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**BEYOND THE 'HORROR STORIES' AND
'RESCUE MISSIONS': THE REALITIES
OF CHILD DOMESTIC WORK IN
SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a critical assessment of dominant child trafficking, child labour and child domestic work narratives using a case study of children in domestic work in South-West Nigeria. Based on a multi-sited ethnography spanning six months, this thesis confirms that some of these children face adverse situations in their work, but also shows that the work is characterised by many benefits for individuals without viable alternatives and functional social protection systems. The thesis contends that child domestic work cannot be properly understood and properly addressed (where it is problematic) without addressing the structures that underpin it. The perceptions and decisions of parents, children, adult caretakers, and intermediaries around the involvement of children in paid and unpaid domestic labour are examined through a post-colonial perspective to reveal that the present dominant focus on supply related factors (such as poverty and ignorance) as popularly presented is too narrow to understand the phenomenon. Instead, child domestic work is better understood through the lens of an informal support system that exists and thrives in the absence of a state welfare system to address the demand and supply factors as they affect different actors. However, the dominant child rescue narrative obscures these socio-economic contexts and complexities as they are guided by assumptions and stereotypes that in most cases run parallel to, and misrepresent, the realities of these children and/or their families. Thus, the main challenge for the child rescue narrative is not to rescue children from what it denotes as exploitative child labour or child domestic work, but from the conditions that produce it. Based on the foregoing, the thesis argues that this relates to a broader call for equity on a global scale, which includes addressing the paternalistic ideologies and institutions which underpin child rescue missions.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASI- Anti-Slavery International

CDW- Child Domestic Work

CDWs- Child Domestic Workers

CRA- Child Rights Act

ECOWAS- Economic Community of West African States

HRW- Human Rights Watch

ILO- International Labour Organisation

ILO-IPEC- International Labour Organisation- International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

IOM- International Organisation for Migration

NAPTIP- National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons

NBS- National Bureau of Statistics

NGN- Nigerian Naira

NGO- Non-Governmental Organisation

NIS- Nigeria Immigration Service

OHCHR- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

TIP- Trafficking in Persons

UBE- Universal Basic Education UK- United Kingdom

UN- United Nations

UNCRC/CRC- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNDP- United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UN.GIFT – United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF- United Nations International Children Emergency Fund

UNODC- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNSC- United Nations Security Council

USDS- United States Department of States

USDOL- United States Department of Labour

WHO- World Health Organisation

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INTRODUCTION

In August 2016, the police in Lagos State (South-West Nigeria) arrested a woman and her neighbour for brutalizing her 16-year-old housemaid with a hot iron and electric cables for failing to sweep her compound. The accused woman, during interrogation, stated that she became 'tired' of the girl's unruly behaviour – including 'theft', 'grubbiness' and 'bedwetting'- after reporting and repeatedly failing to get the brother (who brought her and got paid) to come and take her back. Her frustration with the girl had negatively affected her health (she had high blood pressure) and this was what made her to get a neighbour to 'threaten' the girl (Punch Newspaper, 2016).

Stories like this are not uncommon in Nigeria and elsewhere and are often cited in support of arguments against the engagement of children in domestic work -a phenomenon often associated with trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage and other 'worst forms of child labour' (ILO conventions 138 and 182 cited in IPEC, 2006). Thus, child domestic work¹ (herewith referred to as CDW) is often labelled as one of the 'evils' that must be eradicated in modern society and has consequently, witnessed a myriad of campaigns to 'save the children' caught up in it; described as 'child slaves' by some. It is impossible to overexaggerate the resources devoted towards the eradication of child domestic work and purportedly associated phenomena such as 'child trafficking' and 'child labour' by governments, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and international organizations- notably the ILO (International Labour Organization), UNICEF

¹ I use the term loosely to refer to domestic tasks undertaken as an economic activity by under-18s in households of third parties, and the term child domestic workers to refer to individuals engaged in such tasks. There is an extensive discussion of definitional problems in child trafficking and child labour in chapter one, including the rigid distinction between 'acceptable child domestic work' and 'exploitative child labour' adopted by some child rescue organisations. I will argue that the distinction is blurry and unhelpful later in this thesis.

(United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund), IOM (International Organization for Migration), ASI (Anti-Slavery International), HRW (Human Rights Watch), Save the Children, to name a few.

The 'war' on child labour- and by extension child domestic work- has been going on for decades, and contentions abound on different aspects of the topic(s), but it does not seem as if an end is in view. Indeed, after failing to reach the target of eliminating all forms of child labour by 2016, the ILO at the time of embarking on this doctoral study spearheaded a new initiative 'for a world without forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour' (ILO, 2016a).

A major limitation faced by this fight is that it rests upon relatively limited analysis and superficial data or understanding of the phenomena it seems to challenge (Tyldum and Brunovskis, 2005) given that it is based on the assumption that 'victimization is relatively straightforward and unambiguous' as (Best, 1999:107) argued around the time these campaigns were first being initiated about two decades ago. Indeed, this victimization narrative is so dominant that challenging it is considered surprising and shocking by many (Bourdillon, 2006b:1201). Thus, discussions in the wider fields of child labour and human trafficking 'often elicit intense emotional responses...' (ibid); deliberations are substantiated by imagination rather than solid empirical foundation; most inferences and generalizations, rather than being based on systemic study and analysis, are reduced to human rights narratives, moral crusade or political agenda (Zhang, 2009); and 'rescue missions' are designed based on mythologies rather than empirical research (Sanghera, 2005:4).

There is no doubt that some children are abused and exploited in employment, but the same forms of abuse and exploitation can be found in the world of adults work too (Bourdillon et al, 2010: xi). The notion that children are uniquely predisposed to harm as well as the efforts to prohibit

their work instead of making it safe for them as is the case with adults has thus been questioned by such groups of working children as UNATSBO (Unión de Niños y Niñas Trabajadores de Bolivia) and AMWCY (African Movement for Working Children and Youth) (see also White, 1999:133; Okyere, 2017c).

Additionally, questions have been raised about the ways in which dominant child rights discourses conceptualise and seek to measure harm and exploitation in child trafficking, child labour and CDW given the lack of a universal standard for defining, measuring, or categorizing exploitation (Anderson and O'Connell Davidson, 2013; O'Connell Davidson, 2015:199-201).

Moreover, the dominant CDW discourse often fails to acknowledge or completely ignore the fact that the phenomena they dismiss as 'trafficking' or 'child labour' might actually have various benefits to the child. This is because for 'child savers' or 'child rescuers', all forms of arrangements that do not only take children out of their biological homes, but also involve labour are unequivocally negative and exploitative as scholars such as Bastia (2005:74) and Boyden and Howard (2013:354) have observed. For example, in 2004, the then director of ILO-IPEC, Frans Röselaer, began the foreword to the ILO's publication on CDW for the year by asserting that: 'Almost without exception, children who are in domestic labour are victims of exploitation, often of several different kinds' (ILO, 2004a: III). Such sweeping generalisations and sentiments pervade and shape much of the thinking on CDW, child trafficking and child labour in such a way that we are continually fed with nothing but 'horror stories' (Boyden and Howard, 2013:355).

This bias is evident in the fact that while there are many reports on the plights of child domestic workers (the abuse of their rights, their working conditions, the inhumane situations they live under, how they are denied

education or how their employment affects their education, and so on) by many international organizations (see for example, ILO, 2004a; HRW, 2007b; WHO, 2011 to name a few), there is not a single detailed report by these same organizations examining the positive experiences of labour mobility or employment by young people- even where there are empirical studies to that effect from different regions of the world (see for example, Bastia, 2005; Whitehead et al, 2007; Okyere, 2013; Heissler, 2013; Howard, 2017 among others).

Instead, the child rescue narrative is all about removing children from what is deemed as exploitative work without addressing the real issues- the processes that lead to children being exploited, and the socio-economic structures in which extreme exploitation thrives (Anderson, 2014). The narrative holds that many children are trafficked or forced into domestic labour, but it does not examine what options are available to them (Thorsen, 2012:11); it focuses on the incidence of migration or 'trafficking' without considering the consequences of not moving (Castle and Diarra, 2003); it presents parents or guardians as malevolent, ignorant and naïve, but it fails to account properly for how they come to the decision to agree to their children being 'trafficked'; it demonises the employers and 'traffickers' of children without attempting to situate their activities in the context that they operate; and it classifies child trafficking and/or child labour as 'modern forms of slavery' without 'marking the boundaries of slavery' or analyzing the 'margins of freedom' in many contexts (O'Connell Davidson, 2015).

Rationale, Aims and Research Questions

To be clear, the aim of this research is not to venerate CDW or advocate for the exploitation of children (or any group) or the abuse of their rights. There are numerous problems associated with CDW as the thesis discusses

later. Hence, instead of idealising it, this thesis is inspired by a number of considerations. First, having grown up in Nigeria where I had a first-hand experience and observation of CDW (and child labour in general), I was motivated to carry out this study to shed further light on this phenomenon.

Second, while an increasing number of scholars are highlighting the shortcomings of the trafficking rhetoric for ignoring the agency of the 'victims'(see for example, Iversen, 2002; Bourdillon et al, 2010; Howard, 2012 among others) or the structural, underlying causes that lead to exploitation, abuse and coercion (Kempadoo, 2005: ix; Anderson, 2014) through different sub-themes of trafficking and/or child labour (see for example, De Lange (2007) on agriculture; Okyere (2012) on artisanal mining; Boyden (2013) on educational prospects, Esson (2015) on football migration, and so on), comparatively few studies have focused on CDW and none to my knowledge in Nigeria as covered by this thesis. The bulk of empirical studies on CDW in the country- as in other parts of Africa- are situated within the dominant child rescue narrative (Bourdillon, 2014:2).

Therefore, I was interested in examining possible disjunctures between the dominant narratives and the realities faced by child domestic workers (and their families) by exploring the context through which labour migration (or 'trafficking') takes place as well as the decision- making processes and considerations in CDW. My aim was to show that what may be called extreme exploitation in child domestic work is indicative of wider socio-economic issues; that the present preoccupation with eradication is flawed in its diagnosis of the problem and consequently its prescribed solution(s); that the rescue-the-child campaign is fighting the wrong battle because it completely ignores or downplays the significance of the socio-economic structure within which the problem of child trafficking and/or child labour- and by extension child domestic work- exists.

The specific research questions were:

1. What considerations influence the decisions of key actors (parents, children, and caretakers) in children's entry into domestic work?
2. What are the lived experiences of child domestic workers before and after their entry into domestic work?
3. What are the similarities and differences between the narratives of child domestic workers and those presented by NGOs and activists seeking the abolition of child domestic work?

In exploring these questions, I embarked on six months of fieldwork, during which I interviewed more than one hundred people involved in CDW at various levels- from children in domestic service to their adult caretakers and individuals working to rescue children in domestic service- and observed individuals and settings in which CDW takes place.

The additional originality of this study is that unlike others which have focused on CDW, child labour or child trafficking (See for example, Jacquemin, 2006; Tade and Aderinto, 2012; Adesina, 2014), I did not limit myself to the views expressed by either current or former child domestic workers, their adult caretakers, or traffickers, but I also interviewed government and NGO officials working to rescue children in the urban centres. I also visited villages around the major cities from where many child domestic workers had moved to the cities to work and had interactions with different categories of residents ranging from former child domestic workers to intermediaries and other adults and elders to understand their views of CDW. This overarching approach to studying CDW meant that the data I gathered in the villages complemented those I collected from the urban centres from children, adult caretakers, intermediaries as well as officials of government agencies and NGOs working to rescue children in domestic service.

Organisation of Thesis

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapter One will provide the context to the thesis by giving an overview of the dominant child rescue narrative and examining its weaknesses including inconsistencies in definitions and fixation on numbers. The chapter traces the origin of the child rescue and protection discourses before examining CDW within this narrative. The chapter also discusses Nigeria as a case study including a brief history and current knowledge of CDW in the country.

Chapter Two will build on that by presenting a theoretical lens through which the child rescue discourse can be examined, and that will guide the key arguments of the thesis. The chapter gives an overview of postcolonial theory before offering explanations on child rescue missions within this theoretical framework. Specifically, such concepts as 'epistemic violence' and 'othering' of others are explained to offer a thorough understanding of the child rescue narrative. The chapter then problematises the representation of 'Third World' countries and 'childhood problems' including CDW before drawing its conclusion.

Chapter Three discusses my methodology and choice of research sites as well as the justification for these. Given that I was attempting a broader analysis of CDW beyond the dominant rescue account, I explain how and why multiple sites and different actors were involved. The chapter will reflect on the methods as well as ethical and reflexive issues guiding the research.

In Chapter Four, I will examine the decision-making processes and considerations in CDW from the perspectives of children in domestic service, their parents as well as caretakers and situate these within the existing support system in Nigeria. The chapter will seek to offer a more nuanced understanding of CDW beyond the often rigid and stereotypical deprivation and malevolence explanation in child rescue narratives.

Chapter Five focuses on the experiences of children as domestic workers. By concentrating on children's perceptions of their work situations and their adult caretakers, the chapter will attempt to disprove some of the dominant claims about the experiences of child domestic workers including their lack of agency, the endless misery they are subjected to as well as the ignorance or negligence of their parents about their children's welfare.

Chapter Six reviews the child rescue policies and strategies in Nigeria in connection with empirical evidence gathered during the fieldwork. The chapter looks at how the intended beneficiaries perceive and respond to these policies and strategies as well as how such policies and strategies compare with and differ from the realities that the intended beneficiaries are faced with. I offer explanations on why these differences exist and persist by returning to some of the key arguments of this thesis in relation to the dominant narratives and policies on CDW.

The last chapter critique the child rescue discourse and offers alternative ways of understanding the plights of working children. The first part revisits some of the major arguments of the child rescue discourse and relates the criticisms to a post-colonial analysis. The chapter revisits the theoretical framework underlying the thesis to discuss the findings from my study and discuss the policy implications of the findings from this study.

The thesis will conclude by suggesting that the current 'rescue missions' have little relevance to the children involved in CDW, but instead reproduce certain ideals about childhood in ways that keep rescue organizations in business. As much as these organizations are busy designing policies and intervention measures, the intended beneficiaries of their programmes continue to adapt to the socio- economic constraints they face- which the rescue missions do not address-in ways that confound child rescuers.

1- BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1.Introduction

This study explores the representation, policy discourse and reality of CDW using the views of children, parents, intermediaries, and other key actors involved in this work arrangement. Children engaged in domestic service outside their parents' homes are often depicted as victims of child trafficking and child labour- from which they must be rescued. Although CDW does not necessarily denote child trafficking and/or child labour, it is often discussed as a sub-set of the two. For this reason, while the primary focus of this literature review is on CDW, elements of the child trafficking and child labour narratives which are relevant to the CDW debate will also be featured.

First, the chapter explores the child protection and rescue narrative through a brief history of its origin and its ideological roots, an examination of popular definitions within the rhetoric, and a critique of these definitions. Second, the chapter discusses the representation of child domestic work within this discourse. Next, it explores questions that remain unanswered and how these relate to study objectives and research questions. In the last section, it examines the background and context of Nigeria as a country and the prevailing knowledge of CDW in the country after which is the conclusion to the chapter.

1.2.The Origin of the Child Rescue Narrative

The emergence of the child rescue discourse began with the establishment of the ILO in 1919 with one of its founding principles to ensure:

The abolition of child labour and the imposition of such limitations on the labour of young persons as shall permit the continuation of their education and assure their proper physical development (Treaty of Versailles 1919, Article 427 in Fyfe,2007:8).

While a number of initiatives were advanced by the ILO subsequently (for example, the Minimum Age Convention (No.138) in 1973 and the declaration of 1979 as the International Year of the Child), it was the adoption of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that largely made these issues a subset of child protection and a 'global problem' that soon elicited actions in the form of increased funding, media attention and campaigns to eradicate child labour, child sexual abuse and child trafficking (Aitken,2001; Fyfe, 2007; Howard,2017:3). Notably, in 1992 the ILO established a separate unit to combat child labour-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)-through specific strategies 'to establish an international climate conducive to action on behalf of working children' (IPEC project document, 1991 and Basu, 1999 in Fyfe 2007:21). In 1996, there was a World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children to fight child prostitution and pornography resulting in a new convention against trafficking of minors (Gallagher 2001:982), and in 1999, ILO's worst forms of child labour convention (182) was adopted. In the year 2000, the hugely influential Palermo Protocol (Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the Convention on Trans-national Organised Crime) was adopted by the UN (United Nations) assembly.

Since then, rescuing 'victims' of trafficking, child labour, CDW and other child-related 'problems' has become popular and these 'problems' have become international issues (Desyllas, 2007; Howard,2014:125). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for example, include a commitment to ending 'modern slavery and all forms of child labour' by 2025 (ILO, 2017a:9). Thus, a host of organizations, groups and/or individuals have been involved in helping or saving 'victims' in what has produced a thriving 'rescue industry' (Agustin, 2007:4; Desyllas, 2007). Actors here range from UN agencies to national governments, local and international NGOs, civil

society groups, trade unions, the media, businesses, and religious bodies (Agustin, 2007; O'Connell Davidson, 2015). These actors are usually armed with policy documents and 'international frameworks' guided by a set of assumptions including among others that: 'trafficking of children and women is an ever-growing phenomenon... (and that) all persons under 18 years of age constitute a homogenous category' (Sanghera, 2005:5-6).

However, as success has been relatively limited (the ILO recently admitted that child labour is rising, rather than declining in Africa (ILO, 2017a)), some characteristics of the rescue narrative are worth exploring in detail here: definitional problems, sensational reporting, and/or questionable statistics.

1.2.1. Definitional Issues

There are fundamental disagreements and inconsistencies on the definition and identification of human trafficking, forced labour, slavery, and exploitation -even among governments and international organizations involved in rescue missions (Koettl, 2009: 5-6). The ILO claims these variations are complementary rather than confusing (ILO-IPEC, 2002:5), but this ignores the importance of identifying and defining the exact nature of the problem to be able to measure or determine its prevalence and also for finding solutions to it. The overarching position within the dominant policy discourse is that trafficking, child labour and other problems outlined in ILO Conventions 182, the Palermo Protocol and others must be eradicated even if their true forms and prevalence are opaque (Anderson and Andrijasevic, 2008:138). So, it is not surprising, as Fyfe (2007) observes:

It was clear that, from at least 1989, NGOs concerned with working children were pursuing a wide range of diverse and often contradictory strategies...(and)...even within individual organizations, there were many interpretations...(p43-4).

In relation to the above, it is worth examining the definitions of the key concepts of this thesis- trafficking, child labour and CDW -within the dominant narrative.

The most widely accepted definition of human trafficking is contained in the Palermo Protocol (2000). The Protocol states:

(a) 'Trafficking in persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include at the minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) has been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'Trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) 'Child' shall remain any person under eighteen years of age

(UN, 2000).

Perhaps, the most obvious ambiguity in the definition is how exploitation is conceptualised. Exploitation is at the core of trafficking, yet the definition does not offer any help in terms of what it is (Anderson and O'Connell Davidson, 2013; Boyden and Howard, 2013:356). The UNCRC is not

different in this regard. Among other rights, it states that children must be protected from economic exploitation (Article 32) but it does not define 'economic exploitation' (Bourdillon et al, 2010: 14). Although recommendation 190, addendum to C182 and the Palermo Protocol outline examples of exploitation, the UN constituents of ILO, UNICEF and UN.GIFT collaborated in 2009 to produce a definition of child trafficking and exploitation as follows:

Child trafficking: Elements defined for the purpose of IPEC operations:

A **child** - a person under the age of 18 years;

'Acts' of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt, whether by force or not, by a third person or group;

The third person or group organizes the recruitment and/or these other acts **for exploitative purposes**;

Movement may not be a constituent element for trafficking in so far as law enforcement and prosecution is concerned. However, an element of movement within a country or across borders is needed - even if minimal - in order to distinguish trafficking from other forms of slavery and slave-like practices enumerated in Art 3 (a) of ILO Convention No. 182 (C182), and ensure that trafficking victims away from their families do get needed assistance.

Exploitation includes:

- a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict (C182, Art. 3(a));
- b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances (C182, Art. 3(b));
- c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties (C182, Art. 3(c));
- d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (C182, Art. 3(d) and C138, Art. 3);
- e) work done by children below the minimum age for admission to employment (C138, Art. 2 & 7).

Threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud or deception, or the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability at any point of the recruitment and movement **do not need to be present** in case of children (other than with adults), but are nevertheless strong indications of child trafficking.

Similarly, child labour is generally defined as work that is harmful to the development of children (subsections (d) and (e) above). In relation to these definitions, children are expected to be prevented from working in any sector or area that is judged unsuitable for their development (Boyden and Howard, 2013:356-7). CDW is placed in this category based on the following criteria:

- (i) all children aged 5-11 years engaged in domestic work;
- (ii) all children aged 12-14 years engaged in domestic work for more than 14 hours per week; and (iii) all children aged 15-17 years engaged in hazardous domestic work which includes "for long hours" defined for purposes of these estimates as "43 and more hours per week" (ILO, 2012).

Clearly from these definitions and classifications, the issue is not only that exploitation is loosely defined or relatively ambiguous, but also that there is no ceiling or upper limit to what could be classed as exploitation beyond the examples or phenomena cited to illustrate this concept in these international conventions or documents cited above. For example, as much as domestic work may involve a wide range of tasks in which children could be involved within and outside the 'home', work that occurs 'within an employment relationship' (ILO, 2011:12) outside of the parents' home is held up for special condemnation by the rescue narrative as a violation of children's rights.

The implicit assumption here is that the home - and particularly that of the biological (nuclear) family- is the safest unit for a child's development. This can be deemed defective and ethnocentric for in the context of African societies, the family consists of the nuclear and extended family units despite social change. This problematises the construction of the lives of children who live and work with extended family members or who are in conditions of fosterage as exploitative or deviant. It also suggests that what is defined as 'child exploitation' or 'work that is harmful to children's

development' is reliant on 'personal, cultural and political morals or value judgements' (Okyere, 2017: 95).

Furthermore, classifying all under-18s as a homogenous group does not account for culturally specific understandings of childhood or adulthood and the tasks considered appropriate for each categorisation (Nieuwenhuys, 2009). In many non-western settings for example, distinction is often made between very young children and older teenagers, and this influences what is considered acceptable or unacceptable labour or migration decisions (Bastia, 2005; Alber 2011; Howard, 2012b). For example, in Bolivia, a girl's fifteenth birthday is celebrated in more elaborate ways- than her eighteenth birthday- as it is a rite of passage to womanhood (Bastia, 2005).

Other assumptions underpinning child rescue discourse that have been widely criticised include the belief that:

- There are 'natural' differences between children and adults that applies universally and should not be questioned
- There is a 'normal' route and timetable of development for children and the family (nuclear) is the best unit for this development
- Compulsory schooling, which is not compatible to work, is a means of getting children out of work
- Children are passive, weak and vulnerable, so their rights should be protected and defended by others (adults).

(see for example, Burman, 1994a; Boyden and Ennew, 1997; White, 1999; Nieuwenhuys, 2009; Bourdillon et al, 2010; O'Connell Davidson, 2013a; Boyden, 2015; Wells, 2015; Howard, 2017).

I relate these criticisms to my case study in the next section and subsequent chapters, but the main point here is that these assumptions became dominant and powerful over the decades- especially with the

spread of capitalism- that they define what is considered 'normal' and 'abnormal' childhood (Aries, 1962; Jenks, 1996:74; Boyden and Ennew, 1997; Ansell, 2005). However, before I turn to that, there is need to consider another characteristic of 'rescue missions' as earlier stated.

1.2.2. Sensational Reporting and Fixation on Numbers

Closely related to definitional problems as discussed above is sensational reporting and representation of the 'problems' of child labour and child trafficking. There has been an avalanche of 'facts' and figures or 'guesstimates' (Fyfe, 1989:11) on the number of working or trafficked children over the last couple of decades. For example, in 1985, Anti-Slavery International (ASI) claimed that 100million children were working. The ILO estimate was 52million in 1979, and around the same time, an academic in a report to the UN, put the figure at 145million children (Fyfe, 1989:11). In 2017, ILO's figure stood at 152million (ILO, 2017a). In the case of child trafficking, it is claimed that 1.2million to 2.5million children (depending on the source) are trafficked every year; and that there are between 5.5 and 13.5million trafficked children worldwide (See for example, Charity Network, 2007 and World Vision, 2010 cited in O'Connell Davidson, 2013a:459; Koettl, 2009; ILO and Walk Free Foundation, 2017:23 among others).

These figures and statistics are usually associated with calls by these organisations and actors for our collective action to eradicate these 'problems'. As the 'rescue industry' (Agustin 2007:4) has grown, such claims by organizations and national governments-particularly the US government- have become 'empirical evidence' that do not require verification (Zhang, 2009: 181). For example, in a 2002 publication calling for actions to eliminate child trafficking, the ILO declared:

The ILO views the result of trafficking as an assault on human dignity and a denial of a person's opportunity both to make the most of his/her

resources and to contribute to the economic development of his or her nation. The types of exploitation suffered by victims of trafficking are the antithesis of “full, productive and freely chosen employment”. This is even more the case for children, where immediate exploitation is aggravated by a denial of the child's rights to development that severely limits his/her potential to become a productive adult... Today, the trafficking of children is recognized as a distinct and egregious violation of children’s rights, comprising one of the worst forms of child labour. It is a growing problem that affects millions of children and families in many countries around the world. (ILO, 2002a: vii- xi).

In a similar vein, EUROPOL is convinced that these ‘traffickers’ are organised in criminal networks in relation to child trafficking. Its Executive Director, Catherine De Bolle, in a 2018 report noted:

Vulnerable boys and girls, between the age of two and seventeen years old, are targeted by traffickers for different purposes: to be sexually abused in prostitution; to be put on the street and beg for money, pickpocket or steal from shops; or to work for no pay in restaurants, farms, factories, shops, often living in the place of exploitation. *Criminals decide to target children for many reasons... children do not decide for themselves:* traffickers very often directly engage their families in the recruitment process or even just target orphans... exploited children in vulnerable situations deserve to be protected more than anyone else (EUROPOL, 2018:3 emphasis added)

In relation to child labour, we are also reminded that:

The challenge of ending child labour remains formidable. A total of 152 million children – 64 million girls and 88 million boys – are in child labour globally, accounting for almost one in ten of all children worldwide. Nearly half of all those in child labour – 73 million children in absolute terms – are in hazardous work that directly endangers their health, safety, and moral development (ILO, 2017a:11).

Likewise, UNICEF 2017 stated:

In the least developed countries, around one in four children (ages 5 to 17) are engaged in labour that is considered detrimental to their health and development...

Additionally, there seems to be a sort of 'reciprocal arrangements' with the creation and use of these 'facts' and guesstimates: UN agencies would quote figures from the US State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, and the TIP report would quote UN figures (Zhang, 2009: 182; USDS, 2019); or where the World Bank or UNICEF quotes the ILO and the ILO in turn quotes UNICEF or other UN agencies (see ILO-IPEC, 2002; Koettl, 2009). It has also been reported in relation to the production of TIP reports that in most cases, the TIP office relies on information and statistics from embassies, NGOs, and international organisations, who may in turn rely on other sources for their information (Chuang, 2006: 475).

The main argument here is that accurate and reliable data on such fluid phenomena as trafficking are difficult to gather (Weitzer 2007; Gozdzik and Bump 2011). Yet even where child rescue agencies acknowledge such challenges (see UNICEF, 2004:2; USDS, 2019:16 for example) it does not prevent them from publishing the figures and statistics. These figures and reports in turn often inspire individuals, groups, media establishments, governments, NGOs, religious bodies, trade unions, large business corporations, movie and sports superstars, among others, to 'speak with one voice' to eradicate oppression, abuse, exploitation and slave-like conditions as far as children are concerned (Anderson and Andrijasevic, 2008; O'Connell Davidson, 2015). However, the fact that these 'problems' are deemed to be worsening despite many decades of campaigns and resources devoted to fighting them remains a paradox for activists (Lawrance, 2010).

As Carole Vance (2011) explains in her analysis of the US anti- trafficking efforts, the first way the state- and its actors or activists- 'do nothing about trafficking while pretending to' is to:

...circulate grossly exaggerated numbers of trafficked people to justify new laws, while obscuring the more accurate figures that eventually emerge. The result is to create a sense of panic and urgency that rebuffs all criticisms....

And when rescue efforts do not yield satisfactory result, they

'restart and redirect the campaign, using the same techniques (exaggerated numbers, media sensation, the melodrama of evil and rescue) ... (Vance, 2011:935-39).

In view of the general overview of the child rescue narrative presented above, I shall now turn to how CDW is presented within this paradigm.

1.3.Child Rescue Narrative of CDW

The child rescue narrative of CDW revolves around a range of explanations on why children's engagement in domestic work is bad. This section explores these explanations of CDW from its link with poverty to the role of ignorance, the influence of tradition and culture, the role of parents, its effects on the children, and the strategies being adopted to eradicate it.

1.3.1. *Poverty as the main driver of child domestic work*

The engagement of children in domestic work is often explained in terms of pull and push factors (Blagbrough, 2008b; Thorsen,2012; ILO-IPEC, 2013). In almost all cases, poverty (at the individual, household or national levels) is identified on top of the push factors and the explanations usually go that children are forced into domestic labour as a result of depravity and as part of survival strategies (Black and Blagbrough, 1999; ILO-IPEC, 2013).

From this standpoint, child domestic work in Kenya has been described as a 'poverty-induced employment' (Munene and Ruto, 2010:136), and in a study of the parents of child domestic workers in Bangladesh, most of the parents stated that if they had sufficient income, their children would not be engaged in domestic work (Chodhuary et al, 2013). Also, in a multi-country study of child domestic workers, the need to sustain oneself was the major factor in explaining why and how children became domestic workers (Blagbrough, 2008a). The poverty factor has also been discussed in relation to child domestic work in West and Central Africa (Thorsen, 2012) as well as in other parts of the world (Camacho, 1999; ILO, 2004a)

Other poverty-related or push factors often cited here include: death of parents or their incapacitation due to ailment, displacement as a result of conflicts or disasters, large family size, ignorance about the importance of education, cultural expectations regarding children- especially girls. In Guinea for example, it has been reported that where families have large numbers of children and find it hard to cater for all of them, it is common to send some of the children-usually girls- to work in domestic service with distant or extended family members (HRW, 2007b: 26).

However, to most child rescuers, poverty is not seen as rationale or valid excuse for the engagement of children in domestic work as 'there is little systematic evidence that demonstrates that child labour is indispensable or necessary for poverty alleviation' (ILO, UNICEF, and UNESCO, 2008:10). They argue instead that child labour-and by extension child domestic work-can perpetuate 'intergenerational transmission of poverty' (ibid:11; see also ILO 2004b). This is because poverty can prevent 'the overwhelming majority of child domestic workers from developing their potential and capabilities, and pursuing pathways out of poverty' (ILO, 2017d:20). In this vein, The Visayan Forum Foundation working with child domestic workers in the Philippines holds that while parents send their children to work in

domestic service with the hope that they can supplement family income, engagement in domestic work does not lead to better life for children and it is not safe for them (Flores-Oebanda 2004:17-20).

Furthermore, studies in Brazil and Ecuador concluded that working children have less time for school, play and homework and this affects their cognitive and social development resulting in lower earnings as adults (Emerson and Souza, 2011; Posso, 2017). Thus, 'the policy recommendations stemming from this research are clear—eradicating child labour should result in significant improvements in adult earnings' (Posso, 2017:471). So, we do not only need to combat poverty to end child labour, but we also need to end child labour to increase earnings and solve the problem of poverty for the poor (see ILO, UNICEF and UNESCO, 2008:10-11; ILO-IPEC, 2013:11).

1.3.2. Ignorance

Another factor that is emphasized as contributing to child domestic work and other related issues of child labour and child trafficking is ignorance—of children, their parents, and their wider society. Some of the related issues here include illiteracy of parents, lack of appropriate value for education or concern for the child's welfare, large family sizes caused by lack of or poor family planning. When parents are not educated themselves, they are likely to prefer employment at an early age—rather than education for their children, according to the ILO (2004b). In most cases, parents have many children in the hope that the children can take care of them in old age, or parents may think learning a trade early is in the best interests of the child. Thus, when it comes to making decisions about work, the parents choose for the child in many cases in countries such as Ethiopia, Thailand, and Nepal (ibid).

It is also believed that trafficking of children into domestic work thrives where there is low level of knowledge and awareness about the problem as this report on human trafficking in Nigeria states:

The general public in Nigeria lacks overall knowledge of the human trafficking phenomenon. Most people interviewed for the study, while admitting that they recently became aware of the issue of human trafficking, hold different perceptions as to what it actually entails. Other respondents were clearly ignorant of what constitutes human trafficking, especially child trafficking (UNESCO, 2006:38).

Adesina (2014) also reported that many parents are ignorant of what constitutes trafficking in her study of 'modern slavery in Nigeria'. With regards to child domestic workers, even in cases of abuse and exploitation, most of them are reported to be ignorant of their rights, and they often do not know where they can go to for support (Flores- Oebanda 2004; Chodhuary et al, 2013).

1.3.3. Tradition or cultural practices

Children become domestic workers primarily because their families are poor, but also because the practice is seen as normal and, indeed, beneficial for girls who will one day become wives and mothers. '*Powerful and enduring myths*' surround the practice, encouraging its continuance (Blagbrough, 2010: 85, emphasis mine)

Closely related to the ignorance argument is a belief that traditional or cultural practices make child domestic work thrive in non- western societies especially. Thus, the 2019 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report noted:

Cultural norms and practices play an important role in defining a country or society, but human traffickers have also used them to support, hide, or attempt to justify human trafficking... In some cases, traffickers may take advantage of religious beliefs to coerce victims into servitude and... in other cases, deeply ingrained practices may make it difficult for

governments to see and address human trafficking in their own backyards. For example, many countries in South Asia face the practice of debt bondage, a form of human trafficking in which traffickers use debt to force an individual into forced labor (USDS, 2019:10)

In the Philippines, it has been argued that employing children is ingrained 'in the culture'; and that advancement in technology has not contributed to decline in the number of domestic workers because it is historically rooted in slavery (Flores-Oebanda et al, 2004:16, emphasis added). Sharma, et al (2001: iv) also contended that in south Asia, hiring a live-in domestic is an 'integral part' of the tradition, while ILO-IPEC, 2013 argued that child trafficking is an extension of the traditional practice of fostering or 'confiage' in West Africa (See also Black and Blagbrough, 1999; Moens et al, 2004; ILO, 2004a among others).

The argument goes that the socialisation process which involves young people going to live with wealthier relatives or family friends to learn a trade or go to school directly influences the trafficking of children (UNESCO, 2006; Van de Glind, 2010:104; Adesina, 2014). It has been argued that it contributes to the exploitation of children because in some cases, parents do not know where their children are living, what they are doing, or how they are faring (Save the Children, 2006; Adesina, 2014), and although children may fare better under foster care in some cases, they fare worse in most cases (ILO, 2004a; Blagbrough, 2010).

Moreover, many parents are ignorant of the consequences of their actions, and therefore public awareness is regularly promoted as a way of tackling child trafficking, child labour and child domestic work (Flores-Oebanda 2004:16; Moens et al, 2004; HRW, 2007b). Some campaigners such as Blagbrough (2010:96) have argued that 'a seismic shift in societal attitudes (especially those of parents and employers) is needed if progress is to be made to protect children from exploitation of this kind'. Thus, government

and NGO services often include advocacy for the legal rights and status of domestic workers in general, literacy and vocational classes, and sensitization programmes in rural areas 'to alert domestics about the hazards of urban migration' (Moens, et al, 2004:52; HRW, 2007b). But despite these initiatives, 'the level of awareness of the issue (of trafficking in general) is quite low in practically all spheres' (Moens, et al, 2004: 58).

Also, the 'inferior' status of girls (compared to boys) is another tradition that is said to contribute to parents sending them into domestic service (ILO, 2004a; 2004b). Young girls are sent into domestic work as this is believed to prepare them for married life according to the ILO (ILO-IPEC, 2013).

1.3.4. Helpless children against unscrupulous employers and traffickers

According to HRW, 'most employers of child domestic workers do not behave like responsible employers or guardians, but are like brutal masters' (HRW, 2007b: 2). It has also been asserted that many child domestic workers are in exploitative employment relations in many cases because the recruitment mechanisms into child domestic work are not always clear (Sharma et al, 2001; HRW, 2007b; ILO-IPEC, 2013). In this regard, HRW noted:

Many child domestic workers find employment through formal and informal intermediaries, typically with some kind of parental involvement, in a process often marred by deception, incomplete information, false promises and onerous fees. In Morocco, most child domestic workers we interviewed had been placed by brokers working within an unregulated system that facilitates abuse (HRW, 2006:54).

Also, because domestic work is almost always done behind closed doors in private households, existing laws in most countries do not readily cover child domestic workers or domestic workers generally; or where such laws exist, they are often not enforced for various reasons (ILO, 2004a; Flores-

Oebanda et al, 2004; HRW, 2009). Thus, child domestic workers are vulnerable to the employers' whims and caprices. In fact, some authors concluded that child domestic workers are neither treated as employees nor members of the family where they work (Flores-Oebanda et al, 2004; Blagbrough, 2010; ILO-IPEC, 2013). Employers of child domestic workers often abuse them physically, psychologically or sexually; forcefully confining them to the workplace or preventing them from visiting their parents; and make them work excessively long hours without rest (Sharma et al, 2001; HRW, 2006; Blagbrough, 2010). In many cases, child domestic workers are said to live in conditions akin to slavery because they may not be physically or mentally well-developed for the tasks they are assigned, they are often not adequately paid or not paid at all, and in some cases, their work is for repayment of family debts (Flores-Oebanda et al, 2004; Jha, 2009).

Other reports assert that brokers collect all or part of child domestic worker's pay and may prevent the parents from knowing about any situation of abuse (HRW, 2006; Oluwaniyi, 2009). The ASI also argued that child domestic workers are almost always dependent on their employers in ways that they are 'deprived of the opportunity to choose' (ASI 1997 in Blagbrough, 2008b:185). Similarly, Jensen (2014) likened the CDW relationships with their employers in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to Foucauldian panopticon with employers exerting surveillant power over the child domestic workers to the extent of locking them indoors and going out with the keys to prevent the children from escaping or running away with the employers' valuable possessions.

1.3.5. The role (irresponsibility) of parents

It is also claimed that in some cases, even when parents are aware of the dangers of domestic work, they still send their children into such because of the economic gains that would accrue to them, and they may even be the ones encouraging the children not to visit for long periods of time

(Sharma et al, 2001; HRW, 2006). Some reports even assert that parents may deliberately have large numbers of children with the view of sending them to work early for these children to be able to cater for the parents in their old age (ILO, 2004b).

Save the Children (2006)'s study in West Bengal noted that children do not enter into domestic work voluntarily, but they are usually forced by parents or relatives. Sixty-six (66) per cent of respondents in the study were sending their wages home, while only four (4) percent could keep the money. Similar findings were reported in a study of child domestic workers in Nepal, where it was also found that eighty-two (82) percent of the children were 'advised' by their parents to take the job (Sharma, et al, 2001).

The ILO would also explain elsewhere that:

...children working to pay off their parents' debts (debts incurred for reasons usually having nothing to do with the child). This is a contractual obligation, always illegal, in which the child's labour becomes an integral part of a financial relationship. The child's consent is not sought (ILO, 2004b: 97).

The above, according to the ILO's classification of forced labour, equals private economic exploitation- the most common form of forced labour that may include 'among other things, bonded labour, forced domestic work, or forced labour in agriculture and remote rural areas' (ILO 2005:10). Further, in countries such as India, it is claimed that parents and children remain in perpetual servitude because although the debts may be very small, the fact that wages are usually very low means that 'the debts can never be repaid' and such debts are usually transferred across generations (Jha, 2009:207).

1.3.6. *Psychological and health impacts on children*

It has been claimed that 'working children, when compared with children in school, suffer significant growth deficits- they grow up shorter and lighter, and their body size continues to be smaller even in adulthood' (WHO, 1987, cited in ILO, 1996:3). Of child domestic workers, the report states that it is almost inevitable that children growing up in an environment that exposes them to violence and abuse 'will be permanently damaged both psychologically and emotionally' (p14). A study in Kenya concluded that child domestic workers are prone to an array of psychosocial problems including bedwetting, insomnia, frequent headaches, regressive behaviours, nightmares, and depression (Bwibo and Onyango 1987 in Blagbrough, 2010:95).

In West Bengal, almost seventy (70) percent of child domestic workers were said to have been physically abused with many of them not receiving any medical attention (Save the Children, 2006). The study also reported a high incidence of emotional and sexual abuse among both boys and girls in domestic work. A HRW report on the situation of child domestic workers in El Salvador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Morocco and Togo, found that psychological abuse was common among child domestic workers, and concluded that "employer abuse, combined with isolation at the workplace, excessive work demands, and financial pressures may contribute to intense anxiety and depression" (HRW, 2006:10-11).

Also, children's mental, physical, social and intellectual developments are said to be hindered by the nature of work that child domestic workers do. A study in Ethiopia found that 'childhood mental and behavioural disorders were more common in domestic child labourers than in the non-labourers or other categories of labourers' (Blagbrough, 2010: 95). Similarly, in Brazil, a study of more than 3,000 children concluded that child domestic workers suffered more musculoskeletal pains – caused by awkward posture, monotonous and heavy physical work- compared to children that

work in other sectors (Fassa et al, 2005 in ILO-IPEC, 2013:33). In Togo, 77.5% to 88% of child domestic workers are said to suffer from back pain and extreme fatigue with many of them not being properly treated (GMACL, 2014:7). This may in turn lead to long- term damage or hinder physical development (IPEC, 2011).

Further, derogatory labels are often used to describe domestic workers in many societies in a way that may reinforce low self- esteem among child domestic workers (IPEC, 2011). In Nigeria, as in many countries, it is common to refer to domestic workers as 'domestic servants' or 'house helps' (Nigeria Labour Act, 1990:65; Adesina, 2014); in Haiti, *restavèk* ("stay-with") is used to describe a young domestic worker, but it has come to mean a motherless or an unwanted person; it may also mean an insult describing someone without personality; a nobody (ILO-IPEC, 2013:35); and in Ghana, *abaawa* or maid servitude is connected to female slavery, pawnship and forced labour (Akurang-Parry, 2010).

1.3.7. *Child domestic work and education*

Given the range of adverse effects that engagement in domestic work is said to have on children, it is unsurprising that child domestic work is believed to have a negative correlation with children's educational aspirations. As the ILO puts it: 'Child domestic work is an impediment to education' (ILO-IPEC, 2013:37). Two types of harm are often discussed here: educational and psychological. The first argument is that child domestic work deprives children of their education. For example, in some settings, as many as seventy (70) per cent of child domestic workers are neither attending nor have ever attended school presumably because of their work (Sommerfelt, 2001), and many stopped schooling after becoming domestic workers (Sharma et al, 2001).

The second line of argument about harm here relates to the strain of combining school with work. Where children combine education with

domestic work, the probability of poor performance and school drop-out is said to be very high (ILO, 2004b; HRW, 2006; Blagbrough, 2010). This is because the situation of child domestic workers, 'is more often than not a serious obstacle to studying' (Blagbrough, 2010:93), and combining education with domestic work is a form of 'torture' for children (HRW interview with ILO officer in 2004 in HRW, 2006:61).

1.3.8. Child domestic work as hazardous work or worst form of child labour

Child domestic work is deemed by the ILO and child savers to constitute a worst form of child labour not only due to the associated harms and hazards stated above, but also because the employment relationship is often unregulated, and takes place within the private spheres (ILO, 2004b). While Convention 182 does suggest that child domestic work is of itself not a sub-type of slavery, the ILO argues that it is so and can easily become hazardous work when children are exposed to 'slavery-like' conditions. Examples here include when they are 'trafficked' into domestic work, when they are deprived of sleep, are not properly fed, or are exposed to dangers (such as 'carrying heavy loads, being exposed to fire and hot stoves, handling household chemicals and using sharp knives') (IPEC, 2011:28). In the ILO's estimation, roughly two-thirds of child domestic workers worldwide are believed to be in hazardous or slavery-like conditions (ILO-IPEC, 2013a).

HRW also makes a similar argument in connection with (girl) child domestic workers in Guinea. The organisation declared:

Domestic work is the largest employment category for children worldwide. In Guinea, tens of thousands of girls work as child domestic workers. While other children in the family often attend school, these girls spend their childhood and adolescence doing "women's" housework, such as cleaning, washing and taking care of small children. Many of them work up to 18 hours a day...Many child domestic workers receive

no help when they are sick and go hungry as they are excluded from family meals. They are often shunned, insulted and mocked. They may also suffer beatings, sexual harassment and rape. Despite these conditions, leaving their employer family is difficult for many child domestic workers who cannot reach their parents and have nowhere else to go. Such girls live in conditions akin to slavery (HRW, 2007b:1).

A similar report a year earlier also documented cases in Indonesia, Morocco, and El Salvador where child domestic workers 'suffer specific sets of violations of their internationally-protected rights as children...and work under conditions that fit the definition of the worst forms of child labour' (HRW, 2006: 54).

Likewise, Tetteh (2011), writing about 'child domestic labour' in Ghana outlined seven key rights of the child (from UNCRC) that are violated or at risk of being violated when children are employed as domestic workers. These include: the right to express their views and be heard on all matters that affect them (Article 12); the right to be protected from all forms of abuse (physical, mental, sexual), and from neglect, maltreatment and exploitation while in the care of parents, legal guardians or any other person who has the care of the child (Article 19&34); the right of the child to health and good nutrition (Article 24); the right of the child to education (Article 28); the right of the child to rest and leisure, play and recreation (Article 31); the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation or work that is harmful to their development (Article 32); and the right of the child to be protected from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and arbitrary deprivation of liberty (Article 37) (see also ILO-IPEC, 2013:13). However, what the author, like many studies that focus principally on the extreme working conditions of child domestic workers, fails to highlight is whether the children enjoyed all of these rights before they become domestic workers, or the rights were denied them after becoming domestic workers.

1.3.9. *Strategies for addressing child domestic work*

Given the picture of child domestic work presented so far, the ILO's position is clear:

'... child domestic labour is by nature susceptible to being or becoming a worst form of child labour. Not only are many children in domestic labour very young, the tasks they perform are difficult to monitor or regulate. It follows that the child is in a situation of extreme risk. What cannot be regulated and is potentially hazardous must be eliminated. (ILO, 2004a:5).

