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A Multidisciplinary Exploration of Human Trafficking Solutions

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"Boys Are Like Gold": The Gendered Differences in Sexual Violence Against Street-Involved Children in Southwest Cambodia

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Abstract

This paper explores findings from interviews with 130 children (55 girls and 75 boys) living or working on the streets and beaches in Sihanoukville, Cambodia and discusses their vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation and other forms of violence. The paper finds that while both genders indicate significant vulnerability to various forms of violence and exploitation, boys indicate experiencing higher rates of sexual violence and seem to be afforded greater independence and less supervision and protection by parents and guardians. In addressing these issues, this paper aims to add nuance to discussions on the vulnerabilities of street-involved males in Southeast Asia.

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Introduction

Emancipatory discourse on gender and violence has traditionally focused on the plight of women and girls and fought for their liberation from oppressive patriarchal structures. This discourse is vital and has rightly transformed thinking about the victimization of women, demonstrating its rootedness in regressive gender norms[1], which are inevitably linked with violence[2]. While feminist analysis has advanced significantly from its genesis, emphasizing equity, inclusion, and intersectionality, the conceptualization of men as perpetrators and women as victims remains the dominant paradigm for sexual victimization[3]. Patriarchal assumptions further attribute greater agency and resilience among male survivors of sexual violence and assume them to be less in need of support[4]. As a result, there has been a dearth of research and discourse around the sexual victimization of males and how regressive masculine identities and cultural assumptions affect and influence the identification of men and boys as vulnerable persons. Many of these assumptions have been codified into social policy and international agreements. For instance, the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Article 93) cites adolescent girls to be "both biologically and psychosocially more vulnerable than boys to sexual abuse, violence, and prostitution..."[5]. As a meaningful marker of human rights, the Beijing Declaration has greatly influenced political and social discourse on Violence Against Children (VAC).

While contemporary feminist analysis has significantly advanced since the Beijing conference, emphasizing inclusion and intersectionality, the concept of victimization has

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[1] Stemple and Meyer. "The Sexual Victimization of Men in America: New Data Challenge Old Assumptions," *American Journal of Public Health* 104, no. 6 (2014): e19-e26.

[2] Heilman, B. "Masculine Norms and Violence: Making the Connections." (2018): Washington, DC: Promundo-US.

[3] Stemple and Meyer. "The Sexual Victimization of Men in America: New Data Challenge Old Assumptions," *American Journal of Public Health* 104, no. 6 (2014): e19-e26.

[4] Dennis, J. P. "Women are victims, men make choices: the invisibility of men and boys in the global sex trade", *Gender Issues* 25, (2008): 11–25.

[5] United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women*. 1995. Accessed 12 October 2019.

remained overwhelmingly female[6]. As a result, discourse, research, and interventions around the victimization of boys and young men have been relatively overlooked.

Aftercare services for survivors are often embedded in maternal health programs or gender-based violence services, which can prevent males from seeking services[7]. Social welfare and health practitioners often lack the training and sensitization needed to identify and care for male survivors[8]. In addition, cultural narratives assume male victims to be less impacted by victimization and often minimize experiences and associated traumas that demonstrate males to be vulnerable[9].

A familiar Cambodian proverb reads "boys are like gold, and girls are like a piece of white linen". It goes on to suggest that if the gold falls into the mud, it is easily wiped clean, whereas the white linen, once muddied, is ruined forever. This proverb shows that for girls who are sexually abused and lose their virginity their lives are ruined forever, a damning attitude which leaves girls vulnerable and feeling hopeless. However the authors, alongside others advocating for the understanding of sexual abuse of boys. believe that the proverb can also be used to help illustrate that in contrast to girls, boys who are sexually abused are expected to stop crying, to get up and "be a man". This leaves boys vulnerable because they are not expected to be negatively impacted so little help is available to them to recover.

Street-children (or street-involved children) are particularly vulnerable to being exploited for the work they can do, which, despite being child labour and hence depriving them of their childhood and education[10], is often necessary for the survival of their families. Due to filial piety[11], they are commonly obliged to participate in the worst forms of child labor, including child sexual exploitation (CSE). Although they may ostensibly be collecting recyclables or selling items such as shells, clothes, and other trinkets, they are vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation by both tourists and locals.

Boys (under the age of 18) and young men (18-24) are especially vulnerable in this context in that they are often ascribed with a greater degree of agency and resiliency, and avoid identification as vulnerable persons. Such assumption of resilience run contrary to a growing

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[6] Stemple and Meyer. "The Sexual Victimization of Men in America: New Data Challenge Old Assumptions," *American Journal of Public Health* 104, no. 6 (2014): e19-e26.

[7] Ramadan, "Too Many Barriers: Associations Between the Setup of Sexual Violence Care Programmes and Access for Male Victims [version 1; not peer reviewed]," *F1000Research* 6, no. 905 (2017).

[8] Von Hohendorff, Habigzang, and Koller. ""A Boy, Being a Victim, Nobody Really Buys That, You Know?": Dynamics of Sexual Violence Against Boys," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 70, (2017): 53-64.

[9] Von Hohendorff, Habigzang, and Koller, "A Boy, Being a Victim, Nobody Really Buys That, You Know?," 2017

[10] Council for the Welfare of Children, UNICEF. "Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse," *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 2017. Accessed 30 April 2020.

[11]Filial piety is a collectivist cultural value, which draws its roots from neo-confucianism and underpins much of modern Asian culture to varying degrees. It is especially seen within families in rural communities throughout the Greater-Mekong Subregion. In practice, it may appear as a very deeply-seated sense of loyalty or duty to one's family, which often supersedes the needs or even wellbeing of the individual.

body of information demonstrating a range vulnerabilities to various forms of modern slavery, including being forced by threats or violence to work for little or no pay, and lacking power to control what work they do or where they do it.

In addition to the risks and challenges posed by traditional gender assumptions, street-involved children are among some of the most vulnerable to CSE. Children living or working on the streets commonly lack access to local social and health services and thus possess greater vulnerabilities to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse[12].

Despite these realities, most empirical data on CSE in low- and middle-income countries come from UNICEF global databases (based on a series of international survey programs) or UNICEF population studies on VAC. These databases rely on interviews with children in households or schools, which commonly overlook the majority of street-involved children, as they are often outside of schools and households[13]. Thus, research and policy commonly overlook their needs.

In response, this paper aims to explore the disaggregated experiences of male and female street-involved children in Sihanoukville, Cambodia. Particular attention will be paid to street-involved boys to provide a better understanding of their specific needs and vulnerabilities.

In Cambodia, in addition to numerous vulnerabilities to physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional violence, the rapidly expanding gap between the country's rich and poor has led to increasing forms of structural violence and exploitation[14,15], particularly against street-involved groups. While these forms of violence are not the focus of the present study, future research is needed to understand street-involved children's vulnerability within the context of these larger systems of violence.

Structural violence or "structural inequality" leads to vulnerability, which in turn can lead to sexual exploitation. This has shaped a number of factors within the context of Southeast Asia, including globalization, poverty, neoliberal development, patriarchy and fatalism. Globalization is a product and driver of increasing capitalism, leading to a wider gap between rich and poor and resulting in oppression of vulnerable groups, including modern day slavery. Out of this context, poverty is created and sustained by regional and international pressure to produce cheap garments and textiles, which is the main export industry. Neoliberal development has led to further acceptability of new sexual norms and pornography. However, persistent traditional religious and cultural values sustain paternalistic hierarchies and fatalism, which lead

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[12] Woan, Lin, and Auerswald. "The Health Status of Street Children and Youth in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 53, no. 3 (2013): 314-321.

[13] Marshall and Wood. "Sex Work and Sex Exchange Among Street Children: An Urgent Need for a Global Response," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 44, no. 3 (2009): 201-202.

[14] Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167-191.

[15] Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990): 291-305..

to domineering power structures (such as filial piety) within families and the broader community[16].

Gender and vulnerability

As in most regions around the world, families, and communities in Cambodia often overlook the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys[17]. This neglect is commonly due to a traditional narrative which assumes boys to be more capable of protecting themselves in comparison to girls. This can potentially place them at higher risk of abuse or exploitation, as they are often afforded less vigilance and care because of these beliefs[18]. Such conceptions of masculinity can further complicate the issue of sexual violence against males. Frederick found that such conceptions reinforce the idea that males are inherently "stronger" and thus more able to protect themselves and more psychologically resilient to trauma than adolescent girls[19]. Although Frederick's research is based in South Asia, this pattern appears to be familiar to Southeast Asia as well, as both areas have similar cultural understandings of masculinity. Despite these commonly held beliefs, studies have found boys to be less resilient than females due to gender expectations that inhibit boys from expressing their emotions[20].

Furthermore, recent large-scale population studies in Cambodia and the Philippines have found childhood experiences of sexual violence against males to be equal or even higher than that of females[21]. In the Cambodian study, more than 6.4% of females and 5.2% of males (aged 13 to 17 years) reported at least one experience of childhood sexual abuse. However, 5.6% of males and 4.4% of females (aged 18 to 24 years) report at least one experience of sexual abuse occurring before the age of 18. In the Philippine study (2016), among all young people aged 13 to 24 years, 24.7% of males and 18.2% of females cite at least one experience of sexual violence before the age of 18 years.

Hilton et al. (2008) explore many misconceptions surrounding the causes and effects of male victimization among social service providers in Cambodia. A few of these misconceptions

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[16] Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," 1969; Galtung, "Cultural Violence," 1990.

[17] Hilton et al., *I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys*. Phnom Penh: World Vision Cambodia, 2008. Accessed 30 April 2020.

[18] Frederick, *Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Boys in South Asia: A Review of Research Findings, Legislation, Policy and Program Responses*. Florence: UNICEF, 2010.

[19] Frederick, "Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Boys in South Asia," 2010, 7.

[20] Bautista, *Working with Abused Children: from the Lenses of Resilience and Contextualization*. Quezon City: Save the Children Sweden; UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies; UP CIDS Psychosocial Trauma and Human Rights Program, 2001; Affleck, Glass, and Macdonald, "The Limitations of Language," *American Journal of Men's Health* 7, no. 2 (2012): 155-162.

[21] Council for the Welfare of Children, UNICEF. *Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey*, 2013. Accessed 30 April 2020; Council for the Welfare of Children, UNICEF. *National Baseline Study on Violence Against Children in the Philippine*s, 2016. Accessed 30 April 2020.

include beliefs that sexual abuse of boys is rare and not harmful, that it is not abuse if money is exchanged, that it is not possible for two men to have sex, and that it is abuse only if the boy ejaculates[22]. While it is true that, in recent years, Phnom Penh has seen much social and cultural development, many traditional mores still strongly persist throughout the rural areas from which many street-involved children are migrating[23]. Cambodian boys becoming young men is a time of new responsibilities, bodily change, and burgeoning sexual feelings, but also limited sources of support and guidance. Because of this, some may believe that they need to conform to excessive alcohol use and violence modeled by older brothers, uncles, and fathers in their environments[24].

Counter to these beliefs, the first Cambodian study focusing on gender differentials of sexual abuse[25] found that nearly one-fifth (18.9%) of boys and 13.5% of girls said they were touched on the genitals after the age of nine years old. Nearly two percent (1.8%) of boys and 0.6% of girls (20% declining response) said they had a direct experience of child rape by an adult and 23.5% of boys (2% declining response) and 21.4% of girls (1% declining response) said they had witnessed the rape of another child by an adult. As Miles and Thomas (2007) suggest, these figures "should be read in the context of extreme shame and embarrassment surrounding such experiences", including those who declined to respond.

More recently, a Cambodian household study on violence against children found 4.4% of females and 5.6% of males (aged 18 to 24) reported at least one incidence of sexual abuse before the age of 18 years old[26]. A later study highlighted many risk factors for sexual violence including low levels of education, exposure to poverty, separation or death of parents or critical family members, and domestic violence, with many male victims describing leaving home to live on the streets at a young age to avoid violence within their home or communities or to earn money for their families[27].

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[22] Hilton, Alastair, Sokhem Kong, Socheat Nong, Syphat Oung, Channy Sok, Sothearwat Seoung, Ponarry Teng, Vibol Long, and Dalin Meng. "I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys." World Vision Cambodia, 2008. Accessed 30 April 2020.

[23] Davis and Miles, "'I Want to Be Brave': A Baseline Study on the Vulnerabilities of Street-Working Boys to Sexual Exploitation in Sihanoukville, Cambodia," *Love146*, 2015. Accessed 30 April 2020.

[24] Scandurra et al., "Cambodian Boys' Transitions into Young Adulthood: Exploring the Influence of Societal and Masculinity Norms on Young Men's Health," *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 19, no. 7 (2016): 767-780.

[25] Miles and Thomas, "Don't Grind an Egg Against a Stone: Children's Rights and Violence in Cambodian History and Culture," *Child Abuse Review* 16, no. 6 (2007): 383-400.

[26] Von Hohendorff, Habigzang, and Koller, "A Boy, Being a Victim, Nobody Really Buys That, You Know?," 2017

[27] Hilton et al., "I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys," 2008.

There are unique barriers to boys and young men disclosing experiencees of sexual violence, which have been well-documented[28]. Von Hohendorff[29] defines a series of key barriers to male disclosure, including personal, interpersonal, and sociocultural/sociopolitical barriers. Personal barriers include instances in which a victim does not disclose due to intentional avoidance or an unwillingness to name the experience as abuse due to shame or concerns related to sexual identity or orientation. Interpersonal barriers stem from fears of negative repercussions to (or from) personal relationships. This can include fears of isolation, disbelief or discrimination from others, or threats from an abuser. Lastly, sociocultural/sociopolitical barriers include instances in which a male does not disclose because sexual victimization goes against the expectations of masculinity, because there is a lack of services for males or venues in which a male can be heard, or because there is little awareness or acceptance of male victimization[30].

As in other world areas, research conducted in Southeast Asia continues to demonstrate male vulnerability to various forms of sexual violence—at times even higher than females. In the Philippines, a 2016 national baseline study found almost a quarter (24.7%) of males experienced at least some form of sexual violence before the age of 18 years old, in comparison to a fifth (18%) of females[31].

Despite this growing awareness, the language used within the studies and surrounding media coverage often highlights only female experiences of violence and minimizes the experiences of males[32]. Hilton et al. (2008) describe this as the "feminization of victimization", creating the impression that boys are invulnerable, rarely abused, or less severely affected than females[33]. This language not only impacts how others perceive males but also how males perceive themselves. For instance, a study from the United States among males with documented histories of sexual abuse found boys to be significantly less likely to consider themselves as sexually abused, in comparison with females, with only 16% of males considered themselves abused in comparison to 64% of females[34].

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[28] Donne et al, "Barriers to and Facilitators of Help-Seeking Behavior Among Men Who Experience Sexual Violence," *American Journal of Men's Health* 12, no. 2 (2017): 189-201; Kia-Keating et al., "Containing and Resisting Masculinity: Narratives of Renegotiation Among Resilient Make Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse," *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 6, no. 3 (2005): 169-185; Sigurdardottir et al., "Deep and Almost Unbearable Suffering: Consequences of Childhood Sexual Abuse for Men's Health and Well-Being," *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health* 26, no. 4 (2012): 688-697.

[29] Von Hohendorff, Habigzang, and Koller, "A Boy, Being a Victim, Nobody Really Buys That, You Know?," 2017

[30] Von Hohendorff, Habigzang, and Koller, "A Boy, Being a Victim, Nobody Really Buys That, You Know?," 2017.

[31] UNICEF, *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989. Accessed 30 April 2020.

[32] Stemple and Meyer, "The Sexual Victimization of Men in America," 2014.

[33] Hilton et al., "I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys," 2008.

[34] Widom, Spatz and Morris, "Accuracy of Adult Recollections of Childhood Victimization, Part 2: Childhood Sexual Abuse," *Psychological Assessment* 9, no. 1 (1997): 34-46.

