



## DOSSIÊ TEMÁTICO

### SEMINÁRIO VIRTUAL PERSPECTIVAS CRÍTICAS SOBRE O TRABALHO NO TURISMO

# SLAVERY, NEO-SLAVERY, OPPRESSION AND ETHICS

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**Abstract:** Modern slavery takes on a number of different forms reflecting a range of motives to the enslavement. A shared reality is that the strong exploit the weak by forcing them to work for minimal rewards. Neo-slavery also entails the exploitation of individual with more power through imposition of low rewards. The paper outlines a number of philosophical perspectives about the employment relationship that condone and condemn exploitation and oppression in the workplace. The paper ultimately expresses concerns about the oppression of the weak by the strong in the hospitality sector.

## 1. Introduction

This paper is informed firstly by a conference that this author organised at Stenden University in The Netherlands, and a follow-up book that develops and expands upon the issues raised at the event; *Slavery and liberation in hotels restaurants and bars*, due to be published by Routledge in autumn 2020. The paper also reflects The UK context in which it was written, that said many of the issues raised are global and can be adapted to local circumstance where appropriate.

The golden rule that appears in all religions and ethical codes is to treat other people, as you would wish to be treated yourself. Using this as a guide, employee treatment by their employers would not involve slavery or neo-slavery conditions, yet both continue to exist today. In recognition of this reality most advanced market economies have legislation that outlaws slavery, and set minimum wage rates below which employees should not be paid. Despite these legislative interventions, slavery still exists in European countries; and the UK hospitality industry some firms continue to illegally pay wages below the already low legal minimum rates. They create a state of neo-slavery where nominally free employees are in effect enslaved by poverty and powerlessness.

The ethical obligation to treat other as we would wish to be treated seems to have been set aside. Are these employers ethically corrupt, or are they working to an ethic that

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places financial gain to owners above all other ethical considerations? Whilst some observers may feel outrage about the use of slave labour and the payment of low, neo-slave like rates; it is important to understand the ethical and moral concepts underpinning this 'profit before all else' mindset that dominates capitalist actions. Indeed, discussion of slavery and the slave trade in the past, suggests that there are parallels with the modern-day ruling elite that seem to subvert all moral norms in the pursuit of personal gain.

This paper explores some different ways of viewing work organisations and the varied stakeholder interests with them. The paper also outlines a model for mapping various ethical and moral positions with which to assess management actions towards employees. It concludes with a brief discussion of the characteristics of those who appear to work to a different moral code that is the norm in most societies.

## 2. Modern slavery

Slavery is defined by the Anti-slavery Organisation (2019) as occurring when a person is, 'forced to work through coercion – mental or physical; owned or controlled by an 'employer' through mental or physical abuse, or threat of abuse; dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'; physically constrained or have restrictions placed on their movement' (2019:7).

The International Labour Organisation's (2017) global estimates of modern slavery include forced marriage with victims of forced labour. Their report estimated that in 2016 there were 40.3 million victims of modern slavery. The inclusion of victims of forced marriage explains the difference between global estimates from different sources.

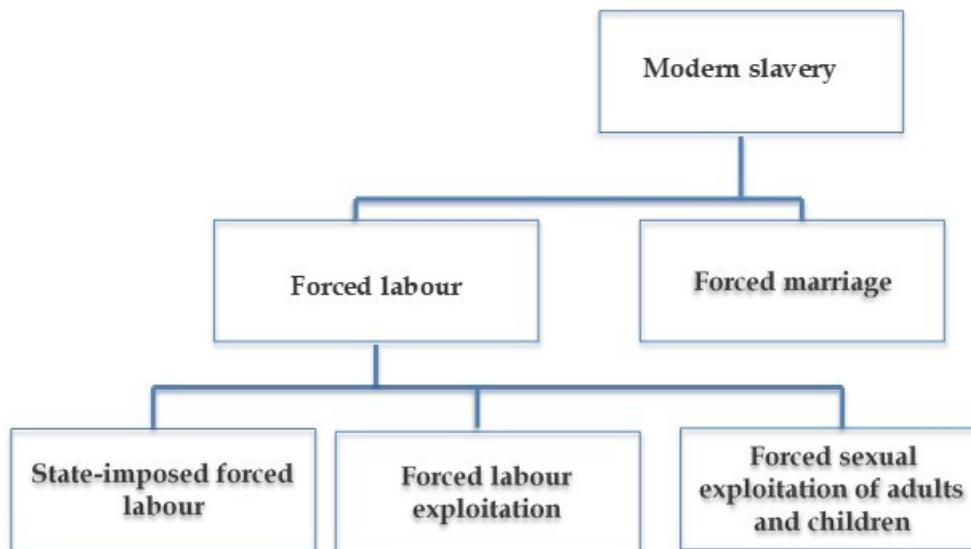
The ILO (2017) report states that of the 40.3 million victims, 24.9 million were in forced labour, '... forced to work under threat or coercion as domestic workers, in clandestine factories, on farms, and fishing boats, in other sectors and like the sex industry' (2017:1). They add that 15.4 million people were living in forced marriages. 'That is they were enduring a situation that involved the loss of their sexual autonomy and often providing labour under the guise of marriage' (2017:2).

