

**Understanding Child Trafficking
From the Point of View of Trafficked Children:
The Case of 'Rescued' Children in Nigeria**

**IFEYINWA MBAKOGU
School of Social Work
McGill University, Montreal**

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The brave children that participated in my pilot and final study - Your tears, laughter, smiles, pain, wounds, voices, strength, compassion and beautiful ways still haunt me to seek action for change and will haunt me for as long as I live. . .

My African children - the love I have for your wellbeing is too consuming to ignore. Your stories should be told and your ways which may be different from the 'more familiar' should be better understood. . .

My beautiful continent Africa - so endowed, so misunderstood and so completely loved by me. . .

My Heavenly Father, Son and Holy Ghost — I go where You lead for I am but an instrument in Your Loving Hands.

Answering a call

*I obeyed the call, never knowing what lay ahead,
I forged on never quite believing the impediments I met. . .
Impediments I never expected. . .often found difficult to understand,
I remained undeterred, never asking questions
As awareness unfolds that I carried the weight of a continent
So, I trudged on never asking questions
Until pathways for illumination opened up for me,
The strength, the remedies for enduring and dealing with troublesome hindrances
Lay not in my hands but in the hands of those that led me on this path*

*How much longer?
I cannot remain here forever. . .
With time, my tasks appeared complete and
I know that with time, a difference will be made
In the lives of those for whom I left
A comfort that I cherished
A sea of beautiful black faces that I love
And who love me in return with all their heart. . .
Suddenly the lonely path to my search for knowledge in strange and unfamiliar terrains
So far from my familiar home will torment me no more.
With time I will live in hopes that the continent I cherish
Will fare better with new pathways
Or as they say 'new ways of knowing'
For looking at this problem that I carry like a heavy weight on my shoulders*

*I can see clearly now
The familiar blue skies, fierce and sweet rays of our familiar tropical sun
I can hear laughter, so loud so clear
I can see colours, the jubilant and happy colours of garments that delight the eyes
I can see my Mother, coming out to welcome me
Accompanied by those chubby faced, happy and mischievous children I remember from yesterday,
But they are children no more...they are all grown. . .was I away that long?
Aha I am home!
But what bars me from entry?
Let me in Africa. . .
Should I scream or cry for entry?
Or should I force my way in?
I tire so from this journey. . .
Please let me in Africa as I come cup in hand offering my service
As we illuminate a welcoming future
For those who carry the yoke of our continent
In their young and brave hearts
Please let me in. . .
To lie down only for a while
For I must awaken these aching joints
Weary from so long a journey. . .*

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Abstract

My research on children 'rescued' from trafficking focused on Nigeria, and children resident in shelters operated by The National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other related Matters — NAPTIP, which is Nigeria's anti-trafficking agency. The ten month research, from August 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014, involved a participatory process towards understanding children's narratives of the reasons behind their involvement in trafficking, their experiences during trafficking and their experiences after removal from trafficking and in agency care. The research also introduced postcolonial theory and critical race theory as platforms for exploring themes promoting the view that child trafficking persists due to its intersectionality with other forms of marginalisation related to children's age, gender, race, culture and social class that reinforce their silence, oppression and exploitation. During my exploratory and field research, children's narratives made constant references to the role their homes of departure played in their involvement in trafficking — and led to the concept of 'home' becoming central to my analysis.

The study used qualitative research methods involving: documentary analysis, participant observation in NAPTIP and NGO shelters in five zones (Lagos, Enugu, Akwa Ibom, Abuja and Edo), semi-structured interviews, drawing, drama and focus group discussions with 55 children (46 girls and 9 boys) under 18 years, and semi-structured interviews with 13 NAPTIP and NGO representatives. Participating children were removed from diverse types of trafficking and were nationals of Nigeria, Ghana, Togo and Republic of Benin. Following the lead of participating children's narratives, data collection focused on four areas: children's journey away from home, children's experiences of trafficking, children's experience of life in the NAPTIP shelter; and children's perception of going home or moving on. Findings from the study made a drastic shift from previous research that dwell on poverty as the basis for children's involvement in trafficking to highlight other factors emanating from children's departure from home. Some of these factors include: unexplored situations (such as teenage pregnancy, kidnap and accusation of witchcraft) leading children into trafficking, the strategic or targeted benefit of child migration, children's quest for education, children's agency in accessing opportunities for vocational development, the nature of family decision processes and children's sense of duty to family members, children's trust in relatives or people taking them away from home, frustration with remaining at home and not attending school, the greed of parents, and the gamble children and their parents take to survive. Moreover, there were indications that traditional child fostering has transformed in the 21st century to become a new avenue for the exploitation of children, including those living with close relatives. The findings also suggest strong links between child trafficking and gender and between child trafficking and education. Though economic factors play a heavy role in the departure of some participating children from home, the children explained the nature of these economic triggers as including the death of parents, the loss of jobs, the quest to access educational opportunities or to fulfil professional aspirations away from home. Besides, not all the children from the study were from poor homes. Too much attention to poverty as a key trigger would have overshadowed the identification of more specific factors making this group of children vulnerable to trafficking.

Clearly, the study reports on children who understood the nature and reasons behind their trafficking better than anyone else. The children were also keen to share their perspectives on their trafficking and were able to identify the nature and extent of exploitation, discrimination and, in several instances, affection they received during trafficking. Children's narratives raised questions about the nature or extent of the 'rescue' approach operated by NAPTIP, in negotiations made about going home, remaining at the shelter or exploring other accessible opportunities which were often vague to majority of the children. My findings recommend that NAPTIP should look into understanding the nature of children's expectations once they have been 'rescued' and are receiving services from a government 'rescue' agency as key for effective interventions to combat trafficking in West Africa.

Résumé

Cette recherche sur les enfants « secourus » de la traite humaine s'est portée sur la Nigéria et les enfants résidants dans les refuges gérés par « *The National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other related Matters — NAPTIP* » (l'Agence nationale pour l'interdiction de la traite des personnes et enjeux liés). Les dix mois de recherche, du 1^{er} août 2013 au 31 mai 2014, suivaient un processus participatif qui visait documentation des narrations d'enfants et la compréhension des raisons derrière leur implication initiale dans la traite, leurs expériences durant la traite et la vie après. La recherche a introduit les théories postcoloniale et de « *critical race* » comme des plateformes pour l'exploration de thèmes promouvant la perspective que la traite des enfants persiste à cause de son intersection avec d'autres formes de marginalisation liés à l'âge, le genre, la race, la culture et la classe sociale des enfants, ce qui renforce leur silence, oppression et exploitation. Durant ma recherche, les narrations des enfants ont fait références répétées au rôle de leur « chez soi », leur foyer, a joué dans leur expérience de la traite — ce qui a mené que le concept du foyer devienne central à mon analyse.

L'étude a employé des méthodes de recherche qualitatives, incluant : l'analyse documentaire; l'observation participative à NAPTIP et des refuges ONG dans 5 zones (Lagos, Enugu, Akwa Ibom, Abuja and Edo); des entrevues semi-structurées, le dessin, le théâtre et des discussions en groupe avec 55 enfants (46 filles et 9 garçons) sous l'âge de 18 ans; et des entrevues semi-structurées avec 13 représentants de NAPTIP et d'ONGs. Les enfants qui ont participé à l'étude ont été retirés de divers formes de traite et étaient des nationaux de Nigéria, Ghana, Togo et Bénin. Suivant la direction de leurs narrations, les données collectées centraient sur quatre sujets : le voyage des enfants quittant leur foyer; leurs expériences durant la traite; leur vie dans les refuges NAPTIP; et leurs perceptions de l'idée de retourner au foyer ou de se réorienter dans la vie.

Les résultats de mon étude représentent un virage des recherches précédentes qui ont un focus sur la pauvreté à la base de l'implication des enfants dans la traite, misant plutôt sur d'autres facteurs qui mènent les enfants à quitter le foyer. Ces facteurs incluent : des situations inattendus (grossesse adolescente, enlèvement ou accusations de sorcellerie); la migration stratégie ou religieuse; la quête pour l'accès à l'éducation; l'autonomie des enfants en poursuivant des opportunités pour le développement vocationnel; la nature du processus décisionnel de la famille et le sens de devoir envers la famille des enfants; la confiance des enfants envers la parenté ou d'autres personnes les enlevant du foyer; les frustration des enfants avec la situation familiale; l'avarice des parents; et les risques que prennent les parents et les enfants afin de survivre. De plus, il y en avaient des indications que la tradition de parrainage d'enfants peut se transformer dans le 21^e siècle en pratique qui mène à l'exploitation des enfants, incluant ceux qui habite avec de la parenté proche.

Bien que les facteurs économiques jouent un rôle important dans le départ de certains enfants de leur foyer, les enfants ont expliqué la nature des déclencheurs économique tels que la mort d'un parent, la perte d'emploi, la quête de l'accès à l'éducation ou d'aspirations professionnelles. De plus, ce ne fut pas tous les enfants dans l'étude qui

provenaient de familles pauvres. Trop d'attention portée sur la pauvreté comme déclencheur aurait bloquer l'identification de facteurs plus spécifiques qui rendent ces enfants vulnérables à la traite.

Ce qui est claire est que l'étude documente que les enfants comprennent mieux la nature de et les raisons derrière leur traite que n'importe qui d'autre. Les enfants voulait vivement partager leurs expériences de la traite et étaient capable d'identifier la nature et l'étendue de leur exploitation, discrimination et, dans plusieurs instances, affection qu'ils ont subi durant la traite.

Les narrations des enfants ont soulevé des questions sur la nature ou l'étendue de l'approche de « secours » employée par le NAPTIP quand il est temps de négocier le retour au foyer, de rester dans le refuge ou d'explorer les opportunités accessibles. Les options étaient vagues pour la majorité des enfants. Mes résultats suggèrent que le NAPTIP devrait faire l'effort de mieux comprendre la nature des attentes des enfants « secourus » afin d'améliorer les services offerts par une agence gouvernementale de « secours ». Ceci est essentiel à l'effectivité des mesures d'intervention contre la traite humaine dans l'Afrique de l'ouest.

Chapter One

1. Introduction

My research on children 'rescued' from trafficking is focused on Nigeria, a country in the West Africa region. Nigeria has an estimated population of over 170 million people, which makes it the most populated country in Africa (BBC, 2013; UNICEF, 2013; UNITED NATIONS, 2015; World Bank, 2015) and the seventh most populous country in the world (Economist, 2011; The Global Fund for Children, 2015; OECD, 2012). It is also ranked the ninth largest producer of crude oil in the world. With its rich human and natural resources, Nigeria also has immense economic potential (Davies, 2010; Tashima, 2011). Its resources notwithstanding, approximately 70% of the population, or 112.5 million Nigerians, still live on or below a dollar a day (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). With high levels of poverty in the country, parents and children are bound to seek alternative means of survival — with child trafficking an unfortunate extreme (Adepoju, 2005; Jones, Presler-Marshall, Cooke & Akinrimisi, 2012; Oluwaniyi, 2009; Torimiro, 2009).

The economic climate in the country also influences the nature of data collected on child trafficking in the country. Most research on trafficking in Nigeria and Africa attributes the problem to household poverty (Dave-Odigie, 2008; Okafor, 2009; UNICEF, 2001), while acknowledging but not looking into other socio-cultural practices that lead children into trafficking such as: son preference; early girl marriage (Ijaiya, 2005; Opara, 2007); children trying to escape violent and dehumanizing cultural rites of passage such as female genital mutilation, adult scarification and circumcision for male children, lip stretching for unmarried girls to mark a change in their identity from girl to woman (Davis, 2011; Fihlani, 2012; Opara, 2007); and religious practices (such as Muslim religious teachers using boys who are called Almajiri for forced begging) (Dottridge, 2002; Elabor-Idemudia, 2003; Scarpa, 2006; US Department of State, 2012; William & Masika, 2008).

Further, in Nigeria, as in other West African countries, there is limited empirical research on child trafficking. Because of problems of access to trafficked children¹ or length of research or project and funding, what limited research that has been conducted by West African nationals themselves is often limited to one state within a country, one aspect of child trafficking (example, street hawking or domestic servitude) or interviewing non-trafficked children to understand their views on sex trafficking and policies for curtailing child trafficking (Okafor, 2009; Oluwaniyi, 2009). Moreover, of the total number of people trafficked globally each year, 56% of this number are women and girls (Dottridge, 2002; ILO, 2007; Troung & Angeles, 2005); my research therefore proposed that the gendered nature of trafficking should also be addressed.

There are also tensions among researchers about the way key concepts such as 'child trafficking' and 'child migration' are conceptualized. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and Other Related

¹ As will be seen in Chapter 4 where I present empirical research from Nigeria, child trafficking is a hidden activity and depending on the type of trafficking under investigation, researchers may have problems recruiting children for their study. To enable access to children participating in different trafficking activities, I collaborated with NAPTIP for access to children in their shelters across the country.

Matters (NAPTIP), Nigeria's anti-trafficking agency, in close line with the UN Protocol definition, defines trafficking as:

...all acts and attempted acts involved in the recruitment, transportation within or across Nigerian borders, purchase, sale, transfer, receipt or harbouring of a person involving the use of deception, coercion or debt bondage for the purpose of placing or holding the person, whether for or not in involuntary servitude (domestic, sexual or reproductive), in forced or bonded labour, or in slavery-like conditions. (NAPTIP-GAATW-UNIFEM, 2009: 18)

The problem with the conceptualization of child trafficking in this definition is that the NAPTIP Act fails to include trafficking for the purpose of early girl marriage, begging or removal of body organs, which allows traffickers that kidnap children for ritual² or medical purposes to go unpunished. It does not impose sanctions for the retinue of acts involved in trafficking but for various acts such as exportation and importation of persons, harbouring, and transportation and deals mainly with trafficking for sexual exploitation. Moreover, Nigeria's anti-trafficking law does not have a definition of trafficking that is focused specifically on children and requires proof of the use of force, coercion and deception as means of trafficking before trafficking agents can be prosecuted (NAPTIP-GAATW-UNIFEM, 2009). These weaknesses are compensated for by the domesticated UN Protocol, which addresses these lapses. Nevertheless, the NAPTIP Act needs further amendment to address these lapses to aid the prosecution of trafficking agents.

2. My Research Direction — African Children and African Scholarship

I have come a long way since engaging in deliberations about the most inclusive way to approach my research on child trafficking. My questions were endless until I read McMahon's (1996) "Significant Absences." The writer's questions about herself led me to find myself, the path I should explore in finding not only my voice, but the voices of all those significantly absent in the quest to understand child trafficking in Nigeria namely: my family, trafficked children and their families. The article also invigorated me against shying away from situating myself within my research, as recognizing my own position creates an enabling platform for self-reflection and having meaningful dialogues with participating children that were not shy to ask why I stayed with them each day, why I always came back and why I cared.

As I write, I remember children who waited expectantly each day until I arrived at the shelter for our daily interactions; and when I was late turning up, some would ask one of their counsellors to call on the phone to ascertain if I was coming to the shelter or not. Would I have been able to achieve this level of trust and friendship without these constant reflections and my resolve to embrace that which made me see my participants as extensions of myself — fellow Africans? Several chapters of the dissertation are preceded by my reflections, as these guided each day of my ten-month field research.

² When children are kidnapped for rituals, it is usually at the request of witchdoctors who require specific body parts (such as: fresh human head, tongue, breast) for the preparation of magical charms or to make sacrifices.

A lot has been written about child trafficking in Africa. And even more on child trafficking in the West African region, with Nigeria constantly cited as having the highest number of trafficked persons in Africa. Nigeria is also uncomfortably positioned as a transit, user and destination country for trafficked children. My findings dispute a lot of the writing on West African children involved in trafficking and the nature of activities leading to children's participation in trafficking. My interest lies in the fact that since the problem affects Africans, especially West Africans and Nigerian children, then researchers within these regions should have a lot to contribute for addressing the problem. Building on this, before moving on, I commend the efforts of several West African researchers whose work I cite in my thesis and who, acknowledging funding constraints and intent on providing a different understanding of the problem of child trafficking, devised manageable data gathering strategies within their constraints.

A look at the available empirical literature on the different types of child trafficking - domestic servitude, child soldiers or armed forces, forced child labor and sexual exploitation — show domination by Western researchers who come into the field with research grants facilitating extended duration of study. I came away questioning the contribution of their research for addressing the problem of trafficking in African countries. Second, even as these researchers indicate a familiarity with the environment, having worked for extended periods of months or years in selected African countries, I question if their contribution adds more for addressing the problem than that of local researchers that have lived their lives with the social problem under discourse. Third, I find that trafficking research also reinforces a dominant idea of trafficked children that is different from the strong-willed and independent West African children I have lived with. It almost appears that the idea of trafficking opens children to helplessness, poverty and silence, while others express their feelings about children's experiences. Fourth, sometimes research on trafficking leaves me with difficulties identifying children and their families within the communal African structures I grew up in. Yes, poverty is a problem in Africa, as in some other regions of the world. But how do we explain this poverty within trafficking research to find solutions to the problem? Yes, child fostering has become a template for the new trafficking. But what is the understanding of fostering projected in the literature and can all fostering be considered bad, though it appears to have deviated from its initial supportive traditional conceptualisation?

On a closer look at the literature (as I will argue in Chapter 2), it becomes evident that solutions to the problem of child trafficking should lie with us (Nigerians, West Africans, and Africans) because, while foreign researchers conduct their research, suggest their interventions or policies, write their papers and move away, the problem remains or lives with us.

3. The place of the researcher in the study: voice and the legacy of my heritage

I recall that the first time I was asked about the implication of my heritage on my work I was almost traumatised by the experience. This was after I lost my older brother, Francis, only months into the doctoral programme. Midway into my class presentation, a classmate, Sigalit, asked me how my recent loss and my family informed my area of research. That question was so apt that it threw me off balance. I said to myself, "Isn't she aware of my loss? Isn't

she aware of how this question is tearing me apart? Isn't she aware that this question is like a nail on my coffin?" While I struggled for answers, pictures of all those in my past and present, that have struggled to give me life, the life that will give me the strength to carry on their work of fighting for justice for exploited children in Nigeria flashed through my tears, daring me to wipe the tears and speak up for them who have ceased to have a voice.

So, I spoke, and though my words were barely audible, my words signified my intention to continue from where my father left off: how he travelled miles from distant cities (first Onitsha, then Lagos) to the village, almost always because someone made an urgent call to him that a young intelligent boy was being forced to abandon school and go into apprenticeship (during that period, boys in Eastern Nigeria were more at risk to migration for apprenticeship). My father always rushed over. On this particular occasion, the boy he brought home was a cousin that became a civil engineer. But so did many more after him become professionals in their chosen field of study. The children found their feet because my father believed in change and dared everything to make that change possible. So I spoke about my late brother who, though not a social worker, spent most of his funds putting children through school up to the university level. But so did my other siblings. It is a family tradition. I could have spoken some more of a family tradition of growing up in a house where the pot was larger than pots used in other houses, because my mother, always accommodating, had so many mouths to feed.

I did not see my life as different, even if others did, because that was the way I grew up, so used to a house full of noise and laughter. I did not see myself missing out on things other families considered normal because they were not essential parts of my growing years. I still do not miss them or consider them important. For instance, we never took a family portrait that included just my mother, father, my cherished grandmother (who lived with us until her passing) and the eight children in the family. My parents would never have allowed that, because that would have meant discriminating against the other fostered children in the household who were completely part of the family. This is evident in Picture 1 of two of my male cousins seen in 'our family portrait' dressed in similar clothes as my younger brother, Chiazor.

Picture 1 - "Our Family Portrait"



I recall meeting a childhood friend during my final field work in Nigeria. When he asked what I was doing these days, I happily told him. He simply smiled and said I was only following a tradition because he remembered looking into our kitchen window each night and always marvelled when he saw my older cousin cooking with the largest pot in the neighbourhood. He always marvelled at the number of people that trooped in and out of our house too. It was amazing that, growing up, he never voiced this but he went through life associating me with that packed home. That chance meeting also helped me understand where my voice was coming from and how my voice could contribute to changing our understanding of child trafficking in West Africa. How many of the foreign researchers have grown up or lived in homes that are not exclusively made up of the nuclear family — in homes where children were constantly moved in unannounced but expected to share your space and be happy within that space? I recall my father choosing to pay for my older cousin's bachelor and graduate studies in an American university while his children remained in Nigerian universities. How many of the foreign researchers have had to sacrifice untold luxuries because they had to live in a non-discriminatory fashion with children their parents have chosen to foster? In Picture 2 of my older sisters, cousin and father, the girls are dressed in similar fashion because my father (with the backing of my mother) would rather see every child in his care go without than to project the impression that he was causing a relative's or fostered child to experience discrimination.

Picture 2 - My beautiful parents, my siblings (Chinelo, Francis and Franca) and my cousin at the baptism of my fourth sister, Anene



I am writing within my experiences and the memories of lives shared with other children in the past (now old), who also had to leave their homes to share mine, mostly to attend school, learn a trade or to escape parental decisions that are likely to prevent them from attending school. I am writing within a challenging family tradition of service to the marginalised that persists because people expect that of my family and me.

The direction of my research required that my methodology allow a platform for both the children and the researcher (me) to speak because the researcher has operated within or lived in situations where she can understand the experiences that some of the children in the study express. Of course, it is important to note that the children invited to share our home had favourable experiences because they operated within the traditional fostering platform where they are socialised to benefit from the education and life skills provided by a trusted member of the community.

In essence, for greater impact to be made in addressing the impact of child trafficking in West Africa, my voice, my interest in child trafficking and my family legacy are too intertwined to be separated. This is the essence and contribution of my scholarship.

4. Negotiating and situating my research

To put it succinctly, my research is largely informed by my social location as an African researcher with interaction with marginalised children and families during my community development projects and social work practice in my native country, Nigeria. During these interactions, I observed the huge gap existing between what policymakers consider the needs of marginalised children and the expressed needs of marginalised children themselves. This inadequate policy platform then informed the development of social programmes and intervention strategies that were used by service providers to address the susceptibility of children to risks.

After enrolling in McGill University for the doctoral programme in social work, I returned to Nigeria in July 2010 for an exploratory study with children engaged in child labour and child trafficking. Two issues resonated from this exploratory study. First, my experience with recruiting children for the study indicated that it was easier gaining access to trafficked children for a study when they are in the care of an agency; second, the discussion with working and trafficked children drew my attention to the aforementioned policy gap and the potential errors it created in addressing the needs of children without making attempts to obtain the views of affected children. These two issues guided my decision to focus on children 'rescued' from trafficking by the National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP) and to question the agency's anti-trafficking policy that laid emphasis on the 'rescue' of children from trafficking.

I recognise that I may be questioned about the use of the contested expression of 'rescuing' children from trafficking because of its potential to strip children of their autonomy or agency. The adoption of a 'rescue' approach by NAPTIP has remained a puzzle to me, probably because of my social work background where we are taught that no two people or cases are the same, that each case should be handled on its own merit. Moving to the child trafficking literature, it appears confusing that the preferred agenda for addressing the needs of trafficked children is within a 'child rescue model', irrespective of the political, social, cultural and economic situations resulting in children's trafficking or of concerns expressed by children about their situation prior to trafficking. Moreover, stories about trafficked children present a one-sided narrative of children living in dire situations of poverty and who were lured to partake in exploitative activities. These stories suit the dominant discourse but submerge other narratives that may introduce the voices of children that do not fall within this categorisation. These conflicting thoughts led me to question who actually listens to trafficked children, whether children are even provided the platform to express their concerns and who has the authority to speak for children in the manner that is acceptable to children.

My resolve to acknowledge and explore the 'rescue' approach is also built on questioning children's acceptance or non-acceptance of the term. I observed during my exploratory study in Nigeria that a number of trafficked children

'rescued' by NAPTIP questioned why they were removed from their places of work and brought to NAPTIP shelters. To the children, their involvement in domestic work promised income that will finance their education or learning a trade, while their removal from such places of employment meant bleak futures. Finally, my doctoral research interrogated the child trafficking literature to determine if the 'rescue' approach can operate on the same basis within the child development and nurturing agenda for children in developing countries with limited economic and educational opportunities versus within the agenda of nurturing children in more affluent western countries.

5. Tensions within the literature and conceptual definitions

There are tensions among researchers, policy makers and children about the way concepts such as: 'child trafficking,' 'child migration' and 'child rescue' are conceptualised (Dougnon, 2011; Howard, 2012; O'Neill, 2001). An understanding of child trafficking — whether or not it should be equated with migration — should move beyond debates among researchers and policy makers to include the perspectives of parents and children (Dougnon, 2011; O'Neill, 2001). For the purposes of this study, my conceptual definition of child trafficking borrows from the NAPTIP Act and the UN Protocol. In this study, a child shall be considered trafficked when the child is recruited, transported or received within or outside Nigeria's borders for the purposes of exploitation, including their use for begging, forced marriage or labour, or removal of bodily organs, even when consent is given by the child, parent or guardian. The second conceptual definition builds on the writing of several African researchers that clarify the link between child migration and trafficking and involves isolating the triggers for migrating African children as different from trafficked children (Dougnon, 2011; Yakub, 2009). A child will not be considered trafficked but rather migrating when the child is recruited, transported or received for work that is of a seasonal nature, fulfils recognised cultural practices and has established contracts or termination periods at the end of which the child is expected to return to his or her parents or community.

In addition, the concept of children being 'rescued' is also a contested one because it is tied to the 'moralist' or 'protectionist' agenda for reducing child trafficking in Africa that adopts western notions of the 'ideal' childhood (Boyden, 1997; Prout & James, 1997; Ray, 2006). From this perspective, efforts are made to 'rescue' children from trafficking without understanding why children were involved in trafficking at the outset; or if children need to be rescued from the situation in which they were found. My research explored the contested nature of the word 'rescued' by understanding from children participating in the study if they felt they were trafficked or not; or needed to be rescued or not. In recognition of the agency of children involved in trafficking, reference to this set of children was relegated to the term *trafficked children* rather than 'rescued' and helpless children.

My research also introduced postcolonial theory and critical race theory as platforms for exploring themes promoting the view that child trafficking persists due to its intersectionality with other forms of marginalisation related to children's age, gender, race, culture and social class that reinforce their silence, oppression and exploitation. This framework is described in more detail in Chapter 2.

6. Overview of the research problem and thesis

A number of researchers have linked the persistence of child trafficking in Nigeria and other West African countries to poverty and other economic situations in the country (Dave-Odigie, 2008; UNICEF, 2001). However, based on data generated from my exploratory study in 2010 that was focussed on trafficked children in the care of NAPTIP, it was relevant to explore the link between the persistence of trafficking in Nigeria and the adoption of anti-trafficking interventions from Western countries that are not suited to the needs and realities of target Nigerian and West African children. A case in point is the 'rescue' framework adopted by Nigeria's anti-trafficking agencies, which is guided by Western models of child protection that aspire to remove children from harmful situations but without necessarily ensuring that children are consulted and that appropriate resettlement programmes are put in place to cater to the needs of trafficked children. In discussing the appropriateness of the rescue approach in developing countries, Bissell, Boyden, Cook & Myers (2008), tersely state that:

...this easily dramatized approach is popular with rich country publics, who are primary sources of funding for many organizations working in developing countries, may help explain its continuing prevalence in the face of today's expert understanding that other options are likely to better benefit children (p. 11).

My perception, therefore, is that policy makers in Nigeria should aspire to fit anti-trafficking programmes within the cultural and social realities of children's historical and trafficking experiences.

This doctoral research adopted a qualitative approach that opened up a participatory process (Jones & Summer, 2008) towards understanding children's experiences and perceptions of their vulnerabilities and channelled discussions on how anti-trafficking agencies shape interventions to accommodate the needs of trafficked children. My study sought to understand children's narratives of the reasons behind their involvement in trafficking, their experiences while trafficked and their experiences after removal from trafficking. Workers from Nigeria's NAPTIP and partner NGOs were also interviewed for their perception of the needs of trafficked children in relation to policies for addressing the problem in Nigeria. Discussions with children and agency representatives presented new perspectives for combating child trafficking in Nigeria.

The research questions can be summarised as follows:

1. What factors are likely to contribute to children's involvement in trafficking?
 - 1.1. How do children explain the influence of their family background on their involvement in trafficking?
2. What is the experience of children with trafficking and how does it differ or relate to the dominant discourse?
 - 2.1. Are there differences in the experiences of trafficked children and migrating children?
 - 2.2. How do children's memories of home influence their trafficking experiences?
3. What is the experience of children with services in anti-trafficking agencies?
 - 3.1. What are children's experiences with making decisions about going home or moving on after their residency in NAPTIP shelters?

7. Benefits of the research

There are several things to be taken from research on trafficking that dwells largely on the voices of children involved in trafficking. Results generated from this study will be beneficial from academic, practice and policy perspectives:

- 5.1. From a policy perspective, the results of the study will be beneficial in providing evidence on children's experiences of trafficking that can inform policies that are more suited to the Nigerian situation;
- 5.2. From an academic perspective, the results will assist academics in understanding factors that make Nigerian children, in particular, vulnerable to trafficking. Factors generated from this new understanding will act as pointers for designing welfare packages suitable for children and families at risk of trafficking;
- 5.3. From a practice perspective, findings from the study will ensure better integration of local knowledge from children and fieldworkers that will influence government programmes for addressing child trafficking in Nigeria. The results are also expected to contribute to sustainable and equitable systems for integrating children removed from trafficking and children at risk to trafficking in development programmes in Nigeria; and improve understanding of children's role in decisions families make about child trafficking.

8. Structure of the Doctoral thesis

The discussions in the remaining chapters of the dissertation adopted the following format

i. Chapter two — Theoretical approach

The chapter begins by problematizing current theoretical foundations for understanding children's participation in trafficking in the West African region. The chapter moves on to present the benefits of adopting postcolonial theory and critical race theory as flexible platforms for uncovering the effects of factors such as: age, social class, religion, culture and education on children's vulnerability to trafficking.

ii. Chapter three — Literature Review — Child trafficking

This chapter presents current literature on child trafficking in Africa, tensions existing with applying key concepts or definitions for addressing child trafficking, the approaches for addressing child trafficking in Africa with particular reference to the origin of the contested 'rescue' approach.

iii. Chapter four — Literature Review — Home

Considering that a large number of West African children are leaving home for recruitment in exploitative trafficking, the chapter tried to present key constructions of home across diverse disciplines. The concept of home emerged in my analysis as a key element for understanding all stages of the trafficking process.

iv. Chapter five — NAPTIP — collaborating agency and policy approach

This chapter focused on NAPTIP, the collaborating anti-trafficking agency for the doctoral research. The chapter presents the contexts for creating the agency, the legislative and policy frameworks facilitating the agency's anti-trafficking operations, and reviews the effectiveness of the agency's anti-trafficking interventions.

v. Chapter six — Conceptual Framework and Methods

This chapter begins by identifying the conceptual framework of the study that concentrates on three exhaustive areas: Children's voice (from a critical race perspective), postcolonial relations and home. The chapter also presents a summary of factors guiding the current research, the overall design of the study, the data gathering tools, the data analysis process and ethical issues pertaining to the study.

vi. Chapter seven — Remembering Home

This chapter builds on the narratives of children that participated in the study to present the economic, educational, religious and cultural, social and emotional motivators of children's movement from home.

vii. Chapter eight — Children's experiences of Trafficking

The chapter provides insights for understanding the intricate processes and actors involved in children's recruitment for trafficking, the types of trafficking experienced by child participants in the study, children's perception of their experiences of trafficking and their personal reflections on their trafficking journey which were mainly informed by children's memories of home.

viii. Chapter nine — Life in the NAPTIP shelter

The chapter presents the emotional, social, religious, educational and institutional factors influencing children's day-to-day life at the NAPTIP shelter.

ix. Chapter ten — Going home or moving on

The chapter tries to understand the impact of NAPTIP's anti-trafficking 'rescue' approach on deliberations and decisions children make about going home, exploring other accessible options and reflecting on the effect of the reintegration process on their future adjustment or survival.

x. Chapter eleven - Conclusion

The final chapter presents a summary of the major findings, the theoretical implications of the findings, the relevance of the findings for better understanding of trafficked children and their homes, limitations of the study, direction of future research and implications of the study to social work practice.

Chapter Two — Theoretical Background

Postcolonial Theory and Critical Race Theory: Useful lenses in building an understanding of child trafficking in Nigeria

My doctoral thesis uses postcolonial theory and critical race theory as two lenses for addressing a pressing social problem in Africa: child trafficking. A small number of theoretical approaches have been used to explain the persistence of trafficking in Africa. These include: human rights, protectionist, law enforcement, labour migration, rational choice, General Strain, social learning, social control, morality, economic or market forces approaches (Raymond, 2004; Salt, 2002; Vock & Nijboer, 2000). I will explain the rationale behind my selection of the postcolonial theory and critical race theory.

Academic discussions and policy decisions on child trafficking are based on frameworks that are guided by western ideas of child nurturing and the role children should perform at each stage of their developmental process (Una Children's Rights Learning Group, 2011). These western ideas of childhood and child development are different from the social, economic and cultural realities of at-risk African children, yet they are used to guide the interpretation of children's trafficking experiences and their subsequent 'rescue' from trafficking. My doctoral research recognises this gap in the discussions of trafficking of Nigerian and West African children and seeks to adopt an alternative theoretical framework that acknowledges that trafficked Nigerian children are diverse in terms of their ethnicity, social status, educational level, race, perceptions of childhood, cultural beliefs, histories and cultures. To bring together this discussion, this section will: provide an overview of current frameworks for conceptualising and addressing trafficking; discuss the emergence and benefits of the selected theoretical frameworks for a study on child trafficking; and provide insight into what a postcolonial and critical race analysis of child trafficking will entail, with focus on selected themes or concepts resonating from an analysis of the child trafficking literature.

1.1. Frameworks for conceptualising and addressing human trafficking

Frameworks for addressing human trafficking have been built around several conceptualisations of what trafficking is. I will dwell on four of the most visibly applied frameworks for conceptualising the complexities of human trafficking (Ray, 2005-2006): the morality; law enforcement; labour migration frameworks and human rights.

1.1.1. The morality framework

The morality framework grew out of early 20th century ideas about the abolition of prostitution by renowned feminists such as Josephine Butler who were asking for a reform of morality laws in England that sought to prohibit prostitution and the exploitation of women (Bruch, 2004; Ray, 2005-2006). Early abolitionist protests led to the introduction of anti-“white slavery” laws that concentrated on protecting white women from sex trafficking while ignoring other forms of forced labour experienced by children, men and other women (Bhabha, 2004). Ray (2005-

2006) perceives this selective attention to particular people or segments of trafficking as a violation of the human rights of the neglected segments.

This attention to addressing the problem of white slavery led to the introduction of such international conventions and agreements as the 1910 White Slavery Convention and the 1921 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Women and Children (University of Minnesota Human Rights Library, 2012). Did these conventions help the position of women or reduce their susceptibility to trafficking? Lee (2007) indicates that while these conventions have set the stage for the current framework, contrary to the intention of these conventions, they also laid the foundation for other anti-trafficking strategies which have largely emphasised the powerlessness of women and girls in making decisions on their own and portrayed women as a male dominated population vulnerable to the sexual demands of men and therefore in need of protection by society as a whole.

A key result of this conceptualisation of trafficking is that it inhibits attention to other areas women and children could be trafficked for. So, whereas many international instruments indicate that there are diverse ways that people may be trafficked, the concentration remains on sexual exploitation in dominant discussions that influence research and policy directions on trafficking. Sharma (2005) asserts that frameworks based on morality rationalise the deportation of women and children on the grounds of assisting or helping migrating or trafficked persons to return to a place where they are better off — at home. Further, when emphasis is placed on the sexuality and morality of affected women — there is heightened social tension, disruption of social order within the society because women and children within it are considered to be engaged in a practice that is considered a taboo, the agency of the women is ignored and their experiences with trafficking are relegated to a single story affecting all women the same way.

1.1.2. The law enforcement framework

The law enforcement framework aims to combat trafficking by enforcing stricter border controls to tackle the international crime of trafficking. With this classification, trafficking is looked at not as an activity with deep roots in the cultural practices of certain societies but as an organised crime, driven by profit-seeking, that smuggles children out of their home countries to foreign countries for work. The explanation of trafficking as organised crime is evident in the 2000 UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime which gives the idea that all acts of trafficking are carried out by organised groups engaged in the illegal trade in human beings that should be addressed using crime tackling strategies (UNCJIN, 2000).

The defect of this framework is the concentration on the trans-border aspect of trafficking while neglecting internal trafficking operations within countries (Dottridge, 2002; Jay, 2008). The organised crime approach calls for investment in criminal investigation and prosecution, often to the detriment of prevention and protection measures. The emphasis on “organised” also makes it difficult for people using this framework to recognise informal-network or family-based trafficking (Chuang, 2006). Finally, this framework also causes sensationalisation of the problem, which may cause countries seen as destination and transit countries to pose unnecessary restrictions to migration on people considered susceptible to trafficking in their country. These restrictions to migration persist in Edo State,

Nigeria where the State government placed registrations on women below the age of 25 years to provide signed documents from their parents before obtaining passports to leave their country. When developing countries adopt the law enforcement framework, government agencies also impose stricter border, immigration surveillance and controls to protect their nationals (Lee, 2007).

Viewed from a different angle, the law enforcement framework can also call up misleading images that depict the State as involved in an aggressive battle with trafficking agents over organised crime. This is evident in media announcements and press releases in Nigeria dispatched by NAPTIP and UNICEF with figures about the number of children 'rescued' from trafficking agents. There are also arguments in academic literature that organised crime has infiltrated the state apparatus and that the trafficking of children persists because corrupt government-employed border agents have allowed the movement of undocumented people across state borders (Agbu, 2003; Adepoju, 2005).

1.1.3. The labour migration framework

The labour migration framework addresses the needs of trafficked persons by regarding them as migrant workers, irrespective of the nature of their work, skills and gender. The labour migration framework also recognises (a) that anyone can be a victim of trafficking; (b) that people can leave home in search of different jobs (skilled or unskilled); and (c) that people making these decisions are not as 'passive' or 'helpless', as other frameworks have suggested.

This framework sees human trafficking as a crime but one that affects 'mostly' women. Dawson (2010) agrees that the discourse on human trafficking recognises the gendered nature of migration in African countries and the effects of structural adjustment programmes which led many women and children to resort to migration or trafficking. However, he is quick to point out that common accounts of human trafficking promote a picture of gender helplessness and pity for people affected by trafficking. Dawson (2010) is of the opinion that, contrary to media and research stereotypes of innocent victims, only a small percentage of women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation, for instance, are kidnapped or migrate against their wishes.

This strong conceptual linking of voluntary migration and trafficking has been problematic to many, especially in developing countries (GAATW, 2010), as this vision of migration as risky has led to measures that limit the movement of people for economic, political, and agricultural reasons in the name of protection. There are also those who question where the trafficking of children falls within this framework; given their lack of legal agency. Children should technically be systematically turned back from destination countries if they are unaccompanied or lack the proper documentation. Although children may be part of an invisible work force, they are more likely to be understood as trafficked than voluntary labour migrants.

Putting children within a migration approach where instruments are not tailored to address peculiarities of their circumstances in relation to their age, gender, ethnicity and cultural practices, essentially undermines children's roles and limits of children's agency. As GAATW (2010) observes, the migration approach "...can result in quick and unhelpful protectionist responses" (p. 6).

1.1.4. The human rights framework

The use of the human rights approach is to foster a shift from the perception of trafficked children as mere objects of trafficking to their perception as people having human rights, people who can be empowered to take control of their lives and move on after the trafficking experience (Jordan, 2002). The human rights approach also allows government and advocates room to introduce the principle of humane treatment in the lives of rescued children. However, complying with the dictates of the human rights approach may be difficult in several developing countries where children do not have guaranteed access to good health, educational facilities and equality - which are part of a child's fundamental rights. Besides, trafficking is bound to persist when poor parents are marginalised in access to decent work, personal security and adequate housing that militate against meeting the basic needs of their children. But do human rights alone make a policy work and ultimately, reduce child trafficking? Bessell (2004) argues that the very practices such as early girl marriage and female genital mutilation leading children into trafficking are also infringements on the rights of children; as are several aspects of the Palermo Protocol especially the specification that children under 18 years are unable to give informed consent to trafficking which stripes children of agency. Ultimately, within the human rights approach, children are vulnerable to trafficking based on cultural and socially discriminatory practises that render them powerless or dependent on families and/or communities based on their age and gender.

Based on the frameworks discussed above, different strategies for tackling child trafficking have been implemented in different countries. But child trafficking remains on the rise. This could be because the frameworks for conceptualising trafficking are only 'rescuing' people who fall within the narrow specifications of the cited frameworks. The narrow specifications in these frameworks do not reflect the complexities of child trafficking (Jordan, 2002; Ray, 2005-2006), the peculiar nature of children's trafficking attributable to their age, gender, socio-economic status, and may be seen as propagating a moralist approach with the intention of abolishing trafficking for exploitative practices whether children benefit from it or not (Niewenhuys, 1996). In addition, the sensationalisation of trafficking stories with media announcements which as earlier stated project deceptive information and figures of an aggressive trafficking-elimination platform, have a lot to say about how the State has failed its citizenry by failing to address those recognised issues such as poverty, unemployment of parents and absence of social protection that make children susceptible to trafficking.

1.2. The Emergence of postcolonial theory

Considering that Nigeria witnessed 100 years of colonial rule beginning in 1860 and ending with independence on October 1, 1960, it is not surprising that, half a century after separation from the British colonial masters, the legacies of colonisation still live in the economic, social, cultural and political policies operating in the country. Olaniyan (2005) reiterates that crises existing in Nigeria and other previous colonies are in large part attributable to the exploitation of the minds and resources of colonised people whose leaders, many years after colonisation, still struggle to wrest the reins of power from the former colonial masters in their respective countries that have been

economically, culturally and politically tainted. The situation of Nigerian children and the factors contributing to their vulnerability to trafficking are not isolated from these colonial influences.

Postcolonial theory evolved from the disciplines of history and literature as a framework for documenting the experiences and struggles for survival within former colonies. Recently, postcolonial theoretical analysis has expanded beyond history and literature's focus on state-based colonial relationships to include domination of oppressed classes, minority groups and people forced into stereotypical groups of the poor, dependent or helpless. Key writers in this field contributed to creating an area of discourse for fostering understanding of how the shared experiences of colonised people have entrenched a sense of inferiority and misplaced cultural identity in the colonised (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1995; Gandhi, 1998; Loomba, 2005; Said, 1995; Stoler, 2006).

1.2.1. Postcolonial theory and critical concepts

Probably because postcolonial theory draws its literature from such postmodern schools as critical theory and within anthropology and uses explanatory texts borrowed from postcolonial theorizing in the disciplines of literature, theology, political science, human geography, sociology and philosophy (Moore-Gilbert, 1997; Sethi, 2011), it is difficult to present a single and accepted definition of the theory. This is seen as a defect to some who accuse postcolonial theory of immersing itself in discussions of cultural and political identity (Moore-Gilbert, 1997). But does this focus on cultural and political identity make postcolonial theory ineffective?

The struggle to depict the relationship that still exists between the colonised and the coloniser is more complicated than critical texts depict; and postcolonial theory is continually unfolding in the effort to depict new ways of thinking that explore this relationship (Stoler, 2006). Postcolonial theory may not be a concise theory but it has themes or concepts (cultural identity, subalternity, knowledge production and power) with which it engages in the struggle to forge an identity for previously colonised people that are relevant to my doctoral thesis:

1. **Cultural Identity:** The idea of cultural identity among previously colonised people that became projected into postcolonial theory was first ignited by colonial literature and narratives by educated non-western writers that questioned the cultural, ideological, political, psychological and economic domination of their people in non-western territories by their colonial masters (Moore-Gilbert, 1997; Young, 2003).
2. **Knowledge Production:** The discourse moves further to explore how research has been used to paint images of the previously colonised as people with inferior knowledge, an image that serves the interests of the colonised as the liberator with the perpetual burden of aid and goodwill (McWain, 2009). Postcolonial theory builds on the logic that even after colonialism, the assumptions of who dominates in relation to knowledge production still exists in relation to cultural, economic, social and religious assumptions guarding the functioning of today's society.
3. **Power:** Postcolonial theory questions the homogenised discussions of previously colonised people as people possessing similar traditions of colonisation, often categorised as those from the Third World (Said, 1978). It could also be said that postcolonial theory presents an alternative platform for evaluating, challenging,

responding to and contesting the persisting colonial legacies that impede the cultural, political, educational and economic transformation of people in previous colonial territories.

4. Subalternity: Postcolonial theory acknowledges that knowledge can be better produced and transformed when the knowledge base is extended to include the subaltern, that is the previously silenced or least powerful people in the society (Spivak, 1998) - a category into which trafficked children also fall.

Postcolonial theory has diversified to include discussions relating to the marginalisation of children in terms of inter-country adoptions (for example, studies on Haiti and South Korea - King, 2004; Waddington, 2010) and early childhood education to understand ways in which children have been impacted by oppressive practices (Kaomea, 2003, 2001). Some of the studies on early childhood education include Viruru's (2001) ethnographic work with children in India. The study revealed that patterns of teaching were tailored to meet Western notions of the Orient rather than the needs of children within the children's culture. While children's needs were in fact being met by the more structured teaching approach typically used in their culture, outsiders deemed it inappropriate and imposed the Western pattern of "mostly play-based methods" of teaching (Viruru, 2005; 2001).

1.2.2. The benefits of postcolonial theory to child trafficking

Since postcolonial theory is seen as a platform for those searching for social justice or equality (Rizvi, Lingard, & Lavia, 2006), the concepts addressed in this section explore the ways in which postcolonial theory can help identify gaps in the theoretical, political and methodological discussions of child trafficking. The postcolonial framework also provides a platform for exploring the multi-layered nature of victimisation that trafficked children experience, taking into account their diverse religion, class, gender, religious or ethnic groupings. The use of the postcolonial framework also critiques the adoption of a dominant strategy for initiating anti-trafficking programmes by introducing an alternative platform that challenges existing social order, power structures and economic or political institutions by putting victimised children at the center of discussions about their wellbeing (Agbu, 2009). The power structures identified by postcolonial theory are not only applicable to children but to the power structures guiding knowledge production within the academia that marginalise the input of African scholars or scholarship for presenting a different understanding of African children's experience of trafficking.

I. Knowledge production and child trafficking

Said (1978) introduced the idea of the Orient which depicts the relationship existing between the East and the West or the Orient and the Occident. The western conception of the Orient is that of a place of backwardness and inferiority, inhabited by irrational people with irrational thoughts; while the West is the mirror image (Said, 1978). This may appear a simplistic depiction of the relationship between the Orient and the Occident, yet it is one which may appear normal to some researchers. However, an issue resurfacing from Said's (1978) discourse on the Western or Occident's infatuation with the Orient and its problems is the tendency for previously colonised people to accept inapplicable interventions for addressing their problems based on convictions of their inferiority and the inferiority of their knowledge or interventions. It also provokes concern for Said (1978) that when knowledge about the Orient rests with the West it gives rise to the problem of cultural dominance when interventions based

on western knowledge and devoid of the cultural identities or realities of the people for whom the interventions are intended, are applied and used to address problems in developing countries. One of these would be the contested 'rescue' approach that forms the nucleus of anti-trafficking interventions in Nigeria and other West African countries.

With Said's idea of the 'Orient' came discussions on how knowledge should be produced and analysed across disciplines (Morgia, 1996). It also opened discussions about the knowledge structures that reinforce the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, and forces a methodological discussion of how to study child trafficking in a way that can be flexible enough to recognise the views of children. As in other forms of academic discussions, there is a politicization of knowledge production that tends to silence less powerful voices such as those of children and African scholars concerned about presenting their perspective on a social problem afflicting their continent.

II. Power and child trafficking

The postcolonial theoretical analysis of child trafficking also deviates from previous discussions that concentrated on poverty and the helplessness of children. Postcolonial theory helps to unmask the silent voices of trafficked children, countering the forms of domination or control that block children from speaking out about their experiences. Institutional practices and the personal interest of authorities can maintain subtle ways of keeping children in positions of helplessness. If researchers continue to interpret and limit discussions of child trafficking to poverty and the lowly social status of young trafficking victims, then our understanding of trafficking will remain narrow and children remain victims.

By using a postcolonial analysis of child trafficking, postcolonial theory offers an alternative platform by its refusal to "...treat the colonized as 'cultural dupes', incapable of interpreting, accommodating and resisting dominant discourses..." (Rizvi, Lingard, & Lavia, 2006: 251). The theory questions this categorisation of people in previous colonial territories and acknowledges that resistance to the homogenised nature of western discourse still persists (Said, 1978). Building on the case of Nepalese girls trafficked for domestic work, O'Neill (2001) argues that it may follow that a platform for addressing trafficking should weigh the risks versus the autonomy of children going to work as domestic servants or other exploratory activities. There is also the issue that protection is based on the fact that several trafficking contexts involve the "domination and docility" of children that are leaving home for the first time, as opposed to others who may have previously been trafficked or left home of their own volition for other reasons (O'Neill, 2001, p. 155). Since trafficking is also associated with power that is wielded over the poor and makes them susceptible to exploitative practices to make ends meet, it is also important to determine where the most power is wielded upon children making them susceptible to trafficking. To O'Neill (2001), the nucleus of power is concentrated on "...the host country - in the families that contract and exploit domestic labour, governments who try to protect their citizens by limiting access to this kind of work and agencies that contract and often strictly control the movements of their workers" (p. 155).

III. Cultural Identity and child trafficking

Postcolonial theory also explores the wrestled cultural identity of trafficked children as decisions about their wellbeing are deliberated within Western perceptions of children and intervention traditions of 'rescue'. It also means that after colonisation, children, like other people in former colonies, are still facing new forms of colonisation that is mostly internal and psychological (Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia, 2006).

In child trafficking literature, the discussion of culture often ends with the child fostering practices of West African households that reinforce the problem. Alternatively, postcolonial discussions on cultural identity will also explore the children's household characteristics, social history, beliefs, values and lived experiences that contribute to shaping children's lives. Introducing these variables will also introduce the interconnection of race, ethnicity, gender, class, age and gender in the discussion (Stuart, 1999). A postcolonial theoretical perspective questions the ideological conceptualisations of children by asking what an ideal childhood for children should be within the limits of their cultural identity, if there are attributes that should be universal to children across cultures and if there is a specimen of the perfect or universal child. A postcolonial analysis, therefore, allows the introduction of demographic differences that are traceable to trafficked children's culture, understanding how children's cultural identity is shaped and how this knowledge will explain the migratory movements and experiences of children as they aspire to benefit from the exploitative nature of globalisation (Bhahda, 1994).

A postcolonial theoretical perspective will also question the ideological conceptualisations of children by asking what an ideal childhood would be within the limits of their cultural identity and if there is a specimen of the perfect or universal child. Is the cultural identity of trafficked children really a threat to the West? It appears to be a threat to Western ways of knowing or doing things, or a threat to Western domination or conceptualisation of things, when new outlooks are presented.

IV. Subalternity, silent voices, and child trafficking

My dissertation builds extensively from postcolonial theory's notion of the Subaltern and providing a platform for the subaltern, in this case voiceless trafficked children and myself, a Nigerian researcher from a former colony to speak within an academic forum on the issue of child trafficking. Who is a subaltern and how does the word even come into the postcolonial discourse? The idea of subalternity is a disputed one because several people have laid claim to it (Smith, 2010; Spivak, 1999). The earliest interpretation of the word was to describe a junior officer in the British army (Gopal, n.d). Subalternity is also traceable to Marxist Antonio Gramsci who used the concept to characterise those falling outside political structures (Gopal, n.d; Smith, 2010) for reasons attributable to their race, gender, religion or class. The term was later given more prominence in depicting the situation of South Asia under British colonial rule by promoting an attempt to write the perspective of the colonised people rather than the perspective of the coloniser who possessed hegemonic power. This later use of the term led to the growth of the Subaltern Study Group that was popularised by Ranit Guba in the 1980s (Prakash, 1994). The Subaltern Study Group, which began as an intervention for rewriting the South Asian historiography, included such renowned

scholars and postcolonial theorists as Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Gyan Pandey, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Gyan Prakash, Edward Said, and Sumit Sarkar (Gopal, n.d; Prakash, 1994).

Spivak (1992) promotes the idea of the West investing more in critical reflections that desist in “othering” the ideas, culture and knowledge of non-Western people as inferior and unworthy of inclusion in social science studies. By integrating the voices of Subalterns, postcolonial theory supports allowing children to speak for themselves rather than through intellectuals; reaffirms its concern with engaging in the re-telling of the stories of marginalised people, children included (Hall, 1998), and takes the revolutionary stance of emphasising that people in non-Western countries can challenge western knowledge and are not passive receptors of intellectual power structures that hinder their contribution to social science theories or research.

Spivak (1988) tries to dismantle western ideas of conceptualising and understanding the ‘other’ as people with homogenous thoughts. She sees postcolonial theory as a way of hearing voices that have been muted by dominant ideologies. An important space for hearing those muted voices is within the academia. There have been debates on how to effectively unveil and incorporate muted voices in social studies and while several social science researchers consider this difficult or almost impossible, Spivak considers the failure to represent the interest of the culturally marginalised ‘Other’ in research an indication of intellectual laziness or not doing the initial homework required for effective field research (Spivak, 1990).

Spivak (1992) emphasises that subalternity is not:

...a classy word for oppressed, for Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie. (p. 45)

Who then is a subaltern? Based on readings and research on subaltern study, I will say that a subaltern is one who is unable to speak for his or herself because they fall outside the hegemonic discourse and will need others to create spaces to share their perspectives and others to advocate on their behalf. The story of children ‘rescued’ from trafficking has been told and retold through diverse sources that are hardly from the silenced voices of the children themselves. The fact that trafficked children have not been provided the platform to present their story does not mean, as Spivak (1992) so eloquently expressed, that “...the subaltern has no history and cannot speak...” (p. 28); rather, the ideological construction within their environment could contribute to the one-sided or incomplete presentation of their story and its relation to power imbalances that cause them to be further marginalised and silenced. I will contest that the subaltern can speak within an academic discussion if we as social science researchers can confer with the subaltern on a discursive note to create a space for them to speak about their realities without us, as researchers, bringing in biases and misinterpretations that see the subaltern knowledge as inferior.

My resolve to adopt the concept of subalternity does not mean that trafficked children do not have voice, rather I contend that the only way to help trafficked children express themselves is by creating a spot for them to be heard within the hegemonic structures of power.

1.3. Emergence of critical race theory

Critical race theory began gaining notice in the mid-1970s as a movement of left-leaning scholars, mostly academics of colour. Critical race theory has its roots in the United States and academics of colour's disgruntlements with Critical Legal Studies' (CLS) reinforcing of colour blindness (Bell, 1995, 1980) in the 1970s and 1980s (Gillborn & Rollock, 2011). Previously, academics of colour such as Derrick Bell, Cheryl Harris, Patricia Williams, Richard Delgado, Mari Matsuda and Kimberle Crenshaw, who supported the basic tenets and objectives of Critical Legal Studies (CLS), came to acknowledge its limitations both in recognising and addressing class-based discrimination that were experienced by professors and students in law schools across the United States (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller & Thomas, 1995; Gillborn & Rollock, 2011) and in attaining racial emancipation (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller & Thomas, 1995).

1.3.1. Critical race theory and critical concepts

Critical race theory is an approach that has no central statement (Gillborn & Rollock, 2011) but adopts different approaches (Bell, 1992; Gillborn & Rollock, 2011) for understanding structures, systems and situations that marginalise people of colour (Bell, 1992). Nevertheless, in my review of the literature, there are themes central to CRT that will help identify the range of factors (racism, white supremacy, intersectionality and the narrative style) contributing to child trafficking by reflecting that:

1. Racism appears entrenched in the social order and is taken for granted by members of society and thus, appears natural (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Gillborn & Rollock, 2011);
2. White supremacy or privilege is a major factor in the decision of critical race theorists to challenge the persistence of racial discrimination within critical legal studies (Harris, 1995). Critical race theorists challenge white dominance of social, economic, political and educational structures existing in the society and interrogate the limitation of privileges' accorded to people of colour (McIntosh, 1997; Preston, 2007; Sleeter, 2011);
3. The limited reach of the voices of people of colour: Racial minority groups could use storytelling as a tool for retelling their stories about racism as a form of psychological and spiritual empowerment, and a way of challenging racist ideologies and injustices (Bell, 1980, 1992, 2009; Rollock; 2012);
4. Intersectionality: While CRT focuses on institutional structures and relationships that reinforce racial inequalities, it also recognises that various systems of subordination can converge in complex ways. The intersectional approach to CRT that was promoted by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) allows an analysis that focuses on historical, socio-economic, political differences existing between marginalised groups that reinforce consciousness of their racial disparities.

Critical race theory also draws from such related perspectives as postcolonial theory, feminist jurisprudence and critical theory. The theory has extended beyond its legal beginnings of racial inequalities to include discussions on gender, class, and issues relating to social structures that have influenced recent sub-groupings such as Latino

(LatCrit), Asian American (AsianCrit) and American Indian critical race studies, as well as critical race feminism (CRF) (Gillborn, 2009; Yosso, 2005).

Critical race theory writers often adopt a narrative approach that builds on strong oral traditions and storytelling to project the experiential knowledge of people of colour. This approach is meant to challenge majoritarian notions by presenting stories that are based on first-person accounts and give voice to the experiences of minority persons (Delgado, 1989, 1990). Critical race stories are also usually written by minority persons to better place themselves and their experiences before the reader in ways that will awaken reactions to injustices, oppressive structures and acts that have previously been disregarded or made invisible by majority narratives (Delgado, 1989; 1990).

1.3.2. The benefits of critical race theory to child trafficking

Critical race theory challenges the idea that research on child trafficking in Africa is objective or neutral when (i) most research on the problem is conducted not by African researchers but by foreign experts and (ii) when children are spoken for rather than allowed to speak for themselves within the pages of academic writing (Delgado, 1998). By calling for the presentation of the voices of children who are 'victims' of the social problem, and a platform for African researchers to retell the stories of affected children, critical race theory amplifies the idea of social justice research which seeks to empower subordinate groups and eliminate traces of racism, classism and oppression (Matsuda, 1991). Critical race theory also recognises that knowledge derived from people experiencing a problem is integral to understanding the problem, talking about it and finding solutions to it. This essential knowledge is found in the lived experiences of trafficked children, embodied in their narratives, story-telling and family histories. Moreover, critical race theory also challenges the economic theories that are used to explain the nature of child trafficking; these theories ignore the input of trafficked children, and promote gendered and racialised representations of the experiences of marginalised children and their families. When these economic markers are adopted they reinforce stereotypical depictions of Africa as 'one country with several villages' afflicted by poverty leading to the trafficking of their children, mostly female, for household sustenance.

1.3.3. Counter-storytelling and child trafficking

An attempt to integrate critical race theory to an understanding of the experiences of trafficked children in Nigeria and West Africa is best served by adopting a technique that is rooted in the social sciences and strong oral traditions of storytelling. Counter-storytelling is a powerful tool for expressing the position of the voiceless. In other words, counter-storytelling serves as a powerful tool for recounting the experiences of previously silent people that seeks to challenge the dominant stories of those powerful enough to make their viewpoints part of the majority or dominant discourse (Delgado, 1989, 1995). Within a child trafficking study, counter-storytelling is expected to serve the theoretical, methodological and pedagogical roles of: providing alternative lenses for understanding the situation of people who are vulnerable to a particular social problem and countering erstwhile beliefs surrounding their situation; providing a forum for society and researchers to share the reality of child trafficking by making children and their stories appear familiar rather than distant or unreal; and building a richer interaction between

stories and children's lived experiences that will contribute to new theoretical frameworks or strategies for addressing child trafficking (Delgado, 1989; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

1.4. What a postcolonial theory analysis of child trafficking will entail

Sethi (2011) recounts that criticisms about the diversification of postcolonial studies departments across the world and its connectivity to such modern theories of postmodernism and poststructuralism also raise questions if postcolonial theory is not without western influence. The same scholar was also quick to add that "... it is not as though theory has no application to issues relating to almost every aspect of postcolonialism such as gender, race, migrancy, diaspora, nation, English studies, and so on" (p. 27). Other researchers have also accused postcolonial theory of over involvement in academic and textual pursuits and being somewhat blind to real life situations of poverty, inequalities and wars existing in the developing worlds it portends to defend (Pieterse, 2001; Rajan, 1997; Sethi, 2011). From these discussions, it appears to me that it is not as if postcolonial theory does not have the potential to shed its textual leaning; it is for academics involved in issues in developing countries to move away from restrictive methodologies to explore and introduce critical, contextual and historical analysis that will provide insight into socio-cultural struggles in contemporary times and enrich the academic relevance of postcolonial theory. More researchers even applaud postcolonialism for presenting insights for understanding Africa and its social problems in a way that is different from those portrayed or written by western academics (Abrahamsen, 2003; Mbembe, 2001). Within the context of my dissertation, I will identify four themes that will contribute to a postcolonial analysis of research with trafficked children in Nigeria. The themes are: cultural identity (Bhahda, 1994; Stuart, 1999), subaltern voices (Spivak, 1992), knowledge production (Fanon, 1961; Said, 1978; Young, 2003) and power (Said, 1978; Young, 2003).

1.5. What a critical race theory analysis of child trafficking will entail

Although critical race theory has been criticised for focusing mostly on race and racism to the exclusion of other sources of oppression, a critical race analysis can also be used to look at other forms or layers of subordination that are linked to race, such as class, gender and immigration status, to which trafficked children are exposed (Crenshaw, 1989). Solorzano & Yosso (2001) identified five themes that guide research methods for a critical race analysis in education. Four of these themes relevant to my exploration of children 'rescued' from trafficking and which bear similarities with some analytical themes proffered by postcolonial theory are: (1) the centrality of race and racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001); (2) the intersectionality of race and racism with other forms of subordination (Crenshaw, 1989); (3) the need to challenge dominant ideology or white supremacy (Sleeter, 2011); and (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge gained by listening to the voices of marginalised groups (Bell, 2009).

Moreover, critical race theory will reinforce my analysis of child trafficking in Nigeria with its idea of counter-storytelling, which is used to expose the need for race-neutral discourses that reject the idea of majority stories built on the knowledge provided by dominant groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993), in this case foreign experts. Counter-

storytelling also serves to either mute the experiences of affected people or provide distorted accounts of their experiences (Merriweather Hunn, Guy, & Manglitz, 2006). There is also the likelihood that the voices of such minority groups as trafficked children can be muted by local researchers who may be interested in presenting a particular aspect of the child trafficking discourse. As evident in my methods chapter, my study adopts the counter-story analytical platform and a data gathering tool that places the direction of research in the hands of children participating in the study. The essential advantage of this format is to ensure that the research objective remains focussed on obtaining the previously silent views of trafficked young persons from West Africa and submerges other secondary discourse.