Street-involvement and CSE

The vast majority of the world's street-involved children are from low-and middle-income countries[35] such as those within the Southeast Asia region. Despite this reality, the overwhelming majority of research on street-involved children and young people (youth) has been conducted in high-income nations, such as the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), and various European cities[36]. In Southeast Asia, social and economic factors lead to an increased incidence of street-involvement among children in some families. Older children carry a social obligation through the tradition of filial piety to contribute to their families' earnings. Among families living in poverty, child street-involvement can be commonplace and even socially expected within families. The family responsibility and the duty of caring for parents, younger siblings, and even extended family members is shared within the family and can lead to street work or unsafe migration in search of economic opportunities to meet their family's needs[37].

One of the main assets of street-involved children is their ability to work and gain income, mainly through informal jobs including begging, washing windshields, scavenging, rag picking, and street vending. At times, street-involved children may manage multiple and diverse jobs throughout a single day in response to shifting demands from morning until night[38]. This type of employment is generally insecure with income fluctuating from day-to-day, which makes planning for the future difficult. While poverty is commonly described as a driving factor for street-involvement, the real causes are often much more complex and involve both 'push' and 'pull' factors. Family breakdown due to violence within the family or an unstable home environment can be a significant push factor for street-involvement among children and youth, which can be seen as a form of resilience or agency within a difficult situation[39]. 'Pull factors' may include seeking adventure or excitement, and a sense of freedom or an escape from strict norms, rules, or family expectations or pressures[40].

A series of small-scale studies with grassroots organizations in Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines have found rates of physical, sexual, and emotional violence among street-

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[35] Woan, Lin, and Auerswald, "The Health Status of Street Children and Youth," 2013.

[36] Woan, Lin, and Auerswald, "The Health Status of Street Children and Youth," 2013.

[37] Beazley, "The Construction and Protection of Individual and Collective Identities by Street Children and Youth in Indonesia," *Children Youth and Environments* 13, no. 1 (2003): 105-133.

[38] de Benítez, *State of the World's Street Children*. London: Consortium for Street Children, 2011.

[39] Patricia, Davey and Nolan, *Still on the Street - Still Short of Rights, Analysis of Policy and Programmes Related to Street-Involved Children*. n.p.: Plan and Consortium for Street Children, 2011.

[40] Butler, "Freedom, Revolt and 'Citizenship': Three Pillars of Identity for Youngsters Living on the Streets of Rio de Janeiro," *Childhood* 16, no. 1 (2009): 11-29.

involved children to be significantly higher than indicated within national household surveys [41]. One study, looking at street-involved children on the Thai-Cambodian Border, found 31% of male and 4% of female street-involved children cited experiences of sexual violence[42], in comparison with the 5.6% of male and 4.4% of female school children indicating the same within a national population study on violence against children in Cambodia[43]. The discrepancies between the smaller-scale studies and the national population surveys are potentially due to variances in the chosen research methods and sample. The population survey relied upon data drawn from children in schools and households, who had no prior interactions or knowledge of the interviewers. Conversely, the smaller-scale studies focused on data gathered from street-involved children, a population which would have not been reflected in the larger population survey. Furthermore, the smaller-scale studies utilized local social workers who knew the communities being surveyed and had already established a level of trust with respondents in talking about sensitive issues.

Context

This paper reports on one specific aspect of two studies on boys[44] and girls[45] which examined the experiences of sexual violence among street-living and street-working (both of these terms are incorporated into "street-involved") children in Sihanoukville, a coastal community in Southwest Cambodia. These studies collaborated with local social workers from the Cambodian NGO 'M'Lop Tapang' in 2014. The studies aimed to provide a baseline of information and a broad analysis of the critical needs, vulnerabilities, and potential resiliencies of street-involved children in the Sihanoukville area in order for NGOs and social service providers to better understand them and provide them with adequate services.

All respondents in this study were less than 18 years of age at the time of their participation and hence all children in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child[46] definition of a child. The authors have therefore decided to use the term

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[41] Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), "Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey," 2013; UNICEF, "Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse," 2017.

[42] Davis and Miles, "'On the Border': A Baseline Study on the Street-Involved Children on the Thai- Cambodian Border," *up! International*, 2017. Accessed 30 April 2020.

[43] Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), "Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey," 2013.

[44] Davis and Miles, "I Want to be Brave", 2015

[45] Davis and Miles, "Sexual Violence among Street-Living and Street-Working Children in Sihanoukville," *M'lop Tapang*, 2015, unpublished dataset.

[46] United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), "United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child," 1989.

"boy" and "girl" hereafter rather than "male" and "female" to reinforce the fact that this paper focuses on the experiences of children. While the focus of this paper is on children, the authors also explicitly recognize the unique vulnerabilities of street-involved persons over the age of 18 years of age, who often fall outside of the target age range of many social services.

Methods

This paper, as well as the broader studies, adopts a mixed-methods approach, which used structured interviews with children. The interviews were conducted in 2014 in the Khmer Language by Cambodian social workers from M'Lop Tapang[47], a local non-governmental, non-religious, non-profit organisation that provides comprehensive education, health, and social services to street-involved children and their families. The social workers were initially trained in the study's methodology and were then provided with ethical training for research with vulnerable people groups prior to undertaking the structured interviews.

Inclusion criteria

To be included in the study children and youth had to be a street-working or street-living boy or girl aged between 8 to 24 years of age[48] who had freely consented to participate and for whom there was no identified risk of harm by participation in the interview.

Exclusion criteria

Children living in a residential structure (either NGO or government-run) or benefiting from close case management from any social service provider or those who were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the proposed interview were excluded from this study.

Sampling

In total 130 children and youth (55 females and 75 males) living or working on the streets and beaches in Sihanoukville, Cambodia were interviewed. Purposive and "snowballing"

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[47]Davis and Miles, "Sexual Violence among Street-Living and Street-Working Children," 2015.

[48] The United Nations defines 'youth' as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. This definition, which arose in the context of preparations for the International Youth Year (1985) (see A/36/215), was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 36/28 of 1981 https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/youth-0/index.html We intentionally included people over the age of 18 because it's a major gap. People tend to be uniquely vulnerable after their 18th birthday because they "age out" of programs intended for children but are just as vulnerable as they were on their 17th birthday.

sampling methods were employed[49] whereby social workers identified particular locations where young people were known to work. After talking to the young people about the study those who were willing to participate were interviewed. After completing the interview, respondents were asked if they knew of any other children or youth who might be willing to participate (chain-referral sampling).

In our previous research conducted in Mumbai[50], the authors found that using focus groups was not possible because many participants were uncomfortable talking about sensitive experiences in front of their peers even though many lived together. The authors have found that utilizing semi-structured questionnaire interviews with sympathetic and supportive social workers provided respondents with an open environment in which they were more comfortable and willing to talk about their experiences.

All of the participants interviewed were, at the time, living or working on the streets in the town center of Sihanoukville. The study conducted the majority of interviews (73%) along the streets and beaches in two popular beach areas in Sihanoukville where children commonly worked. The remaining interviews (27%) were conducted in drop-in facilities in Sihanoukville, operated by M'lop Tapang.

Research Instrument

The study used a questionnaire comprised of 80 questions (excluding numerous sub-questions). Questions were a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions covering a variety of topics surrounding the life and context of street-involved children including demographics, personal relationships, finances, stigma and discrimination, and experiences of physical, sexual, and emotional violence. The questions were structured in a way to gradually encourage respondents to share their experiences, starting with relatively simple and factual questions and progressing towards more sensitive and personal topics. While the initial interviews covered a holistic range of information, this paper considers a small range of variables focusing on sexual violence.

Researchers adapted questions from original research instruments used in previous studies to gather a holistic baseline of information from young male entertainment workers in Cambodia, The Philippines, and Thailand. In adapting the questionnaire for street-involved children, the lead researcher worked with specialists on child rights and child development to ensure that the questions were appropriate. The questionnaires included both quantitative (closed questions) and qualitative data (open-ended questions).

Local Cambodian social workers and child protection officers from M'Lop Tapang were selected to conduct the interviews. Many of the interviewers already had years of experience

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[49] Boyatzis, *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. London: Sage Publications, 1998.

[50] Miles and Thakur, *Baseline Survey with Masseur Boys in Mumbai*. Mumbai: Love146; Samabhavana Society, 2010. Accessed 30 April 2020.

working on the streets and beaches in Sihanoukville and had already established a sense of rapport with many of the young people and their families. Additionally, utilizing local social workers helped ensure immediate support would be provided to any participants who might disclose needs during the interview.

Interviews were designed in such a way that each interview flowed more like an informal conversation. Questions were designed to be naturally progressive and phrased in a way that would be broadly understood by children and youth living and working on the streets, presenting topics simply and using colloquial terminologies. Social workers were trained to utilize eye contact, body posture, and other non-verbal forms of communication to help respondents feel more at ease in answering questions. As a part of this, social workers were required to join the child in eating snacks, as opposed to merely providing the child with food. The idea behind this was to offset the potential power imbalance between participant and interviewer and further help to build rapport between child and social worker.

Definition of Terms

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) refers to sexual contact with a child in exchange for some form of remuneration. This could be in the form of monetary remuneration, food or somewhere to sleep or other necessities. A key element is the misuse of power over a child for sexual abuse. This is distinguished from Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), which is general sexual contact with the child's private areas without consent and requires no element of exchange. This paper also uses "sexual violence" as an umbrella term to define non-consensual sexual acts including commercial sexual exploitation.

Due to ethical concerns, the research did not ask overly explicit questions to children. For instance, respondents were asked if they had ever been touched in their private areas by an adult. Then as a follow-up question, they were asked if any adult had 'done more than just touch them' sexually. The respondents were then free to agree or disagree and define what 'more' had been done to them, if they felt comfortable doing so.

Data analysis

Initial analysis of raw data was accomplished using IBM SPSS 21[51]. Google Sheets was used on open-ended qualitative questions to provide a thematic analysis of patterns within the data.

Ethical Considerations

At the time of undertaking this study the Cambodian Ministry of Health Ethics Committee only approved studies for drug trials and quantitative health research. In light of this,

[51] IBM Corporation, *IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 21.0*. New York: IBM Corp, 2012.

the research team approached the M'Lop Tapang Child Protection Agency to establish ethical approval. It was agreed that the research team would conduct the study using the 2008 UNIAP Ethical Guidelines for Human Trafficking Research[52] as the framework for ethical procedures. Also, the final draft of the questionnaire was reviewed and approved by M'Lop Tapang under the Ethical Guidelines[53] as well as the ethical principles identified in The M'Lop Tapang local Child Protection Policy.

At the time of undertaking this study, the research team concluded that no suitable social science ethics committee in Cambodia could have approved this study prospectively. While the research team understood that The Cambodian Ministry of Health Ethics Committee approves drugs and quantitative health research, the authors understand that the Ministry now also considers qualitative research. However, it is not possible to gain retrospective approval for a study that has already been conducted.

Interviews were conducted in environments familiar and comfortable to the children, usually on the streets and beaches where they worked or in drop-in centers, operated by M'lop Tapang. Before each interview, social workers would explain the study's ethical procedures and purpose, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality in child-friendly language.

After a careful review of the research instrument, social workers were asked to identify what ages of children would best be able to engage with the questions to be asked. The social workers identified a series of questions with the instrument which they felt would be especially sensitive for children under the age of 12; namely questions which explicitly described sex or sexual acts. Thus, the survey was designed to be age-contingent to avoid directly asking sexually orientated questions to children under the age of 12. All questions explicitly defining sex or sexual acts (30 questions in all) were marked and, when possible, grouped with other similar questions. Children under 12 were asked descriptive questions such as: "Have any adults done things to you, or asked you to do things to them, that you did not like?" And "if so, what have they done?" During interviews, if a child was under the age of 12, all marked questions were automatically skipped.

However, if a child under 12, at any time, disclosed or described sexual intercourse or sexual violence, and seemed comfortable talking about the subject, interviewers were instructed to continue through the full set of questions as they would with someone over the age of 12. Interview questions did not explicitly define rape or penetration due to ethical concerns but allowed respondents to define in what way the sexual violence went beyond touching; this allowed for children to describe what happened in their terms and allowed social workers to probe relevant topics, as needed. Following each interview, appropriate follow-up for children disclosing abuse was arranged by the M'Lop Tapang social workers.

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[52] United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP), *Guide to Ethics and Human Rights in Counter-Trafficking: Ethical Standards for Counter-Trafficking Research and Programming*. Bangkok: United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking, 2008.

[53] United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP), "Guide to Ethics and Human Rights in Counter-Trafficking," 2008.

Limitations

This study draws data from a relatively small sample, taken from a single geographical location within one country. Thus, conclusions drawn from this sample may not be generalizable to similar groups in other areas. Furthermore, this study relies on the veracity of accounts given by children. It is possible that children may have chosen not to disclose abuse or chosen to give misinformation, as disclosure is often perceived to have worse consequences than non-disclosure[54]. For children who experience frequent or severe forms of sexual abuse, it is possible for experiences of abuse to become normalized, This can cause some children and young people to see various forms of sexual abuse as normative and thus they may be less likely to label such instances as "abuse" or something significant to report. This became notable during data cleaning within some cases, particularly among boys working in the town center area.

This study drew data on sexual abuse and instances of being shown pornography by adults and did not consider instances in which children were touched inappropriately or shown pornographic materials by other youth. Previous research in Cambodia has indicated sexually harmful behaviors between children to be a significant issue in Cambodia, which has received little attention from social practitioners and child-protection advocates[55].

The effects of post-traumatic stress disorder on memory and on wishing to avoid any reminders or discussion of sexual violence may also have prevented children from talking about any kind of sexual abuse[56]. Children may feel shameful about talking about sexual violence, particularly when disclosing abuse by family members, friends, or older youth with whom they were still in close contact. Families may prefer to cover up abuse rather than have the shame of exposing their families to ridicule and the potential of the severe impact on the future of the child.

Given the young ages of those reporting sexual abuse, omitting children under ten is a limitation as the authors are not certain of the experiences of children younger than this age. Including children under the age of eight could have potentially led to essential differences in the reporting of sexual abuse; however, this would have required further ethical considerations and potential changes to the methodology used. Furthermore, children who knew the social workers might have wanted to please them and develop or continue to have a good relationship with them for accessing services in the future, which could have influenced their responses. It is also possible that children may have feared that their responses may not remain confidential and could become

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[54] Holmes, "See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil: Why do Relatively Few Male Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse Receive Help for Abuse-Related Issues in Adulthood?," *Clinical Psychology Review* 17, no. 1 (1997): 69-88.

[55]Davis, Fiss, and Miles, "To Help My Parents: An Exploratory Study on the Hidden Vulnerabilities of Street-Involved Children and Youth in Chiang Mai, Thailand," *up! International*, 2017. Accessed 30 April 2020.

[56] Miragolia, Camisascaab, and Di Blasioa. (2017). Narrative fragmentation in child sexual abuse: The role of age and post-traumatic stress disorder. Child Abuse & Neglect. Volume 73, pp 106-114. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.09.028

known to other staff or their peers or adults in positions of power over them and thus chose not to be forthcoming in their responses.

Results

Demographics (including education)

Children and youth in this study are 8 to 23 years of age[57] with a mean age of 13.6 years. Males were slightly older than females with a mean age of 14.2 years in comparison to 12.9 years among females. The vast majority of respondents (85%) are 16 or younger and nearly half (48%) are 13 or younger. More than a third (38%) of school-aged children are not currently enrolled in school with notably more school-aged boys out of school (45%) in comparison to school-aged girls (28%). Four children, all boys, had never attended school.

Street-work and Family Involvement

Data on earnings, housing, work hours, and school enrollment demonstrate more independence among boys and lesser connection with families in comparison with girls. Nearly all girls (95%) lived with at least one family member, compared to 81% of boys. Among the one-in-five boys (20%) who did not live with family members, including four (6%) who lived alone, seven (11%) who lived with friends, and two (3%) who described other living arrangements on the street. Of the three girls who lived with non-family members, two regularly stayed at an NGO drop-in center (Table 1) and one lived with friends.