Globally slaves represent 5.4 per 1,000 of the adult population and 4.4 per 1,000 children. Women are most likely to be enslaved, 71 per cent of slaves were female. Almost all those forced to marry against their wishes were women (99 per cent) and 5.7 million of these were children; and 21 per cent of the victims of sexual exploitation were also children. The UN Convention on Human Rights defines children as being under the age of 18.

Women and girls largely were trafficked for sexual exploitation; just 10 per cent of the victims of traffic victims of sexual exploitation were men and boys. 51 per cent of victims originated from Western and Southern Europe, 26 per cent from South-Eastern Europe, 9 per cent from Africa and 8 per cent from the Far-East. Trafficking for forced labour involved men (70 per cent) and boys (5 per cent). Those investigated for,

prosecuted and sentence for human trafficking offences were predominantly male by a ratio of three to one (UNODC, 2018).

Figure 1 - Identifying modern slavery.



Source: ILO, 2017:17.

Whilst there are instances of the direct use of slaves in Western hotels and restaurants, they are more frequently found in the hospitality sector supply chain in sub-contracted laundry, or cleaning services, or in food and drink production. The accommodation sector accounts for approximately 10 per cent of slaves, whilst agriculture accounts for 11 per cent of slaves. The accommodation sector is likely to involve most slaves who are women and girls. Domestic work also involves a majority of women: Lara's story follows, "I had no time off, sometimes working from 7 am until 4 am. I slept on the floor of the children's' room and was never allowed to leave the house" (Anti-Slavery International, 2019). The agriculture sector is mostly concerned with physical labour and there are more male slaves.

Current forms of enslavement encompass the 'people as property' format of former times, but also include those enslaved by debt bondage and physical coercion. The modern slave profiles vary according to the motives of the enslaver. The gender profile is different for those enslaved for the reasons of the use of forced labour or for sexual exploitation. Human trafficking overlaps with, but is also distinct from modern slavery. Human trafficking involves the forced movement of people for purposes of exploitation including forced begging and forced organ donation.



### 3. Neo-slavery

Neo-slavery, whereby supposedly free workers are weakened by in-work poverty pay rates, reduced trade union power, and secondary labour market settings where replacement labour is plentiful; creates a climate of stress and fear, and a culture of compliance and obedience. Technically free employees have few choices, and are forced to accept their lot. With limited income, there are limited savings and so when emergencies occur and there are few, if any, savings on which to fall back. Traditional sources of finance through banks, etc., are typically not available for those on the lowest incomes. Many have to rely on so-called 'pay-day loans' where lenders make loans to the poorest, but at interest rates that are punitive. Although there have been some curbs on some of the worst excesses, it is not unusual for payday loans to be offered at over 1,200 per cent. A £100 loan would attract interest of £100 if kept for one month and the borrower would need to find £200 to pay off both the loan and the interest.

For others, perhaps less on the margins of poverty neoliberalism has encouraged high levels of personal debt. Margaret Thatcher's call for the 'property owning democracy' and the sale of Council Housing to their tenants is classic neoliberalism, switching the ownership from the state to individuals. People are thereby liberated from the regulation and restrictions of the state. Everyone can aspire to be a homeowner, rather than being a tenant. The local state is no longer obliged to provide the same levels of affordable housing for rental. It all sounds like a win-win situation, but many former tenants who bought their council home found that the mortgage provider was less understanding than their former local council when unemployment, or other life emergencies, occurred. Many subsequently lost their homes and were forced back into the private rented property market. By 2017 around 40 per cent of former council properties were now owned by property companies (Collinson, 2017; Booth & Clark, 2015).