1.6. Themes resonating from a post-colonial and critical race analysis of the child trafficking literature

In order to challenge this idea of the “dreadful secondariness” (Said, 1989, p.207) of knowledge from former colonies, I will introduce themes resonating from the child trafficking literature when analysed from a postcolonial and critical race perspective:

1. Child trafficking and stereotypes about children
2. Child trafficking and the question of children’s agency
3. Child trafficking, race and the perceived inferiority of African scholarship
4. Child trafficking and unexplored input of power, class and gender triggers
5. Child trafficking, children’s voice and the need for counter-storytelling

The above are new themes because they will reflect the experiences of trafficked children from a country in the West African region rather than treating trafficked African children as a single, homogenous group.

Moreover, based on my literature search, research on children removed from trafficking in Africa has not been conducted within a postcolonial and critical race framework of analysis. The justification for using the postcolonial and critical race critiques is about making inquiries into the causes of this social problem and seeking appropriate solutions to it with constant referrals between the past and the present. It is therefore essential not only to describe social life but also to redefine social theories by introducing new tools and new voices that offer space for affected children and households to not only speak but to be heard.

1.6.1. Child trafficking and stereotypes of African children

With little trafficking-specific literature that looks at African children’s experiences of exploitative situations, we can turn to related literature that has examined children in armed conflict and child migrants in general. Hart & Tyrer (2006), based on research with children living in situations of armed conflict, indicate that discussions in this area tend to focus on the voicelessness of children by perceiving children as passive victims exploited by adults. Children are also seen as little people with a fragile build and people that should be protected. The focus of such top-down, externally-driven research is overwhelmingly on the trauma and emotional damage experienced by the children with little attention focused on children’s agency. The resulting image of passive, helpless children caught up in

exploitative activities is projected by humanitarian agencies and the media. When these ideas are projected, it is difficult to understand that there are children who may differ from the norm. For instance, it is assumed that children involved in armed conflict may have been persuaded or even kidnapped to partake in the activity. This does not give room to explore whether there were alternative, viable options available to children who may have “consented” to their participation in exploitative activities (Thorsen, 2012). It could well be that children have limited options when struggling to survive, especially when protection by adult family members is lacking.

Truong & Angeles (2005) see social and cultural factors that include “gender, age, ethnicity, intra-household dynamics and attitudes of communities,” (p. 10) as important in discussions of trafficking. The vulnerability of children to trafficking must be considered within socio-cultural settings that may include families upset by war, unemployment or death, family status, membership in a minority ethnic group and other issues that may determine a family’s access to resources or services within their environment. Moreover, in order to develop a full understanding of children’s experiences of trafficking, research must consider the range of trafficking activities that children engage in, and the ways children can be progressively driven from one kind of activity to even more exploitative practices. The aim of such research is to uncover and understand the progressive nature of children’s trafficking and work. For instance, while some children are originally trafficked to work as domestic servants or hair dressers, these children may move on to work in forced prostitution or other more exploitative areas (Truong & Angeles, 2005). Why does this happen? Why are children re-trafficked? Truong & Angeles (2005) attribute this to intra-household decision-making patterns and the tolerance of trafficking by certain people in the community (parents, community members and even policy makers). Children’s movement into progressively more harmful forms of trafficking could be related to the manner in which regulatory agencies and organisations handle issues relating to trafficked persons that cause victims to be stigmatised and have limited options but to return to trafficking. Children who are returned to their communities often do not remain there long before they are re-trafficked (Dottridge, 2004). The failure of government intervention, particularly their reintegration strategies, indicate a need for better understanding of the contexts, patterns and home backgrounds of children who are vulnerable to trafficking.

Western images of Africa and of African children in particular, have a lot to do with mainstream media portrayals and also with reports by development workers (Mbembe, 2001; Övergaard, 1998). These images are not separate from those propagated on child trafficking. Popular stereotypes are of starving, helpless, hungry, abandoned children who are at risk of unsavoury situations. These images present a one-sided discussion of the problem and exclude children who do not fit the stereotype. This one-sided discourse is evident in Dwoden’s (2012) condemnation of a British journalist’s negative reporting on Africa and the accusation that though the journalist cautions people against looking at Africa with European eyes, the journalist is doing:

...precisely what you and the rest of the British media have been doing all this time...European eyes, however, have always dictated the global image of Africa. Trying to get a news editor interested in the story behind Africa’s famines and wars was always difficult. It is always easier to show an aid worker saving an African child overlaid by a tragic-voiced reporter. That was why

most journalists were sent there. I was. But I was also lucky. I worked for three news outlets, The Times, The Independent and The Economist, which allowed me to stay a little longer than other journalists. And out of the corner of my eye on the way back from the interview, the starvation camp or the front line, I saw things that might explain why Africa is the way it is. I caught glimpses of the deference of educated young people towards their unschooled elders. Or the aid agency that sent an expensive computer to a school without electricity. Or a bright girl taken out of school to serve her brothers at home. If you talk to Africans, these are the things they tell you about (n.p).

These one-sided discourses have had great impact in the postcolonial era and seek to reinforce the colonial idea of Africa's development as the 'white man's burden' (Viriri & Mungwini, 2010). To Lidchi (1999), these images can also be used to seek to promote funding opportunities for foreign development workers. But they render the Southern child, parents and people as passive, helpless victims whose very survival is dependent on aid from affluent Northern countries. In essence, the South remains the child and the North remains the ever caring and nurturing mother.

With the dominance of negative representations of malnourished children in some war-torn African countries such as Rwanda and Somali (McWain, 2009), there is the likelihood that these representations will be passed on to discussions on child trafficking, the place of children in it and solutions to the problem.

1.6.2. Child trafficking and the question of children's agency

Before moving into discussions in this area, I will dwell briefly on 'agency' as it relates to children in the developing world. Several studies, especially those dealing with migratory practices of children in developing countries (Hashim, 2004; Iversen, 2002; Nieuwenhuys, 1994; Whitehead et al, 2007) make reference to children's agency with a sharp deviation from Western ideas of the passive and dependent nature of childhood (Whitehead et al, 2007). When children are said to have or exhibit 'agency,' it means that they are perceived as able to deliberate on situations affecting them and make informed decisions based on these deliberations with the understanding that certain consequences surround or follow the action that they (children) have decided to take. Clearly, one's agency is built around the person's ability to make decisions, act on their own will and these are activities that are guided or informed by their lived experiences.

Whitehead et al (2007) also point out that children's agency is constrained by age, gender appropriate behaviours and access to social resources, factors that have a lot of impact on the choices accessible to children as they make decisions. To provide insight to the role of these constraints, I will refer to the decision taken by India in 16 October 2006 to ban employment of children under 14 years in domestic work. While the Indian government must have felt it was protecting children from exploitation and harm, some NGOs in the country protested against government's decisions on the grounds that it impacted on the economic livelihoods accessible to this group of children as a result of their age, infringed on their fundamental human rights and disregarded children's agency and attempt to cope with changes in their living condition. And as Bourdillion (2009, p. 13) points out:

These girls made their own decisions on how to control their lives, improve their situation, and prepare for their future, irrespective of international standards accepted by supposedly supporting adults. When outsiders try to protect children by removing potentially hazardous options, they

override such agency. A ban on child domestic work offers no respect for children who have tried to overcome adversity by working for themselves and their families, often in painful situations.

It can then be said that disagreements could occur across cultures, researchers and policy makers about the extent of children's agency. When children are seen to act in a way that deviates from what is the acceptable norm, society ultimately sets out to assist and remove children from what is considered wrong without questioning where children are coming from and asking children if what they are doing is in their best interest or not.

There are critical methodological challenges in drawing a distinction between operational and ideological definitions of children and adults. It is perceived that the normal developmental process is for children to mature into adults; for, as long as they are minors, children require protection and guidance from adults in making serious decisions (Sanghera, 2005: 13). Extremely problematic also, is when some writers use the word 'children,' they may not be discussing children but young women above the age of 18 years (Gozdziak, 2008; Oluwaniyi, 2009). Oluwaniyi (2009) problematizes applying notions of childhood and a legal definition of a child favoured in Western countries to African countries. African culture values hard work beginning at relatively tender ages, as the traditional rite of passage to adulthood. Building on this discourse, Jefferess (2002) concisely states that:

...the very concept of the universal (Western) child that children in the "Third World" are compared against is itself a problematic construction... Despite the assumed universality, ahistoricity and naturalness of "childhood," the "child" is an ambiguous and paradoxical concept, whose status as not (yet) adult is much more complex and fraught than child rights discourse suggests (p. 76).

One cannot fully understand the problems experienced by children involved in trafficking without considering the influence of their age, vulnerability and ultimately, agency. A social research focus on children's agency ends with the portrayal of children as passive and helpless individuals prone to numerous vulnerabilities (Hart & Tyrer, 2006), something that has been absent in previous research. Further, Bandura (2006) sees agency as an essential part of human nature and explains that "...people [children inclusive] are self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting. They are not simply onlookers of their behaviour. They are contributors to their life circumstances, not just products of them" (p. 164). To possess agency, therefore, implies that individuals are engaged in their own reflexivity about how various choices affect their lives positively or negatively before making decisions.

The previously cited research with 261 Beninese children trafficked from the Abeokuta quarries clearly indicates that anti-trafficking agencies, governments and researchers do not understand where to place children within the legal and policy frameworks of trafficking (Terre des hommes, 2005). This lack of understanding also fails to recognise children's agency. The Nigerian government treated the case as one of illegal migration rather than child trafficking. Moreover, although about 100 or more of the children were above 14 years, the children were not asked if they wanted to return to their country or remain in Nigeria. Even more distressing was the fact that children were transported back to the Benin Republic in the same buses as their captured traffickers (Terre des hommes, 2005).

The problem with the 'rescue' approach to child trafficking is its provision of a protective framework for children that fails to consider children's varying childhoods and interpretation of their social situations (Boyden & De Berry, 2004; Montgomery, Burr & Woodhead, 2003). To Jefferess (2002), children are also stripped of agency because they are Othered when compared to trafficked adults in the same society. Society actually fails in its duty to empower children when it fails to provide a space for children to express their views and be involved in the struggle to channel pathways to a meaningful future for children worldwide.

Postcolonial theory also contributes to the discussion of children's agency. Bauman (1998), following the thinking of Edward Said, argues that the dominance of western knowledge production goes beyond academia to influence policy decisions. This phenomenon is easily observed in the form of anti-trafficking interventions adopted in Africa. Postcolonial theory provides a platform for challenging this one-sided use of the ideological apparatus. Postcolonial theory introduces the need for 'critical methodological correctness' that is often based on historical perspectives as well as agency and identity projected by participants in the discourse. It is also apparent that agency in relation to children cannot be isolated from cultural influences, for children also differ in the way their culture, self, social and structural networks or associations influence the exhibition, use or inhibition of this agency (Archer, 2003; Bandura, 2006).

Within my doctoral research, postcolonial theory also introduces cultural critique as a way of understanding ideologies (Bauman, 1998) in the literature of child trafficking and the beliefs it projects in relation to the discourse of affected children.

1.6.3. Child trafficking and the unexplored intersections of power, class and gender

Merriweather Humm, Guy & Manglitz (2006) posit that critical race theory is a reaction to the absence of a level playing field for issues reflecting "human differences" in such areas as race, ethnicity and gender that are "constrained by hegemony" (p. 244) and that it aspires to rearticulate the experiences of marginalised groups in ways that challenge the dominant discourse. This hegemonic process of rearticulating the experiences of people not only renders these people invisible but also prevents an understanding of their perception of their existence and their history in their own words. The notion of majority stories, universal truths or discourses of universal policies or laws are challenged by critical race theory when minority perspectives are included in discussions (Delgado, 1989). Global discussions about child trafficking are based on frameworks that are built on the western idea of what is considered a nuclear family and how parents and children should function within these (Una Children's Rights Learning Group, 2011). Even more forceful within Africa's development is the direction of global discussions on child trafficking that reflect what Andreasson (2005) refers to as "... a 'systemic' failure of African cultures in their encounters with the challenges of the modern world" (p. 972). The adoption of international conventions that are difficult to apply in addressing such social problems as child trafficking is a clear indication of this systemic failure (Myers, 2001; Una Children's Rights Learning Group, 2011). In like manner, Bonnet (2009) affirms that Africa's adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) for instance, implies that Africa is forced to impose

western notions of the child and adopt the abolitionist framework in dealing with child labour. Bonnet would have preferred that African countries adopt practices for addressing child trafficking that are more in line with “...their traditional concepts of relationship[s] between children and adults” (p. 169), rather than yielding to western notions of family relationships. Should Nigeria and other African countries rate their culture secondary in the face of challenges of absorbing international frameworks that are difficult to apply to social problems within their multi-cultural environment? The limited reach of the anti-trafficking interventions in Nigeria could be due to the fact that the strategy for addressing the problem does not reflect the cultural practices of affected children.

Spivak's (1992), discussion on the muted voice of the subaltern emphasises the issue of gender in power imbalances existing among children themselves. Have female children been culturally sensitised to remain in the shadows, reinforcing their marginalised position in society, thus increasing their susceptibility to trafficking? This factor is also related to Omokhodion's (2009) study involving domestic servants. Of the house-helps who participated in the study, 116 were girls while 5 were boys. The study maintains that the socialisation of girls to adopt the role of homemakers coupled with the preference for female house-helps exposes female children to exploitative practices, such as kidnapping and trafficking. Why are more girls sent off for trafficking and why are their voices silenced? It could be that trafficked children, like many subaltern groups comprised of women and children in developing countries, have no voice because unaddressed stratifications of race, gender, age, social status, wealth have been introduced to ensure that their voices are silenced in projecting their situations.

1.6.4. Child trafficking, race and the perceived inferiority of African scholarship

The idea of the perpetually substandard nature of African research may not be distant from perceptions of Africans in general, which McEwan (2009) indicates have not shifted since the 19th century. Africans are seen as people with similar features who are difficult to differentiate, practice cultures that are of inferior quality (Bolt, 1971), and are ‘indolent children’ (Russett, 1989). The perception of Africans as children or people living in a perpetual ‘childlike’ state may not be far removed from the argument that scholars in the western world should assume the role of ‘permanent guardians’ (McEwan, 2009, p. 136). The comparison of Africans with children persists in academic writing and development discourse and impedes Africans from being at the forefront of discussions of social problems, solutions to them and carving a future for themselves.

Researchers have looked at the issue of knowledge and the power it wields in relation to human trafficking. The control of knowledge dictates whose research, knowledge or interventions counts and who should partake or not partake in the child trafficking discourse. The control of knowledge has also remained for a long time in the North (McEwan, 2009; Powers, 2003). The protective nature of the discourse also determines the direction of funding for child trafficking research. Do African researchers have access to funding from government and research agencies to undertake research that provides their perspective on a problem with historic, experiential and social contexts? For now, research conducted by Nigerian scholars on child trafficking is limited to small-scale projects of short duration that are confined to interviewing children found hawking in major Nigerian markets or the scholar's familiar environment. Their study period is also limited by funding.

Further, most literature on child trafficking is published by foreign researchers and international development agencies. There are several reasons for this, but we cannot eliminate the fact that these agencies (and foreign researchers) have large amount of funding to carry out research on social problems in several developing countries. While the interventions they proffer serve as global models for addressing the issue, McWain (2009) is emphatic that the interventions do not “...explain and tackle the causes of the inequalities it seeks to alleviate” (p. 182). The same researcher indicates that the argument in development quarters has also been that Northern representations of the South are a means of understanding the South better. But representing the South means re-telling the people’s stories and experiences in a way that the people understand it, are familiar with it and agree with it, rather than the opposite.

For postcolonialism to avoid being entrapped as another development discourse which eulogises the Northern hegemony of knowledge, postcolonial theory should make room for discussions that allow counter ideas based on power, ethnicity, authority, knowledge and positionality. The inferiority of African knowledge in this situation draws attention to the fact that the interest of foreign researchers is again a mission to rescue Africans (adults and children) from their own inadequacies. Sadly, it reinforces the idea of ‘academic privilege’ which Andreasson (2005) refers to as a situation whereby “...the study of African crisis can be detached, becoming a study by people not directly affected by or linked to the suffering resulting from crisis” (p. 976). Andreasson’s idea of academic privilege is further reinforced by this insight into the patronising nature of academic endeavours as they relate to solutions to social problems in Africa that are provided by:

...the North American and European PhD student, how she is conditioned and ‘professionalised’ to then be sent out in the ‘field,’ armed with her knowledge, her theory, her method. What are the tangible results of more than half a century of such ‘policy relevant’ endeavours? If we are to judge the utility of African studies and development studies based on what has actually transpired on the African continent and by our ability to find ‘solutions,’ then we surely have a cause for comprehensive re-examination of our field (p. 983).

Some researchers have also questioned why development research is conducted in Africa and Asia and not in places like the United States, Britain and Canada where problems of poverty, homelessness and child trafficking also exist (Jones, 2000). Basically, to be truly engaged in an activity that aims to curtail the prevalence of an annoying social problem, people affected by the problem should be provided an enabling environment to contribute to solutions.

1.6.5. Child trafficking, children’s voice and the need for counter-story telling

The idea of counter-story telling is often associated with critical race theory. However, postcolonial theory is essentially based on a retelling framework for marginalised people to challenge oppressive development issues, claim their identities and keep their histories alive in their territories (Mahala & Swilky, 1996; Tickner, 2007). Critical race theory builds on the idea of counter-storytelling because researchers have to recognise that their real experiences stand in stark contrast to the lived experiences of ‘others’ in their stories (Merriweather Humm, Guy & Manglitz, p. 247). Further, Bagley & Castro-Salazar (2012) show that counter-story telling can be used to express the voices of people who are victims of unjust social structures, in which case, their narratives could be about power relations,

cultural and other relevant contexts that tell their stories. Contrary to beliefs that children could be traumatised by retelling their stories, it could be the silence of unvoiced thoughts that is most traumatic for children. Reinforcing the healing nature of stories, Bell (1989) adds that “. . . people resist by identifying themselves as subjects, by defining their reality, shaping their new identity, naming their history, telling their story” (p. 43). Through counter-storytelling, children can better live with the trauma of their trafficking experiences by sharing stories that will provide understanding of the socio-cultural and historical contexts of their trafficking. Counter-storytelling will also aid in understanding children’s cultural identity and survival patterns (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999).

The purpose of using counter-story telling is to tell the story of the struggles of trafficked children before, within, and after trafficking, if possible. Counter-storytelling is a platform for challenging dominant narratives or discourses, giving voice to often marginalised people (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001) and questioning the validity of conventional assumptions accepted by mainstream society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Faircloth (2009) sees the small sample size allowed by using counter-story telling as an asset because using a larger sample will prevent researchers from fostering that closeness with respondents that will provide meaning and insight into their experiences. My resolve to adopt the counter-storytelling platform for research on child trafficking fits within filling in the missing pieces in understanding the perspectives of affected children themselves. The problem existing in research in West Africa is that of large or small sample size often used by international development agencies and local researchers respectively and how this influences attaining crucial data for understanding the problem. Counter-storytelling offers a flexible platform of small sample size, intimacy and closeness with participants that should make children comfortable enough to share their narratives with the researcher.

It is always important to distinguish between counter-storytelling and fictional stories. Counter-storytelling in the context of child trafficking research would not be based on fictional characters but on the real life experiences of actual children using empirical data. Narratives and counter-narratives should be produced by affected people and recorded by the researcher (Milner, 2007). Narratives provided by children can help in understanding their problems, often taking the form of biographies from different sources that merge to constitute children’s voice of their experiences. By listening to the narratives of marginalised groups, researchers hope to effect transformative change by making links with institutional forces charged with addressing the social problem under focus (Scheurich & Young, 2004).

The majority story builds on negative stereotypes about children and their families (Ikemoto, 1997). The majority story will tell us that children engaged in trafficking are poor children, excluding children who may not be poor but have been driven into trafficking by peer pressure, poor information from relatives or information obtained from the internet. The mainstream idea of trafficked children also spurs stereotypes of children from poor backgrounds and illiterate parents and allows limited room for theorising that hears the stories of children that are likely to deviate from the norm. Is the majority story of trafficked children inspired by what is considered the dominant view of children? The dominant or conventional view of children has been passed on by western researchers who impose their ideas of developmental stages that children should undergo as a form of training for adulthood (Breuil, 2008).

This view implies that Nigerian children that are trafficked are judged within knowledge that is constructed based on the dominant, western standards with which children everywhere are expected to comply. When interventions are built on these majority stories, they may or may not work, depending on the children they target and the factors that led to their trafficking. However, we must acknowledge the immense strength in the hegemonic ideology conveyed by research on child trafficking.

In summary, critical race theory acknowledges that oppression is multi-layered and cannot be articulated by fitting children into any single category. It insists that by using counter-storytelling, society is forced to listen and is hopefully armed with better knowledge for changing the way people think about child trafficking. In other words, counter-storytelling not only addresses stories of experiences, but provides insights into the agency, struggles and coping skills of children that are weaved into their stories. Counter-storytelling has the potential to highlight the unequal power and social relations that are absent in the stories conveyed by dominant discourses of child trafficking (Bell, 2003; Solorzano & Yasso, 2002).

1.7. Discussions and conclusions based on the theoretical framework

Here I will dwell further on the selection of the two theoretical frameworks within which my understanding of child trafficking in West Africa is situated. From my overview, critical race theory appears focussed on institutional structures and relationships that reinforce racial inequalities. However, it also recognises that various systems of subordination can converge in complex ways to allow for an analysis that focuses on historical, socio-economic and political differences existing between marginalised groups that reinforce a consciousness of their limitations and helplessness (Gillborn, 2009). Though the intersectional nature of the influence of these factors on the lived histories of marginalised groups may appear invisible to those outside the frame of influence, powerful narratives of their consciousness of perceived inequality, discrimination and oppression are needed to counter dominant and accepted perspectives. I have been questioned about my resolve to adopt a postcolonial approach for my thesis on child trafficking and I often wonder why the decision to adopt this approach is not obvious. I have also observed that this question is asked by scholars that interrogate the reach of the postcolonial discourse. The use of the postcolonial approach may not be obvious to academics that are prone to look at postcolonial theory through the narrow lens of struggles by former colonies that should be more focussed on carving out an existence away from their colonial past. My resolve to adopt this approach may be troublesome for academics that see postcolonial theory as too abstract and confusing to address an issue that appears easy to attribute to exploitation, poverty and escape routes taken by poor families to enhance their survival as depicted in literature on child trafficking. Regrettably, these views can only be upheld by academics that have not been haunted by the destabilising effects of a colonial past. The effect of colonisation lives on even in the survival tactics of children and adults born in the 20th and 21st centuries. That is the reality of colonisation; and to free themselves from their colonial past, there is a need to continually deconstruct the mystical ideas of Africa, African knowledge and the trafficking of African children.

Chapter Three

Literature Review — Child Trafficking Existing knowledge about child trafficking in Nigeria

Trafficking is a serious social problem affecting a large number of children in the West African region (Mbakogu, 2011; Sesay & Olayode, 2008; UNICEF 2007). With the Nigerian government's effort to curtail the problem since introducing the NAPTIP Act in 2003, it is important to understand why the practice has not waned. In the literature review, I am going to draw on literature on child trafficking conducted in different parts of Africa relating to understanding the major concepts (child trafficking, exploitation, migration, fostering and the idea of 'rescuing' children), the limited empirical research on child trafficking in West Africa, triggers of child trafficking, and gender implications of child trafficking.

1.1. Child Trafficking: Understanding the major concepts

Several researchers assert that human trafficking is not a new activity because it has taken different forms over the course of history (Dodo & Dodo, 2012; Jahic & Finckenauer, 2005; Norris, 2008; UNESCO, 2006). Human trafficking has escalated to alarming proportions with globalisation, wherein it has been commercialised to involve different stakeholders or agents who benefit from this high yielding trade in people (Jordan, 2002; Marinova & James, 2012). Closely linked to the magnitude of child trafficking worldwide is the problem of providing an encompassing definition of trafficking that will be acceptable to states, parents, children and relevant practitioners. In order to reduce trafficking, it is important to understand what trafficking means in the local language or cultural practices of at risk children and parents. If practices parents and children engage in are considered trafficking and parents either do not know this or know this but do not accept the categorisation, child trafficking will persist until there is a level playing ground in terms of practices and policy making. This is replayed in situations where researchers and policy makers talk about child trafficking and parents in some West African countries argue that their children are not trafficked (Dougnon, 2011). It then becomes the Nigerian or African idea of child trafficking versus the global or human rights perception of trafficking. It will be difficult to reduce the occurrence of trafficking in Nigeria, when people that are considered to partake in the activity (parents, guardians, children and relatives) disagree that the activity they are engaged in is trafficking.

1.1.1. Child trafficking

Recently, a number of African countries (appendix 1) have adopted the definition offered by The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (2000) which defines child trafficking as: "...the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of any person under the age of eighteen for the purposes of sexual or labour exploitation, forced labour, or slavery." The UN Protocol provides a legal framework for explaining situations in which children could be considered trafficked thus:

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 (such as force or inducements to obtain the consent of another) set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article (UNODC, 2000, p. 43).

The UN Protocol's definition of child trafficking waives procuring children by fraudulent means. This means that children are considered victims of trafficking even when trafficking has occurred without children being deceived (Kooijmans & van de Glind, 2010). This waiver is important within the context of trafficking in Nigeria where consent for trafficking may be given by parents, children or children's guardians (Nwogu, 2007; UNICEF, 2007). Prior to the UN definition of child trafficking, it was difficult to prosecute trafficking agents in situations where parents, in a bid to escape poverty, gave consent to their children's trafficking. The definition also allows parents to be held accountable for allowing acts that exploit a minor. It is anticipated that when parents are liable to be prosecuted for exploiting their children, then the tendency to hand their children over to traffickers will reduce. Further, I shall look into difficulties arising from the application of the UN Protocol's definition of child trafficking.

1.1.2. Child trafficking and Exploitation

In research with trafficked persons, it is sometimes difficult to understand who is "trafficked" and who is "exploited"? Will children who obediently acceded to their parents' plea to take up work appointments far away from home to save their families from starvation accept that they (the children) were exploited? The dilemma of understanding the cultural, socio-economic, developmental and moral associations of certain terminologies is presented in Gozdzia's (2008) study. Based on the experiences of 100 children, mostly girls, aged between 16 and 17 years who were trafficked to the United States, Gozdzia (2008) comments that it is difficult studying trafficked children because no two trafficked children are the same. Children also have different perceptions of their trafficking and their traffickers (who in some instances are their parents), which will determine whether they consider the activity in which they were engaged in exploitative or not.

Similarly, some parents and 'rescued' children have problems with how the issue of age fits within discussions of trafficking and exploitation (Doughon, 2011; Gozdzia, 2008). Is the definition of a child as any person below the age of 18 years appropriate for the African situation and does it place restrictions on work for Africa's economically active children? Even at less than 18 years, economically active children fail to regard themselves as children and even question how their trafficking translates to their exploitation.

Definitions of child trafficking that also lay emphasis on the classification of children as people younger than 18 also pose problems for African parents and researchers as depicted by research conducted in Mali's Dogon country by Doughon (2011). With emphasis on age, more children fall within the umbrella of trafficked children and opens debates from religious and cultural angles. For instance, it becomes difficult for children to attend Quranic schools that involve living with and engaging in some measure of work for the teachers or Imams that may be considered exploitative; it will also be difficult for young boys from Dogon country to leave home as an essential rite of passage to adulthood that involves exposure to life and survival strategies beyond their community.

Moreover, what does exploitation mean? The UN Protocol (UNODC, 2000) specified certain acts that should be considered exploitation as: "... 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." (p. 42). To me, this explanation appears to depict situations of authority of one person over another person who is considered vulnerable and therefore a victim. Also, based on my interpretation of the child trafficking literature, there are several ways in which a child can be considered exploited in the course of trafficking. This will include situations that involve: forcing a child to move from home with promises of work and payment; making the child rely on one other than their parents for their daily necessities; non-payment of wages for a few weeks later than stipulated in the 'agreement;' the relationship a child has with an employer which results in maltreatment, beatings and inflicting of body harm; and when a child's needs are not met by employers as agreed upon.

Even with these identified ways of exploiting children, there is still no global consensus on what exploitation really means (Buck & Nicholson, 2010; Kooijmans & van de Glind, 2010). As such, some people may see some of the identified exploitative acts as normal rites some children undergo in the course of their training for adulthood — especially in situations where children have to live far away from home and depend on strangers or relatives for sustenance.

1.1.3. Child trafficking and child migration

In developing countries in particular, researchers have found it problematic when child migration is viewed through a trafficking lens (Beauchemin, 1999; Dougnon, 2011; Okonofua et al., 2004; Yaqub, 2009). Okonofua et al (2004) indicate that in engaging in debates on what trafficking and migration should imply it is important to address the realities of people's lives because migration, for most people, is a means of coping with the realities of poverty they are currently experiencing. Children are not exempted from the economic and social realities that lead people to seek alternative sources of livelihood. To Yakub (2009), the link between trafficking and migration of children begins with the unaddressed factor of socio-economic disadvantages that children suffer which determines when, and which, children leave home and under what guise. It may be accepted that teenagers could leave home looking for work. The mode of children's departure from home could be interpreted as trafficking or migration depending on the viewpoints or interpretation of the government agencies 'rescuing' children from their trafficking situations. It then means that by evaluating the context of children's trafficking or movement, you may find that some children on the streets or even in private homes as domestic servants could be either migrating or trafficked children. To add to Yakub (2009) and Okonofua et al's (2004) perspectives, there are differences between the manner of departure from home for migrating and trafficked children. Whereas several trafficked children are unsure of their destination, a decision that in several cases is taken by their traffickers, children migrating for work are usually aware of their destination, their monthly income and duration of work or apprenticeship. Definitions become problematic when western ways of knowing are applied to explaining and dealing with a practice (child migration for work) with cultural undertones.

Tensions arising when child migration is viewed through a trafficking lens also move beyond researchers to include the perspectives of parents and their children. For instance, Dougnon's (2011) research with Malian parents from Dogon community reveals that parents could not understand how they can be accused of trafficking when their children leave their communities of their own volition and return to the community after their years of apprentice are completed. This perspective shared by parents indicates that there should be clarifications about what should constitute trafficking. Should children be considered trafficked when they are taken by force and never return to their communities or the reverse? According to Dougnon (2011), the parents from Dogon community indicated that they could not restrain their 14 year old children from migrating for work, a practice they engaged in themselves. The parents were also: "... shocked to hear allegations that they were involved in the sale of their children to 'labor merchants'. According to the peasants, the very idea is an insult manufactured by certain NGOs in search of funding" (p. 90 — 91).

Regardless of the overlap between child trafficking and migration, there should be clear demarcations concerning when each activity begins or ends. With reference to the study cited by Dougnon (2011), it is clear that parents could not understand why they should be accused of trafficking their children especially as the children left home as sanctioned by their cultural practice of initiation to adulthood. To the parents, also, trafficking amounts to the sale of one's children and when a child is sold; links are severed between the parents and the child. Should migrating children therefore be considered trafficked children? The same question is raised in another study by Beauchemin (1999) that focussed on 282 parents of migrating children in rural Ghana. The parents reported awareness of their children's migration, knew where their children migrated to, maintained unrestricted contact with their children and for some, explained that their children always returned home at the second half of the season to enrol in school with money earned from working during their migration. To ease clarifying the link between migration and trafficking, researchers should seek to isolate the triggers for migrating African children different from trafficked children.

1.1.4. Child trafficking and child fostering

A recurrent tension in the literature on child trafficking in West Africa has been attributed to the age-old African practice of child fostering or placement. Here, I will dwell on the meaning of child fostering, types of fostering, child fostering's association with trafficking and the implications of fostering or if all fostering is bad.

The idea of child fostering originates from the role of the extended family system in African countries as a recognised social institution (Case, Paxson & Ableidinger, 2004; Desai, 1995; Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985; Zimmerman, 2003) or a traditional social security system (Foster, 2000) that contributes to the wellbeing of children. Within the extended family system, a child is seen as the responsibility of the entire community or clan, thereby allowing parenting roles or child rearing costs to be shared (Bledsoe, 1990; Goody, 1982). This sharing is done with relatives, siblings and parents.

Child fostering also has a socialisation mission (Isiugo-Abaribe, 1985; Uzodike, 1990) that is built on a community practice of sending children to live with a relative who is expected to provide good training either in a trade or, with

modernisation, to enrol children in formal schools (Gale, 2008). Serra (2008) adds a more exhaustive list of the reasons for fostering in West Africa as: "... strengthening extended family ties, redistributing child labour, making life-cycle adjustments of household size and composition, schooling, and taking advantage of an informal insurance mechanism. . ." (p. 157). Also, when children are sent to live with relatives or friends, an arrangement could be made about nurturing costs. In some cases, foster parents may bear all or a majority of the day-to-day costs while parents bear some of the educational costs (Bledsoe & Isiugo-Abaribe, 1989; Gale 2008).

There are different ways of looking at fostering. It could be looked at in terms of who is involved and for what reason. Isiugo-Abaribe (1985) presents the intricate and complex nature of fostering thus:

...unique to West African fostering are both its prevalence and the very early age at which children are boarded out. Furthermore, because fostering here is rooted in kinship structures and traditions, children are sent out not only in the event of family crisis or when one or both natural parents cannot, for some reason, manage to bring them up. Rather, the sending out of children is practiced by both stable and unstable families, married and single mothers, healthy and handicapped parents, rural and urban homes, and wealthy and poor parents (p. 56)

Under the traditional practice of fostering, anyone could foster a child because it was a way of providing communal assistance to any member of the kindred considered in need. It could be a childless woman or family, requiring a live-in companion or assistance; or someone requiring support in caring for an elderly parent. Within the cultural practice of fostering, there was no limit to the reach of assistance kinsmen provided to each other. Isiugo-Abaribe (1985) points out that fostering could also be equated with the migratory activities of parents in West Africa especially when they are trying to return to the labour force, school or migrate to new locations, within or outside their country of origin. To meet these goals, parents explore fostering to offset the constraints of caring for or thinking about the wellbeing of their children.

So how can fostering go bad? Sometimes parents may innocently be sending their children to live with a close relative (Bass, 2004) for reasons ranging from economic, moral to educational (Bass, 2004). This practice of child placement is not prohibited. It is expected that since the fostered child is often a close relative, they will be treated as a member of the household. But parents can never be certain that their relatives will not maltreat their children. In extreme cases, relatives may exploit the traditional fostering practices to hand children entrusted to them over to traffickers who engage them in forced labour (Pilon, 2003). The trafficker in contemporary times could be a close relative, parent or sibling (Manzo, 2005). However, when people taking children away from home make insincere promises about reciprocity and returns after children have lived and worked with them, then what can be an innocent, often beneficial, cultural practice becomes an exploitative act (Manzo, 2005).

It would be next to impossible for governments or anti-trafficking agencies to prevent parents from handing over their children to live with close relatives or screen all fostering for bad situations. In the first place, parents would find it difficult to accept, from a cultural point of view, that their 'blood relative' would harm their child when placed to live with them (Salah, 2001). Second, parents always have a purpose in sending their children out to be fostered by other people (Case et al., 2004; Gale 2008). The incentive for moving children away from home and getting

parental consent for this movement in some cases originates from parental inadequacy and the option of providing alternatives for the child's wellbeing in a new location. This parental inability leading to consent for the child's movement from home could be poverty (Raghavan, 2001), lack of access to competitive school facilities or lack of monetary investment to learn a trade or start a new vocation. In the traditional sense of fostering, parental inadequacy is not necessarily a factor, but the incentive for children's movement away from home rests on growth and learning — moral, economic, religious, cultural, social, educational — that is best achieved away from the natural home (Goody, 1982; Gould, 1985; Mbakogu, 2004).

The literature also attests to the potential implications of fostering. For instance, with conflict situations in several African countries, there has been a rise in the number of children requiring fostering, causing a strain on the extended family system (Boyden & Mann, 2007; Foster, 2000). Some findings reveal that when children are fostered as a result of the death of a parent or disruptions in the household, they are likely to experience disruptions in their education and have a lot more duties in the fostering household (Ainsworth, Beegle & Koda, 2005). This is unlike children who are fostered based on mutual agreement between child's parents and the fostering relative or household.

Studies on fostered children in Africa also point to the emotional and psychological pain that girls, especially, experience as a result of the workload (Boyden & Mann, 2007) and relationships existing in the household. The likelihood of fostered children attending school is dependent on the initial agreement between the child's parents and the fostering parents (Gale 2008). The way the child is treated while in the new home — with affection or lack of affection — or the role the child is expected to play in the new home (whether the child is seen as a new daughter or son, a nanny or domestic help) is dependent on the relationship between the child's parents and the host family (Pilon, 2003). If the fostered child is allowed to attend school, the way the fostered child is treated in the home will also determine their school attendance rate and school performance (Vandermeersch, 2000). There is also varying information on the women or families likely to accept foster children. Based on research conducted in Ghana, Blare & Lloyd (1990) report that older women with reduced child nurturing responsibilities for their own children are more likely to accept foster children. Families requiring domestic assistance, seeking companions or seeking to enhance socio-political associations could also accept foster children (Goody, 1982; Silk, 1987; Zimmermann, 2003). Certain studies show that some women recruit non-relative domestic servants to avoid strained relationships with the extended family (Tade & Aderinto, 2014); others show that even when the foster parents are close relatives, they are more likely to send the fostered child on errands than their own children (Ainsworth, 1992; Howard, 2011).

Within the cultural formulation of fostering, there are good intentions for sending children out to leave with persons who are not their parents. When the goals intended by the fostering arrangement are achieved then it is considered good fostering. But fostering is considered bad and may be linked to trafficking when the entire traditional arrangement of socialisation is corrupted by people exploiting children and the services that they (children) are expected to provide. According to Isiugo-Abaribe (1985), parents should not see themselves as inferior for allowing

their children to be fostered, for the fostered child could return to the community several years later as: "...an important source of wealth transfer to the parents, or of social mobility for the clan or kin group" (p.71). There are many situations where fostered children have enjoyed the benefit of education, vocational skills, simply by moving away from home and, according to Howard (2011), some fostered children maintain good relationships with their employers or foster parents.

1.1.5. Issues resonating from the definition of child trafficking

Child trafficking is a complex activity to understand and explain, especially with related activities bearing similarities with it. However, in its simplest form, child trafficking has been used to depict situations in which children are recruited by middlemen and exploited for domestic, farm or plantation work across African countries (Fitzgibbon, 2003; UN.GIFT, 2008). It then means that child trafficking for labour could be a form of labour migration but that is where the similarity ends. While child labour migration could be beneficial and less harmful to some children (compared to other phenomenon such as the sexual exploitation of children), it could be considered trafficking when children are recruited by middlemen who have the intention of handing them over to other people who could exploit and control them for work. In essence, while child trafficking is criminalised, the tag to be given to child labour migration is still debatable. It is also difficult to determine when child labour migration moves from harmless to exploitative work or acts that are similar to forced labour (De Lange, 2009). The discussions show that there is a thin line in differentiating between the activities evident in the definition of child trafficking. It therefore stands to reason that for some policy makers and researchers, migration fits into the trafficking discourse because, as O'Neill (2001) asserts, the migration of children, especially for such exploitative work as domestic labour and prostitution, involves the commoditisation of migrating children and the eventual stripping of their autonomy. It is noteworthy that Dougnon (2011) expressed the need for clarifications and setting parameters about what constitutes child trafficking and child migration because to him, what researchers present as "a new disaster called "child trafficking" is as old as migration itself" (p. 100).

While the UN Protocol is considered a major step in situating trafficking within the violation of the human rights of persons (UNESCO, 2006), shifting the focus of conceptualisations of trafficking from sex trafficking to include other forms of human trafficking, there are still major limitations with the Protocol. Kuttuh (2010) affirms that the definition of trafficking within the Protocol hampers effective performance of trafficking-related activities in situations where legal practitioners are dealing with such trafficking-related activities as migration and smuggling; it is also difficult to protect victims and prosecute traffickers unless the element of `exploitation` is identified. The researcher adds that there are problems either with the definition or people's understanding of it. Moreover, the Protocol was only a definitional framework that should not be accepted in its entirety without consideration of local circumstances. It is important that countries adopt international conventions and apply them in ways that meet the needs of their legal ideologies and concerns. Garrard (2007) suggests that further progress will be made when a new international instrument is created within the human rights framework that is focussed entirely on child trafficking.

From the foregoing, the implication is that the way a country understands or defines trafficking will determine its stance on the issue and how it will design its anti-trafficking programmes or policies. In discussing the next concept ‘the idea of rescuing children from trafficking,’ that forms the hub of my doctoral dissertation, I will pose questions that specifically dwell on the flawed logic of anti-trafficking interventions or policies in Nigeria (and other West African countries) that seek to rescue children from trafficking by using borrowed protective frameworks that fail to meet the needs of trafficked children in the country.

1.1.6. Child trafficking and the idea of “Rescuing” children

In the absence of a framework that addresses the specific needs of trafficked children; anti-trafficking programmes adopt the ‘rescue’ approach which is based on moralistic obligations of protecting children from danger (Prout & James, 1997; Touzenis, 2010; UNICEF, 2004). It will be necessary to trace trends in child protection that resulted in the anti-trafficking and rescue platform currently favoured for trafficked children in developing countries such as Nigeria.

Starting from the 20th century, countries began introducing a legal aspect to child protection and rescue. This is evident in the legal aspects of most anti-trafficking policies that clearly state the role of these agencies in rescuing and protecting children from abuse and neglect within and outside the home. The legal response to child protection requires more time allocated to investigation, documentation and administrative work with less support provided by governments to needy families (Tomison, 2001). The child rescue model — of removing children from environments deemed to be harmful to place them in protective settings, usually organised by the state — sees children as separate entities not operating within households and communities. As such, when children are considered in danger or in unwholesome environments, by adopting the child rescue approach: “... we might see that the child is being liberated from an oppressive, abusive family environment. But this is a crude depiction of child protection work.” (Holland & Scourfield, 2004, p. 34). The main task should be seeking a balanced process that reflects the needs of or real issues afflicting parents and children. In my understanding the real issues afflicting parents and children could extend beyond the home to social, cultural and political factors that are beyond the household’s control.

The rescue model predominates in today’s anti-trafficking frameworks where children in exploitative activities are uprooted from such settings without involving their parents or guardians in the decision making process. What prevails in essence is a mandatory rescue, reunification and reintegration process whether these outcomes are found desirable to the ‘rescued parties’ or not. It is essential to reflect if this is the right approach for addressing child trafficking — especially in Nigeria where there is obvious absence of social protection mechanisms by federal and local governments. Efforts likely to be made by communities and extended families may also be ignored or remain untapped by rescue agents. In discussing the appropriateness of the rescue approach in developing countries, Bissell, Boyden, Cook & Myers (2008), tersely state that: “...this easily dramatized approach is popular with rich country publics, who are primary sources of funding for many organizations working in developing countries, may help explain its continuing prevalence in the face of today’s expert understanding that other options are likely to better

benefit children” (p. 11). This statement supports that made by the parent from Dogon country interviewed by Dougnon (2011) who insists that NGOs accuse them of trafficking or selling their children as a means of procuring funding from development agencies.

Building from Bissell et al’s (2008) analysis, the rescue approach can be seen as one of the distasteful legacies of colonisation when policy makers in developing countries embrace western ideological frameworks for addressing the trafficking of their children. The rescue approach may be a preferred alternative in developing countries when relevant practitioners fail to allocate time and revenue to research that proffers appropriate definitions of child protection within their countries. When no clear definitions of child protection exist, it becomes difficult to define what constitutes infringements on children’s rights. An alternative route could base infringements on children’s rights completely on adult perception of what is considered risky situations for children. Are children really protected or do they have their rights violated within existing anti-trafficking frameworks? Should there also be a universal idea of protection since children worldwide differ based on their culture, religion, ethnicity and experiences of childhood? These are reflections that will be concentrated on by including the rescue model within an anti-trafficking framework for Nigerian children.

There are conflicting perceptions about adopting the rescue approach across developing countries. I will refer to an informative study conducted by O’Neill (2001) who was writing on the migratory experiences of Nepalese girls for domestic work in Kuwait. He argues that often States and NGOs offer extra protection to young females moving into the labour market in the guise of protecting them due to their age and gender. To him, protection could be culturally restrictive and conflict with the decisions households make about their children’s migration. O’Neill’s (2001) study was based on 15 Nepalese girls that were rescued in the course of trafficking them to Kuwait to work as domestic servants. The rescued girls came from a Nepalese village that was previously the source of carpet labour. When the means of employment declined in the mid-1990s, youths (especially females) in that village sought employment beyond the Nepalese border, thus resulting in their migration to Kuwait. The Nepalese government had also placed a ban on the migration of females to the Gulf as a legal intervention to forestall the exploitation of girls for prostitution. The image presented by the media, which was supported by government, contravened the migratory decisions of these Buddhist villages and questioned the sexual morality of the female folk as well. The Nepalese girls were ‘rescued’ to protect them from being exploited by their male Arab employers in the course of migrating to perform domestic tasks. O’Neill (2001) blames most of the rescue agenda on representation presented by the local media that sets off a trafficking discourse that “. . .undervalues the role that migrant families play in making these decisions by placing blame instead on shadowy middlemen and syndicates from whom their “rescue” is required” (p. 154). The conception of rescue embarked upon by government was based on the fact that girls migrating to work as domestic servants are perhaps seen as potential prostitutes since they will be working in areas where they will not be seen and supervised by family members; and where they are likely to compete with women in the households they are recruited to serve. The rescue approach in the Nepalese context was also based on maintaining societal honour (O’Neill, 2001). It is important to emphasise that government will not be blamed for

'rescuing' children from trafficking, when it is for the children's own good or benefit because they (children) could be exploited. In the Nepalese context, the 'rescue' was not in the best interest of the children, because the children were not trafficked but migrated for labour or work with proceeds intended to enhance family wellbeing.

If the accepted platform is that children need to be rescued, then countries such as Nigeria that adopt the 'rescue' platform, should be clear about what constitutes the idea of 'rescue' and what children are rescued from. Are children been rescued from their parents, family members, trafficking agents or society itself which failed to provide basic social, economic, educational, medical and cultural needs that ensure their balanced growth and survival? It is also important to clarify which children fall within and outside the rescue missions of State anti-trafficking programmes. This clarification builds from the observation made by Touzenis (2010) concerning the tone of 'rescue' missions by governments and organisations. The language of the rescue announcements gives the impression that when:

... 'victims of trafficking have been rescued', governments have taken advantage of the term trafficking to imply that the individuals concerned have been brought to the country concerned against their wishes and consequently have no wish and no right to remain there. By using the word trafficking, government officials claim they are 'rescuing' and helping trafficked persons, while in fact they take no notice of their wishes and forcibly repatriate them (p.348).

Clarifications need to be made whether children that are citizens of a country fall under the rescue category when they engage in trafficking related activities within their country of origin or only children who are non-nationals of a rescuing country should be offered the rescue, repatriation and re-integration services by anti-trafficking agencies in their country of rescue.

How do we even evaluate the efficiency of the 'rescue' approach? Breennan (2005) suggests the importance of obtaining the narratives of children who were rescued and comparing their stories immediately after they were rescued and some months after they were rescued to understand if the idea of rescuing children actually works and if children are actually effectively resettled or re-trafficked after they are rescued. Lee (2007) argues that the idea of rescuing children is flawed or counter-productive when children are taken away from people who are exploiting them only to return them to original communities and old conditions they were escaping from. When children's circumstances remain the same after the 'rescue' mission, there is the likelihood that they will return to what they were previously rescued from. Holland & Scourfield (2004) clearly call for the input of children in 'rescue' decisions because "It is somewhat ironic that, in an era of generally increased emphasis on listening to children's views and children's participation, their voices are often absent in the child protection arena" (p. 25).

1.2. Limited data on Child trafficking in West Africa

Research in West Africa gives precedence to children trafficked outside the border and exploited to work in agricultural farms, domestic service or prostitution while downplaying the situation of those trafficked within West African countries (Adepoju, 2005; Lawrence, 2010). This is probably because most anti-trafficking strategies underplay the internal trafficking of children with the perception that external trafficking poses the most threat to

children's health and wellbeing. Currently, there are only a few empirical studies on child trafficking, especially in the West African region and Sub-Saharan Africa (Adepoju, 2005). There has been growing interest in getting the input of children in research that relates to their wellbeing and survival. The increased need to involve children in research that is about their lives, experiences and motivations for activities such as trafficking is largely influenced by the recognition in new studies of childhood and child rights (Spyrou, 2011; Veeran, 2004) that children have rights and have reasons to explain their experiences of the world the way they do (James & Prout, 1997). This understanding questions assumptions about children and childhood across cultures and acknowledges that, similar to adults, children have different explanations of their experiences and are active participants in shaping their world (Christensen & James, 2000; James & Prout, 1997). Goździak (2008) also reinforces the idea of involving children in research by emphasising that limited knowledge of the experiences of trafficked children as explained by trafficked children themselves: "...impedes identification of trafficked children, obstructs provision of culturally appropriate and effective services, and limits prevention of repeat victimization" (p. 909).

1.3. Building on empirical evidence from Nigeria

Additionally, though there is vast literature on trafficking, mostly written by foreign experts (Boyden, 1997; Prout & James, 1997; Ray, 2006), little attention is given to listening to the narratives of trafficked children themselves. Limited empirical research has been carried out on child trafficking in Nigeria, a problem that could be attributed in part to limited access to children involved in trafficking. In this section, I will present some studies on child trafficking undertaken by Nigerian researchers. The selected studies focus on: child domestic servitude; psychosocial, social and health implications of trafficking; adolescents' awareness of sex trafficking; motivators for recruitment by employers; and factors leading children into trafficking.

1.3.1. Studies on child domestic servitude

In relation to child domestic servitude, I will look at three studies carried out by Awowusi & Adebo (2012), Okafor (2009) and Olawuyi (2012). The three studies were carried out in the South Western part of Nigeria.

The study by Okafor (2009) is an extension of fact-finding studies on children in domestic servitude- a minimally explored aspect of child trafficking for work. This study seeks to describe the mode of recruitment of domestic workers, the type of work they do, the opinions of their employers and whether payment derivable from child work will justify the hazards children are exposed to at work. Because domestic workers worked in homes rather than on the streets, it was difficult recruiting them for the study. Most employers of domestic servants were unwilling to partake in the study. The researcher used simple and purposive sampling methods to recruit and interview twenty (20) adolescent domestic servants and five (5) adult employers who were selected within four zones in the upper-income Old Bodija Housing Estate in Ibadan, Nigeria. 80% of the domestic servants were girls with a majority (75%) falling within the 12 to 15 age group, 20% were below 12years and only 5% were above 15years. Data for the study was based on twenty interview sessions with each domestic servant and five interview sessions with the adult employers. The study showed that most domestic servants were from poor homes, had dropped out of school, were

maltreated by their employers, were lured into work by parents, agents or the children themselves, complained of minimal pay for tedious and exploitative jobs and complained of unfulfilled promises (such as failing to send them to school) by their employers. Despite the negative effects of work, some domestic servants felt benefits from their work lay in assurance of daily meals and use of their salaries to care for their younger siblings. On the other hand, their employers felt they were not violating any rules by recruiting underage domestic servants; rather it was a reciprocal arrangement, whereby, they catered for the needs of the domestic servants, who in turn, catered to the needs of their (employers') households.

Another study by Adesusi & Adebo (2012) focussed on young domestic servants and their employers. The researchers used a snowballing sampling technique to select 80 participating children and employers resident in two Nigerian States — Ekiti and Ondo in Western Nigeria. Two structured interview questionnaires were also adopted for data collection with children and employers respectively. Findings from the study indicate that the domestic servants were mostly from Benue and Oyo States, were not related to their employers, did not negotiate an employment contract, worked long hours without compensation and endured poor living conditions. The researchers report that children found themselves working as domestic servants based on lack of funds to facilitate their education, marital upsets, peer influence and attempts at improving their standard of living. On their part, the employers of domestic servants were shown to have no direct links with the parents of their domestic servants but explored informal arrangements with trafficking agents that supplied them with domestic workers when needed.

The third study by Oluwaniyi (2009) was to determine who benefits from the internal trafficking of children for domestic work. The research which adopted the interview format was limited to 26 child domestic servants below 17 years; 12 employers of domestic servants; and 3 trafficking agents that were recruited using snowballing and purposive sampling techniques. Based on findings from her study, Oluwaniyi (2009) questioned how laws on child trafficking can be enforced in Nigeria when most policy makers retain child domestic servants in their homes. Because of methodological challenges in having access to participants, the researcher located the study in Ijaiye-Ogba, in Agege, Lagos State, a locality in which she resided and where it was easy to use her links (family and friends) to access participants for the study. The time allocated to the study was also upset by fitting the interview schedules within the erratic work programmes of domestic servants and their employers. The study showed the involvement of relatives and other networks in recruiting children for would be employers. There was the indication that children were involved in work away from home because their parents had also done the same. The findings also drew attention to the new economic exploitation of children by relatives and agents for recruitment in domestic servitude or the new child fostering.

1.3.2. Study on the psychosocial effects of trafficking

Evidence from a study by Adejumo (2008) reinforced the psychosocial effects of the trafficking of women and children. The researcher adopted the multi-stage sampling technique in selecting the 300 participants (280 trafficked persons and 20 traffickers) from Lagos and Ogun states in Nigeria. The findings from the study emphasised that communities that denied young girls access to social support are likely to have more girls with low

self-esteem, emotional problems and high propensity to take such risks that include trafficking. The findings also reinforced the perception that government's inattention to the needs of the poor contribute to the yearning of young girls for dubious travelling opportunities outside Nigeria's borders.

1.3.3. Study on social and health implications of trafficking

The study by Abdulrahim & Oladipo (2010) explored the social and health implications of the trafficking of women and children in Nigeria as well as the factors influencing the persistence of the problem using respondents selected from eight local government areas in Kwara State, Nigeria. The participants for the study were grouped into women and children aged between 15 to 49 and 10 to 14 years respectively. The eventual number of respondents for the study was 462 women and 100 children. 800 questionnaires were distributed for the study and such qualitative data gathering tools as interviews and focus group discussions were used. Though a large number of the women respondents (61.7%) were unaware that trafficking constituted a troubling social problem in the country, several factors such as poverty, limited parental education, harmful cultural practices and male preference were reported to reinforce the persistence of trafficking. The study also affirms that the involvement in trafficking exposes women and children to huge physical and health risks.

The next set of studies were focussed specifically on young people's awareness of and susceptibility to sex trafficking with participants selected from mostly Edo state, Nigeria.

1.3.4. Studies on adolescents awareness of sex trafficking in Nigeria

Omorodiom (2009) carried out a cross-sectional survey that involved 689 adolescents aged between 15 to 25 years that were selected with the aid of the multi-stage sampling technique from two rural and two urban co-educational secondary schools in Delta and Edo states of Nigeria. The study which tried to ascertain adolescents' level of awareness of sex trafficking and their vulnerability to it, reported that adolescents showed high level of awareness of sex trafficking and that factors such as: poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, false marriage offers and low social status were major triggers of adolescents' vulnerability to sex trafficking. The theoretical basis for the study was the strain theory and based on the rational that economic strain faced by some Nigerian families reinforces their likelihood to seek alternative income generating strategies that may include human trafficking.

Based on the focus of the child trafficking literature on the trafficking of female children for prostitution in Edo State, Nigeria, a study by Okonofua, Ogbomwan, Alutu, Kufre, & Eghosa (2004) sought to identify the factors perpetuating the practice in the State. The researchers used the multi-stage random sampling technique to select 1456 females aged between 15 to 25 years, from three local government areas in Benin City, Edo State that participated in the study. The data gathering tools for the study were a questionnaire and interviews which were administered in the evening when the respondents were expected to be at home— after school or other work activities. The findings indicate that while about 50% of the respondents agreed that sex trafficking had the positive gain of wealth creation for trafficked women and children, a high proportion of respondents favoured the discontinuation of trafficking based on its negative health implications for trafficked persons; and respondents who

were either Christians or Muslims were more likely to favour the discontinuation of sex trafficking than other respondents.

1.3.5. Study on trafficking and motivators for recruitment by employers

Omokhodion's (2009) study comprised a survey of 100 households in Lagos State, Nigeria from which 121 house-helps aged between 7 to 25 years were selected. Of the number of house-helps for the study, 116 were girls while 5 were boys; 107 of the children were Nigerian citizens while 6 of the children were from the Republic of Benin. Only 26 of the participating children were attending school with 9 in primary school and 7 in secondary school. The researcher indicated that several employers of domestic servants were suspicious of the intentions of the researcher and warned the young workers against speaking with strangers. The suspicion of employers, made it difficult for the researcher to recruit and have longer discussions with house-helps for the study. The researcher explored alternative means of speaking with house-helps, such as giving tips to bread hawkers, making friends with security men at households or with the house-helps themselves. Omokhodion (2009) also opted for a short 10 item interview guide to enable her collect information on the wages, age, ethnicity, education and feeling of the children about their work. Findings from the study indicate that there is no specific pattern for the collection and payment of children's wages as this could be collected by any relative who could be parents, siblings, uncles or aunties. The wages could also be in monthly or annual instalments. Only 7 of the participating house-helps, 6 males and 1 female indicated that income earned from their work will be used in starting a business in future. Moreover, the study reinforces the researcher's view that the socialisation of the girl to adopt the role of caregivers or homemakers, be gentle and obedient, coupled with the preference of female house-helps by many Nigerian women exposed the girl-child to all sorts of exploitative practices, such as kidnapping and trafficking.

The study by Tade & Aderinto (2012) was not focussed on domestic servants directly but 15 employers of domestic servants. The researchers adopted a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. They distributed 800 questionnaires to working women in Oyo State, Nigeria, 528 of these were returned with 140 respondents indicating that they employed domestic servants. They also conducted 15 interviews. Their findings indicate that the age, marital status, duration of marriage, income and status of the female employer determine the need for domestic servants and the role or workload of the domestic servant in those households. For instance while newly married women will have a heavier workload for the domestic servant, the reverse is the case for women in mature households who may be seeking companionship. According to the researchers, women participating in the study indicated a preference to employ a domestic servant who is a non-relative, a preference the researchers attribute to the women favouring 'a master-slave relationship.'

1.3.6. Study on factors leading children to trafficking

A related study by Yinusa & Basil (2008) adopted the Differential association theory to explain that practices such as participation in human trafficking are not intrinsic but learned by youths in the society through their interaction with others in the society. The study sought to understand factors that made youths vulnerable to trafficking. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from the 96 literate and non-literate participants for the

study made up of youth and members of the selected community in Benin, Edo State. The findings indicate that youths from poor homes were more vulnerable to trafficking than their peers. Trafficking is also further reinforced by such factors as peer pressure, the importance society places on wealth, greed and unemployment.

The last study may not fit into the categorisation of research with children but provides useful empirical insight for understanding if age has an impact in susceptibility of children and adults to trafficking. To address this issue, the study by Nghan, Maliki & Asuquo (2009) using the People's Perception of Human Trafficking Questionnaire (PPHTQ) and a sample of 1000 civil servants comprising of 500 males and females respectively working in the cities of Calabar, Port-Harcourt, Uyo, Yenagoa, Asaba and Benin city in Nigeria revealed significant positive relationships between such demographic variables as age, gender and a person's place of residence on their perception of human trafficking in Nigeria. The findings show that the older a person, the greater the likelihood of the person understanding the exploitative intentions of traffickers; unlike younger children that are more likely to be carried away by the false promises of wealth, education, employment and a better future made to them by traffickers.

Although much has been written on human trafficking, not enough systematic research has been done on it (Goździak, 2008; Sanghera, 2005). Recognising that there is little quantitative data and difficulties in obtaining such data, researchers working in the area of human trafficking have relied heavily on interviews, focus group discussion and case studies which have their own methodological problems (Van Dijeck, 2005).

1.4. Triggers of child trafficking

A number of explanations presented in literature on child trafficking offer reasons why parents and children could look for alternative means of survival. The most common explanation is traced to modernisation and western education which resulted in children being sent from rural areas to urban settings to assist in the households of relatives working in white-collar jobs (Dottridge, 2002; Scarpa, 2006). Recently, this practice became monetised with children facing maltreatment and death in the hands of employers or relatives (Abdulraheem & Oladipo, 2010; Okafor, 2009). In developing countries, with low technological development and high unemployment figures, child trafficking may reduce economic stress when children's earnings are used to augment household income and consumption (Togunde & Carter, 2006).

Poverty is a crucial factor in understanding child trafficking in Nigeria because poverty plays a key role in decisions parents make to send their children to distant places to work (Dottridge, 2002; Ebigbo, 2003, Hope, 2005; Truong, 2008) with the expectation that the children would earn better wages to boost household income (Dottridge, 2002). In introducing poverty into the child trafficking discourse, the issue of whose poverty has to be clarified. Is it the poverty of parents who are unable to access employment and require every member of the household to contribute to the family income? Is it the poverty of children who are unable to access social and educational amenities like their wealthier peers? Is it the poverty of trafficking agents who exploit the gullibility of parents and

children for their personal gain? Poverty is accorded precedence in the child trafficking literature and prevents giving attention to other confounding variables that may provide insight into the susceptibility of families to trafficking. In Nigeria, social protection is almost non-existent for such marginalised groups as children, women, the elderly, people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS and the unemployed (Jones et al., 2012). There are also parents living with the problem of fending for large households, numerous debts and homelessness (Elabor- Idemudia, 2003; Truong, 2008). So in the absence of free comprehensive education, health care and other social services, poor parents are left with limited choices for survival. To make ends meet, distraught parents have reportedly offered their children for sale (Harrison, 2008). Some may perceive such actions as extreme. But faced with a Nigerian couple who attempted to sell their sons to an undercover foreign journalist, David Harrison, and the 27-year-old mother's tearful words that '... it is hard for us to do this but we are desperate and this is our last hope,' (Harrison, 2008) it becomes difficult to judge the actions of those living in abject poverty. Building on the discussion on family survival strategies, a study of 462 trafficked women aged 15 to 49 years and 100 children aged 10 to 14 years from eight local government areas in Kwara State, Nigeria conducted by Abdulraheem & Oladipo (2010) revealed that most trafficked children were from polygamous homes, and had illiterate parents. Moreover, parents' unemployment status, indebtedness and parental discriminatory practices favouring boys over girls made children in the study vulnerable to trafficking. Apart from information on the high persistence of trafficking victims from certain parts of the country namely Edo and Akwa Ibom States, it may be difficult to allude to regional differences in findings from different studies. This maybe because trafficked children interviewed for these studies are not from one region of the country but a collection of children trafficked from within and outside Nigeria as evident in Okafor's (2009) study of domestic servants from Republic of Benin and Nigeria (Okafor, 2009).

