Even if it is not described as always present or eternal in time, debt represents a strong way to enter the exploitative labour market and sets the expectations of workers. The debt represents a strong incentive and pressure (the family may be threatened) to accept any labour condition, to become dependent on that employer and lose bargaining power, condition that survive the extension of debts.

The issue of debt is strongly associated with the migratory path, as it determines the availability of resources and the necessity to repay as soon as possible. It is common that the debt is initially made to reach the destination country or simply to start the migration process, by the entire family group, which becomes responsible for it and subject to consequences when not regularly paid. Differently, there are cases in which there is not a single creditor, but the whole community contributes to raise the necessary funds, which remains something to be repaid with hard working and psychological pressure, even without threats of violence. Creditors usually are third persons, but cases are reported of intra-familial creditors, which does not mean that the debt is transparent nor safe from violence.

“Spesso capita che non è che tu paghi in Bangladesh per andare a Ravenna. Lì paghi per fare un pezzo di viaggio poi dopo magari invece ti devi fermare perché hai finito i soldi.”⁷⁰

With migrations of long duration in time, debt is subject to increase at every border or main stop to answer financial needs. It can be the case that chains of credits are created among different creditors, to the detriment of the debtor, who loses transparency. Those chains can also be already established, favoring the network by sharing contacts of creditors to possible debtors, guiding and opening the migratory path of people. These chains of debt may also be of a criminal nature, and surely are for cases of trafficking, ensuring the arrival and exploitation of the migrant worker in the host country. Some interviewees refer that the migrant workers speak of “banks” to which they must repay the debt, that in reality are chains of debt. Interestingly, the Chinese community presents a highly developed chain of debt, where the debt between two people can switch to another when the debtor becomes creditor to a third person. In other words, the debt between A and B goes to C if B gives credit to C. This intricate method guarantees impersonality into relations and a low level of formal complaints, making everyone part of the system being both creditor and debtor.

⁷⁰ “It often happens that you don’t pay to go from Bangladesh to Ravenna. There you pay a piece of the trip, then you may stop because your money is over.”

When in the destination country, cases are reported of jobs taken to pay the debt in third countries on the migratory routes but also in the destination country. Here a first job can be linked to the creditor, who directly exploits the labour of the debtor until the debt is paid off, or to a family member that was at any point a creditor as well. However, it is important to distinguish traffickers from smuggler and relative negative or positive perception by the debtor. Interestingly, when the victim is trafficked the debt may be initially paid by the final exploiter, who then claims the right to exploit for a long period of time.

Pakistani and Bengales people are found to be the most related to issues of debt, followed by Eastern Europeans, but no ethnicity is immune to similar mechanisms.

When NGOs start the process of uncovering, the issue of debt is key to explain the entire exploitative system and understand the risk facing the worker and his or her family.

4.2.8 Job finding

When migrants reach Italy, they may find a job connected to their traffickers, debtors or personal network from where to start their migratory mandate⁷¹. When this is not possible most of them rely on the ethnic network to which they belong as soon as they enter the host country. Particularly in this last scenario, personal skills or experiences are not the main driver to choose an economic sector, considering that ethnic networks already possess contacts, information and intermediaries. The same exploiters may be part of the ethnic network, pushing people into his or her own sector. In the host country, personal skills fail to be a protective factors and people are trapped into unspecialized tasks and into exploitation. Substitution of low-skilled ethnic jobs inside the same ethnic community is reported, for instance in case of Bengali workers that leave a job to newcomers of the same ethnicity. Another example may be the case of Prato inside the Chinese community, attracting a big amount of workforce through ethnic networking. Usually, it is common for eastern Europeans to have a direct employment into one sector from their home countries, while non-Europeans need to adapt to the dynamics they find on place, unless they experience a full trafficking network of exploitation (i.e., that does not stop to transportation). In this last case, people are obliged to work for their network of traffickers until their debt is repaid, which may take years in very bad life conditions (see the vicious cycle of debt mechanism)⁷².

⁷¹ Trafficked victims of exploitation may have a deal from the beginning to be exploited into a certain economic sector. Of course, conditions are never transparent. Debtor chains or familiar networks may also follow previous deals.

⁷² The examples describe worse-off conditions for newcomers. Yet, the length of time from arrival is never directly cited by the interviewees as an explanatory vulnerability factor. Surely, the issue connects to the level of integration into the Italian labour market and the life standard that an ethnic community can offer to its members. Usually, the longer a community is present, the better their material conditions (see subparagraphs 4.2.3 and 4.2.11).

Interestingly, interviewees report the presence of intermediaries, gang-master, or caporali, who work to meet supply and demand of work and often control people's work. They do not exist for all economic sectors nor in all contexts, where other strategies to find job are used, but when they exist, they are reported to exercise a great influence. Their service must be paid, and they earn a percentage over workers' wages. It is once signaled a situation of initial 0 wage directly used to pay the intermediary in the first months of work⁷³. Gang-masters are particularly present in agriculture but are signaled also in logistics, caregiving and manufacturing. They are not always associated with organized crime, and usually rely on the belonging to the same ethnicity to find workers and control them, mediating cultural bias, both in respect of standards from the origin country and in respect of productive expectation of exploiters. The relationship between the worker and the owner or actual employer is in these cases absent and the choice to hire is unquestionably in their only hands, providing an enormous power and dependency of people. Moreover, they are seen as professional figures, example of a career path that the exploited migrant could undertake. Their main function is to find work and they do it every day with certainty, unlike what is offered by NGO programs.

*"Il lavoratore contratta con il caporale, viene pagato da questi, ha le indicazioni sulla mansione da svolgere dal caporale, che molto spesso parla la stessa lingua, e che un po' proietta anche la dimensione culturale collegata al paese di origine all'interno del luogo di lavoro."*⁷⁴

A particular form of recruitment, seldomly reported by interviewees, is constituted by fake cooperative or so-called para-legal companies for labour matching. These organizations mediate between the owners/employers and the workers, winning the employers' favoritism by proposing lower wages and irregular labour conditions. Practices of exploitation are identical, following the same logic. Sometimes these organizations are signaled as a formalization of ethnic networks, being guided by intermediaries of the same nationalities of the workers they select.

For what concerns places where to go and get the job, camps, ghettos, public squares⁷⁵ and some reception facilities (mainly the biggest structures) are known places where people find jobs and recruiters go to search for them, as mediated by the ethnic networks according to the characteristics of the context. Competition is present among the workers, while on the side of the recruiter no data has emerged.

Moreover, interviewees often cite a lack of alternatives when explaining the impossibility to find better-off jobs or different jobs. Indeed, they are part of the unskilled labour force, which has its wages already set low

⁷³ Specifically, the interviewee spoke of job debt.

⁷⁴ "The worker contacts the gang-master, is paid by the gang-master, gets working indications from the gang-master, and often they speak the same language, which projects the cultural dimension linked to the country of origin inside the working place."

⁷⁵ Public spaces are still the place where workers gather, and recruiters select. Yet, digital devices are somehow changing it (Rigo, 2015), but still following ethnic networks.

in the vast majority of existing job realities, and for migrant workers employment possibilities even are more limited because of language ability, unrecognized skills and cultural preferences from exploiters. The same interviewees report the impossibility in their local context to imagine different jobs for migrant workers, without specific new trainings.

Mention is also made the condition of nomadism. Agricultural workers follow the seasonality of fruits and vegetables, going where their labour is requested and thus moving among Italian regions or even to other European countries (namely France and Spain). It follows that these workers hardly integrate in any context, without the possibility to settle and plan a migratory project. Such situation affects a lot of people from Sub-Saharan Africa which don't have the opportunity to rest at home between one season and the next.

“C'è un flusso di lavoratori rumeni, o comunque nazionalità comunitarie, in cui è difficile andare a scoperchiare eventuali situazioni perché sono gli stessi lavoratori che preferiscono comunque tener duro e lavorare. Vanno e vengono, anche per la vicinanza.”⁷⁶

4.2.9 Contracts

Interestingly, often the employer is reported to usually hide exploitation behind fake contracts. Such contracts are temporary, renewable and cover only a small percentage of the actual working hours or days (5 days in a month of work, for example), representing an easy indicator of potential lack of labour rights. Workers are formally paid the declared hours, and the difference is paid to them in cash. Interviewees report cases of employers who have opened bank accounts on behalf of their workers to formally paid the due amount. In certain situations, workers are also required to return part of the formal payment because higher than the negotiated wage. Such form of labour contracts is referred to as grey labour. There is a two-fold rationale behind their usage: they grant the employer a defense against labour inspections and represent a mean to blackmail the workers, who may benefit from having a contract and feel dependent on the employer for it. Examples may be part-time contracts of 20 hours into the textile industry in Prato. Moreover, when the workers have a little bargaining power, temporary contracts reflect a minimum of working hours necessary to later have the requirements for unemployment benefits for instance, but not higher enough to lose benefits, as the ones provided by the formal reception system⁷⁷. Interestingly, paychecks relative to the labour contracts are not always given for free to workers, who shall pay in case they need them (for example, to show their income to public authorities). This is a symptom of the wider degrading framework of

⁷⁶ “There is a flux of Romanian workers, or other communitarian nationalities, in which it is difficult to discover eventual slavery situation because they themselves prefer to work hard and keep it up. They come and with their home countries.”

⁷⁷ An interviewee reported a case where workers with unemployment benefits were asked to work because they owned such benefit to the employer, thus being exploited to the expense of the Italian State.

exploitation and dependency that constitutes modern slavery. Lastly, the understanding of the labour contracts and their written condition is basically none, given the low levels of knowledge of the Italian language by the migrant workers. The system holds if it corresponds to the conditions negotiated by voice, respecting the agreement between the worker and the employer without any fraud, which may activate the process of uncovering when it becomes too evident and unsustainable for workers' migratory plans.

*"Tu magari hai un lavoratore contrattualizzato però poi in realtà ti lavora anche la moglie e i figli all'interno di quella azienda che non hanno nessun tipo di contratto... in busta paga sono segnate 10 giorni e tu lavori dal lunedì alla domenica tutto il mese."*⁷⁸

On the public policies side, it is pointed out that, apart from checking labour contracts characteristics as described above, another indicator of exploitation can be a difficulty in establishing the true employer, as in cases of intermediaries and fake cooperatives that provide or exchange low wage labour.

Differently from "grey labour", labour conditions without any contracts, called "black labour", are reported limited, decreasing in respect of the past. Anyhow, when the labour market is fragmented in many little companies on a wide geographical area, absence of contracts is still common. Some interviewees also pointed out in their territories a difference between seasonal workers (without contracts) and stable workers (with partial contracts). Workers from the formal reception system may favor this condition because they have limits to their labour activity during their permanence in the reception system⁷⁹.

Agriculture possesses some peculiarities. First of all, such temporary fake contracts are easy to make since actual days of job are declared afterwards, a peculiarity due to the required flexibility of such job, making it easy to declare false information. On the other hand, when farms or fields are scattered around in small enterprises, no contracts are present, as the territory is difficult to inspect⁸⁰. Integration to wages in cash are given out by gang-master, who can automatically hold back services provided to people, such as transportation. Actually, gang-masters earn a percentage on every worker, reported to be around 2-3€ on the total pay of the day.

⁷⁸ "You may find a worker with a contract, but also his wife and children work but without any contract... on the paychecks there only 10 days, but you work from Monday to Sunday all month."

⁷⁹ The Italian Immigration Law does not allow to work in the first two months of hospitality.

⁸⁰ Examples are the province of Pisa or the Northern Adige region (Sud Tirol). In this last region, agriculture is a little reality from small enterprises which enjoys a peculiar system of low taxation (being a mountain community and an autonomous region with its own fiscal regime) and absence of labour inspection specifically aimed at exploitation. Inspector's attention is reported to focus on minor issues (mobility patents for tractors, etc.). Furthermore, little farmers are also the electoral basis of the main local party (SVP) which controls politics since the post war.

4.2.10 Criminality

Criminality is seldom referred to by the interviewees. Some talk about concerns over possible threats to the workers' families in the country of origin, especially in cases of trafficked people, some others refer mainly to Italian unlawful intermediaries providing services concerning bureaucratic processes or labour contracts. Fake accountants, fake cooperatives, lawyers and service centers of employer associations possess the power to hide unlawful labour treatments and to defraud migrant workers and the State.

Organized crime is cited with references both to Italian mafias and foreign criminal networks, reported for eastern Europeans and Nigerians, which appear organized for the whole transportation and final exploitation (differently from less structures migratory chains of Bengalese and Pakistani). All situations involve families in the country of origin, which risk reprisals in cases agreements are broken. The Chinese mafia is also cited as a network that ostracizes workers that ask for rights, signaling people via social media or by word of mouth. The Nigerian mafias, or cults, are cited as a problematic presence that often controls people, blackmails, and threatens them efficiently. The Italian organized mafias are cited in connections to the reverse auctions system, the management of gang-masters or the administration of camps or neighbors, as a reality that controls the territory more efficiently than the State, both in the South and in the North. It can be the case that Mafia and fake accountants are connected, as the different kind of Mafia are reported to evolve more into an economic affair, influencing prices, wages and all commercial steps. Specific reference is made to the so called fifth Mafia in Agropontino and the homonymous but separated Mafia in the rural province of Foggia.

Violence is higher when organized crime is involved in the exploitation.

“Abbiamo avuto un episodio sgradevole, che adesso sembra che sia ricomposto, di aggressione nei confronti di sindacalisti.”⁸¹

Contacts between NGOs' social operators and organized crime is reduced to the minimum thanks to the fact that the first ones cannot and do not present themselves as uncovering social workers, but as charity or general help services, having to gain people's trust and create a one-to-one personal relationship before introducing workers to the reality of the available program. Furthermore, gate keepers may be present into certain communities, making it necessary to build trust in order to bring outside the group the person in need and have a real confrontation and explanation. However, it is not impossible that a situation of tension may arise when NGOs are not welcome.

⁸¹ “We have had a negative encounter, which now seems to have been resolved, consisting in an aggression against union members.”

Forced begging is cited few times as possibly connected to criminal networks. One hypothesis that emerges from the interviews is that it is a form of territorial controls, but no further detail or knowledge is available from the interviewees, who mostly decided not to work on forced begging because lacking resources.

4.2.11 Living Condition

The condition in which migrant workers live constitutes a definitory element in the exploitative reality of modern slavery. Consequently, interviewees know such reality and labour inspectors tend to immediately inspect the residences in cases of charge of serious exploitation. Generally, what is valid for exploitative labour conditions is still valid in the sphere of residence: comparison happens with previous personal experiences in the host country and during migration, and there is the necessity to save as much money as possible as well as the perception of temporality related to the migratory path.

Residences provided by the formal reception system are cited as one of the most common forms of residence. As explained in a separated paragraph, the reception system does not grant protection from exploitation, but sometimes gives the possibility even to accept lower labour conditions because no need to pay rent or food, thus being functional to exploitation.

Camps are mostly situated in southern Italy. They are made by tents or houses covered by sheet metal and woods. There is lack of services (no proper toilets, water system or garbage collection) and various conflictual situations among the different ethnic networks that inhabit them. Indeed, some camps are divided in ethnic areas, founded or administered by that ethnic network. However, camps may also develop into communities and search for better-off conditions, negotiating with public authorities or civil society organizations (NGOs and civil rights activists⁸²). Inside camps, it can develop a network of service providers and informal economies, even illegal such as drugs or prostitution, to answer the demand of residing people, especially when any urban center is far away. Interestingly, camps form the most visible situation possible, driving the interest of public authorities and civil society, but are favorably seen by gang-masters and criminal networks that easily control the labour force living there.

“Il campo è diviso in tre campi più piccoli e praticamente c'è il campo dei senegalesi, il campo dei Gambiani e il campo dei sudanesi. Poi in realtà nel campo dei gambiani trovi anche altre nazionalità o in quello dei sudanesi poi magari di sudanesi ce ne sono 2 e ci sono di altre nazionalità però probabilmente quando li hanno organizzati eccetera erano appannaggio e a gestione di queste nazionalità.”⁸³

⁸² See the paragraph on Alternative Economies.

⁸³ “The camp is divided into three smaller ones. There is the one of the Senegalese, the one of the Gambians, the one of the Sudanese. Maybe in the one of the Gambians you also find other ethnicities, or maybe in the one of the Sudanese

There are examples of camps in which civil society organizations are not able to enter because gatekeepers perceive them as a threat to their control of the territory. Sadly, public authorities aren't efficient in their management, denying their responsibility to the detriment of other public authorities or private owners of the area, either for economic reasons or lack of real interest in solving the situation. It is reported one only example of Red Cross temporary camp, but it finished with Covid-19. Lastly, when camps are guarded by gatekeepers or gang-masters, people can be accepted or denied living there or might be asked for rents. It develops an informal organization that profits from providing services and governs the life of the camp with a pyramidal authority. During the mornings camps tend to be less populated, while in the late afternoon or evening people come back from work and the level of security sharply decrease, as reported by interviewees, with consume of alcohol or drugs. This factor represents a problem for social operators that either have to move in big teams in the afternoon or risk not to find exploited workers during the morning.

In case of prominently urban contexts, workers are reported to have different forms of accommodations. Either the employer provides an apartment, or it is found by the ethnic network in low-cost neighbors, called ghettos, or it is a makeshift shelter. The first option is surely the most common, overpopulated (up to 10 people in one apartment) to maximize profits from rents and paid directly from the wage. This is the option more suited for seasonal urban jobs: the employer rents 3 apartments for the 20-30 workers needed. In general and when it is possible, homes are close to the workplace, even inside it in some cases. An example may be the so-called sleeping agreements among the Chinese community, which grant, often on the same workplace, a bed and annexed sleeping hours. Thus, the employer increases control and productivity, as well as the dependency level of his workers, possessing the power to leave people without a home from one day to the other.

“Il datore di lavoro aveva messo a disposizione un alloggio dove vivevano in 11 mi pare. Quando le proteste sono diventate eccessive, hanno fatto irruzione nell'appartamento persone al soldo di questi, buttati fuori veramente senza nemmeno potersi prendere né i documenti né niente.”⁸⁴

No mention is indeed ever made during the interviews to regular rental agreements, a characteristic shared by all living options herein described apart from the formal reception system. Remarkably, not always there is the obligation to accept the residence provided by the employer. In many cases such dimension isn't forced or mandatory, but convenient and accepted by the workers, simply as something given to which opposition is nonsense. However, people may be able to find accommodations through other channels, often following

you find non-Sudanese and real Sudanese are only two, but probably when they organized the camp etcetera it was up to such nationalities to run them.”

⁸⁴ “The employer put at disposal an apartment where they lived in 11, I believe. When they protested too much somebody, paid by the owner, entered the apartment, and kicked all of them out, with no time to take documents or anything.”

the information provided by their ethnic network. In this case, conditions may still be low and degraded, with lack of services and overpopulated apartments or even daily slipping spots/mattresses (2-3€ per day), experiencing ethnic ghettos inside Italian cities. Additionally, cases of commuting from residences located into suburbs towards metropolitan cities are reported, with night sleeping into train stations when transportation does not match working hours. However, some examples of better-off conditions are reported. These are cases in which migrants already possess or have developed throughout their presence a certain amount of autonomy, according to their migratory plan, and share apartments with fewer people or friends, with proper services of water and heat, maybe even being autonomous in reaching the workplace. Such condition may be favored by the ethnic networks, happening more often the longer time a community is present on a certain territory. An example are migrants from Northern Africa who in certain areas are commonly reported to have apartments in cities with all necessary services, even when still part of urban ethnic ghettos. This criterion related to time might be applied to all contexts and living possibilities (not only for urban areas), but it shall be weighed against other variables, considering, for example, that camps may reach a certain degree of services available, but can easily be removed, while apartments availability may depend on the community favored in that moment by an employer or an economic sector. Variability is indeed very high. Lastly, interviewees describe phenomena of racism into renting houses by Italian owners. The last option of urban contexts, the makeshift shelters, can usually be found in urban contexts characterized by industrial areas badly connected to the city and to the workplace, so that migrants need to sleep near the industrial neighbor under bridges or into temporary constructions, as it is the case of the big inland port of Bologna.

Lastly, in the most remote rural contexts, examples of residences are either old warehouse and homesteads, or old houses in little depopulated rural towns (borghi), reported mainly in the South of Italy. Often these locations are partially abandoned and lacking basic services such as hygiene, heat or water. The important difference is the possibility to develop a feeling of community, even if when isolated in warehouses or homesteads numbers are smaller and the context appears more deprived.

Remarkably, exploitation reaches its apex when workers live on the employer's property, when dependency is maximized and even night turns of work can be requested. This comprehends both rural isolated settings and sleeping place on the workplace.

4.2.12 Sociality

The interest around sociality derives from the hypothesis of social death, from the absence of leisure time due to long-working hours and from the centrality of ethnic networks for migrants' economic integration into the labour market.

“Sicuramente è fatta da un lato di connazionali e mi viene da dire anche per ovvi motivi psicologici nel senso che comunque sono sempre uno straniero in terra straniera quindi per facilità anche proprio di creazione di rapporti vado a cercare il mio ingroup, come dire la vicinanza etnica da questo punto di vista, tanto più se comunque appunto vivo in un contesto dove non c'è integrazione. Cioè se sono dentro le serre me la posso proprio dimenticare l'integrazione nel senso che veramente non ho neanche... le serre sono praticamente dei dedali totalmente distanti dai centri urbani.”⁸⁵

The most common form of sociality is reported to be the one around one's own job, together with people in the same situation, organized around ethnic belongings. Here a distinction must be made: some workers experience a living location in remote rural areas or isolated neighbors, where movement becomes difficult without private transportations. In this case, contacts with other people are mediated by the exploiter, who owns transportation means to bring people to work, do grocery, and so on. Such isolated option is stronger among exploited women, often locked in private homes or controlled 24 hours a day. On the other hand, the situation of people living in cities, camps or by different means that are not so isolated becomes more easily a situation of ethnic groupism, based on sharing contacts for work, religious places or for any service needed (bureaucracy or health, for instance). Word-of-mouth is a great source for such channels, as well as transiting through the public reception system. Importantly, digital contacts, as membership to some Facebook or WhatsApp group is reported in both situations, as well as contacts with the family. Ethnic networks are favored by psychological mechanisms of ingroup that connect people sharing similar values and background in an unknown foreign context. If conditions are favorable, ethnic networks can develop into actual communities that follow traditional behaviors and live closely together (such as the case of the Sikh agricultural workers in the AgroPontino or in some camp communities in southern Italy), developing forms of internal solidarity and care. Also in this case, integration into the host country's context is absent.

The extension of ethnic networks develops all across the country, when not across borders granting all the trafficking transportation. In any case, networks can be criminal or not, but information flow gives them the power to always obtain new members and never extinguish. Nomadism and seasonal movements across regions are most surely guided by information provided in such a way. What changes between organized criminal networks and more informal ones is the degree of control of its members: movements are more or less imposed by others' decisions, and it is complicated to uncover conditions and help people. Of course, networks are not stable and can change throughout time, especially informal ones, making it necessary to

⁸⁵ “Surely it is made by fellow countrymen, and I'd say for obvious psychological reasons because I am a foreigner in a foreign land and so it is easier to create relationships with my ingroup because of ethnic proximity, even more if I live in a place where there is no integration. For examples, if working in greenhouses I can totally forget integration, meaning that I don't even have... greenhouses are really mazes distant from any urban center.”

always be updated, a necessity that can lead the more isolated workers to lose contacts. On the other hand, the more time spent in Italy, the wider connections one possesses.

As mentioned, the phenomenon of ethnic groupism is reported as an efficient reality for finding a place of residence, working opportunities, taking care of bureaucracy and any other need. That is a central element of concern for uncovering programs because they run slower and less efficiently, promising better-off living conditions with higher costs (for housing) and longer timings (for working). In a competitive logic, the reality of exploitation works better and faster than public programs. It is not economically profitable to exit such logic and trying to integrate into the host country's decent working labour market, as it is difficult and unprovable. Therefore, people are isolated from the context of host country, but do belong to formal or informal ethnic networks. The hypothesis of social death was denied by the interviewees.

The existence of this form sociality does not exclude a reported feeling loneliness, given the strong sense of individualism that governs such networks. Often people do not act with solidaristic intents, everyone being focused on his or her own need and migratory paths, prior to others'. Information is often shared to one's own advantage, when there is the possibility to profit from the presence or work of somebody else, usually from the same ethnicity. Examples range from temporary substitutions on the workplace, selling of personal digital accounts or sharing of contacts with partial profits on earnings, or creating a reliable community for an employer. Competition guides ethnic networks to the detriment of other ethnic communities, substituting one another according to the exploiter's preferences, trust or productivity standards, or also gang-masters' ethnic networks.

It follows that such sociality is a mean of reproduction of exploitation, trapping people into that one exploitative labour market and opportunities, without empowering them to exit it. Additionally, the network acts as a force of homologation to the cultural model of the exploited hard-working man, ostracizes rebels and tends to conserve existing conditions of employment. Only in few cases during the interview, the ethnic network is described as something positively associated with achieving better standards of labour: in cases of groups uncovering, where a certain problematic touches one entire ethnic group that acts together, or in cases of ethnic communities that achieve an overall good economic condition, able to provide better labour opportunities for fellow countrymen (for example, among the northern African community). In the first case, solidarity is reported to increase in the group.

4.2.13 Covid-19

The pandemic did not represent a central theme according to the interviewees, as it was left in the background. The exploitative labour market did not experience long quarantines or health care preventive

measures and kept on functioning with only few minor adjustments. This comes naturally given the hidden characteristics of such labour market and the absence of any security concern, as by definition.

In the beginning of the pandemic, confusion and disorientation are reported. Employers called for lack of labour supply and the government was pushed to legislate an amnesty for domestic care and agricultural workers. Furthermore, regional mobility stopped for the first quarantine (March-April 2020) as well as all programs of uncovering. After this initial period, confusion has left space to the necessity to work, the risk to be fined for unauthorized moves was put aside by the invisibility of the exploited labour and the presence of fake contracts, and the situation in general has soon gone back to the normality of exploitation. On the other hand, social operators started to intervene providing masks and basic information and security services where it was possible (in camps, workplaces, and meeting points). Migrants residing into the formal reception system were the slowest to go back to normality, being obliged to respect the quarantine. Overall, the interviewees confirmed that by the time of the interview (around May 2020) the situation is back to the usual one.

For the sake of clarity, the different economic sectors reacted differently. Special mention is given to the sectors that experienced a rise into the productivity demand or the supply of labour, giving rise to extra profits for exploiters, both employers and gang-masters. It is evident however, according to the interviews, that such extra profit did not benefit at all the migrant workers, going all into the hands of the exploiters. In such dynamics, particular reference is made to the logistic and agricultural sectors.

“Il periodo covid, secco, è aumentato il costo del lavoro cioè il caporale si è rinforzato. perché quando c'è meno prodotto ovviamente il valore del prodotto aumenta.”⁸⁶

Agriculture is exemplary to understand how gang-masters have increased their profit and bargaining power towards employers: with lack of labour, for example from Eastern Europe, the few available workers are moved from one employer to another according to the interest of the gang-master, raising his revenue. On the other hand, the public authority is reported not able to intervene in helping migrant workers during the pandemic, failing to provide shelter, information and Covid tests, even in visible situations as camps.

Simply, the pandemic has aggravated the existing circumstances: it has increased the presence of a wide mass of unemployed workers in need, enhancing the downward wage competition; any migratory project is lengthened by the uncertainty attached to the pandemic and pre-existing difficulties are hidden from the family with the excuse of Covid; the problem of living into overpopulated conditions has brought healthcare problems.

⁸⁶ “The Covid period, just like that, has increased the cost of labour, because gang-masters have enlarged their power. When there is less of a good, obviously the value of the that good increases.”

4.2.14 Dependency

The concept of dependency is seldomly directly used by the interviewees, but it is core to many considerations. Usually, they refer to conditions of absence of autonomy and being blackmailable. Both situations are linked to the exploitative employer, who takes advantages and increases them, but they can also pre-exist the labour relation.

“Chi è probabilmente completamente irregolare è più appetibile perché più ricattabile fondamentalmente. Tu non hai dove andare io ti do questo se ti va bene, bene, se non ti va bene arrivederci.”⁸⁷

Absence of autonomy consists of the inability to find job without help, inability to speak the language of the host country, not being able to understand every situation and express preferences or negotiate conditions, the impossibility to autonomously go to work, living into an apartment rent by the same employer close by or inside the workplace, as well as the inability to take care of bureaucracy without help.

Being blackmailable entails many grounds, such as the withholding of wages or documents, the presence of debt to pay back (both to the employer in Italy or to somebody else in the host country) or an irregular migratory condition potentially perceived as a ground for deportation. This last one is constantly fed by employers and gang-masters, to increase their distance with public authorities and have workers not trying to reach out but hide, such as in case of labour inspections.