As a further indicator of the linkage between neoliberalism and poverty, there are, in 2018, estimated to be almost 5,000 people sleeping rough on the streets in England, and this has more than doubled since 2010. In 2010 there were 1,786 rough sleepers in England and by 2018 this had risen to 4,677 (Homeless Link, 2019). The extreme cold weather of the early months of 2018 witnessed 580 deaths of people forced to sleep on the streets in one of the richest countries in the world! Furthermore, 1,182,954 three-day food packs were issued by charities in the UK. The poverty and destitution experienced by many in the neo-slave position are not, as many pro-rich politicians suggest, a by-product of tough times and circumstances beyond anyone's control. They are a direct consequence of neoliberalism and choices that prioritise the needs of the strongest and most powerful at the expense of the weakest and most vulnerable. Since 2010, the UK government has advocated 'austerity' as an economic necessity, but in reality it is a weapon of oppression, used to further browbeat and disempower the most ill-protected members of society.



The mantra of 'austerity' is accompanied by a shift of income and wealth to the richest. According to Equality Trust (2017) the growth in wealth of the richest 1000 individuals in the UK in for the year preceding 2017 (£82.476 billion) was equivalent to paying 5,143,819 Living Wage jobs for one year (£82.476 billion) ; the grocery bills for food bank users for 56 years (£81.5 billion) ; pay the energy bills for two and a half years for 25.6 million household (£79.15 billion) and lift 2,38 million households out of fuel poverty (£882 million); buy a house for every rough sleeper (£901.2 million) and pay two years rent for 4.5 million households (£72.1 billion); or pay the full Council Tax bill for every UK household (£27.6 billion); or pay 68 per cent of the annual budget for the NHS (Equality Trust, 2017).

The removal of support for the poorest and most vulnerable is not just an economic/political choice, shifting income and wealth from the poorest to the richest; it appears to be motivated by a desire to enslave workers through poverty. Limiting the victims' ability to fight back produces obedience and compliance in those affected, but also allows employers to impose employment terms and conditions that suit them best. The hospitality sector, unlike some other sectors in the economy, has an uneven demand for labour. Variations in sales at different times of the day, and across the days of the week and seasons of the year; together with difficult to predict variations in demand level have previously resulted in staff being on-duty at work, but under utilised. They were recruited to cover a shift but demand subsequently did not justify the staff on duty, thereby incurring higher labour costs that demand levels require. In more recent time and as a result of neoliberalism and labour market liberalisation; the 'zero hours contract' has allowed an employer to recruit employees without an obligation give them work and pay. Neoliberalism represents a considerable shift in power towards employers, and has resulted in growing inequality in the UK and the USA in particular; and growing inequality is both damaging to social well being, and is ultimately counter-productive.

Philip Alston's Special Rapporteur's (UN Human Rights Council, 2019) United Nations report on extreme poverty and human rights in the UK provides a damning insight into the effects of the policies of austerity introduced since 2010. On fifth of the population – 14 million people live in poverty and 1.5 million were said to have been destitute in 2017. Whilst right-wing politicians claims that austerity policies were essential due to economic circumstances, the UN report suggests that this is unacceptable and unnecessary in the fifth largest economy in the world, and accused the Conservative government of being in denial.

The Special Rapporteur concluded with following damning observation, 'The social safety net has been badly damaged by drastic cuts to local authorities' budgets, which have eliminated many social services, reduced policing services, closed libraries in record numbers, shrunk community and youth centres and sold off public spaces and buildings. The bottom line is that much of the glue that has held British society together since the Second World War has been deliberately removed and replaced with a harsh and uncaring ethos. A booming economy, high employment and a budget surplus have not reversed

austerity, a policy pursued more as an ideological than an economic agenda' (UN Human Rights Council, 2019:1).

#### 4. Ethical practice

The golden rule that appears to be in all religious and ethical codes is, to treat other people, as you would wish to be treated yourself. Using this as a guide, employee handling by their employers would not involve slavery or neo-slavery conditions, yet both continue to exist today. Despite legislative interventions, slavery still exists in European countries, and in the UK hospitality industry some firms continue to illegally pay wage rates below the already low legal minimums. They create a state of neo-slavery where nominally free employees are, in effect, enslaved by poverty and powerlessness.

