Acknowledgements

This book has been a long time in the making. I started thinking and writing about the relationship between unfree labour and modern slavery in 2013 when I moved to the United Kingdom. My initial focus was on how different forms of unfree labour and labour exploitation came to be seen as modern slavery. But I hit an impasse. As a feminist who studies what the law treats as labour, I felt it was incumbent on me to address sex work and its relationship to unfree labour and modern slavery. But most of the literature on human trafficking and modern slavery treats labour and sexual exploitation separately even though many forms of work are exploitative, and gendered forms of exploitation – which include sexual violence and harassment – permeate many occupations. My challenge was to find a way to discuss sexual and labour exploitation and the different governance strategies associated with them without either treating them as essentially different or becoming mired in an unhelpful debate about whether commercial sex work is exploitative. It took me a while to figure my way out of this deadlock, which I did by treating the distinction between labour and sexual exploitation as an artefact of law and governance. This solution gave me the clue to approaching modern slavery as a construct of law and governance – hence the title of this book.

Having written a book about how 'modern slavery' was constructed, it is obvious that I think words and terminology matter. Thus, I want to explain my decision to use the term 'victim' of trafficking instead of 'survivor', 'illegal' migrant rather than 'undocumented', and both 'sex work' and 'prostitution' to describe the sale of sexual services. I borrowed the terms used in the legal and political debates and legal instruments I examined. My goal was to put them in their context and explore their meaning in that context.

During the book's lengthy gestation, I had the good fortune to discuss some of my ideas with a great many people, who I would like to thank. I enjoyed a

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fruitful collaboration with Kendra Strauss, a feminist geographer, using the concept of legal jurisdiction in combination with feminist political economy to explain how characterising migrant domestic workers' unfreedom in the United Kingdom as modern slavery resulted, paradoxically, in more restrictive visa conditions and constraints on their freedom. Working at Kent Law School between 2013 and 2018 not only introduced me to the concept of 'modern slavery' but helped to shape my approach to the topic. I benefited from a lively and convivial group of sociolegal scholars interested in critical theory, feminism, and political economy. I owe them a debt of gratitude for reminding me that theory matters and how to do it clearly.

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When I returned to Canada in 2018, I took up a position in the School of Labour Studies at McMaster University, which challenged me to be truly transdisciplinary and explain my ideas about law to people interested in labour who did not have legal training. I am grateful to my McMaster graduate

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