The mechanism through which the employer increases the dependency on himself starts from a pre-existing difficulty, to which he gives help to its own interest. By renting low-cost apartments (overpopulated and without basic hygienic facilities), by helping with the host country bureaucracy, by bringing people on the work-field with private transportation, by renting money to pay any unplanned need, the employer ties a low-cost workforce to him or herself and to his or her own productive necessity, ensuring their obedience on many different grounds, even being perceived as a friend. Workers appreciate this reality where a local employer helps them under payment and provides to their different necessity, feeling protected into an easily understandable situation. Payments are perceived as synonym of guarantee that a service is really taken care of. Cases are reported of employers or gang-masters that drive their workers to do grocery as a present or reward, as well as cases of a personal relationship, where workers feel obliged towards a person perceived as a friend. A personal relationship evolves difficult to exit in cases of uncovering and joining of programs of assistance and integration, because the exploiter knows personal details of the worker, such as the residence of this last or of his/her family. When victims are women, the situation may also entail a fake sentimental relationship and future promises of life together. This develops a situation where workers cannot deny the request to work more and harder, they do not feel entitled to negotiate better condition or ask

⁸⁷ “Probably who is completely irregular is easier to blackmail, basically. You have nowhere to go, I offer you this if it’s ok, otherwise goodbye.”

rights, as they are dependent on his or her help and they can be easily blackmailed. The mix of all these conditions is typical of the nature of modern slavery, where master and serves are not connected by law, and where violence is not essential to govern the oppression.

Such dependency drives a situation of disempowerment, where people do not increase their autonomy, don't learn the language nor the bureaucracy for permits and reduce their decision-making capacity in a foreign context without understanding how to move for their own necessities. Yet, they enjoy an economic income through which they are able to live and help their families, they are able to pay for new clothes and mobile services, while they can stay in Italy and continue their migratory project.

4.2.15 Perception

The issue of perception touches a central theme to understand the functioning of modern slavery and to describe how migrant workers perceive themselves as exploited or not. In general, interviews show various understandings, as they present workers either unaware of being exploited, aware but willing (because they compare the host country with their origin countries' conditions) or forced to accept it because of lack of alternatives. Clearly, the agency of the single can differ, and those elements can be all or in part present in the same subject, there is no exclusion clause, and they can vary overtime, change or evolve. As said, exploitation is culturally biased, and people can feel certain practices not exploitative because used to different and lower standards. Thus, working for long hours, without security conditions and for low pay can be accepted because overall it is a better off labour condition that gives a higher monetary return, something that is perceived as "good luck". Workers' comparison is not between locals' conditions and theirs, but between what they experienced and what they experience now, since they still are linked to their family needs and to a specific migratory mandate.

"Entrare a contatto con la fine della vita, con la morte e farlo per un tempo così lungo. Perché si tratta a volte di mesi o più anni. I viaggi hanno una durata variabile ed entrare in contatto con le torture e poi l'ultimo atto del viaggio in mare magari tentato 3-4 volte. Nel momento in cui si vive tutto, la riflessione che mi viene da tirar fuori è: "quante persone possono poi avere la capacità critica, anche, rispetto alle condizioni lavorative?". Cioè, quante persone reagiscono a quel viaggio con la consapevolezza di dire "ok, ho vissuto una cosa assurda una cosa inumana, ma io non sono quello devo di staccarmi da quella logica lì perché la mia vita vale quanto quella dell'occidentale che mi sta dando lavoro oppure dell'occidentale che mi sta accanto.""⁸⁸

⁸⁸ "To get to touch the end of life, death, and do it for a good while because it may be months or years long. Migrations have different durations and get you in contact with tortures and, in the last act during sea with death for 3-4 times. Living this, I would ask myself: "how many people would still have the capacity to critically assess labour conditions?". I

Not only culture, but personal experiences may influence perception: consequence of trauma is a subsequent acceptability of lower standard of livings, and a higher difficulty into accepting the idea to fight for your rights, bargain and find alternatives to what comes at first. When running away from persecution, hunger or abuses, standards for comparisons are not based on local conditions, but on strong personal and traumatic experiences.

“Siccome non è un Marziano ha capito che qualcuno ha il contratto qualcuno no, qualcuno faceva certi lavori qualcuno no, qualcuno prendeva €1000 al mese qualcuno 500. Quindi questa disparità di trattamento, questa situazione è evidente ed è chiara anche a loro. Che cosa poi siano le tutele quali siano i diritti e quale sia il percorso che una persona in quella condizione può attivare, questo lavoro viene fatto dopo.”⁸⁹

This example from an interview well explains the unclear boundary between consciousness and unconsciousness and recognizes the ability of the worker to analyze his/her own situation and understand the reality. What must come from an external source is the awareness of rights and the capacity to ask for better condition, i.e. resources for empowerment. Migrant workers must realize that certain acts and situations are unlawful and punished by law, without reprisals for the victim (in terms of sanctions or deportation). There is a deep difference between workers who are aware to be exploited given their specific situation and workers who do not realize their grounds of exploitation, in terms of capacity to imagine a different life, becoming empowered and exiting their condition⁹⁰.

Therefore, we can state that when migrants minimize their exploitation is an indicator of exploitative conditions, because it reflects lack of awareness of actual minimum conditions in the host country. On the contrary, when they are fully conscious, for instance of the presence of discrimination on the job place, this is a positive indicator for the presence of awareness.

The migratory mandate is another core issue. As described in the identikit chapter, the profile of the young man is invested with the role to support family finances and needs. They perceive themselves as such, picturing the idea of a strong man with a clear mission to make money, which is heavily financed by their families and necessary to ensure them a decent standard of living. Such migratory mandate puts a strong pressure over the single, who cannot fail. The vast majority among the exploited labour according fails to correctly picture their situation to their families: that would be a failure and would make them appear unable for their task, selfish and weak men, a loss of investments, and would downgrade their social esteem. Thus,

mean, how many react with enough awareness to say: “ok I have passed through something absurd, something inhuman, but I am not that, I have to keep separated from that logic because my life is worth the same as the one of the western guy that is giving me work or that is close to me.”

⁸⁹ “Because it is no Martian, he understands that some have the labour contract and some do not, some makes certain jobs and some others, some take 1000€ some 500€. This difference in treatment is evident to them. What are labour rights and what processes can be activated in these conditions comes later.”

⁹⁰ See subparagraph 4.2.17.

they are culturally trapped into a model who pressures young workers to work hard, no matters the conditions to which these young workers are exposed. This cultural model sets expectations without considering the reality of a different country context, asks people to achieve unreasonable goals, pushing them into exploitative works with unlawful conditions, favoring the presence of modern slavery. People personalize such feelings and become ashamed, disappointed and frustrated with themselves, even if they know the reality of the host country. They feel guilty for the poverty afflicting their families, or for the fact that their sisters might have to work because they have not been able to fulfill expectations and repay their trust. A similar logic is reflected also inside ethnic networks, where workers that formally report to police their exploiters are seen as unthankful, selfish and ostracized in the interest of the same ethnic community, who must not lose contacts with possible employers. Besides, that is why ethnic networks work very efficiently and gang-masters usually hire people of their same ethnicity: such cultural model ensures control as they possess the same reference experience for comparison. Also, the feeling of shame is reported to be higher when exploitation and deception is done by somebody of the same ethnicity: it evolves in a feeling of having been fooled.

“E’ come se tutto questo sistema fosse considerato un sistema parallelo di economia di sussistenza non so come dire, cioè, il connazionale mi fa il favore di farmi lavorare in qualche modo visto che io sono bloccato perché al momento i documenti fanno ritardo.”⁹¹

For what concerns the activity of uncovering, perception exercises an important role, as it is necessary to accept the conditions and rules of assistance and integration programs, which require to have the same interpretation of what has happened before. If workers and social operators do not share a common vision of exploitation, a common understanding of modern slavery, it is complicated to be inserted into an assistance and integration program: an exploited person needs to understand why and how, and furthermore he or she needs to accept a period of life not focused on working as much as possible for all the day, but accepting the idea of training and developing a new professionalism. What drives people to exit exploitation often is a particular event, such as an explosion of violence, an accident, the reaching of a breaking point for fake promises or unattended agreements. Here, when they decide to leave their job and entering an assistance and integration program, they develop an awareness over their exploitative experience, reported to become even more angry and firm over their refusal to keep on working in such conditions. On the contrary, uncovering cases where awareness has not been developed will lead to re-entering exploitation, similarly to cases where uncovering was pushed by third actors (NGOs, Unions or public authorities) without

⁹¹ “It is like all the system is a parallel system of subsistence economy, I mean, where my fellow countryman helps me out giving me a job since I am stuck without documents.”

full agreement from the workers. More details are exposed into the subparagraphs on addressing exploitation and multiagency.

“L’obiettivo è quello lì, appunto, di creare una coscienza”⁹². Failure to achieve this, provide assistance or finding the opportunity and strength to exit exploitation can lead migrants to accept a life at the margins of society, no more pursuing a migratory path, nor seeking to regularize their stay or earn anything other than what is strictly necessary. A survival tactic that lives for the day, trapped in permanent disempowerment.

“Hanno deciso di stare fuori e volontariamente non si non si avvicinano più e non cercano più lavoro non cercano più la questura e non cercano niente. Cioè hanno trovato delle dinamiche di società separata.”⁹³

4.2.16 Public services and frauds

Access to public service is in general low and migrants see public offices, not only the police, as a risk for their irregular situation in the host country, both under the migration and labour point of views. Their perception leads them to avoid any unnecessary contact with the public authority: *“the less it knows, the better”*. Exploiters grow this feeling, developing voices of improbable fines or deportations.

One main issue related to the use of public services is access to health care. This is reported as limited, because of different factors. Sometimes living places are located too far away, people cannot move or do not know how to reach hospitals or health structures. Moreover, migrant workers are unaware of their rights, as the one to have a provisional social security card free of charge, and fear to access public services. First aid hospital is cited more often from interviewees, described in situation of personal emergencies or serious harm. Exploiters may tend to disfavor access to health care, by bringing medicines and discouraging people to go to hospitals, where unlawful situations may be discovered. When they go, they may receive threats not to talk about exploitation.

Sometimes migrant workers themselves may search for civil society organizations’, NGOs’ or unions’ offices, in case they have heard of them and have a specific need. They are preferred compared to public or official centers being perceived less bureaucratic and risky, as far as controls of regular permissions or documents. Additionally, discrimination is less felt when dealing with NGOs. Yet, some interviewees report difficulties in facing migrants and be distinguished from public authorities, especially in cases of first contacts or new arrived migrants. Interestingly, the Chinese community is reported to use services only when completely ostracized by their community, in which otherwise they find help. Furthermore, public services may be linked

⁹² “Thus, the objective is to build consciousness.”

⁹³ “They decided to stay out voluntary and do not try to approach services nor finding a decent job, nothing. They have set up dynamics for a separate society.”

to the territory in which they were firstly used, while civic organizations are developing an integrated approach around the country, sharing information among themselves.

However, usually for what concerns any kind of formal request, documentation or proceeding involving public bodies and immigration administration, migrants tend to trust intermediaries or exploiters to take care of it, under payment.

“Il datore lavoro o l'intermediario in generale in realtà mi fornisce il permesso di soggiorno anche se è una richiesta di asilo, se ne occupa lui quindi non mi devo occupare di niente, non ho il problema di capire come devo fare per andare a prendere appuntamento con la Questura e la dichiarazione di ospitalità e cosa mi serve ecc. lo fa lui, ovviamente lo pago.”⁹⁴

Interestingly, interviewees point out that migrant workers possess a widespread approach to services where payment is a guarantee of reliability. They hardly believe that services are for free and perceive paying as a mean of trust and security when dealing with bureaucracy or public services in general. Interviewees believe this approach comes from their past experiences in the host country. This fact is used by exploiters and intermediaries to profit from free services that they sell under payments. In particular, any kind of formal request, documentation or proceeding are mediated either by exploiters or gang-masters as a favor for their workers. Not knowing the language nor being aware of their rights, workers are keen to accept this and depend on exploiters for administrative and bureaucratic needs that they don't understand. However, exploiters charge disproportionate fees to proceed and act on their behalf, profiting on their need and unawareness. Situations of new debts towards the exploiter are signaled in such circumstances, defined as document's debt.

When dealing with administrative procedures, it sometimes happens that different employers use the same accountants, lawyers or service centers that are keen to help them and share the fraudulent profit. They are known to NGOs operators, being spotted always in similar occasions for similar reasons. On the other hand, fraudsters may also be members of ethnic networks that share partial or fake information and manage to deceive other migrants.

An example is the recent amnesty law, which saw widespread frauds on the application procedure, that is formally free of charge, but sold by the intermediary or the exploiter. This procedure in particular is described as heavily expensive for migrants and has resulted in an increase of conflicts and exits from exploitation, caused by the anger for the totally inefficient process or the denial of the requests. Charges are reported up

⁹⁴ “Actually, the employer or intermediary in general gives me the permit of stay, even if it is an asylum request, he takes care of it I don't have to worry about anything, I don't have to understand how to do to reserve an appointment at the police and the declaration of hospitality and other documents, etcetera, he takes care of that, obviously under payment.”

to 6000€, when presenting amnesty requests with fake documentations. Other examples of frauds are related to paychecks, social contributions, asylum requests, permits of stay (reported nowadays around 10000€), declarations of hospitality (400-5000€) and any service provided for the living place when it is given by the same exploiter (overcharges are put over gas cylinders, new furniture, etcetera).

4.2.17 Addressing exploitation

Uncovering⁹⁵ exploitation is a difficult activity. The identification and management of victims of exploitation up to modern slavery can be risky activities for personal security, which sums to the difficulties and limitations that operators face on the field, in terms of organization and funds.

As anticipated in paragraph 4.1, this paragraph is built not only with the knowledge provided by the interviews, but also with the ethnographic notes provided in two occasions. The first and most fruitful one is constituted by four online meeting of an NGOs' association, the CNCA– National Committee of Reception Communities⁹⁶. Members, divided into subgroups, confront and answer specific issues, share them in plenary sessions and come up with best practice to share and adopt. Such meetings refer mainly to the theory and practice of what is and how it works the process of finding exploited workers and help them.

In the present paragraph it is described the role of NGOs and how they operate to fight modern slavery and exploitation. As previously stated, NGOs operate mainly financed by public grants of the Italian Government, divided among the different regions. The juridical base of such programs of uncovering, assistance and social integration is article 18 of the Italian Immigration Law. NGOs taking charge of such programs are colloquially defined as anti-trafficking NGOs, yet the definition diminishes their role and mandate which also covers modern slavery practices different from trafficking. Usually, each project sees the cooperation between the institutional regional body and/or some big city, NGOs, unions and few other entities. Such multiagency organization is described in the following paragraph. Programs are usually limited to short-time periods, NGOs are few and in certain cases they possess a 20 years-long experience of planning territorial services in the same geographical contexts, with no competition on the interventions proposed. However, interviewees affirm that having to wait for the grants to be prepared and won, their timeframe for actions cannot but act

⁹⁵ Before describing the ways in which social operators fight modern slavery and labour exploitation, it should be pointed out a linguistic peculiarity of the Italian language. The Italian word to indicate the identification and addressing of exploitation is *emersione*, which literally translates as emergence. It gives both the idea to detect a hidden situation together with the effort to tackle it. In the present research the word uncovering indicates both aspects.

⁹⁶ The CNCA is an association of NGOs working on social integration and access to welfare. The subgroup on trafficking and exploitation shares best practices and calls for common advocacy and requests, coordinating actions and talks towards the governmental bodies or in any confrontation table that might open with public authorities, sharing political positions with a common voice. The CNCA has a national and regional level of organization and participates in public campaigns with other federations, but, differently from a consortium, it does not directly manage any project.

on the short term, contrary to what it should be for the subject matter. Additional grants (Italian FAMI or European FSE) are set to focus specifically on agricultural exploitation, the so-called, caporalato, the gang-master system of labour intermediation. This is both because the sector is widely developed in Italy and because it possesses public visibility and attention, driving the interest of policy making. However, funds are limited and these programs are described to cover only a part of exploitation, mostly male, and is unable to access those economic sectors that are most isolated or segregated, such as fishing or caregiving.

NGOs' mission is to take charge of victims of exploitation by uncovering their condition and presence inside the labour market and offering an alternative path. Taking charge is therefore the process of uncovering exploitative conditions and becoming close to the exploited (proximity). It is a gradual process that begins with the first contact with the worker, the building of trust and confidence, until it creates a relationship of sincere confrontation on labour and life conditions, and it achieves the refusal of exploitation to enter a formal program of uncovering, assistance and social integration, with professional trainings and house facilities. Thus, it is a subjective process that must take into considerations different personal sensibilities, varying in time and forms accordingly. First contacts usually involve helping with documentations, health problems, clothes or food. Continuing the uncovering process entails awareness raising over rights and violations, questioning the migratory path and the actual conditions met in the host country, people's quality of life and future intentions, reflecting over vulnerabilities and possible alternatives. The uncovering process is described as something that is patient and slow, but that needs to run when the moment comes, ready to act on different levels, moving branches of a wide network simultaneously, to offer a full support to the victim's various needs. In this sense every activity that reduces dependency from the employer, any sharing of free services increases trust between the NGO and the migrant and should be considered part of the process of uncovering exploitation. For instance, helping people to have their own driving license or home, gives them bargaining power towards the exploiter and it also reflects on the social network of the same migrant, multiplying its positive effect.

“La cosa che io penso funzioni, che però è difficile ripeto, è recuperare un po' quel seme iniziale, ovvero - sei venuto qua perché avevi un sogno perché avevi desiderio di un futuro migliore? Ma è realmente questo il futuro migliore che ti aspettavi.”⁹⁷

NOGs possess different strategies, both to reach out and find victims and to receive eventual direct requests. To reach out victims, or potential victims, they use either word of mouth and public advertisement, or the direct research of people, making contacts with possible exploited migrant workers, building a relationship of trust. Some NGOs have offices close to migrants' neighborhoods, called drop-in services, some have street

⁹⁷ “The thing I believe works, but again it is difficult, it's to recover that initial seed, that is to say – have you come here because you had a dream, because you wanted a better future? Is this really what you were expecting?”

units - unità di contatto (UdS), or équipes, and some also offer reception facilities. Few (especially religious affiliated organizations, but not only) run the so-called low threshold services, or servizi di bassa soglia, a series of services open to everybody in need, like canteen or shelters, through which they can reach out exploited workers. Additionally, some NGOs monitor and map the territory, creating a sort of database of people exploited to better coordinate and administer their activities throughout time, as people may appear and disappear randomly. Under the same logic, NGOs may run public campaigns for visibility. All such strategies directly reflect the logic set up during the 90s against sexual trafficking. NGOs can use one or all the strategies presented, but all of them work with social operators from different professional backgrounds, ranging from proper social workers to psychologists and cultural mediators, who coordinate and act together, confronting each other also to debrief from the job's emotional intensity. In particular, the cultural mediator is fundamental: he or she does not simply translate dialogues and make communication possible, but also takes care of different cultural perceptions and mediates with possible cultural contrasts. Street units could not function at all without mediators⁹⁸. The service is core to uncovering activities and constitutes one of the main modalities of action. Doing this, NGOs keep a low profile and do not identify publicly as anti-trafficking operators, both to protect people they help and themselves, as well as being allowed to access migrant areas. Drop-in services may be used by migrant workers to gradually reduce their dependency and slowly consider the idea of entering formal programs, but that does not always happen or may even be a long-time process, according to each different personal situation. Reception facilities are usually situated in ethnically mixed neighborhoods or apartments, divided between men, women or family groups and are limited in numbers, being difficult to increase or decrease according to short-term needs. That is a great source of problems for NGOs that might not have enough places to host people escaping exploitation in groups, as often happens, having to call fellow NGOs or other public services to answer the immediate shortage. Providing such service means to be available to hosts 24 hours a day, coordinating constantly with the Green Number against trafficking or police forces to ensure availability for all requests. Overall, it is reported a stable increase in all services offered to men, explained by the increased recent attention to labour exploitation. Residences are only partially surveilled by NGOs operators to grant hosts some degree of autonomy into decision making. Hosts are provided with meals and money, according to Immigration law. Lastly, it must be signaled that some NGOs have agreements with reception centers, both first reception and SAI system, to hold periodical

⁹⁸ The second experience of participant observation happened within a street unit in Milan, testifying the first approach of an NGO to potential victims of exploitation. The équipe, composed of a cultural mediator, of Bengalese origins, and an Italian social worker, approached Bengalese and Pakistani street vendors outside the Milan central train station. The team shares useful information through a flyer with a telephone and email contact, as well as the address of the office for visits. They ask migrant workers about eventual health issues, bureaucratic problems (referring to the amnesty procedures) and living conditions, listening to people and taking notes mediated by the translation and body gestures of the professional mediator. As explained during the visit, these aspects are the ones more prone to create a conversation, together with the wage payment or accident at work, depending on the nature of the job. This corresponds to the triggering factor (see below in same paragraph).

information meetings as activity of awareness raising and prevention of exploitation. Professional trainings of reception system operators may happen too.

Places where NGOs' teams operate are both the workplace, or where they gather to be picked up for work, and the living place. Workplaces can be more or less accessible, and the degree of visibility of exploitative jobs change a lot, from agricultural open fields to underground textile laboratories. A general distinction may be drawn between outdoor and indoor activities. Living places can also involve more visible camps or ghettos, as well as private homes located in rural areas. In any case, visibility does not always equate to accessibility, as camps may be partially off limits because of gang-masters and security reasons, as well as exploiters' owned houses. Other place to meet potential migrant workers victims of exploitation are all those gathering places that are important for target communities, such as a mosque or community centers. This is done only by few NGOs and it is described as an innovative approach, capable to uncover unknown situations.

Often it is reported that uncovering a situation of exploitation means to gather not only one exploitative experience, but a group's experience and thus is more complicated to find spaces and solutions for everybody. Also, the risk is that among the group someone can operate as "controller", being intermediaries or gang-masters. Therefore, in all situations, the relationship with the NGO must always be one to one, private. Furthermore, situations of immediate danger can come up to NGOs when people abandon an exploited situation and ask for shelter and protection from eventual reprisals. Here, NGOs need to have specific reception facilities or contacts (see again multiagency cooperation) to deploy and protect the person adequately.

Programs consist of psychological support, assistance for health care, residence permits or eventual law complaints, as well as professional training and activities, with courses of Italian language and awareness raising, aiming to find migrant workers professional internships and help them building a professional career into decent working. First step is always an interview with migrant workers to picture their need and share objectives. Participants are asked to rebuild their vision of past experiences, to describe their migratory path and labour experience, to picture the difficulties, debts or violations they have been subjected to. Also, psychological support is fundamental and helps people face their negative experiences, pains and fears, making them aware of what modern slavery is and what are its effects. This fact contrasts with the perception of migrant workers and their immediate needs. Yet, working to empower migrant workers into autonomous decision making and capacity to act necessarily goes through this and through the idea of reshaping one own's professionalism and plans within his or her migratory mandate. Autonomy goes from the creation of the capacity to deal alone with bureaucracy to the ability of taking decisions without worrying consequences and having guaranteed a minimum level of income. To become active agents, capable to answer to the different situations they encounter.

“Il concetto di empowerment è sicuramente molto complesso da mettere in atto ma è questo, cioè potenziamento di tutte le sfaccettature che riguardano l’essere umano, dalla lingua piuttosto che della competenza e della capacità critica.”⁹⁹

However, these programs bring migrants to stop earning money. Indeed, major difficulties into accepting to enter a program of assistance are: the impossibility to stop working and sending home money, being unaware of being exploited or not interested into gaining better off working conditions, being unwilling to accept to have been exploited and deceived (especially from the employer who acted as a friend who provides assistance in many circumstances), possessing a different understanding of the labour experience and not defining it as modern slavery, being dependent and deceived (about risking deportation, personal fines, or other).

“La difficoltà più grande è veramente non riuscire da parte nostra a garantirgli un guadagno immediato perché la motivazione prima per cui loro comunque continuano ad accettare di stare in quelle condizioni è il fatto... è la garanzia di avere ogni giorno qualcosa in tasca sia per se stessi sia per le famiglie. Noi purtroppo questo non lo possiamo garantire perché venire in accoglienza purtroppo richiede a noi e a loro (ma per noi è chiaro per loro no) un periodo di conoscenza perché abbiamo bisogno veramente anche fosse solo per aiutarli da un punto di vista documentale per capire, qual è il documento che possiamo arrivare ad ottenere, dobbiamo capire la loro storia e per raccogliere la loro storia sono necessari vari colloqui, è necessario che loro si fidino tanto da raccontare con completezza la loro storia, perché se raccontano una storia fittizia o se raccontano una storia piena di buchi che invece possono essere utili da poter essere quelle cose fondamentali per ottenere uno status di rifugiato piuttosto che un altro permesso di soggiorno è chiaro che serve veramente del tempo per creare quel rapporto di fiducia.”¹⁰⁰

Even if they accept the idea to be exploited, the prospect of stop earning to have 1 year of training, where a person may earn more in terms of payment/hours, but cannot work that many hours, is a very problematic factor for their mandate to economically sustain their families in the country of origin¹⁰¹. An internship pay is around 400/500€ per month, lower than the total amount they earn into exploitation. In fact, they cannot afford to stop working to gain, in a medium time frame, better working conditions, when their need of money is immediate. This is highlighted as the strongest critical element for the mandate of NGOs, which would

⁹⁹ “The concept of empowerment is surely complex to enforce but that is it, the strengthening of all aspects concerning a human being, from the language to competences and critical thinking”

¹⁰⁰ “The biggest difficulty is truly not being able to guarantee them an income, because their primary motivation for staying into exploitative conditions is the guarantee of a daily income, both for them and their families. We cannot guarantee this because entering our programs requires to both them and us a period to get to know each other, even if it is just for assessing their situation with the permits and understand what we can achieve. We need to understand their story and that requires various talks, it requires trust to tell the true one in order to avoid holes that could be used to get the status of refugee or some other kind of permit, but it all requires time and trust.”

¹⁰¹ Some interviewees report also that the formal activation of the programme can be subject of long waiting periods.

need wider financial resources. This element is described as a contrast between the migratory mandate of the exploited migrant and the social mandate of the NGOs. This is a central dimension: NGOs have the mission to uncover exploitation, but migrants cannot accept it given their need to repay a debt and immediately sustain their family, without considering the dependency and threats from the exploiter. Such conflict is even sharpened by the dynamics of NGOs' organization that feels as bearers of answers to the problems and sometimes see migrants as passive agent to train, erroneously forgetting the active role of agency that should instead be recognized and reinforced to empower the migrant worker (providing real alternatives instead of explaining how to identify on the labour market). Social operators sometimes reflect the idea of passive migrant victims, who need to be taught and rescued, forgetting to recognize their agency and mandate. In fact, NGOs may be refused by migrant workers that do not appreciate the so-called school-teaching approach. The risk is to set up a top-down process between a powerful actor (the NGO) and a disempowered worker, which though cannot last in time. A significant example comes when interviewees describe their experience of forcing formal complaints against exploiters, a situation that always turns against the relationship between that organization, NGO or union, and the migrant workers they aimed to protect. Furthermore, even the same social operators are found to possess bias. Political ideas of cultural essentialism brought some to state that exploitation cannot but exist, because migrants are not able to accept western standard of rights nor fight for them.

Another important dimension to consider is when, within the perspective of workers, uncovering of exploitation and exit from modern slavery happens. Considering that it does not always happen, since in many occasions first contacts or actions of proximity do not end up into complete uncovering and escape from exploitation, there must be a triggering factor, or breaking point. Without a triggering factor, NGOs are limited in the action according to the degree of visibility of exploitation and of the exploited, meaning that they can reach out and offer their assistance only to workers that they meet on open workplaces (agricultural fields) or living areas. Triggering factors occur when there is use of violence, when it happens a serious incident during working time, or when there is a manifest and profound violation of agreements over wages, payments for fake services (often related to documentations) or general conditions, that bring to the development of a sense of exhaustion, where the workers decide to end the abuse. Cases are reported also of exhaustion caused by the continuous and unsustainable growth of the debt. This trigger factors push people to realize that their idea of temporary exploitation is fake, meaning that their migratory mandate is at risk, causing the refusal of that reality. Importantly, triggering factors are uncommon, since modern slaves are easily replaceable on the labour market, making it inconvenient to exercise too much violence and pressures. Usually workers, especially in case of female workers, are not aware of the entire set of abuses and unlawful behaviors they have been subjected to: awareness develops during the whole uncovering process and building of trust between the NGO and the worker. For instance, a worker that was abused or got injured may have run away from exploitation unaware of the system of conscious creation of dependency

by the exploiter, or of the fake payments and extreme abuses of long working hours and low payments that he or she was subjected to. Accepting help, NGOs propose the participation to programs and start building awareness of rights.