Epicurus, the Greek philosopher writing in around 400 BC, provides a valuable ethical guide point when he suggested that, in dealing with other people, it is important to be asking, 'how would I like to be treated like this'? Whilst Epicurus was an atheist writing at a time when most of his fellow-Greeks were polytheists who believed that the 'gods' lived on Mount Olympus, the message resonates with many contemporary religions across the globe today. Indeed the edict to treat others in a way that you would wish to be treated is a kind of 'golden rule' of all religions. Table 1.1 below shares some of the insights from contemporary world religions.

Table 1 - Insights from contemporary religions.

<b>Buddhism:</b> Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful (Udana-Varga 5-18)
<b>Christianity:</b> In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this the law of the Prophets (Jesus, Matthew 7:12)
<b>Hinduism:</b> This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you (Mahabarata 5:1517)
<b>Islam:</b> Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you would wish for yourself (The Prophet Mohammad, Hidath)
<b>Jainism:</b> One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated (Mahavira, Sutrikanga)
<b>Judaism:</b> What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole Torah all the rest is commentary (Hilell Talmud, Shabbat 31a)
<b>Taoism:</b> regard your neighbour's gain as you gain, and your neighbour's loss as your own loss (T'ia Shang Kan Ying P'ien 213-218)
<b>Zoroastrianism:</b> Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself (Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29)

Source: Author (2020).



The ethical obligation to treat others as we would wish to be treated seems to have been set aside. Are these employers ethically corrupt, or are they working to an ethic that places financial gain to owners above all other ethical considerations? Whilst some observers may feel outrage about the use of slave labour, and the payment of low neo-slave like rates, it is important to understand the ethical and moral concepts underpinning this 'profit before all else' mind-set that dominates capitalist actions. Indeed, discussion of slavery and the slave trade in the past suggests that there are parallels with the modern-day ruling elite that seem to subvert all moral norms, in the pursuit of personal gain.

In essence, the strategies adopted by an employer organisation to its workforce are political, based upon perceptions of the nature and priorities of the organisation. This leads to an ethical position, and to moral actions that shape the rules that an organisation sets for the conduct of organisation managers and members. The neoliberal perspective prioritises organisation profit-maximising goals and some hospitality organisations will be tempted to use slave labour directly, or indirectly through supply-chain organisations. For this reasons most developed economies have adopted a series of labour market interventions that curb employer actions – banning slavery, proscribing sex and racial discrimination, as well the introduction of equal pay and minimum pay legislation, for example. Pro-labour political parties and trade unions typically advocate this legislation. Many within the business community have also been active advocates because they view exploitative employment practices as giving these less scrupulous firms unfair competitive advantage; they argue for a 'level playing field' that discourages competitive strategies based upon excessive labour exploitation. Other industry actors have embraced the neoliberal ideology have attempted to curb, and in some case completely reverse, these protective labour market interventions. Fundamentally, both slavery and neo-slavery involve the oppression of those who are weak by those who are more powerful.

## 5. The employee and employer relationship

The uses of slave labour, or employee pay-rates that do not allow an acceptable standard of living, appear on the surface, to be unethical. Yet they are consistent with a management framework that regards profit-maximisation as the primary purpose of industrial and commercial activity under private capitalism (Wolff & Resnick, 1987). Labour costs represent one of several expense streams that have to be managed in a way that minimises costs so as to generate profit for the business owner. As a cost stream, hospitality frontline labour is a significant element in total costs, and labour cost management represent a core part of manger organisational priorities and duties. Alternative ethical positions argue that the profit motive must operate in a way that does not exploit employee weaknesses through the use of slavery, or poverty wage strategies. The following section will outline three broad philosophical observations about the nature of the employment relationship in capitalist economies.



Fox, (1974) was writing during a period of industrial strife in the UK. Whilst the mainstream media and pro-rich politicians labelled this ‘trade union militancy’ as a uniquely ‘British disease’, that required curbs on ‘trade union power’. In reality, these calls to restrict trade union actions were part of the neoliberal agenda being advocated by the Chicago School of economists, and subsequently enacted in the UK under the Thatcher government in the 1980s. For the advocates of the ‘free market’, trade unions are a potential threat to the power of the richest to further exploit the poorest, although few would express this openly. The Chicago School’s mantra was that all gain when the rich get richer (trickle-down economics). Fox labelled this approach as the unitarist perspective. The following section outlines Fox’s perspectives on the relationship between employers and their employees. The perspectives describe the various philosophical positions adopted by different management, employee, academic, and trade union actors in industry.