Some of the organization's strategies include setting global goals and pursuing time-bound programs in conjunction with other international agencies (such as the target of eliminating all forms of modern slavery and child labour as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)), the adoption of its conventions by member states, and campaigning for greater commitments by member states to its recommendations. Specifically, national governments are always encouraged to give 'priority attention- in both policy and action to combat child labour' (ILO, 2004a: iv). This is because:

The situation of many child domestic workers not only constitutes a serious violation of child rights, but remains an obstacle to the achievement of many national and international development objectives... (ILO-IPEC, 2013:41).

Education is also seen as a tool for ending child labour- and by extension CDW. Thus, the ILO and its key stakeholders are always 'working on preventing child labour and promoting education as a means to this end' (ILO, UNICEF and UNESCO, 2008:11). For example, educating children to enhance their skills and break out of the cycle of poverty is one of the activities of UNICEF with working children in Bangladesh (UNICEF, 2010). In this light, Ray (2002)'s study in rural Ghana concluded that improved school attendance reduced the incidence of child labour.

Other international organizations, governments, NGOs, and civil societies also adopt a wide range of ILO's recommendations and strategies to eradicate the problem of child labour and CDW. For example, in addition to educating children in Bangladesh, UNICEF campaigns against the employment of children under 14, and ensuring the rights of working children over 14 in the country are protected (UNICEF, 2010). HRW also leads campaigns against the abuse and exploitation of domestic workers and advocates for the protection of the rights of all groups- including child domestic workers, and domestic workers generally (see HRW, 2006; 2007a; 2007b; 2009; 2012; 2017 among others). And campaign groups like GMACL (Global March Against Child Labour) advocate total abolition of CDW because it violates existing provisions of international conventions concerning children (GMACL, n.d.).

1.4.Assessing the Dominant Discourse of CDW

From the foregoing, it is clear that mainstream discussions of CDW tend to isolate its causal factors rather than examining the relationship between those factors and structures within which they exist. In other words, it is important to analyse CDW in the way Vance described trafficking as 'a complicated and multi-layered phenomenon involving social forces as well as individuals' (Vance, 2012: 202). For example, in discussing poverty as a causal factor, campaigners often fail to address issues related to it. As Howard (2017:40-1) asks about child trafficking: if we identify poverty as the cause, what causes poverty and why are we not addressing that? But even as child rescue campaigns isolate poverty, their position does not explain why not all poor children work (in domestic service or elsewhere) or the fact that children work for other reasons than poverty (Fyfe, 1989:26; Bourdillon et al, 2010:58-76). Furthermore, the fact of poverty itself does not explain why children presumably from poor backgrounds work in domestic work (Thorsen, 2012:5). Why are they not involved in other activities such as street begging or agriculture for example?

Similarly, the narrative that child domestic workers are often 'denied access to formal schooling' (HRW, 2012:28) often does not specify whether child domestic workers had access to formal education prior to their engagement in domestic work or whether they are denied access after becoming child domestic workers. Rather, there is often a foregone conclusion that domestic work unquestionably deprives children of education or opportunities to participate in further education or vocational training (Article 4, Domestic Workers' Convention; Blagbrough, 2008b:17). However, empirical studies have shown that for many children, educational prospects are connected to their involvement in domestic work or other forms of employment (Oluwaniyi 2009; Okyere, 2012; Nwaubani, 2015).

Further, the assumption that migration and child fostering are causal factors for child trafficking in domestic work leaves many questions unanswered. First, culture and economy cannot be separated (Fyfe, 1989:27). In this sense, rural-urban migration is not a problem without context. If rural areas were like urban centres or urban centres like rural areas, will the desire to migrate be the same? Thus, it is not enough to argue that child domestic workers are being forced or tricked to migrate for labour or educational purposes as some authors claim (see Tetteh, 2011:223 for example); it is necessary to understand the differences and inequalities between rural and urban centres, individuals' perception of their prospects in these areas and how decisions about work and migration are made.

Moreover, in attempting to explain why and how children become domestic workers in a report from the study of four hundred child domestic workers across eight countries conducted by ASI (Anti- Slavery International) and its partners, it was reported that: 'Children were also pulled into domestic service by siblings and friends already working as domestics...' (Blagbrough, 2008b:10). This 'peer pressure' was also reported in Nigeria by Oluwaniyi

(2009). In this sense, a question that is left unanswered is: why do other children follow their friends and siblings into domestic work if it is all gloom and doom or 'modern slavery' as ASI puts it?

The ILO's recommendation of 'setting a minimum age for admission to domestic work', and 'regulating "light work" done by children below the minimum age for admission to work' (ILO 2012b:32-33) is also worth examining in this regard. The distinction between 'light work' and 'hazardous work' or between acceptable and harmful employment relations is not as straightforward as it seems- especially in domestic work (Bourdillon et al, 2010:158-9). In other words, these distinctions, like other debates in the whole child labour arena, are pervaded by moral judgements on work as earlier stated. Chronological age does not paint the whole picture about human capabilities as early exposure to work, socialisation process and other socio-cultural factors are also significant considerations.

Bourdillon et al (2009) have argued against universalised minimum- age policy, stating that its impact on children and the society is questionable (Bourdillon et al, 2009:108). Second, such policies reflect an earlier discussed paradigm which assumes that children should not be exposed to the 'adult world' of work; that 'children are characterised by being smaller and weaker and defined by things they cannot do'; and that 'children develop through scientifically established stages, for which there is a normal route and timetable' (Boyden and Ennew, 1997:60).

Further, the distinction between 'light work' and 'hazardous work' presupposes that domestic tasks can be easily classified as safe or harmful for children. But what exactly constitutes 'hazardous work' for children in domestic service? And under what conditions do tasks become hazardous? The tasks and hours involved are not sufficient criteria for determining harm or safety- at least as far as domestic duties are concerned. If a child works with cleaning detergents under adult or parental supervision in their

biological parents' house, is it safe as opposed to when they do so in another household? Is it acceptable for under 18s to be employed in fast-food restaurants like McDonalds but not in private homes? Other supposedly safe domestic duties like sweeping, mopping the floor, or washing dishes could involve risks such as slips and falls which could lead to serious injuries. In short, 'much may be missed by focusing only on harm suffered by children in employment' (Bourdillon et al, 2010: 157).

Moreover, children are continually engaged below the minimum age even where legislation to this effect is in place; and adopting such documents as the ILO's domestic workers' convention has not helped in addressing the plights of both child domestic workers and adult domestic workers (ILO, 2016b). This suggests that such legislations do not reflect the realities of the CDW market as I will show in subsequent chapters.

Although children are potentially more vulnerable than adults, the fact is that abusive treatments are common in domestic work regardless of whether children or adults are involved (Black and Blagbrough, 1999:4; Anderson, 2000:22-26; ILO, 2004a; HRW, 2007a; ILO-IPEC, 2013:11-12). Domestic work is difficult to regulate because it is done in the private sphere and cuts across different forms of inequalities (Anderson, 2000; Cox 2006; Bourdillon et al, 2010:155). Debating what constitutes 'acceptable work', or what age is appropriate for a particular type of work, or whether work (or a specific type of work) is right or wrong for children shifts our focus away from examining the structures (and many dimensions of inequalities) within which the work exists as well as choices made by individuals therein.

Overall, the conceptualization and discussion of CDW within the child rescue narrative fall short in two broad areas:

1. The limited analysis or superficial engagement with the structure and context within which domestic work occurs, and

2. Failure to address the lack of alternatives, opportunities and provisions to CDW.

A burgeoning body of critical literature has thus questioned the accuracy, validity and efficacy of anti- child trafficking and anti-child labour initiatives. For example, Anderson (2000, 2007) and O'Connell Davidson (2011, 2015) among others have shown that individuals and workers cannot be neatly divided into those who are 'trafficked', in 'forced labour' and those who are not. Other authors have emphasized the structure and context within which migration and 'exploitative work' occur as well as the agency of 'victims'. For example, Castle and Diarra (2003)'s study of adolescents in Mali, De Lange (2007)'s study of young agricultural labour migrants in Burkina Faso, and Heissler (2013)'s study of children's migratory processes in Bangladesh demonstrate that recruitment facilitated by intermediaries does not necessarily amount to trafficking. These studies also reveal that some children classified as 'victims' of trafficking often have positive, nuanced view of their migration and work experiences (see also Thorsen, 2007; Whitehead et al, 2007; Howard, 2017 to name a few). Also, O'Neill (2003)'s ethnographic research with young carpet weavers in Nepal exemplifies how 'rescue missions' can have disastrous consequences; Okyere (2012)'s research with young Ghanaians working on artisanal mining sites shows that what the dominant narrative classifies as 'hazardous work' can be beneficial to children; and Howard (2012)'s study in Benin concludes that anti- child trafficking and child protection agencies are often guided by powerful ideologies and interests that reproduce rescue ideas rather than accommodate counter facts.

Although these arguments and criticisms abound, their applications to child domestic work-particularly in Africa remain limited. Notable exception in this regard are Jacquemin (2006), Morganti (2011) and Alber (2011). Jacquemin's study argues that the approach by NGOs working in Ivory

Coast can obscure the situations of such working children. Morganti explored the life trajectories of adult women and young girls in domestic service or those working as market girls between Republic of Benin, Nigeria, and Gabon to show variations between what the dominant narrative classifies as child trafficking and what many of the concerned parties classify as voluntary migration. Alber's research in Benin is similar. It examined brokered child labour in West Africa (particularly girls from Lokpa (rural Benin) to urban centres) and questioned the usefulness of the trafficking label to the arrangement.

In summary, the primary focus of child rescue efforts has been on the consequences or outcomes of children's engagements in domestic work rather than the causes. The dominant account is fixated on the end products of CDW while neglecting or downplaying the structures and processes that underlie CDW. This could explain why interventions often target consequences rather than the underlying causes. This argument is developed further in chapter six. The remaining part of the chapter discusses my case study.

1.5.Nigeria as a Case Study

Nigeria is located in West Africa and shares borders with Benin(west), Niger and Chad (north), while the eastern borders are shared with Cameroon, and this extends to the Atlantic Ocean in the south (Nigeria High Commission, London (NHCL), n.d.). The country gained independence from Great Britain in 1960² and after years of military coups and political instability, the country currently practises a multi-party democracy with a three-tier structure consisting of Federal government (with the Capital in Abuja), 36 state governments and 774 local governments. The 36 states are further divided into six geo-political zones (with three zones each in the

² For a comprehensive history of the country, see Falola and Heaton (2008) among others.

north (central, east and west) and south (west, south and east)) (Falola and Heaton, 2008; BBC News, 2017; NHCL, n.d.).

The current political structure, based on the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, means that national policies are defined and monitored by the federal government, but state and local governments are saddled with the responsibilities of implementing them. At the same time, each state has its own government, laws, and judiciary (OMCT and CLEEN Foundation, 2004:4). Also, the Nigerian legal system is characterized by three different traditions of law: the English Common Law, the Islamic Sharia Law, and the Customary Law. While the Constitution draws heavily from the English Common Law, it also makes provisions for the application of Islamic laws (mainly in Muslim dominated northern states) and customary laws to civil proceedings (OMCT and CLEEN Foundation, 2004:5). As will be shown later, the complex political and legal systems have implications for child related issues in the country.

Map 1: Administrative map of Nigeria



Map available at and downloaded from:
<http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/nigeria-administrative-map.htm>

The total population figure is controversial and is estimated between 140million to over 200million (depending on the sources)³, but overall, the country is the largest in Africa, accounting for about 47 per cent of West Africa's population (World Bank, 2015a). The population is culturally diverse with hundreds of ethnic groups and dialects; but the three major ethnic groups are Hausas (concentrated in the north), Igbos (south-east) and Yorubas (south-west); and English is the official language.

The country is the biggest oil exporter in Africa and has the largest natural gas reserves in the continent, but 78 per cent of the people are estimated to live on less than \$1.25 a day (ILO, 2015). Robust economic growth (mainly from oil export) in recent years (before the recent recession in the economy) has however not resulted in better living conditions for a huge proportion of the population (World Bank, 2019). This explains why although the country is said to be oil dependent, majority of the population are still dependent on (subsistence) agriculture for survival.

As a matter of fact, the discovery and exploration of oil is believed to be the basis for the structural imbalances and distortions that the country is grappling with today. This is because revenues from periods of oil boom were neither invested in development projects nor evenly distributed across the entire country. While some major cities grew as a result, many cities, towns, and rural areas especially were deprived developmental opportunities, leading to mass poverty and destitution in these areas (Falola and Heaton, 2008:237). The result was large-scale migration to the new oil built cities like Abuja, the capital city.

Also, oil revenues have remained concentrated in the hands of few government officials and individuals who enrich themselves at the expense

³ The 2006 census estimate of about 140million by the National Population Commission remains contentious within and outside the country; World Bank estimates range between 173-182 million (2015a); and the CIA World Fact book and the United Nations statistics division put the 2016 estimate at 186million)

of the majority. This fuels large-scale corruption and uneven development within the country as we know today (Falola and Heaton, 2008:237-8; Olaniyi, 2009:47). Equally worse, the dependency on oil makes the country more susceptible to fluctuations in global economy. In particular, the global economic crises in the 1980s resulted in fiscal deficits, rising inflation and external debts among others in the country. And to cope with these challenges, Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) was introduced, which in turn worsened the poverty situation in the country as in many African countries (Falola and Heaton, 2008; Torimiro, 2009:65).

Many public services in the country have not recovered from the effects of SAP in the 1980s and 1990s (Falola and Heaton, 2008: 238). Today, many Nigerians cannot access good motorable roads, uninterrupted electricity supply, clean pipe-borne water, functioning hospitals and so on. Poor remuneration of professionals in many disciplines, job losses, security challenges such as ethnic and religious clashes are other factors that contribute to large-scale rural-urban and external migration of Nigerians (Falola and Heaton, 2008). It is also against this backdrop that the country has become infamous as a 'trafficking hub' (Ibid).

The high level of poverty is a paradox for a country classified as lower middle income by the World Bank, but the incidence of poverty is not uniform across the country. Poverty is more concentrated in the northern states than the southern states⁴ with the north accounting for about eighty-seven percent (87%) of the poverty rate (Aigbokan, 2000; Madu, 2006; The Economist, 2014; World Bank, 2015:10; 2019:14). Rural poverty is also more than three times the urban poverty. Thus, rural-urban migration is pronounced- urban population more than tripled between 1980 and

⁴ It is not the aim of this thesis to discuss why this is so, and academic literature is scanty on the subject-perhaps due to its sensitive nature in the country. However, explanations include frequent political instability and low literacy levels in the north relative to the south (See Vanguard News, 2012; The Economist, 2013; World Bank, 2019).

2010; about half of the population currently live in urban centres, and the trend is expected to continue (World Bank, 2015: xxi). Urban population in the country also involves migration from (poorer) neighbouring countries (UNESCO, 2006:34). This is because the country is still considered a giant on the continent and particularly in West-African sub-region.

Lastly, while the country is divided along cultural, ethnic, and religious lines, the most important divisions (in addition to income inequality) relevant for the purpose of this thesis are the age structure of the population, regional inequalities and the political and/or legal system as stated above. The two youngest age groups (0-14 years and 15-24 years) account for more than 60 per cent of the population (with the former more than 40 per cent) (NHCL, n.d.; CIA World Factbook, 2017). National unemployment rate is 24 percent, but youth unemployment rate is twice as high as this (ILO, 2015; World Bank, 2019). Furthermore, the country does not have a functional formal welfare or social protection system (Muqtada, 2012; World Bank, 2019:18; Olayiwola, 2019b).

Thus, traditional (informal) social security, based on the principles of solidarity and morality, is still prevalent in the country, and often involves obligations by extended family members and the wider community to ensure the well-being of all (Raheem, 1993, cited in Tambo, 2014:115-119; World Bank, 2019:19). It includes provisions for health services, childcare, elderly care and support, disabled and other vulnerable members of the society such as orphans. So, extensive family ties, informal networks, and circular migration as well as reliance on the generosity of others to meet basic needs are the default support systems for many. External and internal migrants are similar in this sense because they maintain significant ties and relationships with their places of origin, and are often contacted for support in times of crises (Gugler, 1991; Falola and Heaton, 2008; Victor and Hope, 2011; Mberu et al, 2013).

As this thesis aims to show, it is by taking the above factors, among other socio-economic ones, into consideration that one can begin to understand CDW and other child rights issues in the country.

1.5.1. Brief History of CDW in Nigeria

Although there is scanty literature on the subject, it is argued that children have always been engaged in domestic duties and paid domestic work only constituted wage employment during the colonial era (Oloko, 1992, 1995 in Ladan, 2005). A similar argument is made of other parts of Africa (see Hansen, 1986:18). Prior to colonialism, earliest evidence of CDW (i.e. in third person households) has been traced to the apprenticeship system as well as cultural practices of fostering and pawning. Children-especially young boys- could serve as house servants while learning crafts and the masters were responsible for their upkeep until they become masters themselves (Callaway, 1964:63 in Fafunwa,1974:31). This form of arrangement is still widespread in the country today- especially among the Igbos of eastern Nigeria, where young men often go to live with their 'uncles' in the cities to learn trade (Agbu, 2009:11). It is worth stating here that this group is usually not considered when generalizations are made about gender issues in domestic work.

Pawning or indenture- the transfer of persons as collateral for loans- existed on a small scale in earlier times, but it became widespread with increasing socio-economic inequality and transatlantic slave trade (Oroge, 1985:75-6). Based on the patriarchal nature of the society then, women and children were usually the victims. In this regard, children could be forced to do domestic work in homes where they have been pawned in addition to other duties- to repay the debt of their parents (fathers) (Ibeme, 2014:221), but there were also benefits for the children. For example, the relatively wealthy creditor could provide for them and guarantee their safety where their (impoverished) parents could not (Oroge, 1985:78-9).

During colonial times, the colonial administrators and officials lived a bourgeoisie lifestyle which necessitated the demand for many paid domestic workers. Thus, during this time, both adult domestic workers (employed as stewards, cooks, or drivers) and young domestic workers (often called 'small boys' and 'baby nurses') took care of the children of the British officers (Ladan, 2005). Some Nigerian educated and westernized elites in the then capital (Lagos) emulated this lifestyle, and some poor households saw this as an opportunity for their children to earn high wages and gain exposure to western ideals and values. Some saw it as a source of pride to see their children living with the Europeans in the Government Reserved Areas. The remaining elites and educated families who worked in the formal sector up till the 1950s who could not employ domestic workers sought help mostly from their younger relatives for domestic chores in some form of reciprocal fostering practices (Ladan, 2005; Ibeme, 2014:221-2).

As noted earlier, literature within the dominant paradigm suggests that the traditional practice of child fostering perpetuates the exploitation of children in domestic work today. However, if this is indeed the case, it cannot be disentangled from the increasing inequalities that characterised colonial administration in the country as well as elsewhere. For example, Coquery-Vidrovitch (1997:115-116) shows how (starting with colonialism and continuing after Independence), rapid industrialization and urbanization concentrated in selected African cities -including many southern Nigerian cities- encouraged large-scale rural-urban migration, and the spread of in-kind domestic work as children and young migrants from rural areas assisted their hosts with domestic duties in exchange for educational opportunities and apprenticeship. Generally, this trend continues today.

1.5.2. Current knowledge of CDW in Nigeria

The poverty explanation within the push-pull factors (as earlier explained) is widespread in the few literature investigating child trafficking, child

labour and CDW in Nigeria (see Oluwaniyi, 2009; Adesina, 2014 for example). Other factors such as the economic depression of the late 1970s and later, the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in many African countries have also been discussed as factors contributing to the increase in the employment (and trafficking) of children in domestic labour (Olaniyi, 2009; Oluwaniyi, 2009; Thorsen, 2012:5). Ladan (2005) also highlights other contributory factors such as the lack of mechanization in households, scarcity, and costliness of time and effort saving commercial products, but most of these are mere overviews without in-depth analysis.

Empirical studies such as Tade and Aderinto (2012)'s found that employment of children in domestic service is influenced by factors such as women's role strain (between work and home), the need for companionship (by women whose spouses live and work in other cities, and the elderly who live alone), and 'the decline in the traditional fostering system' (p530). This finding about fostering however contradicts the claim by WHO (2011:1) that 'the spurious practice has been on the increase'. The study did not interview child domestic workers or the mechanisms surrounding their recruitments, but the researchers concluded by recommending government welfare provisions to cater for the needs of the elderly and working women (p539).

In attempting to explain the supply and/or trafficking of children for domestic work, Oluwaniyi (2009) argues that: 'the whole process involves four major factors-the traffickers; the parents or guardians of trafficked children; the trafficked children; and the employers of trafficked children' (p93). The author interviewed each of these groups except the parents or guardians of allegedly trafficked children and identified demand (pull) and supply (push) factors similar to the above. An interesting finding was the preference for children to adults as domestic workers because some

respondents are wary of 'husband snatchers'⁵ (p100-1). The author also explained that the recruitment process is often based on deception and the ignorance of parents. Tade (2014) and Adesina (2014) also discussed intermediary roles in CDW within the trafficking frame.

The Nigeria-centric CDW, child labour and child trafficking discourse therefore largely agree with the dominant narrative, and this informs rescue policies in the country as I will show below.

1.5.3. 'Rescue Missions' in Nigeria

Nigeria is a signatory to the UNCRC, ILO's conventions on child labour and the Palermo Protocol. In a bid to enforce and harmonize these conventions, the government established the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) (2003) and enacted the Child Rights Act (2003) especially as it relates to trafficking in children for labour (WHO, 2011:1). Although NAPTIP's responsibility is to arrest and prosecute traffickers in general, the agency is more prominent for its work on trafficking outside the country for prostitution, and less on 'internal trafficking' (Nwogu, 2007; Oluwaniyi, 2009:105).

The NAPTIP Act (Amended 2015) prohibits the employment of anyone under 12 years of age in domestic service (section 23), but the usefulness of the agency's operations based on a 'rescue and rehabilitation model' (Nwogu, 2007: 163) remains questionable. For example, in 2005, a woman was arrested for transporting 65 children (including her own daughter) from Niger state to be placed in domestic service in Lagos. The woman was well-known in the community and children with their families endorsed her services as a seasonal migratory practice. The community and the children were unhappy about the interference with their means of livelihoods and

⁵ Although the researcher did not specify how many of her 12 respondents mentioned this, the topic of female domestic workers 'taking over' the home (or of child domestic workers in general being involved in criminal activities like kidnapping) is not uncommon and would be worth exploring in future research.

condemned NAPTIP. Although NAPTIP undertook several sensitization visits to convince the community against such practice and set up a rehabilitation scheme for the children, the 'victims' were not offered alternative sources of livelihood (Nwogu, 2007: 158).

As noted earlier, the political and legal system is complex, and one major example of how this complexity relates to children in the country can be seen with regards to the Child Rights Act (CRA) (2003). The CRA is the country's attempt to domesticate the UNCRC (as well as the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) adopted by the then OAU (Organisation of African Unity) Assembly of Heads of States and Government), but it took more than ten years to harmonize the provisions of the draft Bill with different customary and religious traditions across various parts of the country (OMCT and CLEEN, 2004:5-6; UNICEF, 2011). The Nigerian federal system of government still requires each state to pass the CRA into law, and until the present, not all have done so⁶. Even in states where the CRA has been ratified, the experiences of children are not necessarily different (Ashogbon, 2014 in Nzarga, 2016: 50). Thus, in many regards, child rescue activities are mostly driven by international organizations and NGOs.

1.6.Conclusion

The child rescue narrative has grown considerably in the past two decades. Characterised by sensational reporting and ambiguous concepts, the narrative problematises children's work and migratory processes. The chapter examined CDW within the dominant rescue account and identified gaps that the thesis aims to fill. By providing some background information on Nigeria as a case study, the thesis is set to begin to fill these gaps, but first there is need to discuss the theoretical lens that will guide the study.

⁶ As at 2016, 26 out of 36 states have passed the CRA into law (see Nzarga, 2016)

2- THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.Introduction

This thesis explores the representation, policy discourse and reality of CDW using the views of children, parents, intermediaries, and organisations involved in this work arrangement. The previous chapter examined the dominant account of CDW and noted that among others, this narrative is underpinned by some assumptions about what children and childhood should be. This chapter will build on that by presenting a theoretical lens through which the child rescue discourse can be examined, and that will guide the key arguments of the thesis. The chapter begins by giving an overview of postcolonial theory before offering explanations on child rescue missions within this theoretical framework. Next, the chapter problematises the representation of 'Third World' countries and 'childhood problems' such as CDW in these countries before drawing its conclusion.

2.2.An Overview of Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonialism broadly relates to approaches and perspectives that criticize colonial legacies and contemporary geopolitical and economic relations between Western countries and the rest of the world (McEwan, 2009). Greatly influenced by Marxist political- economy and post-structuralist ideas, postcolonial theory is a rejection of Western hegemony and/or the imposition of Western knowledge systems and values on other parts of the world. It 'examines the ways in which Western theory and knowledge have dealt with alternative voices and different ways of knowing' and attempts 'to formulate theoretical and practical strategies to this dominance' (Briggs and Sharp, 2004:661-3). Although the origins of the theory⁷ are varied, three of its greatest contributors Edward Said, Homi

⁷ For detailed accounts and criticisms of postcolonial theory, see among others, Loomba, 1998; Young, 2001; McEwan, 2019.

Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak (McEwan, 2019:76) are considered in relation to the purpose of this thesis.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is significant for its analysis of colonialism as discursive domination beyond economic and political control. Central to Said's analysis as well as postcolonial theory in general as will be shown later, is Michel Foucault's idea of power and knowledge as well as Frantz Fanon's idea of binaries ('othering'). Thus, Orientalism – the study of the Orient – 'was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar 'self' (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange 'Other' (the Orient, the East, 'them') (Said, 1978:45). He continues:

When one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and end points of analysis, research, public policy...the result is usually to polarize the distinction- the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner becomes more Western- and limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions and societies...this tendency is right at the center of Orientalist theory, practice, and values found in the West, the sense of Western power over the Orient is taken for granted as having the status of scientific truth (Said, 1978:45-46).

Orientalism is thus not about non-western cultures, but about western representations of these cultures. These representations are stereotypical ideas that say more about the West than about non- western societies they claim to represent. Said's contention was not that Europeans disliked non-Western peoples or cultures, but that the knowledge and practices of the Orient was filtered through European cultural bias (Said, 1978).

Homi Bhabha offers a more nuanced understanding of colonial dominance by identifying its ambivalence and heterogeneity. In *Location of Culture* (1994), he uses concepts such as mimicry (imitation) and hybridity(mixing) to explain that cultures interact and transform each other in more complex

ways beyond binary opposition (McEwan, 2019:79). Thus, unlike Said's claim that colonial discourse was all powerful, Bhabha's writings examine the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, with neither being independent of the other (Loomba, 1998:178). Despite this, he believed knowledge is a function of representation, with the colonial culture being the benchmark in ways that 'the 'hybridity' of both coloniser and colonised can be understood only by tracing the vicissitudes of colonial discourse, or the mutations in European culture'(Ibid:180).

Lastly, Gayatri Spivak's introduction in her influential essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988) captures an overview of her ideas in a way that fits the purpose of this thesis:

An understanding of contemporary relations of power, and of the Western intellectual's role within them, requires an examination of the intersection of a theory of representation and the political economy of global capitalism. A theory of representation points, on the one hand, to the domain of ideology, meaning, and subjectivity, and, on the other hand, to the domain of politics, the state, and the law (Spivak, 1988: 271).

Spivak uses the term 'epistemic violence' to mean the construction of colonial subjects as 'Other'; and the obstruction and subjugation of non-Western knowledge or 'episteme' (and any trace of it) by classifying such as 'inadequate' or 'insufficiently elaborated' or 'naïve' (Ibid:280-1). In this way, the dominant Western discourse is 'palimpsestic', that is, it describes historical and social events not as they were (are), but as they are deemed appropriate to be and establish the alternative explanation as the normative one (Ibid:281).

As shown above, postcolonial theory can be said to be a theory of domination or unequal power relations and of representation. I examine these two elements of the theory briefly before applying the theory to CDW.

2.2.1. Discourse, Power and Representation

Postcolonial theory involves 'analysing discourses' and 'critiquing modes of representation' (McEwan, 2019:2). In the works of Michel Foucault, all ideas are ordered through 'some material medium', and the ordering imposes a pattern, which is called 'discourse' (Foucault, 1970:100). Thus, discourse can refer to 'a narrative' or 'an account'; 'a set of accepted and relevant concepts which have become socially legitimized as knowledge and truth within society' (Desyllas, 2007:52). Discourse produces 'domains of objects and rituals of truth' (Foucault, 1979:194).

The 'order of discourse' in turn refers to systems through which knowledge or what is socially acceptable is created and sustained. In this sense, 'discourses...always involve the exercise of power' (McEwan, 2019:151) essentially through the use of language in certain ways 'rooted in human practices, institutions and actions' (Loomba, 1998:38-9).

Discourses establish the basis for deciding what counts as facts in specific considerations and for determining appropriate mode of comprehending the same facts (White, 1987:3). Thus, at any point in time, what is portrayed and what can be said about the social world vary with the circumstances and geopolitical or institutional positioning of the one telling the story (Spivak, 1990:5; Loomba, 1998:39-40). Therefore, 'the world we live in is only comprehensible to us via its discursive representations' (Loomba, 1998:39-40). This explains why postcolonial theory pays attention to 'language as a tool of domination and as a means of constructing identity' (Loomba, 1998:41).

McEwan explains further:

Discourse refers to the ensemble of social practices through which the world is made meaningful. It is not confined to words and pictures but encompasses their material effects. Discourses shape the contours of the 'taken-for-granted world'; they are produced and reproduced

through representations to naturalize and universalize a particular view of the world and to position subjects in it. Discourses always provide partial, situated knowledge... (McEwan, 2019:150).

The implication of the above is that knowledge is managed and regulated to suit specific interests. It is both a form of power and violence that gives authority to its possessors to close off spaces for the articulation of alternative explanations (McEwan, 2019:208). This essentially makes non-western societies the object of Western knowledge (Ibid). In this light,

The discourse of development is not merely an "ideology" that has little to do with the "real world"; nor is it an apparatus produced by those in power in order to hide another, more basic truth... The development discourse has crystallized in practices that contribute to regulating the everyday goings and comings of people in the Third World (Escobar, 2012:104).

Representation is also conceptualised similarly in postcolonial writings. Representation in Spivak's argument involves two related but different meanings: 'Speaking of' (as in depiction or description) and 'speaking for' (as in political representation). Both are problematic in different but related ways- they involve questions of rights and responsibilities, socio-cultural contexts, taken-for granted assumptions as well as political struggles (Duncan and Sharpe, 1993:473-5). However, the emphasis here is on 'speaking of' i.e. re-presenting. In this sense, Spivak notes that the problem is not that the subaltern cannot speak for themselves, but that the culturally dominant are unwilling to listen to them.

Spivak used the term 'subaltern' in the deconstruction of gender and representation in India, but the term in a broadly critical sense has become synonymous with 'a person or groups of people rendered voiceless and without agency by their social status... people whose voices cannot be heard

or that are wilfully ignored in dominant modes of narrative production' (McEwan, 2019: 22-23).

Hooks (1990)'s autobiographical account echoes Spivak's arguments. To her, western 'experts' are often interested in the experiences of the 'Other' but not their explanations:

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way (hooks⁸, 1990: 343).

To her, local knowledge and narratives have to be moved to central terrain (predominantly Western institutions of knowledge or power (aid agencies, universities, pages of journal) and in the language of the West (science, social science, psychology, philosophy, among others, expressed in English or French)) to be accepted and appropriated. Thus, the story is retold 'only as an example, or as data which the 'experts' alone can interpret' (Briggs and Sharp, 2004: 664-5). In this sense, global development as championed by Western agencies is both strategic and tactical; it promotes and justifies certain types of interventions and delegitimizes others (McEwan, 2008:209). Other scholars like Sardar (1999) have gone as far as arguing that the power of the West to name, represent and theorize is more significant than its technological advancement or economic development.

Overall, these arguments can be related to the representation of 'Third World' generally as well as how popular representation of CDW 're-presents' the voices and experiences of child domestic workers as the next two sections will show.

⁸ She puts her names in lowercase letters as a way of subverting language as a construct that support the status quo, and I have endeavoured to use it accordingly except in the opening statement in this paragraph.

2.3. Childhood and Postcolonial Explanation

Anthropological investigations reveal variations in the meanings of childhood between and within cultures (Boyden and Ennew, 1997:59). Yet, the bulk of the existing literature on the history and evolution of childhood in the English language is focused on western Europe and North America. Thus, what we know about the same topic in non-Western settings- particularly Africa in this context- is very limited (Wells, 2015:11) in part because texts and knowledge on these were systematically undermined or destroyed through forced assimilation policies and other adverse outcomes of British and French colonial expansion. As it has been argued:

The power to represent other places (to name, describe, publish, claim and construct knowledge) was instrumental in reinforcing a sense of difference between the West and non-West, North and South, which also translated into a sense of superiority and justified various political interventions that underpinned imperialism, and, later development...These discourses contained what became acceptable ways of referring to other parts of the world and a set of assumptions and generalizations about the peoples and cultures in these regions (McEwan, 2019:160-1).

In this light, there is a consensus that the change in attitude towards children from around 17th century in Western societies influenced reforms pertaining to the education, socialization, and protection of children in these societies, as well as contemporary images of 'ideal' childhood (Boyden, 2015[1990]:169-177; Hendrick, 2015[1990]:30; Cunningham 2006). In particular, the rise of capitalism, coupled with industrialisation and urbanisation contributed a great deal to the expansion of education and welfare opportunities. Around this time, state intervention involved the gradual regulation of child labour and the introduction of free and compulsory schooling until schooling became a common experience of

childhood (Ariès, 1962; Cunningham, 1995). Over time, the notion of childhood as a period of care and nurture separate from adulthood became entrenched in most Western countries and eventually came to dominate the international institutions and child rights agendas spearheaded by these countries (Cunningham, 2006; Fyfe, 2007; Bourdillon et al, 2010).

As UN agencies such as the ILO and UNICEF have long been dominated by nations from Western Europe and North America, Conventions formulated by these organisations as well as their campaigns and discourses on children's rights are primarily shaped by popular ideals, principles and values on childhood and children in these countries (Boyden and Ennew, 1997; Ansell, 2005; Schmid, 2009; Boyden, 2015; Howard, 2017). This also means that even when UN agencies recognise local variations, child rescue policies in the South are often in keeping with interests of governments, local elites, community leaders and other local stakeholders in the global South who rely on them for paternalistic, moral and other parochial objectives, rather than socio-political and economic realities of such societies (see Feneyrol, 2005; Bourdillon, 2014 among others).

In other words, (unequal) power relations between Western and non-western countries are maintained through institutions such as the UN and its agencies. The CRC for example is a kind of knowledge produced by the UN to justify certain forms of control and interventions through the stimulation of an ideal i.e. childhood (Gadda, 2008:9-10). Thus, a contrast is often made between Western and non-western societies in relation to childhood experiences. Children in the former have and/or enjoy 'ideal' childhood, which children in the latter must also have. In this regard, Heather Montgomery writes:

Thus, notions of what is a 'correct' childhood, and what is a correct path of development, become political, with a contrast set up between the sheltered and privileged life of 'developed children' and the miserable

and pitiful situation of those who are forced to work in a contradiction of their 'natural' role as children. Often emotive pictures of working children are used to make the implicit contrast between the developed West (or native middle classes) with their educational and social structures and the brutal and backward lives of the 'underdeveloped' who are yet to share civilized values...The West, or the Westernized elites in other countries, are therefore given the 'right' to intervene in the social structure of the Third World poor, and thus definitions of childhood change from culturally conditioned and locally understood concepts into universal moral imperatives which demand and justify interference (Montgomery, 2001:57).

However, as highlighted in the previous chapter, most of the international policy documents (such as the UNCRC) developed based on the notion of 'ideal' childhood have been subject to criticisms as increasing tides of empirical studies continue to show huge variations between popular rhetoric and the lived experiences of children from different parts of the world. For example, some studies have proved children's active engagement in their migration or 'trafficking' (Castle and Diarra, 2003; Whitehead et al 2007; Huijsmans and Baker, 2012), or shown how attempts to ban child labour can have disastrous consequences for children (O'Neill, 2003; Jacquemin, 2006; Bourdillon et al, 2010).

Adopting a postcolonial perspective, as this thesis does, offers a much broader scope for critical analysis of the dominant CDW discourse. A good example to foreground the analysis is how poverty- often taken for granted as a causal factor in CDW- in the 'Third World' is often constructed in Western child protectionist and child-saving campaigns.

2.3.1. *Iconography of 'Third World' Childhood and Poverty*

Representations of the 'Third World' and 'the West' are imbued with moral, cultural and socio-political attributes (e.g. civilization or lack of, modernity or backwardness, development or underdevelopment).

These representations often shape development policies... Popular images in the North of the 'Third World' are formed through mass media – television, radio, cinema, written press, school and university education, friends and family, tourism. These are not necessarily false or wrong, but they are partial because they are often not based on first-hand experience, or they are mediated (e.g. through tourism) and are thus in many ways 'fictions'. They are often simplified and distorted images, mental maps of the world or imagined geographies. They represent individual and collective imaginations – they are a product of how the geography of Africa, Asia or Latin America is imagined and how the 'development' of these regions is understood (McEwan, 2019:39).

Representation is significant to our understanding of the world, and it is in this regard that the representations of poverty and exploitation of children do not merely 're-present facts but also constitute them' (Dogra, 2012:1). This explains why and how the mis (representation) of poverty and its causal factors, and 'childhood problems' in the 'Third World' are essential elements that the child rescue discourse thrives on. In this regard, scholars such as Burman, 1994a; Philo 2004; Plewes and Stuart, 2007; Chauhan and Foster 2014 among others have shown how selective and sensationalist coverage of 'problems' in non-Western countries and cultures have resulted in widespread negative images, and paternalistic tendencies to 'help' them. We can examine hunger or malnutrition as examples of 'Third World' problems as given by Escobar (2012) here:

To be blunt, one could say that the body of the malnourished the starving 'African' portrayed on so many covers of Western magazines, or the lethargic South American child to be 'adopted' for \$16 a month portrayed in the advertisements of the same magazines. This is the most striking symbol of the power of the First World over the Third. A whole economy of discourse and unequal power relations is encoded in that body (Escobar, 2012:103)

The discourse and representation work in such a way that:

The language of hunger and the hunger of language join forces not only to maintain a certain social order but to exert a kind of symbolic violence that sanitizes the discussion of the hungry and the malnourished. It is thus that we come to consume hunger in the West; in the process our sensitivity to suffering and pain becomes numbed by the distancing effect that the language of academics and experts achieved (Escobar, 2012: 104)

The net effect of this is that campaign groups and sections of the news and print media are involved in the 'mass production of social ignorance' rather than educating the public about the 'Third World' (Philo, 2004). These findings linked to attempt to grab the attention of audiences by campaigners are not new. About four decades ago, Lissner (1977) argued that using images of starving children without providing broader concepts in fundraising campaigns in Western countries was likely to result in a negative perception of people of the 'Third World' (cited in Hudson et al, 2016:4). Later, Lissner (1981) described such representation as 'social pornography'.

In the same fashion, Coulter (1989) notes:

Indeed, the advertising which has recently been appearing for voluntary aid agencies portrays a universally squalid Third World full of passive, needy people- especially children...With very few honourable exceptions, the causes of this suffering are never mentioned although we are assured that the solutions are easy (n.p.).

While attempts have been made to regulate images and messages relating to the Third World (Hilary, 2014), these do not seem to have any effect on campaigns by NGOs and international organizations. Thus, as the buzz of rescuing the Third World children has continued through the decades, an increasing number of scholars have used Lissner's analogy of pornography

to depict the effects of such messages and images on the public in both Western and non- Western societies (see for example, Plewes and Stuart 2007; Escobar, 2012 and Hilary, 2014).

The reason for this mis (representation) should be clear: there is a direct relationship between sensationalist media depiction and/or description of suffering people-especially children and increased funds for campaigners. If suffering children are presented as active in their quest for survival or if their societies are presented as doing anything to help them, the likelihood of funding is slim (Coulter, 1989; Burman, 1994a; 1994b; Hilary, 2014; Wan, 2015). Thus, fund-raising becomes the goal itself rather than a means to an end- yet this is hardly ever discussed as a way of exploiting poor 'Third World' children (Coulter, 1989; Burman, 1994a; Lambino, 2010).

Images of working children in abusive conditions are often presented in similar ways to those of poor, suffering, and abandoned children in non-Western societies. These deviations from 'ideal' childhood depict, on the one hand, the failures of their families, cultures and communities to cater for them; and on the other hand, require Western public actions and donations to reclaim their 'stolen' childhood (Ennew, 1986:21-3; Burman, 1994a; 1994b; 1995). It is therefore not surprising that images of healthy and wealthy people- including children from 'Third World' countries represent an anomaly to many Westerners (Graham and Lynn, 1990 in Burman, 1994b:249-250; DfID, 2000; Philo, 2004). By the same token, Western middle-class lifestyles or 'fantasy existence' are often depicted in non-Western societies in a way that the audience is "unlikely to find out the existence of poverty or even of a working class in the West" (Ennew, 1986:23).

Although the media and aid agencies are the leading culprits, academic discourses mirror this bias as well. For example, O'Connell Davidson and Farrow (2008) note that although there are many studies on sectors such

as agriculture, hospitality and domestic work, where migrant workers are prone to abuse and exploitation in North America and Europe, child migrants (under 18s) are rarely mentioned. Instead, comments are made to suggest that they are not a substantial part of the workforce, but it is impossible to prove or disprove such comments without 'systematic and focused research' (p30). However, the implicit assumption is that it is only 'Third World' children that are exploited.

Also, when cases of child abuse or child rights violations are reported in the rich powerful countries, the language is usually less sensational. For example, children that suffer abuse while in state care or those that have been denied their rights and freedoms in deplorable immigration centres as a result of state policies in many Western countries are not described as 'child slaves' or 'victims' (Mensah and Okyere, 2019). Similarly, Syrian (and other) child refugees in Greece, Turkey and in other countries are presented as helpless victims of conflict, but the roles played by powerful rich nations in shaping their insecurities (see Feldstein, 2017; HRW, 2017; Bhabha, 2019 among others) are hardly taken up by UN agencies and many Western media. Even where such roles are acknowledged, the language is usually more subtle and devoid of sensationalism (see UNSC, 2017; BBC News 2018 for example) compared to the portrayal of the roles of governments and local groups in the countries of origin.

The above arguments relating to selective representation and the influence of powerful rich nations in shaping public discourses and policies regarding non-Western societies are also applicable to CDW:

2.3.2. 'Rescue Missions' and CDW

Many child domestic workers are too young to work. They cannot go to school. The work they do is often hazardous to them and endangers their physical, mental or moral well-being. ILO evidence indicates that 11.5 million of the 17.2 million child domestic workers are in child labour situations that need to be eliminated. The other 5.7 million, mostly

adolescents, are in permissible work but need to be provided with decent domestic work and protected from abuse and exploitation (ILO, 2017b:3).

Given the blurry distinctions between acceptable and unacceptable child domestic work as earlier highlighted, and the perceived incompatibility of children in domestic work with the image of 'ideal' childhood, the tendency is to draw attention to the most sensational ones and ignore or downplay cases that prove otherwise (Bourdillon et al, 2011:17-18). Thus, the story is often told in a way that leads one to believe that the experience is the same for every child domestic worker.

A cursory internet or academic literature search for child domestic workers is likely to return with images and stories of children that are 'overworked, underpaid and abused' under captions such as: 'the world's most forgotten children', 'lonely servitude', 'hidden slavery' or more popularly 'a modern form of slavery' (See UNICEF,1997:32; Blagbrough, 2008a; HRW, 2012; Muhammad, 2014; BSAF, 2016). The sweeping generalisations that characterise this narrative means that all children in domestic work are often grouped together as destined for a life of misery and hopelessness unless rescued. In this regard, while urging action to end child labour, UNICEF (2001:1) contends that: 'child labour is a prison that withers both capabilities and potential'. Almost following verbatim, one NGO, the US-based International Initiative on Exploitative Child Labour (IIECL) referencing some ILO's reports declared that "Child domestic labour is a widespread and growing global phenomenon... (and that) child domestic labour is a waste of human talent and potential..." (IIECL, 2015:n.p). I analyse some of these texts and their implications in chapters 6.

One can begin to unpack the politics of the child rescue rhetoric by considering such generalizations in relation to the ILO's admission that 'it is impossible to know how many are exploited in domestic service'

(2004a:14), or that 'the specific number of children in forced labour and trafficking for domestic work remains unknown...' (2017b:58). Yet, if the numbers and extent of the 'problem' are not 'estimated' in one way or another and presented in captivating manners, they do not sell. This is an unwelcome outcome, and one that leads to questions that challenge the ideologies and unequal power relations that govern the existence and workings of many international organizations- such as the ILO and UNICEF, NGOs - and Western interests (Howard, 2017).

On the other hand, if one accepts that estimates such as the ILO's are correct, the inconsistencies of the dominant narrative become even more glaring. A comparison of the 2013 and 2017 estimates of the number of children in domestic work and those to be rescued between the two periods, for example shows that there has been an increase in both. Yet, this is never seen as a failure of UN agencies and campaign groups who have been given many millions of dollars each year to address the problem. Instead, non-Western societies are blamed for their 'backwardness' because 'child domestic work is still accepted socially and culturally' in such societies (ILO, 2017b:3).

What is apparent from the above is how the hegemonic position of Western states and organisations has dominated how 'child trafficking', 'child labour', CDW and rescue missions are constructed. This is symbolic of epistemic violence: the process of 'Othering' of childhood experiences and wider social structures and practices in non-western countries, and the justification of 'rescue missions' by actors who sometimes have absolutely no knowledge or understanding of the socio-cultural and political contexts in which they are seeking to 'rescue' children.

As earlier explained, the fact that knowledge and power are inseparable means that the noble and altruistic missions of helping the 'poor' or 'victims' in the 'Third World' are never just that- they are part of 'discursive framing'.