Nearly one-third of boys (32%) and nearly one-fourth of girls (23%) came into street-work through friends, and 26% of boys and 16% of girls came into street-work on their own or as a means of survival. Furthermore, boys were three times more likely to cite that their families were unaware of their work on the streets in comparison with girls, with 18% of boys and 6% of girls (Table 2 and Table 2.1).

Boys worked more frequently and for more extended hours on the street in comparison with girls and the types of work in which they engage in is potentially higher risk. The majority of girls (55%) worked between one and six hours in a day, while the majority of boys worked greater than six hours with one in four (25%) working 10-13 hours and 10% working more than 13 hours. The majority of girls (57%) cited collecting recyclables as their work on the street in addition to 44% who engage in selling souvenir items, often with parents or siblings. Boys cited a wide range of work on the street, including 26% who collected recyclables and 20% who

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[57] The United Nations defines 'youth' as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. This definition, which arose in the context of preparations for the International Youth Year (1985) (see A/36/215), was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 36/28 of 1981 https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/youth-0/index.html We intentionally included people over the age of 18 because it's a major gap. People tend to be uniquely vulnerable after their 18th birthday because they "age out" of programs intended for children but are just as vulnerable as they were on their 17th birthday.

begged for money or food, often alone or with a friend (Table 3). Boys indicated more independence with their earnings with nearly half of boys (41%) indicating their earnings were used for themselves, while only 20% of girls indicated the same, with the majority indicating that their earnings go to their parents.

Sexual violence by adults

Of the 130 children and young people interviewed (8-23 years old), 36 (33%) had experienced sexual touching in their genital area by an adult at least once since the age of 8. While females experienced sexual touching at somewhat younger ages than boys, boys cited notably higher rates of touching, with 39% of boys (25) and 25% of females (11) citing sexual touching by adults (Table 4). Of the 36 children who experienced sexual touching, 24 agreed to share details about the frequency to which the sexual touching occurred. All girls and four in five boys (81%) cited being sexually touched by an adult between 1-5 times. Three respondents, all male, cited higher rates of sexual touching with two reporting that they were touched "more than ten times" and another citing he was touched "regularly." While these findings are not intended to be statistically representative, they do present some limited context to the frequency of sexual touching the children experienced. Following discussions about sexual touching by adults, respondents were asked if these instances of sexual touching had led into further forms of sexual violence. Sixteen boys (28%) and eight girls (20%) disclosed experiences of sexual violence that went beyond just touching. A notably high number of boys (12), and one girl, declined to respond to this question (Table 4.1). This pattern of higher rates of sexual violence among males remains continues consistently throughout the survey findings.

While boys were found to be more likely to disclose instances of sexual touching by adults, girls reported their first experiences of sexual abuse at notably younger ages than boys, with a mean age of 10.4 years among girls and 15.6 years among boys. Ages at which girls indicated being first sexually abused ranged from 2 to 13 years of age, while boys indicated ages ranging from 7 to 15 years of age.

Adults showing pornographic material to children

Of the 99 children who answered questions about whether or not an adult had shown them pornographic materials, more than twice as many boys, in comparison to girls, reported being shown pornographic materials by adults (26 boys (45%) as opposed to nine girls (22%)). Both boys and girls reported being shown pornographic material by adults within their communities, as well as by foreign nationals and visiting tourists from inside and outside Cambodia (Table 5).

Remuneration in exchange for sexual activities

In addition to sexual touching and other forms of sexual violence, respondents discussed instances in which they had been offered food, money, or a gift in exchange for providing one or more sexual acts to an adult (Table 6). Nineteen children, nearly one-in-five (13 boys and six girls), reported receiving some form of remuneration (food or money) in exchange for performing sexual activities for an adult. Of the 19 children, 11 reported that they received food from the adult in exchange for sexual services, while one reported receiving money. Eight respondents declined to respond to this question, all of whom were boys.

Discussion

While regressive male-female gender norms and assumptions have traditionally been used to oppress and subjugate women and girls, these same norms and assumptions have also placed boys and men in a uniquely vulnerable position by resisting their identification as vulnerable persons.

Autonomy vs. Neglect

While all children in the present study demonstrate significant vulnerability to various forms of sexual violence and exploitation, boys indicate higher rates of sexual violence and greater vulnerability to labor exploitation in comparison to girls, while being afforded greater independence and less supervision by parents and carers. Street-involved boys in Sihanoukville are more likely to have come into street-work through friends or on their own, while girls are more likely to have come into street-work through their parents or other members of their family, which demonstrates a lesser degree of protection from parents and carers for boys.

In addition to working more hours, boys indicate doing more dangerous types of work, such as begging for food, which is often done independently and, according to local social workers, places them at a higher risk of violence from the police or restaurant owners. Data indicates girls tend to be involved in what appear to be less-risky jobs, often working under the supervision of family members and peers. These differences between genders are commonplace in many cultures in Southeast Asia, as well as internationally, where boys are afforded greater mobility and autonomy due to culturally perceived gender norms and expectations[58].

More boys than girls lived without family members, and girls were found more likely to be enrolled in school than boys. These are two factors which can significantly increase a child's vulnerability. While boys have more freedom and independence, they may also have less protection or supervision from their parents - forcing them to care for themselves and making them more vulnerable to some forms of violence.

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[58] Know Violence in Childhood, "Ending Violence in Childhood. Global Report 2017." New Delhi: Know Violence in Childhood, 2017. Accessed 30 April 2020.

Increased Sexual Violence

The data in this study reveal a high prevalence of sexual violence among street-involved children in Sihanoukville in Southwest Cambodia. Among the sampling of 55 girls and 75 boys (130 children), 36% said they were sexual touched by an adult, 24% cite sexual experiences with adults that went beyond just touching, and 19% cite instances of being offered food, money, or a gift in exchange for sexual acts with an adult. Notably, there was a higher prevalence of sexual violence among boys, in comparison with girls. While these findings seem to contradict common assumptions on vulnerability to sexual violence, a growing body of research validates them, particularly among street-involved children. For example, a recent study among street-involved children in Chiang Mai, Thailand found a similar pattern among male and female respondents with 54% of males (15) and 29% of females (7) citing having been sexually touched by an adult[59].

Furthermore, a recent UNICEF national household study on sexual VAC in Cambodia found a 5.6% prevalence rate of sexual abuse among Cambodian schoolboys, and a 4.4% prevalence rate among schoolgirls[60]. In the Philippines, a similar study[61] showed similar results, with 24.7% of boys and 18% of girls in schools and homes citing experiences of sexual violence before the age of 18. This growing body of research suggests that the sexual abuse of males is much more common than is generally assumed in Southeast Asia.

The findings among street-involved children are particularly notable as they are significantly (6.25 times) higher than indicated in the most recent household prevalence study[62]. Such results contradict the familiar narratives in the literature that tend to frame sexual violence as a women's only issue.

It is also of note that being shown pornography by adults is more than twice as high among street-involved boys, in comparison with girls. This finding is significant in that pornography is commonly used by perpetrators of CSE to groom children for sexual exploitation[63]. Children on the streets, particularly those who are less supervised or who are pressured to provide for themselves and/or their families, may be particularly vulnerable to such forms of exploitation.

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[59] Davis, Fiss, and Miles, "To Help My Parents," 2017.

[60] Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and United National International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), "Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey," 2013.

[61] Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and United National International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), "National Baseline Study on Violence Against Children," 2016.

[62] Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and United National International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), "Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey," 2013.

[63] Fordham, *"Wise" Before Their Time: Young People, Gender-Based Violence and Pornography in Kandal Stung District*. Phnom Penh: World Vision International, 2005. Accessed 30 April 2020.

Barriers to Disclosure Among Male Respondents

Boys are found to be more likely to decline to respond to questions surrounding sexual violence (see non-responses in Tables 4, 5, and 6). It is possible that this could be linked to rigid conceptions of masculinity, which may make boys less likely to disclose sexual violence, especially when anal penetration is involved, as this has been found to lead to an uncomfortable questioning of their sexuality[64]. Researchers describe the phenomenon of male inexpression as a significant and pervasive challenge in a variety of different fields, often ascribing it to male gender socialization[65].

The UNICEF study on VAC in Cambodia demonstrates a similar reality. While the prevalence of sexual violence against boys was found to be higher among boys than girls, boys are less likely to cite sexual violence as a type of violence, while girls are more willing to discuss specific instances of sexual violence, including rape and inappropriate touch[66]. Such willingness on the part of girls to discuss their vulnerability to sexual violence are often reinforced within media circles, highlighting the victimization and vulnerability of females, while overlooking or minimizing the experiences of male children[67]. This reality suggests that reported rates of sexual violence against boys could be higher than stated in the existing literature and indicates a strong need for specialist training for professionals working with children, to ensure they understand the needs of male victims. Thus, it is essential that service providers create an environment where boys feel less restrained, stigmatized and/or fearful of disclosure and are therefore more able to access support. Careful listening and learning from victims and survivors can reveal to researchers and professionals the hidden experiences and unique vulnerabilities of children, whatever their gender.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study finds street-involved children in Sihanoukville to be especially vulnerable to CSE and abuse. Children are found to have particularly pronounced vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation with remuneration often taking the form of food, rather than money, indicating both sexual and financial forms of exploitation and modern slavery. These findings reinforce the reality that children and young people may feel pushed to engage in such exploitative acts as a

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[64] Dube et al., "Long-Term Consequences of Childhood Sexual Abuse by Gender of the Victim," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 28, no. 5 (2005): 430-438.

[65] Affleck, Glass, and Macdonald, "The Limitations of Language," 2012.

[66] Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and United National International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), "Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey," 2013.

[67]Jones, "The Invisible Man: The Conscious Neglect of Men and Boys in the War on Human Trafficking," *Utah Law Review* 1143, no. 4 (2010). Accessed 30 April 2020.

form of survival, a reality which our previous research demonstrates as a pressing issue in other regions of Cambodia and Southeast Asia[68,69,70,71,72].

While existing scholarship has demonstrated the significant impact regressive masculine gender norms has on women and girls, the findings in this paper underscore the impact of these norms and assumptions on boys and men by resisting their identification as vulnerable persons. Because of this, it is crucial that engagement on the issue of gender and violence consider how violence and its social and cultural drivers impacts everyone, inclusive of all genders and identities.

Emancipation from regressive gender norms and assumptions must be bilateral. It must recognize the unique sets of vulnerabilities that males and non-binary children and youth possess, in addition to the more recognizable vulnerabilities of women and girls. Working toward an equitable response requires careful listening, learning, and the development of support systems built upon the nuanced needs expressed at a community-level. Good social research can help bring this about. Such research must be participative and accessible for vulnerable young people and be shaped by and deeply rooted in the communities that it serves. Everything in the research process, from the development of guiding questions and research instruments, to the interpretation of findings and the development of policy recommendations should be dialogical and humanizing for all people within communities in which it operates. Social research must be rooted in action and development and focused on building the capacities of local practitioners to identify and support the needs of vulnerable persons, however they may identify or appear.

Programming for street-children tends to focus on meeting the child's basic needs including; food, primary education, hygiene, and sometimes temporary shelter. However, in addition to these physiological needs, feeling safe, having a sense of belonging, reducing stress, and improving feelings of self-efficacy should also be considered.

The results indicate that there is a need for sex education and life skills specifically geared towards street-children, including education on personal safety and rights to protection specifically gendered, which recognize the unique vulnerabilities of boys and young men in addition to girls and young women. At present, services for street-involved children and young people in Southeast Asia often lack a particular focus on sexual abuse and exploitation. Programming needs to be modified to more adequately recognize those who are at risk of abuse

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[68] Davis and Miles, "I Want to Be Brave," 2015.

[69] Davis and Miles, "Sexual Violence among Street-Living and Street-Working Children," 2015.

[70] Davis and Miles, "'They Shamed Me': An Exploratory Study on the Vulnerabilities of Street-Involved Boys to Sexual Exploitation in Manila, Philippines," *Dignity: A Journal on Sexual Exploitation and Violence* 4, no. 3 (2019), art. 2.

[71] Davis, Fiss, and Miles, "To Help My Parents," 2017.

[72] Davis, Blackburn, and Miles, "There is Always Violence": An Exploratory Study of Street-Involved Children in Phnom Penh, Cambodia," *Dignity: A Journal on Sexual Exploitation and Violence*, forthcoming.

and to assist those who have suffered from abuse, as well as to provide gender-appropriate therapeutic interventions and safeguarding strategies in the future.

There are currently few services available for male survivors of sexual violence. Over the past few years, only one NGO has provided temporary residential support for boys in Cambodia. The challenges of working with boys and the lack of financial support for programs involving boys has meant that it is only community programs that are available for boys, whereas there have been approximately 20 temporary shelters established for sexually exploited girls in Cambodia over the same period. Furthermore, community working and family care with street-children has not always considered sexual abuse and exploitation. Providing information on this commonly overlooked issue is a foundational purpose of this paper.

Economic resources must be developed in response to these gaps in programs and services. Non-government as well as government work in the legal, health, and social welfare professions need to collaborate together and acknowledge the cultural and societal challenges in bringing about social change. This includes ensuring that boys and young men are identified as vulnerable to sexual violence, addressing toxic masculinity, and the fast-increasing accessibility and demand of pornography, erotic massage, and prostitution, which can increase the risks faced by street-involved children within this context. In the interim, care professionals should identify essential health and social care indicators that may reveal the risk or incidence of abuse in order to more adequately respond to and provide protection for the children and young people involved. As a part of this, additional research is needed to better understand the vulnerabilities of boys' transition into young adulthood in Cambodia today, and how to prevent or reduce engagement with these more negative practices.

To challenge unhelpful traditional and emerging masculinities it is important to encourage fathers to protect their children, both boys and girls, against violence. A further challenge for older boys is to consider how to be protectors of younger girls and boys, when and how to ask for consent in all sexual relations, how to protect themselves against aggressors and to develop the skills of becoming peacemakers in situations of conflict[73]. In addition to this, further research is needed to determine the attitudes of Cambodian lay people and religious leaders to sexual abuse of children and their reactions to findings in this study[74] .

This study is the first of three Cambodian research projects looking at the needs of street-involved children, adding to the small but growing body of knowledge generated by other similar projects conducted in the Philippines and Thailand. Each of these projects has worked alongside expert local practitioners, but with limited funding, often from private funders. There is a need for more comprehensive studies on the needs of street-involved children in Southeast Asia, particularly among boys. However, until the vulnerabilities of males and street-involved children are given higher priority in development goals, donor priority, and the international research and

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[73] Haque, "Hope for Gender Equality? A Pattern of Post-Conflict Transition in Masculinity," *Gender, Technology and Development* 17, no.1 (2013): 55-77.

[74] Eisenbruch, "The Cultural Epigenesis of Gender-Based Violence in Cambodia: Local and Buddhist Perspectives," *Cult Med Psychiatry* 42, no. 2 (2018): 315-349.

policy agenda, this will not be possible. Given this, it is essential for researchers in both the academic and development sectors to take these issues seriously and work in close collaboration with NGOs that appreciate the value of ongoing research, co-learning, and evidence-based practice.

We have found great value in approaching social researchers as a unique way of capacity-building for NGOs. In conducting research, social workers are enabled to think more critically about social issues, develop unique evidence-based responses, and better understand the people that they serve by listening to young people's views and developing programs that address the unequal power relations underpinning modern slavery, which children regularly face in street-involvement as this study has found.

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Tables

TABLE 1: Who do you live with?

	Boys	*Girls*
Family	48 (73%)	42 (81%)
Friends	7 (11%)	1 (2%)
Siblings	0 (0%)	2 (4%)
Relatives	5 (8%)	5 (10%)
Alone	4 (6%)	0 (0%)
Other	2 (3%)	2 (4%)

TABLE 2: How did you enter into street-work?

	Boys	*Girls*
Family introduced	25 (40%)	20 (47%)
Friends introduced	20 (32%)	10 (23%)
Self-introduced	13 (21%)	4 (9%)
Survival	3 (5%)	3 (7%)
Someone in community	1 (2%)	3 (7%)
'I like it'	1 (2%)	3 (7%)

TABLE 2.1: Is your family aware of your work on the street?