A last dimension that touches uncovering activities refers to the world of political activism, that is separated from NGOs and they do not communicate. However, it is interesting because they provide a participatory framework in migrants' camps and can be regarded as action of empowerment building. Usually, political activists work in camps and propose alternative economic networks for agricultural products distribution (such as olives, tomatoes, etcetera) which are not part of any public system of labour integration, nor of official labelling, since their scope is in alternative to the general labour market. Every member works a little and participates into decision making and strategies, and votes for decisions on the action to undertake as a group. The case of the ghetto in Campobello di Mazara, Sicily, is explanatory. Borne on similar premises of SOS Rosarno, which was created after the protests in Rosarno's ghetto in 2010, activists and migrants meet and create alternative labour projects through these participatory practices. Some activists are also motivated by the desire to create working experiences in Sicily to avoid migrate themselves. This group in particular used to work with tomatoes following biological methods, free from exploitation. Products were sold through the so called Fuori Mercato – Outside the market alternative economic distribution network, which brings the product all over Italy thanks again to already established links by similar realities (such as SOS Rosarno and other similar experiences of participation and mobilization). Yet, agricultural production is time consuming, and neither is a sufficient mean for living in many cases, and it does not give enough time to political activities and awareness raising in the camp. Therefore, the group from Campobello di Mazara does not work anymore into agricultural production but focuses on empowerment actions, such as advocating to public authorities to have fresh water at the camp. Here, the efforts strike against the unclear situation of which township has competence to act, as local authorities try to avoid intervening (see subparagraph on the living condition). Thus, such reality appears as a valuable example of a participatory and empowerment practice, but it must be point out that it is small in numbers (among the 2000 people present in the camp only about 40 usually participate) and suffers greatly from the main limitation of public programs: failing to provide a daily income. The impact of the economic network distribution is also too small if compared to big distribution mechanisms. Being so, political activism is left to the margin of the present dissertation.

4.2.18 Multiagency

As anticipated in the previous chapter, multiagency is a core element for uncovering programs and activities. It consists of a network of organizations that cooperate into exchanging contacts, providing services and

answering the needs of former exploited workers, in order to offer them valuable and effective alternatives to previous life plans, de facto reframing their migratory mandate. Multiagency makes NGOs intervention resolute and proximity possible by granting territorial services. It also helps to find, protect and integrate victims of exploitation and modern slavery. Multiagency is also a great asset for exchanging techniques and ideas on where to spot exploitation, how to enter new economic sectors (together with unions or INL¹⁰² staff) and obtain the most efficient result¹⁰³. Multiagency refers to cooperation among NGOs and with other organizations such as unions, public bodies and private organizations.

Anti-trafficking NGOs are spread all over the country, constituting a network able to communicate and work together in case of need. This is a recent development for the system, and it is very much appreciated by all interviewees, embedded in the Green number against trafficking. Unfortunately, such operative coordination only refers to DPO funded grants, since different projects (like FAMI grants) are not linked to it. Anyhow, national coordination structures also exist on a more political level, that is the case of the Italian committee of reception communities – CICMA, a federation of NGOs that coordinates with the Italian government and ministries when making relevant policies. Also, they ensure cooperation and sharing of best practices among members, they follow people moving with seasonality (nomadism) and eventually help to move people in different territories when at risk for their personal security after the exit from a violent exploitative situation. On the other hand, the multiagency cooperation involves more local realities that insist specifically on each context. Those are labour unions, city or regional authorities, local offices of the national labour inspectorate, prefectures and public bodies of administration, police forces, centers for job findings (either public or private), associations of employers, civic or religious associations¹⁰⁴ providing shelter or specific services (legal or medical help, food, etcetera). The NGO comes to assume a role of activation when these subjects do not follow their social mandate regarding migrant exploitation, as well as a role of supervision across the due legal proceedings¹⁰⁵ until the victim is integrated into the job market through projects and training with job centers (in the few cases where they participate, being their participation quite uncommon). Also, a further difficulty in place is to mediate and keep all subjects to the same table, especially unions and employer organizations. Those are reported to be the most difficult organizations to involve, a factor that relates to the reported failure of the network for quality agricultural jobs from the Ministry, seen by companies as a further bureaucratic requirement.

¹⁰² The National Labour Inspectorate.

¹⁰³ Fishing is a new economic sector in which NGOs are presently trying to enter and investigate, confronting between themselves all around Italy and coordinating in local context with unions and INL officials.

¹⁰⁴ Those associations are still NGOs, but not anti-trafficking ones. In this research the word NGO refers to the anti-trafficking ones.

¹⁰⁵ Like criminal complaints (in cases where they opt for it) with police, or cases of labour bargaining with unions.

Unions are part of the multiagency effort. Yet, they possess a different nature and do not specifically work in finding exploitative situations and uncover them. Their full potential is realized in situations where workers have the right to gather and organize, which is something totally absent in contexts at stake, given the impossibility to organize workers to increase their rights, because of the high level of nomadism, the hidden nature of their labour positions and all mechanisms of vulnerability and dependency into place. Illegal economies and the informal sector are thus less prone to have unions, but they still do play a role under certain conditions: when visibility is high, because of the characteristics of the job or because of the existence of ghettos, union activists try to expand and reach workers they know or see. This happens especially in the agricultural sector, with workers living in ghettos that know and reach out to them as well. Unions are particularly active into building awareness of exploitative labour conditions, referring to class consciousness and minimum level of rights. Their strategy of intervention is based on the creation of a feeling of group, mapping possible members and developing a feeling of trust between them and the workers, similarly to the proximity activities of NGOs. They initially provide services and information, while start gathering individual needs that later are put together into collective necessities to start acting as a group and give answers to those needs. To achieve the goals, often public opinion and consumer attention is an asset, differently from the NGOs' modality, that always tries to avoid public attention to protect workers' and social operators. Cooperation with NGOs is common and can help investigating certain economic sector and support workers in formal law complaints against the exploiter.

The National Labour Inspectorate – INL is also another subject that acts directly into the research of exploited migrant workers. Mainly through formal complaints, direct calls, police information and analyzes of suspected behaviors, both economically (taxes and labour contracts) and on the territory (for instance, repeated movements of suspected gang-masters vehicles leading workers to fields or workers themselves moving in groups early in the morning) they try to counter the existence of exploitation on their area of competence. Cooperation with NGOs is yet to be built in most of Italian provinces, as INL follows a more institutionalized logical framework, persecuting the exploiters and ensuring penal law, to the detriment of social integration and assistance of workers, especially when the exploited do not file a formal complaint. On their side, NGOs look with interest to cooperate closely with INL, given their power to access workplaces and deeply investigate. In fact, the role of INL is to run labour inspections whenever they suspect a lack of respect in labour laws. Their activity follows the seasonality of certain jobs, especially in the agricultural sector. During inspections, inspectors ask if payments are in line with legal provisions, interviewing workers individually to verify the statements. Also, they interview workers on working hours as well as on the respect of all security measures, they check respect of all legal requirements of the company and finally they may look the living conditions of workers, described as an important element to signal exploitation. Interestingly, NGOs' operators report that INL is underfinanced and lacking inter-agencies data and communications (for instance, over fake labour contracts).

In general, lack of effective multiagency on the territory can frustrate the work of NGOs and the effective uncovering of exploitative situations, generating distrust in the migrant worker. One example is the lack of communications from police about NGOs services to exploited workers, that may bring to the closure of a company without the due assistance to workers, who need to search for other exploited jobs and won't involve the police in similar future situations to avoid losing their jobs again. Another example is the lack of cooperation between the police forces of the National Inspectorate of Labour (INL) and the same NGOs, where the INL runs inspections without proper social workers to assist and take contacts with exploited workers, and only later shares the information. Furthermore, it is illegal for NGOs to enter private places even when they are notorious to host exploitation, thus limiting the potential intervention capacity. Also, police during labour inspections does not directly engage with migrants, because of low abilities in foreign languages, attitude towards migrants and lack of professional skills as social operators. However, such coordination effort is signaled to be particularly efficient when NGOs are involved, obtaining success both on the penal and social side, thus persecuting the exploiter and taking charge of workers. A positive example of good multi agency are the territorial commissions for refugee's status, established in every tribunal: many of them are used to call NGOs in case of suspected exploitation trauma, which is reported by interviewees as something that is recently growing in the field of labour exploitation. Yet, they are organs not specifically designed to care for traumatic experiences and vulnerabilities, even if they do inquiry upon the existence of it. It might be the case that many in need are not recognized.

For the multiagency system to become a cooperative and effective system, formal protocols are not enough, as in the interviews are reported many examples where such instruments exist but don't work and cases where they don't exist, but the coordination is effective. Great value is set upon single individuals who are capable of making multiagency effective or not, signaling a structural weakness of the system. Interestingly, having a public body that mediates between NGOs and other public bodies (specifically the INL) helps in creating stable and functioning relationships. They also function as a reinforcement on the capacity and value of the action of the NGO, promoting the role of the mediator and of the social worker towards INL, unions, etcetera. Lastly, job- finding centers can make a big difference when providing migrant workers with possible jobs and giving them economic alternatives, and their absence can strongly affect the attractiveness of NGOs' programs.

“Non ci sono dei protocolli formalizzati, però da un punto di vista reale è molto attiva diciamo la multiagenzia. Ed è attiva non solo con altri soggetti tipo la caritas o l'azienda sanitaria, le organizzazioni sindacali ma anche con le stesse forze dell'ordine. Forse in quest'ambito, e questo è un limite, quello che manca è l'anello legato

*al settore produttivo, perché secondo me all'interno di questo intervento multiagenzia è necessario coinvolgere il settore produttivo.*¹⁰⁶

The project N.A.Ve. is the main program referred to by interviewees when pointing out an example of good practice and functioning system. N.A.Ve. is the regional program of uncovering, assistance and social integration for the region of Veneto. Interviewees indicate it as a best practice because of its capacity to work closely between different NGOs, from the anti-trafficking field and not, public institutions, INL, police and the local administrations, as well as with both private and public job agencies, holding periodical meetings. Most importantly, they possess a good cooperation agreement with the INL, making inspections together and coordinating their activities. Still, what is often indicated as a must-do is the cooperation with the association of employers, as something that can make a potential shift in the opportunities and ability to act. Here the multiagency system works on two sides: for the finding of the victims and for the creation of the alternative life-path, meaning mainly the creation of job opportunities. By acting as a medium for meeting job supply and demand, N.A.Ve. multiagency has provided strength to the attractiveness, or appeal, of the alternative path out of exploitation provided by NGOs, which is, again, one of the main difficulties for the system. N.A.Ve. met victims from Africa (65%), Bangladesh, India and Pakistan (25%, increasing) and east Europe (15%), with an increasing percentage of older people. The most affected job sectors are tourism (hotels and restaurants), agriculture, cleanings and commerce, and industry. Even if N.A.Ve enjoys a good success, inside their integration programs the percentage of success from internships to real contracts is only 1/3.

4.2.19 Macro analysis

The interview final question often captures the attention of the interviewees, who usually take a few moments to reflect before answering. What emerges very clearly is the idea of exploitation as something systemic in the economy, not a local phenomenon linked to context characteristics, but a structural modality of management of the vulnerable migrant workforce, constitutive of the general economic system. The prevailing view is definitely a determinist approach to migrant workers' labour market, a system aware of itself and conscious of its mechanisms of profit. Indeed, interviewees describe exploitation as a macro socio-economic reality that calls for macro-policies of contrast, notwithstanding the existence of individual factors of vulnerabilities that also need solutions. Yet, the last cannot but fail without the first.

¹⁰⁶ "There are not formal protocols, but from a real point of view multiagency is very active. It is so not only with subjects like the Caritas, the health agency, or unions, but also with the police forces. Perhaps on this matter, and this is a limit, what is missing is the link with the productive world, because in my opinion inside a multiagency intervention it is necessary to involve that world."

“lo sfruttamento lavorativo è un una conseguenza inevitabile - per quanto mi riguarda - di questo sistema economico perché se il profitto è la prima cosa, è chiaro che la deriva è quella lì.”¹⁰⁷

Regarding the general framework of policy making interviewees state the necessity to have a longer grants' duration, in order to provide a more stable framework for programs. However, having an anti-trafficking and anti-exploitation systems that is efficient, means that multiagency must be promoted, funds shall be generous and stable through time, and that the uncovering capacity should be strengthened both into searching and into rescuing. At present, anti-exploitation effort possesses a size so irrelevant to the numbers of exploitation that is not able to cause a considerable shock to the system. It must be increased the capacity to operate in different economic sectors and with more victim profiles, since, for examples, female workers in domestic care remain too rare. Hosting capacity inside protected residences shall be increased too. Importantly, workers need to be independent to reach the workplace, and in general they should be able to act autonomously in order not to lose bargaining power in the labour relation with the employer. Limitations to the effectiveness of uncovering programs are the attractiveness of professional trainings, which shall become more numerous, shorter and guarantee stable and immediate income without the fear for family at home to be punished by exploiters. For this last point, international response needs to be enacted.

Generally, the public immigration system needs to better consider the reality of exploitation. Permits from articles 18 and 22 (Italian Immigration Law) need to run faster, in numbers and in time of proceedings. Permits, possibly labour ones, should be easier to obtain in order to favor legality on the labour market and eventual contacts with public services. The role of employers should not favor imbalance of power on the workplace.

“In Italia c'è sempre questa grande paradosso: per avere il permesso di soggiorno devi lavorare, per lavorare devi avere il permesso di soggiorno.”¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, the process of obtaining a permit should become digital to follow the nomadism and flexibility of the migrant workforce. State policies should promote correct information over labour rights at the entrance and offer services for possible abusive situations or difficulties. The anti-migration discourse should be left behind and migration should see a proper legislation that governs the phenomenon instead of trying to discourage or limit it. The classification of economic migrant is therefore described as harmful, because it refuses to accept a numerous and different realities and discourages the correct policy approach to safeguard labour rights.

¹⁰⁷ “Labour exploitation is an inevitable consequence – as far as I am concerned – of this economic system, because if profit is in the first place, it clearly goes in that direction.”

¹⁰⁸ “In Italy there is always this great paradox: to have the permit of residence one has to have a job, to have a job one has to have a permit of residence.”

Interestingly, the reception system is denounced to be a source of exploitable workers and not of empowered migrants: the condition of underfunding can be part of the reason, according to some interviewee, while some others pose the accent on the emergency approach that gathers people in big facilities for long period of times, without due regard to their needs. Migrant workers abandon the reception system, avoid it or use it notwithstanding a condition of labour exploitation. Yet, the mandate of such system is to protect and prevent abuses of vulnerable people. A stronger reception system is indicated as central in avoiding the creation of camps or ethnic ghettos.

Interviewees speak of an Italian labour market affected by general job insecurity and high gap between rich and poor, workers and employers, which obviously strikes harder on the most vulnerable, the migrant workers. The access to the labour market is described as structured according to gender and migratory status. Such economic model, labelled as neoliberal, favors exploitation by promoting double action systems, fake cooperatives, unlawful intermediaries, subcontracting and large-scale distribution. These elements aim to keep low the labour costs, focusing on maximizing quantity and profits to the detriment of quality and labour rights. Certain economic sectors are described very dependent on exploitation because the level of wage competition is high, producers are crushed with no profit and pushed to conform to the system. Such neoliberal system is strengthened by a global competitive race to the bottom. Also, this framework is enforced, according to some interviewees, by a public narrative that promotes low paid jobs, a narrative according to which not accepting low labour conditions is synonym of laziness and nothing more. On the contrary, consumers and public opinion should develop a sense of awareness over these general effects of the exploitative economy, to favor a change in society.

“Il paradosso di uno Stato che da una parte ipocritamente mostra di combattere un fenomeno, dall'altra parte invece crea le condizioni o ne beneficia.”¹⁰⁹

The critics to the neoliberal system denounce a two-sided approach from State policies, underling how, if from one side it finances the anti-trafficking effort, on the other side it manages bad migration policies and labour market conditions, profiting from a system of exploitation that keeps prices low to the advantage of employers. Competitiveness and profit are core values of this exploitative economic system, and without changes from the roots, the only possible solution is to patch up with anti-trafficking and uncovering programs. Yet, union members underline the positive effect that State intervention can have to set a minimum guarantee of labour rights for all, applying correct policies. A core element to answer this need is the access to public employment services, which can play a bigger role and replace unlawful intermediaries, offering supply and demand to meet easily and fast, respecting labour rights and promoting decent work.

¹⁰⁹ “The paradox of a State that from one side fights the phenomenon and, on the other, creates the condition for it or benefits from it.”

Finally, all interviewees signal that the power of law enforcement is pretty low¹¹⁰. Under this logic, the State role is to avoid that exploitation becomes convenient and to enforce a minimum level of standards. The INL has limited resources and datasets, its inspections run slower than modern slavery dynamics, unable to check all potential realities of exploitation. It should be increased the capacity to act preventively over exploiters' networks or figureheads, as well as over suspected firms that use specific forms of temporary contracts, guest foreigners without registering the same numbers of contracts, or have no union activity. In other words, the INL should access and cross-checks all different public database that relate to the migrant workforce. Interviewees state that an increased enforcement activity can potentially lead to produce more fake, or partially fake labour contracts, but most of them agree that in such a case it would anyhow represents a theoretical improvement for the enforcement capacity itself and a favorable condition for better-off labour conditions for migrant workers. Interestingly, some interviewees have openly expressed doubts on the rewarding logic that promotes labelling (such as the network for quality agricultural jobs) as it was a mere reward to obey the law. This network is also called into account as an example of policy failure due to a lack of controls even on firms that belong to its virtuous lists, indicating a total lack of inspections both among members and non-members (supposedly the ones that should have had more controls because choose not to subscribe). Already established labels (D.O.C. or Bio) could have been more efficient instrument to host controls over labour rights.

Remarkably, all interviewees agree that international cooperation for development aimed at origin countries can be an essential asset in the fight against modern slavery.

Clearly, interviewees state that all such interventions are strictly linked to political will. Yet, changing economic system is indicated as a necessity. Moreover, these macro-elements are never mentioned alone or separated. Each interviewee, according to his or her own sensibility, link them in different ways, but none gives a straight isolated answer, proposing something that can have an effect independently from the others. The system feeds itself from all points, making it necessary to act simultaneously on all dimensions. The easiest example of this is the law enforcement: increasing it alone, without strengthening the uncovering programs nor changing labour policies would simply push exploited workers into different ways of exploitation, without even gaining their consensus.

4.3 Discussion and conclusion

Herein the thesis discusses the results of the interview's qualitative thematic analysis (Ayres, 2008; Gibbs, 2007) and links them to the theoretical literatures exposed, summing up the main findings.

¹¹⁰ See also (Rigo, 2015).

The idea of a continuum of violations (Scott, 2017; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015) is supported by interviewees when asked how to define modern slavery, even if definitions are various. As said, no consensus is reached over the use of modern slavery as an umbrella term because some favor it, some criticize the vagueness of the concept, reflecting some critical literature (Howard & Forin, 2019). However, all interviewees agree on the presence of various individual vulnerability factors, structural violence (Galtung, 1969) and systemic exploitation (Brass, 2013). The social condition of marginalization, dependency and disempowerment holds the empirical test, as all elements are depicted and described in their interactions. The definition proposed can therefore be used in social science with due consideration to socio-economic contextual characteristics and different forms of exploitation.

Marginalization (Shared et al., 2000), confirmed by an extensive and immediate economic need, is strengthened by dependency (Ritzer, 2012), especially towards the employer, who consciously takes advantage of the vulnerabilities of the migrant workforce. Thus, it is enforced disempowerment (Kabeer, 1999), in terms of lack of agency and strong dependency from the employer for living, access to resources (specifically a job position) and all kind of bureaucracy procedures (such as the sanatory). However, dependency is also described as a general lack of autonomy in decision making that exist prior to the labour relation, because of economic need, low language competences and inability to find decent work¹¹¹ autonomously. Here a critique emerges over the role of NGOs, which sometimes describe themselves as failing to fully recognize or value the individual agency of migrant workers, reasoning for people instead of with people (Howard & Forin, 2019). Moreover, living conditions prove their marginalized condition: migrant workforce usually reside in camps, ethnic neighborhoods, ghettos, makeshift shelters located in industrial areas, or abandoned warehouses in rural contexts. When the employer provides the residence (an apartment or a warehouses) basic facilities are not granted and dependency is strengthened in the labour relation.

However, it must be underlined that often disempowerment is not synonym of lack of agency. Migrants can indeed show a great deal of resources to face a foreign country and culture and may well understand mechanisms of exploitation and dependency. In such cases, what lacks is access to resources and the possibility to enjoy better conditions in due time. The image of being trapped is often used to describe such absence of opportunities and alternatives, underlining how disempowerment is multifaced.

As expected, the role of vulnerabilities (Misztal, 2011) into turning potential threats in experiences of modern slavery is confirmed from the interviews. This is often reported as a conscious behavior by employers, which reflects the structural Marxist analysis. Vulnerabilities called into account range from individual factors to structural characteristics of the labour market and the immigration legal framework. Main individual vulnerabilities are the following: low language proficiency, young age, being the oldest son or a young father,

¹¹¹ ILO terminology.

having a debt or a strong investment to migrate, the belonging to exploited ethnic communities and an experience of long and exhausting migratory route. Among them, coming from urban or rural context is linked to low literacy levels and fewer language abilities. However, education is not underlined as a core element, as cases of higher education among the exploited labour force are signaled.

Concerning the migratory background, it is shown the widespread nature of economic migrants that modern slavery has in the vast majority. It adds the effect of a long migratory path to which is associated a lower resilience capacity and agency, that gradually deprived migrants of psychological and economic resources. The migratory mandate is often strong and vehiculated by robust relationships with the families at home, which is described as a factor of cultural pressure and acceptance of bad labour conditions. It is linked to the strong investment to migrate in order to economically help families in the country of origin. Families don't understand actual conditions of exploitation and workers fail to communicate them because they fear ostracism and disapproval. Interviews speak of a cultural model that sees men as hard workers, which pressures migrants to accept low standards and intense labour rhythms (Burawoy, 2012; Gomberg-Muñoz, 2010). Networks may act similarly, vehiculating peer pressure and acceptance. The presence of 3 main ethnic groups is detected all over the Italian country.

Ethnic networks are reported by every interviewee, yet not always as a vulnerability factor (Ceccagno, 2017; Faist, 1998). Sometimes they can be a source of frauds or disempowerment, as when they provide only certain exploitative labour possibilities, while sometimes they can share protective information about NGOs', programs or needed services (bureaucracy for permits, health, housing). However, often networks come directly from post-smuggling or trafficking experiences, they are connected to chains of debt, or they include exploiters who apply home-country lower labour standard. Gang-masters may use networks to provide exploitative jobs on a daily base, quickly and more efficiently than any other option available. Competition exists on ethnic grounds among workers. Yet, solidarity is not the norm because individuals tend to favor their own migratory mandate before helping others. On-place workers' relationships tends to be competitive and not solidaristic, signaling the existence of an exploitation logic that sustains the absence of class awareness (see below). Social death (Patterson, 1982) is not confirmed, as groupism, based on ethnic grounds, is widespread. It relates to language, common labour understanding, religion and specific places to gather (Brubaker, 2003). In camps, division based on nationalities is reported.

Central is the issue of perception. Perception is culturally framed and relates to past individual experiences, which may entail low labour rights and exploitative dynamics as the norm. Migrant workers feel different from local workers and are treated differently by employers, who possess stereotypical preferences based on ethnic belongings (Ceccagno, 2017). Interviews show three typologies of exploited workers: unaware, aware but willing, forced. Migrant workers possess the ability to understand the situation, but the boundary of awareness on labour rights can be different according to personal experiences, parameters of judgment,

degree of need and availability of alternatives. This is the role of external forces, NGOs and public policies: intervene over access to possibility and awareness of local labour rights. Some interviews also underline those traumatic experiences, related to migration or not, among which violence and death, undoubtedly sets a different degree of perception of what may be acceptable and what not.

It is reported very common that migrant workers perceive such labour experience as something temporary, as if exploitation represents as a parallel economic system that is inevitable for migrants to pass through. Here, it comes the issue of mystification (Burawoy, 2012) and awareness raising, or counter-hegemonic class consciousness (Gramsci, 1971, 1975). It reminds of the concept of habitus, where exploitation is normalized by migrant workers and misrecognized (Bourdieu, 1992; Lynam & Cowley, 2007). Furthermore, it proves that migrants' labour is unfree (Brass, 2013), since they fail to freely sell their labour power to the best offer. Yet, this concept is limited: people are dispossessed from their labour power and are trapped into exploitative labour dynamics but fail to recognize them. This is a core mystification element that needs to be underlined.

Overall, the interviews describe exploitation as a systemic phenomenon, intrinsically connected to the capitalistic economy. It does not appear as a characteristic of undeveloped economies, but a core element of capitalistic societies (Brass, 2013). Exploitation (Allain, 2013) comprehends extreme low pays (often partially withhold or decurted), extensive working hours and rhythms, entailing psychological and physical pressure or abuses, absence of security and hygiene, all of which connected to precarious and unbearable living conditions. Surveillance ensures control so intensively that does not leave space for necessary rest, as it is underlined by literature (Scott, 2017; Wood, 2020), pressuring the exploitative harmful logic. It all belongs to a degrading logic (Bales, 2000; Kara, 2017) that treats workers as mere goods, through continuous blackmails and frauds. Violence is mainly psychological in the form of pressure, stress and anxiety, because physical violence risks to bring people to the breaking point where they can seek justice. Modern slavery has no need of direct violence as every exploited worker can easily be substituted. It does not mean that there is no violence on an interpersonal level, as it is described, nor that systemic violence is absent. Indeed, the concept of structural violence (Galtung, 1969) perfectly fits the macro factors that favor exploitation and the inability of the State to act.

By driving a parallel between the first and last question of the interviews, it is shown how the migrant labour force is considered a productive factor and dehumanized, subjugated to keep it disempowered. Actual conditions are mystified (Burawoy, 2012), both towards society (being not visible and hidden) and towards the same workers, who do not always recognize their conditions as exploitative. The employers themselves often spread false rumors of possible deportation or fines if contacting public authorities. However, mystification does not always work, as it appears that hegemony (Burawoy, 2012; Gramsci, 1971, 1975) may exist, be recognized by workers and accepted. An example is the idea of temporary exploitation needed to pass on and integrate into the host country, or as something that is unavoidable just for being migrant

workers. Also, the theories on flexibility (Scott, 2017; Wood, 2020) reflects the image of being trapped in a vicious cycle of exploitative jobs, being easily replaceable and subject to blackmail in case of rights' reclamation. Nomadism specifically falls in this category. Thus, unfree labour is supposedly welcome by employers to control the workforce and profit.

Few systemic characteristics of the labour market are described as favoring exploitation, such as the double auction system, fake cooperatives (Cagioni & Brusciagioni, 2016; Commissione speciale di ricerca e di studio sulle cooperative cosiddette spurie o fittizie, 2018), the externalization of services and the possibility to easily hide the workplace. On them, organized crime is reported to grow, but never described as a causal factor in itself. Similarly, the issue of labour contract reflects a mystification attempt. They are present, but are incorrect, covering less hours and failing to provide labour rights. They are indeed made in order to avoid problems related to labour inspections and at the same time they give migrants the false impression of having achieved decent work. Still, in many circumstances they are totally absent. Anyhow, power relationship is firmly imbalanced in the hands of the employer, who enjoys the power of dependency in various aspects: providing a residence, withholding documents, choosing to let people work or not, be generous in situation of need such as required bureaucracy or access to health care. Furthermore, due contributions and paychecks are sometimes mystified (Burawoy, 2012) as favors from the employer, even if they need to be paid for.

Furthermore, marginalization is helped by bad policies and legal provisions, which often require standards too strict to legally enter and work. Trust in institutions is a totally absent element, given the widespread irregularity in the labour market and in the permits, leaving migrant workers to remain marginalized in the host society. This includes health care and involves cases of harm from the workplace. During the first covid period and the stop to mobility among regions, the Italian government was sensible to employers' call for absence of migrant workforce, signaling how dependent some economic sectors can be from migrant workers, and enacted a sanitary procedure and special seasonal calls. On the other side, the government fails to protect those who irregularly work and live in the country, which are left outside public protections, marginalized once again (FRA, 2019). Structural violence (Galtung, 1969) spread when covid increased the power imbalance in labour relations, making gang-masters gain the best position for contracts, while failing to provide necessary healthcare protection to all human beings present on the State territory¹¹².

Migration policies and legislation are called into account for what concerns permits and reception system and structures. The first are said to be mostly request for asylum, which grants long waiting periods while providing a provisional permit. However, another important part of the migrant labour force has no regular permit. This aspect is thus ambivalent, and it may suggest the limited role that a situation of regularity with permits has as a protective factor alone (as also proves the case of exploited Eastern EU citizens).

¹¹² Being health care a human right, Italy is obliged by international law to provide it to all people, not just its citizens.

Furthermore, reception policies are highly denounced as ineffective in preventing exploitative job relations and opportunities. The system of first reception is described everywhere as a place for exploiters where to easily find workers, because in lack of resources to provide social integration and necessary information to prevent exploitation. For what concerns the system of second reception (the SAI structures), it is sometimes protective, but it's not always the case. Overall, the reception system itself is picture as broken and ineffective, especially when considering people moving for economic needs, the so-called economic migrants which are nowadays left uncover by laws. One last observation needs to be given to the system of asylum interviews: cases are reported of exploited people passing through public commission who do not tell about their exploitative present, pretending to act according to some fake guidelines in order to obtain a permit of stay. Such issue is linked to the low degree of trust in institution and fear of negative consequences when dealing with public authorities.