In other words, 'helping' the 'Third World' is also getting to discipline and dominate it, to have a more manageable 'Other'; and rescuing 'victims' is often a reaffirmation of 'the agenda of a kind of social Darwinism—the fittest must shoulder the burden of righting the wrongs of the unfit—and the possibility of an alibi' (Spivak, 2004:524; Kapoor, 2004:632). This argument is developed extensively in chapter 6.

In sum, the child-rescue discourse (through campaigns, aid appeals, sensationalist media representation of working children and 'modern slavery' involving children) mirrors the colonial ideology and portrayal of some countries and cultures as backward and socially inferior, as well as the unequal power relations between the West and non-western societies (Escobar, 1995:103; O'Barr, 1994 in Richards, 2004:2). "The language is invariably of 'them' and 'us' – the apparently helpless 'them' being helped by the neo-colonial 'us'" (Coulter, 1989:n.p) with the widespread generalization that these countries- and children- cannot survive without foreign aid and 'rescue missions' as if they never survived prior to colonialism, foreign aid and/or interventions (Richards, 2004; Plewes and Stuart,2007:24).

Thus, a postcolonial perspective rejects a 'sense of neo-colonial moral superiority' (Klocker, 2014:464), and the belief in the notion of 'ideal' childhood that guides child rescue efforts. At the same time, it does not seek to defend, celebrate and/or idealize culture in ways that ignore 'historical, spatial and representational linkages' (Nieuwenhuys, 2009:150). In short, it provides scope for looking beyond the rhetoric of exploitation which principally presents children as victims that need rescuing from evil employers or aberrant traffickers, to structural constraints on individual choices in the Third World (Nieuwenhuys, 2009:150; Klocker, 2014:466).

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to establish a framework for understanding dominant accounts of child trafficking, child labour and CDW. I have argued that dominant representations of these problems mirror the institutional positioning of campaigners and child rescuers; and promote hegemonic discourse of what childhood should be. I will build on this argument with empirical evidence in subsequent chapters. Before then however, there is need to address the methodological approach that the study will take. This I will do in the next chapter.

3- METHODOLOGY

3.1.Introduction

This study offers a critique of the dominant representation and policy discourses on CDW using the realities of children, parents and other adults engaged in this work arrangement. In order to achieve the aims of the study, a multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork was adopted in South Western Nigerian cities of Lagos, Ibadan and Abeokuta, as well as in Saki, and three sending communities around these cities. This chapter discusses the methodological, ethical, and reflexive considerations surrounding the field work. The chapter begins with an explanation of the rationale for the choice of ethnography. Second, the chapter discusses the choice of the study locations as well as how I gained access to my participants. Next, there is a discussion of the methods employed in carrying out the study while the final section focuses on how I managed ethical and reflexive challenges during the fieldwork.

3.2.Rationale for Adopting Ethnography

There are different approaches to studying any given social phenomenon, but the choice of a given methodology is influenced by ontological, epistemological, and theoretical reflections as well as practical considerations (Bryman, 2008:18-43). In this section, I explain how these considerations influenced my decision to adopt an ethnographic methodology. First, as the previous chapter shows, representations and power relations shape child rescue discourses. I therefore identify with a critical interpretative approach that posits that ‘things are not just the way they are (or are presented); they have been constructed and reconstructed...’ (Hesse-Biber, 2017:27). On the one hand, the approach seeks meaning by focusing on ‘subjective experience, small-scale interactions and understanding’; and on the other hand, ‘looks at how

power and hegemonic discourses shape experience and understanding' (Hesse-Biber,2017:21).

Given the above, a view was taken that a positivist approach (that experience of childhood can be studied objectively to produce quantifiable universal truths or conclusions- as is often the case in child rescue narrative and associated (inflexible) legislative framework) was unsuitable. Instead, the philosophical tradition that is critical of the very idea of objectivity by emphasizing "how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted" (Mason,2002:3) was preferred. This ontological and epistemological position is closely associated with the sociological paradigm that childhood is a social construction, and as such requires "an interpretative frame for understanding" (James and Prout, 2015:3). This sociology of childhood does not accept that children are merely passive subjects and advocates studying their experiences as a subfield in its own names and on its own terms.

Ethnography has long been regarded as an effective methodology for presenting children's lifeworlds and for understanding the complexity of human experience (O'Reilly, 2005; James and Prout, 2015: xvi). Studies such as Castle and Diarra (2003) on 'trafficked' children in Mali, De Lange (2007) on young agricultural labourers in Burkina Faso, Davies (2008) on street children in Kenya, Huijsmans (2010) on migrating adolescents in Laos, Morganti (2011, 2016) on child domestic workers in Benin, Okyere (2012) on 'child labour' in artisanal gold mining in Ghana, Howard (2012) on 'child trafficking' in Benin, among others have demonstrated the usefulness of ethnography in this regard. Thus, I sought to use ethnography to understand experiences and subjectivities with regards to CDW as well as to critique the popular rhetoric that seeks to abolish it.

Ethnography is about telling a story in 'a credible, rigorous and authentic' way (Fetterman, 2010:1). The ethnographer is able to do this by observing

behaviour, seeking the locals' perception of observed behaviour, and offering contextual (rather than generalized) explanation for the same. Ethnography is useful for understanding issues such as how people view their world, what their stories are and how members of a given culture understand a custom or behaviour (Hesse-Biber,2017:187). Seeking answers to such questions in relation to child domestic work can provide an empirical basis for critically engaging with the child rescue narrative and related legislative framework as this thesis set out to do.

Overall, the aim of ethnography is to help to create a 'portrait of people' (Hancock, 2002:4) and 'get a holistic understanding' (Hesse-Biber, 2017:183) or generate 'thick description' (Geertz,1994). This involves the researcher spending a great deal of time in the field, using multiple methods to collect different kinds of data in order to ensure all angles are covered, and describing as much as possible about a group or an aspect of culture (Fetterman, 2010). As such, the researcher is able to see beyond the 'immediate cultural scene or event' (ibid:18) to the multi-layered and interrelated context within which each scene exists. Such a holistic orientation can help in discovering the interrelationships among the various systems or subsystems in a society (ibid)

Getting the insider's perspective is at the heart of most ethnographic studies, and because the native perceptions may differ from 'objective' reality, it forces one to recognize and accept multiple realities, which in turn helps to understand why members of a social group do what they do (ibid). In this regard, I was interested in critically examining how the rescue narrative and related policy framework on child rights and child protection, on child domestic workers, compare with the same in the south-western Nigerian social context.

There were several considerations for adopting a multi-sited study. First, multiple locations were proposed to increase the reach of the study. This is

significant given the sensitive nature of the topic of investigation. Second, as earlier pointed out, the main strategy of the child-rescue narrative is to primarily focus on the consequences of children working in domestic service, or to isolate the causes. Thus, studies on CDW within the dominant paradigm almost always dwell on the receiving areas i.e. urban centres where child domestic workers mostly work. However, effective studies of migration or 'trafficking' (which is usually linked to CDW) require working bilocally i.e. in a way that both the points of origin and points of destination are considered (Watson, 1977 in Hannerz, 2003). It is necessary to examine circumstances in both sending and receiving areas to provide a more holistic understanding of CDW. Therefore, one of the strengths and innovations of this research is that it provides an understanding from both sides.

Another way of explaining the above is that there is a need to understand the connections between the system and individual experiences, and a multi-sited ethnography makes this possible. As George Marcus notes:

Multi-sited ethnographies define their objects of study through several different modes or techniques. These techniques might be understood as practices of construction through (pre-planned or opportunistic) movement and of tracing within different settings of a complex cultural phenomenon given initial, baseline conceptual identity that turns out to be contingent and malleable as one traces it (Marcus, 1995:106).

Multi-sited fieldwork involves 'mapping strategies' or pathways where connections criss-cross localities: following the people, the thing, the metaphor, the story, the life or biography, or the conflict (Marcus, 1995: 95,105). It is useful for making connections between sites that are not known or discussed together within the dominant 'macro-level themes of the system', and for compressing the macro-micro or the system-lifeworld distinction (Marcus, 1995; Pierides, 2010). In the words of Marcus,

Just as this mode investigates and ethnographically constructs the lifeworlds of variously situated subjects, it also ethnographically constructs aspects of the system itself through the associations and connections it suggests among sites (Marcus, 1995:96)

Multi-sited ethnography is not without its criticisms. Among others, it has been argued that it is not feasible as 'thick description' in ethnography is a function of degree of immersion, and one cannot be involved in multiple sites in the same way (Hage, 2005). However, the idea is not to treat all sites uniformly:

Multi-sited ethnographies inevitably are the product of knowledge bases of varying intensities and qualities. To do ethnographic research, for example, on the social grounds that produce a particular discourse of policy requires different practices and opportunities than does fieldwork among the situated communities such policy affects... To bring these sites into the same frame of study and to posit their relationships on the basis of first-hand ethnographic research in both is the important contribution of this kind of ethnography, regardless of the variability of the quality and accessibility of that research at different sites (Marcus, 1995:100).

With regards to ethnography in general, questions relating to the reliability and internal validity of descriptions have always been raised. But as argued by scholars such as Guba and Lincoln (1989), ethnographic studies require distinct criteria for judging the validity of its methods. This is where the idea of rigour, achievable through triangulation for example is useful. While it is true that the extent of bias in ethnographic data cannot be estimated because they are not open to replication, this does not mean ethnographic research lack rigour because data from different sources are usually compared and combined in ethnographic writings (Hammersley, 1992; 1998:10)

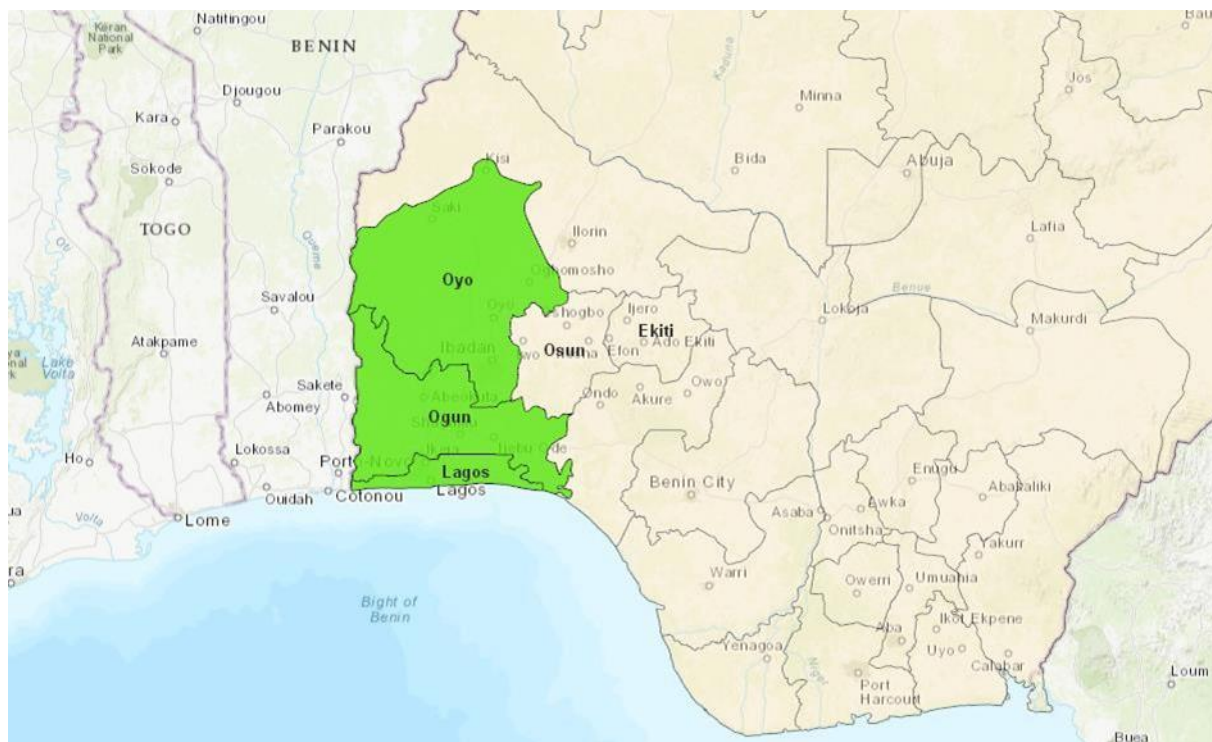
Lastly, while it may be argued that the lack of statistical sampling may produce findings that are not generalisable, it is equally important to state that representativeness of findings is possible 'by comparing the features of the case being studied with aggregate data about the target population' (Hammersley, 1998:11). Also, generalising is not the objective of a study like this. Indeed, one of the problems with mainstream approaches is the tendency to generalise or extrapolate from single studies or specific instances to every other instance or case. What is required is a situated case by case analysis, and this is what this study seeks to provide.

As earlier pointed out, practical considerations were also significant, and these informed the choice of study locations as the next section will show.

3.3.Site Selection and Research Settings

My choice of topic as well as research settings was firstly influenced by stories of abusive and exploitative practices in CDW in the Nigerian media as stated at the beginning of this thesis (see also, The Guardian Newspaper, 2016; The Punch Newspaper 2016b among others). Further, even though Nigeria is a signatory to many international child protection policy and legal documents as discussed in chapter one, no comprehensive study has attempted the dynamics of 'rescue missions' in relation to CDW in the country.

Map 2: The study sites (in green) within Nigeria and proximity to Benin and Togo



Map available at and downloaded from:

<https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=d4ae4958cdf540c98478cdca5f250ab4>

Also, as earlier noted, Nigeria as a country is divided along many lines, but in general, rural poverty is more pronounced than urban poverty, and there is more impoverishment in northern Nigeria than in the southern states. The choice of the south-western region was informed by the fact that its major cities attract substantial number of migrants, and it is in this context that many children are believed to be 'trafficked' into the region⁹ for domestic work (ILO-IPEC, 2002:19-20; Adesina, 2014:171).

⁹ Perhaps it is worth mentioning here that due to the differences highlighted when discussing Nigeria in chapter one, CDW is more pronounced in Southern Nigeria than in the Northern parts. This does not assume its non-existence, but rather it is 'less of a problem' compared to other child-related issues in the north such as early (girl) child marriage, or 'trafficking' of boys through the Quranic schools (see USDOL, 2014 for example). It will be interesting to explore similarities and differences in the incidence of

Although southern Nigeria is divided into three geo-political zones (namely South-West, South-South and South-East), I concentrated only on the South-West region- specifically Lagos, Ibadan and Abeokuta as well as sending villages around these sites- due to funding and other practical considerations. First, Lagos- the commercial capital of the country is believed to capture the huge diversity within the country, and the other two cities (and sending communities) are easily accessible from the same location.

Lagos is the smallest Nigerian city, but it has the highest urban population in the country and indeed in Africa. With an estimated population of between 17.5million to 25million people (World Population Review, 2020), the city has more than doubled in the last two decades (New York Times, 2012). The population is said to be growing ten times faster than such American cities as New York and Los Angeles; and is already more than the population of thirty-two African countries combined¹⁰. The economy of Lagos is said to be larger than of any West African country, and its importance is perhaps best encapsulated in the saying that "Lagos is to the people of Nigeria, what the head is to the body of an individual."¹¹ Ibadan, the capital of the present Oyo state, has been an administrative centre since colonial times; and was at a time, the largest city in Sub-Saharan Africa (Tade and Aderinto, 2012). Another site in Oyo state is Saki- a border town that has been described as a "traffickers' haven" (Adesina, 2014:171) because it has many entry points for neighbouring countries- especially Togo and Benin- into Nigeria. Lastly, Abeokuta serves as "the major corridor for transportation of goods, services and people" between Lagos and the different parts of Nigeria as well as West Africa¹².

CDW between the two regions, or to compare CDW in the southern parts with any of the aforementioned child-related issues in the northern parts in future research endeavours.

¹⁰ <https://lagosstate.gov.ng/about-lagos/>

¹¹ Ibid

¹² <http://ogunstate.gov.ng/ogun-state/>

I set out to carry out my investigation within the three urban centres, and Saki as a 'trafficking hub', but through snowballing, I also visited three villages around these cities. While all the locations are different in many ways, a common feature in all cases is their nearness to neighbouring West African countries-especially Benin and Togo (see map 2), a factor that is significant in understanding mobility of child domestic workers as I will show in subsequent chapters.

Also, limiting my study to these locations was significant considering the logistics involved in commuting in a big country with limited means of transportation like Nigeria. As earlier stated, the study locations are within reasonable distance to each other. So, I stayed in Ibadan during the fieldwork, and from there, I made trips spanning days and weeks to other locations. I only had to travel outside of the study locations once, for an interview with an NGO which preferred to be interviewed at their head office in Abuja, capital city of Nigeria. Further, although I am a Nigerian, I am more familiar with the geography and culture of the South-West region- for example, I speak the major language (Yoruba)- and it was easier to capitalise on this as 'an insider' in a way that I believed could facilitate the collection of data.

Moreover, I have access to many contacts and potential gatekeepers in these cities. This was significant in gaining access and for putting relevant ethical safeguards in place given that the core participants of my study were child domestic workers. Indeed, before I left the UK for the fieldwork, I had contacted friends, former neighbours, colleagues and classmates, church members, among others, and intimated them about my research interests and sought their advice about ways of going about the project in a methodologically and ethically rigorous manner. Through these formal and informal networks, tentative conversations had also been conducted with community gatekeepers who had expressed a willingness to support

the project. Personal and professional connections with civil servants and government officials were also leveraged for access to prospective participants in government agencies and NGOs of interest to this project.

The above would suggest that I was set for a very smooth experience in the field. However, the fieldwork was not without its challenges as I will show later in this chapter.

3.4. Access and Recruitment of Participants

The differences- in terms of the organization and structure- between individual actors in 'child trafficking' for domestic work and anti-trafficking organizations involved in rescuing children meant that I approached these two categories of participants differently.



Image 1¹³: Children on the road to one of the villages

¹³ All featured pictures, except otherwise stated, were either taken by me or my gatekeeper during the fieldwork. They are reproduced with permission



Image 2: One of the villages

3.4.1. Former or current child domestic workers, employers, intermediaries, and parents

I relied on a mixture of convenient and snowball sampling techniques to collect data from individuals and/or groups that are often dominant in anti-trafficking and anti-child labour discussions- current and former child domestic workers, their parents or guardians, employers (I will discuss why I found the term 'employers' to be problematic in chapter four) of child domestic workers, as well as intermediaries. This follows other studies that have been conducted on CDW (see for example, Jacquemin, 2004; Chandra, 2008).

As much as my reliance on informal networks and contacts produced the desired results in terms of gaining access and trust of participants, I encountered different challenges with adult and young participants. Though the research challenges will be fully discussed under the ethical section, it is important to emphasize here that I met with adult participants in diverse locations and settings including open markets -where some employers of

child domestic workers sell their goods or where some intermediaries have other businesses- (see images 3 and 5), churches, employers' or intermediaries' homes, nearby open or public spaces (see image 9) among others.

With regards to current child domestic workers, I discovered that it was rather practically difficult to meet live-in child domestic workers without their employers' consent as rightly observed by Melanie Jacquemin (2004) in her study. It was also ethically wrong in cases where the employers or adult caretakers doubled as guardians (Jacquemin, 2004: 385-386). So, I sought the consent of the employers in such cases, but this yielded mixed results. Some employers readily gave their consent, while others were reluctant to give me such support. For the latter group, the fact that my gatekeepers were largely people they knew and could trust was significant in giving their consent.

In addition to child domestic workers contacted through employers, others were contacted through their teachers and/or heads of schools. Overall, there were more child domestic workers in the latter category than the former (see appendix F) and the fact that so many were in education raised questions about the dominant views on CDW-schooling nexus in my mind at the very outset of the fieldwork.



Image 3: A market in Abeokuta, where some shops had been demolished to expand the road. Some child domestic workers and their employers were interviewed here.



Image 4: Saki town



Image 5: A Market in Saki where some intermediaries were interviewed. These intermediaries were mostly migrant farmers from neighbouring West African countries sell their goods here as well.

With regards to parents of child domestic workers, it was relatively easy to contact those living in the cities compared to those living in distant rural

areas. I was well aware of the prevalence of rural-urban migration in CDW as established in the literature (see ILO, 2013c for example) and I had planned to trace many of the biological parents of child domestic workers, but given the constraints of time and resources, it was not possible to go beyond the specified study locations. Overall, I restricted myself to the parents who were available within the study sites, and the fact that I covered multiple locations enhanced the richness and diversity of the data that I gathered.



Image 6: A village junction (remnants of sun-dried cassava on the road)



Image 7: The main road leading to one of the villages



Image 8: One of the villages

3.4.2. Government agencies, International organizations and NGOs.

I approached the main child rescue agents (governments, NGOs and international organizations- notably the ILO and UNICEF offices) in Nigeria via emails, telephone calls and visits to their offices. Specifically, I visited the regional offices of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) and NAPTIP (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons) as government agencies tasked with the responsibilities of rescuing 'victims of trafficking'. I was granted access to interview the head of research and programme development unit at the Lagos zonal command of NAPTIP, and with the NIS, I interviewed the head of anti-trafficking unit at the Ibadan area command, and a senior inspector of immigration with more than two decades experience working at Nigerian borders in the study locations.

None of the earlier specified UN agencies in Nigeria responded to my emails and other overtures for information from this study. Given the Nigeria-centric focus of the study, none of the international organisations and NGOs

with interest in child trafficking (such as ASI and Save the Children) were included in this study because none is present in the study locations¹⁴. With regards to local NGOs, I limited my investigation to those with relative international recognition and some sort of partnership with foreign donors or those who adopt mainstream child rescue measures, practices, and policies. Three prominent NGOs in the country were eventually selected.

Two of the three NGOs hold a UN Special Consultative Status, and all three have partnerships with a wide range of UN agencies including IOM, UNDP, and the ILO, the EU as well as other Western donors including UK's DfID (Department for International Development), MacArthur Foundation, *kindermisionwerk* (Germany) among others. They have been involved in campaigns against trafficking as well as child labour, child abuse and other child rights issues. Some of them are also involved in other issues affecting youths and women in Nigeria and are particularly focused on the study areas-described as 'endemic states'.

Overall, I interacted with more than one-hundred people including forty-nine current and eleven former child domestic workers, thirteen employers or adult caretakers, seven parents, eight intermediaries, five adults in the communities, three government officials and five NGO officials (see Appendix F) using the data collection techniques I describe in the next session.

3.5. Research Design

In addition to my ontological and epistemological positions as earlier discussed, recruiting child domestic workers for large-scale quantitative surveys is almost impossible because of the practical difficulties and ethical challenges of studying them in private homes. Although many reports by

¹⁴ In general, it seems the space for prominent international NGOs in the country is constrained by factors such as political instability, insecurity, corruption and so on. These same factors have also partly resulted in the proliferation of local NGOs (See Smith, 2010; Smith, 2012 for example).

international agencies tend to use estimates and statistical inferences, a major drawback of such methods is that the use of closed questionnaires and regression analysis leads to simplistic conclusions without supporting evidence, and do not capture the views and voices of the people they are trying to represent (Howard, 2012b).

For this study, I relied on three major techniques:

3.5.1. Interviews

I relied on interviews because understanding the dynamics around such topics as CDW requires a flexible method, and in this regard, in-depth and semi-structured interviews are appropriate. So, I was careful to allow the conversations to flow naturally in a way that made room for unexpected issues to emerge (Mason, 2002). Second, interviews make it possible to understand contexts (ibid), and in this light, I adopted a 'person-centred' approach, which "enables one to investigate, in a fine-grained way, the complex interrelationships between individuals and their social, material, and symbolic contexts" (Levy and Hollan, 2014:296). Person-centred interviews engage interviewees as informants (or expert witnesses of some sorts) and respondents (objects of study in themselves) and move back and forth between the two (Ibid:300-301).

Using this form of interviews was informed by the fact that I sought to elicit information from various categories of people and settings as mentioned above in order to obtain in-depth understanding of actions and interactions that shape reality (Hesse-Biber, 2017:23), people's "opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings" (May, 2001:120) as well as how intervention measures relate to these realities.

The interviews took two forms: individual (face-to-face and telephone) interviews and group interviews.

Individual interviews

These were by far the commonest with all the participants. I conducted face-to-face interviews with current and former child domestic workers, employers, parents and intermediaries. I also conducted this form of interview with key government and NGO officials- in their offices or within the organizations' premises- including director of programmes, and/or heads of units tasked with their core activities involving children, youth and local communities.

I also had to conduct telephone interviews in some cases where it was practically challenging to arrange face-to-face meetings. It is important to state here that there were some physical challenges that limited the amount of data I was able to gather. I would have loved to interview more parents- especially those from neighbouring West African countries, but it was not possible to make such journeys during the research period. Even where I had the contact numbers of parents living in Nigeria, some of them were too far away from the study locations. At the same time, interviewing them over the phone was not always possible because some parents did not have functional mobile phones, or they could not be reached for some other reasons. In one instance, a child domestic worker told me that there was no power supply in their village, so the mother was only able to receive calls in the evening as she had to charge her phone in the daytime at a local business centre where a generator was available. So, interviewing during the twilight hours was effectively ruled out. Some other child domestic workers did not know or have the contact numbers of their parents. I discuss some other challenges in the next section, but in all, I was able to interview one parent and two former child domestic workers over the telephone.

Group interviews/Focus Group Discussion

This was not part of my initial plan, but it was adopted as a data collection technique in the light of events in some locations. In one of the villages,

while I had planned to talk to an adult and an intermediary, our presence (I was with my gatekeeper and our driver at this time) attracted others who were interested in what was going on, and in no time, it turned to a group discussion. I simply did not have enough time to go over the research aims with everyone in such context. I discuss this in greater detail under the ethical considerations.

Also, in two of the public schools I visited, I had between six to ten child domestic workers to interview, but the only available time was a weekly free period of just about one hour. So, I had to choose between individual sessions that could take weeks or group sessions that could be completed within the available time in these schools. Although I had been sceptical as to whether some of the child domestic workers would be comfortable discussing their backgrounds, or conditions of living in a group, they were all happy with the arrangement. For example, there were instances where they all laughed about, agreed or disagreed on different issues. It was helpful that I arranged the groups based on gender. So, I had one group of boys in a school, and another group of girls in another school. Another consideration in having group discussions in the schools was that I was close to data saturation point at the time I got the permission to meet with the child domestic workers in some schools, and since I had conducted individual interviews in some other schools, I wanted to compare the responses with group sessions. In all, I had three group discussions in a village and two public schools.

Through these group discussions, I was able to listen to the perspectives of key actors and understand values and opinions in a collective context as well as learn from their experiences (Krueger and Casey 2000) to complement the information I got from individual interviews.

One of the limitations of interviews in this context relates to the inability of participants to recollect past events- surrounding children's entry into

domestic work- in a way that can undermine the quality of data (Foddy, 1993; Gobo, 2008). To address this, I asked questions relating not just to participants, but also others that they might know. Also, where participants had difficulties remembering dates, I encouraged them to make references to notable events that happened around that time. Also, I encouraged them to give examples and/or cases that they had witnessed; I compared the responses of children with their parents- where I was able to interview both; and I sought to relate the findings from the cities with the findings from the 'sending' communities.

In almost all the locations, I was with at least one gatekeeper, but I was also alone in some settings due to the impromptu nature of the arrangements. In terms of the form the interviews took, as much as I had some pre-planned questions¹⁵, I allowed the interviews to proceed as the flow permitted in many instances. The questions covered included general background information about the participants, the circumstances leading to engaging in CDW as key actors, their perceptions of CDW, perception of anti-trafficking and anti-CDW campaigns, and in the case of child domestic workers, their future aspirations, among others. I conducted all the interviews personally.

¹⁵ See appendix F



Image 9: In research

3.5.2. Observation

Participant observation is a sine qua non of ethnographic research, but it is rarely the only method used (Musante, 2014). So, for this study, I combined observation with semi-structured interviews. The fact that I divided my time between many sites meant that I did not really live inside any location in a way that a typical ethnographer would have done. However, my repeated visits to some of the locations and generally, being a Nigerian with some prior knowledge of certain aspects of the culture that I was investigating, I was able to gain valuable insights into the lifeworld of the participants.

Besides, as much as a six-month ethnographic study is quite different from the conventional ethnography in Anthropology that is characterised by deep

immersion in a culture over a long period of time, this kind of ethnography- called focused ethnography- compensates for its relatively short time frame with intense data collection (Knoblauch, 2005:2). This form of ethnography has been widely used in studying contemporary society characterised by “pluralisation of life worlds...and increasingly specialised and fragmented activities” (Ibid:1-2).

In this sense, I was interested in various aspects of people’s lives, events and everyday social relations that may be significant in understanding CDW between the ‘sending’ communities and the ‘receiving’ cities. The idea was to get a good grasp of the conditions of living, childhood experiences, children’s lives and daily activities. The observational form in this regard ranged between ‘nonparticipation’ and ‘moderate participation’ (Spradley, 1980) in the study sites. Being part of the community, this way was ‘a mode of being-in-the-world characteristic of researchers’ (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994:249).



Image 10: Children returning from the stream in one of the villages



Image 11: One of the villages



Image 12: Cassava processing in one of the villages

So, in one instance in a village, I observed that there was no school, no electricity, no primary health care facilities and the villagers only had one

well to draw from (see image 12). In my interactions there, I was informed that there was an individual that usually brings a tractor for them to hire for use on the farms, and whoever could not afford to pay for the tractor would have to rely on the labour of his immediate family members. This was hard work for the children, and therefore some of them or their parents may not hesitate to migrate if there is opportunity to live in the city. At other times, I witnessed a negotiation for a new child domestic worker (see boxes 1 and 3), noted how an employer complained about a child domestic worker to an intermediary and the intermediary's proffered solutions, had an off-the-record chat with an intermediary about how a child domestic worker that ran away had put her in trouble in the past on our way from her farm, among others.

Moving between these locations, 'hanging out' and 'conversing' while consciously observing and recording my observation enhanced the quality and interpretation of data that I was able to get through interviews (Musante, 2014). Additionally, some of the issues I observed became significant points for discussions and provided broader context for the rest of my research enterprise (Agar, 1996 in Musante, 2014).

It is important to highlight the tensions linked with some of the images used in this study. I understand that the implications of using images in research are never fully known (O'Connell Davidson, 2008:51) and that images may be received and interpreted differently by different audiences (Pink, 2007; Okyere, 2019:96-97). For example, some may argue that the images used here validate the 'pornography of poverty' argument and the need for 'rescue'. However, such interpretations tend to shift attention away from more fundamental issues affecting vulnerable people and/or causing their marginalisation. So, in order to vividly convey the socio-economic circumstances of some of the participants and to mitigate ethical concerns relating to privacy and anonymity, I was careful to thread a middle

ground by using pictures with angles which did not identify the individuals concerned or with their faces not obvious (Okyere 2019:97). I discuss my own unease regarding their circumstances in greater detail under reflexive and ethical considerations.



Image 13: Parents and children at the well in one of the villages

Box 1: Observation

I had been introduced to the woman in December when I first went to Lagos. She has about three stores selling groceries, toys and other consumables, and has been having domestic workers for more than 10 years. She had not only agreed to be interviewed, but also offered to link me with some of her friends that had child domestic workers. So, I met with her on more than one occasion. During one of our meetings, she introduced me to one of her former child domestic workers (it was February already, and she had previously complained about the challenges of finding a replacement for one of her child domestic workers that went home for Christmas). The former child domestic worker, now married, had brought her 'sister' to her erstwhile employer-without prior notice- with the hope that she would be able to work there because her parents were having difficulties sending her to school.

After the pleasantries and recollections of previous experiences, they got to the business of the day. They discussed her wages and the mode of payment. The sister had hoped to collect some money as her own transport fare and 'down payment' for the girl's services, but the employer explained that since there was no prior discussion, the sister would have to come for the money later. She hesitated initially, but eventually accepted the offer.

The new girl of about 16 years old did not take part in the negotiation other than to answer random questions about herself and her family background. After what seemed like a mini interview cum induction session by her boss, and (further) words of advice by her elder sister, she was ready to start work. So, she was sent to join another girl to arrange some goods and prepare what to eat in the kitchen.

The employer and the elder sister continued talking about different things while waiting for the girls to bring them lunch. The new girl did not have any personal belongings with her, and this was somewhat surprising to me. When I asked her elder sister about this, she merely said that her (new) employer would get her essentials like toiletries and pass on some used clothes to her to wear in the house 'since she does not have anywhere to go'. After the elder sister left, my host explained to me that this was not unusual (as I had been previously told by some employers in Ibadan), and that not paying upfront was her own strategy of guarding against losses- in case the new girl 'misbehaves' or absconds for example.

Extract from Field Notes, 05/02/18

Finally, for comparative purposes and to provide another level of triangulation, secondary documents- including country-specific reports available through international organizations, government agencies, and

the media were collected and analysed using the next method that I employed.

3.5.3. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) stems from critical theory in its emphasis on the role of politics, power, and language in shaping our social worlds (Fairclough, 2003). It is not just an analysis of discourse or texts, or a general commentary on discourse, but a form of systematic and transdisciplinary analysis of texts which aims to show 'relations between discourse and other elements of the social process' (Fairclough, 2010:10). CDA aims 'to establish connections between properties of texts, features of discourse practice (text production, consumption and distribution), and wider sociocultural practice' (Fairclough, 2010:88-89). CDA studies how language is used as part and parcel of specific social practices, which in turn have implications for status, solidarity, power, politics, among others (Gee, 2014:87).

In other words, CDA is a method for studying the 'connections between language, power and ideology'; a means of explaining how a particular ideology may dominate another (Fairclough, 1995:1-2). In this sense:

A primary focus of CDA is on the effect of power relations and inequalities in producing social wrongs, and in particular on discursive aspects of power relations and inequalities; on dialectical relations between discourse and power, and their effects on other relations within the social process and their elements. This includes questions of ideology...that contribute to establishing or sustaining unequal relations of power (Fairclough, 2010:8).

This may be done through 'language context analysis' or 'form-function analysis'. 'Language-context' analysis refers to studying how textual language relates to the wider environment to show how particular discourses are created and sustained; while 'form-function' analysis studies

how different aspects of language (form) such as parts of speech, phrases, and clauses are used to accomplish specific functions (Gee, 2005:54-57).

CDA is done on the premise that words are not just used based on their definitions or general meanings, but also based 'on stories, theories, or models in our minds about what is "normal" or "typical"' (Gee, 2014:88). This explains why although the Pope is unmarried, and the term 'bachelor' is used to describe unmarried men, we do not refer to the Pope as a bachelor. Another example given by Gee is how language can function as a 'gatekeeping device' in a job interview to allow some sorts of people access and deny it to others (Gee, 2014:87). Therefore, CDA is about studying value-laden positions beneath social interactions; it is not just studying what is being said, but what the speaker or writer is trying to do (Gee, 2014).

Since CDA aims to contribute to addressing 'social wrongs' such as inequalities and injustices by analysing their causes and sources as well as how to overcome them (Fairclough, 2010:231), I used it to analyse how stories of exploitation and abuse in child rescue narratives are used to define what is 'normal' childhood and justify intervention measures which represent an injustice to child domestic workers on one hand, and recreates unequal power relations that account for the marginalisation of child domestic workers and/or their parents on the other hand. To paraphrase Gee, I was interested in CDA to illuminate and present evidence of my theoretical approach in a way 'that helps to explain how and why language works the way it does when it is put into action' (Gee, 2014:12) in relation to child rescue narratives and interventions.

Incorporating CDA to my study was crucial because according to Van Leeuwen (2018), we can establish the truth or untruth of how social practices are represented through ethnographic studies (in addition to 'internal critique'- which exposes inconsistencies and incoherencies in any

given text- and 'intertextual' study)- through how texts transform other texts for example- of CDA (p144-146). Thus, I relate the texts of the above stated secondary documents as well as images from child rescue organisations in my study to findings from my study. I give examples of how stories about CDW are told based on what is considered a 'normal' image of childhood which I earlier discussed in my critique of the child rescue discourse as I will show in chapter six.

3.6.Data Recording, Transcription and Analysis

In all cases, I sought the consent of the participants to record the conversation and take notes. I was wary that the participants might feel suspicious or alienated by these actions during the interviews and other interactions. However, I also knew that it would have been impossible for me to grasp all the relevant information without the option of recording them somehow; particularly because some of the interviews were done in Yoruba language. So, to minimise such suspicions, in addition to the initial introductions by my gatekeepers, I carried my student I.D. card with me, and I would often start by explaining that I was a student doing a 'university project'. Participants such as child domestic workers in school, employers or parents and intermediaries with older children or relatives in higher institutions readily understood this, though others needed further explanations.

After establishing my motive, it was easy to justify why I needed to record the session, and then move to the specifics of the research. In all cases, no participant objected to their responses being recorded or reported. I also sought necessary approval to take and use images where appropriate. The audio and textual notes as well as images were kept on my password-protected smartphone and later transferred to my password-protected laptop.

As noted above, most of the conversations were in Yoruba language while others were in Pidgin English and English language. I translated all recordings into English language while transcribing the data. While my command of Yoruba and pidgin English is excellent, I agree with scholars who argue that meaning may get lost in the interpretation process (see Van Nes et al, 2010 for example) – especially because there were instances where participants used local proverbs, metaphors and terminologies -that could not be directly interpreted in English language- to explain their views. In cases like that, I relied on the implied meanings of such words in my analysis and report.

I began the transcription of the data while in the field to be able to better reconcile the audio recordings with my observations and fieldnotes. The data were analysed using thematic content analysis with the aid of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). Specifically, the transcribed data were loaded into the ATLAS.ti 8 software from where I derived both inductive and deductive codes in line with the objectives of the study. Derived codes were later compared with overlapping ones being merged, and subsequently the codes were grouped in relation to the identified themes that addressed the research objectives.

3.7. Reflexivity

Social research involves interaction in a way that the identities (including class, race, gender, nationality) of both the researcher and respondents invariably influence findings (Mullings, 1999). Also, like research in every other field, ethnography is not free from biases- for example, the choice of what social problem to study or where to study it, is in itself biased (Fetterman, 2010:1). However, biases can have both negative and positive implications depending on how they are handled (ibid). Therefore, this section sets out my biases and subjectivities in carrying out this study.

First, having lived-prior to my post-graduate studies in the UK- with a first-hand experience and observation of CDW (and child labour in general) in parts of the region I was investigating, I was motivated to carry out this study based upon the premise that there is more to the child trafficking and child labour discourses than is popularly presented. I had to navigate this aspect of my identity in my interactions with the supposed 'victims' and 'perpetrators' of 'evil'- i.e. child domestic workers, employers, parents and intermediaries- as well as other adults on the one hand, and the 'child saviours' i.e. NGO and government officials, on the other hand.

I presented the objectives of the study with emphasis on the aspects which I thought would be of most interest, relevance, or significance to the various interlocutors. To some, I used the fact that I could speak the indigenous language to position myself as an insider who partly understood their social, cultural and economic context and wanted to hear more about it from their own perspectives. To others, such as government and NGO officials, while I spoke English language, I was like them in the sense that I had expressed an interest in seeking solutions to the problem of child trafficking, child labour and CDW. So, for example, after finding out (from the second employer I interviewed) that some government officials do arrest child domestic workers and their employers in parts of Ibadan in order to collect bribes, I used that as an icebreaker many times in interacting with employers, intermediaries and parents or adults in the villages. But while seeking to interview government or NGO officials, I introduced myself as someone interested in their operations and strategies against child trafficking and CDW. In one instance, an NGO official, after reading the information sheet I had given her, started painting pictures of the 'horror stories' in CDW without even asking her, and this led to a very productive interview session with her.

Second, my familiarity with the research environment meant that while I did not face the same challenges as an outsider- for example, adjusting to the research settings and respondents' culture, and prolonged stay in an unfamiliar terrain- I had to think carefully about my status and how this related to the study. As Norman Blaikie rightly observed: 'conducting research in one's society or in a familiar setting does not necessarily mean research can proceed in a straightforward manner' (Blaikie, 2000:87). Sharing nationality and ethnicity with most of my respondents affected the nature of bond I was able to form with them. This insider status enhanced the richness of the data that I was able to gather in many regards. For example, at the time I got to Nigeria in December 2017, there was widespread publicity¹⁶ against 'modern slavery' because of alleged abusive treatment of migrants in Libyan detention centres. This was supposed to deter intermediaries, employers, and parents from agreeing to take part in the study as they are often held to be complicit in the exploitation of children. However, the fact that I was introduced (and came across) to these actors as 'one of us' or 'someone that understands our situation'- for example, by communicating with them in the same language, sharing knowledge I had about their conditions of living, or sharing stories that I had heard from other key actors- facilitated our interactions.

However, I was also an outsider in many regards. First, some of the participants presumed that I knew things that I did not know about, and some found it absurd that I did not know such. So, for example, an intermediary had to explain movements along specific border communities to me more than three times because he was mentioning names and places

¹⁶ As a 'preventive' measure to the crisis, there was a regular clip on the national TV- NTA (Nigerian Television Authority)-during news hour around this period warning people: 'don't accept to go to Europe through the Sahara Desert because you may be lured into slavery'. Also, many participants stated that they had heard campaigns against child labour, child trafficking and CDW on radio and TV. I address 'awareness campaigns' in chapter six.

I had not heard about hitherto. Indeed, I had to seek some explanations and clarifications from people around and carry out extensive research on the geography of one of the study locations-Saki- while transcribing before I could make sense of some of the information I got.

Furthermore, with child domestic workers, I found out that in some cases, my status as an adult created a social distance between me and them particularly with my first few participants. The fact that the societal expectations around them dictate deference to adults and their supposed superiors as well as being in domestic service- where they are in subordinate position- contributed to this. A related issue here was my status as a male researcher. Indeed, I had been less hopeful that female child domestic workers would talk as freely with me about their experiences as their male counterparts. I discovered, after the first two sessions, that it was helpful to begin each session with some random questions unrelated to their experience as child domestic workers. So, in some cases, after the initial introductions, I capitalized on topics like their birthdays, hobbies, state or country of origin, popular national or regional issues at the time, or the fact that I was a student 'like them' in other cases as precursors to conversations about their lives and experiences as child domestic workers.

Overall, I found, as reported by other researchers, that given the right conditions, even children that are in subordinate position can express themselves (Jacquemin, 2004:386; Chandra, 2008). To demonstrate the level of trust I was able to build with some of the child domestic workers, I was asked questions beyond the recorded interviews on issues such as academics, and life overseas. I also had diverse experiences with them after the research- some have called my mobile number to seek career advice, or to connect me with their parents; some have walked up to me on the streets 'just to greet' me, and one girl wanted to 'report' her madam to me in church some days after I had interviewed her.

Lastly, while I explained that I was a doctoral student at a UK University during my interactions with participants, I was careful not to over-elaborate on this status in the villages especially. This was in order to help minimise the distance and power imbalances between myself and marginalised participants such as children in domestic service and/or parents, who often live in poverty with little or no education. Such cautious approach was also necessary to forestall any expectations of material, financial or other benefits for taking part in the study. In some cases, I had to spend considerable time explaining the research aims to prospective participants prior to the interview sessions. Addressing this was important because in Nigeria, travelling or living abroad is usually seen as a sign of prestige and higher social standing, while being associated with domestic work represents lower social standing.

Despite my best efforts in this regard, I found that some parents, probably feeling ashamed about their poverty or inability to cater for their children, tried to present a different picture from what their wards had told me or what I could see around them. For example, in about two instances where child domestic workers had told me that they were living away from home because the parents did not have enough means to send them to school, the parents presented different accounts that obviously did not add up. One father insisted that the daughter had only gone to live with her teacher's friend '*because the teacher knew her as a good girl*'. But the girl had lived with about four employers. The same man would later explain that his income as a commercial motorcycle rider was not stable, and that he would not mind releasing his other children if he knew anyone that could assist them.

In sum, I placed premium importance on building trust and cooperation with each participant - beyond the insider-outsider distinction (Mullings, 1999:340)- by recognizing the uniqueness of each interaction and adjusting

accordingly, and above all, by not taking everything I was told as face value.

3.8.Ethical Considerations

Research involving children poses many ethical challenges that this section outlines and discusses how I managed them. Foremost among these challenges was the conventional guideline that requires parents or guardians to give consent on behalf of child participants (Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), 2015; British Sociological Association (BSA), 2017). This guideline does not consider contexts where adults are not available to give consent, where parents leave the decision to their wards, or where children have assumed adult roles in their own lives (Okyere, 2017b). This was the situation I had to overcome in the field as in many cases, the children had come from rural areas far away from the cities or outside of the country, and in other cases, it was not feasible to schedule a time when the parents and the children would be available.

I addressed this situation in two ways. First, since adult caretakers or employers doubled as guardians and were supposed to have a duty of care towards the child domestic workers, I sought their consent before talking to the children even when the interviews were to be conducted outside of their premises or in their absence. This was largely positive, but as has been noted in studies adopting a similar approach, child domestic workers might see their consent more as a responsibility towards their adult caretakers than of their own freewill (Jacquemin, 2004; Chandra, 2008). Of equal significance also was the issue of power imbalances characteristic of a typical Nigerian and/or African setting where children are always expected to be obedient to adults. While it was difficult for me to ascertain to what extent these issues probably affected the children, I got responses from child domestic workers that they would not have given if they were concerned about their employers' reactions. An example was a case with a girl in Abeokuta whose guardian had agreed to be interviewed. We had the

interview in the guardian's compound while the guardian was in the living room, yet the girl was honest with me that the workload was too much for her; that she no longer enjoyed the place- compared to when she first came; and she was making efforts to return to her village.

The second way I handled it was that after my session with some child domestic workers, I discovered that many child domestic workers were in school contrary to popular rhetoric (indeed, only ten of the forty-nine current child domestic workers I interacted with were not in school. I discuss this fully in chapter five). So, I approached school principals, headteachers, school counsellors, and class teachers. I found this approach useful in two ways: I was able to get the consent of adults- school authorities and/or teachers- who had the responsibility of care towards the children- at least during school hours; and I was able to get the children to speak freely without fear of being questioned by their adult caretakers or guardians afterwards. Thus, school leaders and teachers assisted in scheduling favourable times such as break periods, free periods, sport times, 'sanitation'¹⁷ periods, or closing times to interact with the children. Unlike another study (Tambo, 2014) which interviewed Nigerian child domestic workers in schools that I am aware of, there were no interruptions by any teacher or educator, and my sessions were held in relatively conducive environments such as counselling rooms, and/or other vacant offices, classrooms within the school.