1.5. Gender implications of child trafficking

In patriarchal societies such as Nigeria, where women are unable to inherit their father's property or lands, they are marginalised in terms of employment and relegated to positions of second-class citizens (Opara, 2007). Linked to the cultural practices that limit the social, educational and economic opportunities accessible to female children is the demand for girls to work as domestic servants in affluent households in the oil rich countries of Gabon and Nigeria (Dottridge, 2002; Jordan, 2002) and as prostitutes in European countries (Nwogu, 2006).

Of the number of people trafficked globally each year, 32% are used for forced economic exploitation, and 56% of this number are women and girls (Dottridge, 2002; ILO, 2007; Truong & Angeles, 2005). There are several reasons for this. Elabor-Idemudia (2003) affirms that there are certain development issues related to class, gender and ethnic issues that marginalise African females and make them vulnerable to trafficking. There is a great demand for girls to work as domestic servants in affluent households in such oil rich countries as Gabon and Nigeria. Dottridge (2002) explains that adult women in African countries seek young girls to work in their homes, to run errands and to hawk goods in the market. These adult women seek the services of girls because they are 'more obedient' than boys. Jordan (2002: 28) adds that girls are considered more 'compliant' and 'detail oriented.' The ability of women

to employ and exploit the services provided by younger female children is prevalent in African countries- a trend now reinforced with the entry of women into the labour market, either in paid labour or in self-owned businesses. With this labour participation, women cannot pay as much attention to children and the household as they would were they housewives or homemakers as they normally would (Dottridge, 2002). Rather than women foregoing participating in the labour force and contributing to household income, the alternative source of household support is the cheap service provided by female children, popularly known as house helps or domestic servants (Omokhodion, 2009). Girls are also sought to satisfy African and European men's sexual appetite for young bodies (Elabor-Idemudia, 2003). Jones et al (2012) add that the reproductive potential of female children also reinforce their trafficking as baby producing mechanisms for international adoption rackets.

Statistics on child trafficking in Nigeria shows that the number of trafficked girls outnumber boys (Iyanda, n.d; NAPTIP, 2010). Although boys are liable to be recruited for domestic work, this happens in exceptional cases because most household owners find them more difficult to handle (Bourdillon, 2009). Instead, boys are often trafficked to work in plantations and farms demanding greater physical energy.

Additionally, some cultural practices in Sub-Saharan Africa that disallow girls from inheriting lands or other family possessions limit the options that are available to them and with these limitations comes the pressure to accept work options away from home (Truong, 2008). Age-old cultural practices that place a low value on female children silently expect girls to emulate their mothers by learning to perform household chores and ultimately get married before a certain age, after which they leave the community or household. It becomes pointless therefore for poor parents to invest excessively in the education of girls who will not propagate the family name. With such cultural practices that victimise the girl-child, girls have limited education, limited employment options and are unaware of their rights (Scarpa, 2006; William & Masika, 2008).

1.6. Conclusion

It is my opinion that for local policies or internationally adopted conventions to be effective, they should reflect the realities of poverty, inhibiting religious and cultural practices, poor access to education, health and other social services existing in Nigeria that increase the vulnerability of children to trafficking (Una Children's Rights Learning Group, 2011). These laws should also have historical bases that are built within the context of Nigeria's history of child migration and trafficking (Dougnon, 2011).

In interacting with the child trafficking literature, especially as it relates to West Africa, my interest is with identifying what areas are well covered and the strength of the literature on trafficking? I noticed in the literature that the question of the magnitude of trafficking and its traffickers have been identified in the literature with several researchers attributing trafficking to poverty. There are also obvious gaps in understanding how trafficking plays out in increasing susceptibility to trafficking in some households, the nature and triggers of this poverty, looking into a profile of children liable to be involved in trafficking, offering platforms to listen to the experiences of children involved in different types of trafficking to determine if there are differences in the departure from home and

experiences of trafficked, fostered and migrating children. These identified gaps which pose problems for understanding the nature of child trafficking in Nigeria and West Africa were focussed on in my data collection.

Chapter Four — Literature Review

Home

1. Introduction: Relevance of Home Research

Home is a concept that forms part of our daily interactions but it is also one which we take for granted, assuming we can readily explain what it means to us. The notion of home came to be extensively discussed in academic settings in the 1990s (Egan, Tannahill, Petticrew, & Thomas, 2008; Moore, 2000). Recognising that there are individual differences in the way we explain our attachment to and depictions of home, the focus of home research was to build an understanding of what comprises home. The stories that people tell about their homes have links to and make more meaning when the researcher can understand broader associations these stories have with their culture, gender, tradition, emotions and social status. In her research with people sleeping rough, Parsell (2012) is of the opinion that it is by investigating the realities of people's lived experiences with housing situations that you can understand how they experience home.

Home is a recurring concept in the stories trafficked and migrating children tell about their experiences (Cody, 2012; Human Rights Watch, 2003; Surtees, 2007). Though a small number of social workers have engaged in research on human trafficking, research to understand the multidimensional concept of home has been undertaken in the fields of geography, philosophy, architecture, anthropology, sociology, environmental psychology and law (Leith, 2006; Mallet, 2004). The essence of this chapter is to understand current discussions on home research. I begin by identifying key constructions of home presented in research before focusing on the existing research on home related to vulnerable children, especially in African countries. The chapter ends with explaining how depictions of home presented in the literature will guide my research methodology.

2. Key Constructions of Home presented in the Literature

In order to know the likely place of the home within trafficking research, it is crucial to look at how other researchers have described and understood the notion of home. Somerville (1992) reinforces the view that home can mean things different from what we want it to mean: "...home can be argued to have at least six or seven dimensions of meaning, identified by the 'key signifiers' of shelter, hearth, heart, privacy, roots, abode and (possibly) paradise" (p. 532). In other words, there is a platform for researchers in diverse disciplines to accommodate their perspectives of home within the struggles of those whose life stories and experiences they intend to propagate in their research. In this section, my discussion of home will fall within five themes generated from the literature: Home as a place of rest, safety and belonging; home as family or site for family attachments; home as the site of power and authority; home as the beginning and end of a journey and; home as the search for the ideal home different from the real home

2.1. Home as a place of rest, safety and belonging

Several researchers have related home to a place of shelter or a resting place (Cristoforetti, Gennai, & Rodeschini, 2011; Wardhaugh, 1999). This is usually done with reference to a house in a town or village (Egan, et al., 2008; Norberg-Schulz, 1980). In contemporary times, the idea of owning a home became connected with enhancing one's personal security and economic independence (Mallett, 2004). Considering that, for some people, home is not a physical structure that persists over time — some groups of nomads for instance, associate home with land and space where they set up camp while rearing their livestock (Douglas, 1991; Mallet, 2004) — other researchers argue that the essential thing about home is that it is a place where people can be themselves (Leith, 2005) and feel safe in the company of family (Bogac, 2009; Schrader & Birkinshaw, 2005). Douglas (1991) adds that the idea of home amounts to a way of doing things that gives physical form to domestic activities that become repetitive over the course of time. To her, home need not have a solid or permanent physical structure. There are therefore, multiple senses to the way we perceive home (Blunt & Dowling, 2006).

Home owners design their space in ways that reflect their heritage, their identity, increase the feelings of belonging and feeling “at home” in that dwelling (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). What is a home anyway? Is there a set design or structure of what should constitute home? Homes and the pattern they explore have also largely been shaped by the locality the target person originates from. But the basis society adopts for determining what is fit to be regarded as home is largely determined by the dominant classes (Blunt & Dowling, 2006) and the requirements of occupants of the dwellings in some cases, nuclear, and extended family members. The writings of architects also dwell on the messages conveyed by house designs and arrangements in reflecting the cultural, historical and social relationships between the house and its inhabitants (Mallett, 2004; Blunt & Dowling, 2006). In other words, creating this sense of belonging and attachment within a house is what makes it a home for the inhabitant — without these familiar aesthetic attachments, the home remains only a house.

Home is popularly depicted as one's private enclave, a place of rest, relaxation, privacy and safety or refuge, away from the public domains associated with distant relationships revolving around work and distant social commitments. This depiction clearly draws boundaries between the domestic and public realm. But do all researchers accept the view of home as the place of safety or freedom from surveillance and control? Bowlby, Gregory & McKie (1997) argue that though there have been positive connotations of the home as a place of security and safety from the public domains, to them, the home could also be the site of violence and tensions. Governments also help to promote the impression of homes as that sacred place harbouring only those that conform to the ideals for safeguarding family life, “. . . national, identity and nationalism” (Bowlby, Gregory & McKie, 1997). This is usually done when government brings in political sentiments that are evident in such restrictive measures as: places of origin, regional, ethnic or racial identities all culminating in equating home with the haven offered by one's homeland. Blunt & Dowling (2006) bring an interesting twist to the discourse when they introduce gender differences in perceptions of home. They claim that the home for men, is that place where they can return after work or the public domain. The same does not apply to women — the home for them, is another site of unpaid labour.

Others see the depiction of home as a place of refuge as a romanticised idea of home that is at odds with people's real experiences of home and draw attention to the inadequacy of this depiction of home to the lived experiences of many women and children living in situations of domestic violence. They find that, unlike men who can be exposed to violence in public places, for women and children, the home is a potential site for loss of freedom and endless fear (Jones, 2000; Munro & Madigan, 1999; Wardhaugh, 1999). Further, Jones (2000) sees the idea of home as a place of safety and refuge as reinforcing the notion of homelessness. For instance, children experiencing maltreatment at home may not see the home as a place of safety and may instead consider themselves "housed but homeless" (Jones, 2000, p.184).

I will deal briefly with the distinction between home and homelessness because it exceeds the focus of my dissertation. I will mention Somerville's (1992) perspective that homelessness:

...like home, is therefore an ideological construct, but to say this is not at all to dismiss it as 'unreal' or intellectually defective. Homelessness is ideologically constructed as the absence of home and therefore derivative from the ideological construction of home. As with home, then, the construction is one of both logic and emotion. People distinguish between the absence of 'real home' (ironically meaning a failure to experience home in an *ideal* sense) and the lack of something which can be *called* home for them (meaning lack of abode). The meaning of homelessness, however, cannot be determined outside of the processes of ideological construction which give rise to such distinctions: there is no 'reality' of homelessness beyond the structures created by our intellects, experiences and imaginations (p. 530 — 531).

From the writings of these researchers, there appears a clear demarcation between the private and the public that could also translate to the outside and the inside. This view about home as the inside may be unacceptable to people who do not attach importance to the inside or the private spaces that homes provide. This group may see home as their travelled places and their ancestral, native homelands or land of origin. Nevertheless, references to home are almost always positive as the site of security, fond memories and security (Bowlby et al, 1995).

2.2. Home as family or site for family attachments

There is a link between constructions of home and the family associations they conjure. But what is the extent of this link between home and family? Home could depict one's birth place or family house, the place where a child is nurtured until they are old enough to form their own friendships or establish a family of their own (Mallet, 2004; Wardaugh, 1999). When reference is made to the family house, there are questions about what house is referred to. Is the family house the house one lived in immediately after birth or at some point in their family history? For several people, the notion of family house is one that has changed several times during their growing years. This brings in the arguments that a house is different from a home and a house only becomes a home when it houses a family with social relationships between its members, relationships that provide children living in that house with that sense of belonging that allows them to consider themselves 'at home.' This line of thinking is based on the Western conceptualisation that the place where children experience the best childhood interactions should be in a home with family members (Abebe, 2007; Ennew, 2002).

Connotations of home also transcend the household to include the neighbourhoods in which we live, the services we receive in those neighbourhoods and the social relations fostered with people we grew up with or with whom we have daily interactions. Bowlby et al (1997) see the boundaries that one maintains within their public and private lives as reinforcing the meanings one places on home and family. It is assumed that these boundaries exist because they show demarcations between the public and the private, nonetheless, each side of the divide need the other to function.

2.3. Home as the site of power and authority

Bowlby et al (1997) present the western idea of home as one which has a physical structure, affected by relationships, economic and social existing between entities living within that home. These family relationships exist between certain members related by marriage or cohabiting. Initially, the discourse on home depicted women perceiving home as a place of safety. More recently, home has been documented as a place of oppression for women and power for men. Research shows women engaged in the drudgery of domestic work in the home which is regarded as their private domain, but research is silent on the economic (and public) aspect of women's work which is documented as the reserve of men who work in the public domain (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Kemp, 2001). The power relationships existing in the home and the undocumented work of women outside the private home setting led to the feminist debates of the 1970s. The feminist debate questioned the ideological concentration of depictions of home on family life and the private activities of women within the home. Depictions of family life ignore the fact that several women have paid jobs and have risen to key positions in their work settings. Depictions of family life remain tied to ideological discussions of home and family life that measure women's successes based on the successes of their husbands or male partners. From another perspective, Casey et al (2008), writing based on research with homeless women in public spaces in England, explain that the tendency to situate women in more private and safer domains could be based on the assumption of 'female vulnerability' and the likelihood that women may be exposed to risk in public places. This assumption of 'female vulnerability' in public spaces is contradicted by research that puts abused women at risk in private or home settings (Casey et al, 2008; Kemp, 2001). In relation to this, Isabel Dyck (2005) speaks to the need to reinforce the significance of home as a maternal site where "...social and economic life is orchestrated and, in tandem, political economies are supported" (p. 240). Women's successes are still undermined due to the gendered ideologies traceable to Victorian concepts of the limits to women's control of certain domains that are almost always private (Mallett, 2004). The gendered nature of discussions on home also point to the gendered nature of spaces in the home. Some argue that it is not the spaces per se that merit the gendered connotation but the activities carried out in those spaces that warrant connotations in relation to age, race and gender (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Casey et al, 2008).

2.4. Home as the beginning and end of a journey

The literature on home reveals differences between saying "I am going home" and explaining what the home you are going to means to you. Home has several connotations, as a place of cherished memories, a family home - sometimes it is a family home with ancestral roots or the place of commencement of several journeys - some of

them significant, others insignificant. Depictions of home could also extend beyond the borders of the usual places we refer to as home to include our friends or peers, neighbourhoods, other places and objects to which we attach importance. For this reason, Parsell (2012) sees home as having “. . . meaning on social, emotional, spiritual and material levels” (p. 159). Home is portrayed as a personal journey that people undergo as part of their growth process. Home conceptualised as a personal journey is applicable to several African cultures where independent child migration is an essential socialisation process for the transition from child to adult (Dougnon, 2011; Hashim, 2006). This is why researchers like Parsell (2012) see people’s references of what constitutes home as based on their personal lived experiences, which could also be a reflection of their personal biographies. Similarly, Blunt & Dowling (2006) accentuate that home is something we associate with our feelings about a place we have lived in. These feelings could be based on our emotional and social interaction with the place and will differ from one person to another. Since experiences of or depictions of home differ from one individual to the other, the manner in which people leave home will have an impact on the way they tell their stories, their identity and the way they understand and refer to their homes.

Several relationships are conjured with the current construction of home as a journey or travel depending on the social location of the user who could be a refugee or new migrant. Which is the home they refer to? Most often it is the home with which they have nostalgic associations, their land of birth, place of origin or original homeland and the place to which they aspire to return. The idea of associating home with journeys shows the limitless boundaries of home; and the way in which the attachment people have with their homes influence the way they narrate their experiences of journeys taken away from home. In other words, home is attributed with movement and is not fixed in space; at some points, home is familiar and, at other points, strange (Ahmed, 1999; Olwig 1999).

2.5. Home as the search for the ideal home different from the real home

From the literature, when people are asked to talk about home, there is a nostalgic narrative of what is considered their imagined or ideal home. The implication is that researchers have to listen carefully to narratives to properly discern when the respondent is talking about their imagined home, the home they aspire for, different from their real home or the home they are currently experiencing. It also means that some people spend their entire life searching for that place they have romanticised as their ideal home, different from their actual home.

Could this search for the ideal home be influenced by that upheld by the dominant culture? The literature also point to gender, racial and class discrepancies in access to housing that people would have considered their ideal homes (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Hooks, 1991). Blunt & Dowling (2006) allude to the expulsion of Africans from the city and the inhibition of their desire to build homes in apartheid South African. The two depictions (imagined and real home) of home promote different conceptualisations of home. Whereas promoters of the imagined or ideal home project positive depictions of their interaction with home; the promoters of the actual or real home on the other hand, are more concerned with presenting and understanding the diverse interactions, positive and negative that people have with home. Other writers (Jackson, 2000; Rapport & Dawson, 1998, Somerville, 1992) may not find it troubling to differentiate between the ideal and real home, rather they find the conceptualisation of home in these

ways as providing a platform to better understand the lived experiences of those involved in the narratives under discourse and to understand the social composition of the concept — Home.

Ultimately, allowing for the construction of home using the ideal or real home, gives room to discuss other factors that come to play in narratives of home. It allows for discussions on place, identity, memories, culture, fantasies and a longing for some aspects of the lost but beautiful past that will hopefully transform the present (Hooks, 1991).

What are the assumptions of home and where does the importance attributed to it as a way of understanding people and their relationships come from? These questions are important for discussions of data collected from trafficked children in relation to home.

3. Children and Current Literature on Home

Information in this section will be based almost entirely on adult connotations of home as there is minimal literature on children's perspectives. However, in this section, I will dwell on insight for understanding children's constructions of home provided by research with street children in developing countries, four connotations of home taken mostly from research with street children and end the discussion with the need for home research with vulnerable children.

3.1. Street children in developing countries and insight to home research

Little research has been done to understand children's relationships with their immediate and past surroundings. Even when research has been carried out on these relationships, they have concentrated on the everyday experiences of children in the West where notions of childhood as a time of protection differ from what may exist in the South (Johnson, 2000). With shifts in the perception of childhood to recognise that children are active participants in the construction of their social realities (Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003), it becomes important to understand how children perceive their settings and interaction with people within them, an understanding that will help us to grasp the strategies children explore to survive in alternative spaces away from home (Young, 2002).

The literature available on children's conceptualisation of home in developing countries concentrates on street children. The literature presented by anthropologists and geographers working in the fields of space and place interrogate the assumption that children are homeless simply because they are found working and sleeping on the streets (Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003; Veale, 1992). Research with street children, like that with homeless adults, questions the notion of home. Children, like adults may not consider themselves homeless because they are found on the streets. Many street children have homes that they have lived in and with which they are still associated. At the end of their workday on the streets, some children return to their family homes (Veale, 1992; Young, 2006). The documentation of this phenomenon has led to a significant shift in the belief that street children are running away from situations of poverty in their homes or from other factors leading to significant family breakdown (Young, 2002), to simply understanding why children left home (Evans, 2004; Jones, 2000).

The literature on street children is clear that, similar to adults, no matter where children live, be it on the streets, in their parents' home or in a shelter, their construction of their lived experiences are based on those experiences they have that formed their life stories. In turn, their life stories shape their perception of the world and their perception

of people outside the world they live in. It is for this reason that Ennew & Swart-Kruger (2003, p. 83) caution that professionals working with street children — and other vulnerable children, for that matter — should be aware that professionals “...have developed social constructions that underlie, or are woven through, public discourses about street children and street youth.” It is therefore important that, regardless of the professional’s prior conceptualisation of vulnerable children and their social realities, professionals should be willing to listen to children’s stories of their daily experiences that may differ from those experiences held by adults in authority.

Within the literature on street children in Africa, there are discussions around children’s conceptualisation of home and the western idea of African childhood (Ebigbo, 2003; Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003; Hashim, 2006). Just as with trafficked children, street children could be viewed as living outside the normal domestic order. Street children are not attached to what society considers home and are encouraged or even forced to return home, thereby severing relationships with their street networks. Ennew & Swart-Kruger (2003) refer to this strategy as a throwback to the 1980s programme literature of ‘giving children back their childhood’ which is based on the negative perception that children from impoverished homes are not living their childhood the way they should as African children. Ennew & Swart-Kruger wonder if these “...children from impoverished homes had ever “had” the socially constructed “western” childhood of play, school and absence of responsibility” (2003, p. 84).

Street children form their own networks, often referred to as support networks. When children have the feeling that they cannot trust anyone (ex. not the police, social workers, shelter or agency staff), these confidantes, automatically provide support (Aptekar & Heinonen, 2003).

3.2. Children, social relationships and attachment to home

According to Gray (1998) individuals are likely to have a sense of belonging or acceptance in a place when it is not conceived as simply a place but when social relations also exist that enhance that sense of belonging. When street children leave their homes to enter a new environment, they form new attachments or feelings about the environment. These attachments create that sense of belonging that allow such a space to be considered ‘home.’ Moreover, in the course of migration, some children have lived in different homes or spaces. The degree of social relationships, the warmth associated with the spaces and the extent to which children attain their quest for survival (hunger, arrests and income generation) determine the degree of attachment with these lived spaces children will allow.

Where do children call home and what attributes should a place possess to be called home? Before undertaking research with young people living on the streets in Brazil, Ursini (2011) wondered how young people were able to feel at home on the streets. Viewed from Western perspectives, home is linked with family. So how does a young person feel at home in a place without family? With the deeper insight provided from his research, Ursini found that “...home may consist of features other than house, family and privacy” (pg. 222). It is the interactions resulting from home and relationships between the people in it that shape the behaviour and outlook of children growing up within it. One’s perception of home could be shaped and reshaped based on social, cultural, religious and political associations the person made, which for children begin from the home (Jones, 2000).

3.3. African Children's conceptualisation of home

Building on the discussion of street children, home can mean several things to a child depending on their present circumstances (Ebigbo, 2003; Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003). The important thing should be clarity in understanding what researchers mean when they ask children about home. With reference to research with street children, children's depiction of home is not as clearly defined as adults who demarcate between the public and the private. Street children do not have that clear demarcation between the home and the street (Luchini, 1996). Home could be any enclosure, children find themselves at a certain period of their lives - meaning that the child's home could be the orphanage which they currently inhabit, the shelter or even a residential school. But home means a different thing, when reference is made to the family home, because that is the place where children will always return. No matter the years away from home, children will always return to their family and family home because home implies a place of permanency (Baker, 1998; Hansson, 2003).

In the western connotation, home is seen as a place with family, which is at variance with street life. Ursini (2011) wonders if children are considered to be at home when they are anywhere but in their family home. The conceptualisation of home, according to Ennew & Swart-Kruger (2003, p. 86) links home with family and 'others,' (children) falling outside this home-family setting as the product of dysfunctional families or even abandoned children. To Ursini (2011), the best way to understand children's perception of home is to get to know the children in order to gain insight into their thoughts of their homes and homes in general.

3.4. Home as a place where several rules abide

For children, home can also be considered a site of rules, voiced and unvoiced, that must be obeyed. The physical spaces of several homes are not defined for children to understand. There are unwritten demarcations about what are considered adult, gendered and children's spaces. As a result of this confusion, children may also feel alienated and out of place in some homes. As suggested by Munro & Madigan (1999), "...children, too, occupy an ambiguous status within the family. On the one hand they are protected: taken to school, not allowed to play outside, and kept economically dependent as never before. On the other hand they are sexualized and targeted as consumers from an early age" (p. 108). Others indicate that the home could be a place with some rules that are not written but implied based on daily interactions among family members. These rules are present in the assignment of spaces for all household dwellers. The rules could be based on gender, as in the kitchen is a place for women and the sitting room a place where children should not be seen after certain hours.

Research also aims to understand the reasons children in developing countries leave home for the street. Evans (2004) in his study with Tanzanian street children found that the use of corporal punishment by adult members of the household and coming from polygamous households contributed to children's decisions to leave home. Aderinto's (2000) study with street children in Ibadan, Nigeria attributes departures from home to coming from polygamous homes where children from different wives are likely to be raised by relatives or seek alternative means of survival. The finding is shared by Olley's (2006) study with street children in the same location where parental neglect was reported as a driver for children's movement from home. Similarly, children's desire to create their own

space could contribute to their decision to leave home at an early age. This is buttressed by Veale & Adefrisew's (1993) study with street children in Sudan and Ethiopia that revealed that children's departure from home could be to avoid strict parental discipline, satisfy material or emotional needs not met at home, escape abuse and/or to forge new friendships.

3.5. Home as the basis of one's identity and a place to return

A study by Beazley (2000) reports that, to many street children, the family home symbolises a place of eventual return because it is an extension of themselves or symbolises who they are. Likewise, Angel (2013) reveals that the changes in the stories children constructed about themselves after moves between natal and foster homes are indicative of changes in children's perception of themselves attributed to their experiences within these homes. Other researchers indicate that no matter where children are or live, for many, the place they consider home is that place where their family is. The place where their family is informs their identity, is a reflection of who they are, and children remain resolute about returning to these homes with their families, (Evans, 2004; Hashim, 2006). This view is supported by Hashim's (2006) research with independent child migrants from Tempene Natinga village in the north-east of Ghana. The study reported that though children attested to the ease with which they could access jobs and food in their present locations, there was still a marked preference for home. Further, home was also the place boys will return to after making enough income to buy livestock; and where girls will return after buying articles such as furniture or kitchenware to show their readiness for marriage (Hashim, 2006).

Also, children develop a strong sense of attachment to home, and memories of home could be both nostalgic and destabilising for children who have moved away from home and are in vulnerable or traumatic circumstances. Honwana (2002) provides an insight into strategies adopted to diminish or even erase memories of home among child soldiers in Angola:

...many children mentioned the fact that on certain evenings they were forced to sing and dance non-stop the whole night through. This practice was aimed at not allowing the soldiers to think of home, their parents, brothers, sisters, or friends. . . The hard military training to which these children were subjected, together with the elimination of close relatives or persons to whom they could relate; the use of hallucinogenic, and the changing of their birth names were a powerful initiation to violence and terror. They were brainwashed and subjected to the most violent psychological pressures to make them shed their previous identities and assume new ones, as merciless killers. (2002, n.p)

According to Honwana (2002), children's memories of home are considered a cherished and familiar aspect of their identity. In a bid to get child soldiers' to function as merciless killers, children are brainwashed into replacing memories of home with the new identities that suit the needs of their military trainers.

Home could also be that place where children are comfortable enough to be themselves away from the glares of the world. The route to finding that self or identity is with extensions of home that include the town, village, family, the social, religious and the political or educational that must have impacted on children's lives at one point in time.

4. Discussions — Home and Research with Vulnerable Children

The literature on children's relationship with home focuses on street children and the idea among western academics that the presence of children in the public space of the street is an indication of homelessness. Researchers in this area, indicate that the fact that children are on the streets does not imply that children do not have homes (Evans, 2004; Lalor, 1999; Veale and Adefrisew, 1993; Veale, Taylor & Linehan, 2000). Some of these children visit their homes on a regular basis and often sleep there at night at the close of their street business (Veale, 1992; Young, 2002). There are also indications that homelessness is measured by how long children or youths have been away from home — which may be due to abandonment by family members or lack of appropriate shelter for the children.

There are several conceptualisations of home, which in a way makes it appear as a somewhat ambiguous concept. However, regardless of perceived ambiguity, the connotations or representations of home are almost always positive (Parsell, 2012). For people who live in homes with violence and poverty, the connotations may not be as positive. For the latter, there might still be a nostalgic feeling or longing, for home as a place where one feels a sense of attachment regardless of the emotional trauma associated with remembering, returning home or being at home. It appears from the literature that the conceptualisation of home has been stretched across the diverse disciplines and the resulting discourse to include activities that constitute the public and private work relationships of the household and its members. To be able to collect useful information on people's association with home, an understanding of what home means to people is the first guide to discerning appropriate data collection techniques. Home could also be that place where people are comfortable enough to be themselves away from the glares of the world. Also, Leith (2006) stresses the need to understand the complex nature of the concept — home — since the meaning people give to it depends largely on their association with the term, which varies from one person to the other. Research is crucial to understand children's perception of space in relation to their daily interactions and how these differ from those held by adults.

5. Conclusion — How, then, can Home be applied to my research?

Researchers focusing on home show that people's expressions of home relate to their emotional, spiritual, material and social experiences of home (Leith, 2006; Parsell, 2012). It follows, therefore, that research on the meaning of 'home' should exhibit the fluidity with which the term is used and this flexibility can only be enriched with research from diverse platforms — children, adults, people with disability and the elderly.

Home could be anything that the person interrogated sees it to be. It could be a reference to home designs, the social interactions that people explore, it could be personal, it could be intimate, it could be traumatic reminders of a past long forgotten or yearned for, it could be a life and world you have always imagined for yourself, it could be something that you can only remember vaguely with sadness or with joy. With such fluidity, it is expected that there will be no limit to the dimension that discussions on home can take in narrating the experiences of trafficked children with home. Looking at the literature on home, there are also exclusions to the descriptions of home that I

hope my research will accommodate in subsequent chapters when stories buttressing the lived experiences of trafficked children introduce the religious, class, cultural, and political connotations of home that will determine if trafficked children conceptualise their homes as homes of departure and/or homes of likely return. This is what I will be taking to move on to my methodology.

Chapter Five — Context

Legislative and policy response to human trafficking in Nigeria

Child trafficking is considered a serious social problem in Nigeria and the West African region (Sesay & Olayode, 2008; Sossou, & Yogtiba, 2009; UNICEF 2007). With the Nigerian government's effort to curtail the problem since introducing the anti-trafficking Act in 2003, it is important to understand why the practice has not waned. The focus of this chapter is to present an over-view of legislative and policy response to trafficking in Nigeria; isolate the factors leading to the establishment of Nigeria's anti-trafficking agency and the Act guiding its operations, the successes and challenges facing the agency; and evaluate how the country's anti-trafficking agency, NAPTIP and its operational Act have fared in addressing the problem of child trafficking.

Due to the clandestine nature of the trafficking in persons, reliable and accurate statistics are difficult to obtain (Onyejekwe, 2005; UNICEF, 2007). About 35,000 women and children are trafficked out of West and Central Africa yearly (Eso, 2008). There are also indications that out of 1.2 million children trafficked annually, 32% of this number are Africans (UNICEF, 2007). From Nigeria, external trafficking operates to neighbouring countries of the Central African Republic, Gabon, Sudan and Mali; and to more popular European countries and Middle East destinations of Spain, Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Saudi Arabia (Onyejekwe, 2005; Strategic Implementation Framework, 2011). A smaller number of children (than those trafficked to the aforementioned countries) are also trafficked to the United Kingdom, Ireland and the United States. The points of departure for externally trafficked persons are usually the Southern States of Lagos, Ogun and Cross Rivers and the Northern State of Kano (Ingwe, 2014; Tade & Aderinto, 2012; UNICEF, 2007). According to an FOS/ILO National Child Labour Survey (2003), there are about 15 million children engaged in child labour in Nigeria, with 40% of them likely to be trafficked for domestic servitude, prostitution, begging, armed conflict, pornography, entertainment and ritual killing.

As Africa's largest oil producer, Nigeria, is relatively better off than its other West African neighbours. The result is that over the years, impoverished rural children from Benin, Togo, Ghana and Burkina Faso have been recruited into Nigeria to work in homes, markets, quarries and plantations in Africa's most populous country (ECPAT Global Monitoring Report - Nigeria, 2007; Strategic Implementation Framework, 2011). Children are also recruited from rural communities in some Nigerian States: Cross Rivers, Taraba, Adamawa, Akwa-Ibom, Edo, Delta, Benue, Kwara, Bayelsa, with the South-Eastern States of Imo, Abia and Ebonyi as recent inclusions, to work in such internal destinations as Lagos, Abeokuta, Kano, Kaduna and Port-Harcourt (Counter Trafficking Initiative Project Handbook, 2011; Fayomi, 2009; UNICEF, 2007).

In recognition of the magnitude of human trafficking in Nigeria, government set up an anti-trafficking agency, NAPTIP in 2003. In this section, I explore journal articles and publications from development agencies, NGOs and NAPTIP to provide insight into the context for creating NAPTIP, the legislative and policy frameworks guiding NAPTIP's anti-trafficking operations, and the effectiveness of the agency's anti-trafficking interventions.

1.1. Context for the creation of Nigeria's anti-trafficking policy and agency

Briefly, the trafficking of Nigerian girls to Italy began in the 1980s as a result of economic depression in Nigeria and the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme imposed by the World Bank and IMF (Agbatise, 2004; Ogwezzy, 2011). Economic deprivations forced many Nigerians to search for better opportunities in Europe, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and other countries (Adepoju, 2005). There were also successive governments that looted the Nation's treasury with illegal transfers of these funds into foreign accounts. These actions, which increased the country's indebtedness to lending agencies, mostly affected the rural and urban poor, comprising women, children and other marginalised groups (Onimode, 1992).

The economic downturn forced parents to seek alternative means of survival that included sending their young children to work in the homes of richer urban relatives in exchange for salaries, thereby monetising the age-old African child fostering practice (Akor, 2011). Women were also more vulnerable to trafficking because of cultural, social and institutional discriminatory practices that prevent women from inheriting properties, from having access to credit from financial institutions and from participating in decision making relating to their wellbeing (Onyejekwe, 2005). Because men and women do not have similar privileges, men are more likely to be involved in more economic based decision-making and property ownership than women (Fayomi, 2009).

The economic downturn in the country and heightened need for alternative means of survival meant that migration became a favoured option for several Nigerians. It was easier for educated Nigerians than the less educated to obtain visas and work permits. However, stringent immigration laws, introduced by governments in destination and departure countries, only enhanced the market for services such as fake travelling documents and illegal transportation (smuggling) — all of which encouraged illegal migration (Germano, 2001). With this illegal opening, young girls and boys began leaving Nigeria on promises of well-paid jobs in factories, offices and farms in Europe. In the early stages of young people's migration to the European country, Italy, it was possible for women and girls to work in tomato fields and undertake menial jobs in Italy. Then, human traffickers saw an opportunity to make profit and moved in. The business of trafficking in humans gained momentum because traffickers were able to collude with corrupt government officials in countries across the globe (Agbu, 2003; Nwogu, 2006). By the 1990s, more Nigerian females who had been deliberately tricked were arriving in Italy to find themselves sold into slavery and prostitution (IOM, 1996). To buttress the established nature of the sexual exploitation of Nigeria women in Italy, Agbatise (2004, p. 1129) adds that: "... a number of those who came to Italy during the 1980s ended up as madams³ who later perpetuated the sex trade by becoming exploiters of their countrywomen. . ."

Not much attention was given to the trafficking in women and children in West Africa until two African NGOs, the Nigerian based Constitutional Rights Project and the Togo-based WAO-Afrique gave initial alerts about the presence of child trafficking within their territories in September 1996 and May 1997 respectively (Adepoju,

³ One of the major problems with curtailing the sexual exploitation of Nigerian women and girls is the complex criminal networks that trafficked persons are exposed to — especially the idea of having madams, some of whom are former prostitutes, that have lived in the destination country for trafficked persons for a long time and now act as pimps for incoming girls (LANDIFO, 2006).

2005). Also in 1997, the then Nigerian ambassador to Italy, Ms Judith Attah, drew the attention of the 63rd Interpol General Assembly's Nigerian delegation to the growing presence of Nigerian girls as prostitutes in that country (Ebigbo, 2003). Moreover, between 1999 and 2000, 500 Nigerian women and girls were deported from Italy (Ojomo, 2000). The year 2001 presented further insight on the state of child trafficking in West Africa with media reports of a Nigerian-registered ship, the MV Etireno, which sailed from Cotonou, Benin ostensibly carrying 250 children from the African countries of Benin and Togo to the oil rich country of Gabon. When the ship eventually made a mysterious return and docked in Cotonou, only about 23 children were found on board (Africa Research Bulletin, 2001; Johnson, 2001). Also in 2001, the foreign media was agog with stories of the torso of a young boy found floating in the River Thames. The boy who came to be referred to as "Adam" had his DNA traced to South Western Nigeria. Investigations led to the arrest of a trafficking ring specialising in body parts used for ritual purposes (BBC News, 2002; Bright & Harris, 2002).

With these global occurrences and the increased deportation of Nigerian girls from Italy and other European countries, the Nigerian government recognised that trafficking was indeed a problem and made concerted efforts to address it. The first of these was the enactment of an anti-trafficking law and the creation of an agency with the power to oversee legislative and policy platforms for addressing human trafficking.

1.2. Nigeria's policy for addressing child trafficking

Though the trafficking in human beings has a long history in different regions of the world, especially Africa, human trafficking has a short legislative and policy history in Nigeria (Ndifon, Apori & Ndifon, 2012). Since my doctoral research is focussed on child trafficking, I will address trafficking-related legislation and policy as they impact the situation of Nigerian children. Until 2003, Nigeria had no specific policy for addressing child trafficking (UNESCO, 2006). Before this period, punishment meted out to those accused of trafficking in children was decided within the penal code which is based on Sharia law for the Muslim populated Northern Nigeria or the criminal code for the Christian populated Southern Nigeria. Trafficking in women was criminalised in the Nigerian criminal code in 1904 and in the Nigerian penal code in 1960. While the criminal code defines offences associated with external and internal trafficking for prostitution and slavery, it failed to include other existing forms of trafficking and exhaustively define what should be regarded as trafficking. On the other hand, the penal code in Section 279 specifically defines offences that constitute trafficking. The punishments meted out to traffickers using the penal and criminal codes were lenient. Prison terms ranged from 2 to 10 years and the penal and criminal codes were not enforceable in certain parts of the country (Nwogu, 2007). Olateru-Olagbegi & Ikpeme (2004, p. 27) also draw attention to the problem of level of proof needed with the penal and criminal codes before the successful prosecution of sexual offences involving women and children:

...the Criminal Code and the Penal Code provide that a person cannot be convicted of most sexual offences (some of which may constitute human trafficking) under the Codes upon the uncorroborated evidence of one witness. The few such cases prosecuted under the Criminal Code did not succeed for lack of corroborating evidence.

With some of these identified legislative problems, the country required a centralised legislative structure for prosecuting and coordinating all trafficking related offences in the country.

1.2.1. The TIPPLEA Act and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and Other related Matters (NAPTIP)

The Nigerian National Assembly passed a comprehensive anti-trafficking law, the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act (TIPPLEA Act hereafter known as NAPTIP Act) in 2003. The Act established a national agency, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and Other related Matters (NAPTIP), in August 2003 to investigate, prosecute trafficking offenders and rehabilitate victims of trafficking. The NAPTIP Act offers a legal platform for prosecuting trafficking cases in High Courts across the country (ILO, 2009).

The NAPTIP Act provides a legislative framework prohibiting all forms of trafficking in persons and aims to protect children and adults from criminal networks. For the first time, Nigeria had a law that: made both external and internal trafficking of underage persons for the purposes of prostitution or slavery a criminal offence punishable with life imprisonment⁴; mandated airlines and travel agents to be conscious of likely trafficking acts; and proscribed the trial of trafficking victims for crimes related to travelling with false passports, visa or other related documents. Section 4 of the Nigerian Trafficking law authorises NAPTIP to administer all laws addressing trafficking in persons in the country. This directive makes existing laws on human trafficking at the State level subordinate to the NAPTIP Act that operates at the National Level (ILO, 2009; NAPTIP, 2010). This directive was because, prior to the NAPTIP Act, there were several platforms for prosecuting trafficking related cases such as the fore mentioned penal and criminal codes which operated in different parts of the country. It became relevant that making all laws pertaining to trafficking in Nigeria subordinate to the NAPTIP law, provided a homogenised platform for prosecuting all trafficking related cases. Moreover, plagued with the problem of sex trafficking in their State, the Edo state government introduced revisions to the criminal code in their state: criminalising prostitution, which had the repercussion of also criminalising persons trafficked for such purposes; mandating all repatriated trafficked persons to undergo sexually transmitted disease (STD) and HIV tests, again violating the human rights of trafficked person; and preventing females below the age of 25 years to be issued with immigration documents without the consent of their parents or guardians (UNESCO, 2006). There is no evidence that these instruments introduced by Edo state have reduced the number of cases of people trafficked from the region; and there have been no convictions since these provisions were added to the criminal code (UNESCO, 2006).

In looking at Nigeria's NAPTIP Act it is best to begin with the Act's definition of trafficking. In Section 50 of the anti-trafficking Act, Trafficking includes:

...all acts and attempted acts involved in the recruitment, transportation within or across Nigerian borders, purchase, sale, transfer, receipt or harbouring of a person involving the use of deception,

⁴ There is an emphasis on the sexual exploitation of underage persons in the NAPTIP Act because the key incentive behind the National Assembly's support of the Act in 2003 was the large number of girls from Edo State trafficked to Italy for prostitution (LANDIFO, 2006).

coercion or debt bondage for the purpose of placing or holding the person, whether for or not in involuntary servitude (domestic, sexual or reproductive), in forced or bonded labour, or in slavery-like conditions.

The use of the phrase 'attempted act' makes it easier to prosecute traffickers, caught in the act even when the transaction is incomplete. Most importantly, with the intensity of trafficking within and outside Nigeria's borders, the definition which extends trafficking transactions to involve 'transportation within and across the Nigerian Borders...' also recognises that trafficking occurs within the country. Definitions notwithstanding, it remains for NAPTIP officials to address accusations that their investigations concentrate more on international trafficking than trafficking within the country's borders.

The NAPTIP Act was amended on December 7, 2005 to extend the Act's powers to address other forms of exploitation such as: child labour which Nigerian children contend with; to investigate traffickers and trafficking activities; to persecute traffickers and to confiscate the assets of convicted trafficking agents especially when those activities are confirmed to be the proceeds of the criminal activity of trafficking. The amendment also creates a Victims Trust Fund, whereby the confiscated or forfeited assets of trafficking agents are used for the rehabilitation and restitution of trafficked persons. Nwogu (2007) adds that these amendments to the NAPTIP Act were mostly administrative and focused on issues of board membership for the agency and the appropriate ministry to monitor agency functions. Her critique of the 2005 amendment is based on arguments pertaining to whether NAPTIP should be an agency under the Ministry of Justice (thus positioning its anti-trafficking duties within the law enforcement framework) or other social or welfare based ministries.

Nigeria also prosecutes trafficking through the Child Rights Act (CRA), adopted in 2003 to domesticate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Child Rights Act (CRA) defines a child as anyone below 18 years, institutes a legislative mandate that incorporates all rights relating to children into a single piece of legislation, and stipulates the duties of parents, government, relevant organisations and bodies to promote and protect the healthy development of Nigerian children (UNICEF, 2007). The CRA offers a broad definition of trafficking and presents a comprehensive framework for prosecuting infringements on the rights of Nigerian children. Some penalties prescribed in the CRA include: maximum sentences of life imprisonment for cases involving sex trafficking and rape; five years' imprisonment for labour exploitation; and 10 years' imprisonment for forced begging or hawking (NAPTIP, 2010). The 2005 amendment of the NAPTIP Act supports the provision in the Child Rights Act of 2003, that people found employing children to perform tasks that hinder their physical, mental and social development should be liable to five years imprisonment or a fine of N100,000 or 588USD (NAPTIP, 2010). Even with the provisions in the UNCRC, Nigeria and other African countries have difficulties applying the UNCRC and, therefore, protecting African children. Based on regional, religious, cultural and ethnic differences among Africans, questions are sometimes raised about enforcing certain provisions in the UNCRC, especially those pertaining to discriminatory attitudes towards girls. It will be difficult, for example, to enforce the rights of female children to be protected from early marriage within religious and cultural settings that sanction it. Opponents of

such UNCRC provisions contest the claim that international law should automatically become domestic law (Nundy, 2004). Based on cultural, political and religious factors, Nigeria has only been able to promulgate the Child Rights Act into law in 24 out of 36 states (Amalu, 2010; Jones, Presler-Marshall, Cooke, & Akinrimisi, 2012).

1.2.2. Criticisms of the NAPTIP Act

Despite the novel initiative behind the NAPTIP Act, there are some weaknesses that may pose drawbacks to effective anti-trafficking programmes in the country. First, the NAPTIP Act fails to include trafficking for the purpose of removal of body organs, which is clearly stated in the UN Protocol (Nwogu, 2007; Olateru-Olagbegi & Ikpeme, 2004). With this defect, traffickers that kidnap children for ritual purposes could go unpunished (Nwogu, 2007). Second, the NAPTIP Act does not impose sanctions for the entire act of trafficking but for various acts such as exportation and importation of persons, harbouring and transportation, which limits the retinue of acts involved in trafficking (Olateru-Olagbegi & Ikpeme, 2004) such as deceit, force, abuse of power and exploitation of the trafficked person. The sanctions for these acts vary from 5, 10 or 14 years with or without the option of fine and to life imprisonment in rare cases. Third, critics of the NAPTIP Act claim that it is more oriented towards prosecution of traffickers than prevention of trafficking and protection of trafficked persons (Eso, 2008; Nwogu, 2007). This critique is despite Section 37 of the Act - which ensures that rescued victims are neither detained nor prosecuted for such trafficking related offences as non-possession of valid travelling documents; and Section 45 of the same Act:

Where a person volunteers to the Agency or an official of the Agency any information, which may be useful in the investigation of an offence under this Act, the Agency shall take all reasonable measures to protect the identity of that person and the information so volunteered shall be treated as confidential which enjoins relevant authorities to provide maximum protection for victims who volunteer information about their trafficking ordeal).

These stipulations notwithstanding, victims are not given the needed protection (NAPTIP, affiliated agencies, immigration authorities in country of origin and destination countries) and some children have reported threats to their families because they divulged confidential information about their traffickers (UNESCO, 2006). Shortcomings have also been noted in Section 11 of the Act, which stipulates life imprisonment for people found trafficking in children below the age of 18 either into or outside the country. Persons who are charged with committing underage children in their care to prostitution or indecent assault also face prison terms. A problem is posed, however, in the same Section 11 with the use of the clause 'knowing it to be likely.' While the NAPTIP Act takes a worthy step in criminalising commercial carriers who transport potential trafficked persons with knowledge of the trafficking transaction; it may be difficult to prove and facilitate attempts to convict commercial carriers based on perceived knowledge of the trafficking act.

In essence, since the NAPTIP Act falls short of providing victims with witness protection, it has not fully complied with human rights standards (Adams, 2011). Failure to protect victims and witnesses means that offenders cannot be prosecuted effectively. Moreover, the NAPTIP agency has often complained that their work is hampered because 'rescued' trafficked children have been made to swear an oath or threatened with death by their traffickers if they

divulge any aspect of the trafficking transaction (Mojeed, 2008)⁵ yet the agency lacks the resources and facilities a witness protection programme would demand. Funding, therefore, is a crucial requirement for the effectiveness of a country's anti-trafficking campaign (NAPTIP News, 2010, 2014), a view supported by Iyanda (n.d) who stresses that child trafficking is not tackled by using policies alone but providing adequate funds and support to anti-trafficking agencies for effective implementation of their roles.

Considering that the NAPTIP Act was a response to the clamour of concerned NGOs to protect Nigeria's underage children from trafficking activities, it is disappointing that the offences created by the NAPTIP Act focus more on trafficking for sexual offences than on the other forms of trafficking faced by children in Africa such as hawking or street trading, child marriage and forced labour (Tade & Aderinto, 2012). It is easy for domestic work to go undetected because it happens in the private sphere (UNESCO, 2006), homes, which all too often in Nigeria are surrounded by high fences and massive gates manned by security men. Olaniyi (2003, p. 51) questions the effectiveness of Nigeria's anti-trafficking policies and interventions when they are mostly "...parochial, focusing only on repatriated girls." With the amendment of the NAPTIP Act in 2005, severe penalties were introduced for offences involving sexual exploitation of minors less than 18 years. Even with the stiffer penalties for sexual offences, the NAPTIP Act has yet to include a concise definition of 'sexual exploitation' that will aid in the prosecution of trafficking agents. Nwogu (2006) sees the absence of a legal definition as aiding the stigmatisation and branding of women and children deported back to Nigeria as sex workers.

Some of the lapses in the NAPTIP Act are compensated for by the Palermo Protocol which Nigeria signed and ratified in 2000 and 2001 respectively. The Palermo Protocol was domesticated by an Act of the National Assembly which signed it into effect in 2003 as the "Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children (ratification and enforcement) Act 2003 and the United Nations Convention against Trans-national Organised Crime (ratification and enforcement) Act 2003. The definition of trafficking in the Palermo Protocol as mentioned earlier in the section, allows the inclusion of acts committed by parents or guardians who give children out for trafficking. As previously stated, the NAPTIP Act deals mainly with trafficking for sexual abuse and neglects other forms of labour exploitation. The Act also fails to cover trafficking for begging or removal of bodily organs, defects that are also compensated for by the domesticated Protocol, which covers them. In all, the Protocol appears to offer more protection for victims of trafficking than the NAPTIP Act.

Nigeria was one of the first African countries to adopt the UN Trafficking Protocol (Sesay & Olayode, 2008). Although the NAPTIP Act bears similarities to the UN Protocol, this is not the intention of the Protocol. The Protocol should serve as a template for countries to fashion their legislation in relation to human trafficking; it is also concerned with the affiliation between State Parties in handling cases of trafficking across their borders. This means

⁵ There have been setbacks in prosecuting traffickers in Nigeria because children have been made to take oaths of secrecy in the presence of native doctors at frightening shrines. During the oath taking, children are threatened to make them remain silent about their trafficking experiences and their traffickers (Mojeed, 2008). Children are also made to believe that exposing these secrets will lead to their death. With such dire repercussions associated with exposing trafficking cases, a slow and difficult process is necessary to move 'rescued' children from silence to opening up about their experiences.

that Nigeria is expected to fashion certain elements of the protocol to suit the individual contexts and peculiarities of child trafficking existing within its states. Nwogu (2007) explains that while the Protocol perceives human trafficking as a crime coordinated by criminal networks, trafficking in Nigeria is usually undertaken by petty networks comprised of relatives, neighbours and friends. To function effectively within the Nigerian context, the NAPTIP Act should be modified to incorporate or reflect the peculiar nature of its trafficking networks for moving children away from home. Regardless of the novel intentions behind the UN Protocol and the NAPTIP Act, Brusca (2011) maintains that the major problem with applying the UN Protocol, as with the NAPTIP Act, is that people charged with enforcing it are sometimes those implicated in trafficking offences. When legislators cannot be held accountable for committing trafficking offences, how are NAPTIP officials expected to prosecute major trafficking agents? One instance is the Nigerian senator who was accused of marrying a 13 year old Egyptian girl and transporting her from Egypt to Nigeria (Orji, 2010). Although the senator was invited to the NAPTIP office for questioning, the senator claimed he was not guilty of the charges and with time, the matter fizzled away.

1.3. The effectiveness of Nigeria's anti-trafficking interventions

Nigeria's anti-trafficking efforts depend a lot on funding from international donor agencies. The donors, in turn, have varied interests that determine the focus of their anti-trafficking interventions. The US Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, the European Union (EU), UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT), and the governments of Canada, France, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom are all major sponsors of Nigeria's anti-trafficking programmes (Nwogu, 2014, p. 4).

Nwogu (2014) argues that decisions concerning which anti-trafficking interventions get funded are aligned with the interests or priorities of international donors and are 'not fit for purpose.' According to her, decisions are made at the zenith of bureaucracies of funding countries, adopt a top-down approach without consultation with professionals in the affected country or with trafficked persons to understand their crucial needs and avoid visible solutions to the problem. She maintains that funds directed at anti-trafficking programmes should be more effective in identifying and catering to the needs of trafficked persons. Nwogu (2014) proffers instances of anti-trafficking support from donor agencies that failed to alleviate the situation of trafficked persons. First is the Enhancing Multi-stakeholder Cooperation to Fight Human Trafficking in Countries of Origin and Destination implemented by the IOM, UN.GIFT, with Nigeria, Austria, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and the United Kingdom as participating countries. The objective of the project was to stem migration and trafficking to these European countries. This project failed to recognise the need to offer grants or empowerment support to assist in re-integrating trafficked persons to their societies after deportation. Little attention was also given to enhancing feeding or provisions and facilities at shelters, nor to the psycho-social training of professionals working at NAPTIP shelters for trafficked persons. Second is the three-year 'I am priceless' anti-trafficking campaign aimed at raising awareness about the dangers of human trafficking that was launched in October 2012 by the Nigerian government, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the EU. While advertisements to create awareness about a social ill are

important, the adverts and the campaign did not address the identified economic, political and social realities driving young people into trafficking.

Similar to Nwogu (2014), Buchbinder (2012) addressed the funding of anti-trafficking agencies and NGOs in Africa. She linked this to the trend of NAPTIP and its Togolese counterpart detaining Togolese young women (over 18 years old) working as domestic servants in Nigeria on the assumption that they were underage victims of trafficking. The girls could only be released if they could prove that they were above 18 years. Buchbinder (2012) argues that the practice of naming several activities (such as violence to women and young women or making the professional decision to work as domestic servants) as trafficking influences TIP ranking for these countries and more development dollars for the agencies. This emphasis on trafficking limits attention to other educational, economic, social and political problems afflicting Togolese youth. Buchbinder's (2012) reference to funding builds on her observation that interventions for addressing trafficking in West Africa should look beyond poverty and the vulnerability of children and parents as drivers of trafficking to the aforementioned factors. Again she relates this to the Togolese boys and girls who are sent to Nigeria to work as domestic servants. While this reinforces the African cultural practice of boys and girls travelling to work in big cities as a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood, Buchbinder maintains that the current trend moves beyond the independence and colonial era traditional migratory practices engaged in by their parents and grandparents. Although children's migration is bound by material constraints, migration is also a reflection of young girls' refusal to resign themselves to life in their rural areas, for example, and choosing to remain in the city, Lagos, even after completing their service as domestic servants.

At the moment, compared to other African countries, Nigerian federal and state government spending on anti-trafficking programmes is significant (US Department of State, TIP Report, 2013) but as a transit, user and destination country, the magnitude of trafficking in Nigeria is beyond that in these other countries. NAPTIP is therefore inundated with more victims of trafficking requiring re-integration and empowerment services than the agency can cope with. Moreover, the agency is hampered by a lack of funds to purchase sufficient number of vehicles to investigate trafficking cases or attend court sessions with victims requiring these services across different states of the federation. NAPTIP encounters difficulties meeting its legal obligations to clients when court cases are continually adjourned, judges are promoted or transferred, trials are delayed and the judicial process becomes frustrating for trafficking victims and their family members (US Department of State, TIP Report, 2013).

Nigeria's anti-trafficking programmes also do not seem to address what happens after children are removed from trafficking. This is evident in the case of 262 Beninese children aged between 8 and 14 years who were rescued from the gravel quarries of Abeokuta, Nigeria where they worked eight hours a day in two-year cycles with only about two weeks visits to their parents in their home country (LANDIFO, 2006). These children saw their work as normal because it was a migratory practice that they inherited from their parents. When the children were 'rescued' by the Nigerian government, this act was hailed by the international community. Unfortunately, the migratory practice persists, because alternatives for survival were not provided for families as part of the rescue and reintegration process (LANDIFO, 2006, Nwogu 2006).

In designing policies and interventions for addressing child trafficking, it is also important to clarify who is at risk to trafficking in Nigeria. Is it the child from an affluent home, with doting parents and daily school attendance or the child from an indigent home, with unemployed parents and limited chances of ever making it into a classroom? Readily, the latter child comes to mind because what ultimately makes that child susceptible to trafficking is poverty. In a country like Nigeria where there is wide disparity between the rich and the poor, poor families have to struggle even harder than their counterparts in developed countries to survive. Wealthy Nigerians have become used to receiving cheap services from children and poorer extended family members, who (the poorer families) have in turn accepted these subservient roles as normal. Child trafficking is bound to persist if poverty, access to education and basic social amenities are not addressed in the country. I shall now discuss some silent issues that either make or mar the effectiveness of anti-trafficking interventions adopted by NAPTIP.

1.3.1. Regionalisation and the War on Child Trafficking in West Africa

As mentioned earlier, policies and interventional strategies for addressing human trafficking rely on the political, economic, social, cultural particularities of affected countries, which will in turn determine the priority given to any particular perspective(s) for looking at the problem (UNICEF, 2007). On a regional scale, representatives from 21 African countries met in Libreville, Gabon in February 2001 for discussions on tackling child trafficking across their borders. This meeting and its follow-ups in March 2002 and December 2004 led to the Libreville Common Platform for Action 2000 (Cohen, 2003). The platform is criticised, however, for failing to recognise the cultural and traditional practices reinforcing the trafficking of women and children (UNICEF, 2007).

As a means of combating trafficking across their borders, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has also collaborated in bilateral and multilateral arrangements. However, West African regions are still visibly influenced by their colonial experiences, which in subtle ways guide their relationships with each other. Of the fifteen (15) States comprising ECOWAS: three were colonies of France; two colonies of Portugal; and four British colonies (Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia). Despite linguistic and ideological differences between the countries since they began attaining independence, there have been efforts to collaborate for the economic and social improvement of their region.

As part of their integration processes, the ECOWAS communities instituted the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and the Right of Residence and Establishment in May 1979, ratified in 1980, the same year it came into effect. It guaranteed free entry for 90 days, without visas, for citizens of ECOWAS states to other states in the region. The Protocol also stipulated that citizens of ECOWAS countries should present certified travel documents or identity cards at border controls (ECPAT Global Monitoring Report - Nigeria, 2007). Ultimately, this treaty on free movement became exploited by traffickers for the undocumented movement of underage children, especially girls, across fluid regional borders (Adepoju, 2005; Jones et al, 2012).

The ECOWAS convened its first meeting to discuss the issue of trafficking in persons in Ghana in October 2001. This meeting was followed in December 2001 by the adoption of a Declaration and a Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons (2002 — 2003) in Dakar, Senegal. Member states were thereby enjoined to ratify the

United Nations Conventions on Trans-national Organised Crime and the Rights of the Child. ECOWAS member states were also expected to adopt practices aimed at protecting trafficked persons, identifying traffickers and raising public awareness about human trafficking (ECPAT Global Monitoring Report - Nigeria, 2007; UNICEF, 2007). Some of the Plan of Action has been difficult to implement because of lack of commitment of member countries, poor data and surveillance capabilities needed to trace trafficked persons and their traffickers, and ineffective mechanisms for exchanging information on trafficking activities.

ECOWAS countries have also failed to ratify the ECOWAS Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, which would have made it imperative for countries to work together in locating culprits posing serious security threats in their regions (Aghatise, 2004). It implies that for NAPTIP to be effective, the commitment of other ECOWAS countries is needed for progress with providing reliable data, ensuring effective surveillance, tracking down traffickers across their borders, and ensuring the technical competence of anti-trafficking personnel. And there is also an agreement between the ECOWAS and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to exchange ideas on the best way to provide assistance for 'rescuing' and offering protection to trafficking victims, investigating and prosecuting trafficking related cases and address concerns over problems in applying the ECOWAS Plan of Action (UNICEF, 2007). Nigeria has signed Memorandums of Understanding with other countries in the region. A major Memorandum was signed between Nigeria and the Republic of Benin, a process that began in Lagos in March 2004 and culminated with a second meeting in June 2004. Deliberations ended with the understanding that both countries will collaborate in investigating trafficking agents, as well as protecting and returning trafficked person to their countries of origin. Other Memoranda of Understanding were signed between Nigeria and Italy and Great Britain in September 2000 and November 2004 respectively. These agreements allowed the repatriation of identified trafficking agents from the foreign countries to Nigeria to face appropriate charges (UNESCO, 2006).

Regardless of its regional and global approach for addressing human trafficking, NAPTIP's efforts are inhibited by the corrupt activities of personnel from affiliated or supporting government agencies. NAPTIP has to contend with corrupt custom and immigration officers that collect bribes from traffickers to ignore the migration of undocumented young girls across the nation's borders (Akor, 2011; Jaye, 2008; Onyejekwe, 2005), forgers of travel documents, fake lawyers and native doctors⁶ that terrorise children into taking binding oaths to obey their traffickers before leaving the country (Akor, 2011).

1.4. Discussion: How the NAPTIP Act and NAPTIP have fared in curtailing child trafficking

For a country that maintained a neutral stance on child trafficking or other trafficking matters prior to 2000, Nigeria became a pacesetter in the African region with the introduction of the NAPTIP Act and the facilities it put in place to ensure compliance with the dictates of the Act. But the question to be asked is if the NAPTIP Act is

⁶ Also called Babalawo by the Yorubas and Dibia by the Igbos

enough to carry the child trafficking battle through? Despite numerous challenges, the NAPTIP agency, backed by the NAPTIP Act, recorded some remarkable victories in curbing child trafficking in Nigeria. On December 8, 2008, the Nigerian Federal High Court Sitting in Sokoto State ordered the confiscation of monies seized from two traffickers and the transfer of this money to the Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund established for the welfare and rehabilitation of 'rescued' trafficked persons (Gbadamosi, 2012). In another case decided by the Lagos High Court, a convicted trafficker was sentenced to two years imprisonment and the building where underage girls were housed for prostitution was confiscated. The court ordered that the brothel building be auctioned and the proceeds transferred to the same Trafficking Trust Fund (Ladan, 2011).

Related to both poverty and the gendered nature of child trafficking are the homes from which trafficked girls are taken. The first publicised cases of trafficking in Nigeria were for prostitution with the highest number of trafficked persons deported from Italy coming from Edo and Delta States (Agbu, 2003). These embarrassing deportations led to the Edo State government passing laws making trafficking a punishable offence long before the Federal Government introduced the NAPTIP Act (UNESCO, 2006). But have these actions reduced trafficking of females from Edo State? Okonofua, Ogbomwan, Alutu, Kufre, & Eghosa (2004), using a sample of 1456 Edo State females aged 15 to 25 years sought information on their experiences and attitude to international sex trafficking. Findings indicate that many respondents had been approached by someone offering them assistance with work abroad. And while a majority of respondents (81.5%) supported eradicating sex trafficking, a minority (18.5%) felt sex trafficking should remain because it was a way of creating wealth for poor households. NAPTIP figures show that from 2004 to 2008, the highest number of 'rescued' trafficked persons was from Edo State with 386 females and 34 males (CROSSROADS, 2008; NAPTIP, 2010). From all indications, child trafficking persists in Edo State, and the problem is clearly beyond the limits of the NAPTIP Act.