Separate attention deserves the system of public programs for uncovering, assistance and social integration. Such programs are based on empowerment interventions, working on capacity building and access to resources. Yet, their limited resources and small extension on the territory, the fact that are based on grants and are not permanent services, deprive them of the capacity to make a structural difference. Also, access to private workplaces is forbidden, making the job of social operators impossible in certain economic sectors that enjoy low visibility. The multiagency effort must be far more strengthened between NGOs and the various public branches (especially the Labour Inspectorate) to coordinate and effectively prevent exploitative practices. In general, these programs cannot be a valid alternative unless an immediate income opportunity is provided to the people who subscribe them, because that is their primary need. Additionally, the migrant worker needs to accept and perceive the exploitation that he or she has been subject to, developing a minimum level of awareness. Indeed, the understanding of social interventions and alternative opportunities should be similar between operators and migrants, in order for the program to be successful. To conclude, it can be stated that accepting to enter such programs means that a migratory mandate is being reshaped, leading to strong consequences that are unbearable if the previous elements are not met.

4.4 Limitations

The research question itself has the limit and advantage to be explorative and general, not being specific to an economic sector but reflecting on the wider picture, losing specificity but gaining on the holistic perspective over structural dynamics.

It must be clear that each methodological choice possesses its own limitations. Overall, the present qualitative analysis is a partial perspective on the phenomenon of modern slavery, based on the very specific point of view of social operators. The sample is limited on two sides: first, it reports a sided perspective that

is biased by nature because of its role. A professional perspective embedded into a logic of empowerment and disempowerment. However, their experience is not a simple perception or thought, but a professional evaluation that shall be regarded as the closest proxy of reality available to analyze a hidden social phenomenon. Their understanding is epistemologically valid to start building the knowledge framework over what modern slavery is and how it acts. Secondly, as reported by the same interviewees, they can describe only the realities they meet, which is more than what any other social subject may achieve, but it still means that those economic sectors that are well hidden and difficult to access, especially without the cooperation of police authorities, are underrepresented. The causal framework proposed must therefore be read with caution and further studied. The findings are partial and shall be tested within the wider research community, to get closer and closer to the true understanding of such hidden and challenging phenomenon. As said, the present findings shall be considered as an operative starting point from where the knowledge over modern slavery shall dig more deeply.

Interviews, as an instrument, also possess the limit of time-constrains over the information that they provide. Indeed, interviewees may take a different timing to let their flow come out, but the dialogue cannot go on forever. The same problem exists on the themes that can come out during the interview. No issues have emerged regarding security or anxieties among interviewees.

5. QCA METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction to the Qualitative Comparative Analysis method

After running the thematic analysis of the interviews and having deeply described each dimension deemed central by interviewees, the researcher goes through an additional process of data analysis using Qualitative Comparative Analysis, or QCA¹¹³ (Mello, 2021; Oana et al., 2021; Ricolfi, 1999; Rihoux & Lobe, 2009; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012; Thomann & Maggetti, 2017). With the help of R software (R Core Team, 2021), QCA offers an analytic methodology to select causal¹¹⁴ variables and analyze how those variables combine: such further analytic step partially deprives interviews of their qualitative richness (which is anyhow previously analyzed), but enables the selection of most dangerous combination(-s) on which to build an assessment instrument that could be applied on field by NGOs or police, which needs to be synthetic and easy to fill-in. Specifically, the three elements of the social conditions from the proposed definition of modern slavery, together with the structural macro vulnerabilities, are investigated in their interaction to causally explain exploitation. Exploitation is analyzed as the result of these pre-existing factors.

The technique is located between qualitative and quantitative methodologies because it makes possible to further analyze the qualitative knowledge available by reducing cases to a series of variables, or conditions in QCA terminology. This is a replicable process and may be sustained with qualitative or quantitative designs according to what suits the specific case. It reduces the arbitrary power of the researcher and adds value to the dissertation.

QCA technique represents a valid methodology for a case-oriented approach with a small or medium-N case studies that aims to identify conditions for an outcome, using logic and reducing data to minimum terms (Oana et al., 2021). Ideally, QCA is valid where it is possible to have in depth knowledge on each case (high case sensitiveness). In the present research, each interview, or individual, constitutes a case from which data over vulnerability elements are extracted and minimized to compare their presence/absence to other conditions. Indeed, the technique focuses on variables' configuration into each case, meaning that it analyzes the relationships among conditions, the complex causal links and interlinks, as well as their degree. It describes which conditions are more often present and in which combination they produce the outcome studied, that is exploitation up to slavery. QCA favors synthetic description of variables, working better when

¹¹³ QCA is herein mentioned as a technique for analysis, not as an approach. Of course, QCA's approach is part of the background that sustains the methodology, but it is not in the interest of the present dissertation to present it (Oana et al., 2021).

¹¹⁴ According to QCA terminology, the technique investigates conditions that are causally relevant. It should be pointed out that causality is a more complex and difficult concept, but the specific terminology of QCA is hereby followed for compliance with the relative literature (Mello, 2021; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012).

the model is not overcharged with possible determinants, i.e. with a limited number of conditions, herein corresponding to the vulnerability factors selected (Mello, 2021).

QCA deals with causal complexity, meaning that different combinations of variables may lead to the same outcome, through different pathways and without entailing that what explains an outcome may as well explain its absence (Mello, 2021; Oana et al., 2021). QCA strength consists of recognizing this complexity and in the capacity to analyze it in terms of necessity and sufficient conditions. This is very useful for the rationale and nature of the present research, that works with qualitative data and cannot be dealt with using standard statistical tools, such as logistic regression. QCA is based on Boolean algebra that applies the logic of set relations. Data are turned into scores of belonging to conceptual sets and necessity or sufficient conditions are formed in terms of set relations, as explained throughout the analysis. It suffices here to say that possessing a vulnerability characteristic, for instance some element of the defined identikit, brings that case to be part of the identikit set.

Generalizability is limited to the sample representativeness (Oana et al., 2021). QCA is an effective way to build theories or test them with limited samples, which can later be investigated in their general representativeness, thanks to the creation of a theory from a partial and limited knowledge. Its strength lies in the transparent process of analysis and in the capacity to consider causal complexity. Importantly, combining QCA with the design for an assessment tool means to utilize a determinist approach in the creation of the tool, which cannot be granted such status: the results are to be read as risky vulnerability combinations associated with the defined condition of exploitation. Yet, the instrument itself shall not be regarded as a deterministic tool.

For purposes of clarity, QCA R code is published in the appendix. Here, the thesis describes the conceptual passages and the researcher's choices from calibration to the analysis of the results.

QCA is performed on all interviews except 2, for a total of 20. One interview in Sicily (Campobello di Mazara) and one in Bologna are put aside because they provide a partial and limited perspective. The first only describes the experience of a social activist inside a migrants' camp, therefore useful for the qualitative description of few elements, but lacking the general perspective if compared to the one with social operators. The second interview refers only to women exploitation. Undoubtedly, women share many similar characteristics of modern slavery, as defined in the present thesis, but also possess peculiarities, as highlighted in a specific paragraph above. Female representation is too low to be considered in this further step of analysis and therefore, from now on, the analysis refers only to male migrant workers.

5.2 The analysis

In QCA variable selection is central. They need to be carefully chosen because QCA is strongly sensible to theoretical errors that may come from a not meaningful group of variables. Such mistakes can endanger the value and bring to a meaningless final result (Oana et al., 2021). The proposed variables, or conditions, come from the qualitative thematic analysis, indirectly referring to the theoretical sources and to the literature exposed. Their selection is the first step of the analysis: the researcher has to choose micro variables that can be analyzed in terms of presence or absence, for each vulnerability dimension. Doing this it is produced a first vulnerability matrix that consists in numerous variables. Choices are herein taken, following the thematic analysis, on which element constitutes a vulnerability factor. For instance, because the experience of first reception immigration facilities or the possession of a labour contract are not described as decisive elements to discriminate between exploited and not exploited workers, they are left behind for more discriminatory characteristics, like a negative experience of second reception facility or the lack of awareness of labour rights. All the conditions are described in Table 1.

To reduce the complexity of the matrix, the first step is to theoretically put together those micro variables that relate to the same aspect to form what QCA actually considers as a unified condition, for instance all variables describing the identikit of a vulnerable migrant worker¹¹⁵. These macro-clusters are the following: identikit of the victim (ID), migratory experience (MIG), perception of exploitation (PER), dependency from exploiter/exploitation (DEP) and characteristics of the socio-economic environment (MACRO). Importantly, the amount of conditions to choose is linked to a suggested number of empirical cases, in order to reflect a good ratio between cases and conditions, that is around 25 empirical cases for 5 conditions (Mello, 2021). However, as the same author prescribes, such numbers are indicative and always depend on the nature of the single study and on the researcher's judgment. In the present case, it is conceptually impossible to further reduce the 5 conditions. Lastly, a cluster composed by the various characteristics of the outcome, the experience of exploitation up to modern slavery (Y), is also present and pictured with the same rationale, describing its intensity¹¹⁶. This process of clustering is the result of a theoretical elaboration according to the interviews' findings and is an evolution from the theoretical order pictured by the exposed literature, as well as from the order of questions present in the track of the interview. The researcher has indeed selected those elements that are horizontally present and indicated as strong vulnerabilities by the interviewees, summarizing the information according to the requirements of QCA not to have too many conditions.

¹¹⁵ Future research may consider applying the two-step QCA and distinguish two moments for the analysis, having to deal with less conditions in the end. The explorative findings that the present thesis produces are indicative for future choices.

¹¹⁶ Within the outcome it is more correct to speak of characteristics, or elements, that compose it. To be concise, they are referred to as if they were vulnerability factor.

TABLE 1: Chosen variables divided into clusters.

Conditions name	Condition description
Y_payments	Low payments contrary to law
Y_hours	Long working hours contrary to law
Y_pressure_abuse	Security and hygenic conditions contrary to law (on workplace)
Y_security_hygiene	Employees treated as mere productive factor
Y_degrading_logic	Intimidating working environment, surveillance
Y_violence	Both psychological or physical
ID_age	Medium age
ID_ethnicity	Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sub-saharian Africa, Est-Europe, north-Africa
ID_language	Low language ability
ID_fam_profile	First son, young father, family group migration
ID_low_education	Low instruction
ID_rural_origin	Rural residence in hometown
ID_living_cond	Owner's overpopulated property/ghetto/makeshift shelter/camp/rural borgo
ID_living_isolated	Residence isolates workers
ID_lowaccess_health_police	Low access to healthcare or police (alternative condition)
MIG_initial_investment	High investment from family or community
MIG_fam_relation	Strong ties vehiculates pressure and fake image of migrant
MIG_debt	Presence of debt
MIG_economic_migrant	Reason for migration
MIG_long_route	Passing through thrid countries
MIG_SAI_unprotective	Second level reception system is not protective
MIG_permits	Migratory status either undocumented, irregular or asylum request
MIG_net_job_finding	Netwrok used for unqulaified job finding
MIG_ethnic_groupism	Sense of belonging and acting together
MIG_ethnic_rivalry	Competition for workplaces
MIG_services_by_net	Public services used according to network's guide and frauds
PER_lack_alternatives	Workers believe they have no other option
PER_low_awareness_rights	Workers do not know their rights
PER_unaware_exploitation	Workers do not identify as exploited
PER_comparison	Labour standards based on previosu experiences
PER_temporality	Exploitation is a period of time unavoidable
PER_cult_exp	Strong migratory mandate whose failure drives deep frustration
PER_no_solidarity	Workers do not help one another, strong individualism
PER_fear_consequences	Report fear of anything related to the State
DEP_permits	Permits linked to exploiter or network
DEP_wages	Wages withhold by exploiter and/or used to pay services
DEP_transp	Trasnportation to work depends on exploiter
DEP_residence	Residence is owned by exploiter
DEP_friendship	Exploiter is a friend
DEP_immediacy_income	Cannot leave place of work without new job
MACRO_illegality_paralegality	Job sector sees high level of illegal or paralegal practices
MACRO_criminality	Job sector sees high level of organized crime
MACRO_dark_contracts	Job sector sees grey or black contracts
MACRO_systemic	Exploitation conditions are the norm
MACRO_nomadism	Workers move for seasononality
MACRO_gangmasters	Presence of gangmasters
MACRO_gangmaster_same_ethnicity	The gangmaster (or exploiter) also mediates cultural expectations
MACRO_employer_awareness	Employer knows vulnerability factors and discriminates workers
MACRO_lack_controls	Labour inspections and controls are poor
MACRO_lack_multi-agency	Multi-agency is deficient
MACRO_low_visibility_economic_sector	Economic sector favorable to hide exploitative practices

Again, each cluster is composed by specific vulnerability factors, for which presence (1) or absence (0) is detected according to each interview's discourse, representing the experience of the that geographical area, as described by the social worker operating there. In cases where both presence and absence are signaled by the same interviewee the choice is taken to consider that condition absent, as it is described as something

that is not resolute to explain the phenomenon under investigation. For instance, in the same interview unawareness of exploitation can be described as present for some workers and not for others, meaning that it is not that the element that can explain the perception of the victim. To practice QCA, the research treats absence of information (empty information) and information of absence (0) as equal. This is due to the procedural nature of QCA and the impossibility to determine a difference between elements that are signaled not to be present, and element not deemed worth enough to be mentioned. A theoretical difference can potentially exist, but it is impossible to determine different weights on them. Absence, or 0s, may indeed be regarded as protective elements when building the assessment tool, but it would be incorrect to consider such protection quantitatively equal to the vulnerability that a different factor brings. Consequently, QCA focuses only on the presence of vulnerability factors and their weight.

To clusterize data, there is a process of calibration that can be done in 3 different ways: theoretically, or with direct or indirect methods (Oana et al., 2021). As said, QCA considers the vulnerability factors as conditions of belonging to a particular set. Fuzzy sets QCA (fsQCA) considers such belonging not only full or absent, but also partial. This variant of QCA is chosen as the most adequate to clusterize the present conditions, according to the selected vulnerability factors that come out from the interviews. Giving equal consideration to all of them, the thesis adopts a theoretical method of calibration to determine how many factors of that cluster are met, but still relying on math to establish how strong is the belonging to that cluster, or set – as from proper QCA terminology. As shown in Table 2, a value from 0 to 1 is assigned to each cluster, according to the different totals of the vulnerability conditions that compose the cluster. Fixed values are assigned of 0, 0.3, 0.7 or 1¹¹⁷ (Mello, 2021), to limit the variability of QCA factors without giving the idea of false quantitative precision (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). For example, a cluster of 9 possible conditions has theoretical cut offs at 2.55 (=9/4), 4.5, 6.75. If a case has the presence of 5 vulnerability conditions, scoring exactly 5, it gets a value of 0.7¹¹⁸. Consequently, each vulnerability factor is looked across the interviews and clustered in the respective group¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁷ From 0 to 0.3 the score is 0, above 0.3 to 0.5 the score is 0.3, above 0.5 to 0.7 the score is 0.7, above 0.7 the score is 1. In case of overlap between cut point and score, the approximation is rounded down to guarantee a balance distribution of values among the 4 options of calibration. Also, it is avoided any 0.5 value score that QCA would read as neither in nor out of a set, disabling the set theoretic Boolean logic on which it is based.

¹¹⁸ All cut points can be seen in the code, inside the appendix.

¹¹⁹ Variables score 1 when signaled as relevant to favor exploitation. When analyzing the absence of the outcome, the reading is done over significant absent elements, indicating what has changed. The total is reversed to see what vulnerabilities are left and reflect the direction of the data matrix.

TABLE 2: Cluster calibration according to fsQCA.

	ID	MIG	PER	DEP	MACRO	Y	IDcal	MIGcal	PERcal	DEPcal	MacroCal	Ycal
Asti	3	6	2	1	5	2	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
Liguria	5	9	4	5	8	5	0.7	1.0	0.3	1.0	0.7	1.0
Lombardia ovest	7	8	3	2	7	3	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.3
Milano	5	4	2	3	6	3	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.7	0.3
Mantova	5	5	3	4	6	4	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.7
Veneto	7	7	5	6	10	3	1.0	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.10	0.3
FVG	7	7	3	4	8	4	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.7
Udine	8	9	2	5	9	4	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.7
Ravenna	7	8	3	4	4	5	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.3	1.0
Bologna	4	8	5	3	10	4	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.3	1.0	0.7
Prato	5	8	3	3	2	4	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.7
Pisa	7	8	5	4	3	5	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.3	1.0
Lazio	5	5	4	1	7	4	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.7	0.7
Roma e Latina	7	7	3	4	8	6	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.7	1.0
Foggia	4	3	7	3	4	4	0.3	0.3	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.7
Calabria	3	7	5	4	6	5	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.0
Sicilia meridionale	6	3	6	5	4	5	0.7	0.3	0.7	1.0	0.3	1.0
Sicilia meridionale 1	9	8	5	5	4	2	1.0	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.3	0.3
Sicilia occidentale	5	9	4	3	7	2	0.7	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.3
Sud	3	5	2	4	6	3	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.3
After intervention	6	9	1	2	6	0	0.7	1.0	0.0	0.3	0.7	0.0

Importantly, the data frame has only one row (After Intervention) where the absence of the outcome is completely 0, since all interviewees refer from smaller to higher degrees of exploitation. Y is indeed described in different degrees of intensity by each interviewee, following the variables in Table 1, with this additional particularity. Such total absence is the aftermath of the intervention programs which is also the only possible way to investigate not exploited workers following the logic of the dissertation¹²⁰. This determines also the choice of the researcher to have a unified condition given by the anti-exploitation intervention of public programs in general. These programs apply the same logic and techniques to all cases and are better described in their entirety taken together: by analyzing the interviews, it appears meaningless to have values for each territory, as all successful experiences share the same logic. Furthermore, it falls out of the scope of the present dissertation to investigate local peculiarities and context-specific differences that affect the

¹²⁰ Indeed, organization working with not-exploited migrants do not exist as such: there are NGOs assisting foreigners or covering specific social needs but are not informed over causal conditions determining absence of exploitation. Unions might provide the only option available, but they act focusing on specific economic sectors, thus not respecting the general explorative perspective that the thesis adopts.

realization of the that specific system of grants. Differently, future research on the same topic might develop a specific focus over different ways in the analysis of the absence of the outcome, such as migrant workers who never experienced it, or differences in their approach to the public intervention programs.

Overall, the data set so calibrated appears balanced and not pending too much on one extreme or the other, that would indicate a calibration that makes too much homogeneous conditions. Skewness levels are reported always below 80% or above 30% (Oana et al., 2021). In the appendix 9.2.3 and 9.2.4, histograms describe calibrated data distribution and also compare such data to row ones, showing the same balance.

After calibration, QCA prescribes to analyze necessity conditions, and then, by producing a truth table, identify sufficient conditions. Thus, QCA returns causal combinations and relative parameters of fit. The analysis is supposed to check both presence and absence of the outcome.

In the present case, the analysis of necessity does not describe any necessary condition, as none is consistent enough to pass the required threshold of 0.9 in consistency¹²¹. It means that among the cluster created, ID, MIG, DEP, PER, or MACRO, none constitutes a set bigger than the set of the outcome Y, that would indicate a case where Y happens only with the presence of that clustered condition. Repeating the analysis for $\sim Y$ (it reads non-Y, meaning absence of Y, i.e. the negated outcome) the only condition that appears necessary for the absence of modern slavery, is to have experienced MIG. However, such condition theoretically doesn't make any sense: saying that in order to avoid modern slavery it is necessary to have experience of MIG, which translate in experiencing the vulnerabilities assigned to that cluster, runs contrary to the theoretical findings from the interviews. QCA prescribes the possibility to leave aside theoretically untenable findings in this phase and so does the thesis (Mello, 2021; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). The same is valid for the analysis of the presence of SUIN¹²² conditions. Here, R mechanically builds a set that is larger than the one of the outcome's but may produce untenable findings that are not theoretically meaningful¹²³.

More complex is the analysis of sufficiency, run according to specific QCA literature (Mello, 2021; Oana et al., 2021). Here, the threshold's value for consistency is set lower than for the analysis of necessity, 0.75, while PRI, measuring the deviance in kind meaning the presence of that combination both for Y and $\sim Y$, is set to 0.5 (Oana et al., 2021). This analysis is done by producing a truth table (Table 3), that is a table displaying all possible combinations of the conditions (the clusters) defined. These logical combinations can be read as property corners in a 3d data visualization, or as Weberian ideal types from a theoretical perspective. Such

¹²¹ Consistency indicates the degree to which a condition (or a combination of conditions) and the outcome of interest correspond and exist together, covering the role of statistical significance in quantitative analysis (Mello, 2021; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012).

¹²² Sufficient but unnecessary part of a necessary but insufficient condition.

¹²³ Using R function `superSubset`, SUIN conditions are found only keeping RoN values as low as 0.4, proposing 5 possible combinations for Y, while none for $\sim Y$. Thus, they are theoretically rejected, as theory prescribes (Oana et al., 2021).

combinations are $2^{\text{number of conditions}}$, 32 in the present case. This number is obviously higher than the options that are displayed through the interviews. Indeed, even if QCA is a system that adapts well to small data set, the conditions that are put in it are preferred to be few because of this exponential law. However, the present thesis possesses an explorative approach highlighted above and the interviews' findings have highlighted those 5 factors (i.e. clusters, i.e. conditions in QCA terminology) that need to be tested in their combination. Logical remainders displaced in the truth table, i.e. the combinations of conditions that see no empirical example, can either be analyzed in their possible theoretical existence or put aside, as it is described here after. Lastly, it is stated that the use of QCA is an additional element for the present dissertation, aiming to produce a methodological remark to prioritize certain combinations of vulnerability conditions over others.

After checking for the absence of contradictory rows¹²⁴, the researcher can further minimize the combinations of conditions. Indeed, when two combinations of conditions differ in only one conjunct, that conjunct is considered redundant and dropped, simplifying the two expressions into one. This process of minimization brings the researcher from the primitive expressions of the truth table, the rows that display the various conjunction of conditions, to the prime implicant chart, following the Boolean algebra on which QCA is based. Such prime implicants describes the shortest combinations needed for the sufficiency conditions to be true, dropping the rest.

TABLE 3: Truth table. "OUT" is the value of Y, "n" the number of interviews displaying the combination.

IDcal	MIGcal	PERcal	DEPcal	MACROcal	OUT	N	Consistency	PRI	Cases
0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1.000	1.000	Foggia
0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1.000	1.000	Bologna
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.000	1.000	Calabria
1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1.000	1.000	Mantova
1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1.000	1.000	Sicilia meridionale
1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0.939	0.880	Ravenna
1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0.935	0.842	Prato
1	1	1	1	0	1	2	0.915	0.846	Pisa, Sicilia meridionale 1
1	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.914	0.850	Liguria, FVG, Udine, Roma e Latina
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.913	0.818	Veneto
1	0	0	0	1	1	2	0.909	0.800	Milano, Lazio
0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.818	0.600	Sud
0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.774	0.300	Asti
1	1	0	0	1	0	3	0.722	0.444	Lombardia ovest, Sicilia occidentale, After Intervention
0	0	0	0	0	?	0	-	-	
0	0	0	0	1	?	0	-	-	
0	0	0	1	0	?	0	-	-	

¹²⁴ Contradictory rows are combinations valid for both Y and non-Y's truth table. Here, only row 26 would belong to such case, but parameters of fit are too low and R does automatically exclude it.

0	0	1	0	1	?	0	-	-	
0	0	1	1	0	?	0	-	-	
0	0	1	1	1	?	0	-	-	
0	1	0	0	1	?	0	-	-	
0	1	0	1	0	?	0	-	-	
0	1	0	1	1	?	0	-	-	
0	1	1	0	0	?	0	-	-	
0	1	1	1	0	?	0	-	-	
1	0	0	0	0	?	0	-	-	
1	0	0	1	0	?	0	-	-	
1	0	1	0	0	?	0	-	-	
1	0	1	0	1	?	0	-	-	
1	0	1	1	1	?	0	-	-	
1	1	1	0	0	?	0	-	-	
1	1	1	0	1	?	0	-	-	

Logical minimization is a reflexive process and the core of QCA. There are 3 possible ways in which the researcher can minimize, that are the conservative solution, the most parsimonious solution and the intermediate solution. The last two take into account the logical remainders¹²⁵ and engage in using them to find the shortest possible combination of conditions (most parsimonious solution) or to theoretically assess their likelihood by driving expectations using knowledge from the literature. Choosing the best solution of QCA is a debated issue in literature, which ultimately rest upon the specificities of each single research (Mello, 2021). If some argues for the most parsimonious solution as the easiest to interpret and, thus, able to provide causal interpretations (Oana et al., 2021), the conservative solution appears more appropriate when combined to a multimethod logic of causal investigation (Álamos-Concha et al., 2021). In particular, the last cited authors argue that the conservative solution is well suited for first-case interpretation of social phenomena, providing a causal explanation without being too parsimonious into variables' selection. Indeed, the conservative solution better preserves the theoretical richness of data. Additionally, the present research possesses an explorative nature for analyzing an unknown phenomenon, making it wiser to base the proposed interpretation only on the empirical data available¹²⁶. On the other side, it is important to remind the reader that using the conservative solution tends to produce a quite complex solution formula (M1), especially in presence of a high number of conditions, that is however a coherent finding for a causally complex description for a complex phenomenon.

¹²⁵ Logical remainders, i.e. the combinations of conditions that see no empirical example (column OUT=?), are used in the most parsimonious solution and in the intermediate solution.

¹²⁶ Furthermore, the results of most parsimonious solution display a very high model ambiguity and theoretical interpretation is not easy. The same is true for the intermediate solution.

TABLE 4: Conservative solutions. Black dots denote presence of conditions, white dots absence and no dots means that the variable is not detected in the combination.

Conditions	Solution formulas for sufficiency							Model (total)
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
ID	•	○	•	•	•		○	
MIG	•	•	○	•		○	○	
PER		•	○	○	•	○	•	
DEP	•				•	•	○	
MACRO		•	•	○	○	•	○	
Consistency	0.848	1.000	0.930	0.949	0.922	0.915	1.000	0.836
PRI	0.750	1.000	0.852	0.897	0.867	0.826	1.000	0.761
Raw Coverage	0.600	0.246	0.408	0.431	0.362	0.331	0.146	0.862
Unique Coverage	0.146	0.062	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.000	0.031	
Cases	Ravenna, Liguria, FVG, Udine, Roma e Latina, Pisa, Sicilia meridionale 1	Bologna, Calabria	Milano, Lazio, Mantova	Prato, Ravenna	Sicilia meridionale, Pisa, Sicilia meridionale 1	Sud, Mantova	Foggia	

Looking to each combination score (Table 4), consistency levels are good for the requirements of sufficiency analysis and so are the PRI levels (Proportional Reduction in Inconsistency) that highlights how much the set of a combination of conditions overlaps both with Y and ~Y, signaling an illogical finding¹²⁷ (Oana et al., 2021). Coverage levels also fit inside acceptable values. They represent how much the set of a given expression (raw coverages) or of the total M1 expression (solution coverage, located on the last column) covers of the set of outcome of interest. Part of its sufficiency appears therefore not to be explained by this M1 expression. Coverage levels decrease when looking at the unique coverage¹²⁸ for each condition: this reflects the length of the general sufficiency expression, M1:

$$ID * MIG * DEP + \sim ID * MIG * PER * MACRO + ID * \sim MIG * \sim PER * MACRO + ID * MIG * \sim PER * \sim MACRO + ID * PER * DEP * \sim MACRO + \sim MIG * \sim PER * DEP * MACRO + \sim ID * \sim MIG * PER * \sim DEP * \sim MACRO$$

M1 should be read as the coexistence of alternative combinations of conditions, where the + stands for a logical *or*, and * as coexistence inside the same combination. For this conservative solution no model ambiguity is displayed, since M1 is the only solution proposed. The formula proposes 7 ways that can be regarded as sufficient combinations of conditions for the outcome to be present. Thus, the social operator should be more attempted if conditions combine in one of these possibilities. The attention of the researcher

¹²⁷ Only the first combination proposed is low in PRI, just sufficient.

¹²⁸ Unique coverage is the difference between the solution coverage and all other's raw coverages.

goes particularly to the combinations that see the absence of some vulnerability factors canceled out by the presence of some other, or a combination of them. They describe indeed powerful vulnerability combinations that produce modern slavery even in absence of other vulnerabilities. Moreover, the researcher needs to analyze each combination of condition and comment it in order to provide the most correct interpretation of the solution formula. Looking at Table 4, only the first combination is below 0.9 in consistency, while the highest PRI refers to combinations II and VI. Highest coverage is shown by the first combination, followed by III and IV. In particular, conditions that make a case sufficient in order to experience modern slavery is to be found when PER alone is present or combined with ID and DEP, or with MIG and MACRO. MACRO combines with DEP or ID, erasing in both cases the benefit of not experiencing MIG and PER. When ID combines to MIG it cancels the absence of PER and MACRO or simply represent a common path (high coverage) towards the experience of modern slavery together (combination I).