Yes	55 (82%)	49 (94%)
No	12 (18%)	3 (6%)

TABLE 3: What work do you do on the street?

	Boys	*Girls*
Sales	29 (44%)	20 (41%)
Collecting Recyclables	17 (26%)	28 (57%)
Begging	13 (20%)	1 (2%)
Parking Cars	5 (8%)	0 (0%)
Welding	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Waiter	1 (2%)	0 (0%)

TABLE 3.1: How many hours do you work in a day?

Mean:	8.8 hours	6.4 hours
Minimum:	3 hours	1 hour
Maximum:	24 hours	12 hours

TABLE 4:	Has an adult ever touched YOU inappropriately in the genital area?		Did the adult do more than just touch you?	
	Boys	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*
Yes	25 (39%)	11 (25%)	16 (28%)	8 (20%)
No	37 (58%)	33 (75%)	30 (52%)	32 (78%)
Declined Response	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	12 (21%)	1 (2%)

TABLE 4.1: How old were you when this first happened?

Mean:	15 years	10 years
Minimum:	7 years	2 years
Maximum:	22 years	13 years

TABLE 5: Has an adult ever shown you pornographic materials?

	Boys	*Girls*
Yes	26 (45%)	9 (22%)
No	30 (52%)	32 (78%)
Declined Response	2 (3%)	0 (0%)

TABLE 6: Has anyone ever provided food, money, or a gift in exchange for doing something sexual to you?

	Boys	*Girls*
Yes	13 (23%)	6 (14%)
No	35 (63%)	37 (86%)
Declined Response	8 (14%)	0 (0%)

TABLE 6.1: What did they offer you?

Food	8 (62%)	3 (50%)
Money	1 (8%)	0 (0%)
Declined response	4 (31%)	3 (50%)

Piloting a method for the aggregation and visualisation of audit data to enhance forced labour risk identification

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Abstract

Ethical auditing is one key way that companies assess compliance with labour standards and identify issues relating to forced labour. Essential information on working conditions is collected each year across thousands of factories, yet data remains proprietary, is not harmonised in format or content, and is under-utilised with costs often passed on to workers. This can lead to an underestimation of the risk of forced labour in supply chains. To overcome such challenges, the authors piloted a unique method for the collection, aggregation, analysis and visualisation of social audit data from disparate, pre-existing but hitherto under-utilised resources. Data from 2,946 audits across six Asian countries was aggregated to pilot an online interactive risk screening tool. This paper describes methods used by the team and provides an overview of the online tool. Implications for improving social compliance auditing, risk identification, data classification and aggregation are discussed.

Background

It is estimated that 24.9 million people are in modern slavery in the Asia Pacific region, with approximately 66% in forced labour[75]. The apparel industry accounts for a large proportion of this figure[1]. Asia Pacific has been labelled the 'garment factory for the world', with millions employed in the industry[76]. For example, in India, the garment sector employs about 40 million

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[76] International Labor Organization. 2016. *Wages and Productivity in the Garment Sector in Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States*. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_534289.pdf

workers directly and 60 million indirectly[77], yet one in every two garment sector workers in India are reportedly paid below the minimum wage[78]. In Vietnam, the garment and textile industry is the single largest source of formal private sector employment with a direct labour force of more than 2 million people[79], and yet there are reports of a high number of abuses taking place.

The global fashion industry has recently been valued at around US$3 trillion and accounts for around 2% of the world's gross domestic product[80]. A large part of the industry in centred around Asia Pacific and in 2014 the region accounted for US$601.1 billion (59.5%) of global exports of garments, textiles and footwear.[81]. Reports suggest that South Asia needs to create jobs in labour-intensive industries where it enjoys a comparative advantage, such as apparel, to *'employ its burgeoning youth and attract more women into the workforce'*[82]. The garment industry has previously been labelled a *'stepping-stone to development'*[83] with an important role in providing a competitive advantage to boost economic growth and improve children's health and education[84].

Ensuring standards of work for those in, or who are entering the apparel manufacturing workforce is therefore vital. However, it is made increasingly complex by the presence of multi-tiered supply chains within the industry. In simple terms, a supply chain consists of three or more organisations or individuals directly involved in the upstream and downstream flows of products,

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[84] Rina Chandran, "South Asia Clothing Industry Can Employ Millions More Women, Boost Growth: World Bank", accessed 3 May 2019, South Asia clothing industry can employ millions more women, boost growth - World Bank | Reuters

services, finances, and/or information from a source to a customer[85]. Within multi-tiered supply chains, tiers connect to each other throughout the product's manufacturing process, converting raw materials (defined as 'tier 3') through material and component processing ('tier 2') into finished products ('tier 1'). In addition to multiple tiers, supply chains are also extended through outsourcing and stretched by globalisation[86]. These greatly increase the complexity of the supply network, decrease the visibility in risk and operation process[87], and make issues related to forced labour difficult to detect[88]. Visibility within the supply chain is greater at the higher tiers but multi-tier transparency is required to appropriately understand supply chain risk[89].

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines 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'*[90]. Efforts to ensure that companies are taking effective steps against forced labour within supply chains are increasing. For example, a list of indicators to assist in identification of forced labour is offered by the ILO[91], and the Ethical Trade Initiative Base Code Guidance on modern slavery offers guidance on risk identification, due diligence, awareness and remediation[92]. An increasing number of laws such as the California Transparency in Supply Chain Act[93], the UK Modern Slavery Act of 2015[94] and the Australian

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[91] International Labour Organisation, *Indicators of Forced Labour,* (International Labour Organization), https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_203832/lang--en/index.htm

[92] Ethical Trade Initiative, 2017. "Base Code Guidance: Modern Slavery". eti_base_code_guidance_modern_slavery_web.pdf (ethicaltrade.org)

[93] State of California Department of Justice, 2010. "The California Transparency in Supply Chains Act". SB 657 Home Page | State of California - Department of Justice - Office of the Attorney General

[94] UK Government Legislation, 2015. "Modern Slavery Act 2015". https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted

Modern Slavery Act (2018)[95], which require companies to disclose due diligence efforts to assess and mitigate modern slavery risk in their value chain, are also being employed to tackle the issue. Nevertheless, an analysis of secondary data against company reporting for such legislation suggests that auditing against Codes of Conduct is the most widely used method by which to detect issues of concern[96], highlighting how social compliance auditing remains an integral part of ensuring that abuses are not taking place and that working conditions and production are in line with local law, company policy and ethical protocol. The key objective of these social audits is to provide an independent opinion on the presence or absence of compliance between adopted standards for socially responsible behaviour and their implementation[97], including abuses such as forced labour.

The collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh in 2013 brought the world's attention to the ineffectiveness of auditing practices in identifying workplace violations[98] [99]. Since then, there has been an increase in focus on the health and safety of workers in the garment industry, with reforms from the ILO across Asia and an increased participation from government. Rana Plaza was a catalyst for many brands and retailers to act and ensure greater accountability and transparency in supply chains, under the threat of losing business[100]. As a consequence, the importance of conducting audits to monitor and validate ethical practice to combat forced labour, modern slavery and human rights abuses within the textile and apparel supply chains has been highlighted[101].

The social compliance audit industry itself is estimated by some to be worth US$80 million a year[102]. It is estimated that up to 80% of ethical sourcing budgets are used up on ethical

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auditing alone[103]. However, audits themselves are complex and time intensive. Auditors need to be specifically trained to ensure compliance but are increasingly presented with a large number of indicators for assessment and across large factories, meaning auditors are often overburdened[104]. *'Since the birth of ethical sourcing […] there has been a proliferation of differing codes, audits, protocols and approaches as part of company efforts. This duplication and lack of convergence causes issues for the industry, drains suppliers' resources and makes it difficult to benchmark their efforts'*[105]. This duplication is financially punitive to the industry, but concerningly, costs are often passed on to the worker. Difficulties with social audits include the fact that they do not promote action on human rights related risk[106], typically focus on higher tiers, are a snapshot of a moment in time[107], are argued to protect commercial interests, and fail to detect environmental and labour problems[108]. Recent efforts to improve detection and practices include methods to amplify worker voice[109] and recommendations to map supply chains[110]. These are important steps although these can themselves face challenges[111].

When assessing labour conditions and forced labour risk, auditors uncover indicators of risk by looking at a range of interconnected factors, including the process of recruitment, indicators of debt bondage, and living and working conditions. An inference is then made on the basis of these indicators. Audit firms have also developed different frameworks to detect, collect and process this information. These firms charge the factories or the brands for their services and

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disclose the audit results only to those commissioning the audit or compliance certifications[112]. This means that valuable information relating to the prevalence of forced labour within a specific factory unit remains within the audit and the specific case, cannot be cross referenced with audit findings carried by other brands in the same factory, and is hard to review over time and compare. In addition, factories are often audited multiple times even if they produce a small percentage of a brand's products, or only samples, which in itself can cause further issues. The Ethical Trading Initiative, a tri-partite organisation with over 100 member brands, stated: *'Anecdotally, we have heard of some factories being audited up to 14 times in a single month by different brands. This has contributed to so-called audit fatigue, resulting in a lack of engagement'*.[113]

While there have been efforts to improve and streamline practices, for example, the 'Social Labour Convergence Project' (SLCP)[114], audit data remains available only to a small portion of companies, is not harmonised, and cannot be easily analysed to understand forced labour risk. Evidence suggests that efforts for detection are hampered by a lack of effective standardised indicators and new systems are required that consider the differing nature of supply regions[115]. NGO reports indicate companies are concerned that audits are unable to detect instances of modern slavery[116] and there is arguably a need for more holistic approaches[117]. A report on the Continuum of Exploitation[118] further elaborates: *"Indicators are the most commonly used method of identification of forced labour in practice. […] The use of indicators is common and provides guidance for various actors and enforcers. However, their application is still often problematic in practice when it comes to determining the extremity of a situation. This is because the majority of cases occupy the middle ground between the two extremes and are hard to fit into a straightforward 'exploitation – yes/no' category"*. The current reliance on audits necessitates a need to further improve practices to identify forced labour, develop systems to

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[112] Clean Clothes Campaign, *Fig Leaf for Fashion*, Clean Clothes Campaign, 2019. https://cleanclothes.org/file-repository/figleaf-for-fashion.pdf/view

[113] Ethical Trading Initiative, "Audits and beyond", accessed June 2021, Audits and beyond | Ethical Trading Initiative (ethicaltrade.org)

[114] The SLCP was initiated in 2015 to replace current proprietary tools and enable comparability of data. Although the SLCP is branding itself as an assessment framework, the convergence initiative does not extend to standards, but instead it aims to be "judgement free," accessed June 10, 2021. Social & Labor Convergence Program (slconvergence.org)

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integrate worker voice within current auditing methods, and to make use of previously collected data with efforts to move towards more holistic methods. There is a clear need for more standardisation across the auditing community when addressing forced labour which would support detection as well as help to address issues around audit fatigue.

Recognising these challenges, this paper presents findings from efforts to pilot a method for the analysis of forced labour risk from audit data by sector and by process within the apparel industry. First, we describe the rationale and process underlying the tool development working with large multi-national companies. Next, we present an overview of methods and key findings from analysis of audit data from two key sources, an overview of a visual tool and highlight how results have been used by companies. Finally, we discuss opportunities and limitations of this approach.

Concept

The project was initiated by a Hong Kong-based NGO (The Mekong Club), working specifically with the private sector to address issues related to modern slavery. A workshop with 10 multi-national brands and retailers identified concerns relating to 'gaps' in audit processes, including the inability to conduct in-depth assessments relating to forced labour in supply chains and a lack of insight into manufacturing practices in other regions and countries where the brands were not currently auditing.

Workshop outcomes included the agreed need to focus on aggregating current audit data to provide enhanced visibility across audits, the utility of presenting information in a visual format by industry and region, and the benefits of allowing any company to use this data to inform due diligence processes. Identified challenges included regulations and concerns over sharing data and the diverse audit frameworks and methods used across the industry. Data aggregation and visualisation needed to address these challenges. Several consultation meetings were held to trial ideas and test concepts including utilising pre-existing global forced labour risk indicators. This paper reports on the end product of these consultations and trials.

Methods

Audit data assessment

Pre-existing audit data was obtained via a stepped process.

1. The NGO working on the project operates using a business association model, working closely with multinational brands and retailers to implement the tools and technology needed to combat forced labour within supply chains. They therefore had strong pre-existing relationships with companies. This enabled the project team to speak openly with companies to obtain both audit frameworks as well as the data. After consultation, legal and confidentiality agreements were signed with two companies – one a large

multinational owning multiple apparel brands (Source A) and an international audit company (Source B).
2. The project team accompanied auditing staff from Source A on audits over a period of several days in two factories in China to understand the auditing process.
3. Audit frameworks were reviewed for questions that are related to forced labour and modern slavery. Due to the complicated nature of detection, questions included those within the ILO indicators of forced labour[119] as well as others that may be related. These also included issues relating to accommodation and health and safety.
4. Anonymised audit data collected in 2015, 2016 and 2017 in six Asian countries (Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, China and Taiwan) was requested and provided by companies.

The project team reviewed each audit and categorised according to the following criteria:

a. Product (apparel, footwear, piece goods, gear, accessories, other).
b. International Organization for Standardization[120] (ISO) Code for region/province.
c. Proxy Tier system. For example, where a finished product was listed, this was classified as an 'assembly' facility. Where component processes or production were listed, this was classified as 'processes and components'. Farming and agriculture activities were classified as 'raw materials'. The majority of information (approximately 88%) came from 'assembly' facilities and 12% from 'processing and components' facilities.

Additional re-working of data format was also required due to the different audit processes carried out by the data providers. Auditors for Source B carried out audits across a range of companies using a standardised framework. For Source A, auditors were trained specifically on the company's own Code of Conduct and to use investigation-style questions during the audit (see Table 1). In practice, this meant that questions from Source A contained multiple 'free text' answers that required further analysis. Therefore, each free text response for Source A had to be analysed individually to provide it with a code that could be applied universally across data and used in a quantitative format.

To do this, initially, a coding frame of 11 categories based on the ILO criteria of forced labour was produced. After coding 100 examples of this data, the team felt that this coding frame did not adequately capture nuances in the data. Therefore, a data-driven thematic approach was adopted[121]. Approximately 10% of the data was reviewed, and, as each free text answer was

[119] International Labour Organization, *Indicators of Forced Labour,* (International Labour Organization), https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_203832/lang--en/index.htm

[120] International Organization for Standardization, "Country Codes – ISO 3166", accessed 10 June 2021 ISO - ISO 3166 — Country Codes.

[121] Richard E Boyatzis, *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. London: Sage, 1998.

analysed, a decision was made as to whether the data would fall into a pre-existing category, or if a new category needed to be created. This method was also felt to be the best way to understand data for future coding purposes. This resulted in 60 categories. Categories related to overtime, rest time, child labour, employment of migrant and temporary labour, recruitment fees, health and safety, dormitory and privacy issues, illegal deductions, record keeping and policy, bonded labour, deprivation of liberty, accommodation, harassment threats and violence, retention of identity documents, and factory refusal to provide information to auditors. Once the framework was complete, all data was re-analysed and coded according to the new categories. A final, independent review of the data was undertaken once categorisation was complete. A team member not previously familiar with the data used the same scheme to code approximately 10% of data cases, any discrepancies were highlighted, and the coding frame was reviewed again.

Table 1: Selected Audit Standard Questions and example responses

Description of investigation*	Example audit response	Classification by team
Legal obligations are met regarding payroll.	Employees' wages were paid by bank transfer at the end of each month for previous calendar month. However, employees' wages of Jan. 2015 were not paid yet so far till Mar. 10, 2015 (the audit day).	Withholding of wages and payment issues
Legal obligations in respect of working hours are met. This does not exceed 60 hours per week including overtime.	Through the payroll and time record review of 20 worker samples in March, May, June and July 2016, it was noted that an average overtime was 3 hours per day, maximum overtime per day was 4.5 hours per day, and 2 of 20 worker samples had 73.5 hours per week in July 2016.	Overtime
Investigate evidence to ensure that there are no incidents of forced or prison labour.	Migrant workers had to pay agent fees in their country in order to get a job in Taiwan. E.g. a sampled Vietnamese worker had to pay NTD44,430 to local agency in Vietnam as agent fee, which was more than one month's salary (NTD20,008).	Employment of migrant labour and recruitment fees

*To ensure anonymity of sources, examples of data and questions have been paraphrased.