Further, although I had gained access to the child domestic workers through the adults in their lives as explained above, I allowed the children time to make the decision about the research. In some instances, I deliberately deferred the interviews-even after the children had agreed to be interviewed- for them to carefully consider the decision to participate in the study. This was important because, as pointed out by Boyden and

¹⁷ Free time allocated for cleaning of (public) school premises in some states in Nigeria

Ennew (1997:41), obtaining informed consent “is especially important in research involving children because they are much less able than adults to exercise, or indeed recognise, their right to refuse to participate”. So, throughout my meetings with the children, I was careful to explain the objectives of the study to them; ask them to describe what had been explained to them; give them opportunities to ask questions and/or seek clarifications; and emphasize their rights to participate or decline to participate or ignore any aspects of the interview they might not be comfortable with throughout the research process. Doing so was to ensure that children’s consent was from an informed position.

Another ethical consideration was the safety and security of the participants as well as the researcher. In all cases, I ensured that the interviews were carried out in locations where the respondents felt safe and secured as confirmed by them. With child domestic workers for example, finding a suitable location was also key in deferring my interviews with them as explained above. So, in addition to the premises of their adult caretakers, interviews were arranged in public places such as markets, recreational centres, schools and churches. I met with adult caretakers of child domestic workers in their homes, business places, markets, churches; I had interactions with parents and intermediaries in their homes, on the farms, in open places in the communities among others; I was with NGO and government officials in their offices; and I discussed with former child domestic workers in schools and their business places while I also interviewed two of them over the telephone. To ensure my own safety, in cases where the interviews took place in participants’ homes, I made sure that I went there with at least my contact or gatekeeper to such individuals even if the gatekeeper had to excuse us for the purpose of the interview in some cases.

I was also conscious of the fact that interviewing children in domestic work might cause them emotional harm if they had to recollect issues of violence and abuse against them. Therefore, throughout the interview process, I checked that the children were comfortable with whatever information they were sharing with me. I was careful to reaffirm their rights to discontinue the study or stop the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable or showed any signs of emotional distress. However, I also understand that beyond physical or emotional sufferings that may result from participating in the study, harm may also result in how findings are reported or in 'denial of opportunities as a result of the study' (Okyere, 2019:94). So, in addition to how the images collected during the research have been used in this thesis as earlier discussed, I have been careful not to present a romanticized view of how some of the participants are dealing with the difficult socio-economic conditions around them.

As much as none of the participants manifested any signs of emotional harm during my interactions with them, and I avoided situations that could cause other forms of harm to them as explained above, I personally struggled (and continue to struggle) with the socio-economic conditions and other realities confronting some of the people with whom I interacted during the fieldwork. Indeed, for a while, I could not bring myself to listen to some of the recordings as doing so brought images of the people involved and their conditions of living to my mind in a way that I found emotionally tough to deal with. I discuss some of these cases in detail in chapter four.

Box 2: Research Challenges

My principal gatekeeper had led me to some schools where some of the students were child domestic workers. The premise was that most public schools- especially primary schools- are in such terrible state that only the extremely impoverished attend such. Further, I had interacted with a few child domestic workers that attended such public schools. In this particular public primary school, the headteacher informed me- during my first meeting with her before interacting with child domestic workers in the school- that more than 60 per cent of the students (the total population was about 400 pupils from the enrolment information in her office) were either orphans or not living with their biological parents for various reasons. Among these were child domestic workers. She discussed how the teachers in the school at times try to help the students as I saw students with torn school uniforms, without notebooks or textbooks, and heard how eating three-square meals was a luxury that some could not afford, and how the children that were 'enjoying' the government feeding program had not been fed in school for the past three days. In one instance, the school management discovered that two students (a girl and her brother) had been absent from school for a while, and in the course of their investigation, it was discovered that the mother had been terribly sick with no one to take care of the children or provide for their everyday expenses in school- the father had abandoned them. A group of teachers in the school met with the mother, and afterwards, decided to take up the responsibility of sponsoring their education. The children have been living with one of the teachers since then. At the end of my last meeting in her school, as with some other teachers in other schools, she was literally pleading with me to discuss the plights of some of the children with anyone, group or organization that might be of help to them if I knew them.

(Extract from Field Note, 27/02/18)

In short, while recognizing my own relatively privileged position in relation to those involved in the research, such interactions also underscored my

relative powerlessness in that I could not address their hardships or assist them in similarly meaningful ways beyond empathizing with them. This is one of the issues I have struggled with since completing the fieldwork.

Another ethical issue of relevance to this study was respect and dignity for participants- particularly with child domestic workers and rural dwellers who were less-privileged. So, even when participants were happy for me to take their pictures and to tell about their lives and conditions of living, I was mindful of the ethical implications. I was also careful to address the elderly in line with cultural expectations and to respect the views of all participants regarding what mattered to them from the mundane to the significant. I left the sessions feeling grateful to my participants for sharing invaluable information with me, while some of the participants also derived satisfaction from being able to explain their circumstances, going by their comments after the sessions. Some even offered to 'entertain' me as a 'guest' afterwards, and in one instance, I left a village with a small bag of oranges.

Also, as emphasized to the participants during my fieldwork, I endeavored to ensure their anonymity and the confidentiality of the information they shared with me by coding and securing my transcripts and field notes. Thus, throughout this thesis, I use pseudonyms in reporting findings except in relation to key anti-trafficking actors such as NGO and government officials where I make references to their offices, rather than their persons.

In conclusion, while I had gotten ethical approval from the University, and had familiarized myself with clear procedural guidelines as provided by the University and the local authorities in the study locations prior the commencement of the fieldwork, I was also conscious of the fact that it was not possible to anticipate every ethical challenge that would emerge in the field and that no institutional ethics policy can include all potential ethical issues (Okyere, 2019). Thus, I recognize ethical conduct as a process,

rather than a fixed act (O'Connell Davidson, 2008). So, I was in touch with my supervisors throughout the fieldwork through Skype, email and telephone conversations to discuss events in the field as they unfolded, and I endeavored to act in consonance with the societal, moral and legal expectations of the research setting where issues which were not covered in the ethical guidelines emerged on the field.

3.9.Conclusion

In this chapter, I have endeavored to describe how I set out to achieve the main aims of this study by explaining the rationale behind my chosen methodology and study locations. I also discussed the specifics of the data collection techniques I employed in the field, the challenges I encountered- including ethical considerations surrounding children in research and how I managed these challenges during the fieldwork. In the chapters that follow, I present the findings that the research techniques generated and discuss how they speak to the original study aims.

4- CHOICES, CONSTRAINTS AND COMPLEXITIES IN CDW

4.1.Introduction

CDW has mostly been explained in terms of supply-related push and demand-related pull factors, although most of the explanations have often focused on the former. Given that one of the core objectives of the study is to understand the considerations and factors leading to children's engagement in CDW, this chapter discusses CDW from the perspectives of children, their parents as well as their adult gatekeepers.

The chapter is divided into five parts: in the first section, there is a review of the poverty and associated supply (push) factors in the dominant literature through an examination of why and how children become domestic workers. The second section analyses the link between work and migration decisions and show how what is usually conceptualised as trafficking for domestic work is problematic in many ways. Next, I consider how decisions regarding entry into domestic service are made. After this, there is a discussion of employers or adult caretakers and the demand factors in CDW. The last section links the identified factors to the welfare system in Nigeria.

4.2.Why domestic Work? Perspectives of Children, Parents and Intermediaries

'By far, poverty is the most important factor in pushing children into work' (ILO, 2013:2).

The above statement from the ILO sums up the dominant explanation in relation to why children are engaged in domestic service. The basic tenet of this position is that children are forced into domestic labour as a result of depravity and as part of survival strategies; and that children from poor households are far more likely to become domestic workers than those from

relative affluent homes (Black and Blagbrough, 1999; ILO-IPEC, 2013; Martinage, 2018). In one study of the parents of child domestic workers in Bangladesh for example, most respondents mentioned that their children were in domestic service because of poverty, and if they had sufficient income, their children would not be working (Chodhuary et al, 2013). (See also ILO, 2004a; ILO, 2004c; HRW, 2007b; Munene and Ruto, 2010 among others)

Though the poverty explanation seems infallible in relation to CDW, questions that are often left unanswered include: how exactly does poverty contribute to CDW, or what options are available to the poor? Thus, I sought to investigate how and why children from poor households may be 'pushed' into domestic service with questions bothering on the family backgrounds of child domestic workers, their lives before becoming entering domestic service, and the alternatives available to the poor in a Nigerian or West African context.

Data from the study is consistent with the poverty-related argument. It was common to hear many child domestic workers reporting like Tomi, a 10-year-old girl: *'My parents did not have the means to take care of us'*. Another example here is Chike, a boy of about 17years old, serving under an adult caretaker as an apprentice, and as a domestic worker. He gave a vivid description of his life prior to joining his boss about two years ago:

You know there is what is called 'suffering'. If you saw me when I came! See, I was living in a building with a leaked roof in the village, and sometimes, I had to pray against rainfall because if it rained, I would be soaked on the floor. And there were days I had to beg to eat... I would not see anybody to ask whether I had eaten or not... I was just on my own; I was left alone to survive on my own... (Chike)

Other poverty-related factors often cited in the dominant literature were also evident. Divorce, separation of parents or the death of one of the

parents (or both) was common among child domestic workers- regardless of how they started working. For example, Chike above had lost both parents since early childhood. Similarly, Agnes is a live-in domestic worker from Togo, she did not know her real age, but she recollected that she became a domestic worker in Nigeria about three years ago following her parents' divorce:

'My parents were divorced then; it was around that time that my mum was relocating to Nigeria to be with her new husband. My mum did not know whether to take me along with her, but I ended up with my aunt, and that was why she brought me from Togo (to be a domestic worker in Nigeria) ...' (Agnes)

A similar account was offered by Suliyat, who worked in a canteen with her employer and assisted her at home:

'My father is deceased...Things were difficult as my mother was the only one taking care of us, but afterwards, she was finding it hard to take care of us...'. (Suliyat)

There was however no evidence of other factors that are often correlated with poverty in relation to CDW-large family size and family breakdown. The general argument is usually that families that have more children are not likely to be able to cater for all their basic needs with the result being that some of the children are more likely to be involved in one form of labour or another early in life (ILO, 2004b; HRW, 2007b). While there were current and former child domestic workers who reported having single parents or being from polygamous and/or large families with more than ten children in some cases, I also encountered those from families with just one child or two to three children in many cases. It was therefore difficult to draw a definite conclusion in relation to family size and children's involvement in domestic work in this study especially because some child

domestic workers did not know how many wives their fathers have/had, and some did not know how many siblings they have.

Also, the notion of 'breakdown' is often imagined within the lens of a nuclear family, but in many West African settings, family may mean many interconnected households in a single location or different places, and these networks may be involved in ensuring the welfare of children. Thus, there is no automatic causal link between poverty and family breakdown- and by extension CDW, as Hashim and Thorsen (2011) have also found elsewhere. Indeed, there is evidence from the fieldwork that the large family size in many Nigerian and/or West African countries can be better understood within the context of the support functions they perform- in the absence of formal support systems- as the last section in this chapter will show.

Overall, this study established that for child domestic workers and parents, involvement in domestic service was premised upon several considerations as outlined below:

4.2.1. Sustenance, addressing vulnerabilities and parental burden release

The predominance of poverty and socio-economic deprivation in the sending areas and the lack of state social welfare or poverty alleviation opportunities compel many children to work for basic sustenance and money to pursue life goals. In most cases, working in domestic service was the sole means through which the children accessed decent food, clothing and shelter.

For example, Misi's 'aunt' (as she calls her) did not pay Misi or her parents. Instead, she paid for Misi's education in exchange for the domestic services provided by Misi. While Misi stated that sometimes her 'aunt' would deny

her of 'little things' like sportswear for school, she still preferred living with her to going back to her biological parents' house:

Well, I cannot go back because if I return home, it will be back to suffering; it will be another problem- for the family (Misi)

Her example firstly undermines the notion that children are better off in their own biological homes as it shows that the biological home of itself is not preferred by children in such cases where their basic welfare and developmental needs cannot be met. Misi's case also debunks the notion of irresponsibility often levelled against parents of child domestic workers within the mainstream discourses on child labour, child trafficking and CDW (see Sharma et al, 2001; Save the Children, 2006; HRW, 2006 for example). This notion of irresponsible parents was also reiterated to me by some employers and NGO officials during the interviews. According to one employer for example:

I think it is poverty (that causes CDW) which is also a result of poor family planning or lack of planning on the part of the parents because if they had planned very well, I don't think this issue would come up, but there is no planning. So, they are just giving birth to children, and at the end of the day, they send them out as house helps (Mrs Olaitan).

NGO officials like Alaba and Jane would also explain:

...It (CDW) starts from the parents who need money or who feel that the money they are making cannot take care of their children, so they distribute them into different places... even if you have the wherewithal to take care of your children and you are still not a responsible parent you would still violate the rights of that child. So, the problem starts with the parents... (Alaba)

The primary responsibility of every parent is to protect your child. If you don't do that, the government will do that for you. You cannot be

sending your child to work in another place and call that a bid to survive... (Jane)

To these actors, child domestic workers are rather unfortunate to have parents who did not prioritise their welfare, who cannot protect them and who cannot be trusted to respect the rights of their children. This strategy of blaming the poor is discussed further in chapter 6.

However, in the majority of cases, the parents were themselves unemployed or in precarious and very low-paying jobs- petty trading, subsistence farming, domestic work, commercial motorcycling, security guards- with no safety nets in times of crises (unemployment, job losses or natural disasters). None of those who were interviewed for this research had a regular or reliable source of income and thus lacked the capacity to provide for their children adequately, if at all. They therefore rationalised that it was in the children's best interest to be with families or other responsible adults who could provide them with better life opportunities or social security.

A good example here is Mr Kasali. He was a commercial motorcycle rider, and his wife was a cleaner/messenger in a nursery school. The first of their five children lived as a domestic worker with her teacher's friend. When I asked of his average income, he replied:

It depends! You can't really predict in our line of business. There are days that you make so much and there are days you regret going to work (Mr Kasali)

Another parent, Mrs Oni, was in her mid-40s with five children and an unemployed husband at the time of the research. Two of her children lived away from home as domestic workers, while she worked as a washwoman doing every available job in the neighbourhood. Below is an excerpt of my interview with her:

Peter: So, like how much do you make doing that- maybe weekly or monthly?

Mrs Oni: There are some weeks that I don't get anything. Some other times, I may get NGN#500

Peter: Weekly?

Mrs Oni: Yes, and sometimes, if God does wonders, I could make up to NGN#2,000

So, to Mrs Oni, making NGN#2,000 (about £5) per week meant seeing 'God's wonders'. But Mrs Oni's family situation was not always like this. She explained the family situation better:

*It all started when our house was flooded; we lost everything then. But the church assisted us with accommodation, and some other provisions. My husband also lost his job around that time. So, it was like the end of the world for us... my husband was relatively okay before the incident. In fact, he had a landed property that he had started developing then. But after he lost his job...and the fact that we also lost everything as a result of flooding, things became difficult, so I became a domestic worker... I started doing all sorts of jobs to take care of the family really, but it was so hard because I was not making enough money and I was the only one working. In fact, my husband is still jobless now. Sometimes, we must fast all day because there was nothing to eat. So, it was amid these that my eldest daughter discussed the possibility of finding somewhere to live – a person that could cater for her and send her to school to lessen the burden on me then (**Mrs Oni**).*

Households like Mrs Oni's, where there is only one income earner, are common and are mostly impacted by natural disasters as well as economic downturns and uncertainties that characterise most developing economies like Nigeria. So, while the main discourses tend to stigmatize and blame the poor for their poverty, it is to be noted that some of the causes of poverty are beyond the individuals in some of these societies. For example,

it is well-documented that the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) had debilitating effects on the economy of most African countries, and one of the consequences of this is the expansion of informal employment- including domestic service (Oluwaniyi, 2009; Tsikata, 2009:5-9; Thorsen, 2012:5).

In the case of Nigeria, the reliance of the economy on oil means that the nation remains susceptible to fluctuations in the oil market, and as global oil prices are affected by external factors including international politics, the poorest households are usually the ones most affected by economic downturns. Also, Nigeria as a country has recently come out of economic recession-caused by factors internal and external to the country (Adeniran and Sidiq, 2018), but the effects are still very much present with poor households- which constitute the bulk of the population. Everyday survival is a struggle for more than half of the population, and it is reported that the country is now home to the largest number of people in extreme poverty in the world (The Guardian, 2018; Brookings Institution, 2018; World Bank, 2019).

Similarly, subsistence farming is dominant in many rural African societies, and it has been argued that economic shocks-including the challenges of subsistence farming- contributes to the incidence of child labour (ILO, 2004b). My interactions with many participants showed that the challenges of subsistence agriculture such as low farm yields, poor storage facilities, problems of marketing, inability to access loans, or problems of repayment as a result of fluctuations of prices of agricultural products are significant in explaining CDW. Subsistence farmers depend on manual labour- in one of the villages I visited, a farmer explained that there was only one tractor available for private hire. Indeed, the lack of access to tractors and other mechanised farming implements partly explains why many rural dwellers have large families.

Families with more hands to help till the farm, harvest the crops and contribute to the household in other ways are probably better off than those with fewer hands. However, where parents are unable to raise money for seedlings, or where weather events such as drought have an unexpected shock on the farming season or indeed where individuals are underprepared for these eventualities, even households with one child can struggle to make ends meet and, in their desperation, may send the child out to work. Some parents may do this to raise funds for planting and/or to ensure that the children are taken care of in the '*lean months*'.

The idea of children becoming domestic workers as a result of loans taken by parents can be classified as outright evidence of child exploitation, but my conversation with Sadia, a primary intermediary also provided a more complex understanding of such arrangements.

Case Study: Sadia

Sadia is a middle-age woman, an indigene and resident of Saki. She is a farmer and a trader. Her farmland is in *Onigbongbo*- a village in Saki West local government, and close to the Nigerian border with Benin and Togo. The Togolese are among her neighbours on the farm, as well as the Fulanis, and the Baribas. If some of these people were facing financial difficulties, they do contact farm neighbours like Sadia to assist in placing the children with those she can trust for whom the children can work and earn money. In very extreme financial difficulties- related to problems of subsistence farming earlier highlighted, they may arrange for the children to work for two years (three years is the maximum according to most participants) while they take the money to attend to whatever urgent needs they might have. And if they are better off at the end of one year, they may pay the balance and ask the children to come back to the village, or the children may be sent out for two years while the parents take the salary for the first

year, and ask that the salary for the second year be given to the child at the end of the year.

If they saw that the children were better-off where they have been, they might give out other children in the village. But if there were problems during the year- maybe in terms of payment or the treatment of the children, they would not release the children to her again. While she admitted that there are some 'bad people' that may not treat the children well, she was adamant (as many of the adult participants including former child domestic workers) that these were few compared to the 'good people' that treat the children well. She was critical of the dominant anti-CDW and child rescue strategies, lamenting the insincerity and corruption of politicians and government officials in charge of monitoring movements along the borders. Sadia was emphatic that given the constraints of subsistence farming and rural livelihood, parents send their children out because *'some do not have the means to send them to school and they do not want the children to starve to death or steal; they are majorly doing it to survive'* (**Interview with Sadia**).

Sadia's explanation is supported by historical analysis of pawning- the transfer of persons for loans. Historically, it was not considered morally wrong because on the one hand, it was often as a last resort - when there were no other options for the poor (Oroge, 1985:76; Ubah, 1991:466; Klein and Roberts 1987:25-33; Coe, 2012); and on the other hand, it was considered 'as entrustment rather than direct exchange'(Coe, 2012:305).

Furthermore, children are not even given out for money in some cases, but for better care especially if the parents feel the children would be better off elsewhere. This was reiterated to me in two other locations. In another village, Michael, a farmer from Benue state who was regularly involved in bringing boys and girls to work in private homes and/or on farms in Ibadan from Benue (middle belt Nigeria) until the early 2000s confirmed that the

arrangement was not always about monetary returns for the parents. More tellingly, I met a girl that was handed over for free by her migrant parents in a popular market in Abeokuta. Her parents had been impressed by how another girl (from another family) in the village had been taken care of by her adult caretaker and thus told her to take their daughter too. Although the adult caretaker already had someone with her, they insisted on releasing their daughter without receiving any payment in return (*Interviews with Michael, Morola and Goodness*).

Although the children involved here may be viewed as pawns or 'slaves' in line with the trafficking discourse, there is need to understand the context as coercion may not be involved in many cases (Hashim and Thorsen, 2011). Further, the arrangement reflects a section of the traditional African welfare system which I explain fully in the last section in this chapter. It is in theory no different to children being placed in foster or residential care by the state or through a more formal arrangement. While there is lesser degree of scrutiny in this kind of arrangement, the formal arrangement is not necessarily better. The many cases of historical child sexual and other abuse in care homes, orphanages and other formal alternative childcare settings underscores this point (see IICSE, 2019 for a recent report). However, affected children in the latter case are hardly recommended to be taken away from state care. This shows how the trafficking narrative is guided by the notion of ideal childhood- spent with biological parents or in formal 'sheltered care' at home, rest and play- and a neo-liberal notion of development.

4.2.2. *Helping in Crisis*

The second dominant reason for children's entry into domestic labour is to help solve a family emergency or crisis. The HRW explains that in cases of parental illness and fear of death, children may be sent to relatives, and may in the process become domestic workers (HRW, 2007b). This, according to HRW is how children may be abused and exploited in domestic

service. However, this narrative obfuscates the active roles that children may play in such cases. A counter explanation from my investigation is that rather than CDW being just an effect of crisis, it might also be a way of addressing crisis.

Similar to economic vulnerabilities and shocks, in a crisis situation such as prolonged and debilitating ill-health of parents, and the lack of resources to cater for them, children may work to get funds to cater for their parents, or to cater for themselves while their parents are incapacitated. This is significant in a country like Nigeria where access to quality healthcare is often beyond the reach of the poorest individuals (Hargreaves, 2002; Omoleke and Taleat, 2017). As one employer noted:

A girl was with me before; she had come to work because the mother was sick, and the family didn't have the money to take care of her. So, she was working then to also contribute to the treatment of the mother. They later came to take her away after the mother died (Mrs Adebimpe).

4.2.3. Means of Education

Another dominant reason for children's entry into domestic labour relates to their education. This is contrary to the belief that work and education are mutually exclusive prevalent in child rescue operations. For example, reporting on an ILO project in Madagascar, an official noted:

Parents often tell us that they send their children out to work instead of to school because they're poor. But the message we want to get through is that, in reality, it is because they send their children out to work that they're poor. They're perpetuating a cycle that leaves no space for education or bettering one's position (Martinage, 2018:28).

Similar views to the above have been expressed in relation to CDW in the Philippines (Flores-Oebanda 2004:17-20). However, this account does not

mirror the experiences or realities of most of the children in domestic service with whom I interacted. I provide a detailed discussion of the relationship between CDW and education in the next chapter, but a good example of this situation here is Suliyat.

Case Study: Suliyat

Suliyat is a 17-year-old girl. She is a third child in a family of seven. Her father is deceased, and her mother is currently a groundnut seller. After the death of her father, her mother was the only one taking care of the family, and in no time, she was struggling very hard to do that (she was a caterer before the business crashed). Suliyat is now a live-out child domestic worker in a restaurant and assists her boss at home too. She started working in 2016 after her mother told her that there was no money (transport fare and other miscellaneous expenses) to take to school then. Prior to that time, her elder sister who had completed secondary school was trying to raise money to start her apprenticeship training in tailoring when she found work in the same canteen. So, after a while, Suliyat joined her sister in the same work. The sister left after a year to begin her training after saving some money to support herself, but Suliyat is still with her boss. She admitted that she did not want to return to the work after the first day, but her mother encouraged her to keep going so as to have money for her schooling expenses.

Suliyat is now in senior class one (UK equivalent of year 10). She goes to work (3p.m. to 8p.m) after returning from school during the academic session, while she works full-time (7:30a.m. to 8p.m.) during holidays. She earns NGN#300 and NGN#600¹⁸ per day for half day and full-time respectively, in addition to one or two meals a day- depending on whether she works half or full day. She told me how she was able to pay for her

¹⁸ £1 = NGN#460 at the time of the fieldwork (see <https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/> for most recent rate)

junior school exam (NGN#2800) from her savings from the work, and apart from schooling expenses, she could buy clothes for social functions (as a sign of prestige or 'belonging' in many Nigerian culture), while also saving with a local thrift collector. She insisted that the work was not impacting her academic performance negatively, but she also spoke about the fact that even though she had friends in school, she never discussed what she does with them because *'some will be making jest of me'*.

When I asked her what other options were available to her then, she spoke of being employed as a shop assistant or being an apprentice- which may mean dropping out of school altogether, but she preferred domestic work because of its flexibility with her education. Suliyat would only quit the job if she has (better) support elsewhere, but if not, she sees any opposition to what she does as *'depriving me of some things I do with the money'* **(Interview with Suliyat)**.

Suliyat needs to be rescued according to popular rhetoric but would she be considered a victim if she was out of school because of the inability of her mother to cover her educational expenses? A related question here is what makes eighteen a golden number in relation to work?

Other children in domestic service also discussed what their work meant for their education:

I was living with my mum before. But there was no money, no means of sending me to school. If I were staying with them, there is no way I would be coming to school **(Sewa)**

Well, I could trek over long distances to school before; I trekked a lot to maximize whatever money I had then, but after I started working, I could afford the bus fare... **(Toyin)**

Additionally, in some cases, some children are sent to work in domestic service during the long holidays to make some money to support them in

the (next) academic session and they return to school after resumption. An example of this from my own study is Elizabeth:

*When I was in school, I do visit my sister and her husband in Ibadan for holiday, and it was during the holidays that I was working then... Also, when I wanted to write my (senior) school leaving exam. I asked my parents for money, but they did not have enough money to pay for the fees. So, they advised me to come to Ibadan (to work) during the holidays to complement whatever they had then (**Elizabeth**).*

4.2.4. Individual and familial Investment

Evidence from my study also shows that working in domestic service can be a way of raising funds for investment for the individual and their families. Funds or savings from CDW may be used to pay for apprenticeship and/ start a business after apprenticeship among others:

Case Study: James

James is about 17 years old; he does not know his real age though. He is from a village in Benin, and a live-in domestic worker in Lagos, Nigeria. He was attending school before, but he quit because of his poor academic performance. So, his parents decided that he would be better off as an apprentice, but the father did not have the required money for him to start apprenticeship then. James suggested coming to Lagos to raise money quicker and return home to his father, but the father did not approve of his plans. However, James was unrelenting. So, his father assisted him by discussing with someone that brought him to Nigeria. He was earning NGN#9,000 (about £20) per month which the person was to collect on his behalf, and later send to his father. At the end of the four years when James returned to Benin, he discovered that the intermediary had paid less than what he earned- he only got to know this because his father was keeping a record. They parted with the person, and he returned to Lagos with another

person to work for one more year 'because the (initial) person did not pay the full amount'. He summed up his plans thus:

*Well, there is a bank account where the money is being kept for me. I mean the proceeds from my work this time around is for me to enrol in apprenticeship, but the money from my previous work is in savings. That is what I will use to establish my business at the completion of the apprentice. My dad oversees the account because I was too young to manage the account then **(James)**.*

While it can be argued that James had not done anything concrete with his earnings at the time of the study, Alice's case revealed what earnings from CDW accomplished.

Alice is a 30-year-old former domestic worker and a native of Benin. Her father took her and her sister to Nigeria when they were very young to work. After she worked for about 15 years, she went back home to get married, and came back to live in Nigeria with her husband. She admitted that her father did not think much of their education then, but all her younger siblings are now in school. When asked what her parents did with the money then, she responded:

*Well, they (her parents) collected all the money; they used it to buy a land and later for farming... I have a portion... they plant crops such as cassava, palm oil, maize, beans, and they sell whatever they get for their sustenance, and to take care of those that are schooling... There are many girls in school now **(Alice)**.*

Also, an intermediary described one of the cases she knew about:

For example, there is a young girl that I know very well. She decided to look for work (in domestic service) by herself. So, she was taken to Lagos and she worked there for a year. At the end of the year, she returned home with about NGN#100,000. And she used that to start a

business and later got married. She is doing that business till now (Mrs Edwin).

These examples show that CDW may be helpful to individuals and families in achieving their life goals especially in societies without a formal social support system. If James had not gone to Lagos to work, he would not have been able to raise the money staying at home according to him. This again shows that leaving the biological home does not always mean the child's best interests are not considered by parents. Indeed, what is considered a child's best interest may not be properly understood without considering the context and the available alternatives. The cases also demonstrate the complexities that may be involved in decisions relating to CDW. For example, mainstream argument would claim that Alice's work denied her education, but her work also made it possible for her siblings to be educated.

4.2.5. Meeting social obligations

Motou is a 23-year-old driver in Lagos. He had left Cotonou, Benin for Lagos through one of his brothers after he completed his secondary education when he was between 16 and 17 years old because in his words, '*I didn't have anybody to help me then*'. He was a porter and a domestic worker for NGN#7,000 a month when he first came to Lagos. His employer was also responsible for his feeding and accommodation. He worked there for close to two years before returning to Cotonou. He explained what he did with the money:

You know I had money (savings), but shortly after that, my dad passed away. And myself with my elder brother were the most senior people from my mother's side. So, we had to spend substantially during the burial. So, I literally spent everything when I went home (Motou)

In many African settings, it is usually the responsibilities of the children to give the parents a 'befitting' burial, with the greater burden falling on the

eldest children. Being able to meet these obligations is a sign of success just as failure to do so amounts to shame in many communities (Smith, 2004; CNN (Cable News Network), 2011, 2014; Izunwa, 2016).

Similar to the above, involvement in CDW can also be connected to marriage rites as in the case below:

*... I live with the Kura and Somba people on the farm. So, sometimes, they (the parents) may come to us, and say that they have a girl that is ready for marriage for example, and if the farm yields are low or below their expectations and they have to buy things for her to take to her matrimonial home... they may want such girls to work briefly- maybe in a canteen- and as she is being paid, they would be using the money to buy those items **(Mr Remi)**.*

The above is not new. In a study of CDW in Guinea, HRW explained the migration of young Malian girls to work in domestic service in Guinea and other West African countries to assemble their dowry or to obtain material possessions including kitchen utensils, clothes, jewellery, and so on (HRW, 2007b). Similarly, young girls from rural Benin and Mali have been found to work in urban centres in the countries as well as in other neighbouring West African countries to acquire a trousseau and set up small businesses (Alber, 2011; Lesclingand and Hertrich, 2017).). Yet, to the HRW and other child rescuers, this is a negative thing that should be discouraged; it is not a response to structural inequalities or the existence of opportunities elsewhere, but it is always because of 'peer pressure' or 'peer influencing' that young migrants become 'victims' (HRW, 2007b:34-35; Namuggala, 2015:570).

However, this victimhood narrative differs greatly from how most of the domestic workers and their parents perceive the work. Also, the returns from domestic service as explained in the cases above show the significant positive contributions and/or benefits that individuals derive from it- especially in the absence of viable alternatives for the poor and the

vulnerable. Yet the aim of my study is not to idealise CDW or deny the exploitative tendencies inherent in it, but to offer a contextual account of how individuals navigate the structural constraints and socio-cultural expectations around them. This topic of benefits derivable from CDW is often absent or relegated in child rescue discourses. Instead, CDW is almost always depicted as a result of desperate poverty and reprehensible customs and traditions (See among others Black and Blagbrough, 1999; Sharma, et al, 2001; Flores-Oebanda 2004; UNESCO, 2006; ILO-IPEC, 2013; Adesina, 2014) that people need to be rescued from.

As many of the cases above show, there is a link between migration and work decisions that is worth examining in greater details as the next section will attempt to do.

4.3.CDW as part of the wider migration decisions

In interacting with many people across the study locations- especially in the villages and Saki, my understanding of their perception and decisions around work and migration became more grounded. For example, in Benue state, Nigeria, farming is so common that the state is reputed to be 'Nigeria's food basket'¹⁹, but the Benue people are also popular as domestic workers in the study locations (see Oluwaniyi, 2009 among others). The connection between these is that almost every family has a farm in their hometown, and this makes marketing of their products difficult. Also, the market is not as large as in South-west Nigeria. Thus, some adults migrate to do farm work, and some adolescents and teenagers are involved in domestic service or farm work in big cities like Lagos and Ibadan in the same vein. In some cases, when young boys and girls complete secondary education, they do not have the means to start a business or further their education. So, they may seek to migrate for job opportunities, and

¹⁹ <https://benuestate.gov.ng/>

domestic work may be one of the options taken up by them. In all cases, the central point was that '*there is more money here (in the study location)*' (**Group Interview in a village**).

A former domestic worker, from Benue state, who is now married and settled in Lagos state, re-echoed this claim:

...the more you go out of the village, the more you acquire...Apart from some work... you know the way they pay in the city is different- no one can pay you like that in the village (Ruth).

The above is also significant in the decisions of rural residents around the major cities in South-West Nigeria to send their children to the city. Below is an excerpt of my conversation with a parent who has a child in domestic work and another one in apprenticeship in Ibadan:

Peter: *Okay, let's compare where they are living now to life in the village*

Mrs Idowu: *There is a big difference because life in the village is too hard! She (her daughter in domestic service) does not really have much to do other than to cook and take care of the children. She goes to school, and maybe get back to do her homework. So, there is nothing stressful there. But village life is too hard. They would go to the farm and work, then when they get back to the village, they would still have more to do...life in the village is strenuous!*

In further discussion with her, she made it clear that she would have no problem releasing her other children to live in the city if the opportunity presents itself, and when I asked why she did not want her children to live in the village, she had this to say:

Mrs Idowu: *Even we (as parents) are merely enduring the village- it's because we have no choice because we cannot compare the village with the city... The major problem is money. There is no money to do*

business in the village. That's the major problem...if I had the means to live in the city too, why would I want to continue living in the village?

For these people, rural poverty is not really about lack of food, water or clothing, but about the low quality of life, and the (near) absence of opportunities- that exist in urban centres. So, 'the city' is a land of opportunity-real or imagined, that is better than whatever the experience in the village is. Indeed, for most villages in the country, neglect and underdevelopment are the distinguishing characteristics. In some of the villages that I visited for example, there were no schools, and no infrastructural amenities like electricity.

The foregoing highlights another weakness in the abolitionist discourse- parents not sending their children to school in preference for work. It presupposes that the schools were readily available, but in some villages, this was not the case. While child rescue organizations like the ILO for example rightly identify many domestic workers as rural-urban migrants (ILO, 2013c), they often do not aim their rescue missions at what drives this mobility. Rural-urban (like international) migration is hardly discussed in terms of inequalities (of opportunities) between locations, but in terms of the ignorance, greed and desperation of potential migrants and/or their parents (UNESCO, 2006; Adesina, 2014).

Nevertheless, for many rural children, their dream or fantasy about the city is enhanced through interactions with returnee city dwellers, and they would readily jump at any invitation to live in the city. This is not to be conflated with the idea of ignorant and unsuspecting children and parents being tricked by traffickers as the dominant literature on CDW often explain (see ILO 2004; UNESCO, 2006 for example), but a rational choice in that it is made on the basis of a potential risk versus benefit analysis, valuation of formers child domestic workers and city returnees' testimonies instead of

sheer speculation; as evidenced by my conversation with Victoria, a former domestic worker. She explained:

*During our church camp meetings in the village, people from the city do come and I do observe the way they relate with us, the way they dress, the way they speak English, and all that... there are also people that come to the village during Christmas that would bring gifts for their parents and go about greeting everybody. So, I have always been impressed by that, and I do tell myself that I would be doing that in the future too (**Victoria**).*

So, when an opportunity came through a woman who would be 'taking care' of her and sending her to school in the city in exchange for services such as cooking, cleaning and assisting the woman in ways she was already assisting her parents in the village, she did not hesitate. Even though, it was her parents' and grandparents' decision, she said '*I liked it too; I was looking forward to coming to the city*'. For many children who are used to fairly laborious agricultural and manual labour as part of a normal childhood in rural Nigeria, domestic and other chores in the city are not necessarily regarded as worse alternatives; especially if these chores are being provided in exchange for money, education, skills acquisition and access to other developmental opportunities.

Thus, despite the difficult circumstances surrounding their presence in the city, many of the child domestic workers involved in the study expressed preference for domestic work in the city and wished their parents could also have that opportunity as exemplified by Lydia's response to my question about what could be done to support her parents in the village:

*If anyone can take them (her parents) away from the village... I want them to be living in the city too; I don't like as they are living in the village (**Lydia**)*

The following excerpt from a focus group with boys in domestic service in their school is also fascinating:

Peter: *Now, how do you see where you are living now compared to your parents' homes?*

Uche: *This place (where I live now) is far better than the village because in the village...especially the place you sleep... here, I have a room to myself. Also, in the village, you sleep on the floor, while here, you sleep on the mattress with a pillow. I enjoy myself here too more than the village...*

Thomas: *I prefer this place to the village because you can see nice buildings here. Also, you can make good friends here, you learn how to speak good English here. In terms of food, I eat anything I like here, so there is no difference because I eat what I like in my parent's house too.*

Rilwan: *I prefer this place because the roads are good, and the buildings...everywhere is more beautiful than the village.*

Peter: *No one is preferring their village here?*

John: *We have nice buildings in the village too, but this place is better than the village... (Group interview).*

Moreover, for rural migrants, both young and old, living in the city- regardless of what one is doing there- is a sign of prestige and improved social status-compared to village life. In the same group (above), a 16-year-old boy, who had been a domestic worker for four years got all of us laughing with his input into the conversation on life in the city versus the village:

I would not be happy to return to the village because I have made some friends that I would not want to leave behind here. Also, there is a difference between a village boy and a city boy. Some people see me

as a 'big boy' from the city whenever we visit the village- because we always go for Christmas there or whenever we have any ceremony. So, I don't want to go back there to live... (John, group interview).

4.3.1. The case of 'trafficking' for CDW into Nigeria.

Extending the analysis to movements from outside Nigeria into domestic service, the explanations were similar. It has been established in other studies explaining adolescent migration from neighbouring West African countries such as Benin into Nigeria that there is '*more money*' in Nigeria compared to Benin (Howard, 2012b). This was reiterated to me by many current and former child domestic workers as well as intermediaries, and even government officials at the borders.

Below is an excerpt of my interview with Titus, a 23-year-old Beninese former domestic worker who was training to be a driver in Lagos at the time of the fieldwork. He explained that coming to Nigeria for domestic service is very popular in rural areas along the Nigeria-Benin border (**see Map 2**), and people do it majorly for financial reasons. Probing further, the following ensued:

Peter: *But are there no other jobs that they can do to make money there?*

Titus: *Well, it is not that there are no jobs like that, but you won't easily make money working there.*

Peter: *You won't make money easily like that?*

Titus: *No, you won't.*

Peter: *Why is that so?*

Titus: *No, you won't be able to gather money easily there. That's why people come to Nigeria... They often say that once their children go to Nigeria, they usually come back with money to do whatever they want... (Titus)*

Titus said he had returned to Benin after three years in Lagos, but he did not have much to do, and was eventually 'advised' by his mum to return to Lagos if anyone came to their village to enquire about those interested in domestic work.

When I asked James, who I introduced earlier, how he knew about Nigeria, he responded:

Well, they do say that there are job opportunities here; that people do come here to work and make money. I came here because of the money... (James)

Raymond is an intermediary who frequents Benin, Togo, and Nigeria to buy and sell goods such as rice, petroleum products and other goods. He explained that he assists in placing young boys and girls in domestic work and farm work in Nigeria as part of his travels across the region because there is usually a project for which the children or their families wish to pursue but lack the opportunities in the village to realise these. These include completion of buildings, purchase of motorbikes, raising money for apprenticeships or for business ventures. The term for the arrangements by the brokers between the children, their families and the host may be short-term or long-term (3-5 years)- premised mainly on the need of the child or their family. In relation specifically to CDW, he explained:

Many of them may not want to work in public places... they rather prefer to work in private homes because they know that many educated middle-class families would take care of them very well. Imagine a child that comes here with just two pairs of clothing returning home with about three bags full of expensive clothes, and some for the parents? Would the parents not be happy with such children? They can see that the place is good for the child (Raymond).

Returning from Nigeria with such items as motorbikes, radios, bags of clothes, shoes and 'foreign goods' is seen as a sign of successful migration

experience which enhances one's status in the village or country of origin. This in turn is a major motivating factor for others in the country or region of origin to want to migrate (Castle and Diarra, 2003; Howard, 2017).

Motou, who I introduced earlier in the chapter, goes home regularly now with food items and other goods for his family in Benin. He told me that they see him as '*a big boy*' in the village even though he was a porter and a domestic worker when he first came to Lagos, and a driver now. Cases like these prove that migration- for CDW or other purposes- does not only serve as a pathway to material possession, but also a status-improving and future work-enhancing experience as well as an expression of agency- with those unable to migrate feeling vulnerable (Lesclingand and Hertrich, 2017).

By contrast, in my interactions with city residents-particularly adult caretakers of child domestic workers and government officials monitoring the movement of people along the borders, they repeatedly made comparisons between the migration of Nigerians to Europe and migration to Nigeria from Benin and Togo. One adult caretaker admitted she could not understand why the children who lived with her did not collect their wages directly and asked me about it afterwards, but she paints the picture clearly:

...they (child domestic workers) just come here to work- in search of greener pastures like our people (Nigerians) go abroad for work- and return to their country... (Mrs Aina).

An immigration officer, Samson, provided in-depth account of the dynamics of regional and international mobility. He explained that while they do arrest and send some children back to Benin and Togo, it is common to see children returning to Nigeria to make money through other (informal or illegal) means. The same point was re-echoed to me by the head of anti-

trafficking unit at another command of the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) as well as some NGO officials. Samson noted:

*...Nigeria is like a 'developed country' within the West African sub-region; richer than any West African country (**Samson**).*

Through my interactions with these officials, as well as with residents and intermediaries in Saki, I gained a more nuanced understanding of what 'child trafficking' for domestic work is about. According to these sources, in addition to the relative prosperity or status of Nigeria within the West African sub-region, the movement from Benin to Nigeria is complicated because it is influenced by a wide range of (other) factors including family relations and/or chain migration, porous borders, the dynamics of trade and economic activities along border communities, and the demand in Nigeria-which I will discuss later (**Interviews with Samson and others**).

So far, we have examined CDW from the perspectives of mostly parents and children, I will briefly discuss how decisions regarding children's entry into are made in the next section before turning to the employers' accounts of CDW arrangements.

4.4.Entry into Domestic Service: Who Decides?

The dominant assumption in child rescue narrative is that children are in domestic work because they are forced or tricked into it by their parents or other adults (ILO, 2004b; HRW, 2007b; Blagbrough, 2008a; 2010). The argument goes that 'children obey out of a sense of duty and obligation to the family, or because they are offered no alternative' (ILO, 2004b: 98). Jha (2009:205) similarly asserts that children 'do not work out of choice' and work is, 'above all, a problem for children'. Elsewhere, it has been noted that while experiences of 'house girls' in Uganda are personal, they 'cannot, however, in most cases individually decide either to join or even opt out of domestic work' (Namuggala, 2015: 570). Even where it is acknowledged

that children may personally choose to enter domestic work, their choice is deligitimised with the argument that it is borne of ignorance or that it is 'enforced' by economic necessities (HRW, 2007b), as if adults are not similarly 'forced' to work due to economic necessities.

The narratives of child domestic workers in this study however raised doubts about this largely unquestioned assumption that their entry into domestic work is the outcome of force, trickery, or coercion by adults. It was certainly the case that for some children, parents and guardians were instrumental in the decision making and the children could not disobey their parents' wishes. But even in such cases where children's entry into domestic work followed their parents' or guardians' wishes, they also added that they felt the decision was in their best interests or that their parents wanted the best for them as explained by Temi and Lola:

I came through one of my uncles. He came to the village to take me... since I was not doing anything back home, and all my friends had left the village too... My mother asked me about it, and I was ready to come too... (Temi)

My dad explained that someone needed a child that would be assisting her, and he asked if I was interested, and I agreed (Lola)

In the two cases, the decision was made by the parents who then sought the children's consent. It should be made clear here that while some children said that they could not disobey their parents because they had been taught obedience and deference to adults, others insisted that the parents would not have forced them if they declined.

In other instances, the decision was made by the child who later sought parental consent as exemplified by Deborah and James:

Things were tough for us economically, and I saw that too. So, I wanted them (her parents) to concentrate on my younger ones; I felt leaving

home for somewhere else would lessen their burden... I could see that we were struggling- even to eat was a big problem. So, I sought my mum's permission to start living elsewhere... I felt my own provisions would be out of the way, and they would not have to include me in their worries. Also, I felt it would be a temporary thing; that if things improved, I could always go back home...(Deborah).

...it was not their (his parents') idea. I was the one that suggested it to them. When I saw people coming to Lagos, I wanted to follow them, and make money to start something on my own. My father did not want me to come initially, I was the one that insisted then (James).

This proves that regardless of who made the initial decision, the process was often a collaboration between parents and children. It also shows that that both parties weighed up their personal or family situations and felt that the best way forward was to find opportunities outside the village or their locality.

Indeed, there were other children who were living independently and hence made the decision exclusively by themselves, as exemplified by Chike and Suliyat:

I was suffering in the village before I contacted one of my 'brothers' to assist me in getting somewhere to live and work (Chike)

I did not have any money to take to school then, so I decided to go with my sister (Suliyat)

A former domestic worker also had this to say about how she started working:

I told my step- grandmother...because my mum was not living with us then. She said that it was not right; that I was too young to start working. But I insisted, and she had to let me start...I told her that I could not keep depending on her for feeding and transportation to school because she complained about lack of money at times (Toyin).

This could also be after the decision had been made as in the case below:

Well, I came with my friends who had been coming to Lagos on their own before... my parents were not in support of it initially, but after I returned home, they agreed to it. For example, this time around, I came with the consent of my parent. I came through someone that they know (Aminat).

Most of this chapter have been devoted to understanding CDW from the perspectives of parents and children. Doing so has made it possible to expose many weaknesses and flaws in popular narrative of why children work. Given that the study aims to investigate causal factors in CDW, the next section examines employers' account of CDW.