The **unitarist perspective** articulates a view that work organisations operate for the greater social good that enriches society. Unequal pay and conditions between owners, senior managers, and frontline staff are necessary to incentivise investment, and attract the best talents to run the venture. In these circumstances conflict within the organisation is treated as a malady created by either a breakdown in communications, or the actions of ‘troublemakers’, ‘trade union militants’, and by politically motivated ‘socialists’ and ‘communists’.

This view is held by many managers, and assumes that top-down decision-making and an autocratic culture is technically required for the organisation to operate in a free market environment. The organisations must respond appropriately to the instructions from the market. The unitarist view does not recognise work organisations as having a variety of interest groups that may desire different things from it. There is no recognition of organisation politics; things are the way they are because that is the way they have to be. To the critical observer, the unitarist view is itself deeply political because it predominantly articulates the interests of the owners, and those who work in their interests. Employees are factors of production, to be managed in a way that minimises costs and maximises the profit for shareholders/owners.

Workforce consultation or negotiations with trade union as employee representatives is resisted or limited to the bare minimum, because they interfere with the decision-making processes determined by rationality of the free market. Whilst the term only became more widely accepted after Fox’s model, these views are neoliberal, and were an element of the campaign against post-war interventionism, leading ultimately to the establishment of the neoliberal orthodoxy in the 1980s. The Thatcher government’s restriction on UK trade unions; exemplified by the State resource used to defeat striking mineworkers in 1983 was a deliberate policy informed by neoliberal ideology.

Given this pro-profit oriented priority, labour cost minimisation is consistent with paying the neo-slave wages, and even slavery directly or indirectly. It is for this reason





that most advanced economies have legislation that makes slavery illegal; and sets legal minimum wage rates.

The **pluralist perspective** accepts that work organisations are composed of groups with overlapping and differing views of the organisation, their reasons for being in the organisation and the nature of the rewards from it. This can result in conflicts between the organisational group members. Labour costs and employment conditions are the most obvious where owners and workers are likely to have conflicting needs. Pay rates represent a cost for owners, and the source of income to pay the costs of living for the workforce. Similarly, staffing levels, working hours and work rates are all issues that can be the cause of conflict between the parties.

Recognising these conflicts of interests occur the pluralist approach adopts processes and structures where organisation management reflects the varying goals and objectives of different stakeholders. Pay rates, are less likely to be at the neo-slavery level, because organisation decision makers are more likely to reflect the needs of frontline workers. In Germany, the system of Co-determination involves employee representatives on Works Councils and on Two-tier Boards of Directors.

There are a few examples of these more pluralist approaches in organisation management in the UK, the John Lewis Partnership is one famous example of a more pluralist approach with employee members involved in some the decision-making processes. However, there are few, if any, examples of employee participation in the hospitality sector's major, multi-unit firms.

The **radical pluralist** perspective views conflict as inevitable in capitalist work organisations. Organisation-owners are taking away some of the output of the work force to pay profits to owners – Marx called this 'extracting surplus value'. This inevitably results in employee rewards and working conditions as being the sources conflict. The need to extract surplus value, reduce pay rates, and even use slave labour, are all consistent with the capitalistic profit maximising enterprise.

Many radical pluralists are also interested in studying the reasons why conflict is not more frequently and widely witnessed in work organisations. They point to the different ways that conflict is manifest in these organisations. In situation where trade union membership is low, resistance is likely to take individualised forms. The high staff turnover witnessed in many organisations in the hospitality sector is typical. Where collective forms of resistance are difficult, individuals adopt individualised forms of resistance – high levels of staff turnover – regular absenteeism – poor quality service interactions.

The radical pluralist observer is able to understand the adoption of slavery in the supply chain, or paying slave like low wages, because the interests of owners are dominant, and profit maximisation is the guiding ethical standard. Capitalist work organisations involve oppressors with more power, oppressing those with less power. According to the radical pluralist view, direct slavery, indirect slavery, and neo-slavery