Further, in the US Department of State's 2009 Annual Global Trafficking Report, Nigeria was elevated from a Tier 2 Watch List to Tier 1, having met the minimum standards for the elimination of severe forms of trafficking (US Department of State, TIP Report, 2010). This recommendation was based on Nigeria's anti-trafficking response from 2003 to 2011. Within this period, NAPTIP has: secured the conviction of 65 traffickers; reunited about 4,000 children who were victims of human trafficking with their families; rehabilitated 477 victims through enrolment in schools or provision of assistance to attend vocational training. Also, about 280 of those victims were granted trade equipment and a resettlement allowance for their personal needs in the short-term (NAPTIP, 2010). However, in 2012 Nigeria was demoted to Tier 2 because the Nigerian government failed to meet the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, train police and immigration officials, allocate adequate funding to NAPTIP to enhance its duties of investigating and prosecuting government officials implicated in trafficking offences, pass legislation that would restrict the tendency for judges to provide the option of fines in lieu of prison time during their sentencing of trafficking agents. Moreover, the Ministry of Labour has not been proactive in addressing a significant number of victims of labour trafficking (US Department of State, TIP Report, 2012).

While acknowledging the absence of concise statistical data, the current Executive Secretary of NAPTIP, Beatrice Jedy-Agba, reaffirmed the enormity of the human trafficking problem by confirming that of the number of trafficked persons in major European capitals, “. . .at least six out of ten of the trafficked persons are identified as Nigerians” (NAPTIP News, 2014, p. 17-18). As of 2014, NAPTIP has recorded about 233 convictions with the trend of convictions moving upward since 2004 when the agency earned its first convicted trafficker (NAPTIP News, 2014). The agency has also increased its operational network to 9 zones with 9 shelters serving a population of 170 million across 36 states (NAPTIP News, 2014).

Recognising the ambiguities and shortcomings posed by some sections of the NAPTIP Act, the agency proposed an amendment before the National Assembly in 2014. The essential areas for review are: providing clearer definitions of trafficking offences, removing options of fines stipulated (which are not considered stiff penalties and allow traffickers get away with the offence only to repeat it with other innocent victims) in the Act and giving stiffer penalties for trafficking offences. The amendment bill also seeks to include human trafficking in the human rights curriculum of Nigerian schools and universities. The amendment bill is currently waiting to pass the 3rd and final hearing at the National Assembly (NAPTIP News, 2014). Other factors could also affect the effectiveness of the NAPTIP Act. For example, a problem is best tackled when its root cause is known. It is essential to identify factors making children vulnerable to trafficking.

1.5. Conclusion

Without doubt, the NAPTIP Act is a worthy step towards eradicating child trafficking in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the Act is not the magic wand for eradicating child trafficking; it does not address the intricately expanding causes of the problem in the country. Clearly, legislation and stiffening penalties alone cannot work in reducing child trafficking. Therefore, it becomes important to isolate those issues (such as social, economic, cultural, religious, gender and educational issues affecting vulnerable families) that make legislation ineffective and allows child trafficking to persist. Besides, the limited reach of legislation shows that the problem of child trafficking could be entrenched in other social problems, which the NAPTIP Act was not established to tackle.

Finally, it is difficult to have a critical analysis of Nigeria's anti-trafficking policy that builds from academic literature. Most of the literature on the topic is engaged in commending the country's anti-trafficking policy and its leadership role in addressing trafficking in the African region, rather than offering a critical analysis. It is my opinion that, in order for local policies or internationally adopted conventions to be effective, they should reflect the realities of poverty, child-headed households, inhibiting religious and cultural practices, poor access to education, health and other social services existing in Nigeria that increase the vulnerability of children to trafficking (Una Children's Rights Learning Group, 2011). These laws should also have historical bases that are built within the context of Nigeria's history of child migration and trafficking (Dougnon, 2011).

Chapter Six

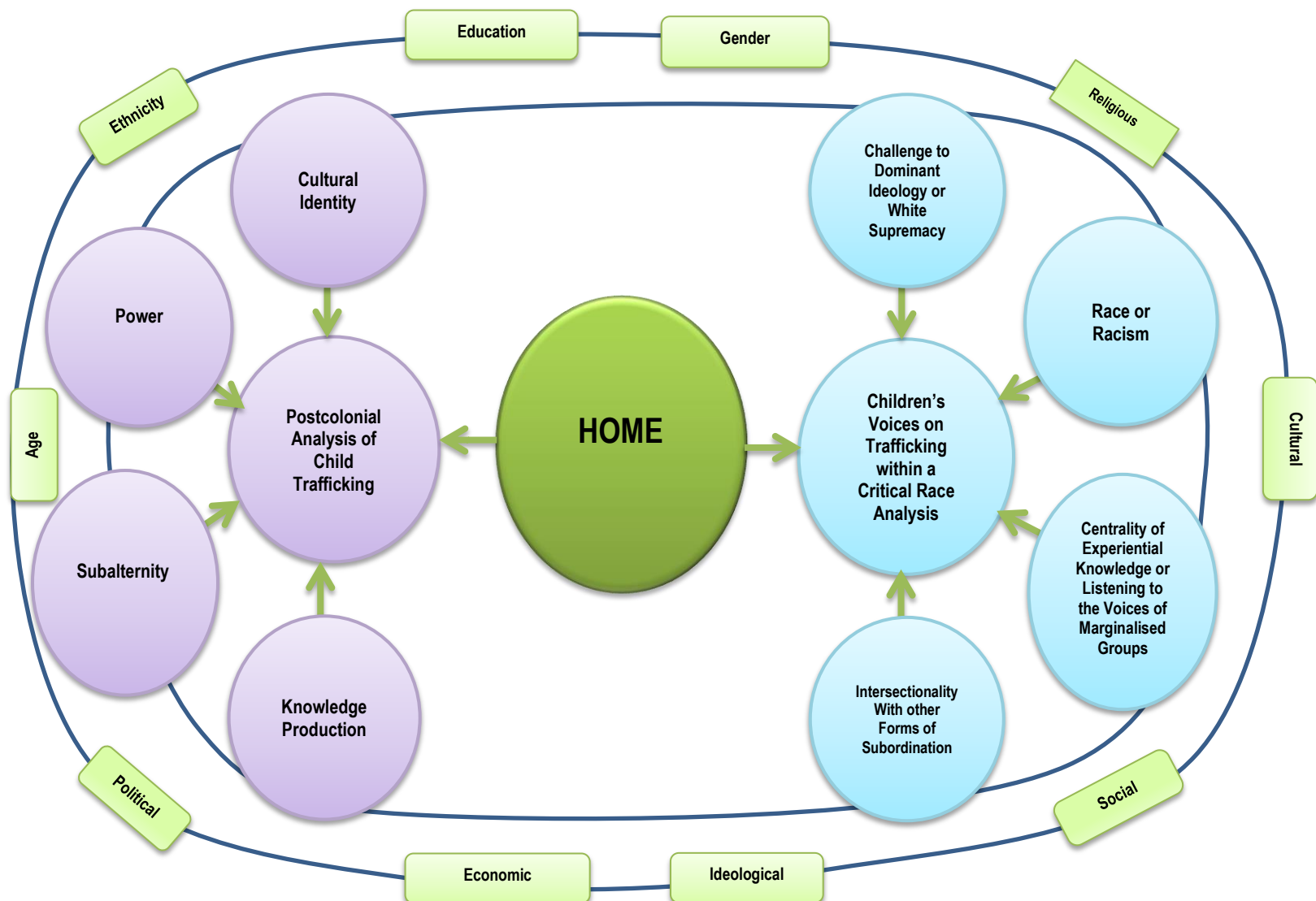
Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology

Conceptual Framework

As a researcher working with trafficked and abused children, I have struggled with the abundance of literature on trafficked children in West Africa and the reasons behind children's participation in trafficking. The literature presents a picture of trafficked children as helpless and traumatised children, which appeared to suit the entire agenda of rescuing West African children from exploitative practices. On meeting and interacting with the trafficked children that participated in my study, I was taken aback to find that their responses deviated from the norm or several areas of the dominant discourses (as discussed in the findings chapters). During our interactions, I constantly had to struggle between relegating my old perceptions and interpretations to the background and listening to the contrary views or perspectives presented by children during the study. The interactive process with children also reinforced the idea that children are an authority on their problem because they speak within the context of their social experiences and the impact of these on their social adjustment.

This thought on children as a useful reference point for providing insight into a problem affecting them formed the starting point and encompassing conceptual framework of my doctoral thesis. I worked within a conceptual framework that allowed theoretical platforms for listening to children's narratives to attain better understanding of the multi-layered nature of children's experiences of trafficking, the impact of children's home environment on their departures from home, their perception of NAPTIP's attempt at 'rescuing' or removing them from trafficking and factors guiding decisions for life after trafficking or 'rescue'. To explore children's experiences of trafficking in Nigeria, the framework for my study concentrated on three exhaustive areas: Children's voice (from a critical race perspective), postcolonial relations and home.

Figure 1: Pictorial depiction of the Conceptual Framework



1.1. Children's voice — counter-story telling (from critical race theory)

The limited reach of the voices of people of colour in academic writing and in retelling versions of social practices or problems in their environment is still an unrecognised aspect of racism and marginalisation. Racial minority groups could use storytelling as a tool for retelling their stories, as a form of psychological and spiritual empowerment, and as a way of challenging racist ideologies and injustices (Bell, 1980, 1992, 2003; Rollock; 2012). As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, children who have experienced trafficking should also be allowed to tell or share stories of their experiences. When this is done, stories will reflect the social, cultural contexts or relationships reinforcing child trafficking.

In sharing experiences, the narratives of children are bound to provide insight into cultural and historical assumptions as well as social relations among certain groups of people around child trafficking. In children's stories, we are able to isolate, understand and interrogate the nature of knowledge of their social networks, culture, family background and history and how all these led to their involvement in trafficking. What do children's stories tell foreign and African researchers about child trafficking? Do children see their participation in trafficking as unjust or as simply something they need to engage in at a particular stage in their life? Are the stories told by African researchers more forceful on the nature of social justice as they relate to child trafficking because they are Africans and can relate to the experiences of the children they are studying? Whose knowledge has capital in addressing the problem of child trafficking — that of the foreign or African researcher?

Whatever the answers to these questions, the use of counter-storytelling allows the people involved in the stories to share their experiences (Ollerenshaw, 2002), have their voices heard and challenge privileged and dominant academic and policy discourses on child trafficking. The goal of this area of my conceptual framework is not only to provide opportunities for trafficked children to speak about their experiences but getting people, particularly local and western researchers and policymakers, to listen to them.

In discussing child trafficking, one needs to question if better results will be obtained when researchers shift from traditional methodologies and, as Leavy (2009) articulates, provide other pathways for understanding the problem that may even evoke new dialogues of oppression or resistance by trafficked children inhabiting political, cultural, and economic spheres. My way of exploring Leavy's suggestion within my doctoral research was by placing the choice of data gathering tools in the hands of child participants in the study.

1.2. Postcolonial relations and an intersectional theoretical platform (economic, social, cultural, gender, religious, class)

A critical look at the situation of Nigerian and West African children in the postcolonial era calls into question if the approaches for addressing the problem suit the terrain and the multiple factors playing out in children's lives making them susceptible to exploitative trafficking. It is only when theoretical approaches reflecting the trafficking situation in the country or region of focus are adopted that it will be possible to understand the interplay of multiple layers of oppression and determine if any of the factors — economic, political, social, ethnic, religious, gender and educational

take precedence over the other in explaining children's susceptibility to trafficking? One way of identifying and isolating the factors making West African children susceptible to trafficking is by involving them in research and providing the platform to listen to their voices. However, what predominates is that interventions (frameworks, conventions) for addressing child trafficking are borrowed from outside, without allowing expression of the people's ideas or ways of addressing their problems. The limited voices of children removed from trafficking and of West African researchers working on trafficking is the norm and points to how shared experiences of colonisation have entrenched a sense of inferiority and misplaced cultural identity. This view is supported by Olaniyan (2005) who recounts how the colonial masters undertook a massive project of reforming the natives' mind to believe that nothing good - history, culture, ideas and even themselves - came out of Africa. This brainwashing process has caused Africans to yearn for everything European to the detriment of their own culture, perpetual inferiority and, within my study, choice of interventions or approaches for addressing their social problems.

1.3. Home

The literature on home concentrates on adult constructions of the term. Home is largely depicted as a place of safety and return; and, from feminist perspectives, a site of power and control (Blunt, 2005). The stories in academic literature about children's migration from home are submerged in descriptions of leaving home that seek to overshadow the agency of children who may well have made independent decisions to migrate from home, even if the reason for their departure is to augment household income.

Of importance to my doctoral research was problematizing the limited reach for understanding the reasons for children's departures from home. Until I engaged in analysis of data derived from children's narratives of their trafficking experiences for my pilot study, I never knew the importance children placed on their 'homes.' From children's narratives, I began to understand that home meant so many things to children. Children's perception of home, determined children's departure for trafficking, obligations while away from home and decisions taken about whether to return home or not. Based on feedback from my pilot study, I aspired to work with a larger number of trafficked children for the final doctoral research. Also, I found from the pilot study that a useful basis for filling this gap on reasons for children's departure from home in the trafficking literature, builds from listening to children as they provide information for understanding their perception of home, the people resident in those homes, their relationships with each other and their desire or not to return to those homes after their 'rescue' from trafficking. Moreover, research on child trafficking in West Africa will benefit from children's analysis of the different homes they have lived in and their experiences within them.

1.4. Research Methods

Child trafficking is a social issue that would benefit from a more nuanced understanding of the problem. First, in child trafficking research, there is still a need to speak to affected children to understand the factors making them vulnerable to trafficking. Second, a lot of attention is placed on poverty as the cause of trafficking, which prevents

identifying other important factors leading to children's involvement in trafficking. Third, considering the large number of female children vulnerable to trafficking in Africa, it is important to isolate gender as a factor making children vulnerable to trafficking. Fourth, it is important to understand children's perception of their removal from trafficking and their experiences of the temporary shelter provided by NAPTIP.

To address the aforementioned, my research introduced new theoretical lenses — postcolonial theory and critical race theory — as platforms for exploring the multi-layered nature of victimisation that trafficked children experience in intersection with their age, class, gender, education, religious and ethnic grouping.

1.5. The Approach — Counter-storytelling

The methodological approach of counter-storytelling adopted for my doctoral research is derived from critical race theory and postcolonial theory's call for a platform for people who are victims of unjust social structures to retell stories of their experiences, struggles and survival. Adopting the counter-storytelling methodology builds on interrogating if traditional research methodologies are ideal for studying racialized and/or ethnic populations (Zim, 1979), especially children within this population. A research methodology that is ethnic- or race-sensitive, unlike other qualitative research methods, allows for critical discussions on the impact of race, ethnicity and intersecting layers of victimisation on responses and data obtained during the research process. It was critical that research with West African children removed from trafficking be conducted using a methodological approach that allows for ease in voicing and sharing information for understanding their experiences with trafficking.

Several researchers of colour have called for the use of counter-storytelling because it allows the researcher to foster relationships with participants (Roderiguez, 2010) that enliven data gathering. Moreover, storytelling (especially with children) serves as a means of assisting the affected to understand their oppression as well as aiding survival, liberation and healing (Delgado, 1989). Counter-storytelling exposes dominant discourses and/or ideologies; provides a platform for people at the margins of society, whose thoughts are not considered of particular importance, to share their experiences and understand that they are not alone in having these experiences.

For effectiveness, the counter-storytelling methodological approach required the active participation of and recognition of the agency of those whose experiences I documented. To achieve this, I was constantly reminded and challenged by participating children to strive to conduct research in a way that does not reignite the oppression that has been a constant fixture in the lives of some of the children. This involved engaging in self-reflexivity to "...recognize, examine, and understand how [my] social background, location, and assumption[s]..." could affect the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2012, p. 17); to understand my study participants and build partnerships that enhanced the research process.

By embracing the counter-storytelling platform, I was able to document and share stories of the struggles that trafficked children experienced before, within, and after trafficking.

1.6. Overall Design of the Study

Children who have experienced trafficking are at the core of this study's design. However, since statistics on the number of children involved in trafficking in Nigeria are omitted from population or labour records, and because this is an inherently hidden phenomenon, there are limited avenues for recruiting children for research purposes. Several researchers have expressed challenges in recruiting participants for their studies (Oluwaniyi, 2009; UNICRI, 2003). The problem with recruitment has also caused some of these researchers to resort to uncommon practices for recruiting child participants such as asking old women to meet with trafficking agents disguised as intended employers of trafficked children and bribing security men in order to gain access to domestic servants living in their compounds (Oluwaniyi, 2009; Omokhodion, 2009). While useful information provided by these studies enriched the child trafficking literature, there is the concern that researchers have exposed themselves and their participants to risk.

Bearing these difficulties in mind, my research relied on NAPTIP for access to children in their shelters. The decision to use children in agency care was largely informed by Godziak's study (2008). Godziak (2008) explained that since it is nearly impossible and dangerous to have access to children while they are still with their traffickers, the most ethical and practical time to interact with children is when they have been removed from trafficking and in the care of a 'rescue' agency. Recruiting children in agency care provided a rich data of children removed from diverse forms of trafficking and allowed longer interaction with children to understand the nature of their experiences during trafficking and in agency care.

Based on this background, my research involved ten months of fieldwork with trafficked children, personnel from NAPTIP and partner NGOs. The partner NGOs were identified and recommended by NAPTIP officials when I arrived for my field research. The partner NGOs were those with which NAPTIP either collaborates in removing children from trafficking or those that rehabilitate trafficked children who have exceeded the six week stay allowed at NAPTIP shelters. I interviewed 13 personnel from NAPTIP and partner NGOs and 55 children between the ages of 7 and 17 selected from five NAPTIP shelters located in five states (Lagos, Cross Rivers, Edo, Enugu and Abuja) in Nigeria. I used qualitative research methods involving: documentary analysis, participant observation in NAPTIP and NGO shelters, semi-structured interviews, drawings, drama and focus group discussions with children, and semi-structured interviews with NAPTIP and NGO representatives.

1.6.1. Input from pilot study

To test the tools adopted for my doctoral research, in August 2010 I engaged in a pilot study that sought the participation of 7 trafficked children in NAPTIP's Lagos shelter. During the pilot study, research problems relating to the length of the interview questions, rewording of certain questions, children's need for private discussions with the researcher, and the need to explore alternative research tools for certain children, were all issues pertaining to validity and reliability that were addressed before the final study.

1.6.1.1. Validity of research tools

I tried to make my research accountable to both the participants and those that will be affected by the outcome of my research. This was achieved in diverse ways.

First, I undertook a pilot study that informed changes I made to the actual research process and data gathering tools even while on the field. Second, I ensured that I was accountable to my participants by listening to their concerns and ensuring that I made changes based on feedback received from them during the pilot and final research. Third, I checked for *construct validity*: by first confronting the theories within which I was situating my research and ascertaining their suitability (Ristock & Pennell, 1996), within my research, study participants and locality. Fourth, I also looked at *face validity* by constantly checking my position, work and conclusions (Ristock & Pennell, 1996) with the children even after leaving the field. These are reality checks based on my self-reflexivity intended to ensure a non-exploitative situation, diminish power imbalances, and reshape my research tools to address the concerns of participants. Fifth, by constantly checking in with participating children and practitioners from NGOs and related agencies to see if I was bringing a new way of understanding the problem, I checked for *catalytic validity* (Ristock & Pennell, 1996). Sixth, I also engaged in *document analysis* by reformatting the interview questions to explore the problem of child trafficking in diverse ways that will be understood by study participants (children and workers). Based on insight provided by the pilot study, for my final doctoral research, I explored triangulation by incorporating multiple tools — drawings, drama, focus group discussions and personal interviews- that enhanced the likelihood of children's participation and ease with the researcher and the data gathering process.

1.6.2. NAPTIP - Collaborating agency

I collaborated with NAPTIP for my final doctoral research. NAPTIP was established in August 2003 to investigate and prosecute trafficking offenders as well as to rehabilitate victims of trafficking (NAPTIP, 2010; Nwogu, 2006). My relationship with NAPTIP began in August 2010 during my one-month exploratory study on child trafficking in Nigeria. During the said visit, NAPTIP allowed me partake in some agency duties, discuss with NAPTIP staff and speak with trafficked children in the Lagos Shelter. Following the exploratory study, the Executive Secretary of NAPTIP provided written assurance of institutional support for my final doctoral research. Specifically, the agency assured access: to their libraries, materials and agency reports; to interview and interact with NAPTIP personnel at five shelters across seven departments; to interview children removed from trafficking by NAPTIP officials in five shelters located in five states in Nigeria; and provide links to other stakeholders NAPTIP collaborates with in the removal of children from trafficking.

1.7. Data collection

There is limited empirical research focused on understanding trafficking from the perspectives of participating children themselves. To address this gap, my doctoral research involved ten months of fieldwork with 55 trafficked children, 46 girls and 9 boys, between the ages of 7 and 17, recruited from five NAPTIP shelters located in five

states (Lagos, Akwa Ibom, Edo, Enugu and Abuja) in Nigeria, 13 personnel from NAPTIP and partner NGOs identified and recommended by NAPTIP officials.

My research used multiple qualitative tools comprising: interviews, focus group discussions, drama and drawings to gather information from children across different trafficking activities. Using multiple sources or ways of engaging with children allowed me to gather basic demographic data from children during the interviews or discussions. Interviews were used to generate information from NAPTIP officials and workers in partner NGOs. There were six sources of data collection for this study:

1.7.1. Documentary analysis

During the first and last month of the research I focused on collecting grey literature on the state of child trafficking in Nigeria and NAPTIP's role in designing and implementing programmes for addressing the problem. I also obtained information from NGOs and other agencies NAPTIP liaises with in removing children from trafficking.

1.7.2. Participant observation

For the duration of the research, I acted as the collector of children's stories that were presented verbally and/or visually. My role was enhanced by keeping a detailed diary of days spent in each shelter and my interaction with children and agency officials during this process. The intention is to show a sequence in children's adjustment in relation to their stories before trafficking, during trafficking and life after trafficking, which began with children's interaction with NAPTIP officials at the shelter. For the period of my research at NAPTIP, I was considered an intern — implying that I was both learning from and contributing to agency functions. I spent one month in each NAPTIP zone visited and after interaction with the units or departments in each zone, I moved to the shelter. While at the shelter, similar to the full-time employees, I participated in all shelter activities and/or duties. On a typical day I would report to the shelter, sign the duty sheet, engage in early morning run-down of new trends in the shelter (which involved knowing who would remain or leave or knowing new trafficked person brought to the shelter), bring children together for their Math or English class or other classes I was assigned and engage children in recreational activities. My daily schedule at each shelter changed with the needs of the zone or zonal head, staff strength and specialised care needed by some 'rescued' children during my research.

1.7.3. Child interviews

I adopted the purposeful sampling technique in selecting participants for my study. This sampling technique allowed the selection of boys and girls of different ages from diverse regions of the country where feasible, so that gender and age contrasts can be highlighted. The final number of children interviewed for the study was based entirely on availability of children at NAPTIP shelters visited during the study period, the willingness of children to participate in the study and time the shelter management made available to interview or interact with respondents.

My research involved one month of interaction and discussions with children at each of the five shelters visited, although for the final stage of the field research, I spent three months at the Lagos State shelter. Not only was Lagos State the hub of children removed from different aspects of trafficking but Lagos State was also an

appropriate spot for interviews with officials of support NGOs and my collaboration with some of these NGOs meant that trafficked persons at the shelter were occasionally provided with additional benefits of parties, gifts and meals to support NAPTIP during funding constraints. The essence of the extended stay in each shelter was to build rapport with children that encouraged children to be comfortable with me, eased the trauma associated with their trafficking experiences and increased the likelihood that children were willing to share their experiences with me.

In each of the shelters visited, the shelter manager would always introduce me to the staff, inform me of my responsibilities or shelter duties (which are usually documented and posted on the shelter notice board) and ensure that I participate in daily activities at the shelter. Thereafter, all shelter residents were asked to converge. I was introduced to the residents and told to explain my role at the agency. I would explain my presence at the shelter and the nature of my research, after which children are told that with further interaction with me, they can decide whether to participate in my study or not.

When I began my field research, I was armed with an interview guide (See appendix 2 for my initial guide for the child interviews) with a series of open-ended questions focused on different aspects of children's lives and their experiences with trafficking. The purpose of the interview guide was to offer multiple question forms to stimulate children's discussions with me. After interacting with children at the first shelter visited (Lagos), I found that, though the interview guide was helpful, a free flowing discussion without resort to a guide provided a more helpful and trusting exchange with child participants. Looking at interview guides and then discussing with children, made children feel they were in another interrogatory platform, similar to the exchanges they had with NAPTIP officials at the main office and the shelter. Based on this observation, I concentrated more on having a meaningful, cordial face-to-face exchange with children. Interview questions with children adopted open-ended questions, flexible enough to change based on feedback from children or children's discomfort with the research material and allowed children to share their experiences in an unrestrictive format. Interviews with children lasted about an hour and were audio-recorded with the consent of each participating child.

1.7.4. Child drawings

The interview sessions with children incorporated drawings. The use of drawings lessened the likelihood that children would be bored and ensured that children were engaged while sharing their stories (See appendix 4 for my initial guide for the drawing activities). Bearing in mind that some children found it difficult to talk about some aspects of their trafficking, pictorial representations of their stories acted as a substitute research tool for this category of children by helping to: explain trafficked children's reality, their feelings about their experiences and about the people represented in their drawings. In addition, Young & Barrett (2001) revealed in their study with street children in Kampala that adopting visual effects enhanced access and acceptance by those children with limited education or means of expressing themselves in words and enabled them to present pictorial representations of areas of Kampala that provided useful insights to their lives on the street. Using such opening cues as: *"Tell me about your family, how many people are in your family or where do your parents work?"* children were asked to share pictorial depictions of their family life leading to trafficking (Rollins, 2005). Also, I ensured a participatory approach in the

interpretation of children's drawings. Using this strategy helps avoid a recurrent problem in research with children where the researcher may interpret the children's world based on his or her own understanding. This practice has roots in the romantic views of children and childhood held by researchers that are likely to take precedence over the views that children themselves could hold about their circumstances (Alldred & Burman, 2005; Breuil, 2008; Eckford-Prosser, 2000). The discussions I held with children after each drawing activity helped me to understand how children interpret the colors, stories and information emanating from their drawings. Regrettably, children's interpretation of their drawings exceeds the limits of the current doctoral thesis. For my current thesis, children's drawings are used to reinforce children's narratives and in some cases, give readers a vivid representation of how children see the people involved in their journey away from home. I will focus on the meanings derived from children's drawings in later postdoctoral analysis.

Toward the end of the interview sessions, children were invited to participate in focus group discussions. For all sessions with children, children were provided with pencils, erasers, easel pads, watercolours, writing materials and poster colours. In most shelters, children mapped out their own strategy for guarding, coordinating and distributing their drawing, writing and reading materials.

1.7.5. Children's focus group discussions

In the focus groups, children shared their constructions of the phenomenon of trafficking in general as well as their own experiences when predisposed to. Each focus group discussion lasted about one hour, although children were prone to exceed this time frame, and had a maximum of 10 children, with drawing constituting an essential part of the activity. The questions for focus group discussions and drawings were designed to highlight opening, intermediate and closing questions that reflected and amplified trends in children's trafficking experiences.

The topics selected for the focus group discussions changed drastically from what I envisaged in preparing for my research (See appendix 3 for my guide for the focus group discussions). This was almost expected because I indicated from the beginning of the study that I will allow the research to be guided by the expressed needs of the children during our interactions. The fact that I had a conceived idea of what to discuss with the children also helped, because it made it easy for inquisitive children who were not used to expressing themselves so freely with an older person to be given ready answers when they asked me: "Aunty, what will you like us to talk about during the meeting?" I gave them an idea, which they either accepted or modified because it made them understand there was or could be flexibility during these meetings.

Moreover, sometimes it was difficult accessing slots for focus group discussions at shelters with busy schedules. This meant that I learned to take on additional assistantship positions by volunteering for the unattended slot on the time table of virtually all the shelters during my visit: "The group counselling session." I turned the focus group discussion into a group counselling session which the children found more acceptable and helped welcome the notion that they could talk freely and express their most troubling concerns. Children knew we were having a discussion meeting with ground rules set to guide the safety of all participants in the meeting. I was also not being therapeutic but only facilitating a group discussion. The fact that the focus group discussion was generated from

the children's need for a group counselling medium made it easier for me to address concerns generated by the first group counselling session I had at the Lagos shelter in September 2013. Based on my familiarity with the children participating in the group meeting, through our drawing and interviewing activities, it was easier to bring everyone together for a group discussion. During the meeting with children at the shelter, I asked them (this time as a group) what they were doing at the shelter. This question generated multiple conversations based on feedback from the children, leading to discussions about who they considered responsible for their trafficking and their aspirations for life after the shelter. A more exhaustive list of children's concerns which translated to our focus group discussion areas is presented below:

1. What do you know about human trafficking or child trafficking?
2. Do you know why you are at the NAPTIP Shelter?
3. Do you share your personal trafficking story with other children at the shelter?
4. Who do you blame for your trafficking experience and /or who do you blame for your presence at the NAPTIP Shelter?
5. Will you forgive those you blame for your trafficking experience?
6. What are your aspirations for the future?

Surprisingly, these concerns were peculiar to children participating in subsequent focus group discussions at the remaining shelters. These issues are discussed in detail in the findings chapter.

1.7.6. Children's drama

I began my field research with the goal of understanding children's experiences with trafficking using the previously identified tools. I also emphasised that my data collection and the selected methodological platform - counter-storytelling will be largely guided by children's responses in the field and tools that put children at ease for interactions with me. When I visited the Lagos shelter in September 2013, I was struck by the absence of master trainers to engage children in life skills training and literacy and numerical educational activities. The participating children and I were constantly engaged in exchanges on the best way to keep them occupied when I was absent from the shelter. Occasionally, I left the children occupied with drawing, Math and English assignments. They also had playing cards and board games. Sometimes those were insufficient. During one of these discussions, the children came up with the idea of putting together a script that depicted their collective trafficking experience. The production, directing and role assignments were handled by the children. Other residents of the shelter were invited to watch the drama at its premiere.

Drama as a tool of research was not without its problems. The most troubling was watching the frustration the children experienced when some key actors had to leave the shelter for the reintegration process before the drama was ready for viewing. Based on the constant switching of characters and amendments to the scripts, only the initiators, children at the Lagos shelter in September 2013, and then children at the Abuja shelter in February 2014 were able to produce their own drama pieces.

Regardless of the problems, the children considered the process of putting together and producing their drama a warm platform for getting to know each other, understanding the experiences of other children within trafficking in a non-judgemental fashion, finding their inner talents and forging new friendships. I heard the loudest, happiest and

most sincere laughter from children participating in the drama, other residents and some agency personnel during the drama practice and viewing sessions.

1.7.7. Worker interviews

During my field research, NAPTIP adopted a unique format that enhanced my interaction with personnel and agency functions during my field research. Upon arrival at the head office in Abuja in August 2013, I had interactions with the facilitating department for my research, Research & Programme Development (RPD), about the best way to position my field schedule to accrue the intended benefits. Thereafter, a detailed memo was sent to all the 5 NAPTIP offices to be visited during my research. The efficiency of this strategy meant that all units expected me at their offices on the dates indicated in the memo. At each shelter visited, representatives of each key department in the agency were assigned to hold meetings with me where I was given a lecture on departmental functions, introduced to departmental staff and familiarised with departmental duties. Based on these familiarisation meetings, I was able to request further clarifications, insights or interviews with identified NAPTIP personnel. Interviews with NAPTIP personnel and personnel from partner NGOs were based on open-ended questions for insight into: their demographic details, their understanding of the state of child trafficking in the country and their perception of the effectiveness of programmes undertaken by NAPTIP and partner NGOs to address the problem (See appendix 5 for guide for worker interviews). I interviewed 8 NAPTIP and 5 personnel from partner NGOs which amounted to 13 key informant interviews. The interview session for adult participants usually did not exceed an hour and were audio-recorded with the consent of the subjects. These interviews served to help me better understand the institutional context when I was collecting data and in analysing children's narratives.

1.7.8. Successes in Data collection activities

Prior to the field research, my knowledge of child trafficking in Africa was hinged upon literature on the problem. The restricted methodological content of this literature made planning an extended study on child trafficking a problem since it was difficult to know from previous research what worked for affected children. The best strategy was to adopt a mix of qualitative methods. This proved advantageous in working with traumatized trafficked children. Coming into the NAPTIP shelters, I noticed that children were closed and suspicious of visitors to the shelter. But when they saw me as a daily rather than a one-day visitor, they were more open to discussions. Children who had been either silent or provided monosyllabic responses when interrogated by NAPTIP investigators became responsive and even talkative after engaging in interactive drawing activities with other children. I also worked on enhancing child-to-child interaction and worker-to-children interaction by introducing games that were often held over the weekend. Children also became more active when they could sit around with other children and I to watch some of my selected movies (we watched some age appropriate Nigerian movies and some popular movies like the *Sound of Music*, *Tangled* and *Snow White and the Huntsman*). The plot and memorable characters were discussed afterwards. At the Abuja shelter, I also took on the role of instructor for the dance slot and it was delightful to watch how children left much of their troubles behind as they danced to different rhythms.

As expected, language did not constitute a problem during my research. The fact that children perceived me as someone who could speak and understand the languages they spoke - which for the duration of my research period were English, Pidgin English, Igbo and Yoruba - made them feel more comfortable in our private and public discussions. Moreover, all participating children from West African countries could speak Yoruba and, with extended stay in the shelter, had started learning to speak English.

I had the longest final stays at the Lagos shelter and during this period, I was able to reach out to some NGOs that collaborated with me in organising several weekend parties for the children. With time, children invited me to attend their court sessions and, on occasion, to accompany them as they returned home. So with parties, drama, games, movies and participation in crucial moments, I was no longer considered a stranger in the children's lives. I shared their everyday experiences and at different times, became a part of their journey for moving on to the next phase of their lives. It was also a joy-filled moment when children called me on the phone after leaving the shelter to tell me how they were adjusting to life after trafficking.

My first visit to the Lagos shelter was from September 1 to September 30, 2013. However, by revisiting the Lagos shelter from February 2014 to about the end of May 2014 and spending a longer period than with the first visit, I noticed how trauma could affect children to the extent that they would shield certain parts of their story that they considered 'shameful' not only to protect themselves but to retain that image of the untroubled child in the older researcher's, counsellor's or friend's eyes. It was the most beautiful experience of all, achieving that tearful trust that broke through those barriers and found huge relief for the emotionally and sexually abused child who did not share her complete story when we met in September 2013 but allowed full disclosure in April 2014.

Moreover, by involving children in decisions taken about the research direction and content, I also observed that, for each shelter visited, children came up with interactive ideas such as drama and storytelling about their future aspirations that enriched focus group discussions and understanding of their trafficking experiences. More importantly, my focus group discussion with children provided insight for understanding children's need for gradual disclosure and gradual healing.

1.7.9. Problems encountered in Data collection activities

I was aware before engaging in my research that NAPTIP operated a closed shelter where children were resident for a maximum of six weeks. I also observed during tenure that where further investigations were required into a child's case or where a child had ongoing court cases against their trafficking agent, the child is liable to be resident in the shelter for several months until reasonable progress had been made in their case. This insight notwithstanding, a major problem that I did not anticipate during my research, mostly because it did not occur during my pilot study, was that of some children leaving the NAPTIP shelter before I had fully involved them in all the stages of my research. The core aim of my research is to be different from previous studies where researchers move in and out of children's lives by administering their instrument as quickly as possible. I always tried to allow a two-week period to get familiar with children before beginning the interview process, by which time some children would have been reunited with their families or taken to a different shelter.

I also observed that there was no way of planning my research schedule to know which children will be staying at the shelter for less than or more than one month. In some cases, the counsellors at the shelter are only given a short notice of a few hours before relevant staff arrived at the shelter accompanied by a NAPTIP driver to take the children to the zonal office or head office for reunification with their family members, movement to a different NAPTIP Zonal Office or residency at an open shelter.

In shelters where I observed an absence of recreational activities for children, children were left to their own devices which, to me, made them focus more on their trafficking situations and left lingering feelings of their trauma. In situations like these, I invested more than planned in buying play items, reading materials and other engaging and/or educational items for the children. I also got notebooks, storybooks and alphabet writing items for the children, which enabled me to engage the children in Math and English classes. I found that while the instructional activities delayed my data gathering process, it also enhanced my data gathering process because the children were more willing to have discussions with me when they knew that their quest for knowledge was relatively met. This quest for knowledge was expected after I observed that virtually all the children interviewed attested that the trafficker's promises of helping them to attend school at their destination point contributed to their involvement in trafficking. Another problem that I did not anticipate was the large number of participants that I would need to cater for during the research. Despite the fact that the shelter managers at the different zones made it clear to shelter residents that my target population would be those under 18 years old, older residents wanted to participate in the study and this meant stretching my resources to provide snacks and other research materials offered to younger participants. The older trafficked persons who were interested in participating in the study were allowed to be part of the drawing activities, focus group discussions and were interviewed with their consent given on the same consent forms as that provided for the children. I will use data collected from them for later discussions on the trafficking experiences of older trafficking persons. Denying older residents participation in the research (even when their results may not be used in the current study) threatened to add to their feeling of despondence and loneliness in those shelters that offered minimal recreational and vocational activities.

Although the outcome of the worker interviews will not be discussed in the current thesis because the magnitude of data required that I concentrate on solely the experiences of trafficked children for the doctoral thesis, problems emanated during data collection for this set of participants. I conducted more interviews with NAPTIP officials than documented in my study. But some senior officials in some departments visited had strict rules around authorising audio recordings of their interview sessions without the express approval of their Directors (who were away at the time). For the affected departments, I only took notes, which cannot be cited in my study because this set of participants did not sign the consent forms; and for one of the departments, the Director made himself available for a makeup interview on behalf of his department.

1.7.10. Changes after Data Collection

Based on some of the highlighted issues that came up during the data gathering process, certain changes were made to my research.

To enable me cope with the large number of children interviewed for my research I decided to concentrate on the 55 children identified for the study (see appendix 17 for demographic details of participating children) that went through the focus group discussions, interviews, drawings and were also present during the drama presentations, meaning that more than 30 children were excluded from the analysis presented in this thesis. The excluded number include children from the Akwa Ibom zone that were 'rescued' from witchcraft accusations. Their exclusion rests on the magnitude of data and the need to concentrate on documenting the experiences of children that participated in all stages of data collection (drama, drawing, interviews and focus group discussions) Interviews conducted with older trafficked persons that participated in the study were also excluded.

Also to ensure manageability of data, I decided, for the purposes of this doctoral thesis, to restrict myself to the perspectives of children removed from trafficking. My future analysis will include the responses of 13 adult respondents selected from the anti-trafficking agency, NAPTIP and supporting NGOs.

1.8. Data analysis

For the doctoral study, I assumed the role of collector of stories told by children. These stories are analysed using a structural analysis that allowed me to tease out and express perspectives considered important to the child storyteller. These perspectives could be cultural, moral, identity, social, economic, gender and religious based (Phoenix & Smith, 2011). The structural analysis is also important within the context of child trafficking because it moves away from traditional theories that focus essentially on what is said by participants (Phoenix & Smith, 2011) to interpret and probe about the "How" of participant's lives. The focus is to understand how these narratives affect the participant's lives either positively or negatively.

Data collected during the research was analysed by: organising files; transcribing all interviews, focus group discussions and drama; reading over texts and making notes in margins; describing and placing stories in a chronology; classifying stories to locate epiphanies; interpreting the meanings that stories convey by focusing on the larger implication of stories and relating them to theories, existing literature and real life situations (Creswell, 1994).

1.8.1. Coding format

Children's interviews, focus group discussions and drama were transcribed verbatim. Initially the transcripts from interviews, focus group discussions and drama sketches with children that participated in my study were organised for data analysis purposes using the NVIVO programme that is easily accessed using codes categorised by the researcher. However, I found it easier to adopt a manual approach to the coding process as this allowed me to reuse or repeat crucial statements made by children in the same or multiple chapters and was a more familiar method of coding for me. The advantage of loading the transcripts into the NVIVO programme lies in the ease with which it can be assessed for future studies after the doctoral process.

Adopting the manual approach also allowed me to transcribe collected data and take some time to reflect upon or make sense of the collected qualitative data, after which I developed four specific coding categories that were

guided by the sequence of children's journey away from home with insight provided from my pilot study and children's drawings during the field research:

- i. **Remembering home:** The important thoughts resonating from children's reasons for leaving home, the nature of the departure and crucial actors in the process;
- ii. **The experience of trafficking:** Children's positive and negative experiences of trafficking and accounts of their removal from their trafficking situations;
- iii. **Life in NAPTIP shelter:** Children's accounts of coming into agency care, their experiences and expectations within this care;
- iv. **Going home or moving on:** Within this category, children share their thoughts on where to go and what to do after leaving agency care.

Guided by these coding categories, I read through the transcribed documents both in the printed and computer versions, underlining relevant phrases and words on the computer version that in turn led to new themes and sub-themes within each identified coding category. The new themes and sub-themes, which I will regard as fragments, were assigned 'unique identification numbers' (Gordon, Skills, Itasca & Peacock, 1998), that made it easy to locate the position of the phrase, sentence or quote to which they refer for easy identification within the document. I present the four coding categories and new themes with their unique identification numbers:

A. Remembering Home

1. Why children move away from home
 - 1.1. Economic
 - 1.2. Educational
 - 1.3. Religious and Cultural
 - 1.4. Social and Emotional
2. What children remember most when away from home (positive and negative)

B. The Experience of Trafficking

1. How are children recruited for trafficking?
 - 1.1. Family
 - 1.2. Social networks
 - 1.3. Strangers
2. Forms of trafficking experienced by children participating in the study
 - 2.1. Sexual exploitation
 - 2.2. Care giving
 - 2.3. Commercial
3. Children's perception of their trafficking experience
 - 3.1. Journey into trafficking
 - 3.2. Experience of exploitation & coping
 - 3.3. Getting out of trafficking
4. How do memories of home make children's trafficking experiences bearable?
5. Looking back reflections

C. Life in NAPTIP Shelter

5. Day-to-day life in a NAPTIP shelter
6. What is memorable about life in the shelter?
 - a. Emotional

- b. Social
- c. Religious
- d. Educational
- e. Institutional

D. Going Home or Moving On?

- 1.1. Leaving the shelter (Do children want to go home?)
- 1.2. Options accessible to children
- 1.3. Process of reintegration and the future

These new themes were further broken down into sub-themes that constituted my coding tree, which was adopted and guided the structure the findings and discussions chapters. The unique identification numbers made it easy for me to call them up within the simple Microsoft word document that I adopted. I also tested for the reliability of coding. According to Gerdon, Skills, Itasca & Peacock (1998), the reliability of the coding process simply “. . . asks whether two independent codings of material into categories relevant to the purposes of the interview would be the same or whether they would vary grossly.” I engaged in testing the reliability of my coding process, by abandoning my first coding results and restarting the coding process three times. After each attempt, I compared the results with the first attempt. For both attempts, the results showed a high level of agreement with the results from my first coding attempt.

1.9. Ethical issues

An essential requirement for engaging in research with trafficked children as well as other participants for my study was recognising that my study subjects have rights that could be violated in the course of research. To address issues arising during my research that could infringe on participants’ comfort, safety and privacy, I sought ethics approval of my research methods from the McGill Ethics Review Board before conducting the study and consulted with them en route if any ethical concerns arose (see appendix 6 for my Certificate from the McGill Ethics Review Board).

Bearing in mind that minors are key participants in the study, special precaution was taken in interacting with them during the research. By spending a month in each NAPTIP shelter visited, the intention was to have enough time to work with agency personnel, interact with and establish some measure of rapport with children before engaging in dialogue with them. With this strategy, children were not compelled to engage in discussions with me but only speak with me because it was their desire to do so. Prior to working with children, the shelter manager would call the children into a circle and introduce the children to me while telling the children who I am and the intention of my visit to the shelter. When it became my turn to speak to the children, I clearly stated the role of children in the study as well as the fact that no harm would befall children for either participating or not participating in the study. When children indicated willingness to participate in the study, consent was also given by NAPTIP officials who were acting as their temporary guardians during their residence in NAPTIP shelters (see appendix 7 to 10 for relevant documents for participating children). In other words, the assent forms for children were written in language that was simple enough for children to understand but had two signature slots: for the child’s and the NAPTIP official’s

signature. The consent form for officials of NAPTIP and partner NGOs was a separate document that emphasised that information obtained from agency officials would not be shared with their employers but used strictly for research purposes (see appendix 11 and 12 for consent forms for officials of NAPTIP and partner NGOs).

During the study, I encouraged the children to terminate the interview whenever they felt uncomfortable or overwhelmed with memories of their trafficking experiences. All NAPTIP shelters have on-site counsellors accessible to children. These counsellors determined whether children were emotionally ready to partake in the research or not. If children needed to speak with someone based on participation in my research, I would have referred them to the counsellors. However, such a situation never arose.

The interview sessions were audio-recorded with the consent of the respondents. To protect participant confidentiality, I assigned numbers and aliases to all child and adult participants in the study. I also sought the consent of respondents to use transcript excerpts in my doctoral thesis. All documents obtained such as audio-recordings and written materials were treated as confidential, carefully stored and kept in a locked cupboard in my place of residence while in Nigeria and on returning to Montreal, Canada.

There were minimal risks from partaking in the study. However, the few that emanated were addressed to the satisfaction of children and agency participants.

At the beginning of the research, some NAPTIP workers were concerned about the clause in the consent form indicating that: "...also, records of this interview will be private and used only for my research. Your employers will not be informed that you participated in the study." NAPTIP staff falling into this category felt that clause should have been excluded from the consent form because if they are participating in my research, it is at the directive of the agency or their department heads. The implication is that regardless of whether they are identified in the study or not, their employers are already aware that they participated in the study. I discussed the problems arising from this clause with Linda McNeil, the officer in charge of McGill's Ethics Review Process. For others, for instance, the most senior officer of a particular unit would not permit a recorded interview because the Director of the unit was not available to issue such permission. In several instances, the assistant Director, coordinating my research with NAPTIP, would intervene by providing explanations that allowed recorded interviews to occur. However, whenever there was this initial restraint, I put affected NAPTIP officials at ease by participating in group discussions with department staff where notes were taken that will not be cited in my doctoral dissertation.

Chapter Seven — Findings and Discussions

Remembering Home

Author's Reflections on Remembering Home

From my work with vulnerable children and having lived most of my life in a West African Nigerian State, Lagos, that attracts large numbers of trafficked children, I find myself interested in motivators for trafficking. To me, understanding these motivators requires insight into the homes children are leaving into trafficking. My first awareness of the link between children and home occurred during an independent investigation of the lives of children that people assumed were trafficked because they saw them hawking on the streets. I became even more involved in the lives of these children when I realised that they combined school with their afterschool hawking tasks while still coming up the top of their class. I would never have known this, if I had not carved a friendship which led to following the children home and meeting their working class parents who saw their children's activities as the socialisation they needed for future adjustment. The parents also ensured that their two children protected themselves by hawking together and arriving home together. The children also felt fulfilled because they contributed to household income that served to fund their education. The children were happy that they remained at home with their families rather than leaving home to work as domestic servants for another family. This agreement was based on negotiations between children and their parents.

The essence of my research, especially as an African scholar, is to question the place of children-parent relationships in available empirical research on child trafficking. Children always appear to be lured into trafficking by insensitive parents who appear only interested in using children as 'tools' to enhance family income or wellbeing. It is understood that occasionally households experience economic downfalls but should it always be the norm that negotiations within the household are presented almost as insensitively as the available research indicates. It is possible that negotiations actually exist within the family prior to children's departure from home. It is also possible that during these negotiations, children could say no to moving away from home and that some poor parents would rather have their children at home with them than send them off to unknown locations with unknown people just to provide them with a better future. It is also important to change the perception of child trafficking by linking more with what children and their parents understood of the nature of the practice they were engaging in prior to children's departure from home — this also implies understanding what trafficking means in different Nigerian languages. Reflecting more on this, will help understand if all children involved in what is termed 'trafficking' are from poor homes.

While the literature has served to provide information or suggest why West African children are involved in trafficking, more focus is given to poverty or economic motivators of trafficking. Understanding the place of home in the discussion of child trafficking will also help us to understand if all trafficked children come from economically disadvantaged homes, if children were forcefully or willingly recruited into trafficking, if children instigated their own trafficking or if children want to be 'rescued' from trafficking.

I have also operated with the uncomfortable feeling that research with trafficked children in West Africa takes a distanced and disappointing stance on the needs of traumatised children. Researchers appear to be walking in and out

of children's lives and after our data is collected we leave the children without thinking to understand the nature of their trauma (that is if we understand that they experience any) or help with the healing process within our knowledge of the home environment children left or will be returning to. The detached nature of child trafficking research left me speculating: (i) if researchers think that because children are involved in trafficking that they do not have homes and if they do not have homes, then they probably lack attachments and feelings; and (ii) if this detachment reflects researchers' efforts to be "objective" rather than subjective in their approach to the study.

Remembering Home

I begin this chapter on the premise that before West African countries should solely adopt the 'rescue approach' as an appropriate template for removing and dealing with the complex nature of trafficked children in their region, research should be directed at understanding 'home' as a crucial motivator for children's departure for trafficking. Child trafficking research is relatively silent in isolating other triggers apart from poverty in households motivating children's decision to leave home. The absence of a wide array of globally accepted triggers could be attributed to the limited voices of trafficked children themselves in speaking about the reasons they left home which may be different from that presented by adults; it could also be attributed to country differences in motivators of children's departure from home and into trafficking. The findings presented in this chapter are solely based on the data collected from the children participating in the study. This chapter will begin with short summaries of the narratives of twelve children that participated in the study (placed in text boxes) centering on their homes and reasons for moving away from them. Thereafter the discussions around understanding why children leave home will focus on two major areas: why children move away from home and what children remember most when away from home.

1. Why children move away from home

When faced with literature on child trafficking, I question the simplistic way in which children's movement into trafficking is almost taken as a normal or rational response to perceived household poverty attributed to large family size, and in most cases, assumed to be traceable to polygamous households. Large family size and polygamy have long been a part of West African history but has that led to the increased movement and exploitation of West African children as it has in the late 20th and 21st centuries? This minimalistic approach to interpreting child trafficking throws into shadow rather than illuminates pathways for understanding the problem. I believe that to understand why children leave home for

***Princess**, 13 years, has a younger sister and is her mother's first child. Her parents are separated and her mother was the second of her father's three wives. Princess said when they lived in one of the cities in Eastern Nigeria, her father practiced as a medical doctor but since marrying his third wife and moving to the village, he opened up a store where he sells building materials. Princess's parents separated when she was a toddler, her father retained custody of the children and Princess was asked to remain with her father's sister. Princess claimed that until her father married the third wife, he used to take good care of his children.*

Not knowing her mother, Princess made several attempts to locate her. When she finally did, she lived with her mother in her parents' house for a short period before her father came to take her away. Her mother has now remarried. After she returned home, her stepmother sent her to live with a woman in a neighbouring village. Princess said that when her stepmother saw that the woman was taking good care of her, she became jealous, accused the woman of witchcraft and took Princess away. Her step mother also needed her to return home to help care for her own children. When she returned to live with her father and stepmother, she was made to stop school and she complained of severe maltreatment. Seeing that no one cared, she would leave the house during the day for her father's sister's house or the homes of some concerned friends. She would return to her father's house at night. This continued until she met someone that offered her a job in a restaurant where she assisted in selling soft drinks. After a while, she became friends with a young female customer who asked her to accompany her to Lagos. Princess's new friend said she since she was only dropping off something for someone, she would only be in Lagos for two days. Princess promised to think about this but forgot until she was accosted on the road by the young lady and her mother. Initially the mother asked Princess to accompany them to Lagos, later she told Princess that a woman will be coming to take her to Lagos, where she will be taking care of the woman's baby and going to school. They told Princess that the woman will be taking her away the next day. When Princess wanted to leave for home, they took away her cell phone and asked her not to inform her parents about leaving for Lagos the next day. Princess did not bother informing her parents because she was not close to them and they were not taking care of her. The next day, the woman arrived and along with three other girls, they set out for Lagos.

trafficking, children should be our guide in explaining if it was an easy or difficult process, how decisions were made, how interactive or authoritarian the process was, and how accepting or reluctant they were to engage in the journey. To present a vivid picture of West African children's departure from home, this area of the dissertation narrows the discussion to four common themes resonating from the narratives of children that participated in my study. Participating children's departure from home were based on a wider net of economic; educational; religious and cultural; social and emotional — motivators for departures from home than depicted in available literature on child trafficking.

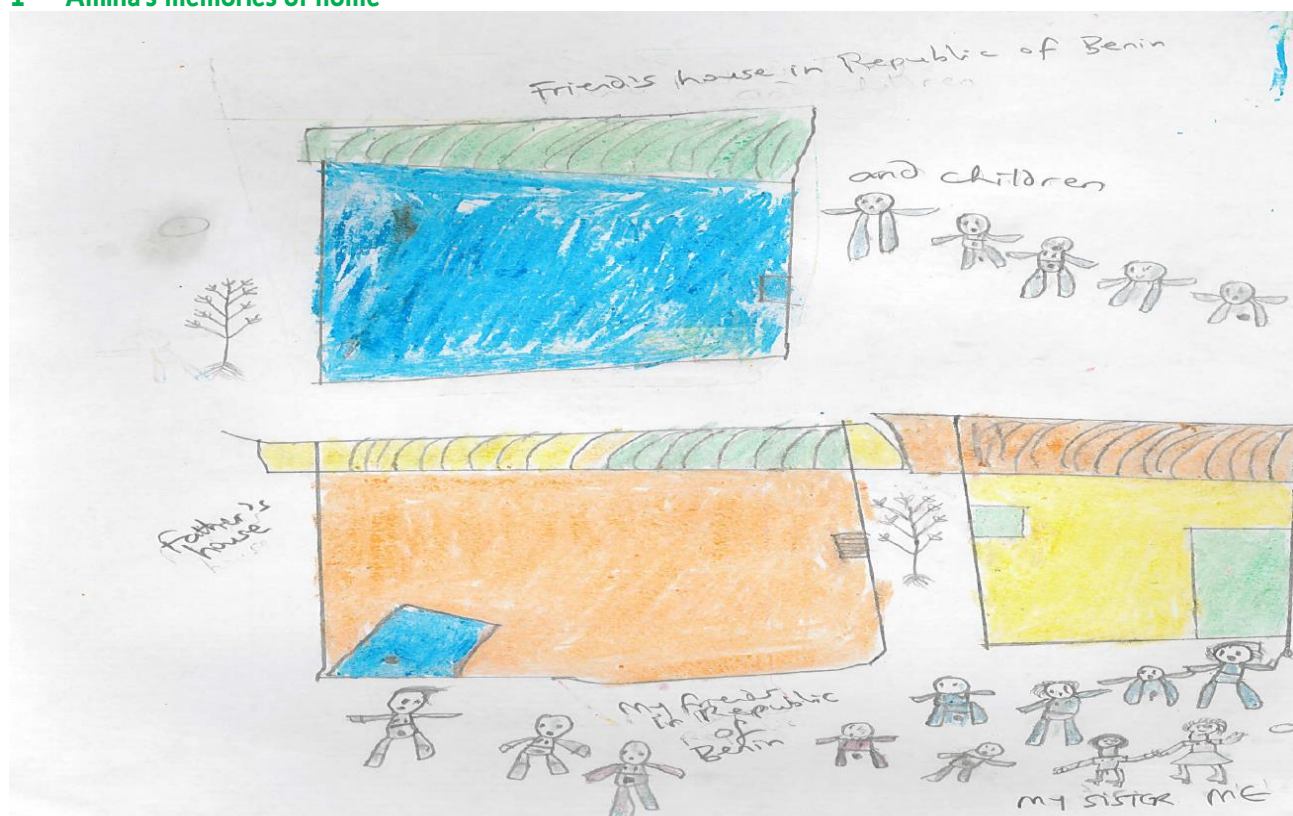
1.1. Economic reasons for leaving home

Usually poverty is identified as the major trigger of children's vulnerability to trafficking in West Africa. This study acknowledges that poverty plays an important role in trafficking, but using the narrow lens of poverty which is one of the key offshoots of inappropriate or badly executed economic policies may limit an understanding of the diverse economic constraints leading to children's involvement in trafficking. Instead of poverty, this study adopts the wider lens of economic factors to further isolate situations or upsets in children's lives causing these constraints to occur.

1.1.1. Lack of funds

In children's stories, there appears to be a relationship between lack of funds, unemployment and major upsets in household adjustment and children's lives. When there is lack of funds, a child may have to stop school due to too many disruptions in attending the normal school programme, leave home or move to a different location until the situation at home normalises. That was the case for 17-year-old Amina from the Republic of Benin who started

1 — Amina's memories of home



working as a domestic servant in Nigeria about five years ago:

I was going to school until my mother did not have money. So I stopped. That was what happened. My mummy started telling me to go and do house-girl job and I told my mummy that I don't want to go. So one day when there was no money, I told my mummy that I want to go and do house-girl job. So my daddy came and carried me to do house-girl job in Ibadan. I worked there for about 2 years then came back. My daddy took me to the woman again — Amina, 17-year-old girl

The same applies to 17-year-old Serena from Delta State who said she had to withdraw from school when she was almost close to completing her senior secondary school education. She explains:

It is because, during that period that I was supposed to enrol, my daddy was not having the money. Then I have to withdraw from school. My younger brother was in JSIII and our last born in Primary 3 at the time — Serena, 17-year-old girl

It appears important to understand the changing home dynamics at the time decisions were taken to abandon school. The female children cited in these narratives felt they should stop school to rescue other family members. In Amina's case, she had younger siblings who were still attending school and her mother had earlier hinted that she should leave home to work as a domestic servant. I look

at Amina's situation and speculate if the decision to sacrifice her educational ambition is related to the minimal regard for female children in West African families. In Serena's case, two things are evident. First, her younger brothers remained in school while she opted to withdraw. Second, her parents never asked her to withdraw from school, she made the decision to withdraw from school probably because she noticed the difficulty her parents faced in meeting school payments. Third, I see Serena's case as simply a temporary financial setback because Serena is the 7th of nine children with older siblings that have completed their secondary education, sponsored by the same parents. I also identify the agency of children who are willing to sacrifice their

Martha, 15 years, is the second child of her father's seven children. Her father had a first wife who he is no longer living with. Her father is a plumber and her mother a trader. Martha was in junior secondary school 3 and attending the closest school to her home. She dropped out of school because she was tired of the spate of cultism in the school. Thereafter, her parents enrolled her to learn sewing. She was one month into the programme when her madam had to travel out of the State to the Northern part of the country in search of a baby. She could not explain if her madam travelled to process a child adoption or to attend a fertility clinic. Martha decided to remain at home helping her mother with house chores until her madam returned. One day, her male cousin, who had travelled all the way from Benin, Edo State, arrived at her doorstep to inform her that her uncle (her father's older relative) wanted her to come over to his house immediately. Rachel said she had never gone to visit her uncle before this day and she could not understand the urgency. Her cousin could not explain why she was wanted in Benin either.

Martha said she had to leave everything she was doing to follow her cousin to Benin. When she got to Benin, she was surprised when her uncle informed her that she had to leave for Senegal the next day with a lady and two other young girls. She informed her uncle that she was already learning a trade and cannot combine two things. Her uncle was adamant that she leave for Senegal. When she asked to get her mother's consent, the uncle said that the mother has already given consent for her departure to Senegal.

dreams to work towards saving their household. Serena's situation depicts diverse ways, different from what is evident in the literature that children can find themselves tagged 'victims of trafficking.' In my understanding, Serena was searching for a temporary job to enable her access enough funds for her education; and she had to migrate to a different location to access this job. Her situation becomes trafficking when she was exploited and coerced, manipulated or forced into engaging in practices other than what she expected or negotiated for before leaving home.

Children also link their movement away from home to unemployment or loss of jobs in the household. Obiada tells us how her father's unemployment made her drop out of school:

Yes. I had to stop school because my father hadn't money and was not working. I dropped out of school and began accompanying my mother to the farm. After a long time accompanying my mother to the farm, I told my mother that I was tired that I no longer wanted to remain in this village. I want to leave for somewhere different. I didn't want to go to Port Harcourt and Onitsha because I had gone to those places before. I would have followed my father to Onitsha but he refused saying I have gone to those places before. Now, I want to go to Lagos to see if I engage in a business to pay the fees for my JSIII examination. — Obiada, 17-year-old girl

Obiada has also made several trips away from home to some States in Eastern Nigeria to work as domestic servant and earn money to pay for her education. Her narrative shows that several children do instigate their trafficking and have deliberated with their parents on what to do with money earned from their trafficking before leaving home. Not all children are docile and helpless actors in their trafficking.

1.1.2. Parents acknowledging that they need assistance

From children's narratives we learn that parents may be short of funds and depend on the entire family to adjust to accommodate the temporary shortfall. We also learn that apart from these adjustments, parents could also acknowledge that they need external assistance to survive. This can be discerned from the narrative of 15-year-old Abraham from Taraba State, who is the fourth of six children. When he was in primary 5, his aunt took him to live with her in Abuja. He remained with his aunt until she passed away at the beginning of his second year in secondary school. When he returned to the village his parents were unable to pay his school fees. Then his mother heard of

Chiedo is 10 years old and the last child of the family. His parents died one day after the other in 2010 and Chiedo was left in the care of his oldest sister. Initially he was living with an old woman who had adult children that had wedded and left home. When Chiedo went lived with the woman, he helped around the house, cooking, sweeping and also attending school. One day his older sister arrived to take him away. Chiedo claimed that his older sister maltreated himself and his immediate older sister also living with her. Their older sister would send them to purchase and resell sachets of pure water; and at other times, she would send them to assist in her friend's shop and house. He claims that while in his older sister's friend's house, he was hardly allowed to take a bath and was not attending school regularly. Chiedo said he had made several attempts to run away from home but his sister always found him. Chiedo made another attempt to run away from home and while walking around a market in Aba, he was approached by a woman. The woman started chatting pleasantly with him and sometime into the conversation, asked if he would like to come live and work (the work entailed taking care of her 3-year-old son) with her in Abuja. The next day, Chiedo left for Abuja without telling any member of his family.

Pastor X through some of the deliverance and healing crusades he organised. His mother heard that the pastor assisted children from indigent homes by connecting them to work as domestic helps for families that will pay for their education.