4.5.CDW from the Perspectives of 'Adult Caretakers'

As earlier noted, the dominant literature on CDW provides ample information on the factors that push children into domestic service. The ILO, UNICEF, ASI, HRW and other child-rescue organizations have produced many reports on CDW and related topics of child trafficking and child labour with many materials discussing the 'push factors', but there is little or no in-depth analysis of the employers' account of CDW (see ILO, 2004b:85,91 for example).

For this reason, I was also interested in why employers engage the services of child domestic workers. I engaged them on questions ranging from their lives before engaging child domestic workers, their considerations as well as the alternatives available to them. I discovered that contrary to the mainstream narrative of malevolence and exploitation used to describe adult caretakers of child domestic workers, there is a large demand for child domestic workers. In other words, there is a labour gap that child domestic workers are used to fill. This became clear to me while interviewing the intermediaries, employers or 'caretakers', adults in the villages as well as

children. Below is an excerpt of a session I had with Sadia, a primary intermediary, who I introduced earlier:

Peter: *Then, are there instances when parents release their children to you, and you don't get any client to give them to?*

Sadia: *No, that's not possible, it does not happen like that. In fact, if we see ten children today, all of them would be absorbed.*

In meeting another primary intermediary, the following ensued:

Peter: *Okay, then what if people call you that they need a child domestic worker?*

Ajike: *Well, it is not up to us; until the parents bring them, we don't have anywhere to get them. For example, someone called me last week requesting a child, but I told them that there was none available!*

Peter: *Okay, then is it possible that or has there ever been a time when the children were available but there were no people to take them?*

Ajike: *Ah! There are always people to employ them; there is no way that children won't have where to go for work.*

This huge demand for child domestic workers as explained by participants could be classified as follows:

4.5.1. Women Dual Burden/ Need for childcare

The most significant demand factor is connected to the limitations in access to childcare and childcare provision in Nigeria; especially for professional working women and families as Mrs Edwin, an adult caretaker and a secondary intermediary explained:

... from our own part, there is a genuine demand for them... imagine a career woman that has children to take care of. It's even worse in a place like Lagos compared to some other places...I got a child domestic worker for a young couple in Lagos because they have two babies (aged two and four), and they didn't have any grandmothers or relatives to

live with them. They could not get the children ready for school around 4a.m. And since, there are people available to do such jobs, why would they not employ them? So, they would usually leave the children with the domestic worker (Mrs Edwin).

Globally, one of the major factors that have contributed to the demand for domestic workers in general is the increasing engagement of women in paid employment and increasing number of female-headed households (Cole and Booth, 2007:34; ILO, 2013c:2). However, as more women are involved in paid employment, their involvement in domestic duties including childcare have not reduced considerably. This is made worse by patrilineal traditions in some countries (like Nigeria), where men do not always share domestic duties (Gregson and Lowe, 1994 cited in Cox, 2000:242; Cox 2006); where there is weak maternity leave policy and generally, absence of support from the state for childcare. The Nigeria state has recently increased the maternity leave for women to four months, but there is still no official paternity leave in the country (Vanguard, 2018; Punch Newspaper, 2018). Hence, a pressing need for childcare support is created when maternity leave ends, and the mother must go back to work or risk being unpaid or worse still losing her job.

Additionally, Nigeria's economic downturn and high unemployment rates in the country do not encourage working women to take time completely off work, even during maternity leave in some cases. Hence, a childcare provision deficit coupled with perceived benefits of employing children over adults (discussed later) is a major contributory factor for CDW:

I got the first girl when I had my first child - about 12 years ago... I was working in the corporate world then, and we were only given two months for maternity leave. So, the child was too young to be taken to a day-care centre. So, I had to employ a girl that would be assisting me... (Mrs Aina)

Immediately, I had my first child, my mother went to the village to bring somebody (a child of one of my cousins) ... I am a working mother, I am a nurse, and my husband was a soldier. He is deceased now, but we were not living together. So, I needed somebody...like when I had twins and my mother-in-law could not stay with me, the girl had to go to the village to bring another girl of her age group. So, they were two living with me... (Mrs Williams).

This finding on the need to combine work commitment-particularly career-structured jobs- with domestic responsibilities by working women in their domestic roles was also reported by Tade and Aderinto (2012) in their study of the demand factors for domestic workers in Ibadan, Nigeria. The authors reported that about sixty-four per cent of employers had hired 'adolescent domestic servants' to assist with house chores, and twenty-four per cent had done so to assist in childcare (p533). Similar findings were reported among employers of children in domestic work in Tanzania (Klocker, 2014).

4.5.2. Elderly care and/or companionship

The second key finding in relation to the demand for child domestic workers was elderly care. According to one employer:

I am over 60 years... I don't have anybody living with me. My children are grown up and have left home; they have gone in search of greener pastures and I cannot do all the chores alone. So, I had to look for someone to help (Mrs Olaitan)

While childcare support and/or the need to combine work commitments with domestic responsibilities was the major demand factor on the part of younger families, the need for companionship was the major factor for the elderly. As one child domestic worker described his adult caretaker:

'...her children are all adults, and they are abroad. So, I am staying with her to take care of her' (Thomas, group 3)

This is like the case of Mrs Adeyemi, a 76-year-old grandmother, with whom I had a very fascinating interview session. All her children are away in the US. She has been having child domestic workers for more than 15 years, and she explained how it started and her experience. It is lengthy, but it captures the point perfectly well:

... I was alone; I needed someone to stay with me, anything can happen because of my age. And apart from my age, you know it is not easy being alone. That's the main reason... to help me in the kitchen because I can't bend down, to run errands for me, I need someone to wash my clothes, clean the toilets...I can't do all these again. I need someone to be with me. If I need to grind pepper for example, I cannot go by myself. I have to send her. So, I need somebody...the children are grown-up, they have to get married and start their own lives. And the children (her biological children) are the ones taking care of the house helps that we have anyways...

She continues:

*... Anything can happen to anybody! I can fall sick, I have to call him or her, then they will look for someone around to help... Like two years ago, 'I went off'. The girl that was with me then came to my room to wake me up, and she noticed that I was asking some strange questions, she was surprised and started crying. She just went to call our neighbour- nobody told her really, but she just noticed that something strange was happening!... I was hallucinating really...When I got to the hospital, they said that it was the effects of diabetes and blood pressure. So, the doctors tested me, and discovered that my blood was too low. It was 25 instead of 70-80, it was very low. They gave me coke and that made the blood level to shoot up! It went to about 110... You know if the girl had not been around, that would have been the end of my life! **(Mrs Adeyemi)***

Also, an intermediary notes:

*You see there is support for the elderly in the Western world. The government takes care of the elderly there... They also have carers for some people... But here, who will do that? So, if people have elderly parents that they cannot support themselves, the option is to get a child domestic worker for them **(Mrs Edwin)**.*

So, a pressing need for elderly care and support exists when the elderly cannot live with their adult children for whatever reasons, and this need is often filled by looking for other children to cater for their needs. This finding is also consistent with Tade and Aderinto (2012)'s study about the need for companionship for the elderly being a demand factor for CDW in Ibadan. This is significant in the absence of a formal care system as the last section of this chapter will show.

4.5.3. Physical impairment or limitation

Physical impairment such as blindness- especially among the elderly was also a contributing factor for the demand for CDW. The elderly do require care, but those with physical impairments or disabilities often need someone around them all the time. This was explained in-depth to me by an adult woman, who had a blind mother that she could not live with due to work and family commitments. She opted for a young girl that could be available anytime- especially because of deficiencies in terms of infrastructures and/or technological support for the disabled **(Interview with Mrs Olalere)**.

Another employer, a retired elderly woman with a 15-year-old male domestic worker, explained that she had never had a live-in domestic worker before but had to do so when the husband became sick:

...my husband has been terribly sick. He became so sick that his sight was affected. So, when he could no longer see, we had to get him a boy that would be assisting him because it was becoming too challenging for me to combine that with house chores since it was just both of us... the idea was for him to be of help to my husband. And we are talking

about a man that has lost his sight and strength in many ways. So, it would not have been proper to get a lady in that sense. And for the same reason, it would not have been possible to get an adult, who may not be available for as long as we want him, as he may not also be available to be living with us (Mrs Junaid).

4.5.4. Malevolence, Benevolence or what?

Although, all the above show that there is a genuine demand for domestic workers, they do not account for why children are preferred. In asking specifically about why employers prefer or choose children, several considerations were put forward. Many of them reported that children were preferred because they could always be available compared to adults who might have their own family issues to handle as well. For example, Mrs Olalere (above) noted that she enrolled the child domestic worker living with her parents in a school, but she later had to take the girl to live with her because the parents felt the girl was not always available to take care of the blind woman (**Interview with Mrs Olalere**).

In another instance, a woman who operated a food canteen and had child domestic workers living with her explained:

... I have children that do go to shop early in the morning to open the shop and start preparing for the day's job...adults cannot do that type of work...if they have children for example, they cannot leave their children and families to wake up early to come to work like 6:30 or 7:00 a.m. They will tell you that they have to take care of their families first... the children are more useful and readily available than adults (Mrs Olusola)

The above also relates to the issue of power relations in employers' considerations. Some commented that it is always easier to correct younger people than adults. When asked why she would not take adults if they were available as domestic workers, one participant answered: 'do you want me

to take somebody that could slap me if I tried to tell them what to do or correct them?’ (Mrs Balikis).

Although, the above suggests that employers are primarily in the position to take advantage of the poverty or misery of others, this is not always the case- particularly when the recruitment means, and terms of engagement are considered as I will explain in detail in the next section. In some cases, child domestic workers and their parents as well as intermediaries and even government or NGO officials in some cases view the arrangement as a symbiotic relationship:

There was a boy that was in Junior Secondary Two before, but he was struggling to make ends meet; he could not even buy basic things like notebooks and stationeries at school. So, the school principal, who was my friend called me when she noticed that I did not have anybody working for me then. So, she informed me that the parents did not mind their child living and working for me while I sponsor his education. So, I agreed, the parents brought him, and he went to school through me. The parent came to take him after his education...so, it was a win-win situation (Mrs Edwin)

In a group discussion, a girl explained what happened as they were struggling to make ends meet and she was always sent out of school for non-payment of fees:

...Then, our church member told my dad that she knew someone that could help me... that was how I got to that place (Salome)

For Chike, it was also about looking for somewhere to live (away from the village):

I was suffering in the village before I contacted one of my 'brothers' to assist me in getting somewhere to live and work (Chike)

And here was Alice's account:

Well, it was our father that brought us (to Nigeria) ... he spoke with grandma (her former employer)- they had not met before, but he just approached her that he was looking for where his children would be staying. And fortunately, grandma was also looking for domestic workers then, so that was how we started living with them (Alice).

This reciprocal arrangement in CDW is consistent with the literature on the expansion of domestic work as a response to socio-economic and structural inequalities in West Africa (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1997:115). I explain this in detail in relation to CDW in the next section.

4.6. Formal versus Informal Support System

Beyond the (individual) demand or supply factors are two interrelated factors that contribute to CDW in the Nigerian context. Poverty, low farm yields, inability to access or repay loans, or the problem of marketing agricultural products are usually classified as push or supply factors. However, it is also a fact that not all children from families in such conditions enter domestic service. This thesis thus contends that the absence of a formal social welfare or support system for families in these conditions is the key contributing factor here.

The absence of state sponsored welfare system to cater for impoverished or crises-affected families, child-care, elderly care, support for people with disabilities and other formal welfare provisions cannot thus be overlooked in these discussions. Indeed, many see the system of child domestic work as a response to the lack of state sponsored child welfare opportunities, since employers or adult caretakers step in where the state has failed. As one elderly woman explained:

You see, in Nigeria we believe in family support... these children living with elderly people is a form of family support too (Mrs Williams)

Thus, both demand and supply factors are predicated upon the lack of adequate state welfare provisions and the reliance on informal systems of care and welfare. In times of socio-economic crises, natural disasters, or desire for opportunities where there are none readily available, the norm for most Nigerians is to seek help from friends, neighbours, extended family members and networks such as intermediaries and others upon which the system of CDW rests (Jones et al, 2011; World Bank, 2019:19). Even abolitionists like Kevin Bales agreed that kinship ties are significant in overcoming crises in the absence of formal support system (Bales, 1999:13). Yet, they would rather argue that children should not be working! An adult in one session captured the local view succinctly:

You see, there is nothing like government support in Nigeria. There are many people that are sick, but the sickness is not really physical, but financial... There is no government to turn to ...each person is left to survive on their own... (Mrs Edwin)

The relationship between domestic work- and by extension CDW- and state welfare support has also been noted by scholars such as Anderson (2000). Additionally, in Nordic countries with comprehensive welfare provision (covering tasks that domestic workers do), it is uncommon for private households to employ domestic workers. The need for and number of domestic workers is very low whereas the opposite has been found for countries where expenditure on social welfare is relatively small or minimal (OHCHR, n.d.:9-10).

So, it is the absence of a well-developed formal care sector and limited or non-existent state welfare support for the poor and the vulnerable, and not just the poverty of the parents or the need of the employers or adult caretakers that creates a market for child domestic work in Nigeria. In this regard, the idea of an 'organized, closely-knit trafficking network' or a 'trafficker' recruiting unsuspecting children or deceiving their parents (see

Blagbrough, 2010:87 for example) as the major cause of CDW is also a myth. A good example here is fosterage as a form of informal support system. Writing in the 1980s, Isiugo-Abanihe noted:

Fostering of children for domestic tasks may have taken on a new dimension in present- day urban areas of West Africa, where many working families take in children as domestic servants, maids, and baby tenders in exchange for their maintenance, training, and token wages. Most "housemaids" in the urban homes, however, are not considered fostered because of their fairly advanced age and experience. On the other hand, children sent away young, but who remain to provide these services as they mature, can be considered fostered at least while still young (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985:58)

Mainstream discourses on child trafficking have sought to link the fosterage system with trafficking and exploitation of children (See among others ILO, 2004b; WHO, 2011; ILO-IPEC, 2013). However, this linkage is quite spurious and shows a lack of understanding of this virtuous traditional childcare and child welfare system. This became evident to me when I sought to understand not just whom the child domestic workers were living with, but also how they started living away from home. While living with 'uncles', 'aunts', grandmas, and other extended family members was recorded, there were also many that became domestic workers through these extended family members as well as through non-relatives such as parents' customers and friends, grandparents' friends, or neighbours.

I came through my aunt- she was a tenant in my madam's parents' house, and became close with them... (Jacinta)

There was a woman that was close to my dad- she was his customer, and close to the person I am living with. So, the woman told my dad's customer that she needed a house help, she informed my dad, and my dad took me to her (Janet)

Similarly, for employers, recruitment was through a friend, a colleague, a neighbour, a relative, a church member, a Christian missionary, a client or customer, a person from their hometown or village or family compound, landlords or tenants- and almost through every imaginable form of human relationship. This is in line with other studies on the nature and role of intermediaries in domestic workers arrangement or 'trafficking' networks (see Sommerfelt, 2001; Vance, 2011; Fudge and Hobden, 2018).

According to Mrs Adeyemi:

...the first one (child domestic worker) I had was through my former driver. She was from the same village as my former driver (Mrs Adeyemi)

Dofi is an intermediary that lives in Ibadan, but she is from Togo. She offered an even more intriguing account of how CDW arrangement is reliant on informal relationships where the formal channel of support is non-existent or weak:

... as we are talking now, someone may call me in the evening that they have a child or children that can work. At times, immigration officers also contact us. My husband is the president of our association (Togolese Association in one of the study locations), so they do contact him... they do contact us if they see children that ran away from home or that are just wandering about or having problems in Nigeria...but if there is no money to take such children back home, they may stay back to make some money. So, for example, this is February, we may ask such individuals to work till December to make some money. Such children may follow others that are going home around December (Dofi)

This diversity also reflects in mitigating against the potential risks associated with CDW (and accounts for my reservations about the use of

the term 'employers'²⁰. The idea of 'employers' suggests that CDW arrangement always involves monetary rewards or some form of obvious payment and a clear-cut labour relation (which is not the case in many regards). On the part of some adult caretakers for example, having a relative- whether close or distant- or someone through a trusted individual (for example through any form of relationship as explained above) is a way of guarding against any loss or negative effects of CDW. For example, when asked what she preferred about having child domestic workers, one woman responded:

Well, the only thing there is that they are (distant) family members or people that can be traced. That is significant because of the many things that we hear, so I don't have to bother about a stranger running away with my children... (Mrs Balikis)

In my sessions with adults including parents and intermediaries, it was also made clear to me that children are released to them based on trust. In general, as much as informal support system is prone to abuse, such relations are usually governed by their own norms, rules and dynamics beyond state interference (Bremar, 1996:186; see also Bales, 1999:13). In relation to apprenticeship among the *Igbos* for example, the boys serve the masters for a few years (depending on age, maturity, and other factors), after which the masters will 'settle' them. To guard against exploitation, the arrangement is usually with families and individuals that are known and trusted in their villages or family compounds. Although written documents are not involved, the interests of all parties are catered for through such arrangements. If a master fails to settle a boy for example

²⁰ I use the term 'adult caretakers' (or simply 'caretakers') henceforth to describe an adult person that engages the services of a child domestic worker as it better depicts the CDW arrangement in this study. However, I retain the term 'employers' when making references to dominant narratives or existing studies on the subject. The child domestic workers in the study also referred to the persons they are living with as 'grandmas', 'aunties', 'madams', or 'master' (in case of boys in apprenticeship). I provide additional comments or explanations where these terms are used by participants in this study.

without any cogent and acceptable reason, their local task force group may seal the boss's shop or suspend him from their association (***Interview with Mr Silas***).

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to situate CDW beyond the poverty-related supply argument by elaborating on the perceptions of and decisions around the arrangement by parents, children, and adult caretakers, and describing the socio- cultural, political, and economic context within which CDW exists in South- West Nigeria. Drawing on data gathered from key actors, I have argued that the account of CDW from the adult caretakers is as important as its perception by child domestic workers and their parents, and the two explanations are predicated upon a dependence on an informal support system- one that thrives in the absence of a state welfare and formal care systems. Rather than isolating (and problematising) CDW, what has emerged from the chapter is a more nuanced and detailed picture that challenges some of the assumptions in the dominant literature on the reasons for CDW. The next chapter reviews the dominant account on the working and living conditions of child domestic workers with evidence from my fieldwork.

5- LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CHILD DOMESTIC WORKERS

5.1.Introduction

This thesis explores the representation, policy discourse and reality of CDW using the views of children, parents, intermediaries, and other key actors involved in this work arrangement. This chapter sheds light on the experiences and lifeworlds of child domestic workers, an issue which is at the core of this doctoral research. The findings presented by this section question the victimhood narrative that characterises the mainstream account of CDW. The chapter is structured as follows: in the first section, there is a review of the living conditions of child domestic workers against the dominant accounts in the abolitionist literature. Next, I focus on the relationship between education and CDW. After this, I discuss child domestic workers' perception of their work and their caretakers before I turn to how child domestic workers deal with exploitative conditions.

5.2.Living Conditions of child domestic workers

In discussing the exploitation of children in domestic service and why CDW is one of the worst forms of child labour, the hours of work vis-à-vis workload, hours of sleep, remuneration, physical and emotional abuse are some of the issues often discussed (ILO, 2004b; HRW, 2007b; Blagbrough 2010). This section examines some of the claims in the dominant literature in relation to findings from my own study.

5.2.1. *Hours of Work and Sleep*

The idea of working 'long and unpredictable hours' is a well-rehearsed issue in domestic work generally, and it has been argued that this is true of child domestic workers as well. For example, the ILO holds that 'children, particularly girls are often exposed to cruel treatment, forced to work

excessive hours, and prohibited from attending school... Children are constantly on call and deprived of sleep' (ILO, 2004b:60).

In contrast to the sweeping or totalising assertion that all child domestic workers are subjected to such maltreatment, this research found great diversity in CDW arrangement, and in the experience of child domestic workers. One of these is the fact that the type of households or families with which the child domestic workers were living determined the nature of work, rest, and overall treatment they experienced. For instance, those living with elderly people (retirees or pensioners) reported having less workload- in some cases, working less than they were at home or before becoming domestic workers. Basirat related her experience:

...In the first place I lived, I did all the chores...it was hard.... In the second place, it was not so busy, and the woman was very nice. I didn't do much apart from washing clothes and plates, and there was water. In this present place, I am far more comfortable because we are just two at home, all her children are grown- up...they just come home once in a while... (Basirat)

Aminat, who also lived with an elderly woman stated:

I like the place because the workload is light (Aminat)

On the other hand, those living with younger, working families- especially single mothers or families with infants, or with 'absentee husbands'- tended to have heavier workloads. An example here is Tolu, who lived with a distant 'relative' in Abeokuta:

... they mentioned that I would be taking care of her children, and I would be doing house chores... Initially, I was doing just those tasks, but ... now, I cook, and do everything in the house, I cater for the children too... (Tolu)

Although she liked the facilities in her adult caretaker's place (for example, there is a washing machine in the house) and her 'aunt' would not allow her to starve according to her, Tolu would not mind returning to her parents *'because the workload will be reduced; I will be free from the stress of living here'*.

Also, the presence or absence of water as well as labour-saving devices mattered greatly to the workload of child domestic workers. Fetching water is usually one of the 'heavy tasks' in households without tap or flowing water in many African homes. Hence, child domestic workers reported having less to do where there was water supply in the house, or where the adult caretakers had washing machines. As confirmed by Garnier et al (2003)'s study of Senegalese adolescent girls, better living conditions for child domestic workers correspond with better socio-economic environment of the employer (see also Tade and Aderinto, 2012). So, for example, Lydia, who I introduced in chapter four told me she *'does not have much to do'*, because her adult caretaker has a washing machine, a private borehole to supply water to the house, two generators to power the borehole, fridges and other electrical gadgets in the house which minimised the need for manual labour. By contrast, Ali, a former child domestic worker, confessed that he found his time as a domestic worker exhausting as it mainly involved *'fetching water for people, and cleaning their homes'*. He explained further:

...sometimes, we could go and fetch water for people as early as 6a.m., and we might not finish till 8a.m. so, imagine waking up as early as 5:30a.m. to be on time to fetch water, and still being late to school (Ali)

Such experiences also had a knock-on impact on child domestic workers' hours of work, time for rest, recreation, and other activities. Many child domestic workers reported being out of bed as early as 4a.m or 5a.m. and going to bed as late as 12midnight or 1a.m., as shown in this focus group discussion extract:

Uche: ...I am up by 5a.m...I go to bed like 8:30/9p.m.

Temi: ...I am up latest by 4:30a.m... but I wake up by 5/5:30a.m. on Saturdays...I go to bed like 10/11p.m.

Rilwan: ...Like 6a.m...I go to bed around 9p.m.

John: I usually get out of bed by 5a.m... but I don't sweep the floor until I return from school. I can go to bed any time after dinner

(Interview, Group3)

The literature on overseas or migrant domestic workers in Western countries for example confirm similar issues (see Anderson, 2000; Cox 2006; HRW, 2007a; Bourdillon et al, 2010:155 for example). So, it is questionable whether maltreatment happens just because children are involved or whether this is a wider problem in the domestic work sector, which requires more attention to regulation and the contexts in which the work is done. For instance, does the fact that many countries have refused to ratify the ILO convention on domestic workers rights or the fact that the application of the convention remains 'a colossal challenge' in countries that have ratified it (ILO, 2016b) point to wider issues that require attention? (See Olayiwola, 2019b).

5.2.2. Remuneration in CDW

Another important issue which the research examined was remuneration. It is generally held that remuneration for CDW may be in cash or in kind, but what is often missing in the literature is the variations in (and the factors determining) these arrangements. On this subject, this study found that the origin or place of migration is one of such factors. Child domestic workers from urban centres and in some cases rural areas within the country typically received remuneration in-kind, such as feeding, clothing, shelter, as well as education and/or apprenticeship training. These child domestic workers also tended to be 'live-out' workers; those who did not live in the homes of those for whom they worked.

By contrast, children from neighbouring West African states, and a few from rural areas, mainly received financial remuneration. In very few cases, payment was made upfront - maybe because of pressing needs as discussed in chapter four. However, payment was more commonly made monthly, quarterly, or yearly directly by the child domestic workers, their parents, or the intermediaries. The main point here is that contrary to the popular claim that in most cases child domestic workers do not receive their payments directly or have no idea about how much they are paid (see Oluwaniyi, 2009; Blagbrough 2010 and Adesina, 2014:174 among others), those who participated in this study were central to the receipt of money or kind-payment for their work.

Also, the age and experience of the child impinged on whether they received their financial payment directly or whether it was given to their parents or a third party on their behalf. Older domestic workers and/or returning migrants were more likely to be paid directly or insist on being paid directly relative to younger child domestic workers and/or first-time migrants who were sometimes uncertain of how to save the money or even safeguard it while they were living away from home as Martha indicated:

... it was my sister that was collecting the money because I couldn't keep the money...She would come to collect the money for me every month, and she was keeping the money for me in her bank account...because I was really young, and I couldn't keep the money myself. It was after I finished the work that I collected the money and I travelled home (Martha)

This system was not without problems, however. Some relatives misused their children's or siblings' money instead of safeguarding it for them as intended. This was evident in the account of an adult caretaker on the experience of one of her former child domestic workers:

'...there was a girl that collected her salary directly. In her own case, she worked for a year before and when she got to their village, they did not treat her well (she was not adequately paid by the 'brother' who acted as the intermediary). So, when they brought her the following year, she did not want the brother to be collecting her salary. That led to a strong disagreement between the girl and her brother. So, when the brother came to forcefully take her back to the village, she ran away. She later came back to work and told me to keep all her salaries till the end of the year. So, she collected the money in bulk at the end of the year when she was leaving (Mrs Olusola)

Alber (2011)'s study of child domestic workers in Benin as well as Thorsen (2014)'s study of adolescent migration in Burkina Faso corroborate this. As child domestic workers or adolescent migrants working in other sectors in the urban centres become older and learn how the system operates, they are able to manage their earnings directly.

In addition to experience, the age of child domestic workers as well as the cities where they are working may also influence the amount received as salaries. This is because of the belief that younger children may be physically limited or too weak to handle some tasks, and the fact that Lagos for example is the most economically vibrant city in Nigeria as well as in West Africa as explained in chapter three. So, for example, some adult caretakers paid about NGN#5000 per month for 10-12 years old in Abeokuta, while the same age group earned about NGN#10,000 in Lagos; 15-to-16-year olds may earn between NGN#7500 to NGN#10000 in Ibadan, but the same group could earn NGN#15,000 or more per month in Lagos.

The variations in payments could also relate primarily to dynamics of demand and supply. As we saw in chapter four, there may be more demand for child domestic workers than supply in some cases. This results in higher payment for CDW. By contrast, if the intermediaries arbitrarily set the

salaries and there was no one willing to offer the amount, the salaries would be reviewed downward. There were also instances where parents or child domestic workers would demand a certain amount- based on the knowledge of the prevailing rate from their interactions with peers or kin group (*Interviews with Sadia, Michael and Mrs Edwin*).

Case Study: Aminat

Another example of the variations in payment arrangements here would include child domestic workers like Aminat. Aminat did not know her age, how much she earned or the exchange rate, but the intermediary that brought her to Lagos from Benin would give her the wages at the end of the year when they are about to return home, which she hands over to her parents for savings. She was confident that the man would never cheat her because they are from the same village and the man goes home every year. To her, if the man had been cheating people all along, people would not be following him every now and then (*Interview with Aminat*). In other words, people would not trust him, and he would have been out of business as an intermediary if he had been deceiving people all along.

Her conviction may seem uninformed, but this again shows the trust of individuals in an informal support system as explained in the previous chapter. In the villages and in my interactions with intermediaries, a recurring issue was a form of control mechanism that exists to mitigate against extreme exploitation. One of such mechanisms is the involvement of parents and the choice of migration through 'trusted' or 'respected' individuals in the villages. Camacho (1999) confirms that entering domestic service through a family or community member is one of the ways of minimising risks and enhancing feelings of safety and security.

Thus, extreme exploitation mostly occurs when or where such mechanisms are weak or absent. For example, I interacted with very few child domestic workers like Agnes, who did not know how much they were being paid and

did not receive any payment directly. Talking about her aunt that brought her from Togo, Agnes said:

Imagine I do everything (work)... yet I cannot access my own salaries... (Agnes)

Agnes' case was arguably one of trafficking in the sense that the aunt had not allowed her to go to school or access her earnings. But according to her, she would also need another relative to escape and she was making plans to do so. I elaborate on the complexities of intermediary arrangement in chapter six, but the main point here is how informal channels, with arguably less scrutiny, are still trusted as control mechanisms even in cases of abuse and exploitation.

Also, an avenue for possible exploitation in payment was explained by the intermediaries as well as parents and other adults in the villages. According to them, some intermediaries and parents could agree on annual salaries to be paid before releasing their children, while the intermediaries might agree on monthly or quarterly salaries with the caretakers afterwards. For example, if the intermediary had agreed with the parents that the child domestic worker would return with NGN#100,000 after 11 months, and the caretaker paid NGN#10,000 per month, the extra NGN#10,000 would be for the intermediary. Below is an excerpt from my fieldnotes:

Box 3: Payment for CDW

I had met this woman through a friend who introduced me to her. Until then, I only knew that Saki was part of the areas I intended to cover, I did not have a strong link there. She is a native of Saki, and a caterer in Ibadan. She maintains close ties with Saki because her relatives are still there, and that is why she assists people in need of child domestic workers in Ibadan and Lagos. After our initial conversation, we agreed to visit Saki together, but we could not find a suitable date until about 6 weeks after our first meeting. We were exchanging telephone conversations in between.

Eventually we were going to Saki. I had been briefed initially that the road was bad, and the journey would take about four hours from Ibadan with a private car, which we had arranged before today. While waiting for the driver to come, I was in her sitting room, and she related to me how different people had been requesting domestic workers from her of late, when she had not got one herself. She also explained how she got connected to a villager on their last trip to Saki. A farmer had been very nice to them while their car broke down along the way, and while trying to fix the car, she had noticed some Togolese farmers moving around the village. She enquired from the host farmer whether they had the Togolese nearby, and the possibility of getting young workers from there, and that was how they became friends. They exchanged mobile numbers, and after a while, the man called her to come to his village because two children were available to work.

On the phone, they agreed that the salary would be NGN#10,000 a month for each of the children, but after her telephone conversation, she explained to me that she would give out one of the children to one of her own clients for at least NGN#12,000 a month because the woman had not been kind to her in other ways when she needed her support. She explained that for some other clients, she does not charge any additional fee other than 'transport fares'- which in most cases, could be a fixed amount determined by her, or a thirteenth month salary that the employer pays her. The transport fares cover the return journey of the children- because the arrangement with the parents does not cover the children's transportation; and it is usually her responsibility to make sure the children return home safely.

Extract from Field Notes, 28/03/18

Although it may be argued that exploitation was involved here as the children would not know their salary, arrangements such as these were not necessarily considered abnormal or exploitative if the intermediary gave

the agreed sum to the parents or the children. Studies of both child and adult migrants confirm that non-payment of earnings, rather than intermediaries' profiting from being a facilitator for migrants, is what is usually considered reprehensible (Castle and Diarra, 2003). Further, licensed recruitment and placement agencies may charge legally acceptable fees for such roles in some contexts (O'Connell Davidson, 2013b:184).

Overall, the less the intermediaries are involved in the recruitment and entry of children into domestic service, the less the chances of exploitation in terms of remuneration. Also, where the parents have direct communication with the adult caretakers, or where no secondary intermediary is involved, the possibility of exploitation in terms of remuneration is slim. This was also confirmed in Castle and Diarra (2003)'s study of adolescent migration in Mali. In Agnes' case for example, her parents were separated; the aunt handed her over to an intermediary.

The above shows that the arrangements in domestic service may be as varied as the individuals involved. What should be clear from the above is how CDW, as a form of an informal support system, is governed by its own dynamics and norms which account for its continued existence despite efforts to eradicate it.

5.3.CDW and Education or Apprenticeship

In discussing the experiences of child domestic workers with regards to the relationship between their work and education, it is important to understand their levels of education before becoming domestic workers, their experience of education (or lack of), and the impact of their work on their situations. For these, I relied on interviews with parents as well as current and former child domestic workers.

An inverse relationship between work and education is always stressed in the dominant literature on CDW. For example, the ILO and HRW hold that

children 'cannot go to school' because of work (ILO 2017b:3; HRW, 2007b:15); and it is almost a cliché that while the children of their hosts or 'employers' go to schools, child domestic workers are expected to be at home and work at all times (Jensen, 2014).

This explains why for child rescuers, education is the cure for all forms of child labour including CDW (see ILO,2004b:60; Martinage,2018:28 for example). This has been shown to be incorrect as empirical evidence on the different forms of child labour in different parts of the world revealed that for many poor children, education and child labour go hand in hand; and in some cases, their education would not have been possible without their work (see for example, Bhalotra and Tzannatos, 2003; Okyere, 2012). This was also the finding of my own investigation.

Although Gamlin et al (2015) rightly point out that the relationships between schooling and children's entry into domestic work are complex partly because some children's educational pursuits are sustained by working 'while others must leave school in order to work' (p221), there was only a case of a girl's education being interrupted by work among all the current and former child domestic workers that I interviewed. The girl's case involved deception and manipulation. According to Agnes:

After my dad died, my aunt told me to come to Nigeria to come and work for one year, so I could save money to continue my education, but since I came here, she has refused to allow me to return to Togo. She has forced me out of school, and that is why I cannot read or write...I was in primary six (6) in 2015...when my father was alive, he was paying my school fees, but there is no one to help me now... she (my aunt) has been telling me that I would go to school after this work. In fact, she pleads with me, and that makes me suspect her that she might be the one spending my money... (Agnes).

One other former child domestic worker, 30-year-old Sarah, reported that although her father brought her and the sister to Lagos to work about twenty years ago (she was not sure of the exact year) because he did not believe in educating his girls, the money she and the sister made then had been used to sponsor the education of her siblings- including girls. In her words:

'I think it was just their way of thinking back then, but things are much different now- they know better now' (Sarah).

Apart from the above, there was no other report of children's educational pursuits being curtailed because of their work. Instead, the reverse was found to be true as stated in the last chapter. Of the thirty-nine child domestic workers that were attending school, five were actually enrolled in school following their entry into domestic work, while majority of the rest were attending schools that they were about to quit or that they were struggling to attend because of difficulties in paying the required fees before they became domestic workers. To understand such difficulties, and how CDW is beneficial, it is important to briefly examine the Nigerian (primary and secondary) education sector as I do below:

5.3.1. Free and compulsory education?

The government of Nigeria launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 1999 to promote the education of all her citizens. The programme was transformed by the UBE Act (2004), which makes provision for states and local governments to finance basic education comprising of ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education), six-year primary education, and three (3) years of junior secondary education (UBEC, n.d.). A key issue in the UBE Act is that 'every Government in Nigeria shall provide free, compulsory and universal basic education for every child of primary and junior secondary school age' (Ibid).

However, the reality in the country is that children pay for such items as uniforms, examination, books (notebooks and textbooks), feeding and 'lesson'. In some states, learning and convenience facilities are non-existent or in dilapidated state (Moja, 2000; EFA, 2015; BBC, n.d.) and as a result, children are charged 'development levy' at secondary level (see *Image 14*). Students may also have to pay for their chairs, desks, and/or brooms, hoes, cutlasses, among others, to clean the school premises.

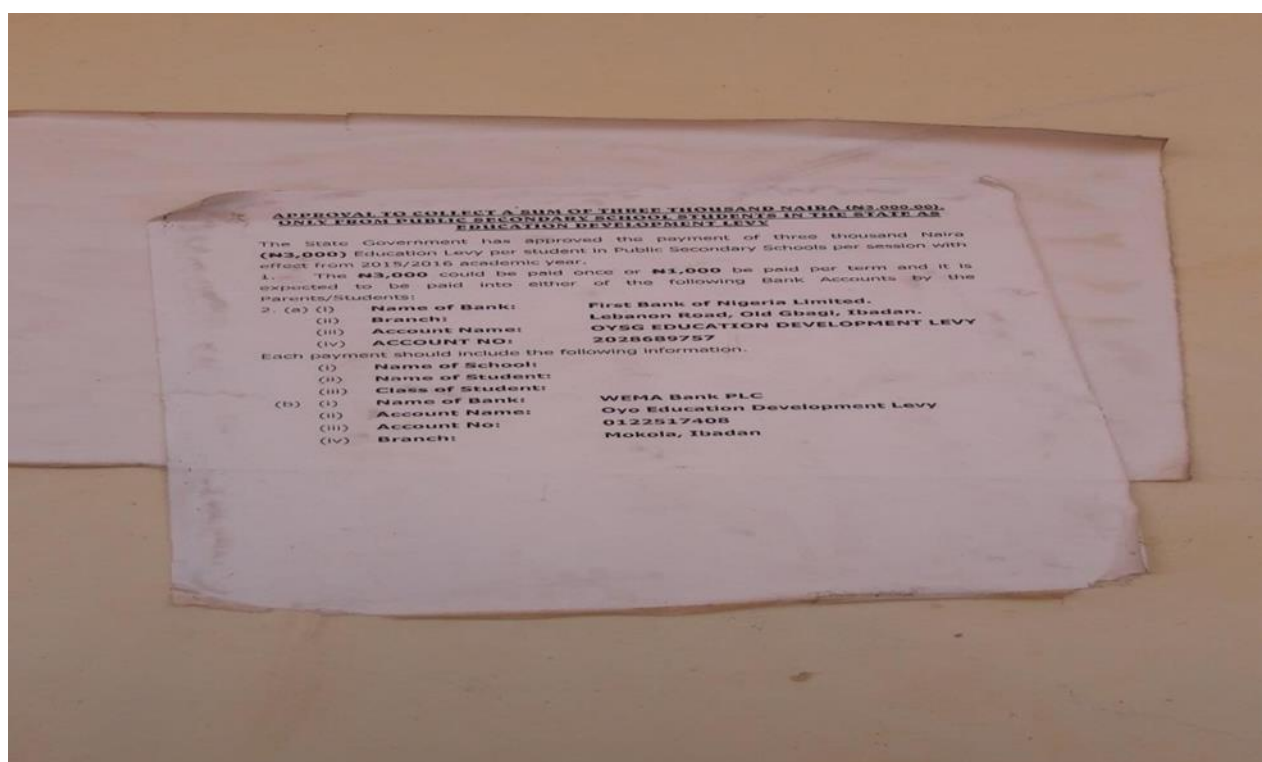


Image 14: Notice of government approved fees for parents and children in public secondary schools in one of the study locations.

In one instance, Daniel, an 11-year-old boy, told me that prior to working, he had been sent home from a nearby primary school a few times when his mum did not have money to buy him notebooks or pay for his feeding or 'lesson' (i.e. after school tutorial common in many schools where teachers charge students to compensate for their low salaries or government's failure to pay their salaries). According to Daniel, before starting domestic work:

*... the teachers would always complain that we come to school without having notebooks... there was a day that my mum said she had nothing to give me. So, I went to school without money (for feeding and lesson), and I was sent back (**Daniel**).*

Similarly, for Mrs Oni whom we learned about in the previous chapter, sponsoring the education of her five children was impossible for her and her husband with such unstable and meagre income. So, a major alternative was to have two of the elderly live where they could be educated even if she did not like it according to her. The above gives a contextual knowledge of the inability of the parents to send their children to public schools with the little fees that they charge. So, for children working in domestic service and their parents, the opportunity to acquire education is a driving force for working.

This corroborates Gamlin et al (2015)'s finding that children may become domestic workers as a means of continuing their studies but contradicts the abolitionist claim that involvement in domestic work often interfere with 'the right to education' of those children (see Blagbrough, 2010; Tetteh, 2011; GMACL, 2014 among others). The latter claim presupposes that the children were in school or that the schools were freely and readily available before the children became domestic workers. But this study proves otherwise. In some of the villages for example, there were no schools, and even in the cities where public schools are supposedly free, the 'little' fees being charged are still beyond the means of some children and their families.

Therefore, it was not surprising that many child domestic workers in my study were not receiving direct monetary rewards. Instead, they were in domestic service because it offered some form of hope or pathway to a better life either through education, apprenticeship, or both. All the participants in the group discussions in the schools for example, were not

being paid; rather, they were in domestic service to be educated. And they did not feel that they were being exploited. Further, it is also often assumed that parents of child domestic workers do not value the education of their children, as these parents themselves are not educated. For instance, GMACL (2014) noted that some parents would rather be indebted for social functions like funerals than incur little expenses for the education of their children. According to the organisation, 'it is a sociological concept that some parents do not place education among the priorities in the life of the child' (GMACL, 2014:18). Likewise, the ILO explained:

The low level of education and skills of the parents also has negative effects on the children and their future. If the parents have received little education, it means their children are exposed to limited family education at home and to low aspirations to obtain it...Similarly, if the parents have never obtained any specialized training or skills they may not perceive any need for their children to do so (ILO, 2004b:90).

Indeed, the study found a general low literacy level among parents of child domestic workers, but contrary to the ILO's claim above, not only did most parents value the education of their children, but in most cases, they sent their children out for the purpose of acquiring education- at least up to senior secondary level. Mrs Alusa could not pay the fees for her son to proceed to high school for example, but she equated good education to success in life, and told me how she felt my parents were 'lucky' that I was educated. In her words:

I am not educated too, but I want at least one of my children to be successful, so we can reap the benefits (Mrs Alusa).

In another instance, an adult caretaker explained differences in arrangements with parents of child domestic workers in relation to education:

You see there are some parents that would tell you that you should pay half of the agreed fees if you are sending their children to school (Mrs Idera).

The little or no education of the parents did not seem to have any effects on the aspirations of working children either. It is also important to note that being out of school at a very early age does not necessarily mean the child or their parents do not value education, or that they place higher value on making money than getting formal education as Chike below showed:

For someone like me, if I had the opportunity I can go to school because education is more important than making money at a very early age. I would have loved to do that, but since I did not have that choice, I had to come here (for apprenticeship and CDW). There are many individuals that want to go to school but do not have anybody to sponsor them (Chike).

Similar to Bourdillon (2006), I found that education was a top priority for most child domestic workers. I interacted with many child domestic workers that had dreams to obtain university education and/or become professionals in various fields; and for them, being in domestic service was the only way they could complete secondary education and later university education. One teenager, whose parents were not educated, had been a domestic worker for about nine years, and hoped to be a lawyer. She said of her adult caretaker:

...she is willing to sponsor my education, and she keeps encouraging me to be patient and focused. So, I see this as an opportunity... (Basirat)

5.3.2. 'Quantity' vs quality of education

Without a doubt, the fact that most of the child domestic workers (thirty-nine out of forty-nine) were attending school did not mean they were having the best of education. Indeed, in most cases, child domestic workers were attending public secondary schools- characterised by poor facilities,

low quality of teaching, and negligence by the government (see images 15-17). However, considering their limited options, and the premium placed on formal education or certificate in Nigeria, these child domestic workers (and their parents) still preferred low-quality education to no education at all, and working provided an avenue for such low-quality education.

So, it was common to hear comments like:

*I was not going to school before because there was no money **(Faith)***



Image 15: A public primary school in one of the study locations



Image 16: Students playing football in a public secondary school in front of a dilapidated classroom in one of the study locations



Image 17: Block of classrooms in a public secondary school in one of the study locations

Also, in some cases, even where working in domestic service was in exchange for education, all educational expenses and provisions were not

always met by the adult caretakers. Despite this tendency for exploitation, it was still considered a better alternative compared to not going to school at all by child domestic workers and their parents:

...we pay about NGN#4,500 and my auntie pays that. Sometimes, she would give me money to school, but at other times, I trekked to school...(Deborah)

... I cannot tell my parents that I do not want to live there again because my dad knows that there is no other way for me to go to school. He has been encouraging me to be educated, and he knows that if I go back home, there is no way I can be what I want to be in life (Juliana, group 2).

Some child domestic workers also opined that the quality of teaching in public schools in the city was still better than what was available in their villages. So, for example, in one group session with boys, while discussing what they did not like about their adult caretakers or where they were living, and what they could do as alternatives, one boy's response provoked laughter among the group:

I will remain here because if I go to the village, things cannot improve. I could not read when I was in the village for example (John, group 3).

In another case, a girl explained why she wanted to leave the village when she left:

... I wanted to come here because of the difference in the standard of education (Tolu)

Another issue often raised in the mainstream narrative in relation to the exploitation of child domestic workers is how they may be forced to take care of their agemates or cater for the children of their caretakers (in private schools) while they are neglected or enrolled in public schools

without basic amenities (**Interviews with NGO officials**; see also Blagbrough, 2010; Jensen, 2014 among others). Indeed, my investigation confirmed the dichotomy in quality of education between child domestic workers and children of their caretakers in some cases. However, there were variations on this subject as well. For example, one girl explained that she attended a private school while living with her former caretaker, but her current auntie could only enrol her in a public school (**Interview with Lisa**). In other cases, child domestic workers and the children of their adult caretakers were attending public schools; and in very few cases, child domestic workers were transferred from public schools to private schools or enrolled in private schools by their caretakers like below:

I was going to a school very close to our village (before)...my auntie (her caretaker) changed my school to a private one when I got here (Lydia).

Also, while working in domestic service was part of apprenticeship arrangements for some like Chike, in some other cases, child domestic workers were learning jobs or enrolled in apprenticeship in addition to their formal education:

...there is a man around our house that is an electrician, so I go to his shop whenever I return from school (Uche)

I do computer training anytime I am back from school (John).

5.3.3. Those that were not in school

Of the child domestic workers that were not in school, a clear pattern that emerged was the difference between those from neighbouring West African countries and those from rural areas or urban centres within Nigeria. In all cases, the latter were neither in school nor in apprenticeship, but were being paid in cash, while the former were in school and/or apprenticeship in almost all cases. A major reason for this was the short-term or long-term

socio-economic gains as discussed in the previous chapter. For example, when asked why they were not in school or apprenticeship or whether they had discussed such issues with their adult caretakers, the responses of child domestic workers in this category were negative. Some stated that they were afraid to ask, but others responded like the girl below:

*Hmmm, my desire is to see a good employer that would be willing to enrol me for a training or apprenticeship, but I have not seen anyone like that ... I really do not know how to tell any one of them because the way I see it is that they are doing their part by paying me for the work that I do. So, I do not know how to ask them for that favour **(Temi)***

Another girl, Comfort, would love to learn a vocation or go to school, but she had not bothered to inform her adult caretaker because she believed she would have to pay by herself since the woman was already paying her monthly salary **(Interview with Comfort)**.