Aggregating data sources

To aggregate the data from across the 2 different sources, a method was required which would add responses from across the different audits, providing one overall risk score. This could then be analysed according to type of risk (indicator), region, product and process.

In the first instance, for Source A, the 60 coding categories had to be refined for ease of aggregation. Categories were collapsed into overarching ('bucket') list of codes. An example of classification method is provided below in Table 2 and a list codes in Table 3.

Table 2: Examples of classification of codes into overarching categories

Source A Code	**Source B Code**	**Overarching code**
Inadequate breaks between shifts; rest days have been worked; inadequate rest time	Employees not free to move, take restroom breaks; employees are not free to leave at the end of a shift; rest days are not provided at least 1 in 7; employees not provided with legally required time off	Deprivation of liberty
Wages withheld for annual leave; wage deductions as disciplinary action	Monetary penalties as disciplinary means; facility does not pay for Personal Protective Equipment; Illegal deductions	Illegal deductions

Table 3: Final codes used for classification

Migrant labour issues
Bonded labour
Child labour
Contract issues
Deprivation of liberty
Accommodation issues
Payment issues
Retention of Identification Documents
Withholding of wages
Overtime issues
Threats and violence

Next, an algorithm was created. This used a minimum count strategy across all possible codes meaning if a score of 1 was obtained across any of the codes relating to that category, then a score of 1 was achieved. For example:

Source A <Evidence of bonded labour> IS YES then score 1.
Source B <Deposits are collected as part of employment> IS YES OR <Evidence the facility has employed workers who are trafficked, bonded or imprisoned> IS YES then score 1.*
* To ensure anonymity of sources, examples of data and questions have been paraphrased.

Due to the large variance in the number of overtime hours, additional weighting was applied in the algorithm for specific overtime levels. For example, >72 hours per month, >18 hours per week were scored as '2' if met. Levels were agreed amongst the team and in consultation with experts.

Results

Across the categorised data, there were several differences between data classification systems.

Data coded into the identified 'bucket' codes largely mapped against the ILO categories

of forced labour[122]. However, selected differences were noted. For example, a new code was created to categorise data pertaining to 'accommodation issues' from the audits. This included security and supervisors staying in the same dormitory and reports of not enough beds for the number of employees living in the accommodation.

There were differences within audits in the number of questions relating to an area covered, for example there appeared more questions from Source B on recruitment and agency whereas notes from auditors from Source A noted more information relating to overtime. The team has attempted to take these into account during the algorithm.

Other concerns noted during the audit process included failure to provide temporary worker lists, workers leaving the factory on audit day and a refusal to provide access to the audit team. Instances of inadequate breaks between shifts, overtime hours and passports being withheld by factories require further investigation (discussed below).

In total, Source A provided 7,741 'rows' of raw data in excel from audits across 42 countries. For the pilot, data was then filtered by the team to include only the 6 selected countries. Each could refer to an individual audit, or there could be multiple 'rows' of data for one audit. All audits came from the apparel industry and from factories that had violated at least one of the audit criteria, thus flagged as 'failed audits'.

For Source B, 9,428 'rows' of data was provided with one line per audit. Data came from 'failed' as well as 'passed' factory audits and from the 6 Asian countries requested. Data included apparel, household, furniture and food. For the purposes of the pilot, only data relating to apparel was included.

In total, this resulted in data from 2,946 separate audits. The majority of the data was from China (1,529), India (301), Vietnam (218) and Bangladesh (170). Tables 4 and 5 provide examples from China and India.

[122] International Labour Organization, *Indicators of Forced Labour,* (International Labour Organization), https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_203832/lang--en/index.htm

Table 4: Incidents in the Guangdong region in China for apparel audits

Product	Process	Number of audits	Number of Incidents
Apparel	Processes & Components	13	8
Apparel	Assembly	260	205
Accessories	Processes & Components	1	1
Accessories	Assembly	217	167
Footwear	Processes & Components	27	19
Footwear	Assembly	113	91
Gear	Assembly	10	12
Other**	Processes & Components	19	9
Other	Assembly	19	15
Piece Goods	Processes & Components	4	2
Piece Goods	Assembly	4	3

** Not classified as apparel, footwear, accessories or piece goods
NB Exclusions from the table relate to areas where no data exists, for example, Gear – Processes & Components.

Table 5: Incidents in the Karnataka region in India

Product	Process	Number of audits	Incident score
Apparel	Processes & Components	3	3
Apparel	Assembly	188	167
Accessories	Assembly	1	0
Footwear	Assembly	1	2
Other**	Assembly	54	48
Piece Goods	Processes & Components	3	3

** Not classified as apparel, footwear, accessories or piece goods
NB Exclusions from the table relate to areas where no data exists, for example, Gear – Processes & Components.

Based on this data analysis, an online risk tool to facilitate easy, aggregated and anonymised visualisation of the data was developed and piloted.

To use the risk tool, users are able to select from a region, product or process from a drop-down menu. The tool then provides an image of the selected region with a summary of the number of incidents for that location, according to the number of audits that have been recorded in the database. The total number of incidents is higher than the total number of audits when more than one incident is associated with an audit. Additional data is also provided relating to country risk from the Global Slavery Index (prevalence of modern slavery per country and country's government rating)[123] as well as from the US State Department 'Trafficking in Persons Report' (country government 'tier ranking')[124]. The online tool was also designed to be linked to a database of resources on forced labour. This included NGO reports, media articles, and anti-forced labour initiatives (led by brands, NGOs and governments) according to country, region, process and material. This ensures that the user of the online interface has access to multiple sources of data that can be easily triangulated and compared to ensure better risk identification and also supports better integration of NGO practices to support companies[125].

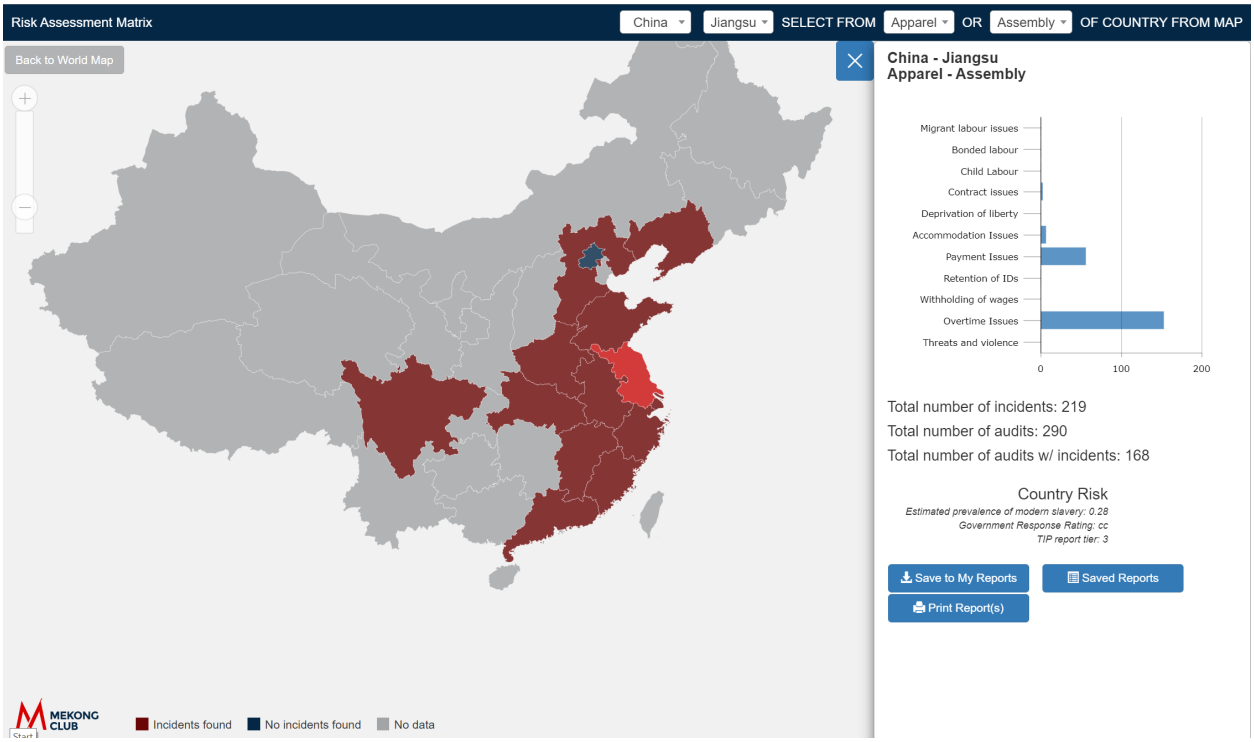
[123] Global Slavery Index, "Modern Slavery: A hidden everyday problem", accessed May 6, 2019, https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/

[124] U.S. Department of State, *2018 Trafficking in Persons Report*, (U.S. Department of State, 2018). https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/

[125] Amy V Benstead, Linda C Hendry and Mark Stevenson, "Detecting and remediating modern slavery in supply chains: a targeted audit approach". *Production Planning & Control*, (2020). doi.org/10.1080/09537287.2020.1795290

An example is provided below.

Image 1: Risk tool visualisation for the Jiangsu region of China for the assembly of apparel



The final project stage was to understand the utility of the pilot tool for stakeholders. Preliminary anecdotal feedback gathered by the NGO suggests that the pilot tool has provided a useful proof of concept with value for large brands, including with modern slavery legal reporting requirements. For example, feedback taken during a workshop with the NGO stated: *"this tool allows us to offer empirical information related to the measurement of risk. This helps to ensure that there is data to back our risk assessments."* One other company stated: *"when we are going to explore possible business options related to our supply chain, we look at the [tool's] data to see if there is any relevant information that would help us determine how much due diligence is required."* In addition, so far, screen shots from the online tool have been used as part of company submissions to both the UK and Australian Modern Slavery Act reporting requirements; examples are provided below.

Image 2: Example of risk tool use within Modern Slavery reporting

China

High-Risk Products:[6] Garments and Cotton

Indicators (from most to least prevalent):

- Overtime issues
- Payment issues
- Contract issues
- Accommodation issues
- Child labor issues
- Migrant labor issues
- Deprivation of liberty

Completed Actions:

- Unannounced spot checks in factories to detect forced labor
- Fung Group Modern Slavery training

Bangladesh

High-Risk Products: Garments and textiles

Indicators (from most to least prevalent):

- Overtime issues
- Payment issues
- Deprivation of liberty

Completed Actions:

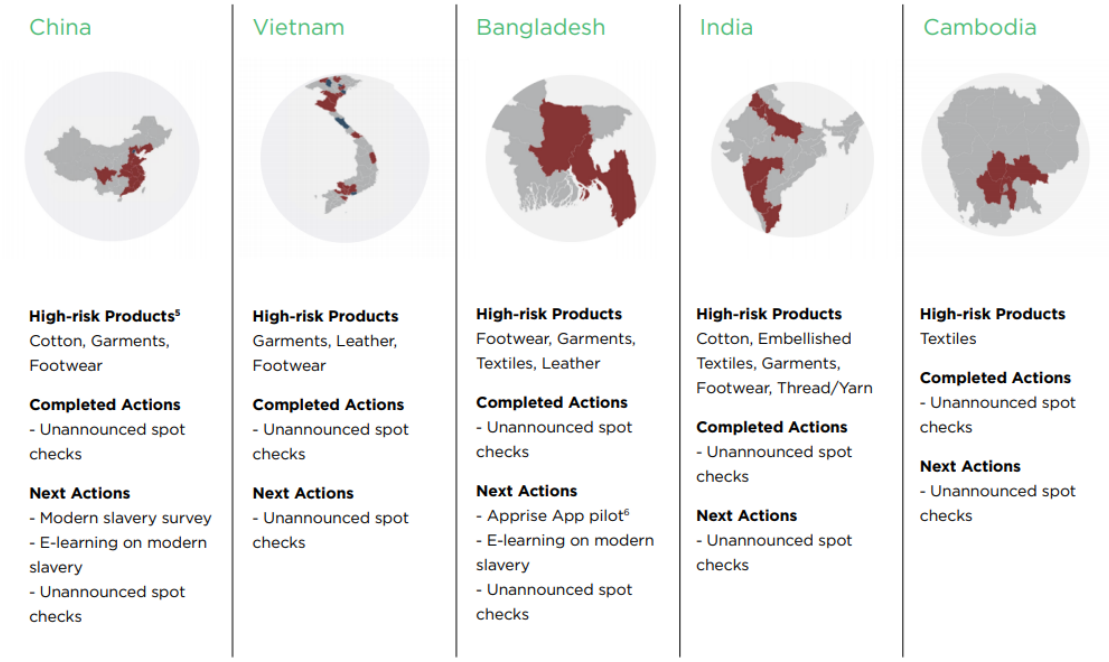
- Unannounced spot checks in factories to detect forced labor
- Code of Conduct training attended by 15 facilities (89% completion rate)

Image 3: Example of risk tool use within disclosure statement on Modern Slavery

C. Modern Slavery Risks, Mitigation and Prevention Measures in Production Markets

We use the Mekong Club Risk Assessment Matrix (RAM), which combines a series of standardized indicators to better understand our risk associated with raw materials and supply chain processes by product, process and region. The RAM aggregates multiple sources of audit data associated with specific materials and processes from different companies gathered in different formats. The matrix is currently based on the analysis of 70,000 data points and the latest dataset available.[4]

Below we have provided an example of regional and product modern slavery risks for our production countries as identified in the RAM tool. Red indicates states/ regions where indicators and/or cases of modern slavery have been identified. Blue indicates where audit data is available but there is insufficient information to conclude whether modern slavery has been identified in the region. Areas uncolored indicate that the RAM does not hold data on that region.



Discussion

This paper has documented the steps taken to obtain hitherto proprietary audit data, pilot a method to aggregate data on incidents relating to forced labour and present these in a visual, easy-to-use format.

As far as we know, this is a unique format for this level of detail. The aim of the exercise

was to pilot a tool that helps to inform companies' due diligence on risk and supply chain decision-making processes rather than to discourage sourcing from regions that present risk. Aggregating data in this way, although labour-intensive, is therefore possible and derives important insights for identification of risk with data from multiple audits providing a more holistic picture of risk across one location. The method of coding data by hand facilitated greater understanding of the data, enabled development of the categories for classification of risk, enhanced comparison with other systems, provided important context to audit results and also provided a large comprehensive data set that can be further analysed and used to enhance auditing processes. The time spent on this development provides a platform for future automation, and methods for streamlining the process are in development. The pilot online visualisation tool, although still in early development stages, has so far shown utility for companies in supporting risk identification with the available data, which is especially important during times of increased reliance on remote auditing due to changed working practices and those brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, only a portion of the data has currently been analysed. For example, data from additional free-text responses from Source B, as well as data from other countries and other industries has yet to be analysed. It is the hope of the project team that following this development of methods for data aggregation, data processing tools and automatic categorisation of data can be used to enhance the speed and the number of sources that can be used. Data within the pilot tool is still being analysed and refined; further analysis is planned as part of efforts to support companies and auditing houses in streamlining questions for auditing and to inform training programs.

Data contained in the pilot tool was collected from two different types of sources. Whilst this necessitated additional analyses, important lessons can be learned from inspection of different types of audits. Use of an 'investigation style' audit where the auditor is provided with freer rein to explore issues may be more helpful in uncovering instances of forced labour, and exploring areas of uncertainty, both during the audit and at subsequent follow up visits. Moreover, as labour laws vary by country and often by region, this may provide the auditor with enhanced abilities to investigate perceived areas of concern that vary according to local custom and law. Previous literature[126] has suggested that specific auditing for forced labour may be more beneficial, and consideration should therefore be given to audit type and data collection format, as well as how auditors may be trained to investigate and explore issues of forced labour. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this method relies on careful training and supervision of auditors. The data itself is also more cumbersome to aggregate.