Figure 4 allows the researcher to graphically analyze the M1 formula, pointing out the cases plotted in the corner where X is present and Y not (down on the right). These deviant cases are interviews number 4, 6, 18 and 20, that are Milan, Veneto, Southern Sicily (psychologist) and South (a FAMI project focused on more southern regions). This last interviewee is the coordinator of different social operators working in various contexts and chose not to go into describing specific characteristics of exploitation because situations varied and he's not on the ground to provide an adequate description. Southern Sicily (psychologist) is an interviewee who also felt not confident enough to deeply describe elements of exploitation, leaving that task to an on-field colleague who did extensively (case number 17, Southern Sicily). Milan is also a particularity since it concerned riders of the food-delivery industry, as described by a union member, where exploitation is not so developed as other cases described. Finally, Veneto is left, which represents the true deviant case, the true outlier in QCA terminology. That interview is one of the few double interviews, where the two interviewees extensively focused over macro-elements of exploitation and over the national programs of social interventions, how they work and why they fail. By mutually stimulating one another the two interviewees focused less on the describing exploitation and more on how to contrast it¹²⁹.

¹²⁹ The reader shall keep in mind that semi-structured interviews are not supposed to obtain the same attention by the interviewees to all questions that are posed, obtaining more or less details according to the interviewees' perception.

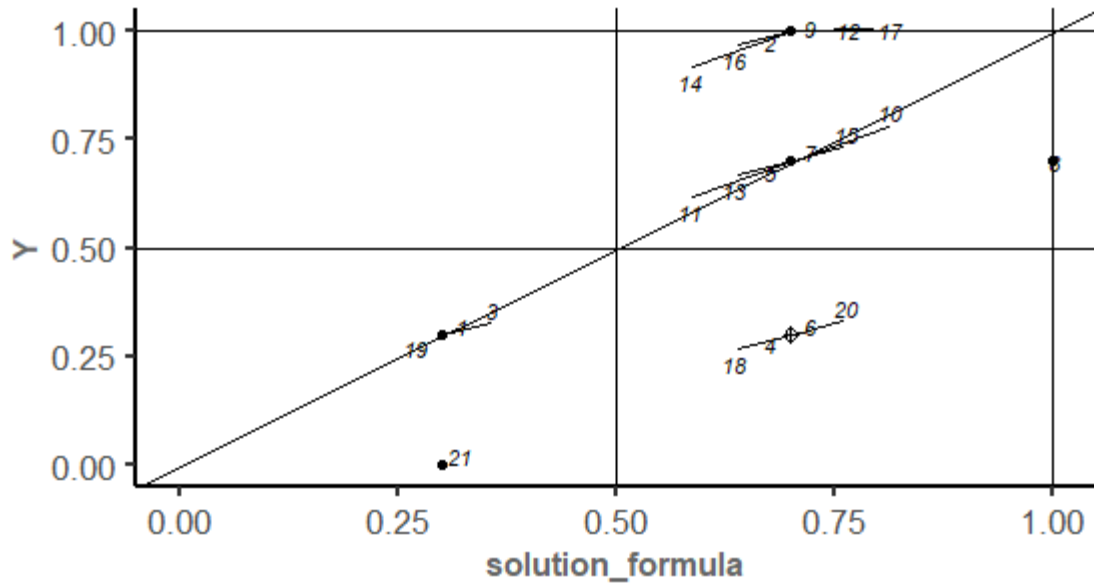


FIGURE 4: Sufficiency Plot of conservative solution (M1: Consistency: 0.836; Coverage: 0.862; PRI: 0,761).

QCA also prescribes to always analyze the conditions for sufficiency for the absence of the outcome, in order to see what elements combined lead to it and to rule out eventual contradictions between the two analyses of sufficiency. In the present case, the conservative solution for $\sim Y$ leads to only one formula:

$$\sim IDcal * MIGcal * \sim PERcal * \sim DEPcal * \sim MACROcal$$

Consistency level is above 0.9, but PRI is 0.7 and coverage is lower. Theoretically, it means that, only considering the few empirical data over low and absent Y, absence of exploitation is achieved when all vulnerability clusters are absent except for the migration experience. Thus, experiences related to MIG appear to be possibly present also in situations of absence of modern slavery. This formula does not contradict the one for the positive outcome. However, when checking the graphical representation, the formula appears very weak, reflecting the low coverage level.

For reason of completeness the thesis also describes the minimization results when including some logical remainders from the truth table¹³⁰, in line with the need to build an assessment tool that is simple enough to be used on field. Here the most parsimonious solution is shown, which produces easier formulas in respect of the conservative solution, where prime implicants are connected in the shortest possible way.

$$M1: \sim MIGcal + DEPcal + IDcal * \sim MACROcal + (PERcal)$$

¹³⁰ The most parsimonious solution only uses part of the logical remainders, the ones called simplified assumptions. These logical remainders are simplifying because that enable further minimization through Boolean comparisons. If adopted as final results, the plausibility of such combinations would need to be weighed ex-post against theory and robustness tests (consistency, coverage, etc.).

$$M2: \sim MIGcal + DEPcal + IDcal * \sim MACROcal + (\sim IDcal * MACROcal)$$

Here R returns two possible sufficient formulas that cover the outcome Y. As from Boolean logic, such solutions have a lower consistency and PRI levels, but have higher coverages. The most parsimonious solution sees a little degree of model ambiguity, because the two solutions proposed differ only for the last combination (as indicated by the brackets). Both solution formulas display the same coverage but M2 is slightly more consistent than M1, which shows an unclear relationship between ID and MACRO, where either one or the other is absent when combined. Absence of MIG as a sufficient condition to experience exploitation is untenable. In order to adopt one or the other, in such situation QCA gives also to theory the role to distinguish among them. Lastly, the most parsimonious solution for $\sim Y$ shows 4 possible formulas, the most consistent of which is $\sim IDcal * \sim PERcal * \sim DEPcal$, highlighting three factors that should be avoided instead of 4 as from the conservative solution¹³¹.

Lastly, minimization can be achieved via the intermediate solution. It also selects part of the logical remainders from the truth table¹³², but less than the most parsimonious solution. The researcher is given the task to select the effect that the conditions present should have on the outcome and command the program to consider such directional expectations. In the present case, being all conditions expected to benefit the outcome according to the interviews, all of them are set with a positive directional expectation. The result gives 2 possible formulas, more complicated than the most parsimonious solution, with identical coverage. M2 is slightly more consistent and would be the choice of the researcher:

$$\sim MIGcal * PERcal + DEPcal * MACROcal + \sim IDcal * PERcal * MACROcal + IDcal * \sim MIGcal * MACROcal + IDcal * MIGcal * \sim MACROcal$$

Interestingly, the unclear relationship between ID and MACRO from the M2 of the most parsimonious solution is here explained by the presence of ID. The combinations proposed are interesting because describe what vulnerabilities cover the absence of the others. The analysis of sufficiency for the negated outcome shows 4 possible formulas, the most consistent of which (0.912, with 0.388 coverage and 0.7 PRI) reminds to the one chosen for the most parsimonious solution: $\sim IDcal * MIGcal * \sim PERcal * \sim DEPcal$.

Literature also reports a further analytical process to select logical remainders (Oana et al., 2021; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). Simply, the researcher may look into each one of them and decide which one are

¹³¹ Non-Y sees results based only on one case, making its interpretation weak. This is not unexpected since the rationale of the thesis focuses only on the presence of the outcome.

¹³² The logical remainders included in this minimization process are a smaller set of the simplifying assumptions used for the most parsimonious solution. Indeed, QCA divides simplifying assumptions between easy and difficult counterfactuals, the first being based on both empirical claims (the data provided) and theoretical ones (directional expectations), the last only on empirical claims. Directional expectations are choices made by the researcher about the effect of a condition (or variable) over the outcome, given as input to the program when building the combinations. Again, excluding the difficult counterfactual can be a debatable methodological choice for an explorative research.

untenable and exclude them from being included in the minimization. This analysis looks into what runs for both outcome and the negated outcome, for what contradicts the necessity conditions and basic logic. In the present work, for reasons of completeness, it is applied such further methodological tool on the intermediate solution, to restate the reader the most simple and coherent solution formula possible. One simplifying assumption is found to be used both for Y and $\sim Y$ (row 17 of the truth table, Pisa interview), while there is no logically impossible condition that is theoretically thinkable nor there is any necessity condition to respect. The row is excluded from the formulation of a new minimization of $\sim Y$, assuming that it contributes mainly to the presence of outcome and not to its negation. However, the intermediate solution for $\sim Y$ does not change in this specific example, because it only reduces model ambiguity without changing the chosen solution.

As the last point, QCA prescribes to analyze the robustness of the findings. Such robustness tests measure how much qualitative decisions from the researcher have impacted the final findings in terms of how much small changes might deliver a different outcome. Specifically, they evaluate eventual change in calibration anchors and in the consistency and frequency cut-offs related to the truth table. In appendix 9.2.4 values are reported for each of the 5 conditions of the analysis. Sensitivity ranges are checked against the modification of 1 point for the measurement within each cluster of condition, up until the maximum value possible for that cluster. The wider the sensitivity ranges that comes out of the test, the better. It appears that values are quite sensible, with DEP and MACRO being the more stable among them, limiting the explicative power of the QCA analysis. This means that findings should be taken cautiously outside the realm of the data to which they refer and would possibly need to be reinforced by a wider sample. Also, future research should consider a two-step QCA to produce more stable findings. However, literature has not yet provided fixed standards (Mello, 2021; Oana et al., 2021). Furthermore, the thesis doesn't seek to provide a strong positivistic analysis, but to propose a first understanding of an important and still unknown phenomenon, reflecting over interactions of different vulnerability factors taken together. Doing so from the peculiar perspective of social operators makes it meaningless to imagine alternative solutions for the minimization process, because that would anyhow imply arbitrary researcher decisions among the realm of possible alternative calibration or frequency choices¹³³. Alternative solutions would arguably have little descriptive power and thus no robustness parameters are calculated comparing the solution to possible ones. To conclude, it can be stated that for the present research the claim to quantitatively highlight how much a chosen formula can resist changes into data doesn't match its qualitative logic of a small-n case study. The issue is still debated in literature (Adrian Duşa, 2021).

¹³³ Choices herein taken are motivated transparently and respect standards set out in the literature.

For the scope of the present dissertation the QCA analysis is concluded¹³⁴. Its aim herein is to show a methodology towards causal complexity, applied to a small n-sample of privileged observers of a hidden social reality such as labour exploitation up to modern slavery. QCA has the advantage to consider causal configurations and distinguish among all the possible ones. It adds an important rationale that should not be put aside, as social operators and policymakers need to prioritize certain situations over others.

5.3 Discussion and conclusion

Summarizing QCA results it can be stated that, no necessary conditions are found among the vulnerabilities chosen by the researcher. It is interesting to remind the reader that the systemic institutional nature of exploitation is highlighted by all interviewees, theoretically translating in a necessary condition. However, given the case-study logic focused on Italy it is not possible to run a comparative QCA on the institutional grounds.

Following the research question, the paper investigates five main groups of vulnerability factors and their interactions. Looking at these interactions using the QCA, sufficient conditions are found to behave in several possible ways, among which it is possible to distinguish the ones that appear more fit, according to several parameters. Thus, 3 ideal-types of modern slave can be categorized. This is obtained by selecting the most present elements shared by all 7 sufficient combinations of the conservative solution formula M1: structural slave (MACRO with either ID or DEP), slave by perception (PER, alone or with ID*DEP or MIG*MACRO) and slave by personal experience (ID*MIG). The first combination, the structural slave, gives macro socio-economic vulnerabilities a key role. Indeed, when they are present combined either if a certain vulnerable identikit or with a dependency towards the employer and the need to work, they are capable of favoring labour exploitation also when people do not experience MIG nor PER, in other words, they can involve non migrant people and people that do recognize conditions of exploitation as such. This is an important combination if one thinks how worrisome it is to erase the benefits that absence of both MIG and PER at the same time should provide. The typology reflects the importance of the macro structural framework in the analysis of modern slavery, as from chapter 2.6 (Brass, 2013).

On the other hand, a core role is played by perception towards exploitation, because it alone is an element sufficient to experience modern slavery, but it also combines to ID*PER and to MIG*MACRO to produce sufficiency. In the first combination further evidence is provide for canceling the absence MACRO, in the second one for ID. The logic of exploitation here acts on the individual through normalization and misrecognition of exploitative conditions (Bourdieu, 1992). Moreover, migrants may also accept a socio-

¹³⁴ Formal QCA methods for theory evaluation do not fit coherently with the explorative rationale of the research which tries to build a theory more than evaluate it.

economic system because they accept hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) or because conditions are mystified (Burawoy, 2012). Indeed, they appear socialized inside an economic system that sells exploitation as a temporary or an inevitable path towards future better conditions, even when other micro or macro elements of vulnerabilities are absent.

Lastly, the ideal type based on personal experiences (ID*MIG*DEP) represent one of the most common (yet not the most consistent) situations of exploitation, and the only combination that doesn't annul the absence of other vulnerabilities. Yet alone, ID*MIG do erase the absence of PER and MACRO, making also such combination worrisome. Theoretically, this underlines the importance of personal traits and experiences, describing the stereotypical identikit of a social group, the marginalized migrant workers, which public policies fail to protect as such. It matches the concept of structural violence (Galtung, 1969) which focuses on the failure to protect human rights.

Additionally, the concept of unfree labour (Brass, 2013) comes useful to understand the link between the three ideal-types described. Slaves are indeed limited in their ability to freely exercise their labour and sell their capacity to the best offer because oppressed by a structural socio-economic framework, connected to immigration and labour laws, because they are socialized into a certain kind of perception and because they are part of a social group marginalized *per se*. Interestingly, the concept of unfree labour, proposed by Brass, is here connected to different perspectives and touches the various literatures described in the thesis. Overall, the three typologies proposed highlight an economic exploitative system (MACRO) that achieves control over a disempowered workforce (PER), that are trapped in these conditions by given vulnerabilities (ID*MIG) that make them unable to build agency and take advantages of new opportunities.

For the sake of academy, when looking at the intermediate solution of the QCA similar typologies can be drawn. PER erases the absence of MIG, MACRO alone erases the absence of dependency (making the case for autonomous workers still exploited because of the structural framework), or in combination with PER (annulling ID) or with ID (annulling MIG). Lastly, ID*MIG, slave by experience, erases the absence of MACRO. The two QCA solutions presented herein point out similar results.

Looking at the analysis of sufficiency for ~Y, the formula prescribes the absence of characteristics related to the identikit, perception, dependency and macro socio-economic factors¹³⁵ to avoid experience exploitation up to modern slavery. What remains in place anyhow is the experience of MIG, indicating that it is possible to be unexploited migrants. This may be interpreted as the existence of elements, such as networks, even in communities that enjoy better conditions for their members.

¹³⁵ For the intermediate solution, MACRO is discarded while the rest of the solution for ~Y remains the same.

These conclusions shall be interpreted with caution but represent a starting point for further investigations into an unknown hidden social phenomenon (in particular, the results over ~Y are very limited in number and scope and shall be considered a very initial understanding). All conclusions are based on the best available source of information (social operators) which is anyhow partial because of its own professional expertise and perspective. Future researchers shall widen the sample but also deepen the comparative perspective over country's different policies and instruments (MACRO elements), indicated central by the interviewees but that the QCA analysis did not confirm as necessary conditions. Overall, the value of the present QCA analysis is that of providing a valid methodology to assess complex causality behind vulnerability factors and indicating what those are and how they interact.

5.4 Limitations

It falls behind the scope of the present dissertation to speculate on the limitations of QCA as a method. It suffices to say that the use of the term causality is part of the terminology of QCA literature, even if a proper causal framework requires wider testing and samples, proper theoretical interpretations and the falsifiability in front of the scientific community, that must be able to reproduce, test and comment over research findings to improve them.

For what concerns the present application of QCA, it is found that semi-structured interviews possess a structure that does not perfectly match the need of QCA to precisely investigate the same variable across interviews. Leaving open the answer to questions has been a necessary choice for the present research and has given the opportunity to find on which variables to build the QCA. However, if one already has knowledge upon the variables to select, a questionnaire appears a more suited instrument for QCA in determining the presence and strength of each variable and their coexistence, reducing the interpretation needed and having a more punctual information.

Finally, technical details over skewness and various parameters of fit (consistency and coverages) show an acceptable degree of strength over the findings of QCA analysis, according to literature (Oana et al., 2021)¹³⁶. It means that the findings can explain part of the sufficiency. What appears weaker are the robustness tests, for which no fixed evaluation parameter exists, but that still display strict margins in the sensitivity ranges on the calibration choices. These narrow margins are to be read as a low stability for the findings proposed, which would be different if different calibration choices would have been available. A strong impact is thus described for the choices of the researcher, specifically in the calibration of qualitative data. Arguably, these values reflect the exploratory rationale of a newly studied and hidden phenomenon, based on a small sample

¹³⁶ In particular, parameters of fit are described throughout the analysis chapter (5.2).

of privileged observers that refer on their peculiar perspective. Lastly, it should be highlighted that logical remainders are many and future analysis shall aim to have a wider sample to possibly cover more logically possible combinations if bound to keep the same number of conditions.

6. THE PROPOSED ASSESSMENT TOOL

6.1 The logic of assessment

After describing the reality under scrutiny through qualitative analysis, and further elaborating the results with QCA causal combinations, the thesis tries to systematize the findings into an assessment instrument capable of measuring the degree of vulnerability of a single individual. As anticipated, such instrument is thought as an asset in the hands of social operators, colleagues of the interviewees, to support them in systematizing their analysis and understanding, and to rapidly assess when somebody is in need of help. This enhances the effort to fight labour exploitation and modern slavery even within the partial and limited knowledge of the phenomenon nowadays available. Recognizing who are the most vulnerable migrant worker is a key result in improving the efficacy of social programs and policies.

An assessment tool is a formalized list of characteristics to be scrutinized, together with some of their possible combinations. The instrument utility in social services' concrete application has been proven in literature (Skillmark et al., 2019), specifically thanks to the higher degree of standardization that it provides in assessment procedures, supporting and not substituting the work of social operators. Standardization has proven useful for professionals to reduce the level of arbitrary power and compare interventions. Indeed, these kinds of tools favor a common baseline for different operators through different areas, who share a common language and can confront (Northcott, 2015), pushing for proper social policies and services. However, it is important to understand that the approach of producing an assessment is physiologically limited in its explicative power and shall not be regarded as a normative nor deterministic tool. This is because it cannot make causal predictions but tells that something, under certain conditions, can potentially manifest.

It must be clear that the main scope herein is to produce an assessment tool to detect the presence of the vulnerabilities associated to labour exploitation. Modern slavery is a subtle reality and a hidden phenomenon which cannot be dealt with in terms of numeric probability associated with specific elements that are activated by specific factors. Thus, what it measures is the presence of concepts. In the present case the concepts at stake are multidimensional vulnerabilities, a characteristic that adds complexity to the dimensions to consider. Historically an issue within sociology (Lazarsfeld, 1958), the specification of what concepts are and how to measure them entails the problem of how to use the imaginary of the researcher to develop aspects, components or dimensions that can be observed and studied to understand nature of the concept. These aspects are called indicators and should be different, uncorrelated and not interchangeable among one another, in order to represent different aspects of that concept. Such indicators should refer to the same time and area of analysis and, most importantly, have an association with the concept to which they are linked that is scientifically understandable (a characteristic called pertinence).

Thus, the process of conceptualization refers to the ability of the researcher to find relations and give them order to theorize the functioning of a social phenomenon (Swedberg, 2016). There must be a strategy to reduce such defining conceptual uncertainty and to decide how to value and interpret information known (National Research Council, 2009). First step is therefore to identify a strategy to select the indicators associated with that concept, observable in terms of presence or absence, which should be the most representative and effective ones in terms of quality and explanatory power (pertinence). For each one a benchmark of presence/absence needs to be set. The previous chapters of the research are to be considered the strategy herein adopted, since they empirically describe the reality and produce indicators as results.

In terms of assessing the strength of the presence of the various indicators, the researcher needs to add a further step. Assessing the strength of their presence means to assess when they are in place, but also how strong they can be and if people are more or less able to handle them. Here, assessment is linked to the idea of risk assessment, in terms of probability to experience the presence of vulnerability's indicators, their strength and capacity to deal a strong damage. Yet, it appears clear that such specifications are not always possible and sometimes it makes no sense to translate a measurement in terms of probability. Indeed, the present thesis reflects on the nature of a causally complex and hidden phenomenon that cannot be monitored in specific contexts, nor by looking at specific activation or manifestation, as well as not being quantitatively measurable. The logic of risk assessment is anyhow a tendency that is manifest through different literatures to standardize social interventions and increase comparability among projects. It should therefore be considered a proper source of literature from where to take inspirations for assessment procedures while framing it coherently with the available kind of knowledge. Doing this, knowledge is gradually acquired and expanded, creating more and more precise information to reduce the risk of experiencing modern slavery.

Risk can be conceptualized as the sum of hazard, exposure and vulnerability (Alwang et al., 2001), or an hazard that is incompletely understood (Baldry & Winkel, 2008). Hazard is a source of danger (Kaplan & Garrick, 1981), exposure measures the capacity to deal damage of a certain hazard, and vulnerability reflects over the possibility to resist its effects. It might be helpful to think of risk as the ratio between hazards and safeguards, or as the ratio between the probability of something to happen over the elements of protection available (thus never being exactly 0) (Moret, 2014). Kaplan and Garrick state 3 fundamental questions: what happens, with what probability and with what consequences. The best way to graphically describe risk is the risk curve, plotting what happens according to its level of damage and frequency. Multidimensionality and uncertainty make such curve to be three-dimensional and multi-linear, turning risk into an area on the graph. Risk is framed as a probabilistic concept, whose occurrence can be forecast only with uncertainty, which tries to measure and weight all elements and uncertainties (Baldry & Winkel, 2008; National Research Council, 2009), considering factors such as exposure and intensity of the hazard. It statistically quantifies uncertainty

and variability. Assuming risk can be known means that it is possible to differentiate processes, find hierarchies and assign different weights to different indicators. Again, this is not the nature of the present case, but it is the approach to which the present standardization effort aims at. Indeed, even if it is impossible to reason in the terms proposed by Kaplan and Garrick, QCA enables the researcher to establish peculiar processes, or combinations, that shall have more weight than others in the final assessment. Moreover, the detection of presence or absence of core indicators is per se a valuable result, beneficial to the understanding of a phenomenon and helpful to social interventions.

From a sociological point of view (Ritzer, 2012; Zinn, 2009b) there are different conceptualizations of risk, reflecting people's fears, cultures, behaviors and choices. Zinn cites different streams of literatures, all connected in some way to the work of Ulrich Beck. These approaches reflect on the influence of individualism, government, communications, and politics, underlining how sociological elements belonging to rationality, culture or structure can influence risk and the attitude towards it. However, the debate over the strengths and weaknesses of the various perspectives is still ongoing and some even argue for risk to be put aside in sociological research (Zinn, 2009a). In particular, the statistical approaches towards the understanding of risk push to read society in terms of artificial probability, and policies to be designed on possibilities more than on empirical findings. Remarkably, Zinn argues that risk is just one possible way to scrutinize reality and support the understanding of social sciences and policy making. The thesis follows this last stance, even if it aims not to enter the debate inside sociology of risk, being its main focus more over the assessment of vulnerability than the conceptualization of risk itself. In any case, to the present aims, sociological approaches are interesting especially when they reflect on cultural analyses (Elsrud, 2020; Tansey & O'Riordan, 1999) that influence risk perception, comprehending the role of social networks and cultural typologies in risk reduction or in its increasing, making it possible to imagine a categorization of people according to their behaviors. Cultural preferences, expectations towards public authorities, expectations from society or employers are all factors linked to what chapter 2.5 describes as factors influencing individual exploitation. Moreover, culturalist studies highlight the different ways in which people behave or feel in presence of risk. Cultural theory (Tansey & O'Riordan, 1999) underlines how judgments are dependent from the social context, its dynamics of power and from the perceived legitimacy mechanisms. For instance, different peer groups may determine a proactive or passive attitude to certain situations. Borrowing the group/grid classification from this literature, people may be categorized according to their group connections and, on the other side, to their respect of authority, influencing their attitude towards risk¹³⁷. Therefore, this

¹³⁷ Interestingly, the same authors underline the difficulties in applying such reasoning onto individuals, especially when trying to quantify how much someone reflects one category or the other. This proposal, similar to Weberian categorizations, is however useful to differentiate among different ethnic networks. The underline assumption is that culture can shape important differences in risk management, for example collective solidarities, but it must be verified against the counterhypothesis that in extreme situations, such as the slavery like, individuals do not act following the most basic survival instincts.

stream of literature is useful in the interpretation of the results of the assessment tool, especially considering the perception of exploitation.

Risk assessment is the process of identifying the presence of risk factors which determines a certain degree of likelihood of a negative event to occur (Baldry & Winkel, 2008; Department of Human Services, 2012). These risk factors are the indicators of the concepts that they are measuring, and thus are established through empirical research, theory or previous scientific literature (Northcott, 2015). Historically, there are 3 approaches to risk assessment: a clinical approach, where a professional analyzes the situation and freely formulates his/her judgement, an actuarial approach, where statistics comes into play to standardize decisions making using matrices or scales, and lastly the structural professional adjustment approach, which is based on a guided assessment by a professional following evidence-based instruments. The last approach is the most recent and appreciated in certain sectors (such as gender violence). Much literature (Desmarais & Zottola, 2020; Northcott, 2015) argues that the structural professional judgment approach enjoys the strength of flexibility of the clinical approach, adding transparency and replicability. The main strength of the structural professional judgment is therefore a combination of the possibility to judge each situation personally and professionally in its singularity, combined with a minimum standardized baseline. On the other side, comparing the professional-lead instruments to the statistical ones, it emerges how the first can resent from bad guidelines or procedures, while the others strongly depend on data quality, which is a great problem if considering a hidden phenomenon like modern slavery. Thus, the assessment tool needs to carefully guide the professional judgement to guarantee the quality of the finding. A last typology is the one of anamnestic approaches that focus on gathering information on the past and the present of a situation, working on a behavioral chain to forecast future risk by using qualitative time data. However, the thesis leaves aside this last approach for reasons of opportunity and also because it does not return any consistency among professionals (Baldry & Winkel, 2008).

Importantly, effectiveness varies among different instruments in different contexts. For example Dutton (Baldry & Winkel, 2008) uses the example of the malfunctioning of predictive instruments for gender-based violence borne in western egalitarian settings when they are used in more prominent patriarchal cultures. Not to be just a good guess, methodologies have been framed to reduce the discretionary variable, based on a cumulative principle and weighting choices. What can be considered a good risk assessment is an instrument that returns consistent and replicable results. In literature, many tools for risk assessment have been developed which vary in characteristics and methods, since they apply to a whole set of different phenomena that can be investigated. No specific literature is available over risk of modern slavery, but some domains of application can offer valid examples from which to start. Risk assessment instruments can use objective or subjective risk indicators and they can collect static or dynamic conditions, meaning something that is given and does not change or, on the contrary, elements that tend to evolve or change. Risk indicators

can be positive or negative in their effect, looking for protective or dangerous elements, and can be historical, individual or contextual. Lastly, a good deal of the difficulty in producing a risk assessment tool is to assign weights to the different inputs (risk factors) and how to combine them.

Different fields have applied of the logic of the risk assessment. Traditionally (Moret, 2014) the fields of environmental and disaster risk reduction have seen a great number of applications, as well as health and clinical studies such as well-being, anti-social behaviors or mental illness prevention (Baldry & Winkel, 2008; Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2022; Department of Human Services, 2012; Simmons & Lehman, 2013). Criminal justice has also applied the logic of risk to prevent the occurrence of violent crimes, such as gender-based violence or child abuses, as shown below. Many of these approaches appears analytic and strongly quantitative, since they use qualitative analysis only when specific in-depth understanding is needed (Gilgun, 2004; Olshansky et al., 2012), while focusing their attention on quantitative indicators. Particularly in the field of natural hazard, vulnerability and risk possess an element of activation of the hazard, which appears as a manifest empirical fact (Nguyen-Trung & Forbes-Mewett, 2019). Measurability appears strongly quantitative when considering, for example in well-being studies, that Likert-scales are widely used indicators, which though cannot be applied in all fields of knowledge. Similarly, economic literature has applied the logic of risk assessment over poverty prevention, defining proxies and indicators on large numbers of data and distinguishing between levels of vulnerability, such as individual, regional or country level. The assessment of economic vulnerability (Moret, 2014) aims to assess the degree to which something or someone is likely to experience harm because exposed to some kind of hazard. When dealing with individual or households' level, economic vulnerability can be scrutinized also with qualitative techniques, even if the use of quantitative approaches is more common. Also, this logic has included the measurement of the ability to cope, the resilience, net of the assets possessed by the various communities. The World Bank proposes the Social Risk Management (SRM) approach, which considers protective factors at different level (micro, meso and macro) and focuses on measuring the probability of losses in welfare and income level of households, not the vulnerability factors themselves (Alwang et al., 2001; Heitzmann et al., 2002). This technique builds a complex matrix to weight positive and negative effects of a long list of quantitative indicators on the three different levels. Resilience is investigated using the Social Sector Review (SSR), which determines the structure of a certain country's social sector, its capacity and effectiveness into fighting poverty (Holzmann, 2001). The most vulnerable are those that cannot manage the different levels of risk, obtaining a higher loss of welfare as outcome. A further field of application for risk assessment is the political risk analysis, which focuses over macro socio-economic variables for international investments and economic scenarios. Focusing on the political risk literature may represent a valuable source for understanding more macro characteristics that impact on modern slavery, when comparing different countries. Indeed, it reflects over country-level trends, both geo-political and economic factors that can shape the opportunity to invest in a certain country, sometimes contributing to sudden change of

opportunities. Political risk is usually defined as *“the possibility of a business incurring loss or harm due to political change in a country, whether internal or external”* (Hetou, 2019) and it is usually studied either finding independent variables to estimate the probability of certain events, either building future oriented scenarios by analyzing the evolution of countries’ development. The author points out the extreme nature of context-dependency of this kind of analysis and promotes Scenario Analysis (SA) as a descriptive necessity to deeply understand all possible sets of events, with an important ordering intent. Clearly, such analysis would need to consider a specific area and economic sector if applied to the risk of modern slavery.