In another sense, other factors such as socio-cultural differences, language barriers, and different orientations regarding education might explain why these child domestic workers from other West African states were not in school as the cases below showed:

*It is a bit complicated...They brought a young boy of nine or ten years to me, and I was concerned that he was too young to work. So, I asked if he wanted to go to school and he responded positively. But we enrolled him, and for a whole term, he could not read one to ten... (he had never been to a school) He confessed to me that he didn't understand what he was being taught... **(Mrs Edwin)**.*

James, on the other hand, opined that he did not think of attending school or enrolling for apprenticeship because of differences in apprenticeship schemes between Nigeria and his home country. He reasoned that there was no use learning skills that might not be recognised or considered useful when he returns home **(Interview with James)**.

The above is not to suggest that child domestic workers or their parents were responsible for their lack of education, or that adult caretakers are always willing to assist children, but to emphasize the diversities of experiences and expectations of child domestic workers, and account for reasons that are often neglected or relegated in popular child rescue narrative on why child domestic workers may not be attending school. For example, some adult caretakers (in Abeokuta) told of how they were 'encouraged' to enrol child domestic workers- from rural areas within Nigeria -in school like below:

I enrolled them in a school... Really, the parents did not ask me to enrol them in a school when they brought them. But when 'Human Rights' (Law Enforcement Agents) came to the market, they interrogated me, and I explained how I got them. So, they advised me to enrol them in a school to assist them for future purposes. So, I took them to a nearby school and enrolled them there (Mrs Morola).

The fact that government officials 'encouraged' adult caretakers to enrol child domestic workers in school and permitted the child domestic workers to remain with their adult caretakers is suggestive of local discontents of dominant child rescue narrative as I will explain in the next chapter.

Further, as Klocker (2014)'s study of CDW in Tanzania found, whereas employers preferred stable and committed employees, child domestic workers were 'flighty' employees. That is, child domestic workers hardly stay long even if adult caretakers desire that. I found this to be true in relation to my study as well. A recurring issue in my discussions with many adult caretakers of non-Nigerian child domestic workers was the uncooperative attitude of parents towards the educational and/or mental development of their children, but for these parents, CDW is essentially a short-term arrangement, a means to a pre-determined end. As we saw in the cases and reasons for CDW discussed in chapter four, CDW

arrangement -especially for migrants from West Africa- may not be more than three years at a stretch except in rare cases. In addition, the fear of 'losing' their children, or of the children losing their cultural roots, or of losing out in one way or another are other factors that the parents consider **(Interviews with intermediaries and adults in villages).**

The theme of temporality challenges the claim that child domestic workers are almost always trapped in a life of misery. I discuss this theme in greater detail in chapter 6.

5.3.4. CDW and academic performance

The child rescue literature stresses a negative relationship between academic performance and CDW, but it is not easy to establish a direct link or single causality between academic performance and the work that children do. In one instance for example, a former domestic worker reported that she felt her work might have affected her senior school leaving results, but she also stated that the work enabled her to pay for the exam in the first instance. She also recollected it was a time when public school teachers were being owed salaries. In her words '*they were not teaching us well because the government did not pay them then, so they used that as an excuse*' **(Interview with Toyin).**

The common complaint among those that reported that their work was affecting their studies related to physical exhaustion when they would have loved to read, and/or lateness to school as a result of work:

I do not get to school on time and my teachers do insult or abuse me for that...I still have to get the children ready even if I wake up earlier. That is why I don't get to school on time **(Faith).**

... at times, I would go to school, and would be sleeping all-day. The teacher would always ask if anything was wrong with me then, but I could not help it... the work was tiring **(Ruth).**

Well, it hindered my education a bit because sometimes, people may call us to come and fetch water for them early in the morning. So, sometimes we could go and fetch water for them as early as 6a.m., and we might not finish till 8a.m. So, imagine waking up as early as 5:30a.m. to be on time to fetch water, and still being late to school!

(Ali)

By contrast, some child domestic workers were adamant that their academic performance had not suffered because of their work. In one focus group, all the participants said they had time to read despite the work, with only one girl in a group of six saying *'I can read in school, but I am always thinking of the work I will do at home when I am in school'* **(Sewa, group 3)**.

Further, some child domestic workers like Deborah and Daniel offered more contextual responses. Deborah believed that her own determination to succeed was more important than any negative experience she might have in domestic service. She claimed to be satisfied with her academic performance *'because there are students who are living with their parents that are performing poorly. But at the same time, I am not using that as a yardstick ...'* **(Deborah)**. Daniel, who was 11 years old, also argued that being a live-out domestic worker was not affecting his educational pursuit as he had the best result in his class in the last terminal examination. His submission was that the work was helping him *'because at times, I get money to take to school from the work'* **(Daniel)**.

So, for Deborah and Daniel, it was about putting their situation into perspectives: comparing their experiences before work to their conditions as domestic workers as well as the consideration of viable alternatives for them. Overall, contrary to many claims by child rescuers, there was no clear evidence of CDW contributing to poor academic performance, and as it has been suggested elsewhere, there is need for more research to better understand the impact of work on children's learning achievement (ILO,

2004b:116) as we cannot simply assume that time and energy spent on work detracts from education (Bourdillon et al, 2010: 127).

5.4 Perception of Work and Caretakers

Although the adults in the villages, parents as well as intermediaries that I interviewed were adamant that *'there are not many people that maltreat children'*, or that *'the people that treat the children well outnumber those that do not'*, I also sought the opinions of current and former child domestic workers about their work and adult caretakers. Many current and former child domestic workers, while highlighting the negative experiences and exploitative tendencies in domestic work, were also quick to point to the comparative benefits. So, it was always a matter of considering the benefits in relation to the risks. The major negativity reported by child domestic workers related to the volume of work, and harsh treatment by caretakers in some cases, but even these were contextualised by current child domestic workers in particular:

Sometimes, she makes me happy, and at other times, she makes me sad... she cares so much about food; she can never allow me to starve maybe as a punishment or anything. People will see me outside and say that I am being taken care of, but they may not know what I am passing through at home...(Zainab)

What I like about her (his madam) is the fact that she is caring, but when you do something that she does not like, she flogs and abuses me sometimes, but overall, they are minor things (Uche)

By contrast, For Tamuno:

...she (her madam) does not give me food regularly; at times, she cooks, and she does not give me out of it. At times, I won't have anything for lunch, or I may drink garri (processed cassava)

For Lisa:

The person I am living with can use any item on me, she can throw anything when she is angry at me, but I normally defend myself. So, she injures herself sometimes!

For Jason, his major gripe was:

The fact that they don't allow me to play (football); everywhere is always boring.

And for Aminat:

...Even if I go home in December, I would still come back to her...She treats me well; she gives me good food, and she is not irritable

The opinions of former child domestic workers were similarly mixed:

*You know there is nothing you do in this world that is easy- you have to struggle, you have to endure to make money... it is a learning process whether you learn within the four walls of a school or through a job. Then, through jobs like that, you learn the value of patience **(Martha)**.*

*...even though I experienced some negative treatments, I remain grateful for my education. I remain grateful that I was able to go to school then **(Miracle)**.*

*I don't think I liked anything about working then... well, apart from the money I was making from it ... **(Ali)***

The above extracts mirror the findings and conclusions of Gamlin et al (2015)'s study of the psychosocial effects of CDW in six countries including Togo, India, Peru, Philippines, Costa Rica and Tanzania. The authors noted that 'the most striking finding is the diverse nature and conditions under which children are employed in domestic work' (p220). While they discovered that some child domestic workers worked long hours and were exposed to physical abuse and at risk of psychosocial harm, they also reported that many combined work with schooling, and reported good relationships with their employers. The child domestic workers in Bourdillon

(2006) and Klocker (2011) also reported that they had a generally good relationship with their employers despite the difficulties they endured sometimes.

Overall, my interactions showed that working and living conditions in CDW may be positive and negative as studies by Bourdillon et al, 2010 and Gamlin et al, 2015 have similarly found elsewhere. A major observation therefore is that the positives identified by child domestic workers themselves are almost never emphasized or only passively so in the child rescue discourse as the next section will show.

5.5.Dealing with Exploitative and Abusive Conditions

‘Many children cannot contact their families and stay with abusive employers because they have nowhere else to go’ (HRW 2007b:15).

Claims such as above result in the labelling of child domestic workers as being non-agentive or having ‘thin’ agency (Klocker, 2007). Although arguments abound on the agency of children, much of these relate to a binary conception of agency against dependency, or freedom against coercion. However, children’s everyday lives show an interplay of structure and agency, and moving along a continuum that make such hard classifications problematic (O’Connell Davidson, 2005; Abebe, 2007; 2012; Hashim and Thorsen, 2011).

Children may be independent and dependent at the same time and may experience changing degrees of both at other times. Thus, the notion of interdependence is more appropriate in discussing children’s agency (Punch, 2002; Abebe, 2012). Additionally, agency is context-specific; it may be shaped by family and interpersonal relationship as well as social structures and environment (Abebe, 2012). In this section, I examine how

child domestic workers exercise their agency in relation to the contexts in which they work and live.

In the child rescue rhetoric, children are often unequivocally presented as helpless victims in the hands of wily traffickers and evil employers. It is plausible that working away from home from a very early age can pose many challenges. But this does not mean that child domestic workers are always helpless and subjected to wholesale abuse or exploitation as often presented in child rescue narratives. In this study, there were indeed cases (such as Agnes') where child domestic workers felt they were helpless to address their situations, but in the majority of the interviews, the child domestic workers explained that even in the harshest conditions, they had support structures and independent coping mechanisms against abusive and errant adult caretakers. These include but are not limited to withdrawal or change of adult caretakers, running away, putting up uncooperating attitudes and behaviours among others. Thus, although children may not always be able to freely choose their residence (or working conditions), they are not always 'helpless victims'. I discuss some of these examples and the factors which facilitate or hamper child domestic workers' coping strategies in the next section:

5.5.1. *Withdrawal or change of adult caretakers*

By far the commonest response to abuse and maltreatment (including disagreements over fees, education expenses and other arrangements), was a change of adult caretaker. However, in most cases, withdrawal did not mean complete removal from work but a change of adult caretakers. Such changes were often made in relation to the consideration of the benefits of work as explained in the previous chapter and should not be conflated with ignorance and irresponsibility of parents as often presented in child rescue discourse. For some child domestic workers, changing adult caretakers was a way of demonstrating their conviction regarding the benefits of domestic work, while for others, it was simply because the

misery of exploitation in domestic work is nothing compared to the alternatives:

I will remain here because if I go to the village, things cannot improve. I could not read when I was in the village for example (John, group 3).

I had gone to a place in Lagos before... I was sent to Lagos, but they did not enrol me in a school, so when I discovered that, I had to leave... I informed my parents, and they were the ones that told my employers to release me (Lola)

An elderly woman in one of the villages recalled:

It is just like what happened to one of the twins around here. One of them was taken to a place where she really suffered. In fact, it was saddening then because she was in a bad state. It was when one of her aunts went to visit her that they found out. So, they took her away. She is now with another family in Lagos, and if you see her now, she is being treated well. In fact, you would not know she ever suffered somewhere before... (Mrs Olubunmi, group 1)

Some other studies of young migrants and/or child domestic workers in West Africa have established that changing jobs or leaving one employer for another is not only a way of escaping exploitation, but also a medium of earning higher wages or learning new skills, or as a life course transition (Thorsen, 2013; Buchbinder, 2013; Thorsen and Jacquemin, 2015). Similar to decisions regarding entry into domestic service, changing adult caretakers could be the sole decision of child domestic workers or their parents, or it may be a joint decision between child domestic workers and their parents. This was also confirmed by Sommerfelt (2001)'s study in Morocco.

5.5.2. Children on the run

Another coping mechanism by child domestic workers, or demonstration of their relative agency in the face of exploitation or abuse was to run away from their adult caretakers. Child rescue narratives often emphasise the fact that child domestic workers are mostly hidden in private homes, but in the context of this study, they are not isolated. All the child domestic workers who provided this study with information had contacts with peers, or with people in the neighbourhood- for example, from their country or tribe, churches, schools, and others who may influence their decision to abscond and could provide the support to do so if need be. At the time of the research, Damude, who did not like where she was living planned to run away to her mother after completing her secondary school education because she acknowledged that the mother did not have the means to sponsor her education **(Damude)**.

Another girl, Lisa, was also planning to leave her adult caretaker after completing her primary school education, but she had deployed another coping strategy in the interim:

... So, there was a day I threatened them (her auntie and the husband) too. I ran away from home and went to sleep over at my friend's place. I left my auntie's children at our neighbour's and left a message for her. She became worried, but I was not far away from home. She went to the police station, and they put my pictures everywhere, but they did not find me. So, I went back home early the next morning- I did that because I wanted to return to the village. (Afterwards) She tried to be nice to me, and I explained that I was not happy because she was not willing to take me back to the village

Likewise, for those that had worked with more than one adult caretaker, running away could be a form of agitation to return to where they perceived as a better option as in the case below:

Case Study: Temi

Temi's parents allowed her to come with her aunt from their village in Benin to Saki, Nigeria because she desperately wanted to go with the aunt then. She has been living with the aunt since and through the aunt's informal contacts, Temi has been working in Ibadan for about 6 years (she was not sure about her age or the year she started working). She went back to Benin in 2016 because her parents wanted to see her, but when she came back to Nigeria, she was placed with another intermediary and within a year, she had worked in about three places until she was able to run back to one of her former adult caretakers in Ibadan, who later met with the intermediary again. Temi said she did not want to return to the village in Benin because '*there is nothing for me to do there*'. According to her, the aunt was not willing to enrol her for any apprenticeship in Nigeria before her marriage, and she did not know how to present such to her employer. So, remaining with her adult caretaker was the best option given the constraints she was faced with (***Interview with Temi***).

These three cases show that while it may be easy to categorise children's work situations and living conditions as helpless, it is also important to emphasize that their decisions- to remain with or change their adult caretakers in less than ideal conditions or run away at a later date exemplify these adolescents' (constrained) agency in different contexts (Jensen, 2014).

5.5.3. Refusal and uncooperating attitude to work

In some instances, child domestic workers purposefully forced their adult caretakers or intermediaries to send them back. Some cried continuously, refused to eat, or refused to work leaving the adult caretakers with no choice than to send them back to their parents. These strategies were also used against parents who wished to send their children away, exploitative intermediaries and others involved in the recruitment process as evident in these accounts:

*... a girl that we had between 2016 and early 2017 was supposed to go in December 2016, but the agent had spent her money. So, she refused to go without collecting her salary... I had paid the agent. So, I had to give her the money that I was supposed to give the agent for the new girl that replaced her... I had no choice really because the girl refused to go; instead, she was crying every day and refused to be consoled. So, I had to look for a way to address the situation **(Mrs Alade)**.*

*... I had to lie to go to my father's place, and when I got to my father, I cried that I did not want to go back to her place **(Destiny)**.*

*I told my parents that I did not like the place; I was crying all day and they had to call the person that took me there to return me home...Initially they were not happy about it... but they did not force me to go back. It was afterwards that they brought me to this (new) place... **(Lydia)**.*

5.5.4. To report or not to report?

Some child domestic workers reported being afraid of possible sanctions and further punishments if they reported their adult caretakers to their parents or even complained to their adult caretakers- especially if the adult caretakers were related to or had close relationships with the parents. Some child domestic workers also reported not being able to communicate freely on the phone with their parents in the presence of their adult caretakers or have enough time to discuss concerns on the phone or in person with their parents. Lucy, for example, communicates with her parents regularly, but she never mentions the fact that her adult caretakers insults and uses derogatory remarks on her because, according to her, 'if I did, my parents would mention it to my auntie, and she might be punishing me for that' **(Lucy)**.

And according to Jacinta:

No, I cannot report the things I do not like about my auntie to my parents because if I did, they might confront the woman, and she might punish me too (Jacinta).

However, some had no problems reporting maltreatment to their parents or intermediaries. One of the strategies adopted by child domestic workers in this regard was to communicate with their parents when they were away from their adult caretakers' homes. Some child domestic workers used friends' and neighbours' mobile phones to report concerns to their parents or they sought help from neighbours, teachers, and other networks to complain to their parents, guardians, or even older siblings- in the absence of parents as in the case of Agnes. She said of her adult caretaker:

... my phone is with grandma (her adult caretaker) ...she seized it from me to discourage guys from calling me. So, I do not even have a phone to call my brother, but what I do is try to call with people's phones whenever I have the opportunity.

Seun is about 11years old. Her parents are separated, and she was living with her grandmother before someone known to the grandmother took her to Ibadan. She would love to leave her adult caretaker because she was being maltreated. According to her:

I sometimes use any phone that I get around- maybe through a friend or a teacher to call my mum and talk to my siblings.

Whether child domestic workers stayed or persisted with the situation after complaining was dependent on various factors. Some left with the backing of parents who felt the adult caretaker had abused their trust. Others were advised or encouraged to stay by parents who felt the situation at home was no better than that at the place where their child was living. Others were also advised to bear with the situation until they had attained a certain milestone in their education or apprenticeship as Benita told me in our conversation:

They (her parents) always encourage me to endure till I complete my senior secondary school (Benita, group3)

By contrast, 11-year-old Seun (from the earlier extract) who had complained about her madam to her parents and teachers was told to forget completing primary school education and return home, as was Miracle (a former domestic worker) who also told me a similar story:

I was there for three years before I left. She (her madam) had two children, and it was my responsibility to take care of them. I did house chores, and all that, but the woman was too harsh... Sometimes, she could shout at me, and I would be shivering. Then, to make it worse, the husband was harassing me sexually, and I was wary of such. So, I asked to see my mum, and I explained everything to her. I was like 15years old and attending a school then, but I had to leave, and that was how I left with my mum (Miracle).

The main finding here was that parents and caretakers were more inclined to act when they felt the situation being described by their child (such as sexual harassment and persistence of duties which went way beyond what children in most Nigerian homes will be ordinarily called upon to perform) were too egregious or there was no major educational or training milestone on the horizon for their child, to warrant grudgingly encouraging the child to bear with their situation for longer. The cases presented here, and the many others found by the study also challenge the stereotype of negligent and irresponsible parents that can be found in child rescue literature.

The decisions to keep a child in a supposedly negative environment or to withdraw them are neither taken lightly or presumptuously by the parents, but in considerations of the welfare (immediate and future) of the child, the severity of the circumstances in which the child is living and more significantly whether the child is in a situation in which they are being compelled to undertake tasks which completely outstrip what is regarded

as normal for children in their socio-cultural context. Much of the work child domestic workers told me they perform is completely in keeping with what children do in their parental homes and so it seems the main difference here is that they were performing these chores away from their own parents' homes and in return for money, training, and other rewards.

5.5.5. Not reporting as a sign of maturity

For many current and former child domestic workers, refraining from reporting abuse or exploitation and instead trying to address it personally was a sign of maturity and independence. This choice was often made by child domestic workers upon reflecting on the situation back home as Victoria, now eighteen years old told me. She had come from Kogi state (middle belt) in Nigeria in 2012 to work and be educated in Ibadan. She explained to me that her caretaker was very nice to her, but the caretaker's children were not so nice to her. Despite being maltreated by her caretakers' children, she did not tell her grandfather in the village:

...because if I did, my grandfather would want me to come back to the village, and I don't want to go back to the village... I just want to complete my education here, and find my bearing... thinking about everything, I prefer the city.

She eventually moved away from the place as she could no longer tolerate constant sexual harassment by her caretaker's son. She has been supported by friends since she left before her eighteenth birthday. Asked whether she had told her family about what happened, she replied:

Yes, I told them, and they wanted me to come back home. But I maintained that I was okay. So, they allowed me to stay back
(Victoria)

Another example was the case of Basirat, who had been a domestic worker for about nine years because her parents could not sponsor her education. She had lived with three different caretakers, and she admitted that some

of the experiences were not pleasant. She was a very gentle young lady and asked me questions about career choices, social media usage and effective study tips after our conversation. So, she was clearly very clever and calculating in the reason why she had also not mentioned the maltreatment she was enduring to anyone at the time of the study. Below is an excerpt:

Peter: *Okay, but do you discuss any negative thing that happens with your parents?*

Basirat: *Well, I don't.*

Peter: *Why do you not tell them?*

Basirat: *What do you mean? Why would I tell them? I can't tell them, I would rather keep everything to myself. Okay, if I tell them, what solutions can they proffer?*

Zainab, a current domestic worker said she was 'tired' of the workload in her caretaker's place:

...but I do not want to tell my dad because if I tell him... If he is aware, he would be sad about it- he would see it as a failure on his part to take care of his children...My dad is not financially stable for now, and I don't want to tell him because he would be bothered because of that.

Juliana also gave a similar explanation for why she does not complain to her parents:

*... I cannot tell my parents that I do not want to live there again because my dad knows that there is no other way for me to go to school. He has been encouraging me to be educated, and he knows that if I go back home, there is no way I can be what I want to be in life (**Juliana, group 2**).*

In all the cases above, it could be argued that the choices not to report or run away from their negative experiences were predicated on the

considerations of the potential benefits and actual costs of leaving especially in relation to the alternatives available to them. These examples show how child domestic workers' commitment to education, considerations of their families' deprivation and other adverse circumstances and feelings that moving will be less advantageous to them also underpin the reasons why they may reveal abuse or otherwise. Without idealising the difficult choices these young people have made I argue that their narratives contradict the helpless victim narrative which characterises mainstream accounts of child domestic work.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter has explained the complexities that characterise children's involvement in domestic service. I have shown that contrary to popular representation, abuse and exploitation are not inevitable and child domestic workers' circumstances range from benign to exploitative. Further, where they encounter abusive or exploitative caretakers, child domestic workers do not unequivocally conform to the helpful victim figure presented in the child rescue discourse. Instead, child domestic workers and their parents both may adopt a range of strategies to navigate such complex situations. Thus, this chapter has shown that while child domestic work arrangements can be abusive, the child rescue discourse also undermines the agency of child domestic workers and overlook the structural factors that affect their decisions. The next chapter presents, in greater depth, the strategies of child rescuers and how these compare to the expectations of child domestic workers and/or their parents.

6- CHILD RESCUERS: STRATEGIES AND SHORTCOMINGS

6.1.Introduction

This thesis explores the representation, policy discourse and reality of CDW using the views of children, parents, intermediaries and organisations involved in this type of work. This chapter examines how child rescue policies are pursued in Nigeria, and how child domestic workers and their parents perceive and respond to such policies. I argue that because child rescuers misrepresent child domestic workers and/or their parents, and efface the structural constraints that affect their decisions, their strategies have not only had limited successes, but in some cases, resulted in unintended consequences- including worsening the plights of child domestic workers.

The chapter begins by presenting posters, images, interview extracts and other data on child rescue efforts in the country, collected by the study. In discussing these, I highlight the fact that while they are well-meaning, they are also driven by moral panics, myths, and stereotypes. Next, I look at the knowledge, attitude and perception of child domestic workers and their parents as well as employers and intermediaries towards these child rescue efforts. Afterwards, the chapter presents a detailed discussion of how child domestic workers and their parents respond to child rescue efforts, and in the last section, I discuss how child rescue strategies are more about effacing structural constraints than addressing the root cause of CDW.

6.2. The Nature of Rescue Missions in Nigeria²¹

As seen in chapter one, among a range of factors that are emphasized as contributing to CDW and other related issues of child labour and child

²¹ This section (as well as the next two sections) draws on and extracts from Olayiwola, 2019.

trafficking in Nigeria is ignorance- of parents, children, and the wider society, as summarised by UNESCO:

The general public in Nigeria lacks overall knowledge of the human trafficking phenomenon. Most people interviewed for the study, while admitting that they recently became aware of the issue of human trafficking, hold different perceptions as to what it actually entails. Other respondents were clearly ignorant of what constitutes human trafficking, especially child trafficking (UNESCO, 2006:38).

This extract, based on a study of 10 of the country's 36 states, 'suggests that the apparent problem- 'lack of knowledge'- affects 'the general public in Nigeria'. It is a national problem concerning every Nigerian. It does not matter that the country, like every other society, is heterogenous; it does not matter whether citizens are educated or not, old or young, rich or poor, northerner or southerner-'they do not know' what constitutes trafficking. And by implication, Nigerians must be assisted or educated.

Scholars such as Oluwaniyi (2009) and Adesina (2014) have also reported the ignorance of parents and the general public in relation to child trafficking for domestic work, advocating the 'need to sensitize and raise awareness in the country...' through various means including news and print media (Adesina, 2014:177). Awareness campaigns have thus become the primary tool deployed by the child rescue and wider anti-trafficking coalition in Nigeria (See also Flores-Oebanda 2004:16; Moens et al, 2004; UNODC, 2008; Blagbrough 2010). Additionally, but to a much lesser extent, focus is also placed on rehabilitative strategies (such as reintegration, and family tracing) (Nwogu, 2007).

Much of the awareness raising and rehabilitating efforts are driven by the UNCRC, ILO's Conventions 138 and 182 and the Palermo Protocol, to which Nigeria is a signatory. These documents inform the NAPTIP Act (Amended 2015) and the CRA which guide rescue operations in the country. For

example, the NAPTIP Act prohibits the employment of anyone under twelve (12) years of age in domestic service (section 23a), but in conformity with international standards, the CRA classify anyone below eighteen (18) as a child, and states that 'no child shall be employed as a domestic help outside his own home or family environment' (Section 28(1)d). The latter outlines the rights of such persons to include right to education, protection against all forms of exploitation including child labour, among others.

In addition to these international conventions, much of the extant efforts against child trafficking are informed by popular narratives on the phenomenon and supposed subsets such as CDW. This was evidenced by the fact that officials interviewed for this study echoed claims about child trafficking and CDW in mainstream literature and discourse despite having no evidence from their own work on the ground to corroborate these claims. For example, the head of the Anti-Trafficking Unit of NIS (Nigeria Immigration Service) gave me a classic abolitionist textbook description of trafficking and trafficker that does not bear semblance with empirical evidence in the study location. According to him:

...the trafficking thing is a chain; a very neatly knitted network.... you have the recruiter at the home country, the trafficker, and the distributor or intermediary, and the end-user... '

He went on to explain how these four parties in the 'ring' almost always work together. Likewise, almost verbatim, an NGO official echoed:

'...the traffickers work as a team; it is a syndicate...'(Vera)

In another instance, when I noticed that one government official (who was the head of Research and Programme Development division of her organisation) was constantly making reference to trafficking for sexual exploitation, I asked if, in her experience, there was any difference between

this and 'trafficking for exploitative child labour' as she called it. She maintained that:

'...all traffickers are the same... It is just that the purpose for which they recruit is what differs... They use the same method' (Vera)

Yet none of these parties had established these findings in their own experience of working in the anti-trafficking field in Nigeria. Similar to the UNESCO report, these officials also pointed to societal and parental ignorance when I asked them for reasons for the existence of CDW and child trafficking:

...poverty might not be enough, someone that is poor but knowledgeable will know that taking care of the future of the child will be paramount in his/her mind- not to send such a child into servitude...'
(Head of Anti-trafficking Unit, NIS).

... apart from poverty, there is need to re-orient our citizens.... Most parents do not know... If they knew... they wouldn't fall prey to the antics of traffickers. ... that is what traffickers capitalize on- painting a rosy picture' (Vera).

Also, Eunice, an NGO official offered her counsel:

I think if you want to change this, it has to do with the parents... The parents have to understand... that not every story is true...' (Eunice).

In all these narratives, the main problem identified by the child domestic workers and their parents: poverty, lack of or limited opportunities, young people's own desire for work and structural inequalities are largely written out by declaring them as 'ignorant'. This ignorance narrative thus stigmatises the poor, deligitimises the role of poverty as a causal factor and reduces trafficking and/or CDW to an attitudinal problem- in ways that resonate with the idea of a 'culture of poverty' among the poor (Lewis, 1966)- a discussion I will return to later in the chapter. There is little or no

consideration for the factors beyond the poor that contribute to their poverty or attempts by the poor to navigate their situation²².

So, based on the widespread claim about the ignorance of the people, these organisations as well as their international partners are involved in awareness creation as a preventive strategy in child trafficking, child labour and CDW, with the major goal being to '*sensitize and help*' the people because '*people feel it is normal*' (**NGO officials**).

The leading organisation in this regard in Nigeria is NAPTIP. Although the organisation is more notable for its work on 'trafficking for sexual exploitation', it has also been involved in 'internal trafficking' for labour and sexual exploitation (Nwogu, 2007; Oluwaniyi, 2009).

²² See Gajdosikienė, 2004; Wilson, 2009 among others for detailed criticisms of Lewis' theory.



Image 18: Anti-Child Labour Poster (in English and Yoruba languages)

For example, NAPTIP undertakes sensitisation visits- to communities where child domestic workers migrate from, as well as rehabilitation schemes for victims (Nwogu, 2007:158). Like NAPTIP, the three NGOs that I visited were involved in advocacy and sensitisation programmes because they believe that *'people just do not know the implications of their actions and decisions'* (**Interviews with Eunice, Jane and Vera, NGO officials**). These programmes take place in different settings and may take different forms such as: occasional visits to some 'endemic communities', markets and motor parks; partnership with community leaders and traditional rulers as well as religious organisations, among others.

We liaise with the traditional rulers... we also visit motor parks and marketplaces for outreaches in those locations (**Vera**).

... to campaign against child trafficking and labour... We encouraged parents, we held household sensitization talks, we had rallies, we had psychotherapy sessions for the children that were victims of these problems that we are talking about...And... we set up a stakeholder's committee.... It comprises the Nigerian Police, the Nigerian Immigration...' (Alaba).

We entered radio jingles in a number of radio houses that have wide coverage... we targeted some core programs that they listen to... (Benedicta).

The content of these messages varies. **Image 18** for example contains two posters: the poster in English depicts children carrying loads- pan for hawking goods, wheelbarrow, big water bowl and a plastic jerry can full of water- too heavy for them and looking exhausted. The poster in Yoruba language is instructive: it is informing parents that it is unlawful for children to engage in economic activities. Just below this message are three images: a child in domestic service (washing plates) while the caretaker looks on, children working on the farm, and a child running after a moving vehicle to sell goods. The message underneath the images warns parents not to 'use their children anyhow' or allow anyone to use them as slaves. Both posters speak directly and didactically to parents- that they are not concerned about the children's welfare; they are causing harm to the children. Here, whatever the conditions that inform the children's work do not count as much as their parents' failure to prevent them from working.

Similarly, **image 19** depicts two rural children being forcefully taken away by a well-dressed city dweller while their tattered-looking and slovenly dressed mother waves goodbye dejectedly. In the background is a mud house. The children are crying possibly at the thought of leaving the 'comfort' and 'safety' of the parent's home or because the 'trafficker' is forcefully taking them away or because they are somehow aware of the misery that awaits them away from home. The accompanying message is

also simple enough- something negative is being done to the future of these children by taking them away to work. Their 'future' is better protected by not separating them from 'home' regardless of whether everyday survival is a struggle for them or not.



Image 19: Anti-Trafficking Poster

In addition to the radio jingles and posters, further trafficking sensitisation campaigns also take place via popular home videos and documentaries (Nwogu, 2014), while some NGOs have also partnered with youth organisations (like the National Youth Service Corps and public secondary schools) to establish anti-trafficking clubs. The motivation behind this is that classmates or peers can detect cases of trafficking more, and *'in fact, they can go to places that we cannot go to because we are busy with office work'* **(Interviews with Jane and Eunice, NGO officials).**

Awareness campaigns also involve partnerships between NGO and security agencies- including the NIS (Nigeria Immigration Service) which is responsible for monitoring movements along Nigerian borders in the study locations. The NGO and NAPTIP officials explained that their sensitization programmes also target security personnel to alert them on the tactics of traffickers and how to handle such. In some cases, NGO officials reiterated to me that they felt the security agencies needed to be regularly updated on identifying cases of trafficking. Similarly, *'after the enactment of the law against trafficking in the country, the Nigerian government mandated all the security agencies- the Police, Immigration, Civil Defence- all of them- to have anti-trafficking section to combat the menace'* **(NIS, Head of Anti- trafficking Unit).**

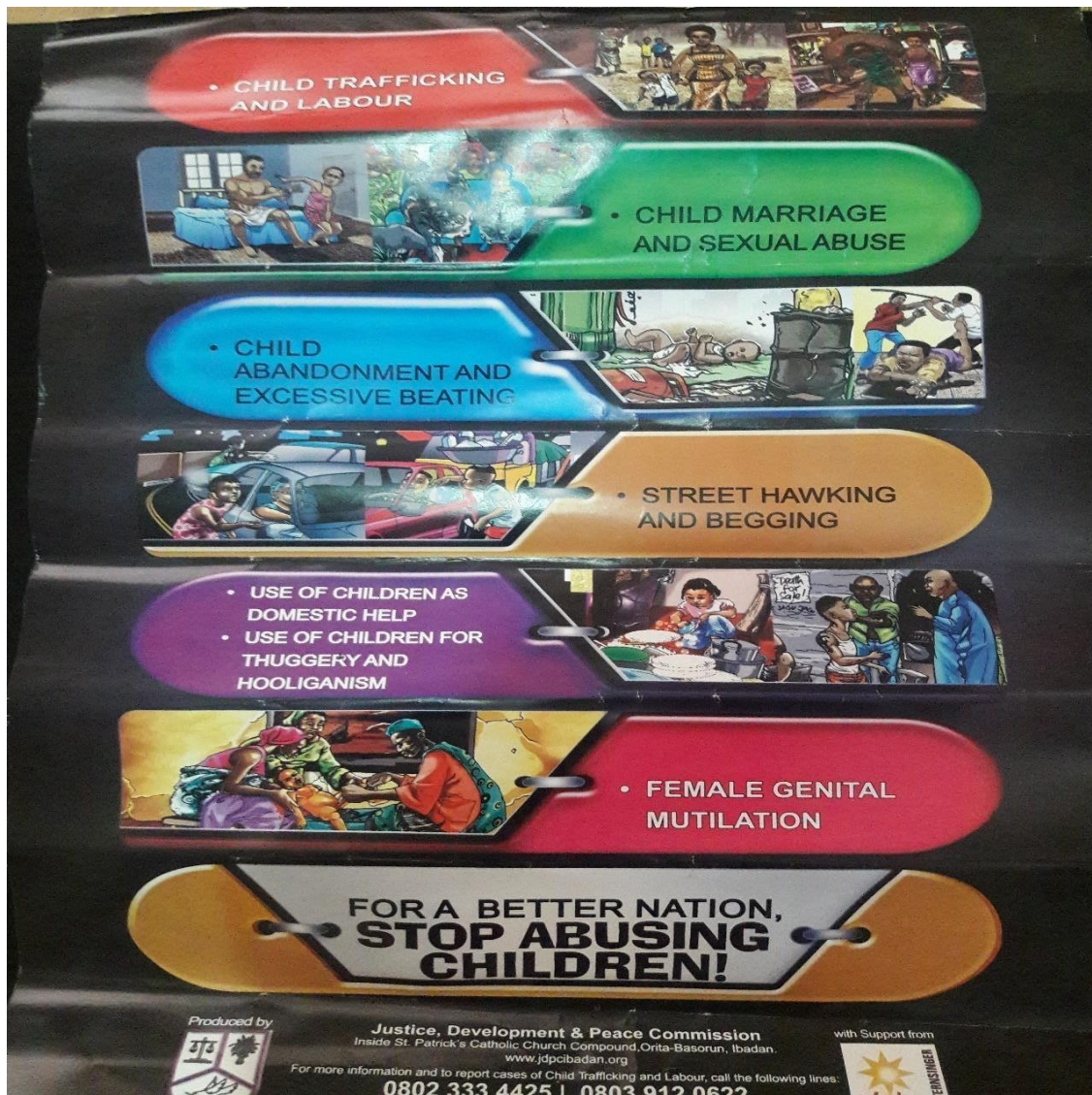


Image 20: A snapshot view of what constitutes child abuse in an NGO material.

- FÍFÍ OMỌ SÒWÒ ERÙ
- LÍLO OMỌ LỌNÀ ÀÌTỌ

- ÌFIPÁ BÀ OMỌDÉ BÌRIN LÒPÒ
- FÍFÍ OMỌDÉ 'BÌRIN F'ÒKỌ

- FÍFÍ OMỌ SÍLẸ LÁITÓJỌ
- NÍNA OMỌ RẸ KỌJÁ ÀÀLÀ

- KÍKIRI OJÀ LÓJÚ PÓPÓ
- BÁÁRÀ TÍTỌRỌ

- FÍFÍ OMỌDÉ SE OMỌDỌ
- LÍLO OMỌDÉ FÚN ÌWA ÌPÁNLE ÀTÌ JÀGÍDÍJÀGAN

- ABẸ DÍDÁ F'OMỌDÉ BÌRIN

FÚN ORÍLẸ ÈDÈ TÍ Ó DÁRA,
DẸKUN ÌLÒKULÒ
ÀWỌN OMỌDÉ

Ipèsè látì

Justice, Development & Peace Commission
Inside St. Patrick's Catholic Church Compound, Orita-Basorun, Ibadan.
www.jdpclbadan.org
Fún àmójúto ètò omọ, è pé àwọn èrọ Ìbáńsọrọ yìí
0802 333 4425 | 0803 912 0622
Atẹ̀jìsẹ̀: jdpclbadan@gmail.com

Pẹ̀lù Ìrànigbà látì

2017

April | 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

May | 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26

June | 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16

Image 21: The same message in Image 20 presented in local (Yoruba) language.

All these mean that in addition to the abundance of information on trafficking through awareness campaigns, there has been increase in surveillance and raids by security operatives to address the issue of trafficking and associated problems including CDW. According to Michael, a primary intermediary (and confirmed by some adults in the villages):

... For example, when you are travelling to Benue now, you will be stopped at different points...you will see law enforcement agents looking for cases of child trafficking- maybe when they see groups of boys and girls in a car or bus... they will stop the bus and ask some questions
(Michael).

Also, according to participants, officials of the NIS (Nigeria Immigration Service) visit markets and other public places to arrest child domestic workers (especially when children are found in such places or roaming the streets during school hours). NIS officers confirmed that they were involved in such arrests, explaining further that it is often difficult to separate cases of trafficking from those that are not- for example, in many cases, people who were either above eighteen, or not working in domestic service had been victims of such raids in times past **(Interviews with Samson and Remi).**

The bigger issue then is the fact that these officials are indiscriminately arresting children under the suspicion that they are victims of trafficking. In other words, instead of using a social welfare or social justice approach, anti-trafficking initiatives ultimately promote a criminal justice approach which traumatises families and children caught up in the swoops.

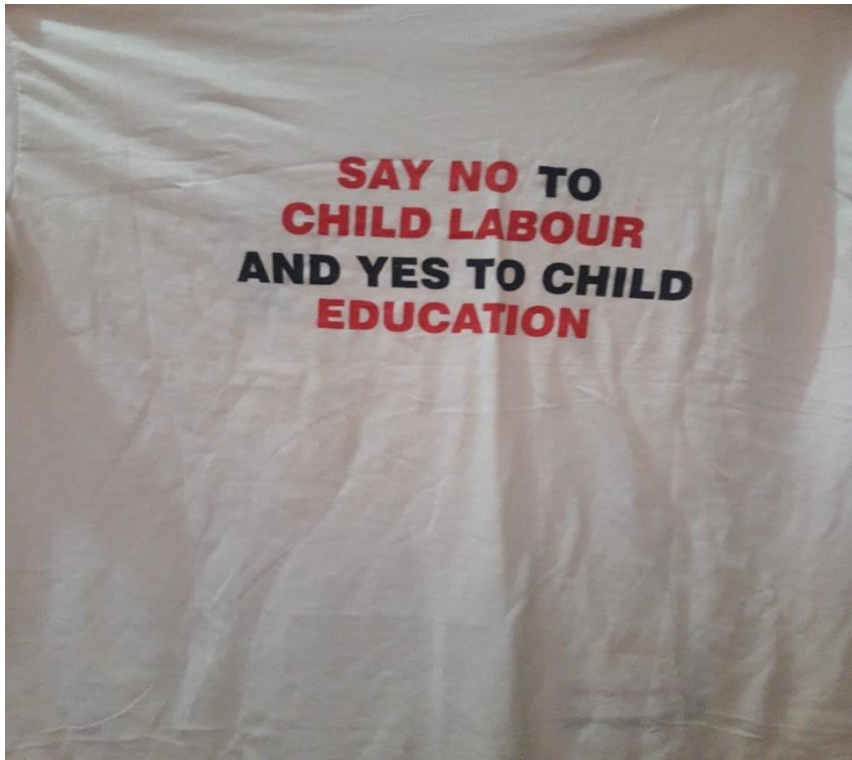


Image22: Campaign tee-shirt (presented to me by one of the NGOs) depicting the message that they believe the parents are not getting. Here again, the binary depiction of work and school is evident. It does not tell whether educational facilities are readily available and accessible to all; whether children are working after school or working because they have been sent away from school and attempting to go back to school; or whether they are working during the holidays to supplement parent's income to be able to buy new books or new school uniforms.

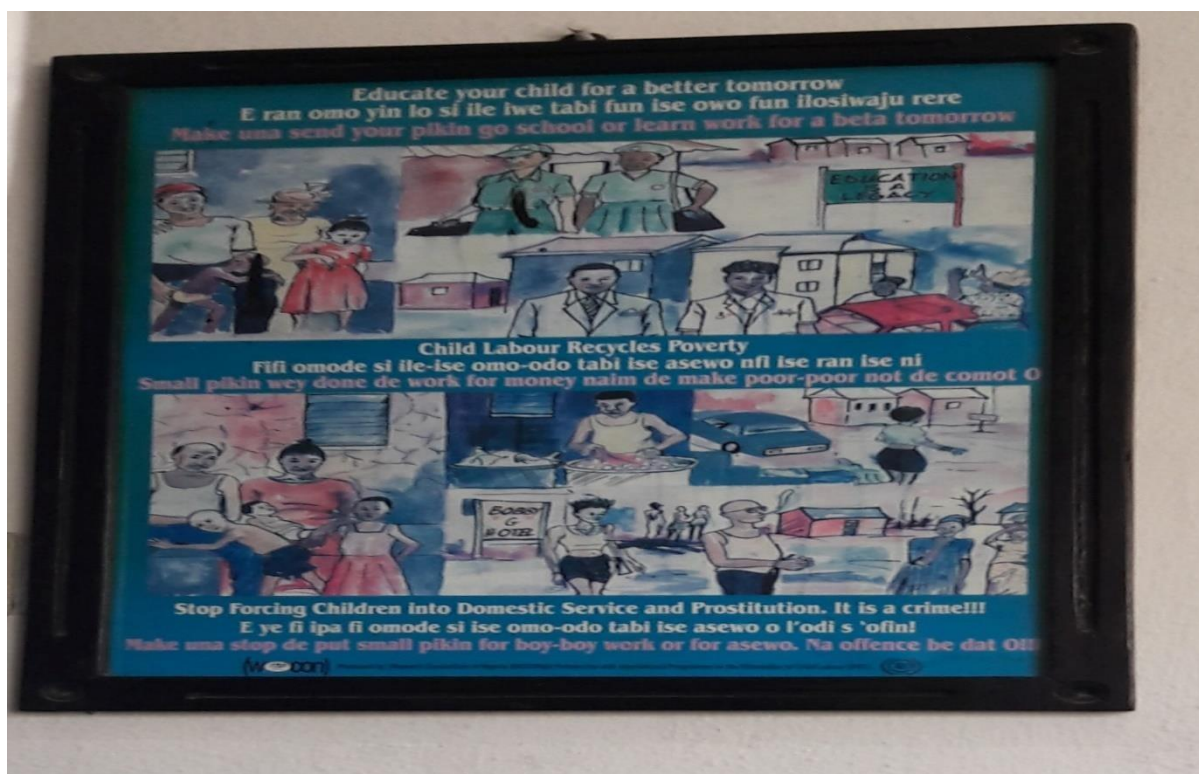


Image 23: Campaign against child labour, CDW and child prostitution (English, Pidgin English, and Yoruba language). The first part of the poster shows that educated children would go on to have good (white-collar) jobs. The second part with its message is clear: stop forcing (my emphasis) children into domestic service and prostitution. "It is a crime!!!", as exclaimed on the poster. None of the messages mentioned the cost of education or the other factors leading to CDW and/or child prostitution. The next section examines how the current and former child domestic workers, parents, and adults in some of the communities that I visited receive these campaigns and the wider anti-trafficking and anti-CDW advocacy and campaigns in Nigeria.

6.3. Knowledge and Perception of Trafficking by Child Domestic Workers and their Parents

I found that contrary to popular rhetoric, most of the parents and children had a fairly good knowledge of what is popularly called trafficking or modern slavery- even if they did not view their situations as such. For

example, in one group discussion, some child domestic workers were asked whether they knew anything about child trafficking and/or any government policy regarding working children. Below is an excerpt of their responses:

Sewa: *I know of child abuse.*

Salome: *I know of human trafficking. Trafficking is the transportation of human beings from one country to another by means of...for hard labour, slavery, sexual exploitation.*

Peter: *Then, what else?*

Destiny: *Child rights... '*

At another time, a parent said:

... they (the government) said that child labour or child domestic work is not good...' (Mrs Anjola).

Participants noted that they had learnt about these issues in school, through the media and in general discussions in marketplaces, religious meetings, among others. For example, in one of the villages, while trying to explain trafficking and anti-trafficking campaigns to some adults before asking them questions about their experiences, they all chorused:

Everyone listens to such on the radio.

Caretakers and intermediaries also explained to me in different ways that they were aware of such topics and associated policies and campaigns against them. In the words of Mrs Balikis, a caretaker:

Yes, we hear about child trafficking, and hawking around after school and all that...Like taking underage kids to work...and most of them do not even know how much they are being paid. It is the people that collect money on their behalf... (Mrs Balikis).

Michael, an intermediary also had this to say:

There are laws against taking underaged children, children that are not old enough to work- I am aware of such, or cases where children are being forced to work (Michael).