2 — Abraham's memories of home



My discussion with Abraham provides information on the negotiations his mother made leading to his leaving home the second time:

...we got to Pastor X's house. He now prayed for me then the next day---when I was in his house he used to go to missionary school. He came back weekends to see how the children were doing. Then Pastor X asked that if somebody needs someone to assist him at home, will I be ready to go or am I going to learn some handwork? I now said that I need to continue school from where I stopped...Then when this woman in Ibadan came around...December 2012...the woman is a business woman, looking for somebody to assist her so that she too will assist the person by taking him to school and paying the person's school fees to the end, Pastor X connected me to the woman, gave me the woman's phone number and I entered a bus from park [Abuja] here to Ibadan — Abraham, 15-year-old boy

In Abraham's case, his parents were short of funds and needed assistance to send their son to school. Their son also amplified this urgency because he did not want to remain at home doing nothing. Abraham's perception of his aspirations in life and his unwavering agency is evident in immediately taking the business woman's phone number from the pastor and at 13 years old making a trip alone from Abuja to Ibadan in South West Nigeria. Prior to that journey, Abraham had only moved within his native Taraba and Abuja in the North East region.

Another child, Obiada who is 17 years old is the third in a family of 10 children. She came to Lagos from Imo state because her parents did not have enough money to send her to school and since they could not cope, her mother let it be known that she needed assistance. Unlike the other cases I have come across, the woman sent three daughters with the trafficker, an older lady from their community:

My mother said okay, that they can also take my two younger sisters. . . Yes, making three of us. All because of no help now, so they are not attending school. The money for paying their school fees is difficult to get. One is twelve years and the other is ten years. Yes she came to our home. My mother saw her. But my father was not at home. So they called my father on the phone to tell him that the woman had come. Yes our father knew and said that she can take us along. So we went with her. She did not give our mother money. She said that it is when she comes to Lagos, if money is given for our parents, then she will give the money to them. But that if they don't give money, that probably when I am coming home in December that they might buy something and give me for my mother - Obiada, girl, 17

From Obiada's narrative, her trafficking situation might be considered stretching the desire for assistance too far. But in the child's words, her mother sent more than one child away from home because she was having difficulties providing the educational needs of these children and since she wanted the children to succeed, she was willing to send them out to places where 'help' was readily available. What becomes interesting is the unison displayed by the parents in sending their children away for their own good, with little thought for the danger the children could face in destination points. What happens in situations where assistance is not readily available?

1.1.3 The attraction for fast money-making enterprises

Building on the fact that the allure for leaving home is based on either attending school in the new location or working and saving enough money to attend school on returning home, children innocently believe that income earned from domestic work will serve in paying for their education after their apprenticeship. That was the dream 12-year-old Ahanna from Imo state held on to before leaving home:

I finished my primary 6 and my mother said that she doesn't have money to train me in JS1. So she went to one woman (that [had already] sent my big brother [his uncle] away) to ask her to help with her son. My big brother [uncle] is living in Lagos and trading. She asked the woman to help take her son to Lagos and send him to a place where he can stay and go to school — Ahanna, 12-year-old boy

Ahanna and his mother wanted a place where Ahanna could serve as a domestic servant and still attend school. Ahanna was open to alternatives if his preferred option is unattainable. The second option was working as a salesperson in a woman's shop, without attending school and receiving a monthly salary. I wanted to know how he conceives earning and saving the monthly salary:

Ifeyinwa: Will the woman pay you for working in her shop?

Ahanna: Yes she will pay...

Ifeyinwa: Will the money be paid to you or your mother?

Ahanna: When it is time to pay the money, they can call my mummy on the phone and she can come and collect the money and take it back to the village. Or my mummy can open an account for me.

Ahanna had worked out how to address the second option of saving money towards his education with his mother who is a widow with two children. Ahanna is her first child. He had heard so much about Lagos and what happens there and he felt this was the best place to work and contribute to his education.

Ten-year-old Chiedo's narrative is presented in one of the text boxes in this chapter. In Chiedo's case, the attraction was for fast money-making enterprises, but it still needs to be determined who will be making the money and who benefits from the money obtained for businesses engaged in with the adult recruiter.

One aunty saw me and asked me if I will like to live with her. She asked me where my parents are and I finished telling her. She has a small boy, his name is GK, and she asked if I can stay with GK. I said yes. She now carried me to Abuja. And she asked that we will start a business — there are three of us. . .we asked her which type of business. She said that we will be selling Gala [sausage roll] and mineral [soft drinks] — Chiedo, 10-year-old boy

Unlike Ahanna, whose intention before and after coming into Lagos was to work in the house of someone that will pay him and the money saved toward his education, Chiedo had run away from home and appeared vulnerable and easy bait for anyone that appeared kind enough to offer him a comfortable place to live. Though his initial anger when leaving home was because his school attendance was minimal, he was coerced by the strange woman he met in the market to leave his home state to the federal capital with no mention of schooling, just the attraction of starting a business and caring for her son. As in both cases, there was no written contract.

1.1.4. The greed of parents and/or other adults leading to the commodification of children's bodies

In situations of household shortfalls, the trafficking literature documents that children have had to be sent to work to augment family income. But there are still gaps in understanding how the process of children leaving home with, in most cases, a middleman or intermediary to be handed over to live with a strange person to earn an income is even conceived within the home environment. This insight is provided by Bolaji, a 13-year-old girl from Ogun State who was initially living and attending school while in the house of a woman who voluntarily agreed to care for her without exploiting or engaging her in work:

***Paul** is 15years old and comes from Taraba state. His parents are farmers and have 8 children. Paul is the last child. Paul says that all his siblings are educated (could not provide adequate information about the level of educational attainment). In 2009, when Paul was 10 years old, he left home with Pastor X who was attending a programme in Taraba State. His parents were agreeable to Paul leaving with the Pastor because he promised putting their son in school.*

Praise: *We got to Sagamu and we entered another bus that carried us and dropped us at Ikode. He cooked food we ate. . .It's that uncle that carried us that gave us everything. People were plenty. So we will buy food and cook on the stove. That uncle used to bring people to Lagos, so he has bought everything and kept inside the house, pot, everything is there. It is a mud house that he showed us to sleep. The next day, he carried another set of people [children] to go and give them work. He didn't come back again. He carried people for work around 5 o'clock. He will carry people for work until they finish. . .*

Ifeyinwa: *How many days did you sleep in this place?*

Praise: *2 days*

Here I present a different dimension I observed in children's departure from home. Some children's narratives appear to indicate that their parents are convinced to allow them leave home with the hope or expectations that children will end up in places where there are assurances of a better future. Parents are motivated to send their children away when they are aware that the intermediary has taken other children out of their homes to better places. But are parents really aware of what the intermediary has to gain and the methods used to obtain, transport and assign children to their final destination. From Praises' narrative, in the excited words of a child who had never left home, she unconsciously provides useful details about ingenious or carefully orchestrated business networks, the intermediary having a makeshift home stocked with household items, somewhere in Ogun State, where he makes stopovers, with large numbers of children, who he comes over to pick up in response to requests by his numerous clients. These requests may take the form of specifications about age, size and gender which the trafficker attempts to meet.

Nana is a 15 year old girl from Ghana. She is the first of her father's children. Her father has two wives and her mother is the first wife. Her parents are farmers. Since Nana has been away from home since she was 7 years old, her narratives about home will be based on the little she knew about her family before leaving home. Until eight years ago, Nana was attending a private primary school in Ghana and her father would drive over at the end of each school day to pick her home. However, at the end of one sad school day, a strange man came and lured Nana away from school claiming that her father asked him to pick her from school. When Nana asked for permission to inform her class teacher (as she always did) that someone had come to pick her, the strange man hurriedly snatched her hand, dragging her into a car hidden under a tree.

1.1.5. The gamble parents and children take in order to survive

For other families, the decision for children to leave home is a gamble parents and children take in order to survive. The negotiations made before children leave home help us understand whose needs are considered paramount in decisions to leave home — the child's, the parents' or household needs. Gabriella, now 16 years old, left her country, Togo, almost 7 years ago to work as a domestic servant in Nigeria.

4 — Gabriella's memories of home



From Gabriella's narrative, a woman, no relative of theirs, was able to convince her mother and her uncle to release their children to her:

There was one night that a woman came to our village and told my mother that she needs a house girl, that they will be paying money. . . I took my bath that night. After I took my bath--- the woman said that if I go to Nigeria that before I come back, I will bring car, I will bring big, big things like that home. My mother is thinking that this is true. My mother started preparing me. I am 9 years that time going to 10 years. She gave me money. My father's brother's child is a big girl, too. They carried the two of us that night — Gabriella, 16-year-old girl

In one night, just before taking her usual nightly bath, Gabriella's happy childhood was shattered because her mother believed the deceptive predictions of a strange woman. Seven years after leaving home, Gabrielle looks at the manner in which she left home and wonders how her mother could have fallen for the dreamy image painted about her future journey to Nigeria and back; a picture so inviting that her mother and uncle were willing to gamble away two female children. Gabrielle also remembers the urgency with which negotiations were made, in the dead of the night, with the woman also taking them away in the dead of the night.

Do parents simply want to take a chance with sending a child away from home because they see it as the most attractive option for the child? Those thoughts came to mind as 14-year-old Praise told me how her parents allowed her to leave home for Lagos with a man who had previously taken a girl from their village to Lagos:

Ifeyinwa: Does your father know anyone the man has taken to Lagos?

Praise: Yes, he knows one girl that lives in our house. He carried the girl away to look for work

Ifeyinwa: Has the girl returned to the village since she left for Lagos?

Praise: Yes

Ifeyinwa: What does the girl do at the moment?

Praise: She does not do anything

Ifeyinwa: Is the girl back in the village?

Praise: Yes

Ifeyinwa: What did the girl learn while away in Lagos?

Praise: She did not learn anything in Lagos. She went to work as house-girl.

Both Gabrielle and Praise's narratives lead me to question the basis for parents' decisions and negotiations about their future prior to leaving home. Are these decisions made in a hurry or are they built on hopeful dreams that when a child leaves a rural area for an urban setting she is assured of a brighter future; even when parents as in the case of the girl from Praise's village are presented with templates of lack of accomplishment. It may be difficult to understand why Praise was allowed to leave with the same middleman, when another girl from her village had worked as domestic servant in Lagos only to return to the village without skills or anything to keep her busy.

Promise is 17 years old and from Delta State. Her father passed away and her mother remarried. She is the fourth of eight children. She says her mother is a visionary. Promise had to drop out of school after her junior secondary school because she was tired of having breaks in her schooling due to lack of funds. Promise told her mother that rather than the on and off school attendance, she would prefer been enrolled to learn a trade. One day her mother told her that she will be travelling to Burkina Faso to work as domestic servant to an 'oyinbo' [White] person. Promise did not want to leave home with a strange man introduced to her mother by a female church member, but after much persuasion and threats, she obeyed her mother.

1.1.6. Major illness or death of a breadwinner or parents

There is a lot of literature on child-headed households as a result of the death of parents from HIV/AIDS especially in East and South Africa. There is only a general acknowledgement of the death of parents or breadwinners as one of the push factors causing human trafficking. In fact, from the NAPTIP fact sheet, the death of parents should fall under the push factor — disruption of support systems (NAPTIP Fact Sheet; 2010). I wanted to understand how the death of parents or breadwinners affected the welfare of surviving children in a region that considers the training of a child the responsibility of the extended family or community rather than the parents alone. After the death of her parents, Empress, 17, from Imo State had to live with first her uncle until she completed her secondary school education then, her aunt. The people she lived with were her mother's siblings. It was while she was living with her aunt, a medical doctor, that armed robbers came to the house, stole money collected for the day from her aunt's cement business which Empress managed and raped her.

Thieves were knocking at the gate. I thought it was my aunty and started asking who it was. . . They came into the house and forced open the door to my aunty's room. . . they took her jewellery. In my aunty's house, they have a store where they sell cement. . . They told me to open the door to the store. They took bags of cement and asked me to tell them how much I made from selling cement that day. I told them that it was only 25,000 Naira (126USD). I gave them the money. When they were about leaving. . . because I was lying flat, two of them stripped me naked and started raping me. The other two were upstairs searching for things, while the two downstairs were raping me. When they came downstairs and saw the other

*ones, they started scolding them and told them to leave me. They left me and left the house—
Empress, 17 year old girl.*

Based on that rape episode, Empress became pregnant and was one of the underage girls lured to the baby factory on the pretext that she will be provided a safe refuge for herself and her unborn child. Sometime after this incident, Empress was sent to live with her old grandmother in the village. On discovering she was pregnant, the girl did not want to cause the grandmother she loved the emotional trauma of dealing with her early pregnancy. One day, she took the decision to look for a place where she could stay, until she had her baby and possibly complete her education. From Empress's narrative, what made her susceptible to trafficking was the death of her parents and her reliance on her mother's siblings who she claims did not look out for her.

The second child, Chiedo, is 10 years old and he began his journey into trafficking after his parents passed away a day after each other in 2010:

5 — Chiedo's memories of home



It is because our parents are dead. There was one woman that took me before. That woman was mama U, the woman was treating me well, then my aunty came and said that the woman was not training me well. The woman lives in Aba. My aunty said that I have to follow her because in December when I went to visit her, she said that I should come and live with her. I said okay, I did not know that this was how she will treat me. My aunty now said that I have to go and collect my bags from mama U's place. The two of us went there and the woman was really taking good care of me. . . My aunty never bought me any clothes, it is just the clothes

that the woman gave me that I have been wearing. When I got there I told mama U that my aunty said she will be coming to take me. The woman started crying. She was an old woman and she really liked me. I was going to school. I was in primary 3. When I was about leaving, the woman started crying and I was telling my aunty that it is not fair. The neighbours told my aunty⁷ [his older sister] to leave me with the woman but she refused — Chiedo, 10-year-old boy

Though Chiedo is only 10 years old, he was old enough to detect genuine compassion and affection, all from an old woman who had taken good care of him as compensation for the companionship he provided. He was sad to leave her but he felt committed to his sister, since his parents have passed on. He was later to regret leaving the old lady for his sister's where school became an uncertainty and new clothes were only imagined.

The narratives of the two children are important because they help researchers understand the trickle-down effects of the death of parents or breadwinners on the children that are left behind. According to Empress, if her parents had not passed away, she would not have reason to live with her aunt, be exposed to robbers or be raped and need refuge for herself and her unborn child. Similar to Empress, if Chiedo's parents were still alive, he would not have relied on his sister to make decisions concerning his future. But since she was his closest relative, Chiedo had to rely on his sister's judgement about what was in his best interest, although he had to discover otherwise (that decisions were taken more in her best interest than his) when he moved in with her.

Angel was 12 years old when I met her at the Abuja NAPTIP Shelter. She left her home in Taraba State about three years earlier after a Pastor identified her as a cult member during one of the Church retreats in her native home. Angel complained about the humiliating process of beating and maltreatment and the demand by her tormentors to show them where she buried the symbol of her power. Angel said she had to hurriedly think of something to dig up and offer them. When her parents heard of Pastor X providing assistance and deliverance for children like her, they handed Angel over to him. Angel had no choice but to travel along with other children in similar situation with Pastor X to Abuja.

1.2. Educational reasons for leaving home

I have always questioned why the literature does not stress a strong link between education and child trafficking. The narratives of all the children that participated in my study began and ended with leaving home for work to increase the chances of getting a better education either during their time away from home or with money earned while working away from home. I will explore a few of the themes that resonated in relation to education during our discussions.

1.2.1 The quest to acquire or continue education

Two girls, Praise (14 years old, already mentioned) and 14-year-old Daniella from Cross River State were among a large number of children removed from what can be called a child trafficking depot, in Ogun State, operated by Daniella's uncle. Before probing deeper, I sought to know why Daniella's parents allowed her to leave the village:

Ifeyinwa: *What did your uncle say to your father that made it possible for you to come to Lagos? Or were you the person that said you wanted to come to Lagos?*

Daniella: *No, my father said that I should go and find money so that I can go and finish school.*

Ifeyinwa: *And did you want to leave the village?*

⁷ Some children refer to their older siblings as — aunty, uncle, sister or brother, because it is considered more respectful than referring to them by their given names.

Daniella: *I didn't have money to go to school. So, I said I will come to Lagos and find money to finish school.*

Daniella's situation is almost comparable to a parent throwing a challenge to a child that is concerned about her future. Daniella needed to go to school and since her father cannot fund her education and was willing to allow her earn money to fund her education, Daniella made the decision to leave home with the support of an uncle who was already in the business of recruiting children as domestic servants.

Obiada, already mentioned, is one of the girls whose narratives revolve around the most important thing to her, completing her education. Here she talks about her first stay in someone's home as a house girl.

I was in school for a short period in Onitsha. . . I was living with someone that was selling clothes. She had me enrolled in school. I was taking care of her child. She had only one child. So after returning from school, I would take care of the child while she went to the market to sell her goods. She was selling tomatoes. That was all I used to do. I left her house because her husband passed away, so she was unable to continue training me in school. . . As well as pay for housing. So I had to tell her that I was going back to my parents in the village. So since I returned home, I was able to take the common entrance examination in primary six. Then I moved to JSI, J11 and J111 and when there was no money, I had to stop. — Obiada, 17 year old girl

Although the woman was nice to Obiada, as young as she was then, Obiada understood the difficulties the woman was going through after losing her husband and having to pay rent as well as other household expenses. She tried to lighten the woman's load by leaving for her parent's home where she continued her education but had to stop when money again became a problem after her father lost his job.

1.2.2. Making up for wasted years or seeking to learn a trade

I found it thought-provoking that children noticed the passage of time, especially when they are engaged in tasks that did not enhance their goals for the future. It is also interesting that wasted years for children is linked to education. To children, the years you waste "doing nothing" (children see themselves as "doing nothing" when they are mostly sitting around at home, not contributing to their social, economic and educational development — they are simply idling away), should actually be years where you are somewhere that records can be taken about the knowledge you have gained — almost similar to the process of ensuring that your résumé is constantly updated for future employment. In other words, education can be acquired in a school or work setting. I will relate this to the narratives of two young boys from Ebonyi State, Afam and Obi, both teenagers, who got tired of remaining idle in the village since there was no money to continue their education. Instead, they decided to accompany a relative to Cotonu to learn a trade.

Now 17 years old, **Mercy** was 15 years when she was walking along the road to attend after school classes in her native Cross Rivers State when she was stopped by a man in a car. The man asked Mercy if she could come with him to Lagos to work as domestic servant to a woman who will enrol her in school and treat her with affection. Mercy though not looking for a job accepted the offer. Since her parents are dead, Mercy, the first child of her parents was living with her grandmother at the time. The strange man told Mercy not to tell any member of her family about the arrangement. Mercy complied and the next day moved to the man's house in the village and that was how she started her journey away from home.

6 — Obi's memories of home



Afam and Obi were turned back at the Togo border for false age declaration. I retain their age as under 18 years, as did relevant authorities, because the children were unable to confirm their concise date of birth.

Afam: I wanted to learn how to sell Ghana must go bags [reusable sack or shopping bags].

Ifeyinwa: You did not want to go to school?

Afam: Hah, I wanted to go to school but there is no money for that.

Obi: It was my brother [cousin] that I followed to Cotonu. He said that I should follow him to Cotonu. We went together to Cotonu [the previous year] and returned home this December. When we returned home, they now decided to bring Afam to Cotonu. But they arrested us at the border because they said that Afam was under-age.

Ifeyinwa: The immigration officials did not believe that you and Afam were 18 years

Obi: I told them that I am 20 years

Afam: I told them that I am 18 years

Seeing that their parents had inadequate funds to enrol them in the formal school setting which the boys would have preferred, Afam and Obi decided to explore education in another form, that of learning a trade instead of remaining at home waiting for a time when money will be provided to support their education. The only setback was forgetting that at the border, without an international passport and looking child-like, no trained border personnel would accept that they were old enough to take the sole decision to travel across international borders.

1.2.3. Seeking to learn a trade and other future aspirations

A child leaving home to make up for wasted years is different from a child leaving home with the intention of either learning a trade or working to earn money to fulfil future aspirations especially about schooling on returning home.

Sunday is a 17-year-old boy from Togo. He told me the story of how he came to Nigeria about 5 years ago with learning a trade or earning enough money for school in mind, since his father had passed away and his mother is the breadwinner:

7 — Sunday's memories of home



I was telling my mummy that I wanted to come to Lagos. I wanted to come and learn work. . . selling something because I used to hear from people that Lagos is good. So my mum now went to meet one of her friends in this house [drawing]. My mummy now told her that I want to go to Lagos. The person now called her friend in Lagos that she has someone that wants to come to Lagos...She used to bring people from Togo to this place [Lagos]. . . and she now came that day to come and carry me in the night. . . I have not seen her with my mummy before. She called her and she came to take me in the night. We went to her house and I now slept there, like Saturday we left. — Sunday, 17-year-old boy

Sunday's narrative echoes his amazement at the speed with which negotiations about taking children away from home are made. Sunday was only having discussions with his mother about wishing to learn a trade, and then his mother calls a friend asking for assistance and that friend immediately calls someone who is in the business of taking children away from Togo to Nigeria. Sunday was shocked when a woman he has never associated with his mother came to take him away from home the night of the discussions. Apparently, the child was given no time to change his mind and took the decision to leave with the woman because he had heard a lot of good things about

Lagos business-wise. Sunday and his mother may have also considered themselves fortunate to have received such a fast response to their request.

Praise, 14, previously mentioned in this chapter, is also resolved to learn a trade:

I came [to Lagos] to look for money. I want to learn tailoring. I tell them that I want to learn tailoring. My father and my mother said that I will learn. When we got to Igode, they [the police] came to catch us. — Praise, 14-year-old girl

Praise must have given up on acquiring formal education from secondary to university level because of her poor background. She opted to learn something that will make it possible to earn a living whether she remained in Lagos or returned to her village. She appears to have also learned a lesson from the experience of the girl from her village who left for Lagos to work as a house-help only to return without skills to start something meaningful in the village. Praise has also narrowed the trade options to dressmaking, which her parents have sanctioned that she will learn only after she has made adequate money working as a domestic servant. Her parents cannot afford to pay for the training but when she has the money for the training she will have their blessings. However, her dreams are cut short because when they arrived at the child depot at Igode, they were arrested by the police.

Sandra is 12 years old and from Benue State. She is the last of eight children. Her mother is a farmer and her father died while she was still a baby. Though Sandra was unhappy with the quality of education in her village school, she was content with attending school in the village where she lived with her mother. One day, a female cousin came to request that Sandra be allowed to move away from home to live with a medical doctor in Onitsha who will put her in a good private school. Sandra's mother refused and said she will like her daughter to remain in the village with her. When Sandra's mother left home to work on the family farm land, her cousin kidnapped her and took Sandra on the long journey to Ibadan and finally Onitsha.

I observed that children and parents almost always do not look deeply into finding out the intermediary's reputation, who the intermediary had taken away, where they are and how they fared during or after trafficking until it is too late. I found out that it is only when children are removed from diverse trafficking situations by NAPTIP, and investigations carried out, that parents are presented with the shady history or practices of the intermediary they entrusted their children to. In several situations, it is difficult to blame parents, because some parents hand their children over to intermediaries based on referrals given by others they claim to trust.

1.2.4. Socialisation

Children have been moved from their homes to that of close relatives in many parts of West Africa to uphold the age-old practice of socialisation or child fostering. In the traditional practice, older sisters have been known to move into their marital homes with their younger sisters as company. Her younger sister becomes a familiar face that assists her when the babies arrive, while the older sister responds by providing care, support and finances for her (younger sister's) education. This practice has been bastardised in recent times with the deceptive practices of relatives and other guardians. Some children indicate that they benefited from this traditional form of fostering. Odinaka, who is 17 and the 7th of 8 children, narrates how her older sister took her to live with her when she got married:

I am from Imo State. I stopped my schooling at SSS2. What made me to stop my schooling at SS2 was ... that time, someone raped me then ... I got pregnant ... in Port-Harcourt. My elder sister is living in that side. She is the one that trained me because my Dad died when we are

tender. Before my Dad died, she told him that she will want me to go along with her. My Dad said no, that he does not want any of his children to be going out. She said for the sake of one thing that I will be assisting her with certain things at home. Then she brought me to Port-Harcourt. I was very small, 4 years to 5 years. She now took me along. I was staying there with her. — Odinaka, 17-year-old girl

In Odinaka's case, she benefitted from living with her sister considering that her father passed away shortly after she left home to live with her sister. Her sister also provided her with good education by putting her in good private schools. Things went wrong towards the end of her senior secondary school programme when she was raped in Port-Harcourt. Odinaka never informing her older sister until it was too late to identify the perpetrator and she had to leave Port-Harcourt to stay with her mother in the village.

1.3. Religious and Cultural reasons for leaving home

The role of religious and cultural factors in the aggressive physical and emotional treatment children are exposed to leading to their propensity to trafficking or leaving home is an underexplored aspect of child trafficking. Based on children's narratives, I isolated seven areas for this discussion.

1.3.1. Trauma associated with deceptive members of religious groups

I will begin with 12-year-old Angel from Taraba State who is still traumatised by the experience of a Pastor identifying her as a witch:

Angel: ... it is one pastor that came to our church to pray that we are in secret society and that we should confess.

Ifeyinwa: Did he actually point to you and say that you are a member of a secret society?

Angel: Yes.

Chinyere is 14 years old and the third of eight children. She is from Abia State and was living with her aunt in the same town her parents lived. She helped her aunt around the house and also attended school. She was in junior secondary school 3 (JSIII) when she started a relationship with a young man in her town. The young man got her pregnant and devised several ways to have the baby aborted. When the methods were ineffective and Chinyere did not want to explore further means of aborting the baby, the young man refuted all claims of getting Chinyere pregnant. When Chinyere's aunt found out about the pregnancy and informed her parents, Chinyere ran away from her aunt's house.

The trauma of being identified as a witch led to her leaving the village with a different Pastor to seek deliverance and a place far away from the stigma.

Similarly, deceptive information, supposedly from an Alfa⁸, about likely mishap befalling her children, led to 9-year-old Binta's mother packing her off to live with their former neighbour who was moving to another part of Lagos State.

⁸ I will simply say that the word 'Alfa' is commonly used by the Yoruba Muslims of South-Western Nigeria. The associations resonating from the Yoruba usage of 'Alfa' is equally complex. Alfes could be seen as Babalawos, soothsayers or people with the power to predict the future. Alfes are also people who preach about and possess good knowledge of Islam.

8 — Binta's memories of home



Binta is the 3rd of four children and lives with her mother who is a trader and her father who is a driver for a bank. The family appeared autonomous, with the father paying the school fees of all his children who attended affordable private schools.

When they were packing out of their home they told my mummy that somebody wants to poison my small brother and I because we are going to school in Ibafo... Later they said that the Alfa has prayed over it and that they cannot take my brother because he is stubborn and because they cook with gas so he may burn their house. My mummy went to buy clothes and slippers for me and said I should follow them. I followed the woman and her husband. — Binta, 9-year-old girl

In Binta's case, it is debatable if she was trafficked since she went to live with a former neighbour thereby putting her parents and the neighbours in the same social class. But she was trafficked due to the deceptive methods leading to her movement away from home and the fact that the neighbours exploited her as a caregiver for their toddler son. Considering that the neighbours are Muslims, giving Binta's parents a message from the Alfa saying that her last kids are likely to be poisoned in school sent her parents into a panic to which the neighbour responded by opting to keep the children as the Alfa's message directed. Much later, the message content changed to exclude the little boy based on the likelihood that he would set the house on fire. Binta herself went on to add that she is familiar with the neighbours because she used to carry their baby on her back. Taking Binta away was their own way of exploiting the child and retaining her baby-sitting services.

Adaora is 7 years old. She was attending school in her village before coming over to Lagos to help a woman she knew from the village take care of her babies and house. Adaora says that her mother never wanted her to leave the village for Lagos but she convinced her mother to consent to the journey. Adaora assumed that since the woman appeared nice to her family, taking the younger ones on outings while in the village, that she was a good woman and should also be assisted in her time of need.

Some other children were made to leave home by their parents without detailed information on what the child will be doing while away from home. From 17-year-old Promise's narrative, it is apparent that she doubted the level of information her mother was given prior to her departure from home by a church member that she did not consider her mother's close friend:

Ifeyinwa: Did your mother know the man that took you away before this time?

Promise: They don't know each other but the woman is our church member. She said that her brother took people to outside [abroad]. . . I had doubts about the outside that we were going. I said no that she should look for another person to give the man that I am not going. . . My mother asked the woman the type of work and she said that I am going to serve oyingbo⁹ in Senegal. It was the woman that told the man not to tell us that it is prostitute work. So the man was even ready to tell us. If the man had told me, I will not go anywhere. Hmm, it is only the man that is not from our church...

Promise had doubts about this nicely packaged trip to work in Senegal but her mother believed her church member when she said that Promise will be travelling to work for a Whiteman. Ordinarily one will expect that a church member will be the best person to tell you the true nature of a job you will perform outside your country. The church member was not only silent but forced their trafficker to silence. It indicates that the desire for fast money-making enterprises has permeated all aspects of our society.

For about a decade, there have been cases of children accused of witchcraft in some parts of Nigeria. The most affected is Akwa Ibom State, with other cases from Taraba State. When children are accused of witchcraft, they are stigmatised, traumatised, sometimes rendered homeless and made susceptible to trafficking. Sarah, 9, is the last of four children.

9 — Sarah's memories of home



⁹ White people.

Sarah's parents are farmers and she is from Taraba state. Sarah helps me understand the reason behind her leaving home some years ago:

Ifeyinwa: Please tell me why you left home.

Sarah: Because there are too many witches in that place that is why we left.

Ifeyinwa: Who did you leave with?

Sarah: I left with Angel and Pastor X and other children.

Ifeyinwa: So what were you doing in Pastor X's house?

Sarah: We came for deliverance. Me and Angel and other children from Taraba, we come to Pastor X's house in Taraba. . . We stayed there and some of us have gone back to our parents. Pastor X now chose the person that is going to come to Abuja. That is how he came and chose us to come.

Ifeyinwa: He chose you to come to Abuja for what?

Sarah: To come for prayers.

Sarah had to leave home probably because she was accused of witchcraft. She also mentioned in her narrative that she left home accompanied by Pastor X and Angel for deliverance, prayers and probably to escape the stigma associated with people practicing witchcraft. When some other children are accused of witchcraft prior to leaving home, their experiences are even more traumatic. Such was the situation of 12-year-old Angel who was pointed out in her village Church as a member of a secret cult. Angel corroborates Sarah's story of '...too many witches...' by recalling how she was humiliated in the village based on accusations of witchcraft and her parents were forced to move her away from home:

Ifeyinwa: And what did your parents say?

Angel: They did not do something, they said yes.

Ifeyinwa: They accepted that you are in secret society. So what did they do to you?

Angel: My father said they should tie my hand but my mother said I am not in secret society. Then the church members said that I should look for something. But I was just giving them anything I found. It is one thing that is always inside torch like a bulb. They said that one is the eye. I tried to find that thing but I did not see it inside the bush. The Pastor did not follow us. A girl kept telling me to look for that thing. I was looking for that thing and they were beating me too.

Ifeyinwa: The people from your church?

Angel: Yes, they were beating me any way they like. I found something and came and show them but they asked is that it. They said it is a lie that it is not the thing. They now asked me to begin the search. . .

When religion focuses on accusing helpless children of witchcraft, children are exposed to extreme violence by their accusers who in Angel's case are her church members, some of whom knew her as a baby. But when you are accused of witchcraft you are no longer viewed from that realm of innocence but from the realm of evil that can only be turned around with prayers and deliverance, the first stage of which is uprooting your source of power, something Angel did not possess and could not produce to the violent crowd. To prevent further abuse, Angel had to leave her village.

1.3.2. Polygamy or marital fallout

The trafficking literature mentions polygamy as one of the factors contributing to the trafficking of children but the nature of this contribution remains unclear. It is difficult to understand how polygamy enhances children's susceptibility to trafficking. Could it be that in polygamous homes, the family size overwhelms the father's responsibility towards children borne by different wives or that polygamous households are more likely to face more economic crisis than monogamous households? I will look to the narratives of some children for insight.

Emilia is the ninth of 11 children. Her parents, who are separated, are farmers. Her father has remarried and has other children from the second wife. Emilia left home to live with an aunt when she was 4 years old and it was only when she was afflicted with a strange illness right before her JSIII examination that her aunt returned her home to her parents:

Emilia: *My parents, both of them are farmers but they are a bit separated.*

Ifeyinwa: *How are they separated?*

Emilia: *They do not stay in the same house. My mum lives in the other end of the village while my dad stays at the other end*

Ifeyinwa: *Who are the children with? Your mum or dad?*

Emilia: *My mum.*

Ifeyinwa: *Does she pay for everything the children need or does your dad contribute?*

Emilia: *He is not contributing. He claims that my mum is claiming that she is the one that owns the children. That was all what I heard because throughout the quarrel I was not around.*

The second child, Princess, is 13 years old, her parents are separated and have both remarried:

My father married three wives. My mother is the second wife. My mother first gave birth to a boy and me, we are twins. But my twin is dead. Then there is a girl that I am older than. Before my mother--I don't know what happened to my mother and my father that they divorced when I was still a baby. So the way the stepmother is doing me, she is maltreating me, she is not treating me good. . . My father did not allow my mother to come to greet us. . . Before I was staying with my father's sister. . . but my stepmother said I should come and stay with them. . . — Princess, 13-year-old girl

As evident in the narratives of these children, it is crucial to explore the diverse practice of polygamy in Nigeria and West Africa. It appears problematic to attribute polygamy as a major cause of child trafficking. Even the children's narratives offer contexts for the role of polygamy in their lives. The second child attests that her father has many wives, but the father is never married to more than one wife at a time. He divorces and remarries. When the literature identifies children as coming from polygamous homes, there is a vivid picture of several mouths to feed and high school dropout rates. But in Princess's case, the father has about 6 children from 3 women, which is a lot less than Emilia's father who has 14 children from two women, 11 from Emilia's mother and 3 from his current wife. Besides, in some polygamous homes, women are responsible for the upkeep of their children. It is likely that sometimes what is viewed as polygamy could be frequent marital breakups.

1.3.3. Threat of early marriage

What options do trafficked children have for financing their education when they come from indigent homes? We had encountered 15-year-old Emilia talking about coping when parents are separated and in her case, her father remarried. Now she weighs which parent she should remain with, based on their support for her future:

If I am asked the person I can live with after their separation I will not choose my mother and that is the truth. I am not comfortable with her. I will stay with my dad because he is the only one that has been supporting me in my education. My mother thinks I should go and marry, that education is a waste . . .but my dad although he does not have the money but the way he is doing some times it does not help me too . . .sometimes he pushes me away. . . — Emilia, 15-year-old girl

Emilia talks about receiving minimal support from her mother and more from her father who occasionally pushes her away, too. Her discomfort with her mother revolves around her perception that a woman is wasting her time acquiring education. Her mother may have been a child bride herself and seeing that no one is willing to support her child's education, may want Emilia's energy directed elsewhere. Emilia, on the other hand, is unwilling to fall into that vicious circle of lack of or limited education and early marriage.

1.3.4. A culture of respect or culture of obedience

Obedience and respect of parents is an important part of West African culture. Parents are held in high esteem and their word is often held as law in different households. What has this culture of respect or obedience got to do with the movement of children into trafficking?

Aduke is a 14-year-old girl from Togo. Her parents have remarried with her father working as an *Okada rider* or motorcycle transporter in Togo and her mother selling soft drinks in Nigeria:

Aduke: *When I was going to school in Togo, my mummy moved to Oyo. She said I should come to Nigeria and learn a trade. When I now got to her place, she now told me to go and work as house-help.*

Ifeyinwa: *Did your mummy know the person in whose house you will be working as house-help?*

Aduke: *I don't know, she just told me to go and work as house-help. . . My mummy's sister knew the person*

Aduke was attending school in Togo when her mother cut that short, inviting her over to Nigeria to learn a trade. However, when she got to Nigeria, she was given different instructions and made to work as a house girl for a woman her mother does not even know. Though her mother's request went contrary to what Aduke and her father were informed of before she left Togo, it never occurred to her to refuse. She complied and went to work as a house-help.

Also facing a similar situation was 8-year-old Chidi from Anambra State. Her mother is a dressmaker while her father is a carpenter. She came to Onitsha based on promises that a medical doctor will assist her educationally:

Chidi: *The person that brought me is my mother's sibling from the womb [meaning my mother's blood sibling]. She took me and brought me to doctor's house. . . At first I refused. I told her that I did not want to go but she asked me to go, so I agreed.*

Ifeyinwa: *Why did you refuse to go at first?*

***Chidi:** Because there was my mum's brother that I was supposed to be going to live with. . .*

***Ifeyinwa:** So what did your mum tell you to make you change your mind?*

***Chidi:** She told me that when I get there I will be going to school.*

***Ifeyinwa:** Does this mean that when you get to your uncle's house you will not go to school?*

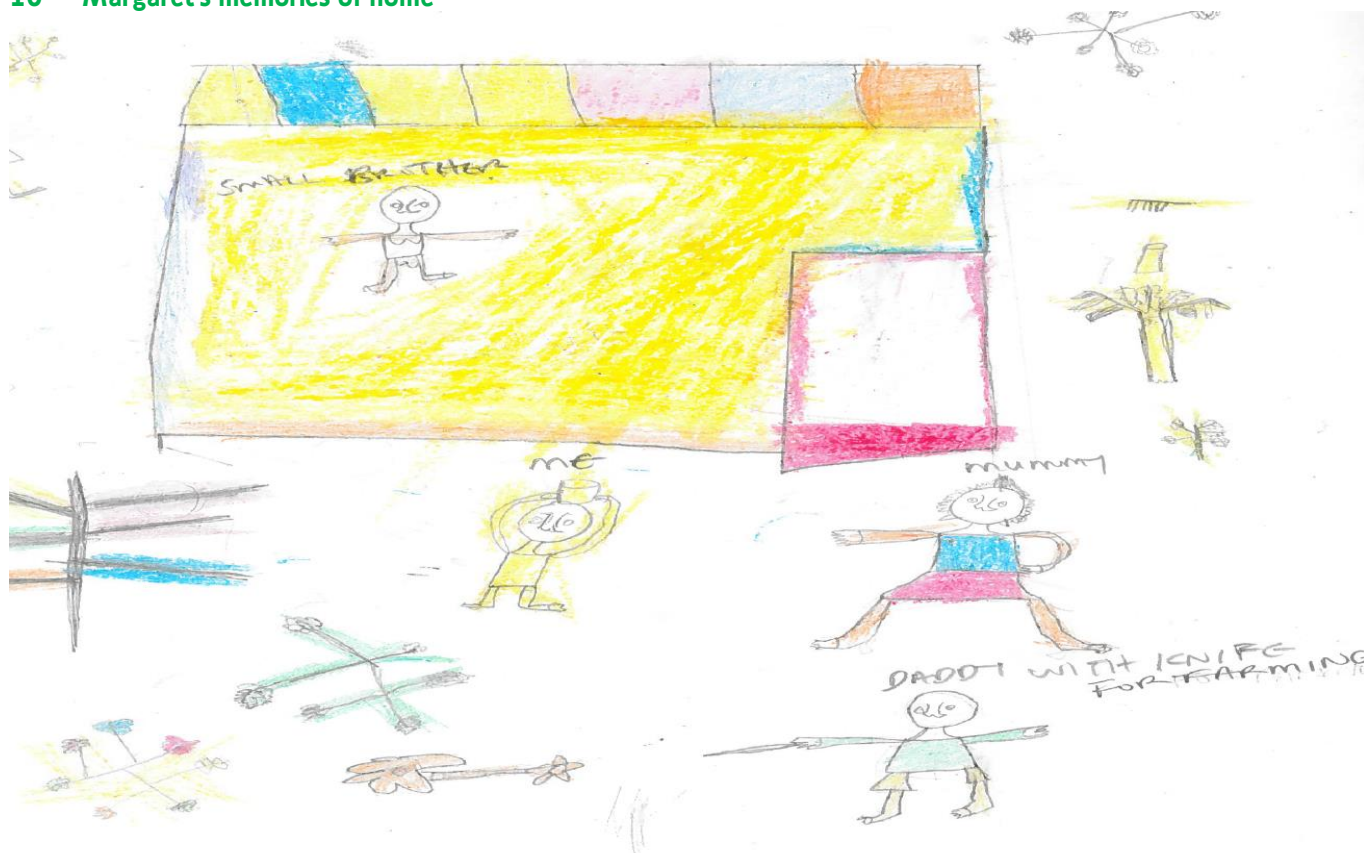
***Chidi:** No, I will go to school.*

Decisions had been taken and plans made to have Chidi live with an uncle who she appears comfortable with, but in one day, plans changed and she was told to go and live with a medical doctor. Why was going to live with a medical doctor a preferred option to living with her uncle? Were her mother and aunty working within perceptions of inferiority that living with a medical doctor has more clout and promises for the future than living with her uncle who may not be a professional. In Chidi's case, there was resistance because she must have felt some form of commitment to her uncle who is a more familiar face than the medical doctor, but her mother and aunty talked her into acceptance.

1.3.5. Multiple owners of the child and the child's destiny

In Nigeria as in other West African countries, the child is usually the responsibility of the entire village or community. Everyone is involved in the growth and wellbeing of the child. It also implies that decisions about when, how and with whom a child leaves home is the responsibility of these multiple owners. In asking children about who brought them over to the city to work, this multiple ownership becomes apparent. Yvonne, a 12-year-old from Benue State, says her uncle brought her to work. Margaret, 14 years old and also from Benue, says her oldest sister made the decision about bringing her to work:

10 — Margaret's memories of home



The same applies to 14-year-old Bimbo from Ogun State. Bimbo's parents are farmers, she is the last of 8 children and currently in JSIII. Bimbo says the first time she left home at 9, the decision was made by her oldest sister:

In 2009, my mummy's first born called my brother on phone that---she is living in Lagos that time. She said that she is coming home to pick me that I will be living with her. My daddy said no, that he cannot release me because he does not trust her. He knows what she can do. She may say that I will live with her then she will do another thing. Until she finally said the truth... [that Bimbo will not be living with her but in a madam's house] then my daddy now said okay.
— Bimbo, 14-year-old girl

The trafficking of children in the West African region is more complex than imagined. These local networks involving siblings, parents, neighbours and other relatives may be difficult to combat.

1.3.6. Stigmatisation

Happiness is 17 and the second child in her family. Her parents are farmers and she said she never went to school. She was working at a beer parlour when someone got her pregnant and denied responsibility for the pregnancy:

Happiness: So my family told me that I have to meet the person that got me pregnant because if I have the baby and keep it here [family house] the baby will answer my mother or father's name. So they called my brother on the phone that he should come and see what is happening. My brother returned to the village and scolded me. The next day, I carried my bag and ran away from home.

Ifeyinwa: If I may ask, did your older brother ever ask you to leave home?

Happiness: No.

Ifeyinwa: Did your father and mother also ask you to leave home?

Happiness: No

Ifeyinwa: Why did you leave home?

Happiness: I left home because the way they were all shouting and scolding me put so much fear in me.

The clarification I sought from the child about whether any family member forced her to leave home was to understand the communication dynamics present in her household (from her point of view) that warranted her departure from home.

Adaeze is also 17 and an orphan. She was living with her aunty (mother's cousin) and about to start her senior secondary school when she got pregnant.

11 — Adaeze's memories of home



Adaeze's boyfriend, also in secondary school did not disown the pregnancy but her aunt asked her to go and live with her boyfriend's parents until the baby's birth:

Adaeze: I am going to school. But I got pregnant. I was about entering SS1. I just finished my Junior WAEC. The person is in our village there, where I am living with my aunty. So my aunty sent me to their parents, to the boy's parents. So the woman now started maltreating me.

Ifeyinwa: Why did she send you to the boy's parents? Why didn't she take care of you?

Adaeze: I don't know. It's her friends that are deceiving her.

Among the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria, childbirth out of marriage exposes a young girl and her family to societal stigma. The stigmatisation may have been more potent a decade ago but the derogatory lens with which it was looked at has waned. But then, Happiness lives in the village and is uneducated, so older traditions of stigma and

taboo may still resonate in her household. Adaeze, on the other hand, could rationalise her aunt taking the advice of her friends over sending her away from her home to another woman's house because they deceived her with bad advice especially as she is not her biological child.

1.4. Social and Emotional reasons for leaving home

Apart from economic, cultural and educational factors, it is crucial to uncover other social and emotional factors operating in children's lives that make them more vulnerable to trafficking. It could be that some identifiable attributes possessed by children or parents render them fertile grounds for requests about moving away from home.

1.4.1. Trust

When I met Obiada, 17 from Imo State, at the NAPTIP Lagos Shelter, she was coming out of her last journey into trafficking. She explains how 'trust' was the foundation on which she was taken to Lagos by a woman introduced to her mother by her close friend:

Why I said I would go is because that boy, the mother is my mother's friend. Both of them are friends and eat from the same plate- she will not see something bad and let that befall my family. . . Since the woman found the person [trafficker], she won't see something bad and allow it happen to my family. My mother said okay. — Obiada, girl, 17

There is the African belief that anyone you trust enough to eat with from the same plate is considered almost a blood sibling and cannot hurt you. The young girl used the same expression in referring to the trust her mother has in the inability of the trafficker to harm her children because the trafficker was introduced by a close friend.

From her narrative, Martha, 15, from Edo State, is the second of seven children. Martha dropped out of school after her JSIII because of the menace of cultism¹⁰ in her school and decided to learn dress-making. Martha was in her parent's house when her father's older brother sent his son to come and bring her to his house in Benin. She needed an escort as she had never visited her uncle in Benin:

He called my mother- the time we are about going away. He told my mother that we are in Benin here. He did not tell my mother that I am going outside [outside the state and country]. — Martha, 15-year-old girl

On getting to her uncle's house, where she met the previously mentioned Success and another girl, the man told Martha that she would be going to work with Oyinbo¹¹ as a hair dresser. Martha said that her uncle called her mother on the phone to tell her about sending her daughter to start a new job. Though Martha never told her uncle she was looking for a job, her mother saw no reason to refuse her daughter remaining with her uncle or rejecting the job her uncle found for her. Martha's mother placed a lot of trust on her husband's older brother.

¹⁰ Cultism has been a major cause of youth unrest in Nigerian universities with several students becoming members of female- or male-dominated cult groups. The cult groups are associated with several on- and off-campus killings, rape, molestation, fatal oath taking and drug-related activities. Recently secret cult activities and initiations have shifted to secondary schools in Nigeria.

¹¹ White woman or man

1.4.2. The innocence of children and parents

How can children and parents discern the sincere and insincere when requests are made to move away from home? Some children's narratives already indicated that they could not understand why their parents fell for promises by traffickers that appeared like unrealistic dreams. Will spending time investigating would-be employers or families yield the character information desired, especially when express requests are made for children to move away from home? During the focus group discussion, 10-year-old Chiedo had this to say:

I blame the people that come to carry me because they will come like this and say they want to carry person and they will allow them to carry when they know they do not have money to put the person in school and they will go and lie to the parents that they have money to put the children in school. Later they will not put them in school — Chiedo, 10-year-old boy

To Chiedo, parents are deceived into accepting that people mean well for their children when they come with dubious promises of education for their children. The innocence of children and their parents is evident in the drama presented by children from the Lagos shelter:

Basil: *I was walking down the road and I saw your daughter crying and she said that the bread you sent her to buy, that the money got lost, so I brought her*

Mother: *[Talking to her daughter]. Go inside the room.*

Basil: *Madam, your daughter is very good. I will send her to America. I have a place in America. I will send her there and everything you want I will give it to you.*

Mother: *Is this true?*

Basil: *Yes, true. I promise. I will do anything you want.*

Mother: *Eh eh?*

Basil: *Yes.*

Mother: *Very good.*

Basil: *So prepare her, tomorrow I will come and take her. So I will be going. Bye*

In both Chiedo's narratives and the children's drama, it is apparent that information about the person or people making the requests to take the child away from home is lacking and all the parents cling to are promises that the child will be cared for either within or outside the country and enrolled in school.

1.4.3. Getting into complicated situations

I observed that the emotional state of children experiencing some form of trauma or another made them breeding ground for deceptive and attractive promises of assistance from virtual strangers. This was the case for Chinyere, 14, and Odinaka, 17 who were dealing with the complications of failed relationships. Chinyere was living with an aunt, helping around the house and in the final year of junior secondary school when she got involved with a young man that convinced her that their relationship counted for something and that he would marry her. Chinyere got pregnant and he gave her some concoction to drink with the intention of flushing out the pregnancy. When everything failed and her father got to know of the pregnancy, Chinyere, like Adaeze, was brought to live with the man and his parents:

My father said that now I will have to go to the boy's house. So he took me and we went to the boy's house. When we got there, the boy was not around. We only saw his siblings. . . We sat there and waited until his father and mother returned. My daddy asked for their son and they said he was not home, that he went to work. His father asked my father if something

happened. My daddy said yes, that there is a problem. The boy's father said, okay, that he will be back. He went out through the back, they called and called him but he never returned. So they now called his wife and said that this is the result of her son's adventures that they have brought me to stay with them. She now said that she does not want me, that if I know who got me pregnant that I should go and meet the person. . . I sat there thinking what to do. . . My daddy left me there and went away. . . When the boy arrived, he asked me what I was doing in his house. I told him that my father brought me here to live with him since he was the person that got me pregnant, that I will stay here until I have the baby. He was angry that I told people about him been responsible for the pregnancy. When I told him that he has to marry me, he said he was not yet ready to get married... He went into the house and was sitting by the window staring at me. . . He went to get a knife and chased me around. . . I ran until I found myself in a woman's compound where I stayed until daybreak— Chinyere, 14-year-old girl

From her narrative, the man's parents did not want anything to do with her or the pregnancy; and the young man also chased her away with a knife. Feeling insecure and alone, Chinyere is in that emotional state that makes her willing prey to traffickers.

In an earlier narrative, Odinaka mentioned how she went to live with her older sister in Port-Harcourt but returned home to her mother after she was raped and gave birth to a boy. In this narrative, Odinaka, talks about meeting a young man and having a relationship with him that led to her departure from home:

Odinaka: *On Sunday, I went to my older brother's place. On my way back I met this boy that. . . told the taxi man that he is dropping off the same place as me. That was how I knew him; I didn't even know him a week. Because I have closer legs, that is what happens to me. I discovered that I have closer legs, someone can cross me once and I take in.*

Ifeyinwa: *Please explain this idea of closer legs to me.*

Odinaka: *Closer legs means that once someone crosses you, you can get pregnant.*

Ifeyinwa: *You mean if someone sleeps with you once you get pregnant?*

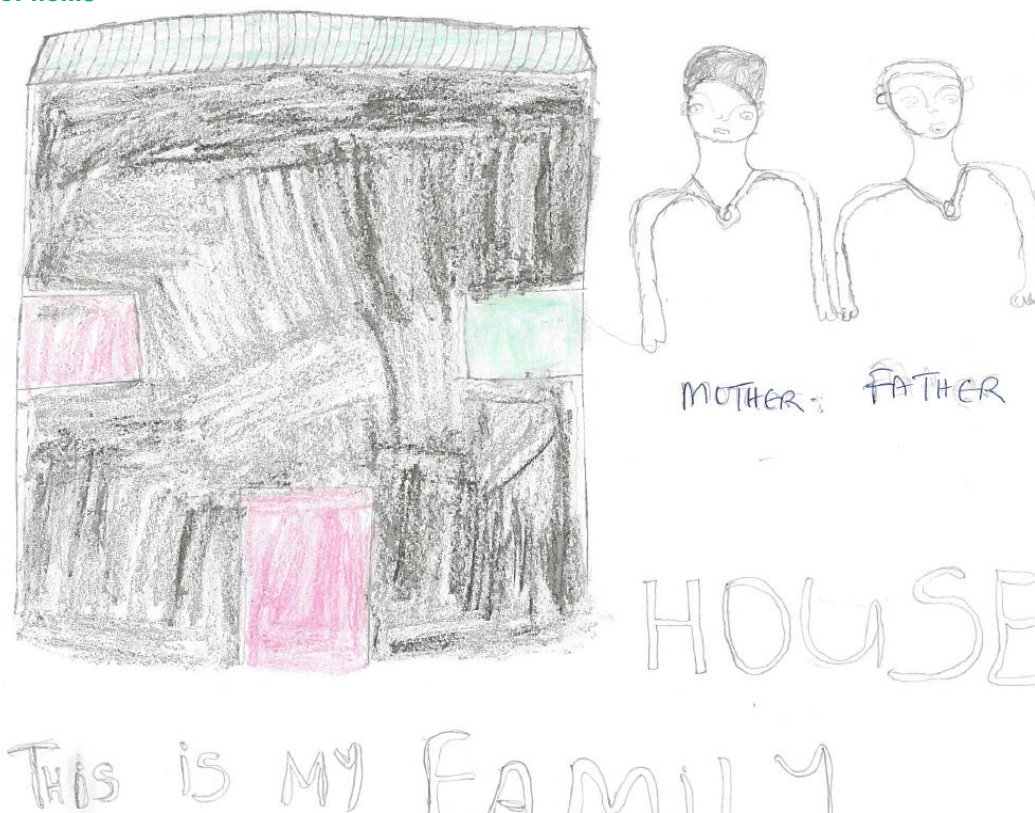
Odinaka: *Yes. That was what happened the first time. I told him that I don't want something like that, that I want to work for God. I told him that someone had hurt me before and I don't want something like that to happen again. He said no, that everybody is not the same... Do you see it? He asked, wouldn't I like him to come to my family and do the introduction [Preliminary marriage rites in Igbo land].*

Odinaka found herself in a difficult situation with a child to care for and having to deal with a charmer. She has also come to understand that she only has to sleep with someone once to get pregnant but will she still be able to count on the promises of marriage and care made by her charming boyfriend? Apart from the narratives of these girls all relating to teenage pregnancy, there are several narratives of children finding themselves in complicated situations making them vulnerable to trafficking that should be highlighted to widen the net for understanding the reasons children leave home.

1.4.4. Not wishing to depend completely on parents (linked to peer pressure)

Children are also likely to leave home after making initial enquiries and negotiations for a saving mission for themselves or the family. Children may decide that their parents are not financially placed at the moment to meet their needs and try to seek paths to finance their education and relieve their parents of that initial stress. In the case of Serena, 17, her parents were only experiencing temporary financial setbacks.

12 — Serena's memories of home



Serena's parents never asked her to assist with the economic setback in the household, neither did she tell them she was looking for a job:

It was when I was in Benin after my daddy was not having the money to enrol me in school. . . during that period there was no money, so I was looking for a job . . . to earn my own money so that I can go back to school. One of my friends . . . from primary school told me that she has one aunty that gives people jobs in Lagos. Then I was like ready to see her aunty so that she can look for a job for me. . . I never wanted to come to Lagos. But I was like maybe it might be something good and I can see somebody that can help me from there. — Serena, 17-year-old girl

Though Serena needed a job and assistance with returning to school, she never stretched her tentacles as far as travelling to distant Lagos for a job. She assumed she would find a job closer to home, in Benin. She also did not want to crush all opportunities open to her and was willing to explore the option of travelling to Lagos, in case something worthwhile came up.

Again, I return to Obiada, 17, from Imo State. The child explains why she cannot depend on her parents for assistance. Her father must have had a better job before he was recruited for the current one, which does not pay well enough to cater for the educational needs of 10 children:

Obiada: My father is in Onitsha. What I know he does. . . hmmm. . . what I know our people call it is Bakassi. I don't know what it is called in Lagos State.

Ifeyinwa: I don't know how to explain it either, probably vigilante or security job. But isn't he paid for engaging in this Bakassi job?

Obiada: Yes he is paid.

Ifeyinwa: So why can't he pay the children's school fees?

Obiada: You know, my mother had many children now!

Ifeyinwa: How many children are in the family?

Obiada: We were ten children, but one died remaining nine children.

Ifeyinwa: What is your position among the children?

Obiada: I am the third child.

Ifeyinwa: Why did you want to come over to Lagos?

Obiada: I wanted to come to Lagos because I was looking for someone to give me a helping hand. Like offering me work- someone asking me to help in selling her goods for which I will be paid at the end of the month. While I am working for the person and receiving money, after I have been paid for some time, I will use the money to register for and take my JSIII examination, which is all I have always wanted to do.

Obiada already knows the type of job she is looking for. She wants to be a sales girl, receiving her salary at the end of the month, which based on agreement with her parents she invests in her education.

1.4.5. Misplaced affection

Children also tell stories of how they left home not because their parents did not have funds to take care of their educational and social needs but because they felt a genuine affection for someone; an affection that backfired. Adaora is 7 years old and lived happily with her parents and siblings until a woman they knew from the village, who always returned home for Christmas with treats for Adaora and her siblings, asked that Adaora move to Lagos to assist with her babies:

Ifeyinwa: Why did you leave the village?

Adaora: I did not want to come to this Lagos. I did not want to leave my family. . .that woman said I should come and help her to carry her baby. So I came.

Ifeyinwa: What is she to you? Is she your mummy's sister or someone related to you?

Adaora: She is not my mummy's sister. . .She is not our relative.

Ifeyinwa: Then why did your parents hand you over to her?

Adaora: You know she lives in our village and I got to know her very well. . . She used to come and buy things for us. When she comes to the village, on Sundays, she would take us to parties. So when she asked that I come to her house to help carry her baby, my Mummy was doing one somehow, she did not want me to go. But I said to my mummy that it is not good, that it will be good for me to help her carry her baby.

Ifeyinwa: You liked the woman?

Adaora: I did not really like her in that way. . .I thought she was a good woman. I did not know she had such behaviour. . .Ah I suffered in that place o! I suffered!

Adaora mentions that her mother was reluctant to grant the woman's request, but she pressured her mother into acceptance due to her perception of the woman as good-natured. The child also felt the woman had a fervent need and they should do their best to assist her. Was that a wrong decision to take? Adaora's mother must have been humbled into acceptance by having to learn about generosity towards her neighbours from her 7-year-old child.

1.4.6. Betrayal

Similar to 7-year-old Adaora who left home to assist a woman she felt an initial affection for, some children described leaving home because the affection they felt for another was never reciprocated. There are also other

instances of betrayal from the children's narratives but I will refer to Happiness, 17 and the relationship she developed while working in a restaurant:

It was in Port-Harcourt, where I was working in the restaurant. I was someone's apprentice. So there was one boy I was going out with and he got me pregnant. I told the boy that I was pregnant and he said I should meet the person that got me pregnant because he did not get me pregnant. I told him that he was the one that got me pregnant. He said no he was not the one.
— Happiness, 17, girl

Happiness, felt betrayed into putting everything — emotions and time — into a relationship that turned out to be a lie. The relationship ended on a sour note with arguments, accusations and counter-arguments concerning who got her pregnant.

2. What children remember most when away from home (positive and negative)

To enable relevant professionals to understand how to deal with trafficked children, we also have to explore the emotional or traumatic aspects associated with moving away or being away from family for a long time. What is childhood without memories? The fond memories of seeing your siblings grow up, welcoming new births or remembering special days in the lives of loved ones. I have always deliberated what associations with their homes while in another person's home meant to trafficked children.

2.1. A favourite sibling

I found children's drawings a gateway to their memories during trafficking. When certain things or people are featured repeatedly in their drawings, discussions with them provide useful information on the repetition. Mary, 14, from Togo, dwelt on her younger brother:

13- Mary's memories of home



Ifeyinwa: All your drawings have only one of your brothers. Is he your favourite?

Mary: Yes

Ifeyinwa: Where is he now?

Mary: He is with my mother in the village

Mary mentions that she misses her younger brother who happens to be her favourite sibling and thoughts of returning home to see and play with that cherished younger brother kept her strong while away from home.

2.2. Faint images of loved ones

An unexplored aspect of trafficking is the aspect of stolen childhoods. A crucial aspect of childhood is the ability to bond with family members during important stages of one's growth and development. When children like Sarah, who is only 9 years old but left home about three years ago, is asked about her family, she clings to past associations to them and is innocent and honest enough to confess that she cannot remember important things about her family. Her responses are based on faint memories of what happened before she left home.

Ifeyinwa: Are your parents in Taraba at the moment?

Sarah: Yes

Ifeyinwa: What are they doing in Taraba?

Sarah: I don't know. When I was at home they were farming. They used to go to farm.

Ifeyinwa: Did your Mum and Dad go to school?

Silence [I had to ask a different question]

Ifeyinwa: When did you leave home?

Sarah: I can't remember

Ifeyinwa: How many children do your parents have?

Sarah: 4, one boy and three girls

Ifeyinwa: What is your position?

Sarah: Last

Ifeyinwa: Do your brother and sisters go to school?

Sarah: I don't know

Ifeyinwa: Oh you have not seen them for a while---you have not gone home for a while. If you see your Mum and Dad on the streets will you know them?

Sarah: I will remember their faces

Regardless of the unreliable or dated nature of this memory, she clings to them and the faint images of her loved ones hoping to be reunited with them in future.

Another child, Goodness, 15 years old and from Benue State, left home seven years ago and deals with faint memories of how much home, parents and siblings must have changed since then:

14 - Goodness's memories of home



Goodness: I left my village now, since I was small, like 8, I left the village so I have not seen my parents for long---Like I have not seen the other children, I have not seen them---

Ifeyinwa: So if you pass them on the street you will not know who they are?

Goodness: Like the last born, like the second to the last born, like that one I will not know that one again. Because that one was very small, they only gave birth to him when I left. I haven't gone home for Christmas since. . .

Goodness emphasises the importance of Christmas as a time of return to home and letting me know, how many Christmases she has spent away from home. Even more distressing is how little about everyone she knows, like the

second to the last sibling, who was born about the time she was leaving home; and she never had a glimpse of the last child who was born while she was away from home.

2.3. The manner of leaving home

What remains familiar to some children is the manner in which they left home and the most significant thing carried forward from that day:

15 - Zainab's memories of home



Zainab, from Togo, was about 8 years old when she left home. She remembered that her younger sister wanted to follow her as she left but was too young to chase after the car. She remembered that tired, sad and frustrated, the little girl went back home. Zainab carried that memory of her little sister watching her leave home, the entire time she worked as a domestic servant in Nigeria. With that memory in mind, she ran away from her last frustrating job as a domestic servant, hoping to find her way home.