Interesting examples of risk assessment fields are the areas of child abuse and gender or domestic violence prevention. Concerning the exploitation of young children (Klatt et al., 2014; Reid, 2011, 2014), literature has proven (Savona & Stefanizzi, 2007) which factors are significant associated with such form of heinous exploitation: poverty, use of alcohol or drugs from young ages, the experience of violence and abuses (both physical and emotional), the experience of exploitative conditions among family or friends and the stigmatization of sexual behaviors. Those are all negative factors that using quantitative methods such as logistic or multiple regressions, have been found significantly associated with the experiencing of sexual exploitation. Also, protective factors have been highlighted, such as the role of education. Running away is a debated factor, since it has been found both positively associated with exploitation or not, surprisingly, because often reduces exposure to stronger risk factors. Reid has interestingly written on the General Strain Theory (GST) that links the experience of violence in childhood, with a higher risk of exploitation. Caregiver strain (such as use of alcohol or drugs, mental problems, domestic violence) evolves into maltreatment and turns into proper risk factors (children themselves using alcohol or drugs, denigrating themselves and running away). Here, girls experienced more feelings of guilt and depression than boys. Similarly, Klatt and colleagues identify in literature 14 possible risk factors for maltreatment, verifying their presence into a limited sample of people using the services given by an NGO in Leicester, UK. Only 4 of them are present in more than 50% of their sample. With a binary logistic regression, the authors analyze which factors are more associated with sexual exploitation, finding 4 factors significantly associated (partially different from the ones above). Moreover, they have run a Smallest Space Analysis (SSA): this statistical technique creates a visual representation of data, that groups together correlated variables and returns a cluster of risk factors, which helps to conceptually understand the typologies and interpreting them. Doing this, as Klatt and colleagues suggest, can also be the starting point for more personal analysis through qualitative interviews that may grasp personal experiences. What this approach does not consider are protective factors and efficacy of already existing social programs.

For what concerns the field of gender-based violence, it is interesting to study how they are shaped more closely. The making of a risk assessment in this field generally follows a common design (Western Australian

Family and Domestic Violence, 2015): the screening¹³⁸, to analyze if the outcome of interest is in place (in cases of prevention of re-occurrence), the proper risk assessment in terms of presence of key risk factors, the victim's own perception and the professional judgement, followed by actions of risk management and information sharing. Lastly, actions of referral are meant to support access to justice and needed services. Among the most famous risk assessment instruments in such field, there is the SARA and its shortened version for police forces (based on the structural professional judgment approach) and the ODARA tool (which on the contrary is an actuarial instrument). These examples assign to each indicator a fixed value, producing in the end a total risk score recommending different management options. Studies (Pavlou & Scott, 2019) have confirmed that risk assessment tools are valuable instruments to prevent the experience of such kind of violence and, thus, are efficient in the hands of police forces and competent organizations. More in details, the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide, or SARA (Douglas & Otto, 2010), begins with an extensive definition of spousal assessment encompassing also dating couples, and not merely concerning physical violence. The instrument is developed considering a limited number of risk factors emerged from the competent literature, clustered in the following groups: variables of general criminal history from the perpetrator, psychosocial adjustment characteristics such as alcohol or drug abuse, employment problems or mental instability, specific spousal assault history, alleged offenses and specific vulnerability characteristics of the victim (Baldry & Winkel, 2008). The complete version of the assessment should be done interviewing both accused and victims, and cross-checking with the database of police department. Since this procedure requires quite a long time, and it is found not suitable for police activities on field, a shorter version (the SARA-S) has been developed selecting fewer item that are found to be most central and non-redundant among themselves (keeping the distinctions between spousal assault and psychological adjustment variables). Thus, the assessment can be done by interviewing only the victims. For each of the answer given, the interviewer assigns a score from 0 (not present) to 1 or 2 (fully present) according to the nature of the variable (a critical variable may see just 0 or 1 and can alone activate a risk alert). Importantly, the administration of the questionnaire must follow precise guidelines to be correctly applied. Interestingly, Dutton (Baldry & Winkel, 2008) points out the both instruments are not quite efficient in preventing sudden violence, attributing too much weight on the historical behaviors of the perpetrator. In the end, both SARA produce an assessment of low, medium, or high risk. Another option is the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA) which uses data from police records and victim's experience to calculate the risk of violence reiteration, though with an actuarial approach, producing a numeric value that describes the level of risk. Furthermore, similarly to the SARA the HRC-20 is a SPJ instrument based on extensive professional guidelines composed of 10 historical items, 5 clinical items that read dynamic present situations and 5 future speculative risk management items. All of them can be rated from 0 to 2 (according to their degree of

¹³⁸ Screening may be compared to scoping in the field of natural and environmental risk reduction.

presence) and make use of all kinds of possible sources of information, from interviews and observation to files and documents. Dynamic items are thought for a regular updating process, thus ensuring a good level of predictability.

It is interesting to note that the field of gender-based violence is similar to the one of labour exploitation and modern slavery, considering the hidden nature of the phenomenon and its social dynamics of oppression and violence. They both reflect on the assessment of an individual situation, mainly considering micro-level variables, without speculating too much over future macro socio-economic trends (as in political risk analysis) nor over characteristics of households, communities, or country-level welfare system (as in the economic approaches to risk). The hazard of both labour exploitation and gender-based violence is the experience of violation of human rights and there is no analytic or activation of risk elements, making it debatable to quantitatively estimate a probability value. Also, elements of sociology of risk, such as culture and structure, are better framed within an individual assessment of qualitative nature. Similar are the existence of an identikit, the presence of mechanisms of dependency, perception and past experiences which influence the likelihood of experiencing similar traumas (the role of the migratory experience). In both fields, the risk is associated with the indicators of concepts behind the experience of violence, that are investigated with an approach based over professional judgements more than the actuarial ones. To reflect in terms of absence or presence of conceptual indicators, even if still enjoying the possibility to differentiate the weight of certain indicators or combinations, is the best approach for the preventive assessment of the two exploitative phenomena.

6.2 The vulnerability assessment tool

To detect a hidden phenomenon like modern slavery is a challenging issue. Only partially understood by social sciences, the phenomenon cannot be studied in quantitative terms and does not present a unanimous definition. Data are scares and fragmented among different concepts and various national legal definitions. Nonetheless, it constitutes a priority for human rights protection that must receive full policy attention. Reasoning in terms of vulnerability factors associated to the experience of modern slavery in Italy, the thesis proposes a sociological methodology to dig into such phenomenon and to assess if a certain individual is more vulnerable or less vulnerable to experience modern slavery. This assessment tool, illustrated below, represents an advantage in the hands for social workers operating on field, contributing to widen their awareness over modern slavery mechanisms. The instrument systematizes and makes explicit central vulnerability dimensions, guiding an ordered understanding of an individual situation. The job of social operators consists in the ability to recognize the gravity of a certain condition and to propose an alternative life path. The aim of this last part of the dissertation is to enhance social operators' evaluation capacity to

support their professional activities, through standardization, comparability, and systematization of relevant factors.

Chapter 4 and 5 have extensively described the different vulnerability factors, discussing their role and dynamics. Empirical methodologies have made it possible to build an organized conceptual framework and to choose coherent indicators. Ordering them, it is now possible to test reality and provide an ordered assessment tool for the strength of such vulnerability factors. However, it is not possible to reason in terms of probability considering the qualitative nature of the available knowledge and the specificities of modern slavery, as highlighted in the paragraph above. In calling the instrument vulnerability assessment tool, not risk assessment tool, the author wants to underline how risk is not considered in numeric terms.

As anticipated, the proposed assessment tool is based on the structural professional judgement approach. Self-administration is not recommended because the assessment tool is designed from the perspective of professional workers and adopts their language and understanding¹³⁹. The social operator knows the tool, understands its logic and can correctly fill it out. Again, what is assessed hereby is the presence of the various vulnerabilities, not considering the specific activation of any hazard, nor the level of exposure or its strength. It is to be considered an instrument both valid for prevention and screening. Thus, as from general theory of assessment, the proposed instrument focuses mostly on detecting the presence or absence of the indicators of interest, while it only touches the issue of the strength of the indicators and the resilience capacity. This is because the phenomenon at stake cannot be described in such precise terms, even if it tends to assess the strength of variables when reasoning in terms of QCA combinations and to assess the eventual resilience capacity when certain vulnerability factors are absent. In the end, the professional judgment produces an analysis that is descriptive, individualized, and relative to the situation considered in both time and space¹⁴⁰.

To build the assessment tool, the thesis further develops the matrix used for the variables of the QCA, considering all the single indicators inside the clusters. These variables are the results of the findings from the qualitative thematic analysis and subsequent re-organization, entailing both objective and subjective elements, but all measuring static conditions in a fixed period in time. Also, they can be historical, individual, or contextual referring to various aspects of vulnerability. The tool is thought for an individual assessment, even if few variables have a more meso- (such as the ones related to the ethnic networks) or macro- (the ones describing socio-economic characteristics, belonging to the MACRO cluster) nature. The assessment form looks like a list of boxes to check for the presence or absence of all these indicators of vulnerabilities,

¹³⁹ The victim perspective and its eventual dissonance with law provisions and the professional judgement are assessed through the indicators of perception, answering the need to analyze such contradictions (Department of Human Services, 2012).

¹⁴⁰ It is important to remind the reader that the analysis only focuses on male victims of exploitation. Female workers are too marginal to the expertise of the selected sample and possess different peculiarities that require different professional training and social programs.

keeping the distinction by section, corresponding to the clusters (ID, MIG, PER, DEP and MACRO). Table 5 below presents the deliverable part of the tool that can be used on field by social operators, a simplified version of the first half of the vulnerability assessment instrument that can be seen in appendix 9.3¹⁴¹. For reason of brevity and comfort, the names of the indicators are hidden behind the questions, which are enough to describe what to investigate. Each indicator has a relative space for notes that guide the assessment of that element, underlining particularities to take into consideration or to countercheck to make ex-post. Questions on the overall cluster are left for a second moment to fill out by the social operator alone. There are also 3 columns to fill in with information for every indicator. The first registers the presence or absence of that indicator¹⁴², the second highlights if, only in case of absence of that indicator, there is a form of resilience effect or protective capacity that shall be considered, while the last space is left to comment and notes by the social operator to write down any element of interest. This structure is meant to guide the investigation of the social operator, highlighting eventual peculiarities, providing an ordered and standardized assessment procedure.

There are two ways to fill-out the assessment tool. The first one is a formal organized interview, collecting all information at once in a safe and controlled environment¹⁴³. The second one is an ex-post compilation, which sees the social operator registering the various information after having met the migrant worker. Possibly, meetings are more than one, because they are often cases of sporadic encounters or situations in which it is not possible to have long or private conversations. Of course, the first option better complies with the need to take a picture in time and rapidly understand the situation, as well as to be able to better investigate specific dimensions by asking precise questions. However, slowly collecting all the information, keeping the assessment inside a short time frame, can represent a common situation. In this case, the social operators shall register the presence of the indicators he or she has found as soon as possible, to have the freshest picture in mind, for example as soon as the professional NGO team leaves the field. In both cases, questions should be kept informal to put workers at ease. In this first part of the assessment described in Table 5 questions are most straightforward possible, because 51 indicators are a long list for an interview and an assessment instrument of such kind needs to run on a fast track. The tool is indeed thought to be a guided evaluation, not a narrative interview. General introductory questions are thus avoided. However, probes can be used when the subject avoids answering the question or doesn't center the point.

¹⁴¹ The second half of the background document of the assessment instrument is presented in Table 6 below. Remarkably, that form is meant for consulting, not to be used in the everyday activity of NGOs.

¹⁴² Note that presence can be recorded in 4 modalities: fully present, somewhat present, not quite present, absent. This is because the interviewee (i.e. the migrant worker) may not provide a straight forward answer. Additionally, the social operator can better register the different shade of the information, without providing a false idea of precision.

¹⁴³ The social operator can introduce the interview, specify privacy protection and the option not to answer on sensitive information. In case some answers are anticipated by the interviewee, the social operator should note and later register them in the relative line, to avoid repeating the question and not to seem redundant.

TABLE 5: Vulnerability assessment tool. Part 1.

Name and job of the subject:						
	QUESTIONS	NOTE	PRESENCE (Fully present/somewhat present/Not quite present/absent)	PROTECTIVE WHEN ABSENT?	SPJ COMMENTS	
		ONLY MALES				
EXPLOITATION	How much do you earn?	Ex-post check compliance with minimum legal standards		n.a.	Comment	
	How many hours do you work?			n.a.	Comment	
	Security briefings, covid procedures have ever been made? Is the environment clean?		Ex-post check compliance with minimum legal standards		n.a.	Comment
	Would you describe the workplace as a tense, stressed, discriminatory environment or as relaxed and friendly?				n.a.	Comment
	Are there controllers on the job place? Are they a factor of stress?				n.a.	Comment
	Have you ever experienced insults, blackmails, threats or violence?				n.a.	Comment
	Is the subject exploited up to modern slavery?		<i>Specify pros and cons, and eventual possible actions for social intervention</i>		Group comment	
IDENTIKIT	What is your age?	Note eventual mismatch with professional judgement		no	Comment	
	Where do you come from?			no	Comment	
	Do you speak fluently Italian?			yes	Comment	
	Who are the members of your family?			no	Comment	
	What is your higher degree of instruction?			yes	Comment	
	Do you come from a city or the countryside?			no	Comment	
	Where do you live?			yes	Comment	
	How close is your residence to the city?			no	Comment	
	Do you trust going to the hospital? Do you trust going to the police?		Even one dimension is considered enough for the purposes of measuring low access to the services; trust is intended as absence of fear of negative consequences.		yes	Comment
	Is the subject a typical modern slave profile?		<i>Specify pros and cons, and eventual possible actions for social intervention</i>		Group comment	
MIGRATION	Who paid for your trip to come here?	Note if employer is debtor		no	Comment	
	Are you close to your family? How often do you hear from them?			no	Comment	
	Have you or have you ever had any debt? Do you work for somebody that you have to repay?		Note if Italy is not destination country. If yes, investigate why.		no	Comment
	What are your plans for your stay in Italy?				no	Comment
	What states did you travel through? Did you experience exploitation or violence?		Violence calls for violence, setting low expectations/standards		yes	Comment
	If you have been hosted in Italian public structures or programmes, what kind of jobs were you offered?		Investigate eventual jobs offer either from inside and outside the programme. Note if reception programmes' activities are positively described. Note if never experienced and why.		yes	Comment
	What is your permit status?				no	Comment
	How did you find your job, is there somebody that helped you out? Is your job connected to your past labour skills?				depends on how	Comment
	Do you follow religious or social events?		Investigate if his sociality is other than the one on the job <u>or</u> if it is limited to the ethnicism		no	Comment
	Do you think that people from other ethnic groups may steal your job?				no	Comment
	When you need to deal with an administrative problem, do you ask advices to your countrymen under payment?				yes	Comment
	Has the subject a vulnerable migratory background?		<i>Specify pros and cons, and eventual possible actions for social intervention</i>		Group comment	

PERCEPTION	Would you say you had luck finding this job? May you easily find others?	Understand if comparison is meaningful to the subject		yes	Comment	
	Does your contract cover all hours you work? What about holidays and health permits?			yes	Comment	
	Do you consider yourself exploited?			yes	Comment	
	Can you compare your present day job to your past experiences?			yes	Comment	
	For how long do you think you are going to do this job?			yes	Comment	
	How would you feel if you cannot send home money?			yes	Comment	
	Did your coworkers ever help you out with problems on the job?		Note if subject specifies ethnicity of workers		yes	Comment
	In case you need medical care, help with services, courses, or info on permits, would you ask to a public office or to who?		Note if the subject asks to the employer or ethnic network		yes	Comment
	Is the subject culturally pushed to homologate and accept exploitative conditions?		<i>Specify pros and cons, and eventual possible actions for social intervention.</i>		Group comment	
DEPENDENCY	Have you ever being blackmailed over your job position or contract in relation to your permit of stay?	Note how the employer is described		yes	Comment	
	Have you ever being blackmailed with late payments of salary?			yes	Comment	
	Does the employer drive you to work?			yes	Comment	
	Do you live in a place owned/provided by your employer?			yes	Comment	
	Has the employer ever done you a favor as a friend?			yes	Comment	
	Would you be available to stop working for a period of time to learn a new job and the Italian language?			no	Comment	
	Is the subject easy to blackmail?		<i>Specify pros and cons, and eventual possible actions for social intervention</i>		Group comment	
MACRO SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS	Do you think activities of your employers are all legal?	Ex-post integrate with professional evaluation over job sector in general		no	Comment	
	Is there any drug or illicit traffic organized by criminal gangs?	Ex-post integrate with professional evaluation over job sector in general		no	Comment	
	The majority of your colleagues have a labour contract?			no	Comment	
	Do you know other possibilities for a migrant worker to have better labour conditions?				Comment	
	How often do you change job and place where you work? Do you move your residence when you do so?			no	Comment	
	Is there somebody that finds and organizes workers for the boss?			no	Comment	
	Is the gang-master your same ethnicity?			no	Comment	
	Do you think employers know how to pay the least possible his or her workers?	This should be posed to seem not focused on his particular experience, but as an evaluation of reality in general. It is to be read net of perception bias exposed above.		no	Comment	
	Have you ever met a labour inspector?			yes	Comment	
	Have you ever met somebody from the Union or any public or private institution helping workers?			yes	Comment	
	Is your workplace visible?			no	Comment	
	Is the socio-economic environment favoring exploitation?	<i>Specify pros and cons, and eventual possible actions for social intervention</i>		Group comment		

Indicators have all been extensively described in the previous chapters of the research (particularly in the subparagraphs of chapter 4 and in chapter 5 in their clustered version), but a brief explanation is available for each one of them in the background document of the assessment tool, in the appendix. Anyhow, it is important to note that the first cluster, investigating exploitation, functions as a basic set of screening questions, but is not counted in the overall assessment, since the instrument is meant to describe the dimensions of vulnerability, not of exploitation itself. Also, the logic of the first part of Table n. 5 does not take into consideration the exploitation cluster. It is however important to ask such screening question to understand if the social operator needs to act in a preventive or corrective perspective.

Particular attention in how to structure the questionnaire is to be given to have or not the same weight for each micro variable. Choosing the option of equal weight means not to recognize a difference in degree of strength, even if it is possible to distinguish major importance by having two specifications of the same issue¹⁴⁴. Indeed, it is herein impossible to theoretically argue that some conditions are n times as important as others, given the qualitative nature of this study, because the decision would entail too strong arbitrary decisions.

A second issue, anticipated above, is to determine when the absence of a certain indicator of vulnerability is to be interpreted as a factor of resilience. The thesis structure has not directly investigated the concept of resilience, but the interviews have made it possible to imagine that some vulnerability factors, extensively described, may have a positive effect when they are not present. However, to establish precise counterweights is again impossible, but that does not mean that this piece of knowledge cannot and shall not be used in the formulation of the professional judgment by the competent expert, because they are capable, thanks to their professional expertise, to consider and compare the role of the various elements. Resilience has thus a small role in the present assessment tool, and the judgement to be protective enough against a vulnerability factor is left to the discretion of the professional judgment.

Lastly, by detecting every indicator ordered in clusters the tool describes a degree in the strength of each one of them. This can be used to quantify the presence or absence of the overall cluster, on a similar logic to the one from the QCA. Values registered as fully or somewhat present are to be counted as present, while values of absence or low presence (quite present) are to be considered not present. The social operator can therefore judge if each cluster is overall present or absent, registering the information. Indicatively, when half of vulnerabilities are present, the cluster shall be regarded as present. Nevertheless, the professional

¹⁴⁴ An example is the presence of gang-masters, which is detected twice: the first if they are present, the second if they are of the same ethnicity of the exploited, described as an element of major exploitation, which translates it in a double degree of intensity of this specific dimension.

judgement of the social operator can interpret the role of resilience or the minor and major strength of different elements and correct situations too balanced or borderline.

After having completed this first part of the assessment, the social operator can proceed to fill-in the second and last part of the assessment, following the steps listed in Table 6. This is an on-desk activity, to be done after having collected all information required. Herein, it is presented the chart that guides the assessment, even if all the procedures could be brought on-line and automatically provide the calculations needed¹⁴⁵. By measuring the presence of cluster, the assessment tool is now capable to highlight which combinations of cluster are present among the sufficient ones that are found to be particularly worrisome by the QCA results. Each combination is taken into consideration and there is a corresponding space to comment for the social operator, together with an overall assessment comprehending an analysis of the typology of slavery in which the subject belongs. They are measured in terms of presence or absence, not in their degree of strength. The important aspect is indeed to bring the social operator to prioritize certain situations because a combination or typology of vulnerability, signaled as particularly dangerous, emerges. This assessment logic recalls the risk chains developed by the World Bank (Heitzmann et al., 2002) and provides a weight differentiation among the indicators.

It is important to underline that there is the possibility of not being able to completely fill-in all indicators¹⁴⁶. This may happen because the situation requires a fast, even if partial, assessment, or because there is not yet the relationship of trust between the social operator and the migrant worker sufficient enough to dig into the exploited life. In any case, when information is partial, the assessment tool cannot provide the calculation of QCA-made combinations, and this part of the assessment should be left empty. The overall assessment will be therefore partial, but still available. Notes shall specify when questions are not answered.

¹⁴⁵ The best format to deliver the assessment tool would be an on-line app, to be used on cellphones. The social operator could fill-in the presence or absence for each indicator and eventually note any comment comfortably in any place through his/her smartphone. When complete, the system could automatically calculate the presence or absence for the entire cluster and the eventual worrisome combinations automatically.

¹⁴⁶ This is different from the case where a question does not apply because of previous answers. In such case, that element should be counted as absent.

TABLE 6: Vulnerability assessment tool. Part 2.

CONDITIONS	CONDITIONS EXPLANATION	QUESTIONS	NOTE	PRESENCE (Yes/No)	SPJ COMMENTS
			ONLY MALES		
WARNING COMBINATIONS	Identikit+Migration+Dependency Absence of	Is the combination present?	Ex-post calculate if the combinations are present		Comment
	Identikit+Migration+Perception+Macro factors	ibidem			Comment
	Identikit+Absence of Migration +Absence of Perception +Macro factors	ibidem			Comment
	Identikit+Migration+Absence of Perception +Absence of Macro factors	ibidem			Comment
	Identikit+Perception+Dependency+Absence of Macro factors	ibidem			Comment
	Absence of Migration +Absence of Perception +Dependency+Macro factors	ibidem			Comment
	Perception+Absence of all others	ibidem			Comment
OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF COMBINATIONS		Does the subject belongs to a particular slave typology?	Structural slave (MACRO with either ID or DEP), slave by perception (PER, alone or with ID*DEP or MIG*MACRO) or slave by personal experience (ID*MIG).		Comment
OVERALL ASSESSMENT		Describe the main vulnerabilities and their combinations			Comment
		Describe the main points of resilience			Comment
		Does the subject posses any degree of empowerment?			Comment
		Is the subject in need to enter a programme?			Comment
		Is the subject willing and able to enter a programme?			Comment
		Overall actions of help			

Lastly, the vulnerability assessment tool provides 6 questions to guide the final professional judgement. It is asked to look at the entire assessment and reflect on the main vulnerabilities, beginning with the clustered result, and reflecting over eventual elements of resilience¹⁴⁷. The third question asks the social operator to judge the perceived empowerment capacity of the individual, net of the difficulties deriving from all indicators of vulnerabilities. It reflects over the strength and seriousness of the condition of exploitation, net of resilience and contextual elements. Subsequently, it is asked to reflect on the possibility to enter a formal program of uncovering, assistance and social integration, in terms of need, willingness and possibility. Last question provides anyhow what should be done to help the individual in need. Overall, this perspective gives the possibility to formulate a complete professional judgment. This is achieved gradually, reflecting over each cluster and only later moving to the general picture, on the model of the gender-based violence tools (Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence, 2015).

Thus, when the assessment is completed, the social operator has a wide picture that can be shared and compared to other situations, planning how to socially intervene. Also, the picture can be described and shared within the multiagency network (paragraph 4.2.18). This is the risk management and information sharing typical of programs against gender-based violence (Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence, 2015). Eventually, NGOs also organize actions of referral to public authorities and access to justice, as well as actions of follow-ups for their social programs of intervention. Follow-ups can be based on the re-assessment of the same subject, highlighting the grounds that changed and the ones that did not.

¹⁴⁷ In the digitalized version, the element of resilience shall come out automatically and listed for the social operator to consider them all together.

In terms of management of interventions, it can be useful to have a list of organizations to involve in the management of vulnerability. The structure can vary according to the different context and the stakeholder present, but the ideal network shall consist in all anti-exploitation NGOs working in the area, INL inspectors and police forces, unions, employers' organizations, the public institution responsible for social programs (either the township, the province or the region) and finally the employment centers, both private and public. Here the virtuous example may be the MARAC, multiagency risk assessment conference, developed in the UK (Pavlou & Scott, 2019). Such conference is meant as the meeting of different professionals involved in the safety of victims of gender-based violence. The conference provides an individualized action plan for the victim's safety and management, which in the case of labour exploitation translates in providing training and job opportunities, enhancing and standardizing the multiagency approach through a formal ideal network.

Importantly, the present assessment tool does not picture the offender, as it is often the case in the literature from gender-based violence and clinical settings (Douglas & Otto, 2010). This is both because the information provided are limited and their weight inside a systemic reality as exploitation is not enough understood.

6.3 Limitations

It is important to remind readers that assessment instruments do not explain truth or causality, they can fail and be too fixed in time, whereas the reality changes and evolves. The dissertation in general holds a positivist view when it tries to create an assessment of vulnerability factors, yet it shall not be confused with a deterministic instrument. This is part of the reason why risk assessment is presented as a tendency, not as the approach followed by the assessment procedure. Social science knowledge is not deep enough to quantify the probability to risk modern slavery.

The proposed vulnerability assessment tool serves to guide the attention of social operators. Being based on interviews that provide social operators' only perspective, the assessment instrument presents a great limitation in its predictability and capacity to read modern slavery in its entirety. However, the tool shall not be assessed independently by the migrant workers but should be filled out by a professional social operator confronting with him or her. The tool does not reflect victims' perspective nor understanding, it is designed over social operators' knowledge and it's thought for social operators use, representing a valid starting point to analyze a situation at risk of modern slavery from an operative point of view. Furthermore, data from migrant workers over vulnerability factors and modern slavery experience may be subject to inaccuracies that can negatively influence the overall assessment. Workers may indeed provide partial or fake information if trust with the social operator is not deep enough. Nonetheless, as already pointed out, such data are the

only ones that are available: to critique them shall not translate into ignoring what is known but should push the effort to widen the present understanding and to always search for better and more representative data.

Additionally, problems of lack of some information from the migrant workers, the impossibility to establish weights and counterweights (resilience) and the possibility that information may be collected across several days in time, limit the explanatory power of the overall assessment, but do not erase its importance and role of guidance¹⁴⁸.

On the other side, the tool is built on a small sample of interviewees which is a limit to its representativeness. This limit evolves into the scientific need to widen the sample and complete, refine and better develop the instrument, which can and shall evolve thanks to the hereby set starting point.

Lastly, assessment instruments in general need to run a proper validation before it is possible to use them. The process is central for the quality of an assessment instrument but requires time and effort, with the participation of numerous stakeholders. The present tool has been only partially tested by the researcher with few pilot trials, checking for the correct order and coherence between questions and the dimensions intended to be measured. However, it was not possible to undertake a proper validation for the same reason for which it has not been possible to work directly with victims of modern slavery (see footnote 40, paragraph 4.1). A proper validation is to be done with the participation of NGOs covering different contexts and economic sectors.

¹⁴⁸ Paragraph 6.2 deals with how each one of these 3 limits are handled.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Modern slavery is a widespread phenomenon of human rights violation. Policymakers, social operators, and researchers need to deepen their knowledge to better understand its mechanisms and dynamics. The urgency to fight it is recognized by the United Nations, whose SDG goal number 8.7 asks all countries to act against it. However, developed countries still lack specific attention, choosing to focus their effort and resources mainly against illegal immigration and trafficking, leaving modern slavery to the attention of less developed countries. Additionally, States do not share an internationally recognized definition of modern slavery and there is no reliable quantitative data that can be used to investigate and monitor modern slavery causes and consequences. To change this situation, the present dissertation takes the case study of Italy, a country that perfectly fits into this perspective, and proposes an understanding of modern slavery, to be the point of reference for future studies and social interventions.