And Abraham, a Christian missionary and a primary intermediary, noted:

...we are aware of the Child Rights Act... We are also aware of issues of human trafficking, and child trafficking laws, so we know much of these laws... (Abraham)

Even those who were not aware of the existing policies against child trafficking, child labour and CDW held views which suggested that they were aware of the abolitionist discourse surrounding it:

... Hmmm, I don't know much about it (child trafficking) other than the fact that they say we are not supposed to be having little maids... (Mrs Hilda)

...I also heard that they want the children to be in school... that once they are eighteen, the law enforcement officers will not bother you (Mrs Williams).

In short, although there were some participants who claimed not to have any knowledge of trafficking, the majority could demonstrate basic understanding of what they believe trafficking is and what they think the government and/or anti-trafficking campaigners are saying. However, they were not receptive to these messages because they felt aspects of the messages did not properly reflect the circumstances or the conditions in their homes and communities as summed up by Mrs Edwin:

... we keep hearing that such movement is classified as child trafficking, but...they are difficult to enforce, and everybody knows that...some people are facing real economic problems....and there is genuine demand in some places... (Mrs Edwin).

Although many acknowledged that there are exploitative tendencies in CDW and felt these need to be addressed, they did not view child rescue policies and strategies as helpful in this regard given the constraints that many face, and the absence of a formal support system. According to Mrs Williams, a caretaker:

...there is nothing called 'child labour' because these fingers are not equal (a local proverb)...The government that is saying so, are they ready to take care of the children and their parents?...no... but some people are... (Mrs Williams).

For the participants, the CDW phenomenon is best viewed as a form of informal support systems for all parties involved. It addresses the needs of caretakers, child domestic workers and their families alike: from care and support constraints to financial, socio-cultural, and economic support as discussed in chapter four. Therefore, NGO and government's campaign messages and strategies have largely fallen on deaf ears as the next section discusses.

6.4.Responses to Child Rescue Strategies

Most participants felt that awareness campaigns and abolitionist policies in general are not in their best interests, and as such they develop a range of alternatives in their bid '*to survive with whatever they have*' according to one primary intermediary. In the previous chapters, we saw how CDW can be a means of sustenance, addressing vulnerabilities and parental burden release. In some cases, a whole community have openly condemned NAPTIP's rescue mission in times past describing such as an interference to their means of livelihoods- especially as the organisation's sensitization and rehabilitation schemes did not include alternative sources of livelihood for the 'victims' (see Nwogu, 2007:158 for a detailed account).

As discussed in the previous section, parents and guardians are not always unaware of the potential risks of sending their children out for domestic service. Instead, many see it as a calculated risk for themselves and their children, having weighed up the choice between the child remaining with them versus living with others. And to them, regardless of the media and

government narratives about the arrangement, it remains a real alternative:

... If the parents do not have the means, and they have people that are willing to help them, you cannot say the children should not go or that they cannot work, that is like punishing the poor. I mean if the means are not there, the children will not die of starvation if there is an opportunity for them to be fed somewhere else. ... (Mrs Anjola, group one)

Daniel, the 11-year-old I introduced in chapter four mentioned that he would not be happy if he were prevented from working as it meant he might not have anything to eat at times. When I asked why he thought that way, he explained further:

...Because there have been days like that; days that we went to bed hungry, without anything to eat, and days that we go around stores in the neighbourhood to buy on credit (Daniel)

So, it is not that these parents take pride in or derive satisfaction from sending their children out, nor is it the case that they have any illusions about the potential for exploitation that their children may be exposed to, but it is a matter of what known (and feasible) alternatives are available to them. Mrs Oni, who I introduced in chapter four had this to say of her two children in domestic service:

Sometimes, they may not be properly fed; they may be physically assaulted at work, and in some cases, they may not give them what they need in school. So, it is not as if all is perfect where they are, but they know that things are even worse at home in terms of basic provisions, so they'd rather endure whatever ill- treatment they face there, and they do not even tell me some of these things...

Yet, given the situation at home with her husband's continued joblessness and her unstable income, she noted that in spite of the above,

...the children cannot really come back home because they know the way things are (Mrs Oni).

Similarly, the above sheds light on the weaknesses of claiming that most child domestic workers, even in cases of abuse and exploitation, are ignorant of their rights, and they often do not know where they can go to for support (Flores-Oebanda 2004; Chodhuary et al, 2013). Such claims also assume that there exists a functioning formal support system or one that is readily available and easily accessible to child domestic workers and their parents. Quite inarguably, the challenge for many is not lack of awareness of their rights or of the perils of trafficking and domestic work, but of the fear of losing the only reliable means through which they attempt to take care of themselves and pursue life's goals.

Further, child rescue narratives do not usually consider the conditions in which children were living before becoming domestic workers. It is often taken for granted that they had a perfect life that was only interrupted by their entry into domestic service. The opposition to their work is 'confusing' (as one child domestic worker puts it) and does not make sense- for they would not be in domestic work if they had a better alternative at home in the first place. Many of the child domestic workers in my study from rural areas especially had helped on the farm at a very young age and this is why some preferred to migrate for work in the city, a point also captured by O'Connell Davidson and Farrow (2007):

when rural children reach the age at which they would normally be expected to start earning independently and/or contributing to the family income, they are often unable to find paid work in their home area. Many therefore migrate to where work is available, a decision that is often viewed as positive by both the children concerned and their parents (p23).

Additionally, as discussed in chapters 4 and 5, the idea that education is not compatible with work is flawed as numerous studies have shown (see for example, Okyere, 2012; Tambo, 2014; Howard 2017 among others), yet NGO and government officials in this study are still guided by such misconception. In cases where working in domestic service was in exchange for education, the children involved saw it as a strategy for realising their basic rights to education; an opportunity which is not guaranteed them by the government, international organisations, NGOs, or others seeking to stop their work. This clearly deviates from the dominant narrative that presents CDW as a hindrance to the realisation of education (see Black, 2002:21; Tetteh, 2011 for example).

Likewise, for individuals like James and Motou among others, it was not that they only had positive experiences of migration and work, but that their options were limited at the time of migration, which made opposition to their migration or work at the time unacceptable to them. Thus, to many child domestic workers and/or their parents, working in domestic service is only a short-term arrangement, which although campaigners often depict as misplaced and distorted (see among others Aderinto, 2014), presents them with some form of pathway out of their disadvantaged position. Ali, a former child domestic worker, who is now a trained fashion designer described working in domestic service and child rescue campaigns like this:

...I think that kind of job is just a temporary thing- a stepping- stone to have something better to do in life...I cannot tell my younger one for example not to work for money now. He does not have anything to do now, and if he wants to go to school, there is no money for him to go to school... it is only a stepping-stone; a temporary work till he is able to learn a trade or do something else...(Ali).

A major reason for the defiance of the parties involved in CDW to rescue missions and campaigns is a different understanding of childhood to that which guides the anti-trafficking and anti-CDW campaigns. One of the

assumptions of the child rescue discourse is that all persons under eighteen constitute a homogenous group (see Sanghera, 2005; Baird, 2008; Nieuwenhuys, 2009; Hopkins and Sriprakash, 2011 for a criticism). While NAPTIP and CRA, in conformity with international conventions such as the UNCRC take a child to be anyone under eighteen (although section 23a of the NAPTIP Act only prohibits the engagement of anyone below the age of twelve in domestic service), this view does not hold in many regards in the study locations. For example, Zainab, a seventeen-year-old domestic worker associated naivety with childhood, but she did not consider herself to be a child:

No one is naïve or innocent like that these days. Even my little sister (who is seven years old) knows many things that you probably cannot imagine **(Zainab)**

Similarly, for John, a sixteen-year-old boy, childhood represents inexperience, and since he has learned to survive under harsh conditions, he did not consider himself a child. According to him:

I am not a child because I have seen some things in life; I have seen how I can make it in the world **(John, Group2)**

To a caretaker:

... Under-12s are still children, but age thirteen upwards are teenagers, right? So, they are not the same... a teenager is not a child... the treatment should be different...you see a fifteen-year- old girl getting married. Even most of our parents in the past got married by age fifteen or sixteen... **(Mrs Olaitan).**

And a parent described her fifteen-year-old son thus:

... he is not a child. He is fifteen years old, but he is different from a seven or ten-year old. He knows the realities that we are faced with for example... so he can decide to live somewhere else by himself... or at least tell me if he is not satisfied there **(Mrs Abeni).**

So, participants differentiated between early childhood and late childhood or adolescence like it has been discovered elsewhere in West Africa (Alber,

2011:86; Hashim and Thorsen, 2011:x-xi); and the distinction as evidenced in some of the responses above was not necessarily based on chronological stage of development, but on the life experiences of individuals. Perhaps, no one captured such local understanding like Ruth, a former child domestic worker:

Peter: *So, what age do you think is ideal to move out to work?*

Ruth: *It is not about age; age is just a number in your head...*

Given the above differences in perception of work and childhood, a recurring theme in my interactions with government and NGO officials was how some children (with or without the support of their parents) could be relentless in their attempt to migrate and/or work. Similar to what had been reported in Togo about 'victims' of child trafficking in domestic work returning to work after their rescue (see GMACL, 2014:18), these officials explained to me that even when potential young migrants or 'victims' of child trafficking had been repeatedly warned against migrating for work, and subsequently arrested and reunited with their families, they almost always find ways to return to work. According to Samson, an immigration officer:

There are countless numbers of children from Benin Republic and Togo that we have apprehended and returned home that would later come with their parents to be allowed to come into Nigeria... they will tell you that they are here to work...

Alaba, an NGO official, also expressed her puzzle:

...the surprising thing is that... we were told that by the time the immigration officers take some of the children back to their countries, some of the children would be back Nigeria before some of the immigration officers- because there are other routes that the children and their contacts use... (Interview with Alaba)

The above corresponds with Howard (2012)'s findings that young migrants and their parents do not only ignore anti-trafficking messages and warnings

against migration for work, but also actively explore alternative means of achieving their aims when the legal channels are blocked or too difficult to navigate. From my interactions especially in the villages, young migrants or child domestic workers (and/or their parents) see such actions as a normal response to anti-trafficking messages and campaigns that do not bear semblance with their realities.

As the legal means of migration and working in domestic service (or other sectors) are criminalised, illegal channels become viable for many. These, according to participants may include migrating through illegal routes or engaging intermediaries who know how to do so, lying to officials about their motive for migration (for example, saying there were going to continue their education or returning to their parents after holidays in the village), bribing officials at the borders, or bribing officials during raids (Olayiwola, 2019). These may lead some intermediaries to charge additional fees as 'transportation' or other related fees, which are borne directly by the caretakers and indirectly by the child domestic workers. Castle and Diarra (2003)'s study in Mali also associated the proliferation of intermediaries in the migration chain with the tightening of the formal migration channels.

The above shows that child rescue efforts may contribute to the exploitation of child domestic workers as parents, children as well as intermediaries try to navigate the barriers and difficulties posed by security agents. Thus, although a lot has been written about the evils of intermediaries and/or 'wickedness' of caretakers in their treatment of child domestic workers (See for example, HRW, 2006; ILO-IPEC, 2013), this account reveals how their demands and expectations of child domestic workers might be influenced by child rescue policies and strategies. For example, as caretakers and intermediaries bear the additional costs as explained above, child domestic workers often suffer the consequences as some caretakers may seek to recoup or get maximum value for their money (Olayiwola, 2019). Thus, in

addition to performing domestic duties, child domestic workers may be asked to do tasks they would ordinarily not be expected to do if the fees were cheaper; they may be engaged in income-generating activities such as hawking; or some restaurant owners that would normally require two or more child domestic workers may recruit less and overtask them ***(Interviews with Michael and Sadia)***.

Also, as intervention measures are mainly targeted at the supply of child domestic workers and often ignore the demand factors as discussed in chapter four, a black market for CDW continues to thrive as individuals in need of childcare, adult care or disability support among others are always willing to recruit them in the absence of viable alternatives. Thus, some adult caretakers expressed frustrations at child rescue campaigns and policies because such leave them with little or no room to meet their needs. In this category are some like Mrs Adeyemi who insisted that they always find ways to recruit someone- at whatever costs. Others like Mrs Williams explained that they do not always manage to get child domestic workers. So, they may rely on friends, family members, or neighbours who can help them, or who have child domestic workers that can occasionally help them. Child rescuers do not seem to understand how their activities could be contributing to the CDW market in this regard. The head of anti-trafficking unit in NIS (Nigeria Immigration Service) in one of the major cities put it like this:

when something is banned – when something becomes an outlaw- anywhere in the world, it becomes more expensive and more lucrative... because we are going after them, arresting them, prosecuting them...it seems more and more people want to know what the whole thing is about...(Samson)

Similar to the above, it was made clear to me that when cases of extreme exploitation- such as non-payment of wages are discovered, people do not report such to government agencies for fear of being misunderstood and/or

prosecuted themselves, or even their children being deprived of the means of livelihood. Below is an excerpt from a group discussion in one of the villages:

Peter: *How about children that are not treated well by their adult caretakers?*

Mrs Olubunmi: *...the other time, two children were taken to work with a caretaker, and they were well-behaved. So, when the parents went to visit them, the caretaker commended them and requested for more children like them. That was when the mother refused... that she could not give them any other child because she had not received anything from the ones with them. It was then that they discovered that the intermediary had collected their salaries for two years without giving anything to the parents. So, the caretakers eventually drafted a written agreement with the parents, and the children are still there today. And of course, the children are wiser now... They have savings of their own now, and they use such money to buy (some other) things for themselves...*

Peter: *Did they not report to the police?*

Mrs Sangojimi: *Ah ah! (Nigerian exclamation meaning 'common, don't be silly')*

Mrs Olubunmi: *Not at all...they resolved it among themselves!*

Peter: *Why did they not report to the police?*

All participants: *(chorus) No o!*

Mrs Olubunmi: *You know with the government's stand that children should not be in domestic service again... they are saying children should not be lured into slavery now. So, you cannot go to report such to the law enforcement agents; such matters are usually resolved among the parties involved* **(Group 1)**

Others in the group echoed the same point and explained that as much as informal means of resolving issues are helpful, they are also limited in addressing all potential cases of exploitation and abuse that may result in a CDW arrangement. They however preferred this to '*handing themselves*

over to the police' like Sadia, a primary intermediary puts it. To sum up, these findings are in conformity with other studies that show that legislation or specific interventions against working children in general without due consideration of the context can actually have worse consequences on the children and their families (see for example, Rahman et al, 1999; O'Neill 2003; Jacquemin, 2006; Bourdillon et al, 2011:1-6,181-192 among others).

6.5. Rescue Missions and the Production of Ignorance

It is clear from the above that ideas guiding rescue missions in Nigeria are different from the realities of child domestic workers and their parents. As stated by Sanghera (2005:4), anti-trafficking efforts are often guided by mythologies rather than empirical evidence. In this section, I will show how NGOs and government agencies are seemingly oblivious to the problem they are meant to be solving and argue that most of the strategies employed by NGOs and government agencies in their fight against trafficking- and associated problems including CDW- are guided by stereotypes and fallacies that differ from the realities of the people they are trying to rescue. I argue additionally that the sensitisation campaigns also result in generating and spreading false information that could potentially harm those the people they are trying to help, beyond the actual harm and distress caused those who are mistakenly caught-up in the anti-trafficking swoops in markets.

Rescue agents claimed that child trafficking for domestic work involved a closely knitted network recruiting children (Tade, 2014; Adesina, 2014) or some wily individuals who deceive or coerce the child or their parents/guardians by feeding them false promises about life elsewhere (HRW, 2006:54; Blagbrough, 2010: 90; ILO-IPEC, 2014:8). However, this study found that what is common is a loose arrangement that thrives on informal support systems as shown in the previous chapter. According to

several participants, it is almost impossible to see anyone travelling with many children at once nowadays just as they also explained that parents do not just release their children 'anyhow', and intermediaries do not just go to communities to recruit children. For example, in one session in a village when I asked how people move to the major cities, they chorused: *Everyone knows somebody or has relatives in Lagos or Ibadan* (**Group1**).

Who counts as 'relatives' or 'somebody' in this regard varies widely as outlined in chapter four. They may be family members, friends, colleagues, or neighbours assisting their 'brothers' or 'sisters' in need. Another study of CDW in the country confirmed the existence of such intermediaries who are merely 'matchmakers within informal networks and often without any monetary reward' (Tambo, 2014:180). For example, I interacted with a man who worked as a Christian missionary in some of the poorest rural areas in the study sites and assisted in placing their children into households in the cities where they could be educated. The parents and the children received no monetary rewards whatsoever except discretionary gifts by the host families and in addition to the parents and children being free to visit each other, they are free to discontinue the arrangement if they were not satisfied. Further, in cases where the children were found not to be well-catered for, they are usually withdrawn from the host families, and that is why he keeps getting children from the villages (**Interview with Abraham**).

Intermediaries like these make the idea of 'trafficking' for domestic service highly problematic because it presupposes that the aim is always to exploit the labour of children or make profits off them which is hardly the case in this regard. Some are guided purely by altruistic motives relating to the child's welfare and best interests where they witness the day-to-day struggle by the parents to cater for the child. This is especially true when a family elsewhere is ready and willing to assist with meeting the child's

welfare and developmental needs in exchange for the same services the child would have provided in their parental homes. Yet, even when 'exploitation' or profitmaking is involved, the arrangement is hardly as malevolent as depicted in abolitionist literature.

In some instances, the reward for the intermediaries might be what the parents give as a sign of appreciation- which may range from monetary payments to assisting the intermediaries on their own farms (in the village) in planting, weeding, or harvesting without collecting any money or goods in return. In others, there is no reward other than the maintenance of strong friendship ties and/or good reputation in the village. Living in a society with weak legal and political institutions means that these arrangements are not only normal but are also viable alternatives among the people. Indeed, not 'helping' or acting as an intermediary in such contexts may be considered a deviation from shared values. In this sense, Castle and Diarra (2003) contended that intermediaries have always played important roles in socio-economic negotiations; that intermediaries do not always receive compensation; and that the presence or intervention of an intermediary does not necessarily equal trafficking.

Also, as much as the idea of deception may be true in relation to 'sex trafficking', I found no evidence of such in relation to my study. In almost every instance, not only were children and/or their parents aware of what they would be doing, but they also considered the arrangement as normal if they received the promised returns for their labour. As John, a child domestic worker explained:

What is bad is children being maltreated, not the work itself (John)

Lucy, another child domestic worker also noted:

...Well, it is good if the children are well-treated as domestic workers, and they are enrolled in school for example (Lucy)

And to Bunmi, an adult in one of the villages:

... the money that the children are making is not a problem here; the problem is that some people are not treating the children well...

(Bunmi, group 1)

In short, what is abhorrent is the maltreatment of children, or the failure of the caretakers or intermediaries to fulfil their parts of the agreement (Castle and Diarra, 2003; Alber, 2011).

6.5.1. What Alternatives are there?

The fact that some child domestic workers as well as their parents see working in domestic service as such does not mean that they are proud of the work. Indeed, for many of them, it is only a better option compared to the alternatives available to them. This also influences how parents and/or their children view rescue efforts- they are not against such if there were better provisions and/or alternatives for them.

For rural residents, farm work is almost always a part of everyday life. However, to many rural migrants, working in domestic service might be an opportunity to escape the drudgery of village life. This was evident as none of the child domestic workers from rural areas mentioned preference for farm work compared to CDW. For many, the workload in domestic service is light compared to farm work:

I prefer being a domestic worker because being on the farm at times is tiring. You may be on the farm for long...So, working at home is preferable for me (Temi).

... all we do in the village is farm work, and farming is harder than what I do now (as a domestic worker) (Uche).

The above is consistent with Sommerfelt (2003)'s study in Morocco where many child domestic workers saw their work in the city as a way of escaping the difficulties of doing agricultural work without mechanised equipment and would rather remain in (unsatisfactory) domestic service rather than

return to their villages. Similarly, working in domestic service, for many, is a way of escaping or postponing being married off at an early age or avoiding some problems with their parents (Alber, 2011; Jensen, 2014). In another instance, after explaining that most parents would want their children to be educated now, Michael explained further:

...The people that allow their children to work now are mostly those who have maybe completed their secondary education or do not have the means to continue their education in our hometown or village. So, children like that may tell their parents that they would like to move out of the village to 'foreign lands' to work.

The same point was reiterated to me in a group discussion in one of the villages. Itunu, an adult who worked as a domestic worker many years ago explained it like this:

*You see, there are some young people that have no one to support them after secondary education for example... so they end up travelling to work... in domestic service... **(Itunu, group 1).***

While other economic activities- like hawking- may also be connected to CDW, they could also be independent options for many children in Nigeria (see Folami, 2011:46). However, the difficulties of raising capital to start a business, and the unpredictability of sales were some of the factors that discouraged many from this option. Even with regards to parents, one woman told of how she quit her hawking business to become a domestic worker because she was making more money from the latter (**Mrs Abeni**).



Image 24: Alternative to CDW? Roadside selling and/or hawking in Ibadan.

Another option for children from poor and vulnerable homes is street life. As Chike reminded me when we saw some street children as we were talking after my recorded interview with him on the way back to his caretaker's shop, *'there are many children on the streets in Nigeria, that is another option if one is not living where they can be catered for (as a child domestic worker)'*. For some of these children, begging, scavenging, working as porters in popular markets, engagement in sex work or in commercial transport system as passenger-driver intermediaries is a way of life, and in the course of exposure to the street subcultures, some turn to crime and deviant behaviours (Folami, 2011:46; PIND, 2017).

According to Basirat:

*Well, if I were staying with my parents, I would probably be out of school now; I would probably be learning a trade now. But being away from home is an opportunity for me to go to school...Also, if I had remained with my parents, I would probably be wandering about...**(Basirat)**.*

Similar to Chike and Basirat above, Mrs Abeni had this to say in relation to her son in domestic service:

... there are many children that are just roaming the streets, and in some cases too, there are people that maltreat the children. That is why... I cannot allow my children to work for money. He is not being exploited where he is... I know the workload is not too much for him there (Mrs Abeni).

Her son was living with a relative of one of his teachers who was sponsoring his education and taking care of him without paying him or the mum any salary at the time of the study. To her, the fact that payment of salary was not involved helped both the caretaker and her son against certain expectations that come with paid employment.

Also, for some that may be 'fortunate' to be rescued by NGOs or government agents, living in welfare home is another option, but not many Nigerians see this as a viable option because of the economic constraints that such homes operate under. The head of anti-trafficking unit of the NIS (Nigeria Immigration Service) in Ibadan had this to say about such homes:

...we do not just put children into welfare homes for the government without going back to check on them. These welfare homes are mostly run by donations from private individuals, NGOs taking rice and foodstuffs like that to them. We too cannot go there empty-handed when we know there are kids who are suffering there...

Closely related to the above is the short-term nature of rescue programmes. It has been established that the system of patronage whereby some individuals are helped materially and/or financially over a specific period of time is insufficient to address the fundamental issues in trafficking or child labour (Feneyrol, 2005: 27; ILO, 2017c:x), but child rescue operations are still guided by this approach. For example, an 'action programme for the elimination of child labour in Ogun state' sponsored by ILO-IPEC was undertaken by one of the NGOs between 2012 and 2014. The

programme involved the withdrawal of more than 100 children from work and putting them in schools and vocation centres, but the programme has no record of the lives of these individuals after the project. Thus, as much as it was lauded as a success model back then, the town is still believed to be a 'trafficking hub' (Nwogu, 2014; Adesina, 2014; ***Interview with Leah***).

Officials of other NGOs also mentioned withdrawing children from domestic service or other forms of child labour, enrolling them in school and providing them with basic items for their education such as uniforms, school bags (***Interviews with Jane, Alaba and other NGO officials***). There can be little doubt that these programmes assisted the children in the immediate term, however, the outcomes beyond the rescue period are always unknown. In other words, while these short-term 'achievements' or 'success stories' may be heralded or serve as the basis for attracting more funding and recognition, the reality is that their long-term outcomes are unknown. More importantly, while empowerment programmes may help locals start small businesses, they do not necessarily cater for the shocks and downturns that they are susceptible to, or the (near) absence of basic infrastructures such as good roads and electricity that affect the marketing of their products. For those that are farmers for example, the problems of preservation and marketing of their crops, and the fluctuations in prices of agricultural products mean they remain vulnerable and susceptible to economic shocks—a major reason why some send their children into domestic service during the 'lean' months or years as explained in a previous chapter. So, to the poor or most vulnerable, the problem is not just that they are faced with absolute poverty, but that the obstacles that contribute to their poverty are not addressed. Thus, one study of rescue and re-integration of children trafficked for labour exploitation concluded that such programmes do not protect the rescued from risk of future exploitation (Donger and Bhabha, 2018).

Furthermore, in all cases, while NGO and government offices were laced with campaign posters and anti-trafficking materials, there were no such materials in public places in urban centres or anywhere in the rural areas. When I asked one official if they ever considered that their radio and TV programmes might not be reaching people without access to television or electricity in the villages as my observation in the villages showed, she would go on to explain that '*seriously, the central government is the one tasked with such responsibilities...*' on one hand, and on the other, that the local government or the community do '*employ the services of town criers in such cases*' (**Interview with Alaba**).

In this regard, NGOs' approach is at best lopsided- they are not addressing the supply side of 'trafficking' because most of their programmes are concentrated in the urban centres as opposed to rural areas where many young migrants or child domestic workers originate from (ILO, 2013c). The NGOs are domiciled in the urban centres, and based on funding and/or donor's agenda (Nwogu, 2014), visit some rural areas when the opportunities come up. As argued by Dorte Thorsen (2007:8) in relation to anti-trafficking discourse and policy in Burkina Faso:

In Burkina Faso, it seemed, taking on board the globalised notion of childhood was instrumental at policy level in condemning adolescents' migration and attracting funding for projects aimed to 'protect' and repatriate rural children and youth on the move, while ignoring the endemic poverty, the lack of future opportunities and the normality of migration for dispersed families in rural areas.

So, for example while Jane would explain that her organisation is wary of empowering parents because '*they often eat up the capital in no time*', she could not connect their intervention programmes with wider issues that affect the poorest households. In other words, as much as economic empowerment for parents may lead to a dependency mentality (Feneyrol, 2005:27), it is also true that the impacts of economic shocks and downturns

are most felt by low-income households. However, NGOs and government officials did not seem to understand these contexts and nuances in their operations. When I explained some of these cases to them, they were quick to say things like:

The primary responsibility of every parent is to protect your child. If you don't do that, the government will do that for you. You cannot be sending your child to work in another place and call that a bid to survive
(Alaba)

Or:

... a child is someone that is very innocent. Of a truth, some of them (the employers) take care of some of these children, but whether you take care of someone or not, that child does not belong to you **(Jane)**

Or:

The problem lies with parents- whether you are educated or not, you should not be sending your children out... they are just playing with the lives of these children... **(Eunice)**

Similarly, some officials would reply in the affirmative when asked if trafficking could be eradicated in an ideal world, and when asked how, they responded like these:

...it can be eradicated; it has to do with people getting information...
(Alaba)

... it starts with this advocacy and sensitization... if everybody knows the implications of what we are all doing, then it can be reduced, I cannot say eradication **(Jane)**

... It is a people problem, it is also a government problem, but I don't know... See, let's be sincere, we cannot eradicate, we can only reduce. We can't eradicate except there is a good system, and it will still persist, and some will still say things like it is their belief and they would want to go with it. Elimination? Eradication? Hmmm, even with good schools, and all that... Ah! (shakes her head in disbelief) **(Eunice).**

Further, towards the end of our conversation, Leah, an NGO official wanted to know some of the findings of my study, and when I shared how CDW could assist in addressing vulnerabilities and limited opportunities as explained in chapters four and five, she (and her colleague) admitted that they did not know about such cases, but she exclaimed:

That's just pure slavery; modern day slavery...

Her colleague would also ask:

*With these findings (referring to my study), do you think there is a solution to this problem because I think it is a 'generational thing' ... do you think this thing would ever be solved? **(Jane)***

I have stated the above because apart from the fact that they were genuinely baffled by some of the information I shared with them, they seemed to be busy pursuing what they did not fully understand. These instances show that as much as these child rescuers justify their actions and interventions- in particular by citing the ignorance of parents and/or child domestic workers, they did not entirely understand the situations of those they are trying to help, and the fact that their efforts are consequently sometimes misdirected. In other words, as child rescue efforts and campaigns are often about blaming individuals and exaggerating the idea of trafficking (Sharapov and Mendel, 2018: 544), they ignore structural realities that confront parents, children and/or caretakers. These parties involved in CDW on the other hand viewed it in relation to structural constraints around them. As an elderly woman asked towards the end of a session in a village:

My question bothers on this policy against children working in domestic service. I know ideally all children should be educated to a certain level before they learn a trade or get married. But if I did not have the means but would want my children to be educated, and there is opportunity for them to work and be educated... So, they are saying such children

should not work, but we are not getting any support from any government. So, I do not really get it... (Mrs Ajanaku, group one)

Overall, when I presented some of the challenges that rural dwellers and children in domestic service (or their parents) raised with me to NGO and government officials, they were evasive in their responses. For example, as much as they agreed that poverty is a major contributing factor, when I asked NGO officials about poverty, I got responses like:

'No doubt government has failed Nigerians as far as addressing poverty is concerned, but...' (Eunice)

Or when I asked government officials:

That (poverty question) is not for the NIS (Nigeria Immigration Service) to answer! (Head of Anti-trafficking unit of NIS)

In other words, as much as officials realised some of the socio-economic constraints that the poor are faced with, they subscribe to a narrative that problematises the adaptive mechanisms employed to address these constraints.

6.5.2. Blaming and Stigmatizing People, Effacing Structural Constraints

According to the ILO (2001)'s 'synthesis report on combatting trafficking in children for labour exploitation in West and Central Africa':

In all the countries studied, poverty is recognized as the main factor that forces parents to send their child with an intermediary. The decision is taken without considering the consequences, or counting the price they will pay in future, for they simply do not have a choice (p43).

Yet the report highlighted 'raising awareness' as one of the recommendations because: 'Although poverty and lack of education are the root causes of the phenomenon, the elimination of child trafficking cannot be postponed until these problems are resolved' (p48).

The conundrum from the above is if the decision (to send children out) is taken because 'they simply do not have a choice' as the ILO report states, how does 'raising awareness' resolve their dilemma? In other words, the lingering question that confound anti-trafficking campaign is: if poverty is identified as a primary cause or contributing factor of 'child trafficking', how does awareness campaign address the issue of poverty? Does awareness creation provide alternatives to the poor or give them solutions to some of their challenges?

The goal of awareness campaigns is to downplay- if not efface- the real situation of the poor. By making the education or enlightenment of the poor the target, attention shifts from those factors which make individuals susceptible to abuse and exploitation. In other words, by focusing on enlightening the poor- and not campaigning against structural inequalities and limited opportunities faced by them, the discourse suggests that the poverty of the poor is not (or cannot be) as bad or as grinding as to warrant sending their children out; that they can do without allowing their children to work 'where they do not know what will happen to them'; that they can look for support elsewhere (except that the 'elsewhere' is hardly stated); or that they can 'manage whatever they have'. As Alaba, an NGO official stated:

I think if you want to change this, it has to do with the parents. The parents have to understand what...if you are drinking garri²³, let your child drinks garri as well.

According to Eunice, another NGO official:

In as much as the economy is not as it should be... We need to help ourselves also... if we can learn to be content with whatever they have... It will go a long way!

²³ Locally processed cassava; arguably the commonest, cheapest, and readily available food item in the study locations as well as in other parts of Nigeria.

Here again, fixing the economy that is 'not as it should be' will not go nearly as far as 'learning to be content with whatever they have'. Thus, after explaining the 'push and pull factors', the same official would relate her argument about child trafficking in domestic work to 'get rich quick schemes', 'people's impatience' among other individual factors, and claimed that:

They (the parents) know the truth, they just decide to continue... It's a people problem...(Eunice)

The same narrative applies to caretakers and intermediaries. Caretakers are told that they can do without engaging children as domestic workers; that their needs are not as critical as they make them to be; or that they can seek (to) help with no strings attached whatsoever:

They (employers) think they cannot do without it(engaging children as domestic workers), but I always say they can do without it. They should just put the children in their own shoes- empathy... They should have thought like 'what if my child was the one labouring like this, would I like it? (Jane)

As Tom Slater (2014)'s critique of the UK's Centre for Social Justice (CJS)'s work on welfare and poverty shows, presenting child trafficking and/or CDW as a problem relating to individual choices means deflecting the reality of structures and processes within which exploitation occurs; emphasizing the rights violation of CDW deflects attention from the conditions that led them to CDW; and talking about the plights of CDW serve to invisibilise the positive outcomes of CDW. Thus, the structural causes of 'trafficking' and CDW are continually and strategically ignored in favour of individual problems- of ignorance and/or desperation- in the case of child domestic workers and/or their parents- or sheer wickedness in the case of caretakers and intermediaries.

By undermining such structural constraints, child rescue rhetoric creates doubts and uncertainties for the general public-about the plights of children

(or families with children) in domestic service. As the head of anti-trafficking unit of a government agency (Nigeria Immigration Service) in one of the sites explained when asked about the challenges with anti-trafficking efforts in general, the issue relates to wider social structures where people do not have access to quality education, decent employment, and welfare system. To him, campaigns and rescue efforts amount to '*killing the tree by cutting the foliage instead of uprooting it*' (**Interview with Adeleke**) (see Olayiwola, 2019).

6.6.Conclusion

This chapter has examined how child rescue policies are pursued in Nigeria, and how child domestic workers and their parents perceive and respond to such policies. It should be clear from the above that fundamental differences exist between what children in domestic service and/or their parents identify as their challenges and what child rescuers are pursuing. This contention around the nature of childhood and CDW shows the need to understand the construction of knowledge and ignorance of child trafficking, CDW and other child-related problems in the 'Third World' as 'an outcome of cultural and political struggles' (Schiebinger, 2004:237), and as 'a strategic ploy' or 'an active construct' (Proctor, 2008:8) as the next chapter seeks to do.

7- FURTHER DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

7.1.Introduction

This thesis explores the representation, policy discourse and reality of CDW using the views of children, parents, intermediaries, employers and organisations involved in this work arrangement. This last chapter critique the child rescue discourse and offers alternative ways of understanding the plights of working children. The first part revisits some of the major arguments of the child rescue discourse while the second section relates the criticisms to a post-colonial analysis. Next, there is a discussion of the policy implications of the findings while the concluding part of the thesis discusses its contribution to knowledge and suggests directions for future research.

7.2.Revisiting the Explanations of the Child Rescue Discourse

Every child in the world has the right to a childhood. It's that simple²⁴

The above statement by Terre des Hommes (one of the NGOs working on child trafficking in West Africa) perhaps best captures the guiding principle of child rescue operations. Its simplicity is what campaigners wish everyone would understand. However, the analysis and evidence presented in this study show that childhood and child-related problems such as CDW are anything but simple. Rather, they involve complexities, nuances and contextual understandings that need to be fully explored.

'The right to a childhood' is suggestive of an image of ideal childhood as described in the theoretical framework. This ideal childhood is 'a time for children to be in school and at play, to grow strong and confident with the love of their family...(live) free from fear, safe from violence and protected

²⁴ <https://www.tdh.ch/en>

from abuse and exploitation', and because the lives of many children do not conform to this ideal, it is said that 'millions are losing out on childhood', and 'childhood is under threat'(UNICEF, 2004:3). 'The right to childhood', and 'loosing out on childhood', or the thought that 'childhood is under threat' all revolve around the notion of childhood itself. But what is childhood? As we saw in chapters two and six, there is a disjuncture between what TDH and UNICEF above, as well as child rescuers in general, mean by childhood and what participants in my fieldwork mean by childhood. For UNICEF, childhood means 'growing strong and confident with the love of family', where the family is largely taken as the nuclear unit, but for many study participants, family includes extended relations and kin groups. Also, childhood to UNICEF is about 'school and play' and 'freedom from fear and violence' but some children live in areas where schools are not available or accessible to them and where deprivation poses a real threat to their existence.

In other words, the child rescue discourse rests on simplistic conceptualisation of childhood and children's work. As I emphasized in chapter one, the major implications of such conceptualisation in relation to CDW are the superficial engagement with the structure or context within which domestic work is done, and the lack of adequate attention to the range (or lack thereof) of alternatives available to individuals within the structure. As studies such as Mann (2012), Morganti (2016) and Fay (2019) have suggested, the argument is not about whether children or vulnerable people need help, but about the kind of help that they need. Mann's ethnography with Congolese children rescued from war shows that to the rescued children, everyday life characterised by extreme anxiety and deprivation was considered more threatening than their experience of war and violence in the DRC. This account concludes that 'protection is more than about safety'(Mann, 2012:458); it is also about seeing children as

human beings who seek and deserve to make meanings of their lives in spite of difficult circumstances.

Another issue here is the framing of exploitation in relation to CDW. As argued by O'Connell Davidson (2005:140) with regards to campaigns against CSEC (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children), such campaigns are guided by the assumption that exploited children represent a unique group that needs to be rescued. However, there is no clear demarcation between the experiences of adult domestic workers and child domestic workers. The same structural factors that lead to adult's involvement in domestic service affect children. For example, in Western countries, domestic workers are mostly (irregular) migrant women- in search of opportunities (Anderson, 2001) or in some societies, they may belong to groups that are historically or culturally considered as 'social inferiors' (Coser, 1973:39). In other words, domestic work is a sector that thrives on structural inequalities- with the most deprived seeing it as a survival strategy or a solution out of their depravity. In this sense, it is important to re-emphasize (as I have throughout this thesis) that child domestic workers or their parents do not necessarily adore their work, instead they consider it as a lesser evil compared to the alternatives. Realistically for many, CDW is the antidote for hunger and deprivation as well as an opportunity to move up the social ladder even if it can be inherently exploitative.

While in general, one can argue that the many households and individuals in deep poverty and without state welfare provisions in the country constitute a huge 'reserve army of labour' (Marx, 1998 [1887]: 902) whose labour power is available for exploitation, it is equally true for these individuals (to paraphrase Joan Robinson, 2006:45) that the misery of being exploited by intermediaries or employers, or exploiting oneself in informal economic activities- in this case CDW, is nothing compared to the misery of not having alternative options. So, exploitation cannot be

properly understood without the consideration of the alternatives available to individuals.

Further, discussing exploitation in terms of acceptable or unacceptable wages or in-kind payment for CDW is no less difficult than discussing what constitutes acceptable wages for capitalist labourers. The fact is that there are varying degrees of exploitation in both formal and informal employment relations, and workers in general cannot neatly be separated into those who are exploited or 'unfree' and those who are not (Anderson, 2007:11; O'Connell Davidson, 2015:199). In this regard, CDW is better considered along a continuum that is context-dependent (Bourdillon et al, 2010:156-9).

As confirmed by other studies (such as Sommerfelt, 2003; Jacquemin, 2006; Bourdillon, 2007; Klocker, 2014), this research reveals several important points that challenge claims by child rescue campaigners such as Blagbrough (2010) that children's best interest is a secondary matter when the decision to enter domestic work is being made, as well as during the course of their stay away from home. Children's working hours vary and not all child domestic workers work excessively long hours; some were attending private schools (same as the children of their adult caretakers in some cases); some reported eating better and having better sleeping facilities than at home, and generally preferring their work sites to their homes.

There are also nuances even when we focus on the worst forms of exploitation or harm in domestic service. Children's rights are not necessarily guaranteed before they become domestic workers or engage in other forms of child labour (O'Connell Davidson and Farrow, 2007:24). Thus, it is difficult to argue, as child rescuers do, that entry into domestic work is unequivocally detrimental or harmful to the child or their developmental needs and best interests. If we consider apprenticeship in this context for example, it is a viable option in economies with limited

opportunities in the formal sector, and caretakers or 'masters' (as they are often called) often assist the trainees with start-up capital upon the completion of their training (Ekpe-Otu, 2009:30). It is also a form of social capital and insurance against risks and vulnerabilities (World Bank, 1995:87).

In this light, findings from this study contradict other studies that are sceptical about positive experiences of work reported by working children (Klocker, 2012). Klocker's study found discrepancies between former child domestic workers and current child domestic workers in their accounts of CDW with the latter reporting positive experiences of their work, and the former being more critical about their work. She argues that working children may have compelling grounds for downplaying their difficulties; and cautions that studies championing the benefits of children's work might have been constructed based on information that is at best partial. On the contrary, I found that both categories of child domestic workers have positive and negative experiences to report. In most cases, they view their work in line with a popular 'hardship ideology' in West Africa i.e. the belief that hardship or 'struggle' is sometimes necessary for development and success in life (Bledsoe, 1990; Hashim and Thorsen, 2011) as evidenced by some of the comments on their perception of their work and caretakers in chapter five.

It has also been argued that the emphasis on exploitation depicts CDW solely as an economic relationship, whereas in reality it can be a form of obligation towards members of one's own (extended) family, kin or community (Klocker, 2014). Respondents in Klocker's study for example described the obligations of employers to child domestic workers more in terms of affective issues like loving and caring for child domestic workers than in terms of wages and working conditions (Klocker, 2014:474).

7.2.1. *CDW as a violation of Children's Rights?*

The biggest reference point for the child rescue narrative is that CDW constitutes a denial of children's rights in many regards. Among others, children's rights, as contained in such documents as the UNCRC, and ILO conventions including access to education, rest and play, right to express their own views and be heard; right to health and good nutrition; right to be protected from economic exploitation and in general their 'best interests' are all said to be endangered or violated by being in domestic service (Munene and Ruto, 2010; Blagbrough, 2010; Tetteh, 2011 among others). And based on these purported denial of children's rights, child domestic workers are said to be 'modern slaves'.

However, such narratives sit uneasily with findings from this study. As noted in chapter six, the case for rescuing children from domestic service is based on the premise that the various rights were guaranteed them prior to children's entry into domestic service, or that the rights would be guaranteed by being out of domestic service. However, neither of these holds true for many working children around the world. Take the right to education for example. Apart from the fact that working in domestic service was found to contribute to children's education, rather than hinder it, arguing that children were deprived of education or formal schooling because of their work presupposes that children were going to school before becoming domestic workers or that formal schools were readily available and accessible to all. However, this is not the case for majority of children in the study locations or indeed in many West African countries where access to quality education remains a challenge.

Thus, in discussing and assessing CDW from the standpoint of children's rights or their best interests, it is not enough to emphasize the actual or potential harm that may result from it but also the benefits that are derivable from it (Bourdillon et al, 2010). I discussed the situations that some participants (mainly rural residents and parents of child domestic workers) were living under in the previous chapters, and it is within this

context that harm and benefits of CDW can be better understood. We can delve further into this by looking into the issue of malnutrition in Nigeria for example.

As noted in the methodology chapter, as much as the south-western region is economically more developed than northern Nigeria, the conditions of living in the rural areas in this region are not different from the most impoverished regions in the world. Overall, Nigeria has the highest number of children under five years in chronic malnutrition (stunting or low height-for-age) in sub-Saharan Africa with 43% of rural children more likely to be stunted (National Population Commission and ICF International 2014; USAID, 2018). With increasing inequalities, the human development indicators in the country are worse than the average for Sub-Saharan Africa (UNDP, 2018). Lack of access to healthcare, water and sanitation, among others, are some of the factors contributing to these poor human development indicators (See some of the images in the methodology chapter; and USAID, 2018). Also, the statistics for the neighbouring countries of Benin and Togo where some current and former child domestic workers that I interviewed come from are not any better. If anything, Nigeria is considered better which is why they migrate in the first place as earlier explained.

In view of these stark socio-economic realities, it is questionable whether working in domestic service- to overcome some of these challenges- is what deprives children of their childhood and dignity or their circumstances prior to working. A homeless or hungry child may be working in domestic service with poor pay (Bourdillon et al, 2010:157), but is this more 'inimical to (their) childhood' (in the words of the ILO, 2011) than being on the streets and/or starving? Therefore, if children are working to avoid starving under less-than-ideal conditions, it is not their work that predisposes them to harm, but their situation before working. The abolitionist or rescue

narrative thus amounts to 'putting the cart before the horse' (O'Connell Davidson, 2005: 142) or treating symptoms while leaving underlying causes untouched (Hart, 2015).

Evidence from this study as well as elsewhere reveals that work is not a problem for working children, but a means of overcoming problems; and as much as work can rob children of some opportunities or close some choices to them, it also opens up other choices and opportunities for them (Bourdillon et al, 2009:109). In other words, children's rights cannot be discussed in abstraction from the realities of their socio-economic environment. In this vein, Bourdillon et al (2010:161) concluded that:

Children's work and related problems can only be understood in their broader context of persistent global inequality, large-scale poverty, and the webs of power within which children are born and grow up, reflecting inequalities based on wealth, social class, gender, generation, ethnicity, etc...

Also, apart from focusing on the effects of CDW rather than the causes, such narratives do not account for variations in the experiences of children in domestic service as this thesis has shown. Temporality is also key here as explained in chapter five. So, to frame child domestic workers as 'modern slaves' or as being unfree will be inappropriate- especially since many do not become domestic workers by physical force or deception, but by economic constraints. Instead, their freedom could be explained in the fact that child domestic workers do not always accept just any offer that is presented to them; they do not always stay long with the same adult caretaker or in an abusive condition, and generally employ different strategies as explained in a previous chapter to escape bad working conditions. In short, to paraphrase Jacquemin (2006:389), the language of rights cannot get hold of the complex realities of CDW. Also, the fact that

their views are never sought in designing policies to help them is never seen as a violation of their rights to be heard.

Lastly, the market for CDW, like every other sector, is governed by the laws of demand and supply, and it does not exist only because children are forced to work and deprived of their rights (Alber, 2011:90). It also exists because of limitations in access to childcare and childcare provision in Nigeria especially for professional working women and families. Deficiencies in terms of elderly care and disability support in the Nigerian state are other factors necessitating the demand for child domestic workers.

7.2.2. A minimum age for CDW?

There were only a few child domestic workers below the age of twelve at the time of the study, but it was clear that some of them had been in domestic service before their twelfth birthday contrary to the legal provision and ILO standard. However, the minimum age approach is itself based on a notion of 'ideal childhood' and an analysis of how its legislation and enforcement affects children and society is still guided by assumptions rather than empirical evidence (Bourdillon et al, 2009).

Setting specific tasks to specific age groups imply that all individuals in certain age groups constitute a homogenous population. This is both illogical and unrealistic as individual's capacities are shaped by a range of factors including early childhood socialisation and exposure to work (Bourdillon, 2006). In the study locations for example, children that have been exposed to farm labour at a very tender age did not consider domestic work to be strenuous compared to their counterparts who had never worked on the farms. Also, there is no evidence that a twelve-year old in domestic service is exposed to more harm than a fourteen-year-old or a sixteen-year-old (Dottridge, 2008:51).