2.4. The longing to be with their parents (for younger ones, the care received by parents)

Children also expressed a longing to be with parents that made remaining in another person's home unbearable. The longing to be with parents is evident in memories of happy times shared together and the care only their own parents can express and give to them. Ozioma, 13 years old, from Imo State, who was one of seven girls that lived with the medical doctor in Onitsha, had this to say:

What happened was that the aunty said that she does not have a female child. . . So. . . my mother's sister lives in Lagos, so both of them know each other and she told her that she wants someone that can live with her and her son. At that time, he was 12 months old. I was 10 years old then. So we went together to Lagos. In that 2010, I told the woman that I wanted to come home in December. . . They did not want to bring me home. They said that after I have stayed for 2 years that if I wanted to travel to the village that I will accompany them to their own village. . . I wanted to see my mother. So I started giving trouble and threatened that I would run away. . . So they now brought me home to my mother. I do not like staying away for too long when I travel to a far place. I do not like living far away from my family— Ozioma, 13-year-old girl

The child's narrative said it all. She told me that although the woman she lived with in Lagos put her in school and treated her well, she still needed to be close to home, her mother and family. The child has no problems moving away from home to live with others, but it should not be for too long, without holidays in between or far away from home.

2.5. Hunger yet happiness

There are multiple reasons why one child could have been trafficked by their parents. Children will provide more insight. Earlier, 12-year-old Yvonne had informed me that she came to Lagos to work. But with further discussions, I was wondering why, as the last child, she was the one sent away from home. Yvonne added that her parents felt she was giving too much trouble; the trouble her parents associated with Yvonne was never keeping silent when she wanted something, especially food. Yvonne's longing for food and adventure while at home is evident in her drawing, showing when she fell down from a mango tree:

16 — Yvonne's memories of home



Yvonne: The time they took me away from the house, they told my mummy and daddy that I was coming to work. So they told him to carry me with him. They said my wahala¹² is too much. My mummy said my wahala is too much that he should carry me and go. That was how I came and work.

Ifeyinwa: Why did your mummy say your wahala is too much?

Yvonne: Mummy, if my stomach is not full [I am still hungry] I will shout to my mummy. That was why my mummy said they should carry me away.

Ifeyinwa: What did your father say?

Yvonne: My father also said my wahala is too much that they should carry me away.

Now away from home, Yvonne remembers that badgering of her parents for more food with affection because at least there was always food, even when it was inadequate. The fact that Yvonne was sent away from home for giving too much trouble also hinges on the old African practice of socialisation. In most cases, the child sent away from home was the troublesome child because it is believed that living with strangers will bring about that needed re-education that will make the child a better person in future.

¹² Trouble.

2.6. Care and love compared to pain and cruelty

For the younger children especially, there was a longing to be with their parents. This was apparent when their narratives were often intercepted with stories of moments shared with their mother before leaving home. I present the conversation I had with 7-year-old Nike and Ola:

17 — Nike's memories of home



Ifeyinwa: What does your mummy do?

Nike: She will wash plates, sweep and give us baths.

Ifeyinwa: She does that for you?

Nike: Yes

Ifeyinwa: So she takes care of all of you. That is real serious and strenuous work.

Nike: My mummy gives me a bath.

[They started giggling]

Ola: My own mummy gives me a bath.

Trafficked children have their own world that they fall back on because it is a world that shows them that they are no different from other children. Especially as in the case of Nike and Ola, they are no different from children whose houses they have gone to work as domestic help. The main things they remember about home is their mother selflessly doing the domestic work they were sent away to do and still having the time to give them baths.

When the lives of children are taken out of context and woven in to fit a single story of trafficked children, then the single story is likely to dwell on children coming from homes without love and care. It is important to untangle the stitches to retell the story as it is from the African context and in the children's words.

3. Discussions from remembering home

3.1. Theoretical basis for understanding children's departure for trafficking

I began this chapter on the foundation that the emphasis on poverty as the basis of children's entry into trafficking prevents attention to other important variables playing out in children's lives. Manzo (2005) also advocates for a wider reach for explaining the link between poverty and child trafficking. She asks that it be addressed within the wider context of uneven development and inequality that reinforces the exploitation of the poor by the rich. Results from my study differ slightly with pointers from children's narratives showing that their exploitation is twofold - by the poor and the wealthy.

I also began the thesis emphasising the need for the silent, the subaltern — in this case trafficked children — to speak within the critical pages of academic research. Borrowing from Spivak's (1988) epic paper, I asked if the subaltern can speak within the confines of academic research. The literature and my work attest that the subaltern can speak if methodological frameworks are built with the objective of understanding children's limitations, reinforcing their strengths, ensuring their comfort and perceiving that listening to their thoughts is a step towards presenting their perspectives to a world that was previously shielded from the eloquence, agency and resilience associated with their voice. Moreover, if children are considered able to perform roles beyond their years in the course of trafficking, then they should be able to speak and provide more information about their movement into and involvement in trafficking.

3.1.1. Understanding departures from home for children from 'other' worlds

With the rise in cases of child trafficking in spite of interventions to address the problem, there has been growing interest in getting the input of children in research that relates to their wellbeing and survival. The increased need to involve children in research that is about their lives, experiences and motivations for activities such as trafficking is largely influenced by the recognition in new studies of childhood and child rights (Spyrou, 2011; Veeran, 2004) that children have rights and have reasons for explaining their experiences of the world the way they do (James & Prout, 1997). This understanding questions the views about childhood across cultures and acknowledges that, similar to adults, children have different explanations of their experiences and are active participants in shaping their world (Christensen & James, 2000; James & Prout, 1997). Godziak (2008) supports the idea of involving children in research by emphasising that limited knowledge of the experiences of trafficked children according to trafficked children themselves: "... impedes identification of trafficked children, obstructs provision of culturally appropriate and effective services, and limits prevention of repeat victimization" (p. 909).

The voices of children that participated in my study resonate and provide useful information for understanding the multiple causes of their departure from home and, even when their departure is attributed to economic reasons,

children's narratives provide a more concise understanding of the nature of economic shortfalls in their households spurring such departure.

We see the agency of children also in their readiness to withstand exploitation in order to meet their objectives for leaving home. Praise, 14, from Cross Rivers State, is a case in point. Praise provided an elaborate description of the process devised by her trafficker to recruit and distribute children camped in his depot in Ogun State. From the child's description, you discern a mind that understands that what the trafficker was doing was wrong, but she considers him the link between herself and her dreams. Moreover, Praise was the person that initiated and negotiated her departure from home (with the support of her parents). The child is willing to turn a blind eye to her trafficker's transgressions as long as she is eventually sent to a good place to work and earn money needed to pay for her vocational training.

When working children in West Africa are seen as victims of their parents' manipulation, it is entrenched in a western perception of childhood as a time for schooling and lack of work schedules. Are there faults in the theoretical explanations for children's departure from home? In industrialised societies, there is the perception of children's involvement in work as: "...an aberration or an outrage — a social problem premised on children's vulnerability and need for protection" (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998, p. 101). Working children are therefore seen to deviate from the norm (Ennew, 2013, Hashim, 2005, Nieuwenhuys, 1996). There has been a gradual shift in the literature with attention to new perceptions of childhood that takes into consideration diverse reasons that children could decide to leave home that shifts from the familiar platform of poverty and family crisis (Whitehead, Hashim, and Iversen, 2007). Children are active in the decision-making process and can influence the decisions made by adults (Myers, 1999). Gozdzia (2012) adds that the children that participated in her study were not helpless and in most cases were involved in negotiations to take them away from home.

3.2. Counter-story telling, household negotiations and children's reasons for leaving home

Academic literature explains the trafficking and exploitation of a child as an activity involving the movement of a child in the process of which the child is exploited for an economic activity not suitable for the child and from which a 'third party' benefits. In relation to children's trafficking for domestic work, another perspective has to be understood whereby children are seen to learn skills that will enhance their standard of living and social status in the future — with female children learning domestic or housekeeping skills (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985; Thorsen, 2012). Usually children are reported to have been requested by parents to move away from home, but children as young as ten years old have initiated their own trafficking in a bid to shape a new path that might provide educational opportunities, learning new skills or economic incentives (Thorsen, 2012). Other studies in West Africa (Anarfi et al., 2005; Chant & Jones, 2005) also indicate that similar to adult migrants, migrating children exhibit agency and this is linked to household and community expectations of when children should start making contributions to their parents or household especially in cases where children contribute to household income by sending remittances. This is also related to the community's perception of childhood and what children should be doing at certain stages in their lives. As the study by Terre des homes (2003) which focussed on parents in Burkina Faso indicates, children

within the 10- to 14-year-old age range are old enough to perform similar tasks as adults and make similar contributions to the household as adults.

Also, the dominant discourse is that child trafficking and migration are activities that children should not be engaged in because all children are expected to be in school just like their more privileged peers. Howard (2012) adds that when children are not in school like their peers, the thinking is that children have been kidnapped, forced into exploitative activities due to starvation or the ignorance of illiterate parents. This majority narrative fails to consider that some children knowingly give consent to their trafficking (Thorsen, 2012).

What does the literature say about home and how does this differ from what is expressed by children about their reasons for departing from it? The dominant narrative embeds children's leaving home for trafficking profoundly on homes experiencing poverty and family inclinations towards the cultural practices of fostering. From the profile of the children in my study and similar to Taylor's (2005) observation, poverty is not always the applicable reason for children's departure from home, although economic factors may make some children vulnerable to trafficking. With reference to poverty, Sanghera (2005) observes that, while trafficking in persons can often be attributed to diverse causes of poverty and lack of sustainable livelihood, she adds that "...these factors are not in themselves the causes of trafficking: they merely exacerbate the vulnerability of marginalized and disadvantaged groups and render them increasingly more susceptible to a variety of harms." (p. 7). Likewise, Bass (2004) adds that though child trafficking for labour is often depicted as a function of poverty, when African policymakers fail to understand how child trafficking perpetuates poverty, government may persist in allocating resources to inappropriate projects or interventions.

I also looked at the empirical literature to ascertain why it failed to dwell on understanding children's homes. Could it be that children need a flexible approach that gradually opens them to discussions about something they consider as sacred as their homes? Probably previous studies were more concerned with asking about the trafficking experiences of children and did not dwell on departures from home or follow children home after trafficking for interactions that help understand why children left home. Was my research different because children saw me as present in their area of domicile for a long period? Was it also the interactive activities that opened up an iota of trust that made children comfortable with me? I mention this because I recall children's openness to me, which they passed on to other children at the shelter based on and during our group activities. This leads me to perceive that children are willing to share more with researchers about their homes that will assist future research for understanding drivers of children's departure from home.

This chapter also helps us understand the complex nature of negotiations made ahead of children's departure from home and who benefits from children's departure from home. I find that it is only when there is more flexibility for understanding how perceptions of childhood across different regions influence departures from home that as researchers, we can attempt a clearer exploration of 'trafficking' in West Africa. To foster this new wave of trafficking research, some researchers have advocated for a shift from the Western perception of the ideal childhood for children to understand why certain children work and if this detracts from their childhood. James,

Jenks & Prout (1999) emphasise that apart from understanding the social, economic and historical contexts of children's work, researchers should understand how children leave home for work, the negotiations involved and the impact of decisions taken about work and home on children's aspirations. From her research with child survivors of trafficking in the United States, Godziak (2012) finds that working with children removed from diverse types of trafficking enriches the information derived for understanding child trafficking and the departure from home. Previously, our understanding of children leaving home has hinged on the request of parents or the manoeuvring of deceptive guardians or intermediaries (Dougnon, 2011; Okafor 2014; Olaniyi, 2009). Dougnon (2011), writing with insight from migrating children in Mali, wonders that, if children have always worked in the rural settings where they live, then they should be able to contribute to discussions and decisions about their work in urban settings. I see from children's narratives and discussions with them that deliberations about leaving home are more complicated than the literature makes us understand. From my interaction with children, I observed that departure from home could be:

- Forced on a particular child with little concern (as in 13-year-old Bolaji's case) if the child is well placed in a good school and with a supportive household, the child is mandated to do the household bidding of earning an income to support other members of the household;
- An attempt to reinforce the waning child fostering practice, where the child is sent to live with a close relative or friend, with the expectation that the child's care, education and growth will be part of the socialisation process. This is evident in the manner in which children like Eziyuwa, Odinaka and Emilia left home;
- A response to household decisions acknowledging the need for assistance with expectations of advancing a child's future, in which case the child is coerced into accepting to leave home, as is evident in little Chidi's departure from home to live with the medical doctor;
- A decision that parents and the extended family take concerning a child's future, which is evident in the narratives of several children that were trafficked away from home by their aunties or uncles or using networks facilitated by these people;
- A decision the child makes, as in the case of 17-year-old Serena, and facilitated using connections from peers intended to seek temporary employment to enable them continue their education but which can only be facilitated with the approval of their parents. Important things to note in this case are that the parents at no point asked the child to assist the household during this period of household shortfall and that the parents tried to prevent the child from travelling but perceiving the child's resilience allowed her to do so;
- A decision taken by the child due to their own sense of adventure or desire to move to a place facilitating regular school attendance as in the case of 10 year old Chiedo, who willingly left home with a stranger;
- Also related to children deciding to travel inspired by their own sense of adventure and sole decision to obtain a job even when they were not requested to do this, is the case of Mercy who left home with a strange man offering her a job as a house help in a different region in Nigeria. It will be observed that in the

case of children who left home like Mercy and Chiedo did, there was no attempt to notify their guardians or seek their consent for the journey;

- A decision children make to avoid stigmatisation or because they are uncertain of the assistance or support of adult family members as in the case of all the children who were deceived into the baby factory;
- Decisions that families make not because they cannot fend for their children but because they feel that their children's future is better served when they migrate to learn a trade as in the case of the two boys, Obinna and Afam who were migrating to Cotonu to become apprentices in their relative's business enterprise;
- When decisions are taken out of children's hands because of the deceptive company they kept that prey on their unstable family relationships, as in the case of little Princess who was lured into moving away from home without notifying her father or stepmother. You will also notice in Princess's case that she is not from a poor home since her father is a medical doctor, but unstable family relationships resulted in his inattention to the needs of children from a previous wife (Princess's mother), and the ability of a distant acquaintance to lure her away from home on the pretext of accompanying her on a brief visit to Lagos;
- When decisions are taken out of the hands of children and their parents and fall in the hands of others familiar or unfamiliar, as in the case of Sandra who was kidnapped by her cousin and sold into domestic sexual exploitation;

From the above summary of negotiations facilitating the departure of children from home, it is evident that the range of options spear-headed by children themselves exceeds those of their parents and is more than the trafficking literature give children credit for. Children, like other individuals in society, do not operate in isolation. The decisions children make are achieved by the interaction of social relationships that are built and influenced by their beliefs, parental relationships, education, culture, religion and past experiences. Children's interaction with people around them informs their responses to conditions within their environment, decisions they make and the outcome of their experiences. Children's interactions also determine the way they explain their actions and the world they live in. Woodhead (1999) expatiates that in their everyday relationships, children are social agents, interacting with people around them and understanding that these interactions and the decisions they make based on them have consequences on both their lives and the lives of others. It is for this reason that discussions on child trafficking in West Africa can only be understood by exploring links between each child's story and interactions existing between the child and members of the household prior to leaving home and how these interactions influence both departures and likely return dates.

When there is a lack of acknowledgement that children can instigate their own movement away from home, it appears an unconscious ploy to undermine the agency that West African children display in making decisions about leaving home for work and retain them in the comfortable position of helpless children who were moved away from home against their will by older adults. As a Nigerian, I have observed that even children from the same locality in Nigeria and from the same socio-economic background experience childhood differently. Moreover, a child opting to

work with the plan to spend their earnings on their education or vocational training does not mean the child has lost an essential part of their childhood. Childhood for that child may be evident in the education the child's society, community or parents consider appropriate for that stage in the child's development.

I should mention that my study also highlights several narratives of children who were encouraged by their parents and relatives to leave home with people they ordinarily would not have wanted to live with. Children like 10-year-old Chidi, who ended up living with the medical practitioner who sexually exploited her but would have preferred fostering by her uncle, fall in this category. While the position of this group of children is addressed in the literature under children lured or forced into trafficking by their parents, the perspective of children playing a major role in their trafficking is not. Moreover, responses by child participants in my study show that when parents play major roles in children's departure for trafficking, parents take the time to explain issues and encourage their children to compliance. There were however some exceptions - 17-year-old Promise, whose mother did not try to understand why her child hesitated about travelling to work with an 'oyinbo' in Senegal. Rather than explain issues to Promise, her mother provided her with two options: travelling to Senegal or leaving her house.

3.2.1. Counter-story telling, leaving home and the meaning of home

During my research, children appeared to view their home through the lens of leaving it. The home they left is often associated with the reasons they left that home. The reason children left home and associations attributed to it often determines whether particular children will consider their homes falling into my three categories - homes of immediate departure, homes of delayed return or homes of no return. The homes of immediate departure are usually those like Serena's, Sandra's, Nana's and Angel's, where children were not mandated to leave home for work, the children either negotiated their departure, left home to avoid religious stigma or were kidnapped against their will. The homes of delayed return are those where children were sent out with intermediaries' because of certain shortfalls experienced by the household. Children fitting into this category like Praise, Abraham, Paul and Bimbo base their return on the household's ability to meet their needs, which relate mostly to the educational and vocational. It is only in rare cases that children consider their homes, places never to be returned to. The only child leaning towards this category is Promise, but with proper counselling and guidance, it is hoped that she will forgive her mother and return home.

Building on the above categorisation, I also observed a close link between education and children's desire to leave home. Although this link is mentioned and/or addressed in literature on child labour (Dar, Hugo Blunch, Kim & Sasaki, 2002; Guarcello, Lyon & Rosati, 2006), I wondered if the lack of emphasis on this link in the trafficking literature is because the literature concentrates on children leaving home to be absorbed in formal school settings rather than the informal, vocational training options that some of the trafficked children aspire for as substitute for the more desired.

Another interesting insight from the chapter on remembering home is children's narratives on how memories of home made it easier to cope with trafficking. I took away the emotional experiences of children like Nana, Goodness, Angel, Eziyuwa, Sunday, Gabriella, Deola and Sarah, dealing with time away from home and how returning to their

families' lives will be perceived by those whose lives they are re-entering. Goodness, for instance, appears excited about returning home, but finds it a troubling part of her trafficking, with so many questions in her head that reinforce that fear. An outsider may not understand the intensity of children's fears about returning home. Though faces have become unfamiliar, what will happen when they are seen? What if she is unable to recognise anyone upon getting home? What if she is unable to relate with anyone at home? Will she be accepted on returning home or will she be seen more as a stranger than a part of the family? This fear of returning and acceptance is presented in Godziak's (2012) study when a young girl from Cameroon hinted that though she longs to meet her father she feared that since she has been away from home for so long she may be unable to relate with the family she left behind.

Another crucial aspect of children's journey away from home is evident in their drawings. Though emphasis on children's drawings is beyond the scope of the current thesis, I intend to return to their drawings in my future research and writings on child trafficking in West Africa. I would like to draw attention to the sequence in children's drawings. When children are asked to depict their memories of home in their drawings, those memories go beyond their houses, its surroundings and the dwellers within to include those that are special to them and make huge impact in their lives. Children's narratives make reference to their cousins, aunties, uncles, grandparents, friends, neighbours and the neighbourhood church and school. As African children, operating within the extended family system, it appears almost acceptable and even natural to expect this stretch of home affiliations. But it was even more interesting that depicting these associations would come so naturally in the drawings of young children dealing with overwhelming experiences.

Finally, children's narratives point to the nature and timing of their departure from home. One such pointer is the introduction of homelessness or destitution, which with existence of the extended family system becomes an option difficult to associate with Nigerian children. Boakye-Boaten (2010) made an important point that destitution was not part of the African culture because every child, whether orphan or born out of wedlock, had people to care for them within the fostering practice often mentioned in the literature. He added that these family support systems mitigated against maltreatment or neglect. For this reason, it was difficult to understand how following a disagreement with her father, 15-year-old Priscilla, could not access this family support system. Instead the child told me that she wandered around the city of Benin for a week before accepting the assistance of the young man who sold her into the sex trade. I asked Priscilla several times why she could not go to stay with some relatives living in Benin and each time, the child claimed she had no one to stay with.

Further, children like Gabriella and Sunday associate home with the nature of journeys away from it and the breaking of links with loved ones that happened without warning, simply because the trafficker mentioned that leaving home will be of benefit to the child and the entire household. The departure from Home especially for these children from Togo was almost always made at night. There was also the similarity in speed of calls made to the intermediary, an immediate response the night the call was made and the evacuation of children at night. The similarities also indicate that the trafficker has something to hide, probably she has taken so many children away

from the same locality and appearing during the day may expose her to previous clients who she may be hiding from, thus the decision to move at night.

4. Conclusion

For my final field research, children's narratives clearly indicate that they understand why they left home. The reason children left home will determine their resilience away from home and their longing or not to return home. Most of the children I interviewed during my exploratory study in Nigeria held similar views of the reason(s) motivating their departures away from home, which was seeking employment for earnings that will facilitate meeting their future aspirations. The findings complement the suggestion held by several researchers that government should explore ways to meet the unfulfilled survival needs of children driving them into trafficking (Howard, 2012; Okonofua, Ogbomwan, Alutu, Kufre & Eghosa, 2004). Thorsen (2012) elaborates that when parents and guardians fail to provide adequate protection for children from exploitative and abusive practices, then the state should develop effective child protection systems that will accommodate children's needs. He also recognises that child protection systems are poorly funded in African countries and may receive only about one percent of the annual budget of these countries.

Also related to the issue of limited funding for child protection systems in African countries is the poor investment in education leading to children's departure from home. Ordinarily, the trafficking literature lays emphasis on children leaving home because they aim to earn an income to assist their financially-strapped households. But almost all the children in my study left home because they wanted better access to education — this is usually done by children working to earn an income which is later plunged into their education on returning home or children assisting in households where they are also enrolled in school. With the importance of education to the young children participating in the study, it stands to reason that a key strategy for reducing child trafficking in the West African region is increasing government investment in education. At the moment, Nigeria operates the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme where children are expected to have access to free 9 years of compulsory and uninterrupted education from the age of 6 to 14 at the primary and junior secondary school levels - that is 6 years of primary education and 3 years of secondary school education (UBE, 2014; UNESCO, 2014; WENR, 2011).

Obviously, from children's narratives, this could be simply promises made on paper, because children are either willingly dropping out of school or having their parents withdraw them from school because of inadequate funds. So, what could be going wrong? In Nigeria, education appears to be a bargaining tool used by politicians to gain votes during elections. Is education completely free in Nigeria when some parents cannot buy school uniform, books and pay for other services needed for children such as sports uniforms, after school classes, drama and parent-teachers association dues? Children also complain of absence of good and dedicated teachers, poorly equipped library and classroom facilities (Nwagwu, 1994 & 1997; UNICEF, 2005 & 2007), poor standard of education in rural schools and the transportation costs of moving between home and school (UNICEF, 2005 & 2007). Also several Nigerian State governors complain of inadequate funds to meet their free education obligations.

Chapter Eight — Findings and Discussions

Children's experience of trafficking

Author's reflections on children's experience of trafficking

Before engaging in my field research I familiarised myself with empirical studies on the experiences of children within trafficking. As with the previous chapter, my readings further reinforced the importance of understanding the homes children were resident in before trafficking as they (children's homes) laid the platform for their trafficking experiences. Furthermore, I observed during my field research that children do not talk about their experiences or even about themselves without reference to the families they left behind. Drawing on literature on child development that places the home at the centre of the child's world, I doubt if meaningful sense of children's experiences of trafficking and the trauma they provoke can be assessed without reference to their homes. Why should the experience of home be neglected for African children involved in exploitative trafficking? In acknowledgement of this gap in the literature, I came into this research trying to understand if children's experiences of trafficking and their level of endurance of the situations they met during trafficking had something to do with their homes and the reasons behind leaving these homes. The way children experience trafficking differs from one child to the other but the narratives of their experience always begins with their feelings about leaving home, moving to the people they left home with, the people they had to live or work with during trafficking and the treatment they received, how they were removed from trafficking and new lessons they learned from their trafficking. In other words, children's experience of trafficking could be emotional, physical, social, educational or economic.

The Experience of Trafficking

How do children perceive their trafficking? Do children exhibit adequate understanding of their trafficking to provide useful narratives for others to understand their experiences of trafficking? Since this doctoral research incorporates the views of trafficked children from Nigeria and other West African countries removed from diverse forms of trafficking, it provides a useful template for identifying, assessing and understanding West African children's experiences of trafficking as stated in their own words. The experiences of children within trafficking will be discussed under the following headings: mode of children's recruitment into trafficking; forms of trafficking experienced by children participating in the study; children's perception of their trafficking experience; and if memories of home make children's trafficking experiences bearable. The discussions in this chapter (as in the previous), will be interspaced with the continuation of short narratives of twelve children that participated in the study (placed in text boxes) centering on their experiences of trafficking.

1. How are children recruited for trafficking?

Explaining how children are recruited for trafficking in West Africa, as I observed with participants in my study, is complex and differs from one child to the other. The role the family plays in trafficking is not something that can easily be explained, even based on interaction with children that were trafficked from the same family.

1.1. Family

My readings in preparation for my research dwelt extensively on the role parents played in children's trafficking. Even while preparing for the field trip, I contested this aspect of the literature, believing that children themselves have agency and could sometimes be active participants in their trafficking. During my field research and based on children's narratives, I identified four interacting forces determining children's trafficking in the family — parents, siblings, relatives or guardians and children themselves.

When **Princess** got to Lagos, she found out that her duties will entail more than taking care of her trafficker's baby. The day after arriving Lagos, her madam took her to a strange looking establishment. Princess ceaselessly asked people what was going on in the building. After a while she was informed that it was a brothel. Her madam told her that she will be working in the brothel. Princess was shocked and enquired about the child she was informed she would be carina for.

Often **parents**, based on their analysis of situations within the family, may decide that there is need for assistance for household wellbeing and that one of their children should seek work away from home. In this case, parents decide the child that should be trafficked and who (intermediary) should be consulted to assist with the process. I observed that, even in situations where children were against leaving home, as in the case of Promise, 17, who did not want to travel to Senegal, parents could be forceful in ensuring compliance.

Other family members, **siblings**, such as older sisters as in the case of Bimbo and Margaret, could convince their parents to allow younger ones to leave home to engage in domestic work. Ultimately, parents or siblings played a large role in final decisions taken about the trafficking of their children.

A large number of children from the study were recruited for trafficking with the interaction or involvement of **relatives**, who could be aunts, uncles or cousins. These diverse communal links reflect the multiple responsibilities for children in West Africa, making it difficult for parents to say 'no' when people claim that they are assisting their children, and making it difficult for NAPTIP to curtail the problem when there are several links to investigate.

For another child, Sandra, it remains difficult to find an appropriate category for her situation, since she was stolen by her cousin after her mother had refused Sandra's movement from Benue to live in Onitsha with a strange medical doctor.

Evident during field research was the **agency children displayed** in convincing their parents to take them away from home especially when they have been out of school for a long time. Although children instigate their trafficking, the ultimate decision to leave home rests with their parents.

1.2. Social networks

Children have lives away from the protective eyes of parents and siblings. It is expected that the relationships they maintain away from home influence decisions they make when faced with extreme social and educational problems. The networks that children maintain could comprise of: old friends from nursery, primary or secondary school; friends from religious or social gatherings; or friends from establishments offering temporary employment. When children are experiencing problems, members of these networks are bound to notice and offer support to children that could be compassionate or fatal. Children's networks facilitating their recruitment for trafficking could include: peers, intermediaries, or religious affiliations maintained by children and their families.

The children that participated in my study were susceptible to the influence of peers or people they considered friends when dealing with dire household financial difficulties, as with Serena, and the hopelessness of living with an uncaring father and stepmother, as with Princess. In difficult situations, children are unconsciously prone to trafficking with expectations of a brighter future.

Children like Mary were moved into trafficking by intermediaries that are no relatives of theirs. These could be their mother's friends or neighbours. Some of the intermediaries also operated from the religious angle. There is no specific type of trafficking that fits within traffickers operating using religious associations as their strength. For instance a number of children recruited for domestic work were linked to employers by the Pastor who claimed he was assisting them with deliverance and prayers from witchcraft afflictions. Some children, like Promise and Success, were trafficked for prostitution by people their parents knew from Church.

1.3. Strangers

I was not very familiar with the idea of strangers having a significant role to play in the trafficking of children. But during my research, I found children's perception of 'strangers' as active participants in their trafficking something to be looked into. With my interaction with children, I found that the notion of strangers is one that could have multiple meanings but which I will explore under three categories: strangers who appear trustworthy because of their position or their connections; strangers who gain trust by making promises; and kidnapping.

Several narratives of the children I worked with, especially those from the West African countries of Togo and Benin, emphasized the physical presence of the sanctioned stranger. This person is the one that appears to have the necessary connections to respond to parents' need of someone to assist their children or the family in finding employment in Nigeria. When these requests are answered, the children always attest that they are people not previously known to their mother, but whom both parents and children are willing to trust and follow into trafficking.

There are also strangers that are sanctioned by children themselves, as in the case of Chiedo, who allowed himself to be sweet-talked into moving from Aba to Abuja without his older sister's knowledge by a woman he met in the market. The same hold for children like Priscilla (who found herself out in the streets at night after a family disagreement), Mercy (who responded to the offer of a strange man to take her to work as a domestic servant in Lagos), and Happiness (who responded to the offer of a place to rest until her baby is delivered) all had to rely on the 'goodwill' of strangers, who turned around to exploit them for prostitution or in baby factories.

Martha was not prepared for an arduous journey from Benin to anywhere but back home to Delta State when she travelled to Benin in response to an invitation from her uncle. Everything happened really quickly. At one point she found herself on a bus, making stop overs to cook and eat. At the next point, she was crossing the border to find herself face to face with policemen from a different country called Burkina-Faso. All the time, Martha wondered if she heard wrong, since her uncle informed her that she was headed for Senegal.

Based on my literal understanding of kidnapping as the forceful capturing of someone against their will, only one child, Nana (who became pregnant in the course of trafficking), fits the profile. Nana was physically bundled away from the private school she was attending in Ghana when only 7 years old. She was forced to endure the process of regional movements that brought her to Nigeria, a place she lived in and worked for 8 years without attending school.

2. Forms of trafficking experienced by children participating in the study

My field research was enriched by providing the experiences of children recruited for diverse types of trafficking that I will narrow down to four categories: sexual exploitation, caregiving, domestic servitude and commercial.

2.1. Sexual exploitation

Within the study, several children were put in positions of helplessness by older people who they trusted to provide them with assistance in the form of work or education. Children in the study were exploited for domestic and regional prostitution and in baby factories.

2.1.1. For Prostitution — domestic and regional

A number of children in the study faced situations where they were lured into domestic or regional (ex. Benin, Burkina Faso) prostitution by people the children thought would be assisting their household during dire financial situations. Parents have also been implicated in the sexual trafficking of their children because they failed to obtain adequate information about their children's traffickers, in some cases believing them to be church members or their older relatives as in the case of Martha who left Benin for Senegal on the urgings of her uncle.

2.1.2. For Baby factory or baby sale

The susceptibility of young women to baby factories is an unfolding addition to the child trafficking literature and one that needs further understanding on how young women leave home to end up in establishments where they have to sell their babies. The contribution of youths removed from baby factories in this study will enrich the understanding of new forms of trafficking in West Africa.

2.2. Caregiving

Caregiving in the larger sense involves children given the responsibility of providing care for people in a household that could comprise children or the elderly. Two children in the study, Paul and Rosemary, were specifically recruited to act as caregivers to the elderly and both children remained with the elderly caring and attending to their needs until they passed away.

2.3. For Domestic work

When children are recruited for domestic work, they are often given the responsibility of household maintenance that entails cooking, cleaning and grocery shopping. Child domestic servants are essentially performing tasks beyond what is expected of them at a certain age. A large number of children in my study were recruited for domestic work, which some children saw as extended slavery from which the only means of freedom was running away from the 'madam' or 'oga'¹³ as they expressed in the Nigerian Pidgin English. It should also be understood that some children experience multiple forms of trafficking in the sense that they could start off as domestic servants and end up as caregivers or move from domestic servitude to prostitution.

2.4. Commercial

The study was also further enriched by the experiences of children recruited for begging or stealing or to assist in family businesses. The essence of their involvement was to earn monthly income that would augment re-enrolling in school or assisting their families.

2.4.1. For Begging and Stealing

Only one child, Chiedo, was removed from begging and stealing. He had previously been involved in caregiving to the elderly, domestic work and assisting his sister in the pure water business before moving from his native Imo state to Abuja.

2.4.2. Family businesses

Children were also removed from work in family businesses. In some cases, children like Eziyuwa and Emilia when in residence with their aunts, moved between domestic work and assisting their aunties in their family businesses. Sunday, who moved from Togo to learn a trade, was also moved from one family business to the other.

¹³ master, boss, mistress, the person in authority

3. Children's perception of their trafficking experience

To understand how children perceive their trafficking experience, I engaged in discussions with children that traced their journey away from home, their experience of exploitation or coping during trafficking and their exit from trafficking.

3.1. Journey into trafficking

The journey into trafficking may appear ominous due to reports about the experiences some children have faced in the hands of wicked guardians or employers. But is it any different from the journeys we have all set out on at different periods in our lives, never knowing what to expect at our destination? For trafficked children, is the journey more concerning because of what lies at the destination or because of what lies at different stopovers before the destination? What is the journey into trafficking like? Some children had verbal and pictorial depictions of their journey. The children in my study traced narratives of a journey that could be upsetting for some and exciting for others.

When **Chiedo**, the woman (his trafficker) and her son arrived in Abuja, several changes began. Chiedo found he was not going to be taking care of the woman's son or doing the type of work he was initially told about in Aba. He also found that there were two other young boys living with the woman in her one room housing. At first, the boys were told that they will be hawking soft drinks and provision items. When the woman found she was not making profit from soft drinks and provision items, she convinced the boys to engage in begging on the streets of Abuja. Later on, she convinced the boys to combine begging with stealing at parties and even Churches. Everyone living with the woman was part of the stealing network, including her toddler.

3.1.1. It involves embarking on a journey

A journey always has a beginning and an end, with perceptions varying as people describe their experiences with their journey. I wanted to understand how children categorise their journey. For those children that found the journey either tiresome or exciting, was it the beginning, the end or the entire process of moving away from home?

3.1.1.1. An arduous journey for some

I found that what was memorable to some children was not having been given prior warning of the journey before setting out. Gabriella, 16 years old, from Togo, was about 9 years old when her mother and uncle decided to accept the exciting offer made by a woman to send their children to work in Nigeria. Gabriella, accompanied by her older cousin, set out on an arduous journey, close to midnight, with a woman they met at their home only a few hours before the journey commenced. The young girl recalls that:

When **Serena** arrived at her friend's aunt's house in Lagos, she met two other young girls who the woman said she had found work for. The youngest girl was 14 years old. Serena never knew the nature of the job the woman had found for her until the woman took her out of the house the next day. She took Serena to a house somewhere in Lagos, the house turned out to enclose a shrine. The woman wanted Serena to take an oath that she will work as a prostitute and pay her 4000Naira daily. Serena refused to come into the compound, refused to consent to taking an oath or paying the woman the daily sum. She maintained her grounds even when the woman's friend came to assist her friend with forcefully pushing Serena into the compound. Serena managed to push the two women away and fled out of the compound into the waiting car.

As a reaction to Serena's disobedience, the woman refused giving Serena money to return to her parents, she also flogged her ceaselessly, would ask her to perform the most degrading punishments and maintained that Serena must consent to prostitution. Two weeks after the oath taking episode, the woman arranged with a cab driver to drive them to the hottest red light zone somewhere in Lagos State. The driver came over to the woman's house the following day, as planned, to convey them to the red light zone. When they got to the red light zone, Serena was shocked at the woman's request that the young girls will be coming to that part of the city every night to scout for male customers. Serena realised it was time to work out an escape plan.

...at midnight, we saw people that were wearing white, we passed the people. I was feeling cold. First we went on okada¹⁴. She carried that girl [her cousin] and I to a place. The next day they carried a little child of 5 years or 6 years old and said she is going with us. We spent 3 or 4 days there and then we started going and going. We got to one place and the police stopped us. The woman had told us that if they ask where we are going we should say that we are going to Nigeria to go and sell market. It's because of that 6-year-old that they stopped us. I was crying, I didn't even want to go again. I wanted to tell the truth. We spent 3 days going and I spent three days on the road again [after brief stop by the police]. — Gabriella, 16-year-old girl

For Gabriella, her journey into trafficking started on a terrifying note with associations of darkness, cold and eerie figures moving to unknown destinations; moving on to activities that will become routine, that of lying to cover the negative activities of adults; and tears shed as she yearned for home. From her narrative, the thoughts playing out in her head, especially having the surprise addition to their crew, the 5-year-old child, reinforced her desire to return home: "I didn't even want to go again." Is the journey different because Gabriella was trafficked for domestic work and moving into Nigeria

from a different country?

Priscilla, 15 years old, from Delta State, Nigeria, who was trafficked for prostitution, also looks back with unpleasant memories of her journey, which started the day she was wandering the streets of Benin after her father sent her out of the house for having been stubborn:

¹⁴ Motor bike used for public transportation.

18 — Priscilla's journey away from home



Priscilla: He said he will take me to Lagos, that I will be working as house girl. From Lagos we now moved out of Lagos. He told me that I should keep quiet that he is taking me to another country to work as a prostitute. That was how he took me there [Burkina-Faso].

Ifeyinwa: Did you work in Lagos?

Priscilla: No

Ifeyinwa: How did the man take you to Burkina-Faso? Did you travel by road?

Priscilla: Yes

Ifeyinwa: Did you pass through some bushes or things like that or---

Priscilla: Yes

Ifeyinwa: Did he get you an international passport?

Priscilla: No, we went by road.

Ifeyinwa: How did he keep your association to him hidden during the journey?

Priscilla: He said I should be going on my own in front. He said that I should not look back. That I should just keep walking as if I am going to the market. That was how I started going until the man met up with me and carried me with him.

The pain emanating from children's journey into trafficking holds different associations for understanding trauma experienced by trafficked children. Priscilla did not have the intention of ending up in trafficking but at 15 years old, she dealt with the separation from her father the only way she knew how, by walking the streets aimlessly for seven days until she fell into the hands of the first person that offered her kind words of 'assistance.' I asked Priscilla if she did not have other relatives in Benin. But she surprisingly said there was no one else, which deviates from the Nigerian idea of communal assistance and relationships of care that stretch to relatives, friends, neighbours and

Paul was to find that things did not happen exactly as the Pastor discussed with his parents before leaving home. Paul did not begin school immediately after leaving home for Abuja. First, the Pastor enrolled him in a mechanic workshop to learn panel beating for a year. Second, when he was 11 years old, the Pastor sent him to learn how to work with soya beans. Third, he was sent to work as house boy to a man living in Lagos. The man did not enrol him in school either. It was at this point that he got tired and told the man to take him back to the Pastor's house. The day after he returned to the Pastor's house, a woman visited that needed a boy that will be assisting her elderly mother at home. The woman promised sending the boy to school. Paul left for Anambra State with the woman and he cared for her elderly mother until her passing in December 2013.

religious affiliations. While already dealing with the separation from her father, she went into trafficking, experiencing betrayal by someone she thought kind enough to assist her with a job.

Complications could still occur when the journey was well laid out and sanctioned by one's family as a socialisation process for their child. This is the story behind Rakiya's narrative and experience with travelling to engage in domestic work in Cotonu with her mother's friend as the link person. Rakiya, a Nigerian, was born and lived her entire 13 years in Abidjan, first with her parents, who had to leave for their native country, then with her aunt, who begged her mother to allow Rakiya to remain a few years with her, taking care of her baby, before she returned to Nigeria to join her parents. Rakiya, who had never attended school but speaks fluent French, returned to Nigeria in 2014, only to be shocked when she was told that she could not attend primary school

in her native Oyo State because she was too old for primary school. Her mother's friend came visiting and disparaged her mother for allowing Rakiya to remain at home doing nothing while other girls were making money working in Cotonu and other places. Although Rakiya did not want to leave home, as attending school was more important to her, she finally agreed to undertake the trip with her mother's friend.

...It was like today that we left Ibadan, we slept in one hotel and then the second day ...we arrived Cotonu in the morning. When we left the bus, the woman said that I should wait for her. As for me, I did not know anywhere. She told me to wait for her at the park, that she was returning immediately. She was not holding on to anything because I was the one carrying everything. I was the one carrying the luggage, even then I was only holding one little bag. I told her that I have heard that I will wait for her. So I waited from that morning until quite late and the woman did not return. I waited until darkness fell. Mummy, I was the only one at that park. I waited by the roadside. I was really hungry---As I waited from morning until night, I started asking what must have happened to this woman, did she go somewhere else or what? I started crying. ... — Rakiya, 13-year-old girl

Rakiya considered her journey arduous because she was abandoned at the bus station, without money and with no idea where her mother's friend was or when she will return. Rakiya also provides insight into the trauma a child faces when she is uprooted from a happy and safe family setting to be faced with a journey she is unsure will ever come to an end.

Also linked to uprooting children from places of safety to that of insecurity is the narrative of 15 year old Nana, whose journey into trafficking began the day she was kidnapped from school:

19 - Nana's journey away from home



... I left the school gate and went to stand outside... I stayed out there, playing. As I was there, I saw one man that told me that my father said he should carry me home. I did not say anything. I just followed the man—I did not ask him anything. I did not want to go initially. He first asked me my father's name. I told him. As I told him, he now said okay that my father asked him to carry me home. I said oh? And he said yes. So I followed the man. He hid his car in a bush. So I stepped out. As I stepped out, we had not even reached the place where the car was packed, since the car was not parked faraway, I just said that I should tell my teacher that I wanted to go home. That was when the man covered my mouth and pushed me into the car. He tied me and pushed me into a bush. The man now carried me through the bush. . . We now slept in one bush like this. In the bush, there was no house but it was just nylon that they used to cover the place and people were sleeping there. There were also . . . many children, about 20. There was an aunty there that was cooking. I slept there. Early in the morning, the man went to town and bought one shirt and that was how they took off my school uniform, my bag, my shoes, as they removed everything, they locked them up and gave me the new shirt they bought to wear. That was how he carried me into the car and brought me to Ibadan. . . — Nana, 15-year-old girl

From her life of safety with an attentive and caring father, Nana was bundled into a car to be introduced to a world where the motto is acceptance or adjustment. Nana knew without anyone telling her that, by meeting fellow child captives, sleeping on nylon covered grass in the bush, getting stripped of and locking up last memories of her former life, she was set to embark on a new journey — that of becoming just another unidentified young child travelling

across regional borders to Nigeria where she will be unknown. She would spend about 7 years serving different households.

3.1.1.2. An Exciting journey for others

However, not all children have negative connotations of their trafficking experience. How do these children who consider their trafficking experience something to add to their growing list of adventures and lessons about life differ from the aforementioned children?

I shall begin with 14-year-old Praise from Cross River State who had, in the previous chapter, given us an insight into the business of children as commodities for sale by talking about her journey into trafficking with a man, Daniella's uncle who operated a child depot.

20 — Praise's journey away from home



Praise's journey appeared over when the child depot was raided and the children and trafficker were taken to the police station. But for Praise, the excitement was again ignited at the police station where they remained for 3days.

Praise: We eat around 2pm; we eat two times a day. In the night around 9 — 10pm they will tell them to lock us up. In the morning, they will bring us out ... The cloth I washed was not even dry at the police station when they came to take us away. ... We thought they were taking us home but they brought us to NAPTIP. ...

Ifeyinwa: Oh you were even allowed to wash your clothes at the police station.

Praise: Yes, we were also playing. It was only our oga that was not allowed to sit outside.

Praise considered her time at the police station another opportunity to make friends, play and do her laundry. The only person who had a terrible time in her point of view was the trafficker, 'their oga', who was never allowed to leave the cell or prison cell. Success, also 14, from Edo State, was another person who spoke about her journey to Senegal which ended up in Burkina Faso with a lot of excitement:

We were three girls, Martha and the girl that has gone home. When we reach one place, Yoruba, I could not understand what they were saying. The woman now said that we will stop here, that the journey is still far. So we went to eat. When we finished eating, we were walking. . . We cooked in one place like that but I do not know the place. It is not the woman that has the house, it is one man, and the house smelt goat anyhow [she laughs]. . . Then it was night. Everybody was sleeping. Then we went on the road again and started going. We reach one place--- We cooked rice and stew and then we cooked fish. . . We finished all of them that night [she laughs again]. It was the woman that went to buy them, oh, we did not come out of the house. I did not understand the language and they were not speaking English, only Yoruba. I will be telling them something but not understanding, they will also be asking me what I want to eat. We left that place and continued again in the night---- Success, 14-year-old girl

Success actually interspaced her narratives with lots of real laughter. The similarity between Praise and Success is that their journey was cut short. I doubt the girls would have remained excited if they had reached their destination. But if Success had made it into prostitution as planned for her, I wonder if the ready laughter would still have interspaced her story. Then again, the laughter evident in Success's story could be her own way of coping with the shock of what would have been her story had she made it to Burkina Faso.

Nana's journey after she was kidnapped from school by a strange man, took different twists and turns. After taking her away from her school, the strange man took her deep into a forest where she saw other child captives. She was later moved to Ibadan in Nigeria where she served as house girl and later to Abuja. Though Nana never attended school throughout the trafficking journey, she learnt to speak two Nigerian and Togolese languages. She was also sexually exploited in one of the homes she sought refuge after running away from one of her madams.

3.1.2. It involves a difficult process of deliberations and decisions

Children leave home with a lot of expectations especially if the person they are going to be living with is someone known to the family or someone that made some promises to their parents, such as treating the child as their own, enrolling the child in school or to learn a trade. When children experience abuse in the household, such as constant beating or maltreatment, children are bound to think of how to solve the problem, which often weighs between withstanding the humiliation and running away.

Amina, a 17-year-old Togolese, had to constantly weigh her options while moving from one trafficking situation to another but the most trying was when she had to live and work for a madam that beat and cursed her at the slightest provocation. She had toyed with the desire to flee several times. The urgency could not be ignored on the day her madam woke her at 4am to open her shop (in the market) to enable them make more sales and Amina lost the day's sales to a dishonest customer. Amina ran away from her madam's hands into the hands of a prostitution network:

I got to a Mosque and I slept there for about four days. . .a woman came to ask why I was staying there. I explained to the woman and she started buying food for me every morning. One day, a cell phone got lost and they said I was the one that stole the phone. . .I was

swearing that I did not steal the phone. . .and they beat me. . . So, there was one girl there that saw me . . . She is about 18 or 19 years old. I told her why I was sleeping in the mosque. . .She asked if I can sleep in her house that her mother is not around and it is only herself and her sister at home...I said okay. She asked if she helps me find work in a . . . beer parlour, will I be able to stay there? I did not know that the girl was planning bad things for me. The girl left me and ran. They call the boy Taye, the boy carried me away. The boy said that he has a shop but I did not know it was a hotel. . .— Amina, 17-year-old girl

Children are faced with several trials in the course of their trafficking that remain undocumented. Who faces the most trials? Is it the child domestic servant who operates in households hidden from the outside world, or the sexually exploited child? What I observed is that some female children may begin their journey as domestic servants and end up in the sex trade. Amina is a typical example. The girl ran to escape the abuse she would have faced from her madam for losing the day's earnings, ended up accused of theft, only managing to escape death in the ends of a hostile mob, then falling for the fake kindness of a fellow girl that got her recruited into prostitution.

3.1.3. It involves asking if parents are really as innocent as we thought

Building on the economic foundation of much of the child trafficking literature, parents are often mentioned as sending their children into trafficking because they fell for the deceptive manipulations and promises of trafficking agents. While it could be true that some parents motivated by concerns about their children's future and household wellbeing could make hasty and unfortunate decisions, I also wanted to know what affected children had to say. I will refer to 17-year-old Promise's narrative on beginning work away from home. Promise is the fourth of 8 children. Her father passed away and her mother remarried and had 3 children with her new husband. Promise stopped school after her JSIII in 2012, a year before I met her.

Promise was still tearful as she recalled the conversation she had with her mum from faraway Burkina-Faso. I observed that the child never accused her mother of wrongfully telling her that she was to work for white people in Senegal and finding herself ending up in Burkina-Faso. The child still believed in her mother's innocence. The pain experienced by the child was more related to the huge knocks on the parental foundation. First, when she told her mother that she was asked to work as a prostitute, she appeared happy that her mother, who she told me is a seer or visionary, told her not to do this because of their religious background. Then the line cut and she redialled only to have her mother spring up like someone with multiple personality. Her mother told her to endure the job for the sake of the family, her mother went on to question her child's morality even accusing Promise of sleeping with men in Nigeria:

. . .the woman now started saying that if we work, we will bring money for food. I said that I want to go to Nigeria, that I am not eating. The woman now started forcing me and my sister. I used the woman's phone to call my mother... I called my mother and my mother now said that I should not do the work for the first time, that I should not do the work o that we are Christians, that our church doesn't do that kind of work. She started crying. She cut the phone. I called her back. She said that I should manage the work, that there is no money in Nigeria. I said oh! Then she [mother] started forcing me to do the work. I said that I cannot do it, that I am very little; I am too small to want to do this work. She now said I should say if I am a virgin. . .that I used to meet men in Nigeria before. I asked how she knows that I always sleep

*with men in Nigeria. She said that she knows. I told her that I am not going to do the work and she started forcing me... She said that there is no work in Nigeria. I started crying...—
Promise, 17-year-old girl*

Finding she could not count on the trust of the one person she felt close to, Promise must have been really shaken and felt resigned to her fate. It made me reflect on the extent to which children's perception of parental betrayal influenced their participation in or endurance of exploitative trafficking.

3.1.4. It involves learning too early that people are not always who you think they are

I move from questions about parental innocence to children that during trafficking had reason to question their perception of people they thought they knew. I will begin with 7-year-old Adaora who was sharp as a fiddle, though in a lot of pain from the hot water that her madam poured on her body prior to coming to the NAPTIP shelter. Little Adaora was attending school in her village in Anambra state until a woman from her village who appeared nice to her and her siblings invited her over to Lagos to care for her babies. Her mother was reluctant to let Adaora leave home, but Adaora convinced her mother that they should assist the woman.

When she leaves the house I try to sleep. She said that when she leaves the house I should lock the door and this day, her washed clothes were also outside. I did not know that it was going to rain. When she came back and saw that her clothes on the line were wet, she used a cane to start flogging me, all over my body, my arms, she will also use her hands to punch me. I will not move, and then she also used her high heel shoe to hit me on the head. My head cracked and blood was all over the place. The one that happened on my head, when it happened I was using it to fetch and carry bucket of water on my head...— Adaora, 7-year-old girl

Apart from humiliating experiences with the cane and cuts in the head, the greatest menace was the woman's dexterity with hot water. When I met Adaora at the Lagos shelter in September 2013, she lifted her arms with difficulty and the other children had to assist with her bath and laundry. Adaora learned from the experience and wished she had listened to her mother. She began to understand the great wisdom her mother must possess for seeing through the woman's 'kind exterior' while with Adaora and her siblings in the village to the woman's true self displayed when Adaora came to live with her in Lagos.

One might expect that, unlike in Adaora's situation with a neighbour, a child is more likely to understand the dispositions of a close relative. Eziwuwa, now 14 years old, from Imo State, could not recall her age when her father's younger sister took her from her widower father to live with her and attend school in Lagos.

Promise's journey into trafficking began even from Nigeria where the link man asked Promise and her older cousin travelling with her to take an oath. The two girls refused. Later on the girls found themselves travelling to Burkina-Faso instead of Senegal and been handed over to a woman who they told Promise was now her madam. The madam told Promise that she will be working as a prostitute, a job which Promise refused doing. Promise requested to speak with her mother before making further decisions about her to deal with her complicated situation in Burkina-Faso.

21 — Eziyuwa's journey away from home



Eziyuwa says that after school she goes to her aunt's house to help with frying buns for sale. When the shop closed for the day, she would return home to continue working there until about midnight or 1am. It was only when her uncle was home that she slept at reasonable hours and functioned without physical abuse. The child recalls her last days with her aunt:

It was on Saturday when she came to the bathroom and asked me if this is how I wash toilets. I told her that I had finished washing the toilet, that I was now washing the walls. She said that I was wasting her OMO [detergent]. So she now took the cord for the radio and starting hitting me with it until she cut my mouth. Her neighbour told her to leave me. When she left me and went to the market the neighbour then took the cell phone and snapped a picture of me. She asked me if I wanted to leave and I said yes. She said I should not worry. I think she was the one that reported to NAPTIP. The NAPTIP people came to collect me on Thursday. So, on Monday I was washing plates because I slept late the previous night and woke up around 5 am. I was washing plates and feeling sleepy. I was now sleeping in the kitchen. She saw me sleeping in the kitchen and brought a cane to flog me. I held the cane to prevent her from flogging me. She then decided to bite me with her teeth. — Eziyuwa, 14-year-old girl

Eziyuwa's second encounter with her aunt depicts a common aspect of Nigerian discipline where a child is expected to remain docile as a parent or older person punishes you for wrongdoing. You are not expected to clutch the cane,

even when you know you could be hurt or even maimed by the cane. However, it is difficult to understand why her aunt responded with a bite when Eziyuwa held on to the cane. Where does socialisation or assistance by an aunt towards her niece begin and end? Eziyuwa expects that if someone is her father's sister, then she should look out for her and understand her limitations or inability to function without sleep or to be told where she went wrong cleaning a toilet the way she has always done since moving into that household. Eziyuwa was brought to the NAPTIP shelter after a neighbour called the agency to report repeated assault on the girl by her aunt.

What, then, happens when a child moves into a home with people that are unfamiliar? Ezinna is a 13-year-old girl from Imo State. She was happy when she was told that she would be going to live in Onitsha with a medical doctor who would put her in a good school. She always felt they were not teaching well in her village school and encouraged her mum to allow her to leave home. Ezinna narrates her experience, the morning she arrived at the doctor's house:

When I got to his house, he told me that he wants to check my body--- So he looked at my body. He said that he wants to use me. I said no. He said he has brought everything for giving people injections that I should go and take a bath. He told me to take a bath, and then he gave me the injection. Everything happened in the morning and I woke up in the afternoon. I was surprised. When I woke up I vomited. It was when he returned from where he went. Immediately I woke up I vomited. I did not say anything to him. I just ignored him. — Ezinna, 13-year-old girl

How are children expected to know that there are multiple sides to some adult's personality? When a child is told that someone is a medical doctor and would assist them academically, based on their perception of the person's profession and their age, children are bound to view the person positively. But, then, that trust is shaken as in the case of Ezinna and the other girls sent to live with the medical doctor, the most likely action is to be 'surprised, possibly ignoring' the person and deliberating on how best to manage the situation especially without contact with your immediate family.

Angel travelled with Pastor X to Abuja and remained in his house along with other children for a while before she was handed over to a woman living in Abuja. Angel was upset that the woman delayed in enrolling her in school. She said that the woman's explanation was that she (Angel) could not read. Angel wondered if enrolling her in school will not improve on her reading and writing skills. Angel was also upset with the Pastor who she claims takes people's children away without keeping in touch with their families. She claims that several families in Taraba State petitioned NAPTIP that the Pastor was selling their children.

3.2. Enduring the experience of exploitation

Different children have different ways of dealing with trauma associated with memories of their trafficking experience. In this section, children's narratives and drawings reveal their perception of discrimination, manipulation and exploitation within trafficking and the way they endured or resisted the multilayered nature of their experiences.

3.2.1. It involves questioning the motives of those who should love you

Chiedo, 10 years old, went to live with an affectionate old lady upon the death of his parents, but his oldest sister, who he calls aunty, came to take him away. While in her home, he never experienced the affection he expected living with a blood sister:

She will give me the money and I have to go to the market myself to buy the water. . . The first time I sold the water, I came back with 130Naira and she asked me for the remaining money and I said I don't know that this was the amount I made from the sales. She said she will forgive

me, I am just starting the business. The next day, she asked me why I was unable to sell anything. I said because people were not buying. I was going to school. But I may go today and not go tomorrow. I had another sister that was also selling water with me. My aunty was treating me bad and handed me over to one woman. The woman was never allowing me take baths and she would lie to my aunty that I was stealing money— Chiedo, 10-year-old boy

Chiedo could not understand his sister's attitude. The child had never engaged in business and was not even aware that the pure water business was lucrative. The sister expected returns on her investment. Chiedo and his immediate older sister, also living in the house, became tools for actualising this, with regular school attendance becoming a distant dream. The two children were also expected to work in their sister's friend's hairdressing salon. Chiedo's narrative makes it even more difficult to understand the power that adults exerted over helpless children and the absence of visible communal networks to monitor and cushion the excesses of erring adults.

Based on **Mercy's** arrangement with the man she met by the road side, she took a few of her personal belongings from home and went to the man's house in the village. A few days later, Mercy was handed over to someone who brought her to the woman needing her services in Lagos. She found her services were needed somewhere she never expected. Mercy made her first visit to a brothel and her narratives buttressed her shock with the new environment. Her travelling bag contained items that a young girl would put together for a trip to a new home — properly tailored dresses, her Bible, shoes and hair accessories. She was re-educated when all these were thrown aside and she was prepared body and mind for a new job.

3.2.2. It involves experiencing deceit on multiple spheres

Zainab, 17, a trafficked child from Togo, had been working in Nigeria since the age of 8. Her experience with trafficking meant she could not trust her trafficker, who constantly moved her from one house to the next for domestic work or her employers who could never stand up to save a child that has lived and worked with them for some years. During the focus group discussion, Zainab provides insight into the deceitful world she lived in:

Some people will come promising that. . . they will carry you to work but, when you get there, they will tell you that you will go to a different place to work for 9 months. So they will lie to you. If it is time for you to leave the place and you call them to tell them that it is time for you to go. . .that you want to go, they will tell you ah no o. No! They will not say no, they will pick the phone and call the oga and say, "Ah, that child has called me. O she told me that ah you are beating her, she is waking up around 5am." So I thank God that the time I left, he [trafficker] said he wants to carry me to work in another place. But I thank God that God gave me power and I ran. — Zainab, 17 year old, girl

Zainab paints a general picture of the experiences of several children trafficked into and within Nigeria — the movement from one establishment to the next, uncertainty about when their work ends and the inability to return home to family consumes trafficked children's existence. When it is time to return home, there is often nothing to show for 8 years of servitude because your employers always submitted your salary to your trafficker. Unable to collect her salary since coming to Nigeria and unable to endure life with such uncertainty, Zainab ran away from her last madam.

Do other children feel as frustrated with the deceptive tendencies of employers as Zainab did in her narrative? In a previous narrative, Amina mentioned that a young girl introduced her to someone called Taye for employment at a beer parlour. The beer parlour turned out to be a hotel. In the current narrative, the hotel manager's wife sells out or squeals on her husband to the police, only to re-exploit Amina to work in a different hotel:

The manager, his wife is also in the hotel. The wife told him that this girl is too small to be doing this type of work, that if you can help the girl. . . and I ran away again. The manager's wife went to report to police that one girl was working in the hotel and ran away. The police searched and found me. They now caught her husband and locked him in the cell. They said they will lock me inside cell, but the wife bailed me out of there. The woman knew what she was doing. She planned bad things for me too. She carried me to one hotel. One day, one boy came and said that I should not be doing this type of work, that this is not a good job, that I should be praying to God that one day the police will come and arrest everybody. So one day the Abeokuta police came and they arrested us: 8 girls. — Amina, 17-year-old girl

Children, especially those on the run from bad situations, are vulnerable to being exploited as money-making resources by adults. Children themselves find it increasingly difficult to know who to trust because trust, as Amina indicates, in her narrative is another platform for exploitation.

3.2.3. It involves being made to feel less than human

Children's stories would also dwell on incidents that happened during their residence in particular homes that made them feel less than human. Nike and Ola are 7-year-old girls recruited for domestic work. Ola felt unwell and defecated, which began a chain of events. The two children were invited to give a joint narrative because they lived with and served relatives living together:

Ola: *It was when I defecated on my body---*

Nike: *Yes, she was not well at that time so she was sitting down and defecated on her body. Then she carried that panty and flung it into the white bucket. When they now saw it, they asked who did it. She now lied against me that I was the one that put the cloth in the white bucket. When they asked me, I said it was Ola that defecated and put the panty in the bucket. When they were now flogging her, the cane now went to her eye—they beat her and after this, they put the panty in her mouth.*

Ifeyinwa: *No!*

Nike: *Then they now fastened it and tightened her mouth*

Ifeyinwa: *How did they tighten her mouth?*

Nike: *The cloth that she wore and the panty, they now sealed her mouth like this [demonstrates]*

Ifeyinwa: *How did they seal her mouth?*

Nike: *They told her to do it herself then they sealed her mouth*

Ifeyinwa: *How?*

Nike: *They told her to open her mouth ah like this, then they put the pant inside, and asked her to seal her mouth, then they used the cloth to seal her mouth too and then they beat her. After beating her they told her to do like this and then they will leave her. But she did not listen.*

Ola: *No, mummy, they did not say anything like that. She is always telling lies.*

Nike: *They told you that if you do like this [a specified punishment called angle 90, demonstrated by Nike which Ola was asked to perform] that they will leave you but you did not listen. So they beat you and tied her hands to the back and tied her legs and asked her to stand up. When they finished tying her up, they told her to stand up---*

Ola: *I did not stand up!*

Ifeyinwa: *Ola, don't worry, allow Nike to talk, you will have your turn later.*

Nike: *She did not get up, so they raised her up.*

Ifeyinwa: *Ola, why didn't you get up when they asked you to get up?*

Ola: *I could not get up!*

Nike: They had tied her hands and legs! They now helped her up. . . They had told her that she should not go outside because they did not want anyone seeing her face. But she went outside--

Ifeyinwa: What was wrong with her face?

Nike: They beat her badly now!

Ola: They used *kpamkere*¹⁵, to hit me on the face.

Nike: She now started holding her face and her face was inflamed and hot.

[They started giggling]

Ola: It was here [NAPTIP shelter] that the mummy around here gave me something to be putting on the face and wound.

What makes the narrative traumatic for the children is the fact that, in their own homes, accidental defecation in the pant due to ill health and hiding it in a bucket may have been considered mischief or telling lies, which are part of the developmental process. This incident would have been handled with quiet conversations between mother and child. But the incident took a different turn with sad consequences. The entire act of asking a younger and helpless human being, also one in your servitude, to feed on her panty and faeces puts asserting one's authority to the limit. Also spicing the punishment with acts such as binding her hands and legs and commanding the child to stand brings pictures of the master and the subservient slave to mind. Then her tormentors offer her some breathing space with the command not to show herself to the world until evidence of her (Ola's) humiliation has healed.

Twelve-year-old Sandra was made to feel less than human in a way that, without professional intervention, would leave permanent scars after trafficking. As previously mentioned, Sandra was stolen away from her mother to live with a medical doctor in Onitsha, who exploited her sexually.