During the process of data analysis, it became clear that issues did not always fall neatly into one category. Attention is required on areas of concern that may be hidden or missed during audits, such as incidents that may be related to forced labour but are not directly visible at the factory floor level, such as accommodation, use of migrant workers and recruitment fees. This

[126] Amy V Benstead, Linda C Hendry, Mark Stevenson, "Detecting and remediating modern slavery in supply chains: a targeted audit approach".

highlights the need for enhanced access by the auditor and further understanding from the perspective of the employee; efforts to include worker voice within audits are welcomed. It is hoped that in future, iterations of this pilot tool will be able to include worker voice technology and further work from local NGOs. This may offer a means of data triangulation and indications of areas of discrepancy for further investigation (such as whether overtime was agreed to). This will also support effective work currently being undertaken by NGOs to improve working practices[127].

It is clear that audits contain a plethora of data. This exercise has shown that to date, data is under-utilised for the wider community. A large data-set was generated during this project with only a sub-set so far analysed; gathering data points from diverse sources may be helpful to inform broader data modeling tools and information to predict risk. Furthermore, aggregating previously collected data is cost-effective and supports transparency and accountability. If a higher risk of forced labour is flagged by location or product classification from across multiple audits in the data visualisation tool, it is our hope that this results in enhanced due diligence and analysis of risk. This supports improvement of Code of Conducts and Labour Standards in areas that are not yet as heavily audited and where the garment industry is smaller but growing (such as Myanmar or Ethiopia) to ensure that standards are improved while industries are relatively nascent. Companies should be encouraged to share data where possible and communicate lessons learned so that the industry can become more aware of how to respond to areas of high forced labour risk in supply chains and make more informed supply chain and purchasing decisions. In addition, this pilot concentrated on one area of concern, that of the apparel industry. Methods developed here may also be useful when applied to audits across a range of other areas, and the project team plans to expand the tool to the other industries that data has been gathered on but not yet analysed.

Limitations and considerations for future use

Efforts to classify data into categories were labour-intensive, and coding large amounts of data by hand has a greater chance of resulting in a coding error. Further review of the data will be undertaken, together with investigation into the use of automation. There may also have been additional data that has not been represented to show that there were extenuating circumstances as to why some of the indicators were encountered. For example, evidence as to why an employee did not leave at the end of the shift, or an additional question that was not provided to the project team to suggest that an employee asked for a ‘savings scheme’ for wages.
Within the audits themselves, questions may have been asked in multiple formats and ways to ensure that data is accurately captured. However, this can result in additional questions and possible conflicting answers. Whilst efforts have been made throughout this process to take this into account, it is possible that this may result in inaccuracies in risk presentation.

[127] Amy V Benstead, Linda C Hendry, Mark Stevenson, “Detecting and remediating modern slavery in supply chains: a targeted audit approach”.

The pilot was designed to address an un-met need using audit data. The pilot tool integrated some NGO data but it was not possible to integrate worker voice solutions. Future iterations of the tool can be combined with worker voice technology and tools to assess risk of forced labour. These include worker voice digital solutions, helplines, 'whistle blower' systems, apps to support independent interviews of a larger number of workers in their own language during the audit process and worker advocacy. This will help to ensure that data can be verified and collated across multiple sources[128] which will also help to identify possible areas of concern and inconsistency. Similarly, as some audits contain information relating to migrant labour, using this data in combination with tools that analyse migrant labour flow will be helpful to enhance risk detection. Future tools and aggregations should take advantage of the variety of indices currently available, such as information on local labour laws, and embed specific data to enhance algorithms and form stronger conclusions about risk.

It is recognised that audit frameworks do not necessarily capture sub-contracted facilities or homeworkers (the 'informal economy'). In addition, data in the tool is largely from assembly (Tier 1). Whilst it is recognised that efforts need to be concentrated on investigation into lower tiers, it is clear from the data that there are still incidents occurring within Tier 1 and 2 that need to be examined. Efforts for the detection and resolution of forced labour at every stage of the supply chain need to be made.

Recognising the limitations, we believe that it is possible to bridge gaps in data collection to bring together data from multiple formats via cross-company and cross-sector collaboration. Use of otherwise un-used historical data also forms a salient contribution in understanding changing patterns of risk. Audit data has clear limitations, but if used effectively and appropriately, it contains valuable data that can be mined to better understand forced labour risk.

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[128] Hannah Thinyane, Silvia Mera, 2020. "Amplifying workers' voices through technology to uncover modern slavery: Report on Supply Chain Compliance", accessed June 10, 2021, https://compliancecosmos.org/amplifying-workers-voices-through-technology-uncover-modern-slavery

Adapting a life skills training program for survivors of human trafficking

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Abstract

This brief reflection paper presents a case study of a life skills training program for survivors of human trafficking in the Philippines. Trauma-informed principles and Motivational Interviewing guide the development and implementation of this life skills development program to support survivors in achieving their educational and career goals. This article details the curriculum adaptation process, guiding frameworks, curriculum design, and recommendations for strengthening life skills programming for human trafficking survivors. The experiences of practitioners detailed in this paper are instructive for other stakeholders in the anti-human trafficking movement planning to implement life skills programming with survivors.

Keywords

Philippines; survivors; life skills; soft skills; trauma-informed; human trafficking

Introduction

Life skills are defined by as "a broad set of skills, behaviors, and personal qualities that enable people to effectively navigate their environment, relate well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals" (Gates et al. 2016, 1). These skills are broadly categorized into: psychosocial and emotional skills, intra-personal skills, inter-personal skills, communication skills, cognitive and higher-order thinking skills, entrepreneurship and civic engagement skills, and employability skills (Honeyman 2018). Life skills are critical for vocational success (Puerta et al. 2016). Life skills programs can strengthen core skills necessary for employment, including

autonomy, self-care and self-management, risk reduction, relational, and communication skills (Ferrari 2016; Rafferty 2013). However, given the magnitude and complexity of trauma that survivors of human trafficking have experienced, a holistic, trauma-centered, and contextualized approach is required to ensure life skills programming is effective (Gill and Cordisco Tsai 2020; Gilmore 2008). Few models of successful life skills programs specifically developed for survivors of human trafficking exist. Little is known about what a successful curriculum looks like within an enabling learning environment tailored to survivors' needs, priorities, and experiences.

10ThousandWindows (10KW) is a nonprofit organization in the Philippines that supports survivors of violence and exploitation in achieving their career goals. 10KW primarily serves survivors of human trafficking; program participants also include people who have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV), child labor, and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV). 10KW has created a life skills program – the Soft Skills Training and Empowerment Program (STEP) – within a repertoire of survivor-support services. In addition to STEP, 10KW's services include crisis intervention, career counseling, educational scholarships and academic support, employment services, work immersion opportunities, and labor rights education. 10KW also engages in community education initiatives, such as partnering with employers in creating trauma-informed workplaces.

STEP serves as the foundational program for 10KW's services. All survivors newly enrolled at 10KW first participate in the STEP program before advancing to other services. In 2018, 10KW conducted a comprehensive program assessment, which simultaneously revealed that program participants greatly valued STEP and yet also highlighted the need to refine STEP to better match the experiences of survivors (Cordisco Tsai 2018). As a result, 10KW embarked on a systematic process for revising the STEP program in 2018 and 2019. This article outlines the curriculum adaptation process, guiding frameworks for STEP, an overview of the revised curriculum, and implications for practice. This manuscript does not present research findings; rather, it outlines the experiences of practitioners in adapting this program specifically for human trafficking survivors. This case study can nonetheless aid other organizations in the anti-human trafficking sector and the wider skills-training community in understanding the unique employment-readiness needs of human trafficking survivors and how to adapt programming to match the needs of survivors.

Guiding Frameworks

Implementation of STEP is grounded in trauma-informed principles and designed to be adherent with Motivational Interviewing (MI). Both MI and a trauma-informed lens create the safe and supportive environment necessary to allow people who have experienced considerable trauma to fully engage with learning. Traumatic events can devastate a person's sense of autonomy and underlying assumptions about safety in the world (Herman 1997). Trauma symptoms can interfere with the process of learning and embodying life skills. Key principles of

a trauma-informed approach include transparency and trustworthiness; establishing physical and emotional safety; choice/restoration of autonomy and control; mutuality and collaboration; empowerment; and sensitivity to historical, cultural, and gender issues (SAMHSA 2014). Trauma-informed principles help 10KW staff create an environment that centers survivors' needs.

MI is an evidence-based, humanistic, and person-centered approach to communication based upon four components: acceptance, compassion, partnership, and evocation of change from within the person (Miller and Rollnick 2013). MI strengthens individuals' motivation for and commitment to change. 10KW uses MI techniques adapted to the Filipino cultural context, allowing 10KW staff to better engage with survivors' priorities, values, and needs (Cordisco Tsai and Seballos-Llena 2020). Both MI and trauma-informed principles are integrated throughout STEP, including session design, facilitation of sessions, wording of all materials, establishing group norms, feedback mechanisms, and expectations for staff communication with survivors.

Adaptation Process

In revising the STEP curriculum, 10KW prioritized evidence-informed approaches and obtaining input from key stakeholders. 10KW staff first reviewed the literature on life skills training for similar populations. Secondly, 10KW developed a survey for staff and employers to identify priority soft skills based on the World Learning soft skills inventory, a research based-inventory created through a review of global literature on life skills programming (Honeyman 2018). Definitions drawn from the World Learning inventory were provided for each skill to establish common understanding. In the survey, 10KW staff and employers hiring entry-level positions were asked to rank soft skills per category in order of importance (n=40). The top five skills in each category were noted. Employers were also asked to share observations about survivors' strengths and areas for growth in the workplace. Third, 10KW elicited survivor input. 10KW conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) with survivors who had completed STEP and obtained employment (n=15). Survivors were asked to assess their own readiness for the workplace, their strengths, and challenges in school and in employment. Survivors were invited to identify the behaviors, characteristics, and attitudes their peers should embody to succeed in employment. A short list of soft skills was determined through the FGDs and survivors were asked to select/rank the top five skills from this list.

10KW staff integrated stakeholder feedback by identifying priority life skills across stakeholder groups. 10KW ultimately focused on a total of nine skills in three overarching categories: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive/planning skills. Per input from all stakeholders, the final list of life skills included: self-confidence, coping with stress, and self-discipline/control (intrapersonal); respecting others, teamwork, and resolving conflict (interpersonal); and managing time/tasks, responsibility, and decision making (cognitive/planning). Staff balanced dual needs for comprehensiveness with feasibility of implementation.

Draft modules were initially piloted over two rounds, with ten survivors in the first batch and 18 survivors in the second batch. Feedback from these pilots was used to further simplify activities.

Additionally, the 2018 program review identified the need to expand program orientations to support survivor agency in determining whether or not to participate in STEP. The program review revealed that some human trafficking survivors joined the program because their social worker determined it would be helpful for them, but survivors themselves did not always fully own this decision (Cordisco Tsai 2018). This dynamic reflects consistent of patterns in the anti-human trafficking sector in which decisions are often made on behalf of survivors (Lockyer 2020). Research has reinforced the importance of clarifying informed consent procedures with human trafficking survivors given their lack of trust in service providers (Cordisco Tsai et al. 2020). To ensure adherence with a trauma-informed approach and MI, 10KW determined the need to bolster orientations and informed consent processes accordingly.

The program review also highlighted the need to broaden the curriculum to more holistically address the career development and psychosocial needs of survivors. While the original version of STEP contained group sessions focusing on self-assessment, vision setting, and career goal development, the revised STEP significantly expanded the career counseling component of the program to also include eight individual sessions with career counselors within STEP.[129] These individualized sessions allow counselors time to develop a rapport with survivors, which is essential given the importance of building trust with survivors over time (Cordisco Tsai et al. 2020).

Further, 10KW added six psychosocial education sessions tailored to survivors' needs and experiences: understanding trauma, human trafficking, IPV, suicide, substance use, and reproductive health. The latter three topics were selected given the considerable likelihood that survivors may experience challenges with suicidality, harmful substance use, and barriers to availing of reproductive health services (Frey et al. 2019; Hopper 2017; Kelly et al. 2019; Kiss et al. 2015). Each component of the revised curriculum is described below.

Revised Curriculum

The final 17-week program integrates expanded orientations, career counseling and goal development, psychosocial education, life skills training, and culminating activities that together support survivors' self-determination (see Table 1). Four orientation sessions provide comprehensive information regarding 10KW's entire repertoire of services, the STEP program, and the career counseling services. The expanded orientations allow survivors to fully understand the program and clarify their questions before making any decisions about joining. Orientations are followed by an individual informed consent session wherein confidentiality guidelines, norms, and expectations are discussed and survivors decide whether or not they want to continue.

[129] Subsequent career counseling sessions follow completion of STEP. These 8 sessions refer to the sessions that are a part of the STEP program.

Career counseling and goal development include a combination of group and individual sessions with the STEP team and career counselors. Group sessions allow survivors to assess their strengths, motivation, and values (Evaluate); explore a variety of career options firsthand through engagement with partners and peer mentors (Explore); and develop personalized career goals and vision statements (Vision), as shown in Table 1. Group sessions provide an opportunity for peer support and building self-efficacy through peer modeling. Group sessions are, however, insufficient to help survivors develop individualized and actionable career goals.

Group sessions are supplemented with individual career counseling sessions in which counselors build rapport and trust with survivors and support survivors in understanding and articulating their hopes for their futures. Given concerns regarding trust, time is spent initially on relationship building between the counselor and survivor. Counselors use culturally-adapted MI techniques to support survivors in developing individualized career and life goals and strengthening motivation toward reaching their visions (Cordisco Tsai and Seballos-Llena 2020). The direction and pace of career planning is dictated by survivors themselves, and progress through sessions is based on survivors' readiness. When each survivor is ready, counselors support in creating action plans, starting with identifying smaller intermediate targets, challenges, skills needed to achieve those targets, and resources available. In keeping with trauma-informed principles, survivors progress through the sessions at their own pace; as such, they may not complete all eight counseling sessions by the time STEP has finished.

Six psychosocial education sessions address trauma, human trafficking, IPV, suicide, substance use, and reproductive health. These sessions teach survivors to better understand their experience and triggers, strengthen emotional self-regulation skills, understand their rights, and provide information about resources available in the community. Given the stigma associated with these topics in the Filipino cultural context, inclusion of these sessions normalizes discussion of these topics, reinforcing that 10KW staff are safe people with whom survivors can explore these subjects when they are ready (Cunanan and Yabut 2019; Hussain and Finer 2013; Redaniel et al. 2011; Shoultz et al. 2010).

Twelve life skills training sessions focus on the aforementioned nine intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive/planning skills. These sessions promote skills development through experiential learning, reflective analysis, and self-expression through art. Training methodologies include case studies, role plays, individual reflection exercises, personalized application exercises, presentations/Q&As with peer leaders, and individual portfolios. Both group and individual processing are crucial to allow survivors to understand and apply concepts to real-life experiences. Each session contains an introduction, participatory activities to assist with processing, and exercises for at-home application/practice. Review sessions are incorporated at the end of each skills cluster (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive/planning) to allow survivors to identify their successes and challenges and show appreciation and support for each other's learning. These components allow survivors to understand what each skill is, why it is helpful, and concrete ways to use the skill. Content is modified to survivors' experiences. For example, in light of participants' prior experiences of exploitation, lessons on interpersonal skills

such as respecting others and conflict resolution focus not only on adapting to another person, but also helping survivors prioritize their own safety and ensure their own needs are met.

Survivors build individual portfolios throughout STEP for reflections, feedback on their learning, and expressing their creativity. The program closes with a culminating session in which survivors share their portfolios with their peers, reinforcing peer support and learning. Career case conferences are conducted with referring social workers and 10KW staff to support each survivor in planning for next steps in his/her pathway toward achieving his/her vocational goals.