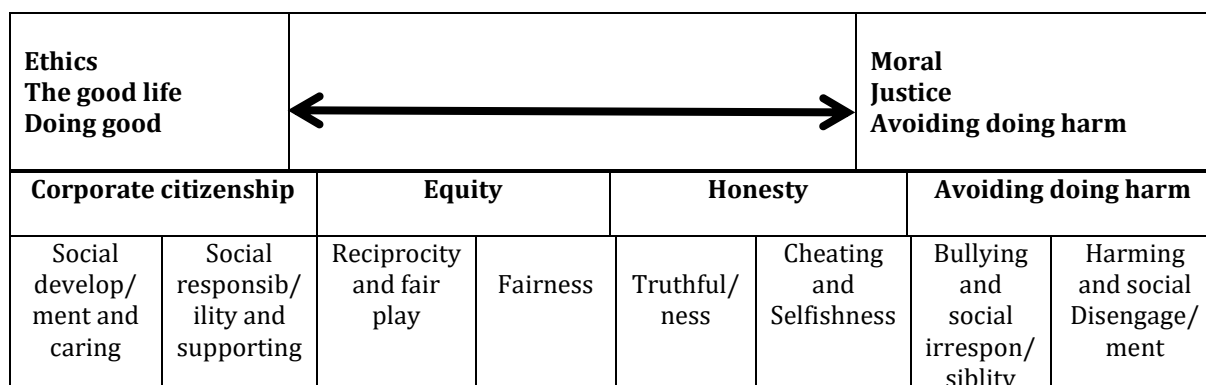
are all consistent with labour exploitation implicit in capitalist work organisations (Wolff, 2012).

## 6. Ethical and moral frameworks

Whilst Fox's perspectives help understanding of different views of the 'political' nature of work organisations, it is possible to understand the adoption slavery or neo-slavery within ethical and moral frames of reference. Fisher and Lovell (2012) make a distinction between ethics and morality. Ethics are general guiding principles that shape aims and objectives and about ensuring good behaviour; morals involves list of rules and codes of what to do, or not to do. Laws whether they are national legal determinants, or internal organisational rules of conduct map actions as being legal or illegal.

The point here is that although hospitality firms are legally bound to be lawful, they can adopt one of a number of positions in relation to their business practice. Fisher and Lovell's second dimension produces a continuum relating to ethics doing good or at least avoiding doing harm. Figure 2 is adapted from their map (2012: 34).

Figure 2 - Mapping ethics and morality in business practice.



Source: Fisher & Lovell. 2012:34.

The various positions identified by Fisher and Lovell is helpful because they show a number of different options for hospitality operators. These options display varying degrees of commitment to doing good, or avoiding doing harm. Fisher and Lovell (2012) go on to produce a matrix that is also helpful in identifying a number of positions relating to slavery and neo-slavery. They compare actions that good or bad, with actions that are legal or illegal. Figure 3 below shows how these continua interact to show actions that are:



*Actions that are good and legal, but not a legal obligation*

Given the ideology of many corporations that define their key duty is to increase shareholder value, many hospitality firms may see this as unnecessary. Others might consider that they also have duties to other stakeholders that means that should promote ethical and fair employment practices, and actively campaign against slavery. They are likely to implement employment practices that include the living wage rather than the legal minimum.

*Actions that are bad, and illegal.*

Employing slave labour and/or paying below the legal minimum wage rates are both bad and illegal. They place maximising shareholder rewards above the needs and consideration of other stakeholders. In a setting where legal oversight is minimal or dependent on voluntary codes of practice tempts some employers adopt practices that are bad and illegal because they are primarily concerned with rewards to shareholders/owners.

*Actions are legal but bad.*

This category is the one most likely to involve business and management decisions in employment, because they relate to these fundamental issues about obligations shareholders alone, or to a wider set of stakeholder interests – customers – employees – suppliers – communities. In some cases, being ‘economical with the truth’ that is falling short of telling lies but does either mislead the customer, or cover up useful information. It might also include decision to pay employees low wages, or to employ only young people who can be legally paid a rate that is below the ‘living wage’ rate.

*Actions that are good, but illegal*

This category includes actions that may be morally good but illegal. For example, during Apartheid in South Africa, several US and British firms took the view that it was their global duty to adhere to a equal opportunities policy, and broke the South African law promoting black and other ethnic group workers, and providing equal employment rights. Clearly actions in this category lead to some difficult considerations, because organisations are not free to disobey laws or legal obligations, just because they don’t like them. In most countries they are free to lobby and campaign for legislation to be changed, and so decisions to disobey the law are unusual.