22 - Sandra's journey away from home



¹⁵ Cane

Sandra shares a typical demeaning process of violation and intimidation:

... He continues sleeping with me. If I don't want to do it ...that doctor, yes he will just beat me and say that do you know the money they paid for you. When the doctor calls her [the other girl from her home State] to come and hold my leg, she will come and hold my legs for him, so the doctor will come and continue—There are many times. . . But I can't count them. The one I can count is like 8 times — Sandra, 12-year-old girl

Sandra accused the other older girl from her home state of holding her legs and assisting the doctor in violating her sexually, something the other girl continuously denies. The accused girl was, however, instrumental to the removal of the other six girls from captivity from the doctor's house. The doctor's comment about unreserved rights over Sandra's body and his violation of it when desired calls to mind the extent to which the rich are willing to exploit the

poor and helpless to satisfy their unwholesome desires. If a parent had been informed that their 12-year-old child would have to sleep daily with an old male doctor, would they have accepted to release their child to him simply to be free of the parental obligations of paying for the child's education from primary to university level?

*Her family's decision to keep her in her boyfriend's house after discovering she was pregnant backfired and **Chinyere** ran away from home. She passed the night at the backyard of a woman she sells tomatoes to. When she narrated her story to the woman, the woman promised to assist Chinyere by sending her to another woman who will take care of her (Chinyere) until she had her baby, was well enough to start school and manage on her own. The woman's assistance turned out to be sending Chinyere to a baby factory where undisputed decisions were taken to sell her baby for less than 1000dollars and without her consent too.*

Similar to Sandra, Princess was uprooted from her home at eleven years old, and taken to Abeokuta on the pretext of a short visit to Lagos. Then, on arrival, she was told she would be taking care of a woman's baby. It turned out to be a lie and Princess found herself in the sex trade. Princess had made several attempts to run away before taking on the first client, but the woman

always had the boys on her payroll find her. She narrates the process of starting work in the hotel after another aborted escape attempt:

Before she took me to the hotel. . . that morning she gave me something to drink. She said that if I run away, something from babalawo¹⁶, if I run away I will die and I will be smelling on the road and people will reject me. She gave me many things to rub on my body... I removed my clothes and knelt down. . .So, after rubbing the things on my body that day, I put on my clothes and we went to the first hotel. . . The first hotel, I stayed there. I was working. More than 20 men will come to sleep with me in one day. I was doing the work. I was even crying. Nobody pitied me. Some people pitied me. Some other people do not think about that. All they know is that they have paid the money, they finish and go. I used to make 10,000Naira (51USD) a day for her. . .— Princess, 13-year-old girl

Princess talks about the feeling of aloneness in her dehumanisation. The people who came over to sleep with her did not care about her tears, her age and size — their major concern was with getting value for the money they paid. Her madam's only concern was preparing Princess with fetish creams and drinks that ensure compliance and attract customers - two attributes that guarantee steady daily income. While Sandra was violated daily by one man who

¹⁶ Father of knowledge, divination, herbalist or voice of the oracle in the Yoruba culture

dehumanised her and intimidated her to submission using injections and force, Princess recalls having to sleep with more than 20 men in a day.

3.2.4. It involves remaining helpless as adults justified their actions

Ola's narrative did not end with feeding on her faeces. Ola had to endure the after-effects of the abuse meted on her by keeping away from public glare. This was her madam's way of preventing neighbours from knowing what she did to the children living and working in her household:

The mummy that gave birth to those twins told her [Ola] not to step outside. But she stepped outside and I heard that woman shouting 'Ola but I told you not to step outside.' I did not know that she had stepped outside. I got up and went outside. I said, 'Ola, what happened that you stepped outside? But I told you not to step outside since that mummy said you should not go outside.' She stepped outside and they now saw her. They asked her what happened to her face. She said that she fell down. They had told us that we should not tell that woman what happened to us because if we tell her what happened to us they will beat us. We did not tell her. It now happened that one day, the woman called the policemen. — Nike, 7-year-old girl

The idea of asking a child to remain hidden in the home to hide evidence of your defilement of her body appears abnormal. Is the directive to keep herself hidden, an act of remorse or penance on the part of the madam? If an act is completely justified then there should be no reason to hide the physical evidence.

3.2.5. It involves living with the effects of unstable family relationships and leaving home too early

In the previous chapter, the narratives of children like Emilia and Princess dwelt on being torn in two in making decisions about their education and wellbeing when separated from their parents. The emotional weight of taking on adult roles led these children to make some wrong decisions. Priscilla, a 15-year-old from Delta State, continues her story about leaving home after an argument with her father.

Brother B, a young boy, said he will help me and take me to Lagos where I will be working for one big man. He talked to me and told me everything about Brother E. He said that the man used to employ girls in Lagos. Brother B handed me over to Brother E. I never knew two of them before now. Brother E took me to his house. He said he will take me to Senegal and I will be working for oyinbo man and the man will put me in school. I followed the man to Cotonu where one of his friends disvirgined me. He said that if I really need help then I have to sleep with his friend Felix. He said that this is a different country that nothing is going to happen. That is how I slept with the boy. We did not use protection it was ordinary body. But the man gave me medicine. The next day we went to Burkina. He sold me to a lady called Sister E for 350000francs. The lady told me that I will be working as a prostitute paying her 1.2million in France money in Burkina. That was how I started doing the job. — Priscilla, 15-year-old girl

This was one of the narratives I struggled with during my field research. Unlike other children I worked with, I had reason to meet Priscilla at two shelters I remained in for one month intervals. I had close associations with this child, who was one of the most intelligent children I met during my research. She had a natural yearning for knowledge and she would always come to me with textbooks, asking to be given textual assignments and wanting to read comprehension passages to me, hoping to learn new words. I interviewed her first at the Lagos shelter in September and again at the Benin Shelter in October. Her responses remained the same. I also had the extra advantage of

accompanying her when she was returned home to her father by NAPTIP. I could not understand the resolve to continue on that journey away from home, your home state, Benin, moving to Lagos, then out of Lagos, getting exploited in Cotonu and continuing on to Burkina Faso. But Priscilla's narrative provided insight into the power strangers or traffickers could have on decisions taken by children to engage in activities they ordinarily would not have engaged in, were they in control of situations and their 'lives' for that matter. Priscilla's experiences had made her withdrawn and passive and the only thing that brought out some element of light or child-like spark were discussions about education.

Sharing another story resulting from unstable family relationships was Deola, 17 from Cotonu. Deola considers herself enslaved in Nigeria since the age of 5 by someone she was too young to know when he trafficked her, was her relative. She realised after she was removed from trafficking that her trafficker was indeed her father:

I don't know, but I was about 5years old when they brought me to Lagos. They took me to Orile-Iganmu side where I was working with an old mama. There was a time the mama was taking me to school, taking good care of me, but when the person that took me away from my mother [her biological mother] came to collect my salary, he said that they should not send me to school that he did not ask them to do so. If it weren't that the man stopped my schooling, I have already gone far more than this [meaning schooling-wise and the lessons we were having at the shelter]. He said that I should not go to school and he fought them that I should not go to school. . . — Deola, girl, 17

Deola spent painful days at the shelter trying to come to terms with the fact that the man that she has always

Sandra travelled to somewhere in Western Nigeria with her cousin (her trafficker) before arriving in Onitsha where she was received by the medical doctor (a man) and her trafficker's cousin also from Benue State who was working at the doctor's hospital. The medical doctor had his own hospital in Onitsha. He enrolled Sandra in a private primary school where Sandra was taken three classes lower - from primary 5 to primary 2 because the teaching method was more advanced than in her village school. The medical doctor also kept Sandra in one of the many apartments in his house and in the care of the older girl from Benue State. Thereafter, Sandra endured several months of sexual exploitation until the day she escaped from the house.

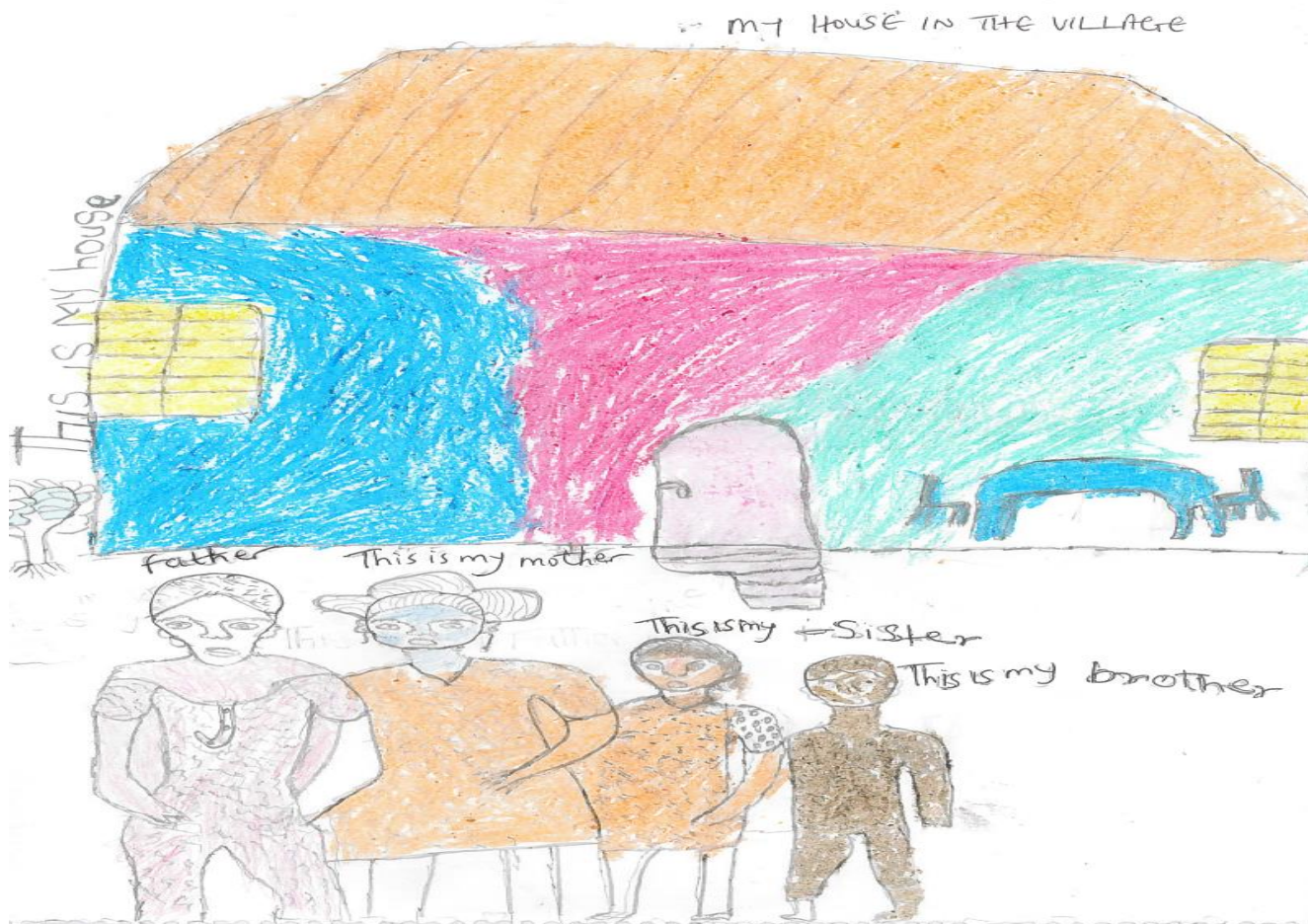
associated with her trafficking (or her preferred description, enslavement), the man who collected the earnings of her labour and separated her from her mother and siblings was her biological father. The reason behind keeping a child in servitude and preventing her employers from allowing her acquire education, even when the money expended on this education would not be deducted from the child's monthly salary, is one that the child still finds difficult to understand. But it reinforces the fact that education is a tool of emancipation. If the child becomes educated, she is presented with a wider worldview, associates with people that teach her so many things about knowing her rights and then she begins questioning her 'enslavement.' This probably explains why several employers of these young domestic servants

fail to enrol them in school.

3.2.6. It involves an attack on innocence

The innocence so prized in children is a beautiful thing and one that should be nourished for as long as possible. The narratives of 17-year-old Mercy and excerpts from the drama presented by children from the Abuja shelter indicate that innocence in trafficking is only exploited for its monetary value:

23 — Mercy's journey away from home



Ifeyinwa: How did your madam prepare you for the job?

Mercy: She went to buy clothes for me because I did not bring my clothes with me. She bought clothes for me and bought weave-on for me to fix in my hair. She bought shoes for me. I came with my shoes. The shoes I will be wearing [while working as a house help] I came with them. Since I was coming to do house-help, I came with my hair-thread, but nobody is doing hair with thread here. I also came with my Bible that I will be taking to Church. But they carried that Bible and said nobody does anything Church here, that nobody goes to Church.

Ifeyinwa: What happened to your Bible? Did they throw the Bible away?

Mercy: Yes. My people's [family] phone numbers that they gave me they tore that one too. They tore them. When I started work, they told me that I will be carrying men in the house every day.

I asked Mercy how her madam prepared her for the job and Mercy talks about her nonchalant introduction to prostitution. Her narrative indicates she must have felt violated and forced into helplessly accepting what was the norm in the establishment without regard for the ideals she had grown up with. She was sad that all associations with home were callously tossed aside. These associations to home included her address book, her shoes, her possibly prim and proper dresses appropriate for the 15-year-old that she was, her hair thread which they must have considered local or primitive choosing to give her a perm and extensions. What she found even more difficult

was taking away her Bible and making her believe that in the hotel, people are too busy satisfying the needs of men to go to Church. Could there have been a milder way of preparing a child to do something she never even consented to?

Excerpts from the drama presented by children from the Abuja shelter also buttress how traffickers can exploit innocent and trusting children for monetary gains:

[Roadside — a young girl is standing minding her business]

Lady White: How are you, my daughter? I have something for you, you hear.

[She gives the girl several packets of snacks to eat]

Girl: Thank you ma!

Lady White: What is your name?

[Silence, the girl could not answer]

Lady White: Yes. This is a good opportunity. I will give this girl to Chief Gbenga. No, Chief Gbenga may not give me enough money. Alhaji Bello will give me enough money for this fish o! Alhaji will give me enough money.

[Turning to the girl]

Lady White: Don't worry, my daughter, you will follow me to my house. . . Don't worry. When we get there you will eat chicken and good food. Don't worry, let's go. Follow me to my house, you hear?

[In the lady's house]

Lady White: Welcome to my house my daughter. Sit down o! Let me get you food o.

[Returns with the food]

Lady White: My daughter, here is food, eat.

[On the phone]

Lady White: Chief, chief! Chief how are you now? You know me now, you know me lady white now! Ah ah!

Chief: Has anything happened?

Lady White: You know me, now, chief.

Chief: Is there a problem?

Lady White: I have got sweet fish for you. This one is good o!

Chief: I hope it is not the type of fish that behaves foolishly.

Lady White: No, this one is good fish. It appears they have not cut its tail at all o! It is still fresh o! Ah chief, this one the tail has not been cut o. So you should know that you will pay some good money¹⁷ for this one o!

Chief: It is only when I see it and if the thing is good then I will pay you good money.

Lady White: Okay, later in the evening tell your PR ¹⁸to come now.

[Chief's PR comes over]

Lady White: Oh welcome o PR. How are you, ma?

PR: I am fine.

Lady White: I hope chief has arranged better o!

PR: Yes, where is she now?

Lady White: This is the girl

PR: Is she the one?

Lady White: You know something, she cannot speak English well.

PR: Hope she knows how to do that thing.

Lady White: Yes she does.

¹⁷¹⁷ Sweet fish with an uncut tail refers to a virgin. When a child lured into prostitution is a virgin, the trafficker or pimp expects to be paid a lot more

¹⁸ Public Representative or personal assistance

PR: Okay, my friend, my friend, just enjoy yourself.
[Later Girl returns home crying]

When the children from the NAPTIP Shelter presented their drama I was taken aback that children that were not removed from sexual exploitation had a real sense of what their peers with such experiences were going through. I also marvelled at the language used in the exchange between Lady White and the potential exploiter of the innocent girl. Mercy was innocent and a virgin until she went to the hotel; the girl in the drama was innocent and a virgin until she was exploited by Lady White — their exploitation and tearing down of their innocence was also done without their consent.

Adaora started living in Lagos with the woman she knew from the village, her husband and her two children. She was not attending school while resident in that house. Her duties in the house included cleaning, mopping and cooking. After a while, for minor mistakes Adaora made, the woman would pour hot water on her or hit her on the head with a heavy pair of shoes that caused her scalp to split.

3.2.7. It involves finding yourself passed around from one person to the other

Are trafficked children like other children or are they a special breed of children without dreams of their own, simply there to nurture the dreams of others? I will look to the narratives of two children, Paul and Mercy for insight in filling the vacuum. Fifteen-year-old Paul is the last of 8 children. He left home because his parents assumed Pastor X would link him to someone who will put him in school:

As I went with the pastor, he did not put us in school. . . He found a workshop where we will learn mechanics from somebody. I am not a mechanic but panel beater. We did this for one year. The pastor now took us to learn how to do soya beans. From there I went to Lagos and the man [the Pastor sent him to Lagos to work as houseboy for a new man] did not even put me in school. . . I was just staying in the house. After that I told the man that I am not going to stay, that I want to go. From there in 2012, the man sent me back to the pastor. — Paul, 15-year-old boy

As stated earlier, Mercy who is now 17 years old, left home at 15 with a man who promised her a job as a house girl. Mercy left home without informing her grandmother, who she lived with at the time:

***Mercy:** We will stand in front of the hotel, then the men will see your face and carry you. You will just stay like this [she demonstrates cheerfully, she is usually a happy child] and the man will come and touch you and say 'come.' Sometimes she [madam] will remove some money, sometimes those people will give me 3000 and I will remove 500 and give her 2,500. Sometimes I make 7000, 8000Naira a day. Sometimes, if market enter me¹⁹ I will get 6000, 6500Naira. I carry fast²⁰, I carry plenty people. Sometimes, here [back and waist] will pain me and I will go and sleep before coming to market. I will carry 2000Naira people. If I carry 4 people, my madam will say I am a barrier²¹ and she will beat me.*

***Ifeyinwa:** So how many people does she want you to carry then?*

***Mercy:** She will want me to carry 6. She is finding her own money, 7000, 8000Naira. Sometimes if I carry 5000Naira she will be very happy. If I carry 10,000Naira she will be very happy.*

***Ifeyinwa:** What about you, will you be happy, won't you have body pains?*

***Mercy:** Yes*

¹⁹ When market enters someone is the pidgin version for when someone is in a business mood

²⁰ To carry fast — to sleep with or have sex with multiple customers quickly

²¹ Impeding or retarding economic progress

***Mercy:** Yes. Sometimes when she is in the village, I will carry 2000Naira people and keep it and write it on paper and when she comes back, I will give her. They will be calling me on the phone every day. . . The police caught me there, three times; they said that I am too small.*

Paul left home knowing that he wanted someone that will put him in school while he contributed by helping with house chores. He waited about three years while the pastor put him through vocational training programmes and housekeeping for a man that still did not enrol him in school. Paul shows that sometimes, some trafficked children know when to put an end to associations that foreshadow their dreams.

Similar to Paul, Mercy left home because she felt she would be going to a place where she would work and go to school. Although she had to work at her destination, no one at the hotel mentioned anything about going to school. From her narrative, she was made to attend a new type of school, where the amount of customers she had to attend to and the daily returns she had to make to a demanding madam made it almost difficult to remember she once had a dream of attending school. Mercy's narrative also leaves me pondering if she cultivated that happy exterior to mask the many pains that became part of her life — the obvious pain of having to sleep with more than 4 men a day and masking the back and waist pain from her customers and madam; the pain of having to learn how to make herself inviting to potential male customers by the road side; and the pain of having to deal with the many older men calling day and night to have a taste of her young body. Mercy must have found solace in smiles and a cheerful exterior as a way of dealing with situations she had no control over. The police had also caught her thrice and it is troubling that she always managed to return to the hotel, probably because her earnings were still with the madam and, at 15, not knowing her way around a new part of the country, she had limited options until she was removed to the NAPTIP shelter.

3.2.8. It involves taking on adult roles

When children are trafficked for labour exploitation, there is the tendency that they do a lot more than they would have done in their homes and more than other children their age. For children like 15-year-old Paul, whose final stage of trafficking was to care for an old lady, even more is expected of them:

No, my name is T but they gave me an Igbo surname. They also gave me their father's surname. . . I will give her food, after giving her food I will go to school. After school, I will prepare her afternoon food. I was just living like that. On Christmas day, they will buy clothes for us, the old woman and I. Sometimes the woman's son in Lagos will stay with us for one week, two weeks, three week. After staying with us he will go back to Lagos. . . In 2013, I don't know how the old woman started coughing. . . Then the cough became worse and she was not even talking. . .or walking again. So I called [her family] and . . . they came to take her to the hospital. . . I will go and feed her, wash her clothes, make her food and she will eat. I stayed with the woman until she said that we should bring her clothes that she wants to go home. Let me translate it the way she said it in Igbo language. She said 'we should leave her to go to her Father's house.' I said 'You are not going anywhere. You are in your house.' — Paul, 15-year-old boy

Paul presents a powerful narrative of love and affection for a woman he accepted as his own grandmother. His narrative also showed respect for a family that took him in and accepted him as their own. He mentioned that the

family gave him an Igbo name, which is a mark of a Nigerian tribe's acceptance of a stranger as one of their own. The change of name also helped ease the process of registering him in school because the school recognised him as a child of the people paying his school fees. He also points to the non-discriminatory stance of the household because anything that was given to the old lady was also given to him. Such love displayed by the family made him persevere with his care of the old lady who depended solely on his good will. The narrative ended on a sorrowful note where the child indicated that the old woman was already weak and tired of living and needed her clothes (beautiful clothes probably) to return to her Father's house in heaven. Paul, like a true son, told her to persevere, that she was not leaving him. Unfortunately those were her last words to him. It is impressive to listen to the narrative of a child who performed adult roles with selflessness and experienced the pain of losing someone dear within the trafficking literature.

3.2.9. It involves enduring humiliating evaluations like commodities on sale

From listening to children's narratives, I detected an undercurrent of people that perceived themselves different from other human beings — especially other children and people in the households they worked. If they were not different, then why have they become bargaining tools while their mates are snuggled warmly in bed or all dressed for school? The narratives of 17-year-old Sunday and 15-year-old Priscilla depict the evaluation and commodification of children's bodies. For Sunday's narrative, he also makes references to the pictorial depiction of his story:

24 — Sunday's journey away from home



This is Iya²² Bolanle's house. This is the place she keeps children before giving them to people... Then this Iya Bolanle will now take the children around. She will be asking people if they want to collect some children. The drawing shows all the children in her house. The children are more than this, it is because the paper is too small. There are more than 40 children. But my mummy told me that she came to her because she heard that she used to give children to work for people in Lagos. I was staying in her house until she took me somewhere to work. — Sunday, 17-year-old boy

Sunday's mother thought she was helping her son realise his dreams of learning a trade in Lagos when she contacted a friend who she heard takes children to Nigeria for work. She did not know she was sending her son to a child-depot where he became nothing but a shadowy face among the endless sea of children that Iya Bolanle kept in her house, dispatching them to people who had need for children and could meet the price she attached to their work.

²² Yoruba word for mother

Fifteen-year-old Priscilla, on the other hand, had to put herself on display to attract male customers:

Priscilla: *She [madam] taught me how to fix condom on their [men] bodies and the next thing how to collect money, which I will add to my purse. That was all. If I take a customer inside, I will fix the condom on him. I will sit down outside on the main road watching when men are passing on their bike or with their cars. There are many of us and we will be sitting on our own chairs on the main road, when men are passing they will now come and meet me and I will take them inside. That was how I used to do it.*

Ifeyinwa: *Assuming I am a customer, when I come over to you what do you do?*

Priscilla: *I will tell you the amount you will pay me, which is 1000CFA. You will give me the money and I will take you inside. You will spend about 5 or 6 minutes before I come out and ask the other customer to follow me inside.*

Ifeyinwa: *How many customers did you have in a day?*

Priscilla: *Sometimes I have 20, sometimes I have 18*

Ifeyinwa: *Weren't you having pains?*

Priscilla: *Sometimes she used to give me medicine when I get home.*

Ifeyinwa: *Did all your customers use condoms?*

Priscilla: *Yes*

Ifeyinwa: *Were you ever pregnant?*

Priscilla: *No. She used to give me medicine when I get home*

Only two months before leaving Nigeria, Priscilla was in the third year of secondary school. Her life completely turned around to become a commodity sold to a woman for whom she has to make daily payments from the proceeds of selling her body. It is difficult to imagine a 15-year-old sleeping with 18 to 20 men daily; the assurance she gets for continuing work the next day were the drugs given to her by her madam on returning home. It may never have occurred to her to know the name or content of the drugs because she had been groomed to submission. She also believed the 'miracle working drug' solved all imaginable sexual problems — from back or body pains to pregnancy.

3.2.10. It involves endurance or making the best of every situation

Like Priscilla in an earlier discussion, the inability to bring about changes to your current situation may cause children to endure and make the best of the situation they have found themselves. In relation to this, I will present the exchange I had with 14 year old Daniella. Daniella was earlier sent by her Uncle to a woman's house in Lagos. It was only after travelling home for Christmas and returning with Praise and others that they were arrested by the police. Daniella recounts her experience at the woman's house:

25 — Daniella's journey away from home



Daniella: Yes, I have stayed with a madam before the police came to catch me. My uncle took me to this madam that has 4 children. I was working. I will wash toilet, I will wash clothes, I will cook, wash car and I will do many things. She was not treating me well. She was beating me even though I was not doing bad things. She will not give me food. I will eat in the morning and I will not eat in the night.

Ifeyinwa: What about the afternoon?

Daniella: I will not eat

Ifeyinwa: What does she give you in the morning?

Daniella: It's rice.

Ifeyinwa: Were you the one feeding her children?

Daniella: Yes

Ifeyinwa: Were you the one cooking the food?

Daniella: Yes

Ifeyinwa: Why didn't you eat some of the food while you were cooking?

Daniella: She will come and stay in the kitchen and she will be looking at me.

Sometimes children put their dreams ahead of their discomfort. Daniella knew she was treated unfairly in a home where she was only sure of breakfast but she remained because she wanted to collect her monthly salary and make enough money to return to school. She recounts feeding the children on an empty stomach and not having the opportunity to taste even bits of her cooking because the madam remained in the kitchen until all evidence of the meal is cleared.

3.2.11. It involves making the unacceptable appear acceptable

When children find that the situation they have found themselves is different from what they expected, as Praise did, the reaction is often to adapt to the situation or leave. When 10-year-old Chiedo ran away from home and left with a strange woman for Abuja, the woman said they would start a business. The business turned out to be begging and stealing in the company of two other boys:

Ifeyinwa: *When you go to steal clothes in the market does she go with you?*

Chiedo: *Yes she would come with us and we are usually about three, when we steal something, we pass it to the other person. She will tell us that when we steal the clothes we should wear them on our body. There were even shoes that we stole. It was only when they went to the church to steal a rug that was spread to air behind the church (I was not with them) that they caught them and flogged them. When the boys were flogged and asked who sent them, they said it was aunty C. Yes, she was inside the church. But she denied and said she was not the one that sent the boys to steal.*

There was a wedding we attended between a Yoruba and Igbo person, and while they were dancing we stylishly, myself and her little son---

Ifeyinwa: *Her 3 year old son was also stealing with you all?*

Chiedo: *Yes. There is the time when she went to the market with her son, she will pick up shoes and sample them on her son's feet and she will tell her son, to test the shoe. While she is talking to the seller, she will carry her son away and the seller will not notice that the son has walked away with the shoes on his feet.*

In the course of working with the woman and probably taking pride in their many successes, Chiedo seemed to have lost touch with what is morally right or wrong. He also forgot his dreams of attending school as he spent his days formulating ways to steal enough things to please a woman who could send children to steal a rug from a Church compound, and who has already groomed her child to steal at only 3 years old.

I will continue with Mercy's narrative about how she was brainwashed into readiness to work as a prostitute:

Mercy: *Yes. I told them that I don't like this place. I cried that I do not like this place that I don't want to stay. . . I said this work that you are doing, that I cannot do it o! I stayed there for one month. Then they called a doctor to come and give me injection and my body became big and that was how I started this job. Before, I was not doing anything. I was staying in Peace's house sometimes. When Peace has customers staying until daybreak, I will stay in my madam's place at night. . . until I got my room.*

Ifeyinwa: *So you stayed there for one month even after you told them that you did not want to work there.*

Mercy: *Yes, then they called doctor to come and give me injection.*

Ifeyinwa: *What type of injection was that? Were you taken to the hospital?*

Mercy: *No, the doctor came to the hotel. The doctor comes there every day. He gave me injection in my bottom and here and the doctor gave me drip after I started work. You know he gave me drip, he gave me the thing so that it will not pain me. The day I started putting drip is the day I start work.*

Mercy had earlier narrated how she was stripped of things she identified with from home, including her Bible. Here when she refused to work in the hotel, they kept her there until the day the doctor came to attend to her. Mercy told me during our interview that her breast was not visible when she came to work in that hotel. But here we find Mercy been attended to by a doctor with intravenous fluids or drip or IV and injections that made her body larger.

Why did Mercy need intravenous fluids when she was not ill? What was injected into her body? The girl could not explain because she did not know and never asked. All she knows is that whatever was applied rejuvenated her for the work ahead and possibly reduced the pain during her first sexual experience. Why would a medical doctor be implicated in committing atrocities that involve subjecting a 15-year-old child to injections and drugs for work in a brothel?

3.2.12. It involves living in captivity and fear

Since children may not share similar experiences of trafficking, not all children may have been afraid or felt like captives but it was an experience shared by many. Chidi, 8 years old, who was one of the seven girls living with the medical doctor, recalls fear and helplessness associated with been sexually violated without her consent:

...He will come at night and fall on me almost suffocating me then... Then he will bring his penis and put it in and I will start crying. He will tell me to shut up and close my legs. He will bring... out the injection, then he will finish doing it to me... — Chidi, 8-year-old girl

It is confusing how a medical doctor will intimidate underage children into sexual submission by misusing the tools of his profession, injections that are freely administered to children who have not consulted him for any known or unknown ailment. The 8-year-old still bears visible evidence of her trauma with her speech coming out in difficult stammers like one still living in fear and probably a speech defect she did not possess before moving into that home. Ozioma, 13 years old, confirms how the children were intimidated into silence, from talking to anyone, his [doctor's] wife or their parents:

All of us were warned never to tell his wife what was going on... We were told that we should not tell anyone the things that are happening to us, that if we tell anyone that... There was a time my mummy came to visit but he will not allow me to really come close to her. He will be the one to go to the village. When he goes to the village he will come back and tell me that my mummy said that he should greet me and she said that I should always be doing whatever doctor asked me to do and that my mummy is very happy. — Ozioma 13-year-old girl

It can only be imagined what would happen to the children if they told anyone what happened in their house. It is even more traumatic for Ozioma who had left the home of a caring woman in Lagos because she wanted to live close to home. Ozioma was particularly sad that she could not visit her mother or have private conversations with her without the doctor hovering over them.

3.2.13. It involves resistance

Several children I interviewed for my study mentioned the initial resistance to remaining in a place they were not comfortable with. However, finding that that resistance also strengthened their traffickers' resolve to have them remain in those places, resistance may weaken to turn into submission until someone rescues them from captivity. After Promise, 17 years old, realised that her mother was not supportive of her returning to Nigeria empty-handed, she battled with her captors the best way she could:

The woman took me to a woman that speaks my language. My sister and I stayed in the woman's house. The woman took me to a bar. The name of the bar is XB. My sister and I started working there. I do not like to work. I will just sit down and start crying. I will not carry

men. They said that I should be carrying men because they don't sell drinks there. It's for Burkina people. . . So they now started---I do not like carrying men. I will just stay in one place. [She gives a pained reflective laugh.] If I carry one I will be busy, me and the man will be fighting inside. He will ask me to return his money, I will return it and he will go. So they were complaining and telling my madam that I don't carry men fast that I will be beating the men, that me and men will be fighting inside. — Promise, 17-year-old girl

Promise expressed that she will not like to work as a prostitute but no one listened to her or noticed her tears until she started turning customers away, which was bad for business. But how long can resistance to rendering services to customers be tolerated in the sex trafficking business? It is even more difficult to prolong resistance when a child is in a strange country, does not speak or understand the language and is unable to navigate law enforcement facilities.

3.2.14. It involves partaking in a soulless business activity

When children partake in a business during trafficking, what is it that is attractive about the business that makes them remain? Or do children remain in the business enterprise because they are captives with clockwork schedules and a constantly appearing, intimidating presence that forces them to submission or compliance? Seventeen-year-old Odinaka, who was trafficked into a baby factory, told the story of her confrontation with a madam who saw children and the sale of their babies as just another item to tick off her daily to-do-list:

We got to our destination in the morning. They gave me food and the driver left. We were not allowed to go outside. It's just washing, cooking and all that. The woman does the cooking while we assist her. She may bring her children's clothes and we will wash them. After washing them she may bring another set. . . she will always say that we should have no time to chat with one another. Do you see it? We remain busy, busy till the end of the day. She was always harsh, she never wants to chat with anybody and she always concentrated on her business. When she has visitors, she will send us inside. Do you see it? When the visitors leave she will ask us to come out. She told us that even if you are not doing anything you shouldn't be inside you should be outside. Do you see it? — Odinaka, 17-year-old girl

Odinaka became pregnant when she was raped while in secondary school. Having the man that got her pregnant deny her and the pregnancy was a difficult process for her. The seemingly reliable opportunity she had to deliver her baby in a place that would provide care for the child and rest for her, turned out to be a baby factory. Odinaka's narrative is important because in a country like Nigeria where there are several reports of young ladies removed from baby factories, it is important that a child victim will provide insight into the personality of the owner of the establishment, an insight that helps understand why children could not talk themselves out of the 'business' and succumbed to the sale of their babies.

3.2.15. It involves dealing with the diabolical or fetish

Moving from Odinaka's insight into intimidating presences that sway children to accept exploitative practices by adults are children's reports of their employers resorting to diabolical means to ensure compliance to their wishes.

In an earlier narrative, 13-year-old Princess told how her madam forced her to drink and rub certain ointments on her body before she started working in a brothel. Now, Priscilla, 15 years old, who was also working in a brothel in Burkina-Faso, talked about how her madam kept her in check with threats of dealing with her using juju²³:

... that lady told me that if I do not pay her money that anywhere she goes she will take my name to a juju in Burkina. That anywhere I go I will never find peace until I pay her money - 1.2 million CFA — Priscilla, 15-year-old girl

When Priscilla arrived at the shelter in Nigeria, she confided the fear that her madam would hunt her down using diabolic means. It took discussions with counsellors who had dealt with such issues in Benin, Edo State to alleviate her fears and insecurity. Other children, like Gabriella, questioned the ease with which a woman is allowed to constantly cart away children from her village even when their parents never get to see the children:

I don't even know if my mummy knew the woman before. I don't even know if the woman used medicine [juju] for the people in our village. She used to pack small, small children, 5 years old, 6 years old, and she will just pack them and go like that. She does not return them [children]. — Gabriella, 16-year-old girl

There is some rationale to Gabriella's questions and her belief that the woman must be using juju to control parents from her village. Gabriella, for instance, left Togo for Lagos with the woman about 7 years ago and has not seen her parents since then. She is not even sure if her monthly salary is sent to her needy parents.

While Gabriella struggles for answers, 14-year-old Success, who was a victim of an aborted recruitment for prostitution, shares the preparation that was made ahead of their departure for Burkina-Faso:

I did not swear to juju but the man we met at that side [Benin] gave us soap and powder. The soap is in our bag. But we did not use the powder. He said if we finish bathing that we should rub the powder on our face. It is black soap, Yoruba soap. The powder is one colour like that. I don't know the colour I have not opened it. . He said if we bath at that side, in Burkina-Faso, that if we want to leave the house for work that we should rub the powder on our face. It is that girl's uncle that gave us. Martha. The soap is with Martha. Everything is in Martha's bag. She was the one that the madam gave the things when we were coming. So we kept them that we are going to return them and ask the uncle what the soap and powder means²⁴. — Success, 14-year-old girl

Success and Martha did not take an oath but they were given items that they should use before leaving the house for work while in Burkina-Faso. Although the items were not originally given to the girls in Benin, the girls knew about the items, which were then handed over to the woman taking them to Burkina-Faso. It makes me question what the girls thought those items were for when they assumed they were only going to learn hairdressing outside Nigeria.

Bolaji, 13 years old, grapples with the idea of diabolical issues in trafficking by lamenting how her last madam would prevent her from touching her baby because she considered her (Bolaji) a witch:

²³ ... Charms, spells, amulets and items associated with witchcraft or voodoo

²⁴ When the girls use the powder on their body it is assumed that it acts as a spell drawing male customers to their body. Some girls make incisions on their body after which they rub the powder on their body. The spell relies heavily on contact with the female body.

She will not allow me to carry her baby. She will tell me that I am a witch, that I should not carry her baby. I was just sweeping, mopping, going to the market and washing plates. She said that because she bought clothes for me and the clothes were tearing fast that I must be going to meetings every day. I said I don't go to meetings. She now said that those meetings tear clothes. I don't know about this. But if my madam is going anywhere she will always lock me inside the house, except when I have to go to the market. — Bolaji, 13-year-old girl

Her madam considered Bolaji a witch because all clothes bought for her became unwearable after little use. Her madam said it was because she was constantly attending nightly meetings and the transportation process to these meetings wore clothes out. Bolaji denied being a witch and questioned how her madam knew so much about the journeys and effects of witches' journeys on their apparel. I also could not understand how someone could be accused of witchcraft and still be trusted with going to the market to buy food items for the family. Could this accusation be another way of ensuring compliance and humility from a child?

3.2.16. It involves understanding difference and discrimination

What makes a child different? How were children able to identify this difference? Children's stories drew pointers to the way they were treated different from other members of the household, especially children as young as or even younger than they were.

For 12-year-old Angel, who got into trafficking because she was accused of witchcraft in her native Benue State and forced to move in with a pastor who was to be involved in her deliverance, difference and discrimination were evident in the way she was constantly beaten and disallowed from attending school when her madam's children were attending school:

She did not put me in school early. . . She was talking that there is no money but she put all her children in school. I used to wash plates and fetch water and sweep and wash cloth. If I do something she will beat me. ...She said I don't know how to read. I was thinking, that if you don't know how to read, when you go to school they will teach you. — Angel, 12-year-old girl

Children like Angel who questioned the role of schools in future pupil's lives learned a lot about how different they were from other children within a household by the nature of their role (domestic servants) and treatment while in the household. A similar narrative of differential treatment is presented by Aduke, 14 years old, from Togo, who came to work as a domestic servant in Lagos.

26 — Aduke's journey away from home



Aduke had to leave the house at night, in search of matchsticks to cook the household meal. She was new to Nigeria and the locality and was unable to locate her madam's house when she was found by the police:

The house I worked in Lagos, my oga used to tell all sorts of lies against me. Anything that happens, they will lie and say I did it. I will clean the house and sweep the entire house from top to bottom. I was the only one living with her. She has one child. She just had a baby. She used to beat me all the time. I was always having headaches. She uses the wooden spoon for making amala²⁵ to hit me on the head each time. Then she chased me out of the house to go and look for matchsticks. That was when the NAPTIP people found me. She bought matchsticks but there was only one matchstick in the box when she got back. She told me to make some food. I did but the light burnt out. So she chased me out of the house and asked me to go and look for matchsticks. She is rich but she just wanted to punish me. — Aduke, 14-year-old girl

Aduke still remembers the pain of repetitive beatings, headaches and living with a wealthy woman who wanted to punish her by asking her to set out at night in search of matchsticks. The child was not given money to make this purchase. What is the probability that one matchstick in a box will be successful in lighting the cooker if the madam had used it herself? Even when the child was found by strangers, she was so new to Lagos, that she could not provide information about her madam and her residential address.

²⁵ Yam flour

Fifteen-year-old Mary, from Togo, experienced discrimination in a place she thought she would be safe: her mother's friend's house in Lagos. Her mother's friend did not put her in school but made her buy ice blocks each evening that she would carry around in a basin on her head to cool the prepared *Akamu*²⁶ that she wanted her to sell:

27 — Mary's journey away from home



Ifeyinwa: Were her children selling akamu with you?

Mary: No. When I finish selling the akamu in the night I will come back. So, I told mummy Sandra's friend that mummy Sandra was always beating me. Then her child went to tell mummy Sandra. When I came back, mummy Sandra beat me... One day she beat me and blood was coming out of my nose. She did not do anything about the nose. She said that I should be selling akamu with the bleeding nose. I went to take toilet roll to clean my nose and my blood. Her child told her that I collected toilet roll... so they now asked me why I went in to collect something.

Ifeyinwa: Are you allowed to use toilet paper?

Mary: No.

Ifeyinwa: What if you wanted to use the toilet will you be given toilet paper?

Mary: No

Ifeyinwa: How do you clean after using the toilet?

Mary: I use water.

Ifeyinwa: What about mummy Sandra's children, do they use toilet paper?

Mary: Yes

²⁶ Akamu is the Igbo name for the breakfast porridge made from fermented maize.

Mary provided extra income for the family. She was the only one in that household selling akamu at night; the woman's two children did not participate in this. Yet, it was considered an affront to allow her to use the toilet roll when going to the washroom or even to clean a sensitive part of her body, a bleeding nose, prone to infection if unhygienic objects are inserted in it. The fact that it was mummy Sandra's child that reported Mary accessing something reserved for royalty makes one see where Zainab, in a later narrative, was coming from when she warned that if traffickers and users of trafficked children are not stopped then the act will be continued by their children who are observing and emulating.

Discrimination occurred even when children lived in the homes of close relatives. From her narrative, Rosemary, 15, had lived with her father's brother for as long as she can remember. Not surprisingly, when she is asked who her father was, she would point to her uncle. But that long relationship did not get her to be treated the same as her uncle's children.

My father works on the farm. But my mummy does not do anything. I was in my daddy's younger brother's house since I was little. When I am asked who my daddy was, I will always point to him. . . I did not go to school at all. . . His children were going to school. They now discovered a place where someone promised he will take me to learn hairdressing... and I will be bringing money in for them daily. . . When I again told them that it is the hairdressing profession that appeals to me, they did not listen to me. Instead they forced me to learn the other job of looking after the house and looking after grandma. — Rosemary, 15-year-old girl

Although Rosemary was not allowed to receive formal education like her uncle's children, even her plea to be enrolled to learn hairdressing was ignored. She was instead sent to work as a domestic servant, a job from which the family will garner immediate benefit by collecting her monthly salary.

Another child, Emilia, also 15, lived with her aunty from about the age of 5. She was enrolled in school but treated with spite by her uncle and his children:

I didn't have any problem with my aunty. . . although I was having problems with the husband. The husband used to beat the hell out of me. The man doesn't like me. I don't know why. . . but he used to say that I am not part of his family. . . My aunty didn't make me feel uncomfortable, it's the husband that did that. The oldest son is two years older than me. The other ones, I was the one that carried them [care giver]. I was not comfortable with the children. . . They used to torment me that I should get out of their father's house. Their dad used to ask me 'what are you doing here, this is not your home'. . . But she is my dad's sister. The man used to push me . . . I used to roll on the staircase and land on the floor. She knows, but anytime she wants to talk, he will beat her up. . . — Emilia, 15-year-old girl

The helplessness Emilia portrays in her narrative is also reflected in the helplessness of her aunty who, though the breadwinner of the family, had to endure the violent displays of an abusive husband. Though the act of getting beaten and sent rolling down the stairs could get her maimed or killed, Emilia endured humiliation at the hands of the man and his children because remaining in her aunt's place was the only way she was sure of an education. It was only when she fell ill that she had to be taken home by her aunty.

Discrimination was a constant feature in the stories children told about their trafficking experiences and it was reflected in the joint drama presented by children from the Lagos shelter in September 2013. In the play, the

children narrated the story of Buky, a 10-year-old girl, who was lured into trafficking by a young man she met on the streets when she was crying after losing the money her poor widowed mother gave her to buy bread for the morning meal. The man took the crying girl home and convinced her mother that he would take the girl to America where she will be put in the best schools. The mother agreed and handed her only child over to the man who took her to Lagos to work as a domestic servant to a single mother, Bimbo, with a little girl, Chinyere. Here we have a glimpse of how the children imagined the relationship:

Bimbo: Chinyere?

Chinyere: Hmm?

Bimbo: I want you to take her [Buky] inside and give her bed things.

[They prepare their sleeping arrangements and go to bed]

Bimbo: I have to go and sleep. . .

MORNING

Bimbo: This is 7.30am. This girl has not woken up.

[Marches into the room to start beating Buky]

Bimbo: Buky, move it. Stand up. Wake up. Do you know the time? Have you swept this morning? Eh?

Buky: Oh no! No! No!

Bimbo: Have you laid my bed? Have you laid my bed? Eh? I want you to kneel down now. Kneel down here.

Buky: No, no, ah!

Bimbo: Have you swept this place this morning? See, did I carry you to this place to be sleeping? Eh, quickly get inside---

[Buky starts marching inside]

Come back here, I want you to come back here. I want you to kneel down there. See you did not even lay the bed that I slept on. See the time. I collected you to come here but I did not collect you to be sleeping. Next time you wake up early. . . See you have not even given my child a bath. Now I want you to be sweeping now. I want you to be sweeping all these places now.

[Buky starts sweeping while the woman goes to embrace her daughter]

Bimbo: Oh my daughter, did you sleep well? What will you eat this morning?

Chinyere: Rice.

Bimbo: You are going to eat rice.

Chinyere: Yes.

Bimbo: I want you to sit down. Let me go and prepare your food for you. Okay?

Get ready I am coming.

[Bimbo goes to prepare food for her daughter while Buky continues sweeping. . . Bimbo returns with a lunch bag]

Bimbo: Here is your food. When you get to school, tell your aunty that your food is inside your bag. If those small boys pour your food away, you are not going to eat afternoon food. . .let me go inside and bring your sandals.

[She goes in, returning with her daughter's sandals which she places on the floor and helps her daughter slip into.]

Bimbo: You, I want you. . . Let me carry my child to school. Before I come to this house, I want you to sweep the entire place and arrange my bed and I want you to clean this television and wash everything. Do you understand this, house girl?

[She beats Buky as she speaks, then leaves the house with Chinyere.]

Discrimination and difference was evident in the abusive way Buky was treated in Bimbo's house while her child was treated with compassion and love. It is commendable that children are able to identify the significant parts of their trafficking experience — such as beating, name calling, unappreciated work, and dehumanising practices — and incorporate them in their drama.

Difference and discrimination was also a stark reality in the reception two village boys, Obinna and Ikenna, received from their family friend Lady White after she brought them from the village to Lagos in the guise of enrolling them in school.

[Obinna and Ikenna are in Lagos and Lady White's house]

Lady White: Eh heh, as we are here now, no stubbornness, no dirt. As you come in, just go into that room and take a bath.

Obinna and Ikenna: We are hungry.

Lady White: You are hungry? How many times do you eat in your father's house? You now come here and think I pluck money from a tree. Try going to school tomorrow let me see if your legs will not be knotted. From tomorrow you will start selling pure water. You, what is your name?

Obinna: Ikenna

Lady White: You will start selling orange. You will start selling pure water every day and then let me hear that my money for pure water is missing, you will regret the day your mother gave birth to you. And you, be careful how you run about the road. This is a city o! Your father did not give me money for food. Sit down there.

[Children were moving to the sofa]

You, sit on the floor there!

[Lady White steps out and returns with food]

Lady White: Take this food. It is for the two of you. . .

The boys were not even given adequate time to recover from the long trip from the village to the city before Lady White showed them her true colours. Not only did she consider them unworthy to sit on her chairs, preferring to have them sit on the floor, she also considered them unworthy of regular meals and school attendance. The reason she brought them to Lagos was because they were only relevant as business tools and she made that obvious by immediately assigning jobs to them selling pure water and oranges. She also asked them to be careful while crossing the highway. This information may be difficult to understand by children who have probably not experienced such busy city roads and traffic.

Rashida, a 15-year-old girl from Togo, narrated how she lived with a woman as a domestic servant. She would do the cooking, feed the woman's children and transport the children to school. Despite doing the cooking, the woman would never give her food to eat. Rashida complained that she only ate when the woman's husband was home or in town.

After beating me, she carried umbrella and said she wants to kill me so that nobody will ask her about the girl that was given to her. . . She carried the umbrella and drove it like this close to my neck. I was the one that ran away that night. My oga's house is on the main road, I ran and did not know that the police was there. My madam had torn my clothes, blood was everywhere. . . One police saw me and called me. He asked where I was going and I said my oga beat me and I want to run away. So the police took me to my oga house, I changed my clothes, took a bath and cleaned the blood. My oga and that police carried me to the hospital. . . The

husband was crying that it is the wife that behaves like that. If the husband is in the house, I will eat, if the husband is not in the house I will not eat. If the husband gives me food she will collect it. If he buys something for me she will collect it. She will cook food, lock the kitchen and carry the key inside and sleep. She will go to work, she will lock the kitchen and carry the key away. . .She does the same thing every day. I don't have money to eat. — Rashida, 15-year-old girl

The abuse continued until the day the woman maimed Rashida's face with an umbrella and Rashida ran away. Not only does she maim Rashida, but she justifies her actions with the authority of a slave owner. Since she bought the slave, she is allowed to possess the slave without being accountable to anyone for her slave's fate.

Twelve-year-old Yvonne, from Benue State, tells her own story about being made to feel so different in her madam's household that her sister and herself deserved nothing but beating in sensitive parts of their body:

Yes, we will work, oh, they will beat us. One day, my sister and I were sleeping when my madam hit her in the stomach with her leg and told her that if she does not shut up that she will beat her. Then she brought a cane and flogged her to add to the kick. They will beat us o! It's my sister that does the cooking. If we finish cooking, we will carry the soup to them so that they can serve it. After serving the food, in the night they will wake us to go and arrange the kitchen. — Yvonne, 12-year-old girl

Hunger, irregular meals and the threat of having control over a child's life because you pay a monthly salary or stipend to the child's guardian or parents features a lot in children's stories and that told by Yvonne and Rashida. The madams of these children feel they can kill or maim children without getting prosecuted by the law. The children are seen by their madams as slaves there to do their will. It is interesting that in the postcolonial era, a new form of slavery predominates in a West African country where adults poach the labour of helpless children. From the demand for trafficked children to work as domestic servants, it appears that it is the madams who cannot do without the children. Without Rashida in the home, for instance, her madam would have to leave the office or remain at home, in order to transport her children to and from school.

It is also difficult to understand the thoughts behind the actions of the highlighted children's madams that make them comfortable seeing child domestic servants cooking in the home and then dishing the food to their children without allowing the domestic servant to have a taste of the meal. Trafficked children also need a balanced diet for healthy growth.

3.3. Getting out of trafficking

By understanding how children got out of trafficking, insight is provided for understanding if the children wanted to be recruited into trafficking in the first instance. When a child willingly went into trafficking and found the environment at the destination point favourable, then there is likely to be reluctance to leave trafficking. This section looks at issues that played out in children's interaction with their employers, their trafficking situation and the impact of these in informing their decision to either remain or leave trafficking.

3.3.1. It involves feeling like a 'different' type of child

When a child's body and labour are exploited for sexual practices the child, as in the case of 17-year-old Promise, knew nothing about before leaving home, the child may ask her employer if she would be willing to have her own young daughter involved in prostitution:

I asked my madam - Can't you see that I am very small? If I am your daughter will you allow her to do this work? And she said, nobody will bring her daughter to Burkina to do this type work. I said okay. Then they now changed me, they made me stand on the road-- Eh, another one again making two [This is her second job posting] and I will now carry customer and when I bring the man, I will now tight [close] my legs together like this and they will now be fucking ordinary bed [she gives a sad laugh]. So they now changed me again and put me in Ali Baba where I worked to collect 100,000CFA. That was how I came back to Nigeria, because we were sleeping after work when police came, five police... they saw many condoms, three packets of condom. That is why they took us away. — Promise, 17-year-old girl

Promise's madam admitted that she would never bring her daughter to work as a prostitute but since Promise has become her property, she has to ensure compliance using every method imaginable. One of them was switching the child to several service points, from the bar to standing by the roadside. When the child found she had to comply to earn money to leave Burkina Faso, she worked for one month earning 100,000CFA (160 USD), which converted to 30,000Naira (using the 2013 exchange rate). Shortly after, there was a police raid and she was removed to the Nigerian embassy.

Unlike Promise who did not like her place of employment and showed resistance in trying to get away from it, Bimbo, 14, who had been trafficked to work in several places, talked about how she went to work with an insensitive food seller and how she made the decision to leave:

When we got to the woman, she was a food seller, one of those amala sellers. I said 'heh I can't stay here'... I met them (distant cousins) there, they were doing the work. I felt that nothing will happen to me since my people were there... So on that day we went to the shop to buy some things we need to cook in the shop. On our way back... everybody was talking loudly when the boat capsized... I didn't know how to swim. Some people sank and died inside the water, some people were carried away by the water. My cousins did not die but the water carried them away. I was the only one... my head was on top of the water, I did not sink! The boat operators have life jackets but they did not give it to us to wear. They said they were dirty and that they don't want to wash them. When we got home, the woman did not do anything. I now said that I am going home o! — Bimbo, 14-year-old girl

Bimbo made the decision to leave because she must have asked why she should put her life at risk doing things that other children, including the food seller's children, were not doing. In this narrative, she went to purchase groceries for the business and almost drowned. The food seller did nothing to attend to the trauma experienced by Bimbo and her cousins, taking it as just another regrettable hitch in a day's business.

Twelve-year-old Bolaji, on the other hand, looked at her inquisitive or mischievous act of taking a picture of herself with her madam's camera as the final revelation to leave the house of a madam that considered her a witch:

One day, I took a picture of myself (possibly with the woman's phone). She asked: 'who is this?' I said it is me. She went to cut rope of AC²⁷ and used it to beat me with the mop stick too. She used all of them to beat me. It's our landlord that called NAPTIP. He has all NAPTIP phone numbers. He called them and they came. Before NAPTIP came to take me, when I first got to her house, she used omorogun²⁸ - the thing that they use to mix eba²⁹ [referring to the wooden spoon] to hit my eyes. Her husband will also aid in beating me but that day the husband had gone to work. — Bolaji, 13-year-old girl

Bolaji was embittered by the combined beating she received from both her employers [husband and wife]. I look at the act of using an adult's phone or camera to take a picture as one of the inquisitive and mischievous things normal children do. I will expect that the woman's children do the same thing but they are her children and she would pardon them without scolding them. But Bolaji was a 'different' type of child. The beating may have been worse if the landlord had not called NAPTIP for assistance.

3.3.2. It involves wondering if you are still a child

Based on their narratives, some children, like Promise, have lived experiences that put them several years ahead of their peers.

The money is with her. But I don't know because...in our house, if you work 5,000, or you work 10,000, you will write it. In a day, I always carry ten men. In one day. Yes, me [again, she gives me that sad smile]. True to God, sometimes I carry fifteen. On Saturday, because they (male customers) don't go to work or on Sunday, there are many men here. I will be in pain. I will be in pain. She (her madam) cared for me. She took me as her own sister. She will buy drugs for me, she will give me food, she will buy everything I will drink. Then I will sleep. They pay me CFA for each person that I carry, that is 1000 in Nigeria its 300 Naira (about 1.6USD), then sometimes 2000 (about 2.23USD). — Promise, 17-year-old girl

No matter the context within which childhood is viewed, African or Western, no child below 18 years should be forced to sleep with multiple men in one day. According to the children's narratives, some have slept with as many as 20 men in one day. In this narrative, Promise complains about the pain she experiences after sleeping with more men than usual on hectic Saturday and Sunday nights. But it is interesting that she still commends her madam for caring for her. Could she be commending her madam because in that helpless state in an unknown country and not knowing an escape route, kindness, even when it is profit-oriented, is appreciated?

3.3.3. It involves asking if you are actually the child or the parent

The manner in which some children are moved around by their parents from one exploitative workplace to another, either because there is insufficient money in the home or because parents are out of work, makes children wonder if they are actually the children or the parents.

²⁷ Air conditioner.

²⁸ Wooden spoon.

²⁹ This is a starchy Nigerian food, eaten by all tribes in the country. It is made from cassava flour. Eba is commonly called garri. Eba is eaten with soup or stew.

Rosemary, who is now 15 years old, narrates how she was forced to work as both a domestic servant and caregiver to an old woman, even after she expressed a need to learn hairdressing since her uncle was not interested in financing her education:

In Ife, I told them that I will not be going there. But they forced me and took me to that place and I stayed there for one year. When I got there, I learned to do the job. I will sweep the house, I will wash clothes, wash toilets, clean the house, organise the house, clean the kitchen floor and mop the floors. After doing all this work, I will start by taking care of the old mama, I will wash all her dirty clothes, then I will wash the clothes of the second mummy and her children. . . I took care of grandmama until her health got really bad. Even when her health got really bad, I was the one that took care of her until she passed away. . . When the grandmama was using pampers, I will carry the pampers and carry her to give her a bath. . . I was 13 years old. I took care of the old mama until she died — Rosemary, 15-year-old girl

Rosemary, like Paul, though younger at the time of residency, provided care for an old woman until her passing. The choice of domestic work for the child was to enable her parents to collect her monthly salary.

Two narratives, provided by Rashida, 15 from Togo, and Bimbo, 14 from Nigeria, question the interest of parents in a child's trafficking and the thoughts children harbour while analysing the relevance of their servitude:

Rashida: *My father is a farmer. My mama will cook food and sell it.*

Ifeyinwa: *Why did you come to Nigeria?*

Rashida: *My father said he wants to use money to do something.*

Ifeyinwa: *But you say your sister's husband is not sending the money home.*

Rashida: *Yes, he is not sending it. He will drink ogogoro³⁰, igbo³¹, every day he will drink it.*

Ifeyinwa: *What is this mark on your face?*

Rashida: *It is my father that wanted to kill my mummy when I was a small child and my mother was carrying me. My father carried a knife and wanted to beat my mother and my mother was carrying me to give me food, that knife now cut my head---*

From Rashida's narrative, you see a child already branded for life because her father attacked her mother while she was a baby and she received the brunt of the knife. Then her father needed money for something nobody can explain and Rashida was sacrificed to work in Nigeria to earn that money. Rashida is not even sure what happened to her salary because her sister's husband must have exhausted everything servicing his addictions.

Similarly, Bimbo, who risked her life while selling amala returns home with her salary only to have her father squander it on free drinks for friends and other reckless expenditures without thinking of using it for her twin brother's education.

Ifeyinwa: *What did your daddy do with the money you brought back from one year of selling amala?*

Bimbo: *He spent it.*

Ifeyinwa: *What did he spend the money on?*

Bimbo: *He used it to just drink, buy things for people, he did not even use it to send my twin brother to school. . . And he did not put him in work, he just wants him to be following him to work and everything. And my brother is crying.*

³⁰ Native hot drink or gin

³¹ Indian hemp

There are similarities between Bimbo and Rosemary's experiences and that narrated by 17-year-old Amina from the Republic of Benin, who was recruited for domestic work to assist with the family income:

The woman carries children to anywhere she likes. She is not the one that will collect the child. She gives the children to other people. She gave me to someone in Akure; the place was good. They did not put me in school but they were not beating me and when I was hungry, they gave me food. The money the person was paying me, my daddy collected two years salary. So I came home. I was in the house for about one month in Ogbomosho there. Then my papa told me that I will go back and I said no problem. I did like 3 years there. Then one day when I was in Akure with the first woman, they carried me and said that one of the children with the woman got lost, so they said that all the house-helpers that the woman has should be packed to the police station in Ilorin. So they carried me, I packed but then we had an accident on the road. . . — Amina, 17-year-old girl

But even after Amina had spent 2 years at this task, with the money collected by her father, her father only allowed her one month's rest at home before sending her off to the next household where she worked for three years. Again Amina was returned home after a raid on her trafficker's establishment and her father re-trafficked her to Nigeria for domestic work until she ended up working as a prostitute. All the children's narratives indicate a willingness to go out to work to contribute to household income, but they silently question the duty of parents to them as children, and they would have desired judicious use of monthly salaries that they toiled and risked their lives to earn.

3.3.4. It involves wondering why adult assistance has to come with painful consequences

The experience of trafficking involved children's reflection on the relationship they have with adult members of society. These adults could be those that arranged their entry into and participation in trafficking or those they met in the course of running away from exploitative work.

Fifteen-year-old Rashida, cited earlier for running away from her madam's house due to starvation and violence, narrated how she unknowingly welcomed the advances of a young male visitor to her madam's compound who gave her money for food in exchange for an intimate relationship:

I went to do house-help. Every day she will beat me and I will not see money to eat. It is one boy that is in my oga's house. He will give me money and I will eat. He will not leave me. He said every day I should do like that. I did not know I was pregnant. It was my friend that told her that I was pregnant. My oga went to buy that thing that if you are pregnant you will know that you are pregnant (pregnancy test kit). . . She said that I should urinate. I urinated and gave her. She did it and she called me over. . . She said she told my friend that I was not pregnant but now she knows that I am pregnant. She beat me every day until I ran away from the house. — Rashida, 15-year-old girl

It was when the madam found out that Rashida was pregnant that she threatened to kill her. But who should be blamed for Rashida's pregnancy? If her madam had welcomed her and treated her as her child, she would probably never have gotten pregnant. Rashida relied and depended on the kindness of two adults, the young man and her madam, and they exploited, failed and abandoned her.

Fifteen-year-old Nana, kidnapped from Ghana, shared that after she ran away from her madam's house, she was harboured for a few months by a woman in whose shop she went to buy *a sachet of pure water*³²:

Ifeyinwa: *So how did the pregnancy come about?*

Nana: *It happened in Ibadan. The brother of the woman from whom I bought pure water got me pregnant... Me and the woman and her small brother were in the house... They are Tivi people. Now the woman told me that she will take me to her mother's place so that her brother and I can get married. The brother talked to the woman before that he liked me and wanted to marry me. I said okay and did not talk. One day when we closed the shop and went to the house, the woman now told me that if her brother calls me to come that I should not say anything that I should just go. So as I went I did not know that he wanted to sleep with me. The first time he forced me.*

Ifeyinwa: *Why did you agree to sleep with the man?*

Nana: *Because I was afraid. I was afraid that if I run away from that house, where would I go? I don't know anywhere.*

Within the course of trafficking, Nana also became pregnant. Her pregnancy was linked to the sibling of the woman in whose shop she sought refuge. Nana exhibited agency by running away from her previous employer, but accepted to sleep with her current helper's brother because she felt caged and could not think of anywhere to run to for support. The woman's desire to forge a 'deceptive bond' between her brother and Nana appeared to be an adult's way of extracting payment for assistance rendered to a child. Nana was saddened that it was the same woman that eventually reported her missing to the police and made arrangements for her trafficker to take her away to work in other households. Knowing that Nana was missing, the woman should have made this known to the police immediately after Nana sought refuge in her shop and eventually her home. Why did the woman wait until Nana had been exploited working for her without pay and sleeping with her brother for several months before notifying the police?