Conclusion

Research regarding survivors' experiences in life skills programming and evaluating the impact of such programs is needed. In the absence of a broader evidence base pertaining to life skills training for survivors of human trafficking, this case study illustrates key lessons for organizations interested in adapting and implementing similar programming. The STEP curriculum reinforces the importance of incorporating guiding frameworks into curriculum development, using research-based tools, contextualizing curricula to culture, and garnering a wide array of stakeholder input on program priorities, needs, and goals. By integrating clear informed consent processes, career counseling and goal development services, psychosocial education, and life skills training, STEP provides a foundation for survivors of human trafficking to continue to pursue their vocational goals.

Table 1: Overview of STEP Curriculum

		Group Session	**Individual Session**
Month 1	Orientation and Informed Consent	General Orientation **Career Counseling Orientation** STEP Orientation	**CC1: Informed Consent** **CC2: Getting to know you**
Month 2	Goal Development and Career Counseling (CC)	Evaluate 1 **Evaluate 2** Explore 1 Explore 2 **Vision 1** Vision 2	**CC3: Exploring my track** **CC4: Strengthening my vision**
Month 3	Psychosocial Education	*Trauma* *Substance use* *Reproductive health* *IPV* *Human trafficking* *Suicide*	**CC5: Focusing on goals**
Month 4	Life Skills Training	Intrapersonal: 1: Self-confidence 2: Coping with stress 3: Self-discipline 4: Review/synthesis Interpersonal: 1: Respecting others 2: Teamwork 3: Resolving conflict 4: Review/synthesis Cognitive/planning: 1: Managing time/tasks 2: Responsibility 3: Decision making 4: Review/Synthesis	**CC6: Action planning** **CC7: Determining readiness** **CC8: Next steps**
	Culmination	Career Case Conference Culminating Activity	

Sessions facilitated by:
Plain Text – STEP Training Manager;
Bold – Career Counselors;
Italics – Social Worker

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Contemporary slavery and health: mortality levels of rescued workers in Brazil

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ABSTRACT

This paper estimates life expectancy at birth and mortality probabilities of Brazilian workers who were rescued in working conditions analogous to slavery. We address the following questions: do those workers have higher mortality levels than similar individuals who did not suffer from such working conditions? Do these conditions affect life expectancy at birth? In an approach on the subject as a public health problem, not only a legal matter, we refer to the effects of overexploitation and violence against enslaved workers in political, social and economic processes that harm life quality and health.

Keywords: Contemporary slavery, health, mortality, life expectancy

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary Brazil, the existence of workers in a situation analogous to slavery became well-known in the 1970s with the first reports of slave labor, carried out by Brazilian civil society organized for the defense of human rights. Since 1995, with the creation of the Special Mobile Inspection Groups (GEFM), official numbers of the Brazilian government indicate that more than 55 thousand workers were rescued from this situation (Radar - Painel de Informações e Estatísticas da Inspeção do Trabalho no Brasil, 2020[130]). Contemporary slavery is neither a recent nor an isolated problem in Brazil. It can be found in almost all countries of the world, being concentrated in Southeast Asia, North and West Africa and in parts of South America. Likewise, it occurs in developed countries in North America and Europe, among others[131]. It is, therefore, a global phenomenon expressed in different ways, according to the social, economic and cultural particularities of each region; however, its essential attributes are maintained:

> *control over a person in such a way as to significantly deprive them of his or her individual liberty, supported by and obtained through force, threat, deception and/or coercion, with the intent of exploitation, through the use, management, profit, transfer or disposal of that person[132].*

Today, the criterion for enslavement is not color, but the vulnerability of the enslaved[133]. Absence of income or livelihoods, difficulties in accessing services, benefits and public policies, in addition to the impossibility of participation in decision-making processes, are some economic, social and political factors that make men and women vulnerable to contemporary slavery, as they prevent the development of their capacity for self-determination.

In Brazil, contemporary slavery is described and criminalized based on Article 149 of the Brazilian Penal Code, being called "conditions similar to slavery." Its confrontation is the subject of intersectoral policies implemented in an articulated manner by public institutions, private entities and civil society organizations[134]. By law, the practice is limited to labor relations,

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[130]Radar - Panel of Information and Statistics of Labor Inspection in Brazil. Available in: https://sit.trabalho.gov.br/radar/, accessed on 09/28/2020.

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[132] Kevin Bales, "Slavery and its Contemporary Manifestations". In Jean Allain (ed.) *The Legal Understanding of Slavery. From the Historical to the Contemporary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 287.

[133] Kevin Bales, *Disposable People. New slavery in the global economy* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2000), 11

[134] Author, *Fighting Forced Labour: the example of Brazil* (Geneva: ILO, 2009), http://www.oit.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_116691/lang--en/index.htm

marked by the exploitation and control of the worker, which implies actions that affect his or her freedom or dignity through the presence of forms of control that prevent him/her from leaving the workplace at will, or by their submission to conditions considered degrading due to threats to their health, safety or physical integrity during work activity[135].

In this context, workers are exposed to degrading working and living conditions, being subject to moral and physical control, in situations of coercion and violence in which vulnerable workers lose their social rights[136].

Vulnerability and overexploitation associated with an exhaustive daily working routine, common to contemporary slaves, may have significant impacts on health levels, and differences on health levels might affect morbidity and mortality levels, and, therefore, life expectancies. This paper estimates life expectancy at birth and mortality probabilities of workers who were rescued in working conditions analogous to slavery. We address the following questions: do those workers have higher mortality levels than similar individuals who did not suffer from such working conditions? Do these conditions affect life expectancy at birth?

In the present study, we address the subject as a public health problem, rather than a legal matter, as it is done in most analyses concerning the topic. For that, we use an amplified concept of health encompassing threats to life, degrading working conditions, harmful impacts to interpersonal relationships and quality of life, all of those related to the public health realm[137]. Thus, we do not only refer to psychological and physical effects of contemporary slavery, but also to overexploitation and violence against workers in political, social and economic processes that harm life quality and health.

The hypotheses of this study are the following:

1) Workers who are submitted to extremely harsh conditions and who are overexploited, working in conditions similar to slavery, may present a deteriorated health;
2) In this context analogous to slavery, degrading conditions influence long-term health levels, impacting on life expectancy;

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[135]On the legal assets protected by Article 149, see: José Claudio Monteiro Brito Filho, "Trabalho em condições análogas às de escravo: os bens jurídicos protegidos pelo artigo 149 do Código Penal Brasileiro". In: Ricardo Figueira *et al*. *A Universidade Discute a Escravidão Contemporânea: práticas e reflexões* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X, 2015), 441-452; Renan Kalil and Paulo Gurjão (2018) "Os Descaminhos do Conceito de Trabalho em Condições Análogas às de Escravo no Congresso Nacional: Aonde o Poder Legislativo quer chegar? In Ricardo Figueira *et al. Estudos sobre Formas Contemporâneas de Trabalho Escravo* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X, 2018), 509-530 and Luís Antônio Camargo Melo, "Atuação do Ministério Público do Trabalho no Combate ao Trabalho escravo - crimes contra a organização do trabalho e demais crimes conexos", *Possibilidades Jurídicas de Combate à Escravidão Contemporânea* (Brasília: ILO, 2007), 64-103, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---ilo-brasilia/documents/publication/wcms_227539.pdf

[136] Lívia Mendes Moreira Miraglia. *Trabalho escravo contemporâneo: conceituação à luz do princípio da dignidade da pessoa humana* (São Paulo: LTr, 2011).

[137] Maria Cecília de Souza Minayo and Edinilsa Ramos de Souza, "É possível prevenir a violência? Reflexões a partir do campo da saúde pública", *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, Volume 4, nº 1, (Rio de Janeiro, 1999), 7-23.

3) Workers who were rescued from these conditions possess similar characteristics to unqualified workers in Brazil, and should present similar life expectancies if working as a contemporary slave did not significantly affect health levels.

The text analyzes how high levels of mortality and low life expectancy are aspects resulting from enslavement, which reveal the health deterioration of rescued workers. This deterioration, added to other factors, makes them susceptible to recurrence in new situations of slavery, preventing the rupture with the cycle of contemporary slavery. This occurs when vulnerabilities to slavery remain unchanged after the rescue, making slave labor the only possibility for survival. Addressing worker health as a constituent part of this cycle is an important contribution to the studies of policies to confront contemporary slavery in Brazil, revealing an essential dimension of slave labor to be considered in the care and assistance actions for rescued people, as well as prevention of recurrence in slavery[138].

In Brazil, the low Human Development Index (HDI) of states and municipalities reveals the vulnerability of its residents to contemporary slavery, indicating possible sources of slavery and enticement for slave labor. Finding that slavery worsens life expectancy, one of the aspects measured by the HDI, would make it possible to monitor, through this indicator, the points of vulnerability for incidence and recurrence of contemporary slavery in the country.

This paper is further divided into five subsections. The next discusses contemporary slavery in Brazil and the third presents some associations between contemporary slavery and health levels. Fourth section describes the methodology, the fifth presents the results and the last concludes the paper.

WORKERS IN SITUATIONS ANALOGOUS TO SLAVERY IN CONTEMPORARY BRAZIL

In contemporary Brazil the existence of workers in a situation analogous to slavery became well-known in the 1970s when the first reports were made by human rights activists, in

[138] On public policies to confront contemporary slavery in Brazil, see: Renan Kalil and Thiago Ribeiro, "Trabalho Escravo Contemporâneo e Proteção Social", *Revista Direitos, Trabalho e Política Social, Volume 1,* (Mato Grosso Federal University, 2015), 15-38, http://periodicoscientificos.ufmt.br/ojs/index.php/rdtps/index; Luiza Cristina Freitas and Valena Mesquita, "Combate ao trabalho escravo: a sistemática da lei estadual paulista 14.946 e seu processo de implementação nacional" In Ricardo Figueira *et. al. Estudos sobre Formas Contemporâneas de Trabalho Escravo* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X, 2018), 51-71; Fabiana Severo, "Trabalho Escravo Urbano Contemporâneo no Brasil: análise de mecanismos extrajudiciais de repressão e prevenção" In Ricardo Figueira *et. al. Estudos sobre Formas Contemporâneas de Trabalho Escravo* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X, 2018), 93-118; Krystima Chaves, "O trabalho escravo contemporâneo sob a perspectiva da teoria do desenvolvimento humano de Amartya Sen" In Ricardo Figueira, et al, *Estudos sobre Formas Contemporâneas de Escravidão* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X, 2018), 73-91.

particular the catholic bishop dom Pedro Casaldáglia[139]. However, it was only in 1995 that the Brazilian Federal Government admitted the existence of contemporary slavery in the country[140]. Since then, official numbers of the Brazilian government indicate the hugeness of the problem: more than 55 thousand workers were rescued from a situation equivalent to slavery (Radar - Painel de Informações e Estatísticas da Inspeção do Trabalho no Brasil, 2020). Official statistics, however, do not show the number of enslaved workers who have not experienced fiscal action, nor do they demonstrate the re-enslavement situations. A study carried out by the International Labor Organization (ILO), which interviewed 121 workers rescued between October 2006 and July 2007, revealed that for each worker rescued in Brazil, it can be considered that 7 to 8 are not reached by the inspection. Among the rescued workers interviewed, 59.7% had already experienced situations of slave labor with deprivation of liberty, which makes recidivism part of the experience of these workers[141].

The contemporary slaves in the Brazilian context are a phenomena that connect extreme violations of human and working rights with the slavery past of a society that is still in debt with the descendants of historical slaves. Nowadays, however, contemporary slavery is distinct from colonial slavery, abolished in 1888 by the enactment of Lei Áurea. Currently, slaves are not only Blacks and Pardos, although they are the majority of individuals in working conditions considered similar to slavery. Of the workers rescued between 2003 and 2018 in Brazil 42% declared themselves to be pardo, 12% black, 18% yellow and 23% white, showing the non-white profile of the workers rescued in Brazil. It is a phenomenon associated with social, economic and political vulnerabilities that affect non-qualified workers in agrarian and urban activities, although there is a prevalence of enslaving activities in Brazilian rural areas, since 73% of the workers rescued between 2003 and 2018 in the country were engaged in agricultural activities. 32% worked on beef cattle, 20% on rice, 8% on sugarcane and 11% on alcohol production. 3% worked as construction workers and 2% as bricklayers.[142]

The demand for unskilled labor combined with the supply of labor from socially and economically vulnerable workers produces the circumstances necessary for carrying out work in conditions similar to slavery. The absence of income or livelihoods, the lack of knowledge about

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[139] The document "*Uma Igreja da Amazônia em conflito com o latifúndio e a marginalização social*" is historically considered the first contemporary report on workers in a situation analogous to slavery in the Amazon region. Published in 1971, the document is recognized as an inflection point in the struggle against contemporary slavery. José de Souza Martins, "A escravidão nos dias de hoje e as ciladas da interpretação"In Comissão Pastoral da Terra, *Trabalho Escravo no Brasil Contemporâneo* (São Paulo: Ed. Loyola, 1999), 127-164.

[140] The former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso recognized the existence of contemporary slavery and announced the establishment of policies to prevent such working conditions.

[141] International Labour Organization, *Perfil dos principais atores envolvidos no trabalho escravo rural no Brasil* (Brasília: ILO, 2011), 85-105.

[142] Data from the Digital Observatory for Slave Labor and Human Trafficking (https://smartlabbr.org/trabalhoescravo), accessed on: 05/07/2020.

labor rights and difficulties in accessing public health, education, work, employment and social assistance policies are vulnerabilities shared by workers currently enslaved in Brazil.

The exploitation of contemporary slaves in rural areas is directly linked to agribusinesses, a sector that produces a great part of the Brazilian commodities. Paradoxically, the agribusiness is a well-developed, modern and technological activity of the Brazilian economy, extremely capital-intensive. The use of capital-intensive technologies to produce agricultural commodities decreases the demand for unqualified workers. They are necessary for the performance of less specialized activities that precede the production of the commodities themselves, such as construction of fences or removal of native forest in an area that will receive agricultural or livestock activities. Hence, still today, contemporary slavery is linked to the most precarious activities of the modernization process of capital expansion through agricultural activities[143].

CONTEMPORARY SLAVERY AND IMPACTS ON THE WORKERS HEALTH

Two main sets of factors can be used to analyze implications of contemporary slavery on health and security of workers: 1) the vulnerability of the exploited; and 2) the naturalization of overexploitation of workers.

Contemporary slavery is neither a recent nor an isolated and occasional problem in Brazil. It unfolds in many social and political contexts and in places plagued with extreme poverty and lack of opportunities in the labor market for unqualified workers, factors that decisively create situations of social vulnerability.

Therefore, although there are direct links between contemporary slavery and the colonial past, there is a clear convergence of this phenomenon with the modern degradation and overexploitation of unqualified workers[144]. Due to these features, the employers greatly reduce production costs, exposing their employees to degrading working conditions, in general, subjecting the individual to moral and physical control[145].

As emphasized by Martins (1999), in societies with contemporary slavery, extremely harsh working conditions tend to be considered a natural fate of poor individuals who do not possess other living alternatives. A situation of absolute immediate financial deprivation is the factor that most motivates the worker to accept those working conditions. Hence, Moura[146] characterize the victims and survivors of modern slavery as ″slaves of necessity″, referring to

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[143] José de Souza Martins, "A escravidão nos dias de hoje e as ciladas da interpretação”In Comissão Pastoral da Terra, *Trabalho Escravo no Brasil Contemporâneo* (São Paulo: Ed. Loyola, 1999), 127-164.

[144] Rogério Garcia Schwarz, *Terra de trabalho, terra de negócio: o trabalho escravo contemporâneo na perspectiva (da violação) dos direitos sociais* (São Paulo: LTr, 2014).

[145]Lívia Mendes Moreira Miraglia, *Trabalho escravo contemporâneo: conceituação à luz do princípio da dignidade da pessoa humana* (São Paulo: LTr, 2011).