In the Western world slavery is illegal, however some operators may see it is an easy way to make extra profits. Where it does occur this is more likely to take place in ‘back-of-house operations’ – in kitchens, housekeeping and in cleaning services. There are examples of slaves being employed in restaurant services, in some ‘ethnic’ restaurants;

where enslaved individuals are transported from the local national and cultural setting to work in the Western based restaurant. In the USA work done by prison inmates involves slave-like labour because they are compelled to do it for pittance level pay, but they are not technically slaves. These examples aside, slavery tends not to be employed directly in hospitality businesses in the West, but at some point in the supply chain. Sub-contracted laundry or cleaning service; or in the food supply chain on farms, etc., are the more likely locations for slave labour. Organisations that directly campaign against, or adopt business practices to avoid both the direct and indirect employment of slave labour are located in the quadrant that is good and legal.

Figure 3 - Ethical options on slavery in the hospitality sector.

### Legal acts

<b>Good</b>	<i>Actively campaigning against the use of slave labour in the industry.</i>	<i>The use of suppliers that pay neo-slave pay-rates reduce costs and increase profits</i>	<b>Bad</b>
	<i>Discriminating in favour of the former slaves in recruitment</i>	<i>Directly recruiting slaves to make higher profits via exploitation</i>	

### Illegal

Employment practices that positively discriminate in favour of the recruitment of former slaves, in an attempt to compensate former slaves for their abuse is perhaps good but would be deemed to be illegal in most countries with equality legislation. 'Positive discrimination' in these circumstances is typically deemed to be illegal, though the intention may be good.

Employees in the hospitality sector are more likely to experience neo-slavery in the UK hospitality industry. In some cases, employers are paying below the legal minimum rate, they are acting illegally and their actions are bad. Others are paying legal minimum wages but these do not provide a living wage; or tie employees into arrangements such as zero hours contracts. Hospitality workers are employed, but the employer is not obliged to provide a guaranteed minimum number of hours. In other cases, the use of sub-contracted labour makes the worker nominally self-employed, and the organisation



avoids holiday pay and other legal obligations it might have to employees. Again these examples of actions that are legal, but bad. Hotel companies like Accor take an ethical stance that is committed to an anti-slavery stance; and at the same time employee pay is at a rate above the national minimums within the countries that it operates. Both Accor and Shiva hotels adopt ethical policies relating to the slavery and neo-slavery that are legal and good.

Against the Fisher and Lovell model (2012) neo-slavery is essentially bad, but when employers pay below even the legal minimums their action are both bad and illegal. Using the law to pay the legal minimums, which are below the point deemed to be a 'living wage', is legal and bad; as are the use of tips to meet part of the wage, zero hours contracts, and sub-contracting arrangements that define people working for the organisation as self-employed.

The forgoing discussion has posed ethics within the context of organisational conduct, but ethical principles should also be at the core of individual aims and actions. An ethical view that states that in a world of oppressors and oppressed, the individual is always on the side of the oppressed, provides a guide to oppose injustice in whatever for it takes. Sexism, racism, religious intolerance all involve the oppression of the individuals because of what they are or believe, rather than because they are cruel in their actions to others. Generosity, compassion, and learning to ask the questions, 'What it like not to be me', helps individuals to develop empathy both to the plight of others as well as to oppose injustice whenever, or however, it is manifest.

## 7. Oppressors and the oppressed

Direct slavery, indirect slavery, and neo-slavery are imposed on victims due to their weakness and inability to resist. Their oppressors take advantage of their circumstances for gain. Unlike the moral codes discussed earlier, the oppressor stance is that the strong and rich exploit the weak and poor. It is interesting that many of the advocates of the neoliberal orthodoxy declare themselves to be Christians. Margret Thatcher the neoliberal zealot, for example, frequently declared her Christian principles. When she was first elected as Prime Minister in 1979, she quoted from St Francis of Assisi as she entered No 10 Downing Street. "Where there is hatred, let me bring love. Where there is offense, let me bring pardon. Where there is discord, let me bring union. Where there is error, let me bring truth". Given that she had spent much of the election campaign attacking trade unions and the protections offered by the welfare state; many observers at the time were appalled by the self-delusion and hypocrisy in her words. Similarly, Teresa May, a more recent Conservative Prime Minister, was a clergyman's daughter who would be seen on high-days and holidays traipsing into church, and declared her actions were informed by her Christian faith. Continuing the policies of neoliberalism her administration introduced tax cuts for the richest whilst slashing support for the poorest in society.