Overall, as much as intervention measures such as campaigning for children's rights, minimum age laws, or compulsory education to a certain age have failed to protect children from exploitation, international

organisations as well as NGOs backed by rich countries continue to sponsor these policies in the poor countries of the world (Myers and Boyden, 1998). The reason for this is better understood within a post-colonial theoretical lens as the next section shows.

7.3.A Post-Colonial Critique of the Child Rescue Discourse and Policy

A post-colonial approach compels researchers to look beyond (not overlook) children in domestic service to the structure of inequalities within which CDW occurs; it requires moving beyond discourses of exploitation and child rescue, as constructed within and by dominant western theories and epistemologies, to the role of Western institutions and child saviours in creating and perpetrating them (Klocker, 2014: 466). Thus, in this section, I refer to post-colonial theory especially Spivak's explanation of epistemic violence and the palimpsestic nature of western knowledge- in this case, the dominant child rescue discourse.

7.3.1. *Epistemic Violence and CDW*

Of course, it would be preposterous to assume that all child rescuers are oblivious of the complexities and nuances surrounding children's entry into and experience of domestic service like some of the NGO and government officials that I interacted with. However, they do nonetheless continue to be guided by a notion of childhood that is to be protected from the realities of the adult world; a childhood that is best protected within the (nuclear) family and one that can be lost outside of the home. So, children whose homes or families may be characterised by absolute or relative deprivation and/or limited opportunities, are to keep waiting for the child rescuers or a non-existing state welfare system in countries like Nigeria in their quest to overcome these socio-economic disadvantages.

Without denying the abusive and exploitative tendencies inherent in domestic service, this thesis holds that it also has many positives that are

almost always absent or downgraded in child rescue discourse. Thus, epistemic violence in this context is about the effacing of the structural determinants or factors leading to the engagement of children in domestic work to the detriment of finding more effective measures, and how the risks and negative tendencies in CDW are exaggerated- at the expense of its benefits- to become the dominant discourse.

In addition to other benefits accruable from working in domestic service that my own investigation has shown, Erdmute Alber's analysis of the practice of sending young girls out as housemaids among the Lokpa people in Benin revealed that among other socio-economic benefits, it contributed to decline in the practice of betrothing small children. By migrating to work to acquire a trousseau and/or capital for business, girls that would have otherwise been married at a younger age could go into marriage later in life. This time of working as an adolescent is locally conceived as 'opening the eyes', 'going on a search' or 'going on adventure' (Alber, 2011:86-87) in addition to earning money. Thus, even when young girls were aware that the working conditions were not ideal, they would often migrate of their own freewill, with their parents and other adults in the village admitting that it was almost impossible to stop them.

As working in domestic service has positives, not only negatives, the question is: why are such positives always absent or relegated in favour of the negatives? This relates to the power of 'the discourse of condemnation' as Alber calls it (Alber, 2011:80)- that is the representation and framing of CDW in the child rescue discourse. For example, in relation to fostering or child placement, the ILO notes:

In *some cases*, this practice does not result in the exploitation of the child, however in *many cases* the relationship is either exploitative from the start or becomes exploitative over time...and in many places this is

seen as culturally acceptable and even desirable (ILO, 2002:19, emphasis mine).

The language here is carefully selected: the positives (some cases) are not comparable to the negatives (many cases). Yet the exact opposite is the case according to participants in my own research. But the ILO being 'an authority figure' is to be respected and quoted compared to the local people-who do not really have 'expert' knowledge like the ILO. As argued by Said, when (western) authority figures (academics, institutions, and governments) are involved in the production of certain kinds of knowledge, such may be accepted 'with greater prestige than its practical successes warrant' (Said, 1978:94). He continues:

Most important, such texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time, such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weights, not the originality of a given author, is responsible for the texts produced out of it. (Said, 1978:94).

In relation to the focus of this study, it means the description or framing of CDW, 'child trafficking', 'child labour' and other child related problems in the 'Third World' by authority figures like the ILO, UNICEF and other UN agencies or international NGOs and rich powerful nations may be considered more valid than any other account even when their claims are not substantiated with empirical evidence or are contrary to the experiences of those they are describing. So, for example, in a study of child trafficking in Benin, (Howard, 2012b) used 'the power of received ideas' to refer to cases where many local and international NGO officials were quick to quote and recite UNICEF's account of how child placement (Vidomègon) has been abused and contributed to trafficking, even when there were no empirical studies to prove this.

These 'received ideas' or 'discourse of condemnation' are usually promoted by the media and NGOs in both Western and non-western countries. As will

be seen later in the chapter, these ideals are internalised through surveillance, and in ways that involve interactions at different levels in Foucauldian analysis (Foucault, 1979). The result is that 'rescue missions' become more about meeting 'global standards'- rather than what is relevant or problematic in local settings. As another ethnographic account in Zanzibar found, child protection measures and campaigns -against corporal punishment in schools- championed by the state, NGOs and international organisations including UNICEF and Save the Children- have not had the desired success and have been misinterpreted in some cases because their recommendations were contrary to local perception of discipline, morality, upbringing and well-being (Fay, 2019).

In relation to my own research, NGO and government officials acknowledged the nobility of 'traditional' communal upbringing and solidarity that enabled children from disadvantaged backgrounds to be catered for, but they were always quick to claim that it has been abused in modern times. In other words, as much as local NGO and government officials that I interacted with agreed that there are good experiences in CDW arrangement, they downplayed these and emphasize how CDW is all gloom and doom for the children. In this context, rescuing victims of 'trafficking', or 'modern slavery' as well as the alibi of educating the ignorant and pre-modern individuals who send their children into domestic service become local standards as well. This explains why the local media are silent about such positives, but revel in the negatives as explained in the introductory chapter.

Further, as argued by Kempadoo (2015) in relation to anti-slavery and anti-trafficking campaigns in general, instead of learning from and respecting the views of those classified as victims -in this case, child domestic workers and/or their parents -about their lives and work situations, such views are presented as uninformed, and the people depicted as incapable of knowing- at least not without help from 'the experts'. So, by wrapping the practice

around 'tradition', 'custom' or 'culture', there is a basis for justifying why they need rescuing as such represents the contrast of modernity, 'the ideal' that everyone should be aiming at. A good example in this regard is the well-publicised case of child labour in producing soccer balls in Sialkot, Pakistan.

As noted by Khan et al (2007:1064):

Child labour was attributed to vague and unfathomable traditions, which, like a mystery virus, had afflicted the whole soccer ball industry. Now that it had been identified, the industry was going to develop and administer the vaccine that could eliminate this disreputable practice.

The 'vaccine' in form of the Atlanta agreement had everyone that mattered in attendance except the children and families involved. The authors argued that the exclusion of these intended beneficiaries was to prevent them from presenting a contrary view to the abolition of child labour as had been witnessed in previous conferences involving child labourers. So, the families could only communicate their concerns through NGO representatives who, in addition to presenting their concerns in line with certain guidelines, had to report to the ILO office in Geneva. The ILO in turn collaborated with 'partner agencies' like UNICEF but 'excluded organizations that were more likely to raise controversial issues' (Ibid:1066). Thus, the families were neither aware of the controversies around their work nor the rescue package being prepared for them before the changes took effect. It was not surprising therefore that while the rescue programme was initially hailed as a success story, the situations of the children and families worsened in no time (Ibid:1067-1070).

This supports the irony that working children have persistently been excluded in discussions about their work. As UN agencies do not invite working children to participate in their conferences and meetings, and organised groups of working children in different parts of the world have

been lobbying for changes in policies that affect them, it is questionable that the ILO and other UN agencies are actually speaking for these children (Okyere, 2017c; see also Hashim and Thorsen, 2011).

As we saw in the previous chapter, NGO officials in some cases were unaware of the situations of those they were trying to help; and they were asking if I thought there could be a solution to the problem. While not disputing the fact that their intentions may be genuine, they were acutely unaware and/or bemused about some of the information I shared with them. The question then is: on what basis do these local actors design their intervention agendas? They have authority figures like the UN bodies- ILO and UNICEF to reference, and these bodies in turn quote each other and international NGOs. This can be further explained by discussing the politics around child rescue operations.

7.3.2. *Playing the Politics*

Legislation is usually seen as one of the most significant ways of eradicating childhood problems such as child labour, child trafficking and CDW (see ILO, 2011b for example). Thus, countries are expected to ratify and domesticate international conventions to show their commitment to such global goals of protecting children, and underperforming countries may be subject to sanctions and/or international pressures such as withdrawal of aids or technical support, to ensure compliance (Chuang, 2006:439). As noted by Nieuwenhuys, ratifying such conventions or documents as the UNCRC is often 'part of the neoliberal package that developing countries had to accept to be able to remain part of the 'international community' (Nieuwenhuys, 2008: 8).

In this regard, there has been growing international pressure on countries like Nigeria concerning child trafficking, child labour and child rights problems since the end of the nineties. An example is the United States' Department of State's yearly Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report in which Nigeria is consistently rated as 'not fully meeting the minimum standards

for the elimination of trafficking' (see USDS, 2019 among others). So, the country like many other less powerful countries ratify and attempt to domesticate international conventions such as the UNCRC and the Palermo Protocol– not because they believe so much in the documents– but as a form of 'international norm', and to be in the good books of Western countries.

Thus, the 'official' position on child trafficking is nothing more than a slogan that has no relevance to local government officials in some cases (Alber, 2011:88). In my own study, one NGO official explained to me that she had a child domestic worker in her home for twenty years but had to let her go when she started working in the 'development sector' (or more accurately after her children were grown up and the lady was ready to get married). Many participants also confirmed that it was not unusual to see NIS (Nigeria Immigration Service) and other government officials with child domestic workers in their homes. Furthermore, government officials like Samson explained that they do not always stop children from neighbouring countries from coming to work in Nigeria even when they are aware of their motives. During our interaction, he gave an instance of acting as a mediator between a host family and parents of a child in domestic service for the latter to allow their children to continue working and living with the family. Also, it was reported in Alber's study that a mayor who publicly denounced child trafficking nonetheless sometimes openly arranged for members of his family to work in domestic service in the capital city (Alber, 2011). Similarly, Klocker (2014:464) found that a prominent children's rights activist had a child domestic worker in their house.

Against this backdrop, while almost all the government and NGO officials I interviewed expressed their frustrations at the failure of the Nigerian government to address grinding poverty, inequalities, inadequate infrastructures, among others, and lamented the insincerity of the Nigerian government in signing international Conventions knowing that they would

not enforce them, some of them were also quick to emphasize that the government needed such to be in the good books of Western countries.

A classic example of the significance of 'international pressure' is the case of working children in Bolivia. The Bolivian government had been praised in the past for supporting the rights of working children, but a few years later, with increasing international pressure, especially from the ILO and the US government, the government had to 'amend' the legislation in a way that effectively amounted to a total ban for working children under the age of fourteen (Liebel, 2019). In other words, many countries accept the UNCRC, not because they agree with it, but because the UN or its agencies as well as Western countries have surveillant power over them (Gadda, 2008:10).

There is also a wide gap between the Nigerian government's rhetoric on CDW, child labour and child trafficking and its actions in combatting these. As previously discussed, the Nigerian government had mandated each security agency to have an anti-trafficking unit after signing the Palermo Protocol and enacting the CRA. But these agencies do not get extra funding to cover these operations or remuneration for staff for the additional work as confirmed by officials. The Nigerian government welfare homes, where rescued children could be catered for, are not different as these homes are also underfunded most times and reliant on private donations to remain operational. So, the NGOs come handy in this regard.

It has been observed that in many instances, empirical evidence collected by academic researchers do not tally with NGOs' accounts of working children or CDW (Whitehead and Hashim, 2005:31). In other words, while international agencies and NGOs portray children in domestic service, street children and working children in general in terms of their vulnerability and exposure to harm, some other studies reported a more nuanced picture which comprised both the harms and hazards as well as the benefits working children and their families sometimes linked with their work. One

of the reasons for the differences is the fact that different academic researchers and NGO workers 'are actually looking for different things' (Ibid).

In a context where NGOs are heavily aid-dependent, a major motivation which drives many studies they conduct into these issues is funding. For many, this means adapting to (mostly Western) donor's demands, terms of reference, language, and other requirements or expectations. All the local NGOs in this study for example are collaborating with or in partnership with several UN agencies, the EU, or other Western organisations. Thus, it would be unreasonable for any of the NGOs to define a child or present CDW contrary to the dominant views held by these organisations and hope to partner with them. In other words, NGOs cannot hold contrary views to donors and expect to be supported by them.

For the NGOs in my study, their partnership with (or dependence on?) foreign donors means adopting the rigid classification of all under 18s as a homogenous group contrary to localised conception of children; presenting work and school as mutually exclusive contrary to localised norms; branding localised means of survival and informal support system as basis for exploitation; blaming parents for having more children than they knew they could cater for and labelling them irresponsible and malevolent for sending their children out; and presenting the (nuclear) family as the safest unit for children's development as opposed to communal upbringing that West African societies are noted for. This means that even where local NGO officials for example, acknowledged the functioning of the communal support system in many West African contexts or that '*it is not feasible to talk about awareness campaigns when the economy is really bad*' (according to one official), they still had to justify why they are in business.

By the same token, research activities sponsored by such Western agencies cannot be expected to reflect localised understandings and contexts more

than the dominant ideology which they represent- especially when there are significant differences between the two. It is unsurprising therefore that when local NGOs start working with international NGOs, their reservations about the representation and exploitation of working children often vanish (Thorsen, 2007:8). As noted by Dupuy et al (2012) in relation to foreign aid to local NGOs:

Over time, many local NGOs became top-down groups nourished from abroad, rather than local products of a popular, grass-roots civic movement. Understandably, foreign-supported NGOs began to adopt the issues, language, and structures their foreign donors wanted, rather than those preferred by local people (n. p.).

It has also been observed, in relation to Nigeria, that interventions by government agencies, NGOs and even UN agencies are driven by the objectives and priorities of donors in ways that advance the donor's policies rather than local needs (Nwogu, 2014:58). Similarly, Huijsmans and Baker (2012: 924-925) reported elsewhere that donors often mandate local NGOs to create anti-trafficking projects, spend huge sums of money and in turn generate data which the donors use for further fundraising activities. In some cases, NGOs that may be sceptical about dominant discourse on human trafficking or child labour face moral dilemma of either expressing their reservations about some aspects of donor's ideas and losing funding or going by the dictates of the donors and reproducing the same discourse (Ibid). So, while some officials in this research acknowledged their misgivings about some of the dominant narratives in off-the-record or private conversations, they were unwilling to openly express such discord. Meanwhile, as much as NGOs seem baffled by some of the findings of my study, parents and/or child domestic workers expressed disbelief and outrage at how government and NGOs could be arguing against what they are doing to address their disadvantaged situation in the absence of a

formal support system. This explains why anti-child trafficking and anti-child labour messages do not seem to be having the desired effects on the target audience (Olayiwola, 2019). Rather, as shown in the previous chapter, when the legal means are tightened, individuals resort to illegal means to meet their needs where such needs are not met by the government. For example, despite the fact that many NGOs are working in the sending rural communities of Benin to rescue 'trafficked' children and prevent potential 'victims' from migrating to Nigeria and other places, the practise of sending children out has not declined because local residents do not see viable alternatives and feel the NGOs are only advancing their own interests (Feneyrol, 2005; Howard 2012; 2017). Also, despite about two decades of anti-trafficking interventions in the country, debates about how childhood and adolescence should be spent have not gone away (Alber, 2011:89). What are the major implications of these discussions?

7.4. Policy Implications

In his analysis of why migration policies fail, Stephen Castles (2004) argues that restrictive policies have had little or no success because they do not recognise migration 'as a social process, with its own inherent dynamics' (Castles, 2004:208). He explained that these dynamics and processes are created and sustained through the interactions of structural factors and migrant agency- expressed through chain migration and networks, the role of the family and community among others. Thus, migration is impossible to stop where inequality remains unaddressed (Ibid:223). To paraphrase Castles, child domestic workers or their parents do not decide to stay off work because government and NGO workers state so- 'especially if the labour market tells a different story' (Ibid:209).

The story of the labour market for domestic service as this thesis has shown is that it is not only driven by poverty or other supply-related factors, but also that it is affected by a range of demand factors. Both are predicated

on an informal support system that thrives in the absence of a formal care and welfare support system. The child rescue model does not take these more structural and cultural factors into consideration. Rather, the child rescue discourse often present CDW solely in terms of the supply factors i.e. poor people sending their children out in a bid to survive.

Thus, the lack of consideration of the demand factors, of structural inequalities and the absence of state welfare system to address vulnerabilities - other factors explaining CDW as this thesis has shown- makes the discourse and associated policies problematic in local contexts. For example, it has been argued in the case of Benin- one of the neighbouring countries supplying child domestic workers to the study locations- that almost everyone is familiar with anti-trafficking campaigns, and as a result 'it is rare to find housemaids below the age of puberty in private households.' However, the demand for housemaids has not changed, but might be increasing as a result of rapid population growth and the expansion of the urban middle class (Alber, 2011: 81).

Also, as noted by Howard (2017) in relation to anti-trafficking discourse and policy, as much as poverty is frequently cited, questions are hardly asked about the structural (or external) factors that cause poverty. So, if poverty makes people desperate, and awareness creation is designed to address their desperation. How about their poverty? If poverty drives children into domestic service, why rescue them without solving the poverty problem for them? Yet solving the poverty problem might require looking beyond individual households in some regards. For example, there is research evidence that rural subsistence opportunities are undermined by neoliberal economic reforms as well as climate change (O'Connell Davidson and Farrow, 2007; Sassen, 2010; Howard, 2012); and the huge cost of servicing debt limits the capacities of developing countries to provide social welfare for the citizens (O'Connell Davidson, 2015: 139). These are poverty issues that are often absent or ignored in discussions of child trafficking,

child labour and CDW in favour of the normative talk of ignorant parents, wily traffickers and cruel employers exploiting innocent children. In this sense, there is need for a synthesis of macro analysis with micro explanations in policy discussions on trafficking in general (Mendel and Sharapov, 2016) and CDW in particular.

This means that it is not enough to rescue, rehabilitate and reintegrate individuals, but also that policies and empowerment programmes should be alert to inequalities between rural and urban centres, structural issues relating to rural poverty- low quality soil yield, absence or poor quality of storage and processing facilities, poor road networks- as well as external factors affecting the poorest in Third World countries. Specifically, rescuing children from work that is supposedly harmful to their development and well-being without given due consideration to why they are involved in such work in the first instance is myopic at best. In other words, there is need for greater and holistic analysis of the causes of CDW instead of focusing on the effects as the child rescue discourse and policy tend to do.

As this research has shown, a good number of child domestic workers combine school with work, and are actually working to overcome many obstacles to their education. Educational aspirations and delivery are also major drivers of child migration (or 'trafficking') among the poor (Boyden, 2013). Addressing these obstacles is likely to sit well with and be more effective for child domestic workers and their families than campaigning that they should send their children to school instead of work- where access to school is made possible by their involvement in domestic work. Improving the quality and availability of schools, subsidizing educational expenses for the poorest households, and remuneration for teachers (Bourdillon et al, 2009:109) might be appropriate policies in this regard. For older teenagers in domestic service, whose work is arguably more of a stopgap between completing secondary education and enrolling for apprenticeship, further education, or starting their own businesses,

supports in these areas seem to be a more pragmatic assistance to child domestic workers and their families than demonizing what they are doing to support themselves. Some participants for example explained that many children would be educated to university level if student loans were available in countries like Nigeria.

In other words, the big question that should preoccupy child rescuers is: If child domestic workers and/or their parents were to design intervention programmes, what would these involve? However, as observed by Nwogu (2014) in relation to trafficking in general, no one is asking the affected persons what they want before designing interventions (p60), and when the input of the affected population is not sought in designing long-term adequate solutions to the problem of trafficking, policy failure is inevitable (Feneyrol, 2005:24).

For the children that I spoke with as well as parents and adult participants in the villages, their responses ranged from having viable and stable sources of income to decent employment opportunities, provision of adequate infrastructures in the rural areas, totally free and qualitative basic education, and provision of social safety nets or viable social welfare programme. When child domestic workers were asked what could be done for them in another study, they highlighted four priorities: higher wages and more benefits, protection from abusive employers, appropriate education programmes and a change in society's low regard for domestic workers' (Whitehead and Hashim, 2005: 47). And in another study, majority of current and former child domestic workers as well as employers agreed that a contractual system would offer protection to CDW as well as employers; and stated preference for local leaders- as opposed to the central government- to handle such (Klocker, 2011). Child domestic workers or the other parties involved did not suggest preventing or removing children from work in any of these studies.

In summary, the existing legislation regulating CDW in the country remains detached from the realities of many households. Also, campaigns advocating attitudinal changes (especially by caretakers and intermediaries) or changes in cultural practices miss the mark by reducing CDW to issues of morality and human rights while ignoring socio-economic inequalities that underlie it. Questions for policy consideration in the light of the above are many and can include for example, what impacts do such policies as unconditional cash transfer, income support for poor families, unemployment and childcare benefits, free and qualitative education including informal education and apprenticeship have on CDW? Or what impacts do the extension of paid maternity leave to young families or the existence of a formal care system and basic infrastructures like electricity and water supply have on households that have child domestic workers? Although there have been some research endeavours exploring some of these issues in relation to child labour in general (see for example, Rosati, 2016; Del Carpio et al, 2016), they have not been specifically addressed to CDW or other aspects of child labour for that matter in the study location. These are some areas for future research endeavours.

Overall, the study found that there are few similarities and wide differences between popular child rescue rhetoric and the realities of child domestic workers. By discussing the differences within a post-colonial theoretical framework- in particular, the notion of ideal childhood guiding child rescue operations and the issue of power relations involved in such, the thesis has offered a more grounded and nuanced understanding of CDW in South-West Nigeria, and also discussed some of the implications of these findings. The concluding part of the thesis discusses the contributions of the thesis to knowledge and highlights (other) areas for future research endeavours.

7.5. Conclusion

The thesis sought to examine the situation of children working in domestic service and how their accounts relate to dominant narratives and policies on CDW, child labour and child trafficking. The study concentrated specifically on children involved in domestic service in various forms and for various purposes in South-West Nigeria. The study has made it possible to analyse CDW beyond the dominant explanation of poverty and ignorance on the part of child domestic workers and/or their parents as well as malevolence on the part of the adult caretakers and intermediaries by exploring the decision-making processes in CDW, coping strategies of child domestic workers, perception of domestic work by children and their parents as well as how local conception of CDW differs from popular child rescue narrative.

The dominant narrative on CDW involves melodramatic depiction of brutal working conditions, helpless children, heartless parents, ruthless traffickers, and cruel employers. This narrative says many child domestic workers are simply trapped into a cycle of endless misery unless they are rescued but empirical evidence from this study points to the contrary. Evidence from the fieldwork shows that CDW is a relatively short-term arrangement for many children and their families: to guarantee food and basic sustenance in the midst of severe deprivation, to acquire education at least up to secondary level before apprenticeship or marriage, to raise capital for investment or business start-up, or to fulfil social obligations. For the caretakers as well, CDW is mostly a mechanism of meeting needs relating to the absence of a formal childcare, adult-care, and disability support system as well as the institutionalisation of informal support systems.

To talk of child domestic workers trapped in misery is to assume that child domestic workers are a homogenous category- which is contrary to evidence from my investigation. For instance, child domestic workers could be distinguished based on their places of origin- those from neighbouring

West African countries, those from rural areas within the country and around the major cities, and those working within the same neighbourhoods or near where their parents live. CDW arrangement can also be classified based on relationship with adult caretakers- there are child domestic workers working for extended family members or distant kin and those working for non-relatives. Both may be with direct monetary reward and/or in exchange for other benefits. There are also other distinctions in terms of those who work full-time and part-time in domestic service; those who are live-in and live-out child domestic workers; those living with elderly or physically impaired people in need of care or companionship and those living with young families and women with childcare duties. The experiences of child domestic workers are shaped by these nuances and complexities.

For the poorest households, it is not a matter of being ignorant or being helpless victims in the hands of 'traffickers' and/or employers as child rescue campaigners claim; it is a matter of what alternatives are available to them to address their vulnerabilities and severe deprivation. To them, they have always been 'victims' in a world of unequal opportunities and power relations between the rich and the poor, the urban and rural areas, as well as in a society where members strive to survive with poor infrastructures and little or no support from the state.

In this sense, CDW from the standpoint of children and/or their parents is only one many survival strategies within the Nigerian society. The choice of CDW for many is based on available opportunities (relating to demand factors on one hand and individual's own networks on the other hand) as well as its consideration as a lesser form of evil compared to these alternatives. As noted by studies on child prostitution for example, some children are involved in child prostitution because they perceive CDW to be too hard for them (Montgomery, 2001; O'Connell Davidson, 2005). But

some also chose CDW because they perceived it to be better than child prostitution.

This also means that poor households that do not take to CDW might not have the opportunity or might rate the alternatives highly than CDW. According to some participants, for example, working in domestic service compared to the alternatives means that children can have their basic needs- in particular food and shelter- met in conformity with a local proverb that 'once hunger is out of the picture, poverty is no longer a problem'. Overall, the consensus in the villages seemed to be that no one sends their children out if living at home was a better option.

Similarly, for those that are in domestic service for reasons other than absolute deprivation, it simply makes no sense telling them not to work when the benefits derivable from CDW are not readily provided. Saving some money to enrol for apprenticeship or to start a small business or to perform some social obligations are real needs that individuals struggle to meet when there are very limited economic opportunities. As long as rural areas suffer from neglect and underdevelopment; as long as there is unequal access to basic education, as long as there is scarcity of economic opportunities for young people out of school, and lack of appropriate support for apprenticeship or further education, CDW remains a viable option for many individuals in countries like Nigeria.

As much as the dominant discourse says their experiences are almost always the same, we have seen that such generalisations do not hold true with the child domestic workers in my study. As we saw in chapter five for example, child domestic workers living with elderly people tend to have less burden to bear compared to those living with younger families or with women with childcare duties. Also, being subject to harsh conditions does not mean all child domestic workers are helpless as many adopt a wide range of coping strategies that challenge the dominant account of their exploitation.

From the standpoint of caretakers, CDW should not hastily be conceived in terms of the (human) tendency to exploit, but within the wider political and socio-economic context. For young families, childcare without a supportive maternity and paternity leave policy or benefits and/or other support from the State, and the scarcity of (flexible) employment opportunities means that many cannot afford to be out of work for long while raising a family. And without considerable improvements in their finances, the scarcity of labour-saving devices and irregular supply of such amenities as electricity and water, caretakers must go for the cheapest option available in seeking help with household chores. This is why and how engaging children as domestic workers occurs. Likewise, the absence of a formal elderly care or other old age support systems as well as disability support systems means that individuals who cannot stay with their elderly or disabled parents may resort to informal channels- with minimal costs to them- to ensure their parents are catered for.

The above is however not to deny the employment of domestic workers as a status symbol, but to emphasize how changing socio-economic conditions affect caretakers' decisions to engage cheap labour (Omoike, 2010:211). What should be apparent from the above is the influence of caretakers' income in the engagement of domestic workers. As suggested by other authors (see Tade and Aderinto, 2012; Tetteh, 2014), the income of a caretakers' household determines their choice in engaging domestic workers. All the caretakers of child domestic workers that I interviewed were largely between low- and medium-income earning households, and from my observations, high income earning households are less likely to have children as domestic workers. This is mainly because, compared to the former, they can afford to employ adults on a full-time basis (and perhaps pay them more) for a relatively long period of time- as opposed to children that are almost always in domestic service as a short-term arrangement as earlier noted. Thus, anyone with some understandings of

Nigerian society can attest to the fact that adult domestic workers- gatemmen, cooks, cleaners, gardeners, or drivers- in high income earning families tend to remain in the employment comparatively longer. This implies that as much as the market for domestic service is the same for adult and children workers, some distinctions could be made between child domestic workers and adult domestic workers - at least within the Nigerian context. This is an aspect of domestic service that would be worth exploring in greater detail in future research endeavours.

It is also clear that child rescue organisations, guided by a particular notion of childhood, misrepresent CDW by depicting it as a problem of attitude, perception, 'culture' and 'traditional beliefs'- that can be solved by awareness creation. Further, by attempting to rescue children without making connections to the socio-economic structures within which they work, and by absorbing individuals of any agency to navigate their disadvantaged position, many child rescue strategies do not seem to have any meaningful impact on their intended beneficiaries. Nonetheless, these strategies are continually employed by child rescue organisations because deviating from them would not only mean admitting failure but would also lead to questions that challenge the underlying interests and ideological hegemony governing the operations of these organisations.

While this thesis acknowledges that there are exploitative tendencies in CDW, it also argues that it is a viable alternative for many households to navigate their disadvantaged position in a structure of inequality, and a society without any formal support or social protection system. The thesis therefore holds that addressing structural issues that contribute to CDW from both the demand and supply angles should be the main preoccupation of child rescuers. Downplaying these factors explain why rescue operations- in the current form- do not seem to have any impact on the underprivileged households and/or potential child domestic workers or child migrants.

It is the contention of this thesis that using the lens of 'global standards' to judge such concepts as 'light work' that is acceptable, 'harmful work' or the 'worst forms of child labour' that should be abolished, or defining what is beneficial or exploitative to children in domestic service does not do justice to the children working in domestic service as it does not bear semblance with the realities of their socio-economic environment. In other words, the experience of exploitation or benefits in domestic service cannot be understood without reference to the specific contexts in which the work is done and the range of options available to individuals. As the previous chapters of this thesis have shown, the best interests of the children engaged in domestic service as well as the majority of children in Nigeria and other poor countries can be better understood within the context of devastating poverty, economic vulnerabilities, limited opportunities, as well as the deficiencies in state welfare provisions.

7.5.1. Contributions and Direction for Future Research

The focus of the research has been Nigeria, specifically the south-western region that is believed to be a major centre of child trafficking for domestic work. By focusing on internal and external migration in relation to CDW, the study contributes to knowledge in these areas that are known to be under-researched compared to 'trafficking' across borders and for sexual exploitation (Bastia, 2005:58; IOM, 2008).

Further, by examining how CDW exists and thrives as a form of informal support system from both the caretakers' and children's ends, as well as how child domestic workers navigate less-than-ideal work situations, the study moves beyond the victimhood narrative that is often used to depict child domestic workers-and justify rescue missions-and contributes to the body of literature calling for a more careful analysis of the complexities that characterize 'lives lived at the margins of global capitalism and outside of

Western Childhood or the Ideal State' (Howard, 2017:130) before designing intervention measures to help them.

While the criticisms of the dominant anti-child labour and anti-trafficking policies have been well- documented by many studies (see for example Boyden, 1997/2015; O'Neill, 2003; O'Connell Davidson, 2005;2013; Bourdillon, 2006b; Howard, 2012; Okyere, 2012 among others), none to my knowledge has related this to the context of this research- CDW in Nigeria. Thus, this study presents fresh evidence that corroborates existing critical stances of the dominant child trafficking and child labour narrative and its associated campaigns and strategies. However, it remains to be seen whether the findings and conclusions drawn from the study will hold true in other geographical settings.

Also, there is need for similar critical analysis- backed by empirical evidence- of the child rescue discourse and policies in other child labour related fields such as street hawking or working in agriculture in the study locations to account for possible similarities and differences with findings from this study. Closely related is how the recruitment, engagement, and experiences of children for domestic work as well as their perception of work compare to these other areas.

It is also significant to interpret the findings of this study not merely as a critique of the child rescue narrative, but as an alternative way of studying children lives and understanding childhood experiences in contexts of poverty, inequalities, and absence of state welfare. As such, the thesis is not about denying the harsh realities confronting some of the participants- especially child domestic workers and/or their parents, or romanticizing their experiences, or about cultural relativism that ignores the plights of the vulnerable; it is about explaining the complexities that may shape childhood experiences, offering nuanced accounts and contextualizing as well as retelling CDW stories.

In summary, efforts to protect child domestic workers must relate to the structures and conditions under which the work exists and thrives. This may go beyond the narrow analysis of helping poor and helpless children to much broader struggle for equity on a global scale. However, without challenging and changing the many dimensions of inequalities within which domestic service as a sector operates, many children- and adults- will continue to be absorbed therein- a troubling but inescapable fact for child rescuers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Participant Consent Form

School of Sociology and Social Policy

University of Nottingham

Project Title: Beyond the 'Horror Stories' and 'Rescue Missions': The Realities of Child Domestic Work in South-West Nigeria

Researcher's name: Peter Olayiwola

Supervisor's name: Dr Samuel Okyere, Dr Esther Bott

In signing this consent form I confirm that:

- I have read/heard the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw from the research project at any stage, without having to give any reason and withdrawing will not penalise or disadvantaged me in any way.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, any information I provide is confidential (with one exception – see below), and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published.
- I understand that the researcher may be required to report to the authorities any significant harm to a child/young person (up to the age of 18 years) that he/she becomes aware of during the research. I agree that such harm may violate the principle of confidentiality.
- I agree that extracts from the interview may be anonymously quoted in any report or publication arising from the research
- I understand that the interview will be recorded using audiotape/electronic voice recorder
- I understand that data will be securely stored
- I understand that the information provided can be used in other research projects which have ethics approval, but that my name and contact information will be removed before it is made available to other researchers.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher [or *supervisor*] if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Officer of the School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.
- I agree to take part in the above research project.

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITAL)

Participant's signature/thumbprint

Date

Researcher's name (BLOCK CAPITAL)

Researcher's signature

Date

APPENDIX B

Consent Form for Parents/Guardians of Child Domestic Worker

School of Sociology and Social Policy

University of Nottingham

Title of Study: Beyond the 'Horror Stories' and 'Rescue Missions': The Realities of Child Domestic Work in South-West Nigeria

Name of Researcher: Peter Olayiwola

Name of Parent:

Name of Participant (Child):

**Please
initial
box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet version number for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without their legal rights being affected. I understand that should they withdraw then the information collected so far cannot be erased and that this information may still be used in the project analysis. ☐
3. I give permission for the researcher to collect, store, analyse and publish information obtained from my child's participation in this study. I understand that my child's personal details will be kept confidential. ☐
4. Consent for storage and use in possible future research (Optional)
I agree that the information gathered about my child can be stored by the researcher, for possible use in future studies. Any information or data used will be anonymised, and my child will not be identified in anyway. ☐
5. I agree for my child (named above) to take part in the above study. ☐

Name of Parent

Date

Signature

Name of Person taking consent

Date

Signature

**(OPTIONAL) Section for children to give
assent I agree to take part in this study**

Name of Child (for assent)

Date

Signature

APPENDIX C

Participant Information Sheet School of Sociology and Social Policy University of Nottingham

Project Title: Beyond the 'Horror Stories' and 'Rescue Missions': The Realities of Child Domestic Work in South-West Nigeria

Personal information: My name is Peter Olayiwola. I am a PhD student at the University of Nottingham, and my project is on the above named topic. My email address is peter.olayiwola1@nottingham.ac.uk and my phone number is +447746798923,+2348033785707.

Purpose of research: The purpose of this research is to examine the realities of child domestic work.

Nature of request: I am interviewing key actors (children, parents and caretakers) in child domestic work. So, I am seeking your consent to interview you about your experiences of child domestic work. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the research project at any stage, without having to give any reason. Also, please note that there will be no penalties whatsoever if you do decide to withdraw at any stage.

Confidentiality: Your name will not be used and nothing that will make people recognize you or anyone taking part in the research will be used when I am writing the findings in order to protect your privacy. All data collected will be securely stored. Extracts from the interview may be anonymously quoted in any report or publication arising from the research.

Contact details Supervisors:

Dr Samuel Okyere (+44) 0115 84 67177], Samuel.okyere@nottingham.ac.uk,

Dr Esther Bott (+44 (0115 84 67595), Esther.bott@nottingham.ac.uk.

Complaint procedure

If you wish to complain about the way in which the research is being conducted or have any concerns about the research then in the first instance please contact my supervisors. If this does not resolve the matter to your satisfaction then please contact the School's Research Ethics Officer, Dr Alison Mohr (+44 (0115 846 8151, Alison.mohr@nottingham.ac.uk or LQ-ResearchethicSSP@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk or write to:

School of Sociology and Social Policy

Law and Social
Sciences building
University of
Nottingham
University Park

Nottingham, NG7 2RD

APPENDIX D

Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form & Hazard checklist

School of Sociology and Social Policy

University of Nottingham

FIELDWORK RECORD

Name of Fieldworker:	
Dates of Work Activity:	
Place where work to be carried out:	
Description of Work Activity:	
Level of perceived risk i.e.: Low/Medium/High	
Names of Supervisors/PI:	

Contact details:

Name, address, mobile and telephone number of fieldworker while in the field	Name, address and telephone number of next of kin and/or emergency contacts

Details of Itinerary, including internal travel and dates and places where staying including addresses and phone numbers

--

Please sign below to confirm that

- a) you have read and discussed with your supervisor or PI as appropriate the attached hazard check list and have and will take all necessary action as required**
- b) you have read and will comply with the University's guidance Conducting Research Abroad which can be found on Workspace under Risk Assessment**

Signature of fieldworker	
Signatures of Supervisor(s) or PI	
Date:	

APPENDIX E

Interview Guides

Current child domestic workers

- personal details- What is your name? How old are you? Tell me about your parents- what is (are) their occupations? Where do they live? How many children are in your family? Do they know what you are doing? . . .
- motivation/decision to work- How long have you been a domestic worker? why are you working here? what were you doing before? Did you know you would be doing this work before coming here? How did you get here? Who made the decision? Why was it made? How was it made? If your parents or other adults did, can you refuse? If you did, what were your considerations?
- Views/experiences- Describe what you do everyday to me. How does it compare with what you were doing before? At home or in another place/job? Do you earn any income? If so, how much? If not, why not? Do you live with your employer or not? If yes, how does it compare with your home? If no, why not? What other jobs could you do if not domestic work? Why are you not doing them? Are you doing any other thing apart from domestic work- schooling, training/apprenticeship? Have you had any training/schooling before? If no, why not? If yes, what happened? Tell me your relationship with your employer- are you related by blood? How do they treat you? Have you been a domestic worker elsewhere before? How does it compare to this place? Do you know anyone that has been a domestic worker before or that is currently working? Do you talk to them? (if yes) How does their experience compare to yours? If you talk to them, how do you do so?
- Are your parents aware of what you are doing? Do you maintain contacts with your parents and family(siblings)? Would you like to go back home? What do you want to be in the future? What are your plans now? How do you see the work? Do you like anything about it? Dislikes? What do you think if anyone remove you from this work? What would you like them to do for you and your family?

Former child domestic workers

- Tell me a bit about your life/history
- How did you become a domestic worker?
- Were you doing any work before then? If yes, what was it? If no, what were you doing?
- What did you make of your time as a domestic worker?
- Why did you leave/quit?
- When did you leave?
- Who made the decision?
- What has been your experience since?
- Do you know of any government efforts/laws against children in domestic work? If yes, tell me about it
- What would you advise others? Etc.

Parents/Guardians

- Tell me a bit about yourself and your family-income/job, size,
- What were the children doing before?
- Why did you let your children move to the city?
- How did you arrive at the decision?
- Did you know what your children would be doing beforehand?
- Do you know what the children are doing now?
- Do you speak to them about their work? If yes, what do you discuss with them? If no, why not? What do you think is their experience now?
- What do you think of their work?
- Do you know of any government laws about children in domestic work? If yes, tell me about it.
- What do you think about such policies and strategies? Etc.

'Adult Caretakers'/'Employers

- How/why did you come to the decision to have a child domestic worker? What factors influence your decisions and preferences?
- How do you recruit them?
- What do the children do?
- If children were not available, what would you do?
- Alternatives? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?
- Do you pay them? If no, why not? If yes, how much and how is it arranged?
- Your personal experiences of employing children, likes/dislikes?
- Your relationship with the child? Any family relationship? Employment relationship?
- What do you think about laws/policies on child domestic work? Etc.

-

NGOs/Government officials/international agencies

- why do you think children work in domestic service?
- Why do they migrate?
- Do you know of communities/villages from where children come from?
- Do you work directly with parents/children?
- If yes, what do you do? If no, why not?
- What are your agencies/organisations aims?
- How do you go about these?
- Your successes and challenges?
- Personal views on international laws/policies
- Effects/Impacts on child domestic work? Etc.

Children in 'Sending' community:

- What do you think/know of the city?
- How did you know this-have you been there? Were you told? By who?
- Would you want to go there? If yes, why? If no, why?
- How do you think life there compared to here?

- Do you know anyone who has gone there to work?
- (If yes) Do you know what they do?
- Do you talk to them? If so, how do they talk about their work?
- What would you like to do when you are older?
- What are your plans towards it? Etc.

Adults in the 'sending' community

- Why are children sent to the city?
- What type of work do children do in the city?
- Do you know of anyone whose children work in the city?
- What type of work do they do?
- What do you think of child domestic work?
- Do children do that in the village? What type of work do children do in the village?
- Do you know how such arrangements are made?
- How do others talk about children working in the city?
- What do you know about it in the city?
- Have you ever lived/worked in the city? If yes, tell me your experience. If no, why not?
- Knowledge and perception of policies/laws on child domestic work etc.

APPENDIX F

Table of Interviewees

I. Individual Interviews with Child Domestic Workers

Date	Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Place of Interview
08/01/18	Gafar	15	Male	Near parents' home
11/01/18	Suliyat	17	Female	Public space near caretaker's home
21/01/18	Lydia	14	Female	Church
24/01/18	Faith	14	Female	Caretaker's compound
28/01/18	Kafila	17	Female	Caretaker's church
05/02/18	James	±16	Male	Caretaker's shop
05/02/18	Aminat	±13	Female	Public space near caretaker's home
06/02/18	Comfort	±15	Female	Near caretaker's shop
11/02/18	Ajarat	17	Female	Open space near parents' Home
18/02/18	Daniel	11	Male	Parent's church
18/02/18	Deborah	17	Female	Parent's church
21/02/18	Agnes	±18	Female	Caretaker's church
22/02/18	Chike	15	Male	Market place
22/02/18	Augustine	16	Male	Market place
23/02/18	Misi	±17	Female	School
23/02/18	Damude	14	Female	School
23/02/18	Seun	13	Female	School
23/02/18	Lucy	10	Female	School
27/02/18	Jacinta	10	Female	School
27/02/18	Lola	17	Female	School
28/02/18	Jason	11	Male	School
28/02/18	Lisa	13	Female	School

28/02/18	Tamuno	12	Female	School
02/03/18	Zainab	17	Female	School
02/03/18	Salome	15	Female	School
25/03/18	Tolu	13	Female	Caretaker's compound
25/03/18	Goodness	14	Female	Market place
29/04/18	Temi	17	Female	Caretaker's church
30/04/18	Toni	13	Male	Caretaker's church

II. Interviews with Former Child Domestic Workers

Date	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Occupation
05/02/18	Alice	Female	30	Tailoring Apprentice
05/02/18	Titus	Male	23	Shop Attendant
06/02/18	Motou	Male	23	Driver
08/02/18	Toyin	Female	18	Student
14/02/18	Martha	Female	23	Caterer
18/02/18	Miracle	Female	21	Student/Shop Attendant
26/02/18	Ali	Male	20	Tailor
02/03/18	Victoria	Female	19	Student
02/03/18	Basirat	Female	19	Student
12/03/18	Ruth	Female	23	Fashion Designer
16/04/18	David	Male	19	Student/Tailoring Apprentice

III. Interviews with Parents/Guardians

Date	Pseudonym	Age	Occupation
08/01/18	Mrs Alusa	55	Petty trader
18/02/18	Mrs Oni	40s	Domestic Worker
24/02/18	Mr Tijani	45	Farmer
24/02/18	Mrs Idowu	35	Farmer
13/03/18	Mr Kasali	57	Commercial Motorcycle rider
16/05/18	Mrs Abeni	40s	Cleaner
18/05/18	Mrs Irewole	45	Farmer

IV. Interviews with 'Adult Caretakers'

Date	Pseudonym	Age	Occupation
11/01/18	Mrs Olusola	61	Caterer
28/01/18	Mrs Olaitan	65	Retiree
05/02/18	Mrs Adeyemi	76	Retiree
09/02/19	Mrs Alade	36	Trader
12/02/18	Mrs Audu	38	Businesswoman
15/02/18	Mrs Olalere	30s	Businesswoman
24/02/18	Mrs Williams	60s	Retired Nurse
01/03/18	Mrs Junaid	60s	Retiree
09/03/18	Mrs Hussein	60s	Retiree
18/03/18	Mr Silas	42	Businessman
25/03/18	Mrs Balikis	38	Businesswoman
25/03/18	Mrs Morola	55	Trader
25/03/18	Mrs Idera	50s	Trader
29/04/18	Mrs Aina	40	Banker

V. Interviews with Intermediaries

Date	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Occupation
15/02/18	Mrs Edwin	Female	61	Caterer
16/02/18	Abraham	Male	40s	Christian Missionary
16/02/18	Dofi	Female	40s	Housewife/Trader
21/02/18	Michael	Male	40s	Farmer
28/03/18	Raymond	Male	45	Trader
28/03/18	Ajike	Female	40s	Farmer
29/03/18	Sadia	Female	50s	Farmer
29/03/18	Remi	Male	40s	Fashion Designer

VI. Interviews with NGO/Government Officials

Date	Pseudonym	Status
01/03/18	Samson	Senior Immigration Officer
05/03/18	Leah	Director of Programs in an NGO
19/03/18	Vera	Head of Research in a government agency
23/03/18	Eunice	NGO Official
23/03/18	Jane	Youth and Community Development
13/04/18	Alaba	Head of Child Rights Programme in an NGO
13/04/18	Benedicta	Programme Officer, Child Rights Development in an NGO
17/04/18	Adeleke	Head of Anti-trafficking Unit in a government agency

VII. Group Interviews

Date	Codename	Relevant Information
11/01/18	Group 1	A focus group discussion in a village with five adults consisting of four women including a former CDW and a man.
	Group 2	A focus group discussion with nine child domestic workers (3boys and 6girls)
11/05/18	Group 3	A focus group discussion with six child domestic workers (boys)
14/05/18	Group 4	A focus group discussion with five child domestic workers (girls)