[146]Flávia de Almeida Moura, *Escravos Da Precisão: economia familiar e estratégias de sobrevivência de trabalhadores rurais em Codó (MA)* (Maranhão: Universidade Federal do Maranhão: Dissertação de Mestrado, 2006).

vulnerable unqualified workers with working experience based on manual activities that require strength and physical endurance. Therefore, it is essential to understand contemporary slavery as a phenomenon naturally linked to a context of current labor force overexploitation in situations of coercion and violence in which vulnerable workers lose their social rights, being subjected to undignified living conditions.

Thus, contemporary slaves' living conditions, as well as impacts on their health, can be analyzed comparing contemporary slaves to groups of the population representing similar workers that, however, have not suffered from these degrading working conditions. Vulnerability and overexploitation associated with an exhaustive daily working routine may have significant impacts on health levels. For instance, self-medication and the use of anti-inflammatories and painkillers have been reported among current slaves.

Differences in health levels might affect morbidity and mortality levels, and therefore, life expectancy. In this sense, this study estimates mortality levels of workers who were rescued from working conditions similar to slavery. More specifically, life expectancy at birth and survival probabilities are estimated for this group of individuals and comparisons with other groups in the population are made. The next section details the methodology.

METHODOLOGY

Database

The database used in this study contains administrative registers of individuals who were rescued from working conditions similar to slavery. The Labor Ministry, through the individual data on Unemployment Insurance, made the database available for Rescued Workers. This database is linked to data concerning death registers originated from the Civil Register's Computer-based System of Death Control (SISOBI), which is complemented by the Mortality Information System (SIM), created by DATASUS in the Health Ministry. These databases are harmonized and used in the empirical analysis of this paper.

Initially, the database had 35677 observations. 24 individuals were rescued twice, may present some particular idiosyncrasies, and were not included in the analysis. Only 5% of the individuals were women, and we selected only men to make the analysis more insightful, as mortality levels and life expectancies vary between sexes. A few individuals show problems in their year of birth and these were also excluded from the analysis. Moreover, data for those rescued in 2018 is incomplete and it was also excluded. The database has two forms of death registration, SISOBI and SIM. Most deaths were registered in both forms, 802 for the first and 756 for the second, however, the death record in one of the types of registration does not include deaths in 2017. Thus, data for this year was also excluded from the study.

The final sample size is 32971 observations of rescued men from 2003 and 2016 with ages ranging from 14 to 81 years old.1019 of those had their death registered in at least one of the forms of registration.

Life expectancy at birth

Life expectancy at birth of rescued men was estimated by standard procedures present in the literature [147](Preston et al, 2001; Wachter, 2014). First, the number of living rescued individuals by age per year was directly obtained from the database for each year between 2003 and 2016. Then, the individuals were grouped in five age groups: 10 to 19 years old; 20 to 29 years old; 30 to 39 years old; 40 to 49 years old; and 50 to 59 years old. We use these age ranges in order to minimize statistical fluctuations due to small samples. After this, the number of individuals-year for each age group was estimated for all the period between 2003 and 2016. These numbers represent the risk of death for each individual in each age group.

Using data for deaths in the same age groups mentioned above, we estimated the ratio between deaths and individuals-year by age group in the period. Based on the standard methodology described in the literature[148] (Preston et al, 2001; Wachter, 2014), including the Brass[149] relational model described in the next subsection, the surviving probability in each age group was estimated for the period between 2003 and 2016. That is, we estimated the probability that an individual aged x would still be alive at age $x + n$.

However, there are three limitations in the estimates that must be emphasized. There are very few rescued individuals aged between 10 to 19 years old. All the estimates were made with and without this age group. The results are very similar and the results with this group are shown. Moreover, very few individuals aged 60 and over were rescued, so they were not used in the estimates. The use of mortality tables partially overcomes the problems associated with this feature of the data. Finally, the greatest limitation of the data is that there were no individuals aged under 10 among the rescued. Thus, it was impossible to estimate survival rates for this group. In order to overcome this limitation, three mortality tables for Brazil were used, with life expectancy at birth between 58.9 and 66.7 years old [150], values below and above our estimates. The assumption is that rescued men have a similar survival rate to these mortality tables from birth until the age of ten. Using this assumption, we obtained a robust range of values for overall life expectancy at birth.

Brass relational model

Relational models estimate standard mortality rates by age using a mathematical approach applied to mortality tables. More specifically, the relational model is a comparative

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[147]Kenneth W. Wachter, *Essential demographic methods* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2014).

[148] *ibid.*

[149]William Brass, *Mortality models and their uses in demography. Transactions of the Faculty of Actuaries* (… v. 33, 1971), 123-142.

[150]CEPAL, *Tablas de vida* (CEPAL - América Latina y el Caribe - Observatorio Demográfico, 2017).

mathematical relation between mortality tables chosen as a standard for comparison and mortality estimates of a particular population. The chosen standard mortality table captures the complexity of function representing mortality by age, and mathematical parameters determine deviations from this standard in order to reliably represent the empirical values described. An advantage of this approach is that it provides a high degree of flexibility.
The first relational system was developed by Brass[151] and is based on the assumption that two mortality tables can be associated by a linear relation of the logits of survival probabilities from birth until the age *x* in each table. More formally, two sets of survival probabilities from two mortality tables, 1 and 2, have the following relationship:

$$\log it(l_{2x}) = \alpha + \beta \log it(l_{1x}), \quad (1)$$

where l_x is the survival probability from birth to age *x* in each mortality table, and α and β are parameters.

Variations of α with a constant β vary mortality levels. If $\alpha > 0$, survival rates of mortality in table 2 are higher than in table 1. On the other hand, the contrary occurs if $\alpha < 0$. Changes in β with constant α modifies the age profile of mortality levels. For instance, $\beta > 1$, mortality in table 2 concentrates at older ages.

Log-quad model

Another relational model is the log-quad model. Wilmoth *et al.*[152] developed this model, a flexible bi-dimensional model of mortality tables. This technique indirectly generates estimates of complete mortality tables using partial data for a region or a population group, for instance, child mortality (from birth to 5 years) and adult mortality (from 15 to 60 years old), as used in this study. Other pairs of data, such as infant mortality (from birth to 1 year) and adult mortality in other age ranges can also be used. The model presents some interesting features as it has a great flexibility, demands very little information to obtain complete mortality curves and life expectancy at different ages, and results are robust. We use the same methodology proposed by these authors and the estimates are based on the results obtained by the Brass relational model.

[151] *ibid.*

[152] John Wilmoth *et al,* "A flexible two-dimensional mortality model for use in indirect estimation" In *Population studies*, v. 66, n. 1 (…, 2012), 1-28.

The bi-dimensional log-quadratic model used to estimate mortality rates by age, m_x, is defined as:

$$\log(m_x) = \alpha_x + \beta_x \log(m_{child}) + \delta_x \log^2(m_{child}) + \gamma_x \kappa \quad (2)$$

where m_{child} is child death probability, κ is a parameter of mortality level that varies between -2 and 2, and α_x, β_x and δ_x are parameters that differ by age and sex.

κ is interactively estimated by using the mortality probability between the ages of 15 and 60. The value is obtained when the value estimated by the model for this probability is equal to the empirical value. The model estimates mortality probabilities for specific ages using the value of κ and of $\log(m_{child})$.

RESULTS

Life expectancy at birth and survival probabilities were estimated for rescued men in Brazil for the period between 2003 and 2016. The results were compared to other groups in the population in order to verify whether there are differences between individuals who suffered from contemporary slavery and similar individuals in the Brazilian population who did not suffer from this phenomenon.

Table 1 shows the estimates for life expectancy at birth for workers who were rescued from modern slavery conditions. As mentioned, we use three mortality tables for Brazil with life expectancy at birth below and above our estimates, and obtain a robust range of values for overall life expectancy at birth for the period between 2003 and 2016. First, notice that the estimates are not very sensitive to the assumption that rescued men had a similar survival rate than these mortality tables from birth until the age of ten. The values for life expectancy vary from 60.7 to 61.6, a quite narrow range.

Table 1 – Life expectancy at birth of rescued men, Brazil, 2003-2016

Life expectancy at birth in the mortality tables	Life expectancy at birth of rescued men
58.9	60.7
61.9	61.6
66.7	61.4

Source: SISOBI, SIM and authors estimates

These results are compared to similar socio demographic groups of the Brazilian population. For instance, life expectancy at birth for unskilled men who live in the North or

Northeast regions ranged between 65 and 67 years (Silva, Pereira and Freire, 2016). That is, a value quite higher than the observed for rescued workers between 2003 and 2016, although this first population group may also face poverty and harsh working conditions.

The results presented in table 1 seem quite robust. However, the use of the Brass relational model in databases such as the one used in this paper may present some limitations, as already mentioned, in particular the use of mortality tables to exogenously estimate survival rates of the first and last age groups. The use of three different mortality tables could overcome some of the limitations. Nonetheless, in order to test the robustness of our estimates by using a different approach, we choose to compare mortality rates for rescued workers with Brazilian adults in different population groups.

We estimated the death probabilities for those aged between 15 and 60 years. This estimate has several advantages: it captures mortality levels in a large age interval; it does not suffer the effects of mortality levels for children, a limitation of our data; and it does not use data for older individuals, another limitation of our data.

Table 2 shows the results for rescued workers and for different groups in the Brazilian population. Workers rescued from conditions similar to slavery have a probability of 28.8% of dying between the ages of 15 and 60. This number is compared to other groups in the Brazilian population. First, it is much higher than for Brazilian men, a group with a value of 21.3%. However, these differences may be caused by the higher SES level of Brazilian men when compared to rescued individuals. Indeed, qualified men in Brazil show a much lower death probability between the ages of 15 and 60, 9.3%. However, even the non-qualified men in Brazil show lower probabilities than rescued workers, 23.2% against 28.8%. This might be caused by regional differences in mortality rates of unqualified men. Truly, mortality levels for this group in the Northeast region, the poorest in Brazil, are higher than in other regions, but the value for death probability is still smaller than the observed for rescued men, 25.3% against 28.8%. Last comparison is between rescued men and indigenous men, and the first also present higher death probabilities.

The results indicate that the death probability of rescued men is considerably superior to all the other analyzed groups in the Brazilian population. The value is similar to the observed in very violent regions of Latin America, with large prevalences of external cause deaths, such as Guatemala and El Salvador, with values ranging between 22% and 30% for the probability of dying between the ages of 15 and 60 in 2015. Although high, the death probability between these ages for rescued workers is much lower than in regions plagued by HIV/AIDS epidemics, such as South Africa and Mozambique, with values between 44.4% and 63.0% for this probability in 2007.

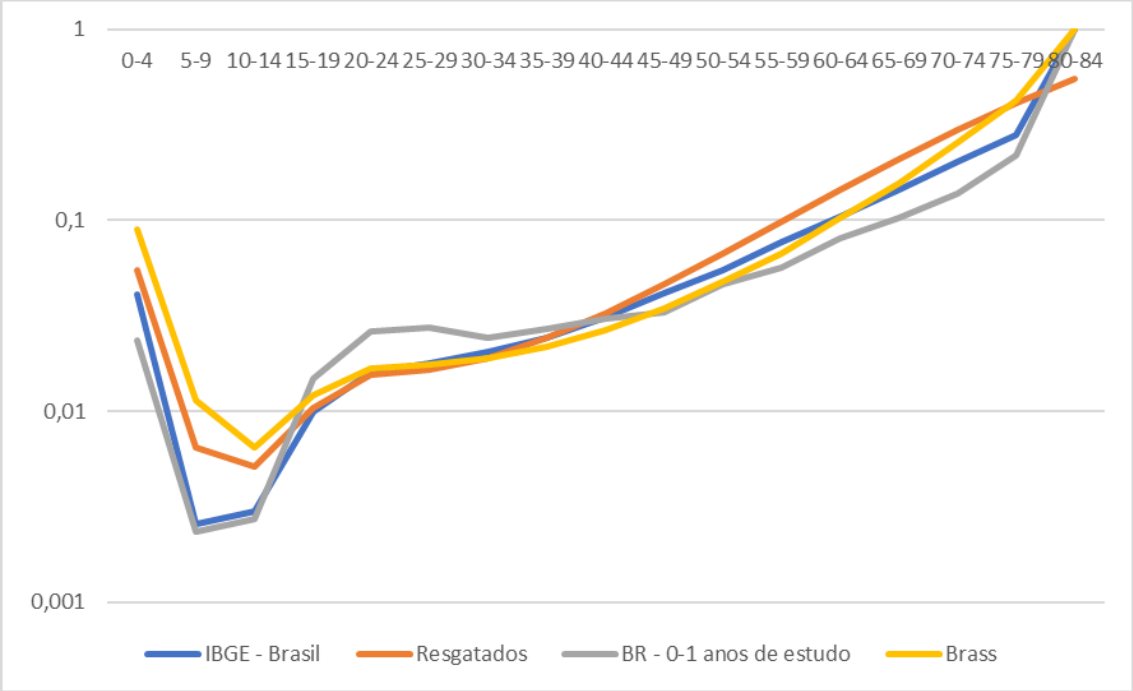
Table 2 – Death probabilities for Brazilian men in different population groups

Population group	**Death Probability (%)**
Rescued workers	28.8
Brazilian men	21.3
Qualified Brazilian men	9.3
Unqualified Brazilian men	23.2
Unqualified Brazilian men – South	21.9
Unqualified Brazilian men – Southeast	22.5
Unqualified Brazilian men – Central-West	21.1
Unqualified Brazilian men – North	20.9
Unqualified Brazilian men – Northeast	25.3
Non-indigenous Brazilian men	21.5
Indigenous Brazilian men	25.5

Source: SISOBI, SIM and authors estimates; IBGE (Censo 2010); Silva, Freire and Pereira (2016), Campos *et al*. (2017), Queiroz and Sawyer (2012) .

Additionally, based on infant and adult mortality estimates generated by the Brass relational model, we obtained the complete mortality curve using the log-quad model. Figure 1 compares this curve for different groups of Brazilian men. The mortality estimates for children and young adolescents are lower for rescued individuals than the observed for other groups of the population. However, due to the limitations of the data, we believe that it is better to focus the attention on adult mortality. The results for adult mortality indicate that mortality levels are similar to the poorest and least qualified in Brazil (Silva, Pereira and Freire, 2016; Campos, *et al*., 2017). Nonetheless, mortality levels for young adults are higher.

Figure 1 – Comparisons of mortality curves for different groups of males in the Brazilian population



CONCLUSION

This study estimates mortality levels and life expectancy at birth for workers rescued from working conditions similar to slavery, the contemporary slaves. The main question addressed is: are mortality levels of contemporary slaves higher than the ones of similar individuals who did not suffer from these extremely harsh working conditions? This topic is approached based on a public health perspective, which uses an amplified concept of health encompassing threats to life, degrading working conditions, harmful impacts to interpersonal relationships and quality of life.

Life expectancy at birth for those rescued from working conditions similar to slavery ranged from 60.7 to 61.6 between 2003 and 2016, while this estimate for Brazilian men was around 67 years in the same period. The results indicate that mortality levels of contemporary slaves are also higher when compared to similar individuals in the Brazilian population, such as unqualified men living in the Northeast region, or indigenous men.

Even though similar in many aspects to other individuals in the Brazilian population, contemporary slaves are subjected to extremely harsh working conditions and degrading living circumstances that may increase mortality levels. Besides, they have less access to health services, which may also negatively influence survival rates.

Degrading work conditions act cumulatively on the enslaved, leading them to illness and death in subsequent years. Its mortality rate is similar to that observed in violent regions of Latin

America. Contemporary slavery can, therefore, be perceived as an external threat to the lives of those who suffer it, which makes it a multifaceted problem associated with public health and safety, in addition to strongly affecting human and labor rights. This reinforces the need for an intersectoral approach to tackle it.

This study is directly linked to safeguarding basic human rights for poor individuals in Brazil, a basic feature of citizenship in democratic societies. It touches social, political and health issues, potentially affecting public policies designed to eradicate such practices.

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