Leon Festinger (1957) work on cognitive dissonance provide a useful insight into the psychology of individuals who declare themselves to be motivated by the highest moral whilst performing cruel acts. Cognitive dissonance occurs when a person experiences conflicting beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. This produces a feeling of mental discomfort leading to a change in beliefs attitudes or behaviors, so as to reduce the feelings of discomfort and restore balance. Pro-rich politicians may engage in dissonance reduction when they argue that the ruling elite should receive more of the total rewards because they are the wealth creators. They justify inequality by arguing that it ultimately works for the collective good via the 'trickle-down effect'. Similarly, arguments that the poorest in society only have themselves to blame because they are 'work-shy' or 'scroungers'; are examples of cognitive dissonance. Those with a disproportionately large share of income and wealth reduce the cognitive dissonance by blaming those with low incomes and little wealth for their self-inflicted plight.

Cognitive dissonance enables pro-rich politicians to declare their Christianity and faith as a way of sanctifying their actions. As Prime Minister Mrs. May declared on several occasions that she was "doing god's work". It is difficult to justify actions that take away support from the poorest and give more to the richest when religious declarations advocate taking from the rich to give to the poor. The Christina bible quotes, 'Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven'.

The stigmatisation of the poor and economically vulnerable by these self-declared faithful Christians is, therefore a necessary device for those with wealth and power to live with themselves. No one, other than those with psychotic personality disorders, wants to openly declare their own selfishness and greed; cognitive dissonance reduction strategies develop beliefs and attitudes that both inflate their own value and goodness whilst at the same time shaping their attitudes and beliefs about the victims of their actions. The payment of poverty wages, together with impositions of manipulative working conditions, and the extraction of surplus value produced by workers are justified as rewards for their entrepreneurship and goodness. Their casualties are dismissed as feckless, amoral, or faithless and who deserve what they get.

Slave ownership and the slave trade in the past, together with modern day slavery and neo-slavery, all involve the oppression of weaker people by those with more power. The oppressor has little concern for the impact of their actions on their weaker victims. Hence this results in a reverse of the 'golden rule' discussed earlier. Personal gain at the expense of all else leads individuals to traffic human beings, sexually exploit, or pay poverty levels of pay that create the conditions of neo-slavery. In all cases, their actions in oppressing those who are less powerful are bad, using the Lovell and Fisher (2012) framework, and can be judged as illegal or legal. Knowingly recruiting slaves directly into the workforce, or using sub-contractors that are known to recruit modern day slaves are actions that are illegal. However, paying workers poverty level wages may be legal



providing they meet minimum and equal pay requirements, but exploiting the powerlessness of the workers to resist is legal but morally bad (Wolff & Resnik, 1987).

It is worth remembering that prior to the abolition, the slave trade and slavery were both legal, but clearly bad. However, this did not prevent slave owners from owning and exploiting their fellow human beings. The form of oppression may have changed over time but oppression of the strong over the weak informs much of actions and priorities of pro-rich politicians and the ruling elite interests that they serve (Wolff, 2012).

It is tempting to claim that those who act in this totally self-oriented manner are sociopaths. Whilst some members of the ruling elite may well be sociopaths, or display sociopathic tendencies, most elite members do not meet the clinical definitions of sociopaths. The ruling elite's selfishness and greed is systemic and founded on the values inherent in private capitalism. Marx and Engels famously observed (Marx & Engels, 1998), 'The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force... The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas'. Hence the 'golden rule' to treat others as you would wish to be treated is sidestepped by the self-justifying and victim stigmatising ideology of the wealthy and owners of private capital.

## 8. Conclusion

Labour costs represent a significant cost-stream in hospitality service organisations. In the most labour-intensive businesses it is not unusual for labour costs to represent forty per cent of the sales revenue. Even in firms that have 'McDonaldized' (Ritzer, 2007) and reduced labour inputs via job redesign, deskilling, and 'service factory' methods, labour costs are still significant. Managers are therefore always looking for ways to reduce the cost of labour even further. For some the drive to increase returns to owners may be so strong that they adopt practices that involve direct slavery, or wage rates that create a state of neo-slavery.

The discussion on slavery and neo-slavery is best understood through the prism of business ethics and a continuum of moral standpoints. The framework created by considering manager actions to be either legal or illegal or good and bad; creates four quadrants within which to judge management actions. The employment of slave labour in most advanced economies is both illegal and bad; as is the payment of neo-slave wage rates that contravene minimum wage legislation.

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