A framework of vulnerability is built to explain how modern slavery works, representing an efficient medium to understand the mechanisms of this social phenomenon. The thesis develops a multimethod approach that uses qualitative thematic analysis combined with Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to deeply investigate all conditions favoring labour exploitation up to modern slavery, both in their singularities and in their most worrisome combinations. The thesis does not limit to describe the vulnerabilities but also looks at their interactions and links, because the phenomenon does not present a single causal factor nor a single combination of vulnerabilities that lead to its experience. This explorative rationale is necessary because modern slavery appears as a causally complex and multifaced concept. This is why it is also important to study it from different perspectives, intersecting different sociological literatures and debates, reasoning in terms of interaction of vulnerabilities inside a favorable environment where they can develop and spread.

Thus, it is built an understanding of causality behind modern slavery reasoning in terms of vulnerability factors and using empirical data from the knowledge acquired on field by professional experts. Such perspective is valid even if partial, necessary to focus on vulnerabilities horizontal to different economic and geographical contexts, following the explorative rationale of the thesis. The dissertation explores a not well-known field for social science research and contextually brings the attention over how the phenomenon can be stopped and fought. Findings are synthesized in the form of an assessment tool meant for the use of professional social workers, implementing a standard framework for evaluating individuals' level of vulnerability in projects of social interventions, adding an operative value to its academic nature. Therefore, the thesis widens the scientific and social operator's awareness of how to reduce such reality.

Remarkably, the thesis builds a new methodology to analyze a hidden social phenomenon in a causally complex framework, highlighting the main vulnerability factors and their interactions, thus contributing to

prevent their appearance and most dangerous combinations. Such methodology is a relevant contribution of the present research, proposing an innovative way to analyze unknown social reality and possibly intervene.

The dissertation begins by highlighting the historical evolution of slavery, from its chattel version to its modern form, underlining the change from legal ownership to the mechanisms of extreme labour exploitation of the most marginal social groups. People to the margins are often migrant workers in extreme economic need. The slave has come to be the most vulnerable, a person in strong economic need without choices to negotiate any right, easily replaceable, exploitable until exhaustion with no need to care about health conditions of who is regarded as a mere factor of production.

Considering the physiologically hidden nature of the phenomenon of modern slavery, the lack of pre-existing scientific analysis, and the absence of reliable quantitative data, the present dissertation has developed a sociological definition that describes modern slavery as the coexistence of a situation of labour exploitation and a social condition of marginalization, dependency and disempowerment. The two fundamental aspects allow the researcher not to limit his interest to specific violations, such as trafficking. This twofold nature is shown to be both related to individual factors of vulnerability (present and past conditions of an individual) and to favorable structural dynamics related to the nature of a socio-economic system. It connects to the policies regulating migration and labour, designed to disfavor what is called economic migration. Thus, individual and structural dimensions together grow and develop into actual modern slavery. As shown, it describes an historical complex and multifaced concept using a recognized terminology from international and national arenas.

Selecting the case study of migrant workers in Italy is also interesting because of the peculiar system of fight against modern slavery that Italy possesses. Indeed, the so-called anti-trafficking network does not only focus on actions to contrast trafficking but also addresses exploitation by taking charge of people in need, searching for them, and proposing alternative life plans through the State-funded programs of uncovering, assistance and social integration. To begin, a purposive sample is selected among social workers culturally competent in describing modern slavery conditions. Scattered around all of Italy, the sample covers half of number of the public programs for uncovering, assistance and social integration, with some additional similar projects. The track of the interview covers five main areas of interest, with an introduction exploring the job of the interviewee. These questions are thought according to the literature analyzed and are left open to allow the interviewee to freely speak and determine which are the most relevant elements of vulnerability. The experience of migration, the labour environment, the individual perception of labour exploitation, migrant workers' sociality and attitude to social services, together with what the social operators deem policy failures and needed interventions, constitute the five areas that the researcher investigates deeply. Using the NVivo software, qualitative thematic analysis (Ayres, 2008; Gibbs, 2007) describes the elements that horizontally emerge as central when experiencing modern slavery. The victim profile emerges to be a young male worker,

usually a first son of a family that invested money and hopes into sending one of its members to work abroad. Main ethnic groups are found to be sub-Saharan Africans, Bengalese or Pakistani and Eastern Europeans, both from inside and outside the European Union, signaling how permits of stay are not sufficient to ensure protection from exploitation. Long migratory paths are said to weaken eventual initial resources that people might have had, both physically and mentally. The main permit for staying in Italy is the request for asylum, which grants long periods of temporary permission because proceedings take a long time to finish. Migration reception facilities are often not protective factors for people that experience them. Ethnic groupism is widespread and networks vehiculate services, often profiting from undue payments, as well as labour opportunities, information and frauds. The same network has a role in enforcing adaptation to low labour standards and low awareness of labour rights. Migrant workers' perception looks at exploitation as something temporary, without alternatives or even without fully recognizing it: comparison with past worse experiences, in origin or transition countries, together with the pressure from family members and their expectations that make the exploited feel like a sort of breadwinner, hard worker and strong man, are all factors that contribute to the acceptance of the existing labour imbalance, even when it is understood as such. In general, minimization of exploitative conditions shall be regarded as a stronger vulnerability to modern slavery, while being aware of discriminatory or exploitative practices signals that there is space for empowerment. Elements of dependency sustain this reality, bounding workers to depend on the employer for permits of stay, residence, means of transportation to distant labour places, delayed paychecks (to blackmail workers), always accompanied by the extreme economic need that does not allow stop working. The employer may also be perceived as a friend when helping workers with some of these aspects. Furthermore, the systemic nature of exploitation throughout low-skilled economic sectors is taken for granted, both by the migrants and by the social operators. Contracts are absent or partial, gang-masters are widespread and controls lack, especially in case for job places that are not visible nor accessible. Reflecting on labour contracts, it emerges that their presence can be read in terms of mystification of actual exploitation, pretending to give labour rights covering just a small percentage of the actual labour activity. Having a contract and also having a residence permit are insufficient characteristics to have in order to find decent jobs.

Thus, qualitative thematic analysis has answered the first part of the research aim, that is to describe conditions that favors exploitation of migrant workers in Italy. The social condition of marginalization, dependency and disempowerment holds the empirical test, as all elements are depicted and described. The vulnerabilities shape different aspects of the life of migrant workers, who find their migratory mandate to collide with unexpected difficulties that they fail to cope against, understand or interpret. Individual and structural rationales hold migrant workers trapped in a vicious cycle of exploitative jobs. Here, sociological literatures from labour sociology to immigration or cultural studies are intertwined, placing the thesis on the boundary of different sociological traditions. Indeed, aspects connected to the individual dimension reflect

on the role of individual perception and how such system of exploitation is accepted. The process of normalization through habitus and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1992), together with the disempowerment that leads to lack of awareness, support the misrecognition (Gramsci, 1975) or mystification (Burawoy, 2012) of an exploitative reality that is taken for granted and/or accepted. Additionally, ethnic networks also function as channels of socialization into low labour conditions and acceptance of bad standard of livings, believed to be temporary, necessary, or unavoidable (Carl Bankston, 2014). On the other side, the structural dimension focuses on socio-economic characteristics of a system that never completely eradicated labour exploitation. Considering the evolution of slavery from chattel slavery to forced labour, the slow and partial transition to labour contracts still bound to specific masters, and the advantages of a reserve army of labour in keeping wages down, Marxist authors insist on the importance and presence of unfree labour still nowadays (Brass, 2013). Globalization helps to exploit workers with mechanisms of power imbalance, creation of debt and immigration permission linked to employers. Additionally, exploitation is supported by States' failure to respect their positive obligations toward human rights protection (Galtung, 1969), enacting weak policies.

To proceed further, the QCA technique represents a valid methodology to analyze causal combinations of different factors. The method applies to case-oriented examples with a small or medium-n and uses logic to synthesize data to minimum terms, losing qualitative richness to the advantage of conceptual clarity. QCA adds value to the present research because it investigates interactions between vulnerability factors, which adds to the fact that the thesis represents one of the few examples of QCA applied to similar issues. The technique is based on the selection of a few key variables and the creation of clusters that measure core concepts. Variables selected come from the qualitative thematic analysis and subsequent reorganization. In particular, the applied fuzzy sets - (fs)QCA enables the clusters to be measured with different degrees. Herein calibration is done with four possibilities between 0 and 1 (thresholds at 0.3, 0.5 and 0.7). With the help of R, all logically possible combinations of conditions, i.e. the clusters created, are analyzed. There are 5 clusters: an identikit that describes certain demographic and personal traits (ID), a migratory condition of past and present experiences (MIG), a particular perception of what exploitation is (PER), a degree of dependency towards the employer and an income (DEP), and finally a set of few macro socio-economic characteristics¹⁴⁹ that provide a favorable environment for exploitation (MACRO). Such different elements shape a holistic perspective over modern slavery and connect different literatures, micro or macro, past or present, individual or structural. Among all possible different combinations of these clusters, some are present in the empirical data of the interviews, and some are not (the so-called logical remainders). Choosing not to speculate over logical remainders, the researcher adopts the conservative solution for minimization, proceedings with

¹⁴⁹ The description of macro socio-economic element is limited by the single-country nature of the present research. Indeed, wider legislative differences can be added when country experiences are different but it has no meaning when such elements apply throughout all situations.

Boolean formal logic to synthesize the combinations found. These combinations are all combinations of sufficiency to the experience of modern slavery, not having found any necessary one. Looking at the clusters that constitute the seven sufficient combinations that come out as the result of the analysis, it is possible to imagine three main typologies of slave, similar to Weberian ideal types: the structural slave, the slave by perception and the slave by personal experiences. They reflect the main factors that favor modern slavery exploitation and social condition, explaining what forces push vulnerabilities to crystallize into real-life events and how. Migrant workers are vulnerable because their social group is marginalized inside society, oppressed by an unfavorable macro-system (immigration and labour laws) and socialized by their human capital and experiences into acceptance of the established reality. All three typologies are marginalized, dependent, disempowered and exploited. As said, the social condition and exploitation feed one another, making all vulnerabilities responsible for such condition. Common elements are the imbalance of power in the labour relation and its unfree nature, together with the systemic and degrading logic of the labour relation. The concept of unfree labour (Brass, 2013) is tantamount to understand the widespread nature of a phenomenon that is considered to be a systemic aspect of the existing economic structure and accepted as such. Thus, it can be concluded that the thesis has investigated the possible causal combinations and interactions of vulnerability factors that favor the development of modern slavery.

Last step of the dissertation is the creation of an instrument that can bring the results from theory to practice. Ordering the various vulnerability factors into a matrix helps to make explicit the process of evaluation, which becomes standardized and comparable among different organizations and situations (Skillmark et al., 2019). The logic takes inspiration from similar risk assessment instruments, especially in the field of gender-based violence, without turning to an understanding in terms of statistical probability. Such vulnerability assessment tool supports, not substitutes, the work of social operators, who are necessary to fill-out the questionnaire and interpret it. The vulnerability assessment tool is in fact a Structural Professional Judgment (SPJ) instrument. It is divided into two parts: the first one serves to find the presence or absence of the various indicators of vulnerability, with space to comment. These indicators are the same exposed above and are registered by the social operator during a formal interview or by noting down in a second moment all the details asked throughout informal dialogues. The second part takes into consideration the presence of the clustered combinations from the QCA and later guides the overall assessment of that specific situation by asking questions over present vulnerabilities, eventual resilience, empowerment potential and the possibility to socially intervene with a structured public program.

Thus, the proposed vulnerability assessment tool supports and enhances the ability of social operators to understand and analyse situations of vulnerability to modern slavery. It has both a preventive and corrective intent and forms a rapid assessment procedure for human rights protection. Furthermore, by systematizing the analysis and making it comparable among different situations and NGOs, multiagency is enforced and

promoted, strengthening this operational approach in social policy, indicated as the most effective against modern slavery exploitation. Thus, the aim to reinforce the capacity of social operators to intervene against situations of modern slavery is met.

This last contribution of the thesis is of particular value because it concludes the innovative multimethod procedure to deal with social interventions in case of unknown or hidden phenomena: qualitative analysis combined with QCA and risk assessment theory produce a valuable, even if limited, instrument for the analysis and understanding of the vulnerability level of a person in danger. Part of its value is precisely to deal with causally complex and hidden phenomena that ask for an urgent intervention but see a very limited understanding.

However, there are important limitations to the present research. First of all, the thesis takes the peculiar perspective of social workers to look into modern slavery. It is the only choice available to keep the framework as general as needed to reason in terms of vulnerabilities, but it returns a biased perspective. Their understanding is undoubtedly professional and competent but shall not be regarded as definitive, since it should be compared to the one's of victims and other professionals, to get closer to the real picture of what modern slavery is. Furthermore, the sample is small in numeric terms and only speaks of those economic sectors that are not the most hidden and inaccessible to NGOs. Moreover, the role of the researcher is strong, both in qualitative thematic analysis and within QCA. This technique has good advantages in the understanding that provides to the thesis, but still can only partially explain sufficiency and suffers from the non-perfect overlap between semi-structured interviews to its dimensions, which is left to the theoretical re-elaboration of the researcher. The thesis refers to QCA terminology when speaking about causality and does not forget the more complex criteria of falsifiability, theoretical interpretation and confrontations needed to prove it, to which it contributes. Lastly, the proposed assessment tool, not to be regarded as deterministic even if such tools tend in that direction, can be dysfunctional when the social operator is not able to establish enough trust in his/her relationship with a migrant worker. To do that, it requires time, while the tool takes only a picture of time, which needs therefore to be taken at the right moment.

Before concluding, the thesis can recommend some policy actions to fight against modern slavery. Policies shall focus on the reduction of vulnerabilities, giving migrant workers the possibility to autonomously find alternative labour opportunities that are not exploited. This entails both micro and macro aspects. Programs of uncovering, assistance and social integration enhance empowerment on the personal level through professional training and job research, reshaping the migratory mandate and the perception of the labour market. Disempowerment cannot turn into empowerment if there is not a change in the perception of what exploitation is, together with an understanding of how exploitation works. Misrecognition, habitus and mystification need to be contrasted to fight exploitation (Burawoy, 2012; Dick & Nadin, 2011; Smith, 2010). At present, these public programs of social interventions have a limited efficiency in providing alternative

labour opportunities, as well as in structuring their work as a systemic presence throughout the various contexts. Their resources are indeed limited and multiagency cooperation is often not well developed with all the relevant stakeholders, especially with public authorities such as the labour inspectorate. On the other hand, the State must enforce its positive duties of human rights protection and act against macro socio-economic factors that surround vulnerabilities (Galtung, 1969). Policies on migration are not designed to protect people from exploitation, while the labour market sees a downgrade wage competition, a strong lack of controls and labour rights enforcement, and difficulty in meeting supply and demand under legal terms. The immigration system should provide opportunities of legal entry for job seekers while ensuring that reception facilities for the most vulnerable are truly capable to understand individual situations and give them an answer. In fact, reception facilities are often places where exploited labour opportunities are found, and where migrant workers are not trained over their rights and don't develop trust in institutions. On the other side, to stop downward wage competition, public authorities should enforce minimum guarantees, which connects to the issue of law enforcement. Labour inspections are too low, and controls over contracts and labour database are non-existent. Also, permits from article 22 of the immigration law are still not widely used and acknowledged to combat and fight what Italian law defines as serious labour exploitation.

Remarkably, the thesis paves the way to future research interest. To be considered a central result, the thesis builds a baseline from which to further investigate social reality, a first systematization of modern slavery that is both academic and operative. In fact, the vulnerability framework proposed shall be tested with a wider sample and from the perspective of different actors involved, as well as tested on women's exploitation, in less accessible economic sectors (fishery, for instance), and compared to the realities of different countries. This last aspect would enable better reasoning over socio-economic factors and effects of different law systems. Additionally, one other interesting aspect is the role of exploiters. The thesis has described them as eager and willingly able to exploit workers whom they consider as a mere economic variable. There is an interesting socio-economic favoritism inside the logic of structural violence that enhances the capacity to exploit. Factors such as impunity for illegal acts (under both labour and penal law), strong power to establish imbalanced labour relations through dependency, the mechanisms of perception mediated by cultural expectations and ethnic acceptance, all sustain disempowerment and are to be better pictured from the perspective of employers. It is an interesting dimension that sees an important lack of data. Possibly, studies may use criminal databases to interview condemned exploiters.

Concluding, the thesis shows how modern slavery enforces low payments, long working hours, lack of security, a degrading labour environment, pressure, abuses, and psychological violence. Such strong form of exploitation is embedded in individual and social vulnerabilities that grow into real experience of modern slavery when interacting among themselves inside a favorable socio-economic environment. This system of exploitation is an organized and conscious reality that exploits single individuals who are marginal,

disempowered, and dependent, denying them any social integration or development. The thesis describes modern slavery as a multifaced phenomenon rooted in vulnerabilities connected to some individual characteristics, to a migratory background, to the dependency towards the employer, to a partial perception of what exploitation is, and to some structural socio-economic factors. Such conditions are analysed in their singularities and in their combinations. Further analysis results in a classification of slave typologies following the reasoning of causal combinations. The structural slave, the slave by perception and the slave by personal experience all underline important aspects leading to the same outcome, demonstrating the complexity of modern slavery and the necessity to consider multiple perspectives. Lastly, the thesis contributes to the fight against modern slavery by systematizing its findings and turning them into an assessment tool for the individual level of vulnerability. Reasoning in terms of vulnerabilities helps to fight the phenomenon from the point of view of social operators and policymakers. The assessment tool enhances standardized cooperation among NGOs, helpful to develop multiagency, and makes explicit where policies should focus to prevent structural favoritism of the various modern slavery exploitative dynamics.

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9. APPENDIX

9.1 Track of the interview

Interviews are held in Italian following the semi-structured track here reported in English. The order of the questions and the phrasing itself may change according to the development of the conversation and to the interest of the researcher in exploring possible additional explanatory elements. An oral introduction is always used to thank the interviewee and open the conversation about his or her experience. The track appears divided into sections: one main question introduces the theme, followed by specific questions, as reminders or follow-ups, to touch every aspect of interest.

- Let's start in medias res: how would you explain and define modern slavery?
- Can you please tell me about your job and the people you work with?

Migratory profile:

- Investigate individual characteristics, such as age, gender, nationality, family profile, education, marital status and language abilities
- Which is the most common migratory profile? Do people come from rural or urban areas?
- What are the migratory projects? What do people aim to do?
- Usually do people move alone or within organized routes with smugglers or traffickers?
- Are there any debt situations?
- Do people experience violence?
- How long is the migration and which paths are more common?
- What kind of residence permits are most common? Any common issues of waiting times or else?

Work and exploitation:

- What kind of jobs are most common? Is it connected to one's personal skills?
- Which are the main exploitative dimensions? Wage, hours, violence, what else?
- What about security and hygiene on the workplace?
- How do people find a job?
- Are there labour contracts? Are payments of wages respected?
- Is there any ethnic separation?
- What is the relationship among workers?

- Are workers surveilled?
- How is the relationship with the employer?
- How did Covid-19 affect labour exploitation?

Perception:

- What is the perception of migrant workers towards their labour condition? How do they make sense of labour treatments, why they accept, do they justify?
- What is the level of awareness over labour rights and mistreatment?
- Why cannot people find better off conditions?
- Is there solidarity among workers?
- When do people start fighting for better off conditions?

Sociality and services:

- What kind of social ties do migrant workers have?
- What about ethnic networks and how do they work?
- Do they often talk with their families?
- Where people live? What about the rent?
- How do people reach the workplace?
- What do migrant workers eat?
- Do they access health care services?
- How is perceived the police?
- Do they experience discrimination?

Policy analysis:

- In your opinion, which is the primary intervention or policy needed to fight this form of exploitation up to modern slavery?
- Any suggestion for other NGOs to interview?

Thank you

9.2 QCA

9.2.1 Code

```
#clean up
rm(list=ls())

#set working directory
setwd("C:/Users/Utente/OneDrive/Dottorato/QCA/Project from Rstudio Cloud ECPR/tesi")

#QCA packages
library(QCA)
library(SetMethods)

#data upload
data_matrix <- read.csv("data_matrix_csv.csv", header = T, sep = ";", row.names = "i..Var", dec = ",")

#change column rows
matrix_transposed <- data.frame(t(data_matrix))

#checking
names(matrix_transposed)
rownames(matrix_transposed)

#theoretical calibration
#summing the values

matrix_transposed$ID <- NA #empty variable
matrix_transposed$ID <-
matrix_transposed$ID_age+matrix_transposed$ID_ethnicity+matrix_transposed$ID_language+matrix_transposed$ID_fam_profile+matrix_transposed$ID_low_education+matrix_transposed$ID_rural_origin+matrix_transposed$ID_living_cond+matrix_transposed$ID_living_isolated+matrix_transposed$ID_lowaccess_health_police

matrix_transposed$MIG <- NA
matrix_transposed$MIG <- matrix_transposed$MIG_initial_investment +
matrix_transposed$MIG_fam_relation + matrix_transposed$MIG_debt +
matrix_transposed$MIG_economic_migrant + matrix_transposed$MIG_long_route +
matrix_transposed$MIG_SAI_unprotective + matrix_transposed$MIG_permits+
matrix_transposed$MIG_net_job_finding+matrix_transposed$MIG_ethnic_groupism+matrix_transposed$MIG_ethnic_rivalry+matrix_transposed$MIG_services_by_net

matrix_transposed$PER <- NA
matrix_transposed$PER <- matrix_transposed$PER_lack_alternatives +
matrix_transposed$PER_low_awareness_rights + matrix_transposed$PER_unaware_exploitation +
matrix_transposed$PER_comparison + matrix_transposed$PER_temporality +
matrix_transposed$PER_cult_exp + matrix_transposed$PER_no_solidarity +
matrix_transposed$PER_fear_consequences

matrix_transposed$DEP <- NA
```

```
matrix_transposed$DEP <- matrix_transposed$DEP_permits + matrix_transposed$DEP_wages +
matrix_transposed$DEP_transp + matrix_transposed$DEP_residence + matrix_transposed$DEP_friendship
+ matrix_transposed$DEP_immediacy_income
```

```
matrix_transposed$MACRO <- NA
matrix_transposed$MACRO <- matrix_transposed$MACRO_illegality_paralegality +
matrix_transposed$MACRO_criminality + matrix_transposed$MACRO_dark_contracts +
matrix_transposed$MACRO_systemic + matrix_transposed$MACRO_nomadism +
matrix_transposed$MACRO_gangmasters + matrix_transposed$MACRO_gangmaster_same_ethnicity +
matrix_transposed$MACRO_employer_awareness + matrix_transposed$MACRO_lack_controls +
matrix_transposed$MACRO_lack_multi.agency+matrix_transposed$MACRO_low_visibility_economic_sect
or
```

```
matrix_transposed$Y <- NA
matrix_transposed$Y <-
matrix_transposed$Y_payments+matrix_transposed$Y_hours+matrix_transposed$Y_pressure_abuse+matr
ix_transposed$Y_security_hygiene+matrix_transposed$Y_degrading_logic+matrix_transposed$Y_violence
```

#to see only totals

```
matrix_calibrated <- matrix_transposed[, c("ID", "MIG", "PER", "DEP", "MACRO", "Y")]
```

#calibrate with theoretical method. cut point is number of conditions divided by 4

#ID 9/4= 2.55, theoretical cut off are 2.55, 4.5, 6.75. Assign personally the values for each score

```
matrix_calibrated$IDcal <- NA #create empty variable to fill with theoretical calibration
matrix_calibrated$IDcal[matrix_calibrated$ID ==0|matrix_calibrated$ID ==1|matrix_calibrated$ID ==2] <-0
matrix_calibrated$IDcal[matrix_calibrated$ID ==3|matrix_calibrated$ID ==4]<-0.3
matrix_calibrated$IDcal[matrix_calibrated$ID ==5|matrix_calibrated$ID ==6]<-0.7
matrix_calibrated$IDcal[matrix_calibrated$ID ==7|matrix_calibrated$ID ==8 |matrix_calibrated$ID ==9]<-1
```

matrix_calibrated\$MIGcal <- NA #empty variable, cut offs at 2.75, 5.5 and 8.25

```
matrix_calibrated$MIGcal[matrix_calibrated$MIG ==0|matrix_calibrated$MIG ==1|matrix_calibrated$MIG
==2] <-0
matrix_calibrated$MIGcal[matrix_calibrated$MIG ==3|matrix_calibrated$MIG
==4|matrix_calibrated$MIG==5]<-0.3
matrix_calibrated$MIGcal[matrix_calibrated$MIG ==6|matrix_calibrated$MIG
==7|matrix_calibrated$MIG==8]<-0.7
matrix_calibrated$MIGcal[matrix_calibrated$MIG ==9|matrix_calibrated$MIG ==10
|matrix_calibrated$MIG ==11]<-1
```

matrix_calibrated\$PERcal <- NA #empty variable, cut offs at 2,4,6

```
matrix_calibrated$PERcal[matrix_calibrated$PER ==0|matrix_calibrated$PER ==1|matrix_calibrated$PER
==2] <-0
matrix_calibrated$PERcal[matrix_calibrated$PER ==3|matrix_calibrated$PER ==4]<-0.3
matrix_calibrated$PERcal[matrix_calibrated$PER ==5|matrix_calibrated$PER ==6]<-0.7
matrix_calibrated$PERcal[matrix_calibrated$PER ==7|matrix_calibrated$PER ==8]<-1
```

matrix_calibrated\$DEPcal <- NA #empty variable, cut offs at 1.5,3,4.5

```
matrix_calibrated$DEPcal[matrix_calibrated$DEP ==0|matrix_calibrated$DEP ==1] <-0
matrix_calibrated$DEPcal[matrix_calibrated$DEP ==2|matrix_calibrated$DEP ==3]<-0.3
matrix_calibrated$DEPcal[matrix_calibrated$DEP ==4]<-0.7
matrix_calibrated$DEPcal[matrix_calibrated$DEP ==5|matrix_calibrated$DEP ==6]<-1
```

```

matrix_calibrated$MACROcal <- NA #empty variable, cut offs at 2.75, 5.5 and 8.25
matrix_calibrated$MACROcal[matrix_calibrated$MACRO ==0|matrix_calibrated$MACRO
==1|matrix_calibrated$MACRO ==2] <-0
matrix_calibrated$MACROcal[matrix_calibrated$MACRO ==3|matrix_calibrated$MACRO
==4|matrix_calibrated$MACRO==5]<-0.3
matrix_calibrated$MACROcal[matrix_calibrated$MACRO ==6|matrix_calibrated$MACRO
==7|matrix_calibrated$MACRO==8]<-0.7
matrix_calibrated$MACROcal[matrix_calibrated$MACRO ==9|matrix_calibrated$MACRO ==10
|matrix_calibrated$MACRO ==11]<-1

matrix_calibrated$Ycal <- NA #empty variable, cut offs at 1.5,3,4.5
matrix_calibrated$Ycal[matrix_calibrated$Y ==0|matrix_calibrated$Y ==1] <-0
matrix_calibrated$Ycal[matrix_calibrated$Y ==2|matrix_calibrated$Y ==3]<-0.3
matrix_calibrated$Ycal[matrix_calibrated$Y ==4]<-0.7
matrix_calibrated$Ycal[matrix_calibrated$Y ==5|matrix_calibrated$Y ==6]<-1

#add row "After intervention" for Y=0
matrix_calibrated[nrow(matrix_calibrated)+1,]<-c(6, 9, 1, 2, 6, 0, 0.7, 1, 0, 0.3, 0.7, 0)
row.names(matrix_calibrated)[21]<-"After Intervention"

#Select new table with only calibrated data
matrix_clusters <- matrix_calibrated[, c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPcal", "MACROcal", "Ycal")]
print(matrix_clusters)

write.csv(matrix_clusters, "matrix with only clusters")

#To upload only the matrix with clusters
matrix_clusters <- read.csv("matrix with only clusters", header = TRUE, row.names = 1)

#histograms of calibrated data
hist(matrix_clusters$IDcal, breaks = 4)
hist(matrix_clusters$MIGcal, breaks = 4)
hist(matrix_clusters$PERcal, breaks = 4)
hist(matrix_clusters$DEPcal, breaks = 4)
hist(matrix_clusters$MACROcal, breaks = 4)
hist(matrix_clusters$Ycal, breaks = 4)
#the graphs shows how 0.5 are excluded by theoretical calibration. When 0 cases are absent, R does not
show the column

#see on graph raw and calibrated
plot(matrix_calibrated$ID,
      matrix_calibrated$IDcal,
      main = "Calibration of ID",
      xlab = "Raw score",
      ylab = "Calibrated score")
abline(h = 0.5,
       v = 4.50)
plot(matrix_calibrated$MIG,
      matrix_calibrated$MIGcal,
      main = "Calibration of MIG",
      xlab = "Raw score",

```

```

    ylab = "Calibrated score")
abline(h = 0.5,
      v = 5.5)
plot(matrix_calibrated$PER,
      matrix_calibrated$PERcal,
      main = "Calibration of PER",
      xlab = "Raw score",
      ylab = "Calibrated score")
abline(h = 0.5,
      v = 4)
plot(matrix_calibrated$DEP,
      matrix_calibrated$DEPcal,
      main = "Calibration of DEP",
      xlab = "Raw score",
      ylab = "Calibrated score")
abline(h = 0.5,
      v = 3)
plot(matrix_calibrated$MACRO,
      matrix_calibrated$MACROcal,
      main = "Calibration of MACRO",
      xlab = "Raw score",
      ylab = "Calibrated score")
abline(h = 0.5,
      v = 5.5)
plot(matrix_calibrated$Y,
      matrix_calibrated$Ycal,
      main = "Calibration of OUTCOME (Y)",
      xlab = "Raw score",
      ylab = "Calibrated score")
abline(h = 0.5,
      v = 3)

```

#checks

```

skew.check(matrix_clusters$IDcal)
skew.check(matrix_clusters$MIGcal)
skew.check(matrix_clusters$PERcal)
skew.check(matrix_clusters$DEPcal)
skew.check(matrix_clusters$MACROcal)
skew.check(matrix_clusters$Y)

```

#----- NECESSITY -----

```

QCAfit(x = matrix_clusters[,c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPcal", "MACROcal")],
      y = matrix_clusters$Ycal)

```

```

SUIN <- superSubset(data = matrix_clusters,
  outcome = "Ycal",
  conditions = c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPcal", "MACROcal"),
  ron.cut = 0.4,
  cov.cut = 0.6,
  incl.cut = 0.9,
  depth = 2)

```

SUIN

#ron should be set to 0.4 because there are no combination with 0.6 nor 0.5. It is too low and gives too many SUINS

```
QCAfit(x = matrix_clusters[,0:5],  
      y = 1-matrix_calibrated$Ycal)
```

#the only condition of necessity not to experience Y is MIG

#nonsense

```
SUIN_nonY <- superSubset(data = matrix_clusters,  
                        outcome = "~Ycal",  
                        conditions = c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPcal", "MACROcal"),  
                        ron.cut = 0.5,  
                        cov.cut = 0.6,  
                        incl.cut = 0.9,  
                        depth = 2)
```

SUIN_nonY

#no result

#-----SUFFICIENCY FOR Y & CONSERVATIVE SOLUTION-----

```
CONS_SOL <- truthTable(matrix_clusters,  
                      outcome = "Ycal",  
                      conditions= c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPcal", "MACROcal"),  
                      incl.cut = 0.8,  
                      pri.cut = 0.51,  
                      n.cut=1,  
                      show.cases = TRUE,  
                      complete = T,  
                      sort.by = c("OUT", "incl"))
```

CONS_SOL

#LOGICAL MINIMIZATION WITH CONSERVATIVE SOLUTION

```
minimized_table <- minimize(CONS_SOL, include = 1, details=TRUE, show.cases=TRUE , use.tilde=T,  
row.dome = T)  
minimized_table
```

#checks

```
minimized_table$PIchart
```

#graphical representation

```
pimplot(data = matrix_clusters, results = minimized_table, outcome = "Ycal", jitter = T, all_labels = T)
```

#----- SUFFICIENCY FOR ~Y & cons sol -----

```
CONS_SOL_NONY <- truthTable(matrix_clusters,  
                            outcome = "~Ycal",  
                            conditions= c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPcal", "MACROcal"),
```

```

incl.cut = 0.8,
pri.cut = 0.51,
n.cut=1,
show.cases = TRUE,
complete = T,
sort.by = c("OUT","incl")

```

CONS_SOL_NONY

```

minimized_table_NONY <- minimize(CONS_SOL_NONY, include = 1, details=TRUE, show.cases=TRUE ,
use.tilde=TRUE, row.dome = T)
minimized_table_NONY
minimized_table_NONY$Pchart

```

#-----ALTERNATIVE QCA SOLUTIONS-----

#USING LOGICAL REMAINDERS
#include outcome ? from truth table

#MOST PARIMONIOUS SOLUTION

```

minimized_table_2 <- minimize(CONS_SOL, details=TRUE, show.cases=TRUE , use.tilde=TRUE, include = "?",
row.dome = T)
minimized_table_2
minimized_table_2$Pchart
minimized_table_2$SA

```

#INTERMEDIATE SOLUTION

```

minimized_table_3 <- minimize(CONS_SOL, details=TRUE, show.cases=TRUE , use.tilde=TRUE, include = "?",
dir.exp = "IDcal, MIGcal, PERcal, DEPCal, MACROcal", row.dom = TRUE)
minimized_table_3
minimized_table_3$SA
minimized_table_3$PI

```

#-----non Y -----

```

minimized_table_2_NONY<-minimize(CONS_SOL_NONY, include = "?", details=TRUE, show.cases=TRUE ,
use.tilde=TRUE, row.dome = T)
minimized_table_2_NONY
minimized_table_2_NONY$SA
minimized_table_2_NONY$Pchart

```

```

minimized_table_3_NONY<-minimize(CONS_SOL_NONY, include = "?", details=TRUE, show.cases=TRUE ,
use.tilde=TRUE, row.dome = T,
dir.exp = "IDcal, MIGcal, PERcal, DEPCal, MACROcal")
minimized_table_3_NONY
minimized_table_3_NONY$SA
minimized_table_3_NONY$Pchart

```

#ENHANCED STANRDA ANALYSIS (to apply to the best solution dealing with logical remainders)

Identify contradictory simplifying assumptions:

```

CSA <- LR.intersect(minimized_table_3, minimized_table_3_NONY)

```

CSA

#one contradictory row, number 12!

```
ESA<- esa(oldtt = CONS_SOL_NONY, contrad_rows = c(CSA))
```

ESA

#remake minimization for non Y

```
minimized_table_3_NONY_esa <- minimize(ESA, details=TRUE, show.cases=TRUE, use.tilde=TRUE, include  
= "?", row.dome=T,
```

```
dir.exp = "IDcal, MIGcal, PERcal, DEPCal, MACROcal", row.dom = TRUE)
```

```
minimized_table_3_NONY_esa
```

#ROBUSTNESS TESTS

#Determine sensitivity to qualitative calibration choices

```
matrix_calibrated_syntethic <- matrix_calibrated[, c("ID", "MIG", "PER", "DEP", "MACRO", "Y")]
```

#compare calibrated to cluster

```
rob.calibrange( raw.data = matrix_calibrated_syntethic,  
calib.data = matrix_clusters,  
test.cond.raw = "ID",  
test.cond.calib = "IDcal",  
test.thresholds = c(2.55, 4.5, 6.75),  
type = "fuzzy",  
steps= 1, #equal UNIT OF ADDITION  
max.runs = 9, #equal MAX OF VALUE  
outcome = "Ycal",  
conditions = c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPCal", "MACROcal"),  
incl.cut = 0.8,  
n.cut = 1,  
include = "?")
```

```
rob.calibrange( raw.data = matrix_calibrated_syntethic,  
calib.data = matrix_clusters,  
test.cond.raw = "MIG",  
test.cond.calib = "MIGcal",  
test.thresholds = c(2.75, 5.5, 8.25),  
type = "fuzzy",  
steps= 1,  
max.runs = 11,  
outcome = "Ycal",  
conditions = c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPCal", "MACROcal"),  
incl.cut = 0.8,  
n.cut = 1,  
include = "?")
```

```
rob.calibrange( raw.data = matrix_calibrated_syntethic,  
calib.data = matrix_clusters,  
test.cond.raw = "PER",  
test.cond.calib = "PERcal",  
test.thresholds = c(2, 4, 6),  
type = "fuzzy",
```

```

steps= 1,
max.runs = 8,
outcome = "Ycal",
conditions = c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPcal", "MACROcal"),
incl.cut = 0.8,
n.cut = 1,
include = "?")

```

```

rob.calibrange( raw.data = matrix_calibrated_syntethic,
calib.data = matrix_clusters,
test.cond.raw = "DEP",
test.cond.calib = "DEPcal",
test.thresholds = c(1.5, 3, 4.5),
type = "fuzzy",
steps= 1,
max.runs = 6,
outcome = "Ycal",
conditions = c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPcal", "MACROcal"),
incl.cut = 0.8,
n.cut = 1,
include = "?")

```

```

rob.calibrange( raw.data = matrix_calibrated_syntethic,
calib.data = matrix_clusters,
test.cond.raw = "MACRO",
test.cond.calib = "MACROcal",
test.thresholds = c(2.75, 5.5, 8.25),
type = "fuzzy",
steps= 1,
max.runs = 11,
outcome = "Ycal",
conditions = c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPcal", "MACROcal"),
incl.cut = 0.8,
n.cut = 1,
include = "?")

```

```

rob.calibrange( raw.data = matrix_calibrated_syntethic,
calib.data = matrix_clusters,
test.cond.raw = "Y",
test.cond.calib = "Ycal",
test.thresholds = c(1.5, 3, 4.5),
type = "fuzzy",
steps= 1,
max.runs = 6,
outcome = "Ycal",
conditions = c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPcal", "MACROcal"),
incl.cut = 0.8,
n.cut = 1,
include = "?")

```

#determine consistency range

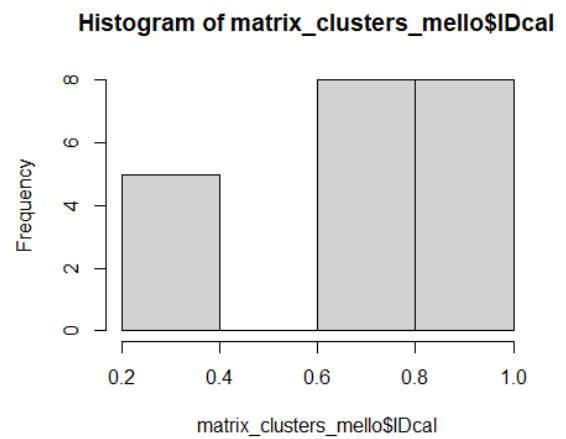
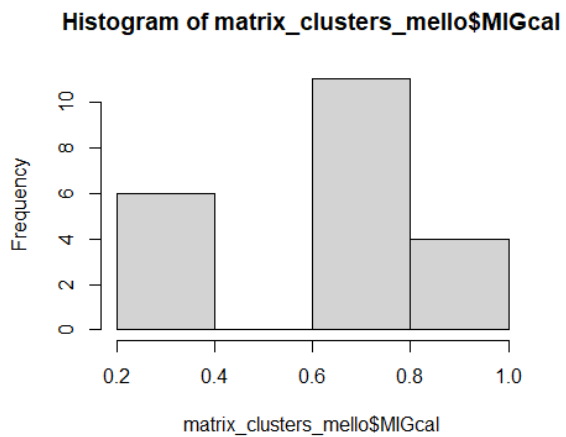
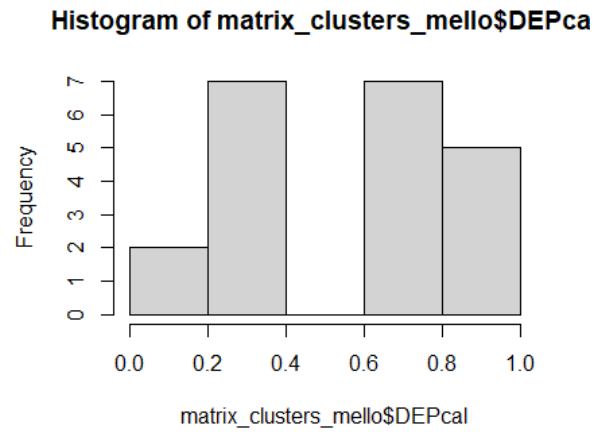
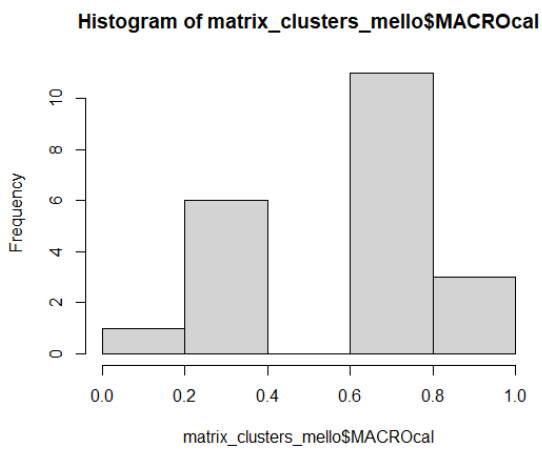
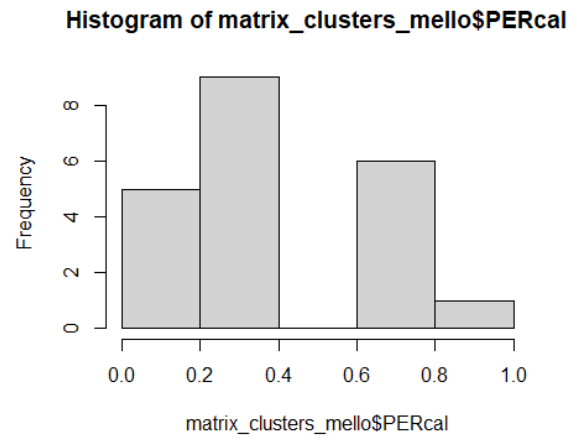
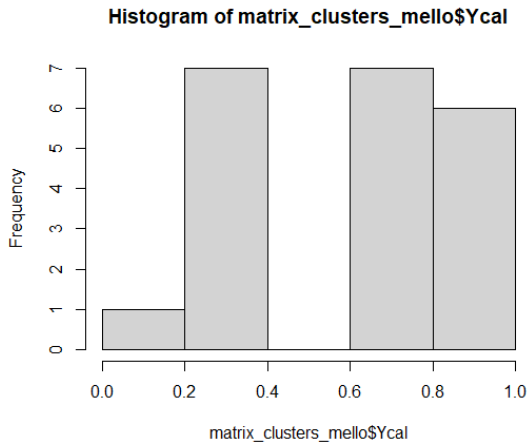

```
rob.inclrange(data = matrix_clusters,  
  steps = 0.01,  
  max.runs = 20,  
  outcome = "Ycal",  
  conditions = c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPcal", "MACROcal"),  
  incl.cut = 0.8,  
  n.cut = 1,  
  include = "?")
```

#determine frequency range cut-offs

```
rob.ncutrange(data = matrix_clusters,  
  step = 1,  
  max.runs = 20,  
  outcome = "Ycal",  
  conditions = c("IDcal", "MIGcal", "PERcal", "DEPcal", "MACROcal"),  
  incl.cut = 0.8,  
  n.cut = 1,  
  include = "?")
```

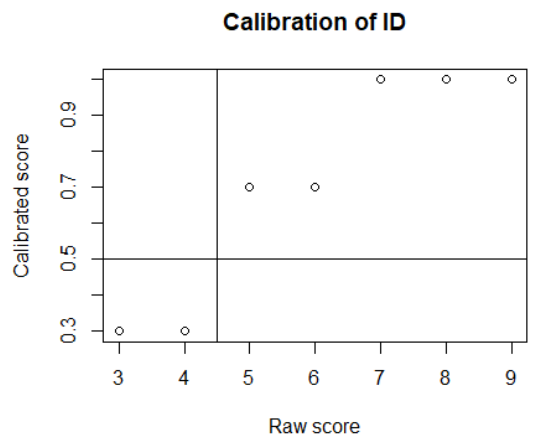
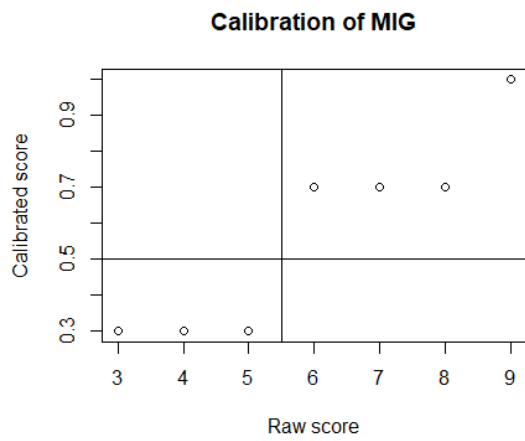
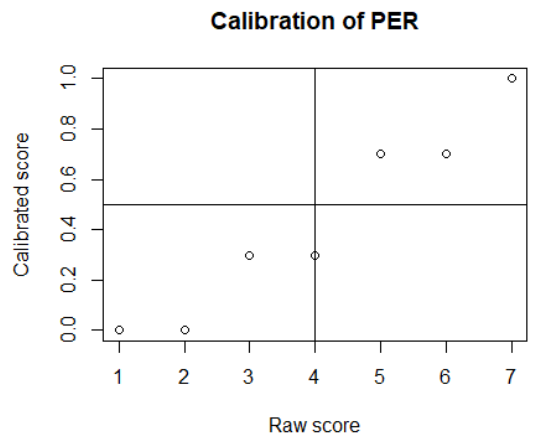
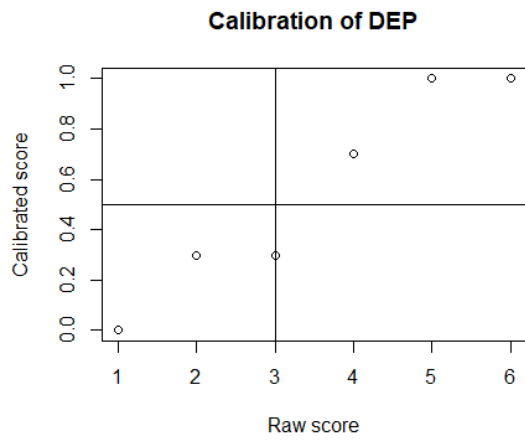
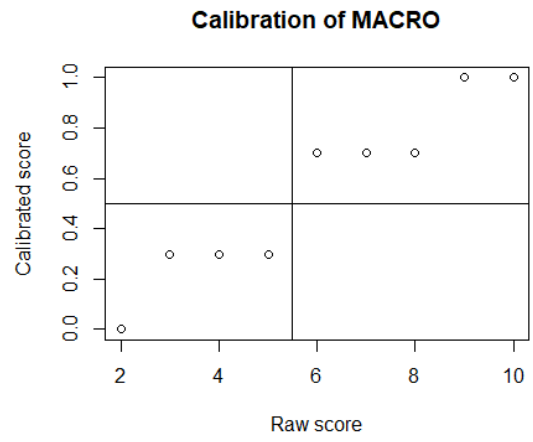
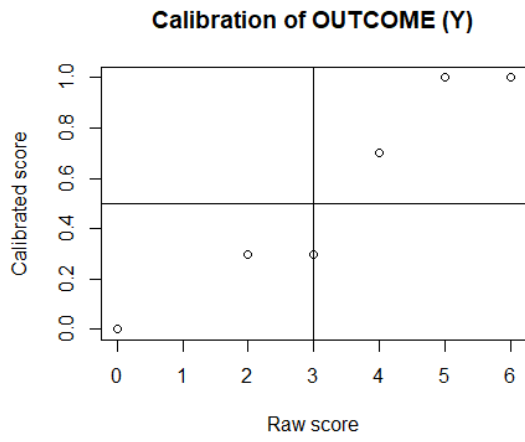
#end

9.2.2 Distribution of calibrated data¹⁵⁰



¹⁵⁰ Histograms show absence of the 0.5 values, which is required for fuzzy-set QCA.

9.2.3 XY plots for row and calibrated data



9.2.4 Robustness test

Sensitivity Ranges				
Conditions		Lower bound	Empirica anchors	Upper bound
ID	Full inclusion	6.75	6.75	NA
	Crossover	4.5	4.5	4.5
	Full exclusion	NA	2.55	3.55
MIG	Full inclusion	8.25	8.25	10.25
	Crossover	5.5	5.5	5.5
	Full exclusion	NA	2.75	2.75
PER	Full inclusion	5	6	6
	Crossover	4	4	4
	Full exclusion	NA	2	3
DEP	Full inclusion	3.5	4.5	6.5
	Crossover	3	3	3
	Full exclusion	NA	1.5	2.5
MACRO	Full inclusion	6.25	8.25	11.25
	Crossover	5.5	5.5	6.5
	Full exclusion	-4.25	2.75	4.75
Y (outcome)	Full inclusion	3.5	4.5	NA
	Crossover	3	3	3
	Full exclusion	-0.5	1.5	1.5
Consistency range		-	-	-
Frequency range		1	1	1

9.3 Vulnerability assessment tool – background document

Name and job of the subject:						
CONDITIONS	CONDITIONS EXPLANATION	GUIDELINES		PRESENCE (Fully present/somewhat present/Not quite present/absent)	PROTECTIVE WHEN ABSENT?	SPJ COMMENTS
		QUESTIONS	NOTE			
			ONLY MALES			
Y_payments	Low payments contrary to law	How much do you earn?	Ex-post check compliance with minimum legal standards		n.a.	Comment
Y_hours	Long working hours contrary to law	How many hours do you work?	Ex-post check compliance with minimum legal standards		n.a.	Comment
Y_pressure_abuse	Security and hygienic conditions contrary to law (on workplace)	Security briefings, covid procedures have ever been made? Is the environment clean?			n.a.	Comment
Y_security_hygiene	Employees treated as mere productive factor	Would you describe the workplace as a tense, stressed, discriminatory environment or as relaxed and friendly?			n.a.	Comment
Y_degrading_logic	Intimidating working environment, surveillance	Are there controllers on the job place? Are they a factor of stress?			n.a.	Comment
Y_violence	Both psychological or physical	Have you ever experienced insults, blackmails, threats or violence?			n.a.	Comment
OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF CLUSTER		Is the subject exploited up to modern slavery?	<i>Specify pros and cons, and eventual possible actions for social intervention</i>			Comment
ID_age	Medium age	What is your age?			no	Comment
ID_ethnicity	Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sub-saharian Africa, Est-Europe, north-Africa	Where do you come from?	Note eventual mismatch with professional judgement		no	Comment
ID_language	Low language ability	Do you speak fluently Italian?			yes	Comment
ID_fam_profile	First son, young father, family group migration	Who are the members of your family?			no	Comment
ID_low_education	Low instruction	What is your higher degree of instruction?			yes	Comment
ID_rural_origin	Rural residence in hometown	Do you come from a city or the countryside?			no	Comment
ID_living_cond	Owner's overpopulated property/ghetto/makeshift shelter/camp/rural borgo	Where do you live?			yes	Comment
ID_living_isolated	Residence isolates workers	How close is your residence to the city?			no	Comment
ID_lowaccess_health_police	Low access to healthcare or police (alternative condition)	Do you trust going to the hospital? Do you trust going to the police?	Even one dimension is considered enough for the purposes of measuring low access to the services; trust is intended as absence of fear of negative consequences.			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF CLUSTER		Is the subject a typical modern slave profile?	<i>Specify pros and cons, and eventual possible actions for social intervention</i>		yes	Comment
MIG_initial_investment	High investment from family or community	Who paid for your trip to come here?			no	Comment
MIG_fam_relation	Strong ties vehiculates pressure and fake image of migrant	Are you close to your family? How often do you hear from them?	Note if employer is debtor		no	Comment
MIG_debt	Presence of debt	Have you or have you ever had any debt? Do you work for somebody that you have to repay?			no	Comment
MIG_economic_migrant	Reason for migration	What are your plans for your stay in Italy?	Note if Italy is not destination country. If yes, investigate why.		no	Comment
MIG_long_route	Passing through third countries	What states did you travel through? Did you experience exploitation or violence?	Violence calls for violence, setting low expectations/standards		yes	Comment
MIG_SAI_unprotective	Second level reception system is not protective	If you have been hosted in Italian public structures or programmes, what kind of jobs were you offered?	Investigate eventual jobs offer either from inside and outside the programme. Note if reception programmes' activities are positively described. Note if never experienced and why.		yes	Comment
MIG_permits	Migratory status either undocumented, irregular or asylum request	What is your permit status?			no	Comment
MIG_net_job_finding	Netwok used for unqualified job finding	How did you find your job, is there somebody that helped you out? Is your job connected to your past labour skills?			depends on how	Comment
MIG_ethnic_groupism	Sense of belonging and acting together	Do you follow religious or social events?	Investigate if his sociality is other than the one on the job or if it is limited to the ethnicism		no	Comment
MIG_ethnic_rivalry	Competition for workplaces	Do you think that people from other ethnic groups may steal your job?			no	Comment
MIG_services_by_net	Public services used according to network's guide and frauds	When you need to deal with an administrative problem, do you ask advices to your countrymen under payment?			yes	Comment
OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF CLUSTER		Has the subject a vulnerable migratory background?	<i>Specify pros and cons, and eventual possible actions for social intervention</i>			Comment
PER_lack_alternatives	Workers believe they have no other option	Would you say you had luck finding this job? May you easily find others?			yes	Comment
PER_low_awareness_rights	Workers do not know their rights	Does your contract cover all hours you work? What about holidays and health permits?			yes	Comment
PER_unaware_exploitation	Workers do not identify as exploited	Do you consider yourself exploited?			yes	Comment
PER_comparison	Labour standards based on previous experiences	Can you compare your present day job to your past experiences?	Understand if comparison is meaningful to the subject		yes	Comment
PER_temporality	Exploitation is a period of time unavoidable	For how long do you think you are going to do this job?			yes	Comment
PER_cult_exp	Strong migratory mandate whose failure drives deep frustration	How would you feel if you cannot send home money?			yes	Comment
PER_no_solidarity	Workers do not help one another, strong individualism	Did your coworkers ever help you out with problems on the job?	Note if subject specifies ethnicity of workers		yes	Comment
PER_fear_consequences	Report fear of anything related to the State	In case you need medical care, help with services, courses, or info on permits, would you ask to a public office or to who?	Note if the subject asks to the employer or ethnic network			
OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF CLUSTER		Is the subject culturally pushed to homolagate and accept exploitative conditions?	<i>Specify pros and cons, and eventual possible actions for social intervention.</i>		yes	Comment

DEP_permits	Permits linked to exploiter or network	Have you ever being blackmailed over your job position or contract in relation to your permit of stay?			yes	Comment
DEP_wages	Wages withheld by exploiter and/or used to pay services	Have you ever being blackmailed with late payments of salary?			yes	Comment
DEP_transp	Transportation to work depends on exploiter	Does the employer drive you to work?			yes	Comment
DEP_residence	Residence is owned by exploiter	Do you live in a place owned/provided by your employer?			yes	Comment
DEP_friendship	Exploiter is a friend	Has the employer ever done you a favor as a friend?			yes	Comment
DEP_immediacy_income	Cannot leave place of work without new job	Would you be able to stop working for a period of time to learn a new job and the Italian language?	Note how the employer is described		no	Comment
OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF CLUSTER		Is the subject easy to blackmail?	<i>Specify pros and cons, and eventual possible actions for social intervention</i>		Comment	
MACRO_illegality_paralegality	Job sector sees high level of illegal or paralegal practices	Do you think activities of your employers are all legal?	Ex-post integrate with professional evaluation over job sector in general		no	Comment
MACRO_criminality	Job sector sees high level of organized crime	Is there any drug or illicit traffik organized by criminal gangs?	Ex-post integrate with professional evaluation over job sector in general		no	Comment
MACRO_dark_contracts	Job sector sees grey or black contracts	The majority of your colleagues have a labour contract?			no	Comment
MACRO_systemic	Exploitation conditions are the norm	Do you know other possibilities for a migrant worker to have better labour conditions?				Comment
MACRO_nomadism	Workers move for seasonality	How often do you change job and place where you work? Do you move your residence when you do so?			no	Comment
MACRO_gangmasters	Presence of gangmasters	Is there somebody that finds and organizes workers for the boss?			no	Comment
MACRO_gangmaster_same_ethnicity	The gangmaster (or exploiter) also mediates cultural expectations	Is the gang-master your same ethnicity?			no	Comment
MACRO_employer_awareness	Employer knows vulnerability factors and discriminates workers	Do you think employers knows how to pay the least possible his or her workers?	This should be posed to seem not focused on his particular experience, but as an evaluation of reality in general. It is to be read net of perception bias exposed above.		no	Comment
MACRO_lack_controls	Labour inspections and controls are poor	Have you ever met a labour inspector?			yes	Comment
MACRO_lack_multi-agency	Multi-agency is deficient	Have you ever met somebody from the Union or any public or private institution helping workers?			yes	Comment
MACRO_low_visibility_economic_sector	Economic sector favorable to hide exploitative practices	Is your jobplace visible?			no	Comment
OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF CLUSTER		Is the socio-economic environment favoring exploitation?	<i>Specify pros and cons, and eventual possible actions for social intervention</i>		Comment	
ID*MIG*DEP	WARNING COMBINATIONS	Is the combination present?	Ex-post calculate if the combinations are present		Comment	
~ID*MIG*PER**MACRO		ibidem			Comment	
ID**MIG**PER**MACRO		ibidem			Comment	
ID*MIG**PER**MACRO		ibidem			Comment	
ID*PER**DEP**MACRO		ibidem			Comment	
MIGPER**DEP**MACRO		ibidem			Comment	
~ID**MIG*PER**~DEP**MACRO		ibidem			Comment	
OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF COMBINATIONS					Comment	
OVERALL ASSESSMENT		Describe the main vulnerabilities and their combinations			Comment	
		Describe the main points of resilience			Comment	
		Does the subject posses any degree of empowerment?			Comment	
		Is the subject in need to enter a programme?			Comment	
		Is the subject willing and able to enter a programme?			Comment	
		Overall actions of help			Comment	