Finally, 8-year-old Chidi builds on her experience of sexual exploitation by the medical doctor who took her away from home and ends with a sceptical evaluation of adult assistance as something that only benefits the adult:

Ifeyinwa: *What was your position in class for the last term?*

Chidi: *I was 9th out of 24 students in the class*

Ifeyinwa: *Do you have time to read at home?*

Chidi: *When you want to read he doesn't give you time. . .*

Ifeyinwa: *Do you receive extra lessons from a private teacher?*

Chidi: *No*

Considering that the medical doctor put all the children in his care in private schools, which may have been a strategy for creating a positive, philanthropic image to the world, Chidi uses the same tool, education, as the lens for seeing adult assistance as something that only benefits the adult. From our discussion, although the doctor enrolled the 7 female children in private schools, the doctor never allowed them much reading time because he was always dropping in to pick one girl at a time to service his sexual needs even during crucial school examination periods.

³² Water sold in sealed plastic bags.

3.3.5. It involves been seen as usable and disposable goods

Something that kept recurring in children's narratives was that perception of themselves as something that can be taken at any time and disposed of at any time. The taking and disposal can be done by anyone that has identified something they are worth exploiting for. I begin this discussion with insight provided by the drama from children in the Lagos shelter:

[Bimbo, the mother, returns home after dropping her child in school]

Bimbo: See this child that I collected and put in my house? See this child? I hope this child will not kill me like this, o.

[She starts screaming]

Come here now. Did you sweep this place? Did you sweep this place?

Buky: Yes

Bimbo: Are you sure that you swept it? If I use my leg to touch this floor and this floor is not clean, you will use your tongue to mop the entire place for me. Do you understand that you should sweep this place clean?

Buky: Yes

Bimbo: If I use my leg to touch it, I will deal with you this morning!

[Woman takes off her slippers]

Now step on the floor and see the place that you say you swept

[She starts beating the girl]

Step on it and see the place you said you swept. Step on it. Is this how to sweep? Don't I pay you salary? This girl will give me hypertension. You want to kill me? You want to kill me? My child did not kill me. Are you the one that will kill me?

[Bimbo works herself to a frenzy]

Okay leave my house. Get out of my house now. Move this way and get out. From today I don't want to see you in my house again. If I see you I will get the police to arrest you. Do you understand?

[She keeps pacing the room in anger, she sits, then she stands, holding her head]

God, I thank you that this child has left now. This girl just gives me headache every day. My child has not killed me. She is the one that wants to kill me. Oh God, I thank you.

[Finally she sits down to take a rest.]

The scenarios children depict in their drama are based on their collective experiences. The actions and words amplify the depth of their experiences and the effect it has on them. Bimbo talks about a child that she "... collected and put in my house," because there is an available market for trafficked children. The agent takes your specifications and provides a child that is considered to meet your needs — all these have been highlighted in children's narratives. Bimbo is therefore bound to be upset when her specifications failed to meet her needs of a compliant robot. In her annoyance, she sends off the defective good to whoever may want it and she is uncaring about what happens to the defective good as it sets out to find a new owner. The drama speaks to the experiences presented in the narratives of several children especially that of Aduke presented in this chapter.

Additionally, Odinaka, 17 years old, who had earlier provided a description of the female owner of the baby factory where she was held captive, talks about the woman's actions the day military men, raided her establishment:

Ifeyinwa: Was it easy to take you girls away from that compound?

Odinaka: That very day there were bullets here and there. She (madam) told us that kidnappers are around. Do you see it? She now told us to go and jump a fence that is so high that when you are jumping it's either life or death. It was not possible for us. We wanted to

jump but it was not possible. We now climbed down. I tried because she told us it's kidnappers, that we should run. She put fear in us, in our bodies, especially as we are usually afraid of her. She asked us to escape.

Odinaka painted a picture of goods that were only useful when they yielded profit without incriminating the owner. In an earlier narrative, Odinaka had painted the picture of the owner of the baby factory as an authoritarian figure that does not harbour chit-chats or idle moments, someone that instilled enough fear in children to take their babies away without a thought for their mental and emotional state. But here, though the girls were still living with the previous image of a fear-inspiring tyrant, what should come to mind is a weak woman who understands that she has engaged in a criminal activity and wishes to eliminate the evidence by causing the death of six young pregnant girls. Odinaka told me that all that was provided was a ladder on the woman's side of the house to climb to the top of the fence, there was nothing for climbing down to the other side of the fence. I reflected on the fact that the girls made an attempt to climb the fence as an indication of the power of intimidation and fear. I also looked at their ability to make it back down the same ladder as the power of their own self-will, fighting the intimidating presence they have forced themselves to live with.

3.3.6. It involves dealing with remnants of intimidation

When children are seen as disposable goods, then they are seen as people that will budge under the force of intimidation. Adaeze, 17 years old and also a victim of the same baby factory, shares how she dealt with the last bits of intimidation on the journey away from the baby factory:

When we were inside the car, the woman told us that even if they are going to shoot us that we should say that the pregnant ones came to visit their husbands who used to work with her. She was speaking in Igbo. The people can only understand English. The woman said that we should stand in that thought. She now told me that I should say that I am one of her patients, that I came there to deliver a baby. But that since I delivered I have not seen my [husband]—that my husband brought me there and ran away and that she is the one taking care of me... that I should say that. When we got there, the police said that if we tell the truth that they will release us. But if we didn't tell the truth that we will be sent to a place where we will tell the truth. Because the woman was there, everybody was afraid, so we told a lie. ... — Adaeze, 17-year-old girl

Adaeze narrates what happens during raids on trafficking establishments when both the trafficked and their traffickers are loaded into one vehicle. Since the children were interrogated with the woman present, the woman exerted her last bit of power over the children. Since the woman could not eliminate the evidence of several pregnant underage girls in her compound prior to the arrest by law enforcement, she explored the next option of asking (intimidating) the girls to lie concerning their presence in her compound even if it means likely death³³ for the girls. Here, we see a woman who was willing to cause the death of six underage girls in the ploy of protecting her name. But once the children were moved to the NAPTIP shelter, Adaeze started telling the truth concerning their presence in the woman's house.

³³ It is interesting that though the owner of the baby factory was loaded into a truck (by law enforcement agents) with the same children she had exploited for several months, she felt she could intimidate them into believing that she still had power over their life or death.

Also linked to power that traffickers assert over their victims is this conversation with 14-year-old Patricia from Togo about her friend escaping and leaving her behind when she could no longer endure the ill-treatment at her place of work:

28 — Patricia's journey away from home



Patricia: I told my friend that she should not run away because she can remember that Debbie warned us that if we run away and they catch us, they will kill us.

Ifeyinwa: Who will catch you?

Patricia: Debbie just told us that when we come to Nigeria that we should not run because if we run and they catch us, they will kill us.

Patricia and her friend had been told by their trafficker, Debbie, that if they ran away from any place she sent them to work, that they would be caught and killed. Debbie left the identity of the person who will be doing the catching open-ended to fit diverse individuals, robbers, kidnappers, ritualists and others. The more the children deliberated on the possibilities, the more likely that they remain fearful and compliant. In this case, Patricia's friend had made up her mind about taking a chance with escaping and facing the world out there.

3.3.7. It involves looking unto others for your release or freedom

Sometimes it appears as if children want to remain in what they consider a comfort zone and could resist an attempt to get out of trafficking. That was the case when 10-year-old Chiedo's madam's husband invited Chiedo to accompany him to work:

The next day I said I was going to beg and the husband told me that I should accompany him to where he works where they pay him good money. But the man took me to NAPTIP. I was angry with the man and started asking him where he brought me too. I was walking away when the police started begging me that if I tell the truth, they will help. I was angry because he said he was taking me somewhere to work and I did not see the work. I did not know that NAPTIP is where they help people. I was angry. — Chiedo, 10-year-old boy

Chiedo, who was on his way to the day's job of begging and stealing, was apparently in a rage that his madam's husband deceived him into accompanying him to an establishment where he would not earn an income. Although Chiedo said he was more understanding after he was made more aware of NAPTIP's duties, I observed during his retelling of the story, that his rage with his madam's husband was still apparent. This made me ask if he would have liked to remain with a woman and a job where his safety and future were uncertain. Apparently, Chiedo was too young to understand the implication of the activities he engaged in. But he was happy to be away from his madam's negative influence and ready to move on with his life.

3.3.8. It involves children exhibiting great agency in fleeing from captivity

Though the literature provides some information on the experiences of children during trafficking, I was concerned that the impression may be that children are forced to spend several years in servitude without any chances of escape except through an agency or the goodwill of concerned individuals. It made me wonder where children's agency played out in setting themselves free from 'contracts' they found unattractive and unrewarding. The current section explores some of the narratives of children who fled the captivity of trafficking.

Twelve-year-old Grace from Togo came into Nigeria to work as a domestic servant and also contribute to paying the debt owed by her father:

Because the person I was living with in Nigeria was always abusing me, if she goes out and comes back to the house she will always be asking me different things, why I am sleeping, or why am I doing this and that. That was why I ran away. . . — Grace, 12-year-old girl

Grace who could only speak Yoruba and French when she was brought to the NAPTIP shelter in Abuja said she could no longer endure the incessant rain of abuses and decided to run away. To the child, life on the run is more consoling than life spent living with someone whose needs she found difficult to understand.

29— Grace's journey away from home



Also responding to abuse and maltreatment, Gabriella, 15, from Togo decided it was time to leave her madam's house. Gabriella's drawing shows that she is beaten and slapped daily. The child felt that the abuse that was already difficult to deal with worsened when her madam gave birth to twins:

The time my oga was pregnant and the time she had her babies, that was the time the beating got worse. Yes, she had twins. . . I always cleaned the boys with a towel. She said that if she is unable to find the towel that I will see what she will do to me. I knew she would beat me that day, so I left, I entered a bus to Ojuelegba. I was hoping to see the person that brought me. I saw one of my friends and asked her to follow me because the girl too is doing house-girl and they used to suffer her the way they used to suffer me. I told the girl that we should run together. The girl said that her madam is in the house and that they will catch her. I said no problem. I left the girl and went back. . . — Gabriella, 16-year-old girl

30 — Gabriella's journey away from home



From Gabriella's narrative, knowing that her madam would beat her over the missing towel, she decides to save herself by running away in search of her trafficker. On meeting her friend, she sought companionship with a fellow sufferer, but since her friend was unwilling to run away, her spirit dampened and she returned home to meet her fate and plan for the next escape, which she did.

It is also interesting that younger children have a fair understanding of limits to endurance. For this, I will refer to Bimbo, 14, who talks about her attempts at running away from her first assignment as a domestic servant at the age of 9. The female employer's son was a year younger. When she found she could not remain in that house, she started hoarding money given to her by visitors. The woman found the money, seized the money and starved her for 3 days:

The second day I was very tired. What will I do? And I was hungry. She now left me and the child in the house. ...I will find a way to leave this house today, the woman must not come back to meet me because I can't continue with this suffering. So the boy was sleeping, I used clothes to tie the boy's legs, the hands, I packed some of my clothes that I know that I can pack--- He didn't know because he is a sleeping beauty. I was thinking that if I carry travelling bag that the people on the street are amebo³⁴ they will quickly call her because they know her phone number- and people who are guiding the street may catch me. I just took some 3 clothes

³⁴ Rumour monger or gossip

and tops and put them inside nylon—because she is also hair-dresser we used to sell wig with that bag. I carried it. I did not dress as if I was going out. I just dressed anyhow, wearing slippers, wearing clothes that I wore around the house and I now woke the boy. I used water to wake him. He now said that ‘ah ha his leg is tight.’ I now said ‘take the phone and call your mummy that me am saying goodbye to this house o!’ The boy spoke to his mummy and I helped him to end the call. Immediately I cut the line, I left the house. . . — Bimbo, 14-year-old girl

Bimbo narrates a meticulous attempt at escaping from an unfriendly home that seems to belong in a movie. Her departure from the home shows a final and satisfied farewell to a place with unpleasant memories. Besides, the fact that Bimbo was only a year older than a boy who she considered nothing but a pampered and sleepy beauty increased her resolve to run away.

Sunday, 17 from Togo, talks about his attempt to escape his near enslavement to a woman who trafficked him from one business to the other, collecting 9 months’ advance payment for each assignment:

She used to collect 54,000 (about 272 USD) for 9 months. I stayed there and I now just said that what I am doing is not good, that I want to go back home. I started misbehaving and sometimes if they [his employers and other workers] want to go home I will tell them to go that I will come later. I will be playing outside until like 10pm. . . So they came to carry me from that place. . . to Mushin and I worked for one month before I ran away. . . I met somebody there that I know... I told him what is happening to me, that I want to go home. He now asked me what I want him to do for me. I said that he should take me to the police station. He took me to the police station. . . I reported that since I came to Lagos that I have not seen my mum and I do not know where my money is. I cannot even go home. They went to arrest the madam, Iya Bolanle. . . We saw many people there too and we arrested them. — Sunday, 17-year-old boy

Once Sunday realised that he had wasted several years working and not receiving any of the money he should have made, he decided it was a time to put an end to the journey and return home to his mother. Unlike Bimbo’s elaborate escape plan, Sunday adopted a diplomatic style that saw him seeking assistance from an adult he could rely on to take him to the police station. His statement at the police station led to the raid of the woman’s house and the release of several children, some of whom I met at the NAPTIP Lagos Shelter.

Twelve-year-old Sandra from Benue State reinforces Sunday’s story of how children can plot their release from trafficking, she does this by telling me how she got other people involved in her attempt to leave the medical doctor’s house:

Sandra: *I was afraid of him. If I see him, I will be afraid.*

Ifeyinwa: *If you were afraid of him, how were you able to leave his house?*

Sandra: *I told our teacher first, so our teacher went to tell our headmaster. So they took me to the Father’s house and I now stayed there for one week.*

Ifeyinwa: *By Father, are you referring to the Reverend Father in the Catholic Church?*

Sandra: *Yes. So they now took me from there to Awka, from Awka to Enugu here. From Enugu to Makurdi, so they now carried me from Makurdi to my village.*

Ifeyinwa: *Did you tell your mother what happened to you?*

Sandra: *Yes. She did not say anything. But my mother was crying.*

Although Sandra and the other little girls had been warned against telling anyone outside their home what happened to them while in the doctor’s house, Sandra was already frustrated and took the risk of sharing the story

with her teacher, hoping for assistance. When the teacher and headmaster found that they could offer little assistance, they consulted the Catholic Priest who provided temporary shelter in the Church compound and consulted the lawyer who made the referral to NAPTIP. Sandra was happy to be reunited with her mother who remained silent and tearful, imagining what her young daughter must have gone through.

Another child, Princess, 13, who was also trafficked for sexual exploitation, narrates her first and second attempts at escape from her madam:

The first time I ran away, I was walking around on the road in the night. I was sitting beside the field where people are playing ball, so there was one boy met me and said I should follow him to his house that he has a sister and a brother. The sister is married with children. The boy bought something for me. I ate. After eating the boy took me to his house. I met his sister and her husband. And they were the same as me, they are Igbo. I was telling them what happened and the way I came. So they wanted to give me money to go back to the village. That day, I want to go tomorrow, then today the woman's friend... came to catch me... After that, the second time the boy took me to another place another day. They still came to catch me. — Princess, 13-year-old girl

Princess stresses the words 'same as me, they are Igbo,' almost as if in the unsafe situations she has lived since getting trafficked into prostitution, she needed something familiar to hinge her trust for another human being on. Although the woman or madam that took Princess into trafficking was also Igbo, the child appeared willing to give reliance on something familiar a second chance. Consequently, the fact that her new friends were Igbos, members of her tribe, endeared them to her. But her joy was short-lived because a team of boys were sent by her madam to forcefully take her away from her new friends. It was commendable that her new friend still made a second attempt to remove Princess from the brothel, an attempt that failed. Princess's last attempt where she joined forces with two older girls led to her freedom from captivity.

4. How do memories of home make children's trafficking experiences bearable?

In my discussions with children, I discerned constant references to home in their reflections while away from home. I thought that this may be because they considered their trafficking a journey that was motivated by reasons positive or negative relating to family or individual child's wellbeing. Children's narratives motivated by memories of home will highlight their longing for a place with family and the promises made before leaving home.

4.1. Longing for a place with family (affection makes children remain in a household)

Some children longed for a place where they were treated like members of the family rather than outsiders needed to meet a present need. Earlier I narrated the experience of Paul with providing care for an appreciative old lady and her family. Paul narrates his journey into the household:

There was a woman... She said she wants me to help her mother... that they will put me in school... When they carried me to Anambra... that time they were writing exam in school, so they cannot put me to school until they have finished second term... I was staying in the house with the old woman. When they finished the third term I now started first term in the school... a Catholic school — Paul, 15-year-old boy

From the boy's narrative, you can discern pride, happiness and contentment with a family that kept to the initial promise to him. He also said that the family offered explanations why they could not place him in school immediately after he arrived. Once the initial obstacle was sorted out, he was enrolled for the new school year. Paul's narrative indicates that children are likely to stay in a household when they feel affection towards its members and are able to meet the goals that took them away from home in the first place. In Paul's case, the goal for leaving home was the search for a place with access to education.

4.2. The promise made before leaving home

Children also leave home based on promises made to their family members. The promises could be to come back with their monthly income or better educated in formal and informal schools. Fourteen-year-old Praise, who I already reported saw her trafficking as an exciting adventure, took loving memories of her grandma, sister and other family members she could not draw, as loving reminders of home and the people she hopes to meet after her work is done:

31 — Praise's memories of home while away from home



Ifeyinwa: Who are these people?

Praise: This is my grandma and my grandma likes to carry things.

Ifeyinwa: Does she live in your house?

Praise: Oh mummy, she does not live in our house.

Ifeyinwa: Who is this?

Praise: This is my sister

Ifeyinwa: Why did you draw only your sister and your grandmama, you did not even draw your mama and papa? You like these people a lot o!

Praise: I like all of them but I cannot draw everything.

Praise's parents already granted approval for her to go to Lagos and work and possibly learn a trade, which she will return to practice in her village. The familiar faces from home indicate people that she hopes to impress on returning home because they trusted her to depart from it to return to make things better at home.

Grace, a 12-year-old girl from Togo, especially remembers the promise she made to her mother to return with a large modern cooking pot for communal or large scale cooking.

32 — Grace's memories of home while away from home



This promise remained at the back of her mind when she could no longer endure the ill treatment in her place of domestic servitude and ran away. Running away meant she could not collect her salary and could not fulfil the promise made to her mother before leaving home. Her drawing shows her mother cooking in the family compound using a native cooking pot.

4.3. Income from trafficking helps sustain the family

The manner in which income generated from a child's work during trafficking is used generated a lot of debate during my field research. While some children expected that their earnings would be used to take care of household needs, others felt it should be kept solely to finance their education. I shall begin with the positive outlook to income spending, as evident in my discussion with 14-year-old Daniella:

Ifeyinwa: *What was the agreement you had? How much was the woman expected to pay you?*

Daniella: *8000Naira (41USD)*

Ifeyinwa: *What will happen to that money?*

Daniella: *My madam will give my oga. . . that man that carried me from Cross River.*

Ifeyinwa: *Your madam will give the man the money to do what with?*

Daniella: *He will give the money to my mama.*

Ifeyinwa: *What will your mama do with the money?*

Daniella: *She will use it for farming.*

Ifeyinwa: *Does that mean that your mama will not keep the money for you to attend school as you always wanted?*

Daniella: *She will keep it for me. She will take some and the remaining one she will keep for me.*

Daniella felt that since she left home because there was insufficient funds to meet even her educational needs that it was only fair for her mother to invest some of her earnings on materials for the farming that provides for the bulk of the family's needs. She also expects that her mother will set money aside for her education. The child may have also thought that if her parents did not give the approval, her uncle would never have taken her to Lagos in the first place.

Other children, like Nike and Ola who appeared to provide almost identical responses, are more concerned with the fact that their families sent them to Lagos to work so those who stayed behind could spend their earnings frivolously, living a healthy lifestyle while they fed on suffering in their places of work:

Nike: *My parents wanted to punish me. They brought me to Lagos to do house-help, they collected money, and they spent the money while I am suffering. That is why.*

Ola: *They brought me to Lagos to work as house-help and they were sending money to the village and they were eating well there while I was feeding on suffering.*

When one considers the experience Nike had had, being forced to eat her own faeces, the child's humiliation could have informed her negative perception of her work and her parents' participation in it. Ola, who also witnessed Nike's humiliation, shared similar thoughts. In such cases, it could be that for these children, imagining the current lifestyle of those they left at home (made better with money from their work), they are more driven to leave trafficking and return home.

4.4. Familiar and favourite people and items from home

Children showed in their narratives and drawings that memories of favourite and familiar people and items from home made their trafficking situation either difficult or easier to live with. Margaret, 15 from Benue, told me how she was made uncomfortable by people she had to deal with in her madam's shop.

33 — Margaret's memories of home while away from home



Margaret said that the customers made so much fun of her limited understanding of English and Yoruba that their mocking laughter caused her to run away:

Margaret: Mummy, the time they carried me to my madam's house I could not understand Yoruba, I could not understand English too. They were using me to laugh [making jest of me], so I ran away.

Ifeyinwa: So who was laughing at you?

Margaret: It's the people that used to come and buy something.

Ifeyinwa: Were you assisting your madam to sell in the shop?

Margaret: Yes

Ifeyinwa: But how were you able to sell in the shop without understanding English or Yoruba?

Margaret: My madam taught me.

The closest person she could think of to run to was her sister who brought her to Lagos in the first place. Though she blames her sister for taking her away from home, she believed that seeing her sister would provide the comfort that she would have received from her parents.

4.5. Holidays and the return home

A contested issue among children and their traffickers, whether they were relatives or strangers before living together, was that of 'holidays or returning home for intervals during trafficking.' How long do children have to remain in a household before it is considered important to allow them home to visit their family members? Eziywa, 15, who came to live with her father's younger sister several years ago, has never returned home to see her father, her twin sister or any of her siblings:

Ifeyinwa: *Have you ever returned home since your aunt picked you to stay with her?*

Eziywa: *No*

Ifeyinwa: *Does your daddy come to visit you in Lagos then?*

Eziywa: *No, my daddy does not know the way. Even my daddy asked her to bring me home to visit in December but she refused.*

Ifeyinwa: *Do you speak to your daddy on the phone?*

Eziywa: *Yes. The last time I spoke with him was in December. He asked if I will be coming home and I said no because my aunty has refused bringing me.*

Ifeyinwa: *If your daddy comes into this room, will you know him?*

Eziywa: *Yes, he is 'yellow' (light skinned).*

Ifeyinwa: *There are so many people's dads that are 'yellow.' If I bring my dad that is 'yellow' into this room, you may think he is your dad?*

Eziywa: *I know my dad.*

Ifeyinwa: *Do you have a picture of him?*

Eziywa: *Yes, his picture is in the house [aunt's house]*

The exchange indicates that although Eziywa's father is unhappy that his sister has failed to bring his daughter home, he appears unable to do anything to change the situation especially as he cannot find his way to Lagos. What the child holds on to for now, is the probably aged picture of her father in his sister's possession and the unsatisfactory phone conversations with her father.

Another child, Goodness, 15 from Benue State, who left home at 8 years old to work for two different madams, shares a similar experience. In Goodness's case, frustrated, she devised an escape plan to return home for Christmas:

34 — Goodness's memories of home while away from home



It was when they left home. . . So, when I saw them coming back, I left there and went to the back of the house. So when they went inside the house, I went outside the gate. I only took my toothpaste. . . I went to sleep in. . . back of somebody's house. I don't know the person. . . If it is night I will stay in one place and sleep there. I slept outside like for 5 days before somebody saw me and now asked what am I doing there? I now told them. Then the person now brought me to NAPTIP. They brought me and then they called my uncle, then they found my aunty's number. — Goodness, 15-year-old girl

Unlike Eziyuwa, who had her father's picture displayed in the house where she worked, Goodness had no reminder of her father apart from him being a light skinned man. The day Goodness was reunited with her father, she could only make him out because she saw a light-skinned man, bearing some resemblance to her and laughing as she approached. She told me it was the happiest day of her life. For Goodness to continue living with her madam an agreement was reached that every Christmas, she should be allowed to return home.

5. Children and their reflections

This section looks at children's narratives that dwell on their reflections about the vicious circle of trafficking, forgiving and moving on, hoping for a bright future and based on their experiences, becoming an advocate about child trafficking.

5.1. Vicious circle of trafficking

In one of the focus group discussions, Zainab, 17, a young girl from Togo, was pained at the number of little boys and girls that were brought to the Abuja shelter during her residency. The girl was so pained that she wondered if trafficking will ever end or was nothing but a vicious circle that will be perpetrated by the children of current traffickers or users of trafficked children:

I am here so that NAPTIP can help me to arrest the people that did bad things. So that NAPTIP can tell the people that what they are doing is not good, that they should stop it. Because if you continue like that, the small children that they born will grow and see it, not even only the person's children but other children will see it and do it. So NAPTIP should help us tell them that the thing they are doing is not good. — Zainab, 17, girl

While Zainab is concerned with public enlightenment and arresting traffickers, Mercy, who had been removed from a brothel and has an ongoing case with her madam in court, has been enrolled to learn catering by NAPTIP. Yet it appears that the young girl has not learned from her first mistake of trusting a man she met on the streets:

Mercy: *I can't remember, but I stayed in the shelter for 3 months before I went to learn work. I am learning catering. They paid 15,000Naira for me to learn catering for one month. I ran away from that place to find another place to learn work.*

Ifeyinwa: *Where did you run to?*

Mercy: *There is one girl in that house that is my friend and I told her that I cannot stay in this place and go to school. That girl now told me that she wants to leave and I followed that girl to leave. That girl was staying in Ikeja. Then I now saw one man, he is a Calabar man. . . That man said he will find work for me, house-girl work, but the gate-man . . .at the place I am learning work. . . told everyone that they saw Mercy. . .*

If the problem was that Mercy considered the place she was enrolled to learn a trade or the shelter where she lived was deficient, then it is expected that she should report to appropriate persons in NAPTIP. She decided to choose a more familiar path, trusting another young girl, leaving her paid residence and vocational center and trusting a man she met on the streets to offer her a job. It is important to understand why she thought the path she chose the preferred path.

5.2. Looking beyond trafficking, forgiving, healing and moving on

Most children took a philosophical stance in their reflections on their trafficking experiences. To them, certain things happen for a reason. If things do not happen for a reason, then why did it happen to them and not to other children? I will present some of these reflections, focusing only on children at the Abuja shelter:

Abraham: *I forgive my parents. I forgive them because they are my parents. I cannot reject my parents. I cannot say that I cannot forgive my parents now! If I do not forgive them, who can I forgive?*

Zainab: *Me, I forgive my parents because I love my mother. I have forgiven them and I am praying that I see them. So when I see them, I will forgive them. I also forgive the person that carried me here, through God, because if I do something bad I will tell God to forgive me and He will forgive me too. So I have forgiven the person.*

Apart from a general forgiveness for harm done during trafficking, children like Zainab, who left Togo to work in Nigeria until she was 17, went further to forgive everyone for the wasted years:

Me, I have forgiven them [parents and family] for all the wasted years because the thing that happened to me, God knew about it before my mother even gave birth to me. — Zainab, 17, girl

So what is it about forgiveness and moving on? Children themselves initiated the discussions at the focus group discussion and I noticed that many of them were grappling with identifying the source of their predicament and how to deal with their pain after leaving NAPTIP and settling in with their families. The trauma brought on by these thoughts was more visible with children who had cases under investigation or in court. The intrusions in their lives made their trafficking and experience of it part of their daily discussions, especially when they lacked social and educational activities to keep them occupied.

5.3. Hoping for a bright future

It was interesting to discover that even when children forgive their parents for the role they played in their trafficking, as well as the wasted years spent in trafficking, children do not exonerate them from blame. Unlike children like Nana who was kidnapped from Ghana and spent about 8 years working in Nigeria, Abraham, 15, did not waste years out of school. However, he still blames his parents for their inability to care for him and entrusting him to a Pastor:

35 - Abraham's reflections on his journey



Abraham: *I blame my parents because they did not take care of me and they think that by giving me to Pastor X, I will help them to make my life good...*

Ifeyinwa: Are you angry that your parents handed you over to somebody?

Abraham: I am not angry.

Ifeyinwa: Do you blame them for not enrolling you in school?

Abraham: Yes.

Ifeyinwa: Why don't you blame them for handing you over to somebody?

Abraham: Because they gave me to somebody for my life to be good, for my future to be good.

The child added that while he blames his parents for not sending him to school, he is happy that they sent him to someone who can do that because, though they lacked funds, all they wanted was for him to have a bright future. It could then be said that the child would have blamed his parents for keeping him at home doing nothing when he should have been in school.

5.4. Children becoming advocates

Finally children's reflections also move to what they will do with their experiences of trafficking on returning home. So many children have decided to be unpaid advocates, willing to make all their contacts aware of the dangers of child trafficking. Some children share their advocacy approaches:

I will tell them that they should not be giving their children to people for trafficking. — Gabriella, 16-year-old girl

Promise vows to begin her own advocacy, using her experience as a point of reference:

I will tell them what I have passed through and that they should not leave their children like that. If someone comes to tell you that they want to take your daughter or son abroad, you should not allow them do so. — Promise, 17-year-old girl

Other children, like Martha and Success who were arrested before they were sold into the sex trade, are still in recovery from the journey but are committed to beginning their advocacy with family and friends:

Ifeyinwa: How do you feel about this journey?

Martha: I feel bad

Ifeyinwa: When someone calls you to go on a trip again---?

Martha: I will reject it!

Ifeyinwa: Are you sure?

Martha: Yes. Me, from what I have seen, when I get to the house, I will be advising people, girls like me. Like my own sister does not know what they call abroad, whatever they call that thing. My own sisters that are at home, I will call them to sit down and I will advise them. I will advise my friends. If I advise and they do not take it, whatever they see let them bear it. Like my own sister now, if I advise her and she takes or does not take my advice, at least, me, I have seen things with my own eyes. What I have seen is beyond me. God helped me!

Success provided more detail in her attempt at advocacy:

When I get home I will tell all my brothers that when somebody comes to meet them, that they want person that they will take to travel, that they should not go because what we met on the

road³⁵ was ashawo³⁶ work. The woman was carrying us to do ashawo work, not the hairdressing work she said we were going to do. — Success, 14-year-old girl

I witnessed the beginning of Success's advocacy work when we reunited her with her family. We had not left the building before she started warning neighbours and siblings alike about the ills of travelling with unknown persons.

6. Discussions generated from children's experience of trafficking

Drawing on children's narratives and drawings, this section, looks at: the theoretical basis for understanding triggers of child trafficking; the implication of children's voice for re-enacting their experiences of trafficking; a look at children's exploitation, agency and resilience in the postcolonial setting; and the gendered nature of child trafficking in West Africa.

6.1. Theory and the opening of diverse triggers for understanding child trafficking in West Africa

Children's narratives generated diverse themes from their experiences of life away from home. Their narratives also warranted a closer look at the age-old cultural practice of socialisation, assistance and support to decipher where things went wrong. Ideally, the fostering practice, according to Goody (1982) is socialisation that offers training, knowledge and additional experience to the fostered child. But this socialisation factor does not belie the fact that fostering in some African countries is motivated by the receiving household's needs for a young child to assist with household chores (Ainsworth, 1990). Isiugo-Abanihe (1985) presents a more detailed understanding and explanation of the conceptualisation of fostering in West Africa that fits the demographics of fostered children in my study:

...unique to West African fostering are both its prevalence and the very early age at which children are boarded out. Furthermore, because fostering here is rooted in kinship structures and traditions, children are sent out not only in the event of family crisis or when one or both natural parents cannot, for some reason, manage to bring them up. Rather, the sending out of children is practiced by both stable and unstable families, married and single mothers, healthy and handicapped parents, rural and urban homes, and wealthy and poor parents (p. 56)

My study could not present typical characteristics of the typical fostering family or person. Bimbo was fostered by a lady she would prefer to call a single parent, since she never saw her husband the entire period of her residency, Emilia lived with her aunt who was frequently battered by her husband, Abraham lived with his aunt who was unmarried, Mary lived with her mother's friend that sent her hawking to make ends meet and Chiedo lived with his unmarried older sister who also engaged him in work.

Some researchers attest to the positive aspects of fostering in providing the best care for children leading to adulthood when biological parents are unable to do this (Bledsoe, 1990; Serra, 2009). On the other hand, with findings from their research in Ghana, Kuyini et al. (2009) draw attention to the abusive practices resulting from fostering and Pilon (2003) highlights uncertain findings concerning school attendance for fostered children. If socialisation was the reason for children's trafficking then there would be no reason for children to run away,

³⁵ What we met during the journey

³⁶ To call someone ashawo is to call the person a prostitute

because education, which is the supposed purpose of child fostering, involves a mutual process of communication and clarification between the child, the immediate family and the older relative.

The findings also show that children like Eziyuwa, Emilia and Chiedo, fostered by blood relatives, are more likely to attend school than other trafficked children. However, excessive household tasks may make children too tired to perform well in school or have irregular school attendance records. Agblorti & Tanle's (2011) study, conducted in Ghana, reports negative correlations between fostering and education. They found that while children living with their biological parents fare better educationally, children in fostering are unlikely to be enrolled in school and when they are enrolled, may not attend school regularly.

It appears that exploitation of those considered helpless has become so ingrained in the postcolonial period that Gozdiak's study with 30 child survivors of trafficking from four continents (2008) reports that extended family members did not consider their treatment of the children in their care to be exploitative or wrong. There is the suggestion that parents like Eziyuwa's father, who send their children to remain in the care of relatives, do not understand the new dangers of unimagined exploitation that children may face while engaged in the old practice of fostering (UNICEF, 2002).

Children's narratives from my study also point to the intersectional nature of factors influencing their departure from home and their experiences during trafficking that buttress the need for new theoretical approaches paying attention to power, class, gender and oppression to accommodate the complex nature of children's experiences within trafficking.

6.1.1. Power, Class and Oppression

It appears that in the postcolonial era and with deplorable economic situations in some homes, children are used as the bargaining tool for family sustenance. In relation to references to some African parents exploiting their children for work in an attempt to escape from poverty, Ajayi & Torimiro (2004) are emphatic that:

What African parents want for their children is not substantively different from what parents elsewhere in the world want. They want good health, development of economic and social competence that will make the children responsible adults in the future. In order to achieve these, the means are enmeshed in the prevailing cultural, social and environmental conditions in which the children are being raised. These are the African cultural realities! (p. 190).

Similar to Ajayi & Torimiro, I will avoid heaping the entire blame for trafficking on the poverty of parents because, from discussions with children, I see a number of parents who would have ordinarily wanted their children to remain at home managing the best they could if some people had not come with lofty promises they had no intention of fulfilling. In this regard, I see parents that are more interested in the future of their children than about what the family stands to gain when children are trafficked for work.

Conversely, the bargaining tool could be instigated by strangers, relatives and friends who are more interested in using children's labour to actualize their own business intentions. That appears to be the case for children like Martha, given away for sexual exploitation by her uncle, and Sandra, stolen away by her cousin. It narrows down to

power and the people lording it over those they consider socially inferior to them. Several narratives also show that children and their parents are in most cases unsure of receiving income from children's work during trafficking.

But what about the actions of people who children have to work or live with in the course of trafficking? The actions of people (relatives, employers and strangers) in these temporary homes reinforce the downward trend of families, family values and the worth and/or treatment of 'borrowed' children in the post-colonial era. Can this be blamed on modernisation and the migration of people from rural to urban areas for paid employment, leading to less time to care for their households; and the victimisation, oppression and humiliation of helpless children sent to provide assistance in these households in exchange for an income or education? Recent literature on child domestic work in Nigeria has added voice to the changing role of women as they move into the more formal labour force and how this is likely to reduce the attention women give to children and other household tasks (Okafor, 2010; Okafor, 2009; Tade & Aderinto, 2014). To offset imbalances in care, Tade & Aderinto (2011) report that some of their female respondents admitted to hiring domestic servants for several reasons: for companionship or someone to chat with when their husbands are away on business and to assist with household chores and caring for the children. Their study also found that the duties of the domestic servant varied with the age of the employers. Younger employers require domestic servants to assist with the general household and childcare; and older employers with grown up children, require domestic servants who can also act as companions.

Children are exploited in every way. Even their innocence is valued to the extent that it yields monetary gains as presented in the narratives of Mercy and other children forced into prostitution. According to Hossain, Zimmerman, Abas, Light, & Watts (2010), trafficked persons do not have control over activities that ensure their health and safety because actions such as work, rest and eating periods are in the hands of their employers. Awosusi & Adebo (2012) observed from their study of domestic servants in Ekiti and Ondo States in Nigeria that a majority of the children were unfairly treated during the course of the study, were not living or working with blood relatives, worked long hours (weekdays and weekends) and under poor working conditions. According to Uzodike (1990), the discriminatory or unfair treatment that children experienced during the course of their work differs from the age-old socialisation process that children should experience in engaging in normal work around the home. This normal work, in contrast to the exploitative work children in my study engaged in, calls up different associations for children: "...personal worth, pride and accomplishment." (Uzodike, 1990, p. 85).

There are diverse contexts for tackling trafficking because children are trafficked from a variety of source countries, speak different languages, come from different ethnic, educational and economic backgrounds, and vary across age, gender and experiences of exploitation during work and while in transit (Brennan, 2005). Just as there is no typical trafficking victim (NAPTIP-GAATW-UNIFEM, 2009; Nicola, 2007), there is also no typical trafficked child. Just as power is exhibited in the manner in which children are exploited by diverse individuals in society, power is also exhibited in academia with the squashing of children's voices and the information disseminated about the nature of child trafficking, especially in Africa. Can it be blamed on numerous desk reviews, sensational journalistic reporting or limited empirical research that are likely to prevent critical policy making that dwell on the plight of affected

children? Gozdzia (2012) confirms that of 1500 English Language articles written on human trafficking, majority are not based on empirical research with trafficked persons. The effect of limited empirical research Gozdzia (2012) adds is evident in the way: "...trafficked persons, including children are often depicted as a very homogenous group. . . (p. 3). The effect of treating trafficked persons as a homogenous group is seen for instance, in some studies where it is difficult to understand if the reference is to trafficked women or underage girls. These inconsistencies are bound to affect the application of empirical evidence intended to influence policy making for trafficked persons. Kooijmans & van de Glind (2010) also call for more specific responses that are based on in-depth localised research that give useful information on "children's profiles and root causes" (p. 35) of the trafficking problem.

My research contributes to empirical data relevant for understanding the situation of children across different nationalities (within West Africa), and shifts from the generalist nature of trafficking research that appears to treat children as a group of people unworthy of attention within academic research.

6.2. Counter-storytelling and the politics of giving voice to children's experiences

Building from the discussions in his chapter, who then understands children's experiences better - the children that experienced the phenomenon or those that have chosen to write about it based on their understanding of children's experiences? There are also limits to children's voice when they are prevented from partaking in research because of their perceived vulnerability (Powell & Smith, 2009). Mazzei & Jackson (2009) argue that researchers should reflect on the power relations influencing data generation that could restrict children's voices. Giugni (2003) affirms that research with children has often consisted of the responses of children to different issues using observational tools (which have now extended to include audio-visual tools) that are monitored by adults. She questions why the mode of conducting research with children should rest with adults and argues that the blame for this may not be distant from development theories that see children as immature and unreliable.

Are trafficked children really more mature or immature than their peers of the same age? I will argue that children who have faced exploitative situations (sometimes willingly) that adults consider beyond children's age and stage of development should be considered mature enough to speak about their experiences. Stoler (2002) builds on this argument that decisions made about children's role in research appear to be in keeping with conventional western understanding of child development, where children who are below 18 years old are considered "partial adults" (p. 6) in training to become adults. Therefore, their views may not be as comprehensive and acceptable in a research context as those provided by adults. To Stoler (2002), these ideas of childhood which guide the research process grew from European and North American ideas of the role of the family and children that may differ from the realities of children's lives in developing countries. It is crucial to consider children's lives as the children interpret them rather than what researchers consider or envisage children's lives should be.

6.2.1. Postcolonial theory and the tools and language of exploitation of children

It could also be that what results in postcolonial Nigeria is due to colonial influences that were geared toward administering their colonies. This colonial influence, as Damachi (1972) reports, involved positioning Nigerians toward Western values:

...as a result, traditional social institutions were disequilibrated and in their place modern ones were being instituted. In fact, the colonial contact initiated a lot of social processes unknown to traditional Nigeria, especially processes of differentiation and integration. With differentiation, there was a modification of the traditional social institutions while new ones (economic, governmental, educational) sprang up. Traditional beliefs and religion, family structure and functions, social stratification and traditional associations were all affected (p.3).

The reference to colonisation should not however be misunderstood, as Mapuva & Chari (2010) say, pushing the entire blame of failures in African countries to colonisation. Rather, the intention is to acknowledge that while failures within African countries in handling their child trafficking problem exist, the problem in its present state is also traceable to the effect of having been colonised, manipulating the tools of modernisation and inability to use previous traditional protective forces to shield children from trafficking and exploitation.

At the moment, there is much focus on the economic underpinnings of the problem of child trafficking in Africa (Agbu, 2009). The researcher adds that: "...the mainstream literature mostly published by international organizations and NGOs, though relevant, needs to be approached with detachment in order to better understand the African situation" (p. 2). Furthermore, looking at child trafficking from an African perspective means explaining poverty within the situations of wars, poor social services, poor educational facilities that African children are exposed to and also making working children a visible part of Africa's history (Grier, 2004).

The narratives of several children in the study, such as Mercy, recruited and forced into sex trafficking, amplify my inference that child trafficking opens children to exploitation and is often a violation of innocence. Children's narratives appear a recollection of acts they were made to engage in that they never would have imagined adults asking of them prior to trafficking. With themes derived from this apparent violation of innocence, we see children:

- Forced to lie to cover up for lasting and often visible harm done to them or the dubious practices of adults;
- Forced to shed family and religious ties;
- Forced to embrace sexual practices;
- Forced to remain in the service of their madams;
- Forced to change their perception of morality to enable adults justify their actions;
- Forced to move on with their lives without knowing who to trust — relatives, friends, church members or strangers;
- Forced to become silent pawns in the hands of adults that use them as recyclable goods for financial gains;
- Forced to endure dehumanising acts to actualise some set goals or avoid further punishment.

The exploitative decisions that are forcefully made for children is considered a violation of their innocence and in some cases changes the way the trafficked children I worked with view adults, leading them to see their elders with

mixed emotions of suspicion, fear and restrained trust. This is not unrelated to some of the children enduring situations where adults possessing the monetary means to recruit their services have considered themselves possessing the authority to lord it over children and their daily existence. This brings in the dominant idea of 'collecting children' depicted in children's drama and the angry thoughts expressed by Rashida's madam, all reinforcing the image of children as disposable goods - a collector's item. The collectors are also interested in going to the market to identify and pick the most desirable piece which should be malleable to obey or understand needs before they are expressed. When this piece deviates from the expected, the collector is angered. Bad feelings and beatings become the norm, as in the beating Rashida received from her madam that caused her to run away at night, only to be rescued by some police officers.

After I was treated [at the hospital], my oga's husband said he will pay money so that he can take me back home. The police refused. They said they will not release me to them. It is likely that, at night, the woman could use a knife to kill me and nobody will know anything about it. . .
— Rashida, 15-year-old girl

Are trafficked children too young to understand their role in some of the trafficking situations they were removed from? Apart from their voiced narratives of perceptions of exploitation and discrimination, drama sketches written by children, based on their collective experiences of trafficking, identified different pointers to their perception of themselves (trafficked children) as an unappreciated collector's item. In their drama, Buky's madam is aware that traffickers, aiming to make fast money, will readily provide children as demanded and, if you do not like the child you are given, you can dispose of the child and make payments for another to be delivered to you. Children's rights and needs are not respected when they are with employers and they are also prevented from making informed choices (Woodhead, 2004), even in the least important situations. The bargaining platform leading to children's trafficking or movement from home, therefore, is the collector's ability to pay when the desired merchandise is delivered. Questions are also not asked when the merchandise is defaced, deformed or runs away.

Rwezaura (1998) says that, sometimes, parents' inability to intervene when their children are treated harshly in the course of exploitative work could be because the family depends largely on the income generated from the work. This could be applied to results from my study where children run away from homes where they are severely maltreated and the parents or guardians return them to the same places or another employer who adopts similar tactics. This also reinforces the notion of children as disposable items. It was also interesting that Tade & Aderinto's (2014) study with female employers of domestic servants report that women attest to differences in the manner in which fostered children who are relatives are treated compared with domestic servants who are non-relatives. The women indicated that ill-treatment of a relative's child will cause strains in extended family relationships. Regardless of this finding, several children in my study reported severely humiliating and discriminatory treatment in the hands of blood relatives.

There are several explanations for the nonchalance with which children are humiliated in the course of work. Writing based on experience in Sierra-Leone, Bledsoe (1999) reports that parents believe that the ill-treatment children receive during the socialisation or fostering process will remind them of the importance of hard work and its

rewards in adult life. Related to this, Uzodike (1990) adds that the hard and often humiliating punishments meted out to children by parents and guardians, such as putting hot pepper in their eyes or privates, are often done in good faith, intended to make the child desist from an undesirable practice and make the child strong-willed to deal with the future. On my part, I wonder what lessons for their future development children will learn if they develop complications as a result of these inhumane practices?

The findings reflect the growing deceit that parents and children are open to in postcolonial West Africa when they fall for the empty promises of traffickers who turn their children into recyclable and disposable goods. We have also found that sometimes parental consent is not sought before children are taken away as seen with the high rates of child kidnapping reported in Cameroon (IRIN, 2015).

6.2.2. Children's agency and resilience

Children's narratives also counter the dominant narrative by presenting new perspectives on their trafficking journey and their experience within it. Children's narratives attest to their agency in either taking initiative for the initial journey into trafficking or, finding the journey not meeting their expressed needs, getting out of trafficking. Based on her study with young trafficked persons in Marseilles, Brueil (2008) found that children do not feel they have lost their agency or ability to make choices simply because they have been trafficked.

A small number of studies attest to the resilience displayed by trafficked children (Hynes, 2010; Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010). Children that participated in my study also give evidence of their resilience by remaining in their trafficking situation not because they are unable to make it out of the environment but mostly because they are more interested in meeting the goals of leaving home. These goals could be saving up for their education, financing learning a vocation, enhancing household income or settling a family loan. The resilience and agency displayed by some of the trafficked children attests to their discomfort with the tag of victimhood or trafficking victims in need of a messiah. Praise and Daniella presented in the study are two children whose reasons for leaving home were, respectively, to earn money towards learning a vocation and to continue their education. Though their trafficker was arrested, they are still intent on remaining in Lagos and achieving those goals.

With evidence from her study with children of diverse nationalities trafficked to the United States, Gozdzik (2008) adds that accepting the tag of victim would go contrary to children's reasons for migrating to a different country, which is strictly to earn money, some of which is remitted home or used to offset their smuggling costs. Why is the literature silent on children's agency and resilience? The literature could be silent because professionals see children as passive and helpless victims of trafficking in need of rescue and reintegration (Harrington, 2005; Jordan, 2002), an image that may differ from what I observed during my discussions and association with the children.

It is normal for society to question children's agency, preferring to accept that children will be nothing but children and in need of protection. Children with agency could still be vulnerable and in need of protection, especially when they face harmful situations. But while children could be vulnerable, it may not imply that they are passive victims, constantly requiring people to rescue them and provide for their needs. Woodhead (2004) indicates that the only aspect of work in which children may be seen as passive participants or victims is in the area of forced or bonded

labour. But in other aspects of harmful work, he sees children as “...social actors, trying to cope with their situation, negotiating with parents and peers, employers and customers, and making the best of oppressive, exploitative and difficult circumstances.” (p. 327).

Alan (1990) explains that the fact that children have agency does not mean that they work in isolation. The decisions children make are achieved through the interaction of social relationships that are built and influenced by their beliefs, parental relationships, education, culture, religion and past experiences. Berlan (2005) indicates that child workers exhibit great resilience in dealing with situations they find themselves in and do not consider themselves ‘victims’, as evident in the dominant discourse on child trafficking. This view is shared by Montgomery (2001), who voiced wariness for interventions claiming to be in the child’s best interest, without consulting with children or sharing their everyday experiences.

As previously discussed, the problem society has with children’s involvement in decision-making could be because of societal perception of children and the notion of childhood. Nieuwenhuys (1996), working from a sociological approach, sees childhood as a time for play and learning; and work as exploitative and harmful to children’s health. Moreover, children also questioned the direction of their ‘rescue’ or removal from trafficking. Children wondered what they are being rescued from, when for the most part they are unsure what they are doing in NAPTIP and what they will be doing after leaving the agency.

6.3. Children and the gendered nature of child trafficking

I began the research looking at the literature and statistics attesting to the large number of girls trafficked across Nigeria and other West African countries. When I undertook my exploratory study there was also a larger number of female children removed from trafficking than male children. NAPTIP also reports that about 8000 females and 2000 males have been removed from trafficking since the agency’s inception in 2003 (NAPTIP, 2014). During my field research, I found that there were always a large number of female children removed from trafficking in all the fully operational shelters I visited for my study, with a minimal number of male children present and, at other times, none at all.

Are there empirical explanations for these differentials? Bass (2004) provides further insight by classifying the types of employment male and female children are co-opted for during trafficking. Boys are more likely to be hired in quarries, plantations and farms, while girls are hired as domestic servants, food hawkers and prostitutes. Similar to Bass (2004), Tade & Aderinto’s (2014) study with women employers of domestic servants observed that the preference for male or female children as domestic servants depends on the nature of the household tasks. Female children are preferred for baby care, cooking and washing, while boys are preferred for washing of cars, cutting grass and ironing clothes. While this may be so, several female children in my study, 14-year-old Patricia, for instance, attested to having to add washing of cars to her already exhausting list of household chores. Some of the women made a marked preference for girls because of their own gender; the fact that females still exhibit fear (probably timidity or respect) of their madams, unlike the males who exhibit a lot of ‘male ego.’

Children themselves also had something to say about the large presence of female children in trafficking and the NAPTIP shelter. One of these children, Obiada, 17, whose mother was in need of support for her children and sent three female children to work in Lagos State, shares her thoughts:

Ifeyinwa: *How old are your two siblings?*

Obiada: *One is twelve years and the other is ten years.*

Ifeyinwa: *Boys or girls?*

Obiada: *They are girls.*

Ifeyinwa: *You mother sent out her female children. Does this mean they don't want male children?*

Obiada: *These people do not want male children. But it all depends on the child that is brought to them. . .*

Obiada's innocent observation of the preference for girls by traffickers and potential users of trafficking, which in Obiada's case was to act as domestic servants or shop girls, reinforces the notion that women in urban areas have a preference for girls to work in their homes because they are attracted to their docile and malleable nature (Moore, 2000). Unlike older ladies, the young girl is also unlikely to flee, except in dire situations. Another girl, Mercy, mentioned that while in the sex trade, male customers preferred docile underage girls to older sex workers because the former yielded to their needs easily and did not spend time fighting and insulting them. This supports Muazo's (2005) observation of a gendered classification of trafficking that also has links to the age of affected children.

The preference for dispatching female children into trafficking may be linked to cultural factors that favour keeping boys safe at home because they are considered the sustainers of the family line. This preference for female children is depicted in my study by 14-year-old Bimbo's movement from one trafficking situation to the next, until her residence at the NAPTIP shelter. During her involvement in trafficking, her twin brother remained tearful at home, not advancing in education compared with his working sister, but kept safe in the village with his father. There appears the cultural expectation that female children will have the compassion to respond to the family's needs for relief from difficult economic situations. Female children are expected to be well-behaved in the final work destinations and endure the exploitation they experience, with the ultimate goal of their family's wellbeing in mind. The high expectation from female children is evident in the narrative of another child:

I don't know what he does with the money but each time I go home, I never meet money in his hand. So I was tired of the place but my daddy took me back there. . . He said I should go and work for both the money they owe me and the money I took from them. . . — Rosemary, 15-year-old girl

Rosemary, as mentioned in earlier narratives, had been working to bring in money for her father and uncle from an early age. She had worked without ever knowing what was done with the earnings, and sadly forgoing school and her aspiration to learn hairdressing. In this narrative, having run away from her last employer, she returned home, only to be sent back to work to repay the money stolen to facilitate her escape and that still owed the family by her employer. In several instances, it appears that whether the child likes it or not, female children are automatically expected to be: natural caregivers, mothers or homemakers, even when they are younger than other children in the household of employment; and docile, malleable and good lovers when they are recruited in the sex trade.

The cultural stigmatisation that female children face, especially as a result of teenage pregnancy, makes them susceptible to trafficking and reinforces the gendered nature of trafficking. In this case, the notion of children as commodities adopts a different platform when the fruits of children's womb are forcefully seized and seen as the vehicle for providing happiness for women (usually older married women) unable to have children of their own. With insight from her study with young women between 15 and 25 years from Edo State, Attah (2012) links the large number of trafficked girls and women to the commodification of female bodies, especially with feedback from the father of one of the trafficked persons who lamented the absence of companies in Edo State and the expectation that their children will remit earnings generated from prostitution abroad as start-up capital for low-risk businesses in Edo State. Also, based on a study of potential female migrants from Edo State, Onyeonoru (2005) reports the influence of gender-biased cultural systems that make it more difficult for girls to access meaningful employment and assume that the only way they can contribute to household wellbeing is through their involvement in the sex trade.

7. Conclusion

While poverty is often used to explain children's exploitation and trafficking, not much is known why children are trafficked for some activities and not for others (Thorsen, 2012). Research on the experiences of children moving into trafficking and their experiences within the activity are crucial for informing directions in re-integration and rehabilitation processes for young persons removed from trafficking (Rigby & Whyte, 2013). Further research is also needed into the gendered nature of trafficking to understand how it reinforces the overlapping domination associated with social status, age, economic, educational, religious, ethnic and political forces existing in the country or region of focus.

Chapter Nine — Findings and Discussions

Life in NAPTIP Shelter

Author's Reflections on Life in NAPTIP Shelter

A shelter is a place of temporary protection, a place to seek refuge until you are considered safe enough to re-emerge and interact with society. For children that are used to freedom and expressing themselves in play, noise and silence, a closed shelter that restricts movement or associations with the outside world and operates within certain rules, could be a difficult place to remain for long periods of time. Some children may also find it easier to live in the shelter when they are assured that the problems leading to their departure from home and into trafficking will be addressed close to their departure from the shelter. I reflect on the significance of a shelter when the issues plaguing the young ones that sought refuge in that shelter afflict them even after they are long released from the shelter. I reflected on the modalities for establishing shelters for trafficked West African children long before my field research, during my field research and during the thesis writing process. Who are these shelters set up to serve, what models are adopted in the operational pattern of the shelters, what are the strategies for evaluating their success and what are the markers for rating success in relation to other existing shelters?

If West African children are confined in a regional shelter for a period of time and do not feel served by it, then who are the shelters designed to serve? How should shelters be perceived by children and NAPTIP staff? If agency workers see the shelters in Nigeria more as transit points for children, how do children see the shelters? And do shelter workers try to understand children's perception of their shelter? I also had reason to wonder if there are perceived expectations of gratitude for services rendered to children but then, I thought, that without trafficked persons, the agency or shelter will have no reason to exist. Moreover, justifications for gratitude should be measured by going with children to their homes to understand if services rendered to children are commensurate with their needs, viewed through the confines of the crucial departure point: their Homes.

Life in NAPTIP Shelter

The previous chapters have presented findings on children's departure from home and their experiences within trafficking. The current chapter will look into children's lives after 'rescue' and residency in the closed shelter operated by Nigeria's anti-trafficking agency, NAPTIP. The areas of discussion based on children's narratives are: children's day-to-day life in a NAPTIP shelter; what children considered memorable about life in the shelter; and discussions generated from the findings. As with the previous findings chapters, a summary of the narratives of twelve children that participated in the study focussed on leaving trafficking and their experience of the NAPTIP shelter will appear in text boxes,

1. Day-to-day life in a NAPTIP shelter

The NAPTIP Shelter is one of the core units of the Counselling and Rehabilitation Department of NAPTIP. The Shelter Management Unit is charged with offering services such as "...feeding, clothing, provision of regular sanitation products, recreational exercises, basic educational classes," to all trafficked persons in their care (NAPTIP website, 2015). The shelter management unit works with other core counselling and rehabilitation units to provide services to trafficked persons. These mutually reinforcing units include: the counselling unit that collect information leading to understanding the reasons surrounding children's movement from home; and the rehabilitation unit that offers vocational or short-term formal educational programmes to residents as well as handling the disbursement of trade equipment to trafficked persons that have completed their apprenticeship. Discussions in this section will provide: insight into the NAPTIP shelter; trafficking victims in residence and the length of time allowed in the shelter; the process of integration to the shelter; shelter timetable and activities for children in residence

At 12years, **Princess** was not prepared for the journey she was embarking on. She also made several attempts to escape. The first two attempts were not successful but the third attempt where she was asked to guide and accompany two older girls was successful and led to the arrest of her madam and Princess's residency at the NAPTIP shelter while awaiting the outcome of legal actions against her trafficker.

1.1. Insight into the NAPTIP shelter

NAPTIP operates nine closed shelters in nine Nigerian states with shelters varying in the number of trafficked persons they can accommodate at a time: Lagos (60), Abuja (38), Benin (40), Uyo (45), Kano (30), Sokoto (30), Maiduguri (20), Enugu (30) and a recent shelter in Makurdi (20). The Lagos shelter is the largest shelter with the capacity to accommodate about 60 trafficked persons at a time. The shelters are transit and closed because of the sensitive nature of cases (such as children that have taken oaths of silence, are indebted to their madams or the target of organised trafficking networks) before the agency and to ensure the safety of trafficked persons.³⁷ Since the shelters are closed, trafficked persons can only leave the shelter for medical or investigative purposes accompanied by NAPTIP personnel.

³⁷ If shelters are open, some children in difficult situations run the risk of getting lured back or intimidated into trafficking or abducted by their traffickers while their cases are still in court.

1.2. Trafficking victims in residence and Length of time in the shelter

The shelter provides temporary residence to trafficked persons, male and female of diverse nationalities, removed from exploitative situations within and outside the country. Since the shelter does not offer age-specific accommodation, underage children and adults share housing and have daily interactions in dormitory-like settings (For further information on sheltering, accommodation and other basic shelter management details, see appendix 15 for NAPTIP's documentation on Sheltering for children in formal care).

Trafficked persons can remain in the shelter for a maximum of six weeks. However if the situation warrants that trafficked persons remain in agency care for an extended period, then they will be referred to shelters owned by partner agencies or NGOs accommodating extended residency. According to the U.S. Department of State (2014) the anti-trafficking agency: "...paid a monthly stipend of the equivalent of approximately \$2,500 to a local NGO-run shelter and provided limited funding, in-kind donations, and services to NGOs and other organisations that afforded protective services to trafficking victims." Further training and technical support is provided to NGOs by state and local governments (U.S. Department of State, 2014).

1.3. Process of integration to the shelter

When children are brought before the agency³⁸ and information concerning their cases obtained, they are sent to the counselling unit who are expected to adopt more subtle techniques for putting children at ease or even obtaining additional information from them that will determine the pattern of their adjustment and integration in the shelter. Personnel of the counselling unit are in most cases expected to hand the children over to the shelter (there are cases where staff from the investigation and monitoring department have brought new trafficked persons to the shelter) management team or unit. The shelter management team will seek further demographic details, let children know the rules guiding residency at the shelter, introduce them to other trafficked victims and assign them to their rooms. An essential part of integration at the shelter is understanding and complying with the minimal rules for shelter life which children are expected to agree to on arrival at the shelter. These rules hinge upon respecting other trafficked persons, not stealing, not fighting or quarrelling, adhering to shelter schedules, participating in shelter programmes and taking their meals. (For further information on these rules, see appendix 16 for NAPTIP's documentation on obligations of children in formal care).

1.4. Shelter timetable and Children's activities (school, therapeutic, health, rehabilitation)

Each shelter has a time-table that monitors the schedule of trafficked persons and workers at the facility. The shelter time-table determines the schedule of meals, counselling, recreational, siesta, religious and instructional activities.

³⁸ Children could be brought to the agency through referrals from other related agencies like the Police, immigration and NGOs. Children could also be brought to the agency through NAPTIP arrests made on the basis of reports by concerned individuals in the society. Depending on the nature of children's trafficking experiences and the agency receiving the reports, children may have spent some days at these establishments before their referral to NAPTIP and the shelter.

The activities available for children differ with individual shelters. On my first visit to the temporary location of the Lagos shelter for my exploratory study in 2010, there were a lot of master trainers instructing children on bead making, sewing, hat making and other pursuits. During my final field research at the permanent location of the Lagos shelter, the children were almost left to entertain themselves because there was an absence of master trainers and instructors due to the distance from major parts of Lagos to the shelter. The children kept themselves occupied with featured programmes on the local television network.

The Abuja shelter had a network of instructors, which I benefited from and the children had a busy programme that included arts and crafts, sports or fitness day that occurred once a week and involved all shelter personnel. The Enugu shelter did not have master trainers coming to visit during my stay, there was a lack of recreational activities for children, although they had a table tennis table, which was hardly set up and used by the children. I noticed that children kept themselves entertained with the television and video recordings or DVDs. The Benin Shelter had an in-house trainer for bead making, who also doubled as the cook; and they had an active cable subscription that the children and I enjoyed while there.

Martha had to be moved from one shelter to the next to give her case the attention it deserved. I met her in the Lagos shelter and met her again at the Benin shelter which as an indigene of Delta State, is her zonal shelter. Moving her to her home zone also allowed closer interaction with her traffickers (especially her uncle) and discussions with her parents.

2. What is memorable about life in the shelter?

Life in the NAPTIP shelter is a process of adjustment, especially for children who had never lived away from home or in dormitory type settings with other children prior to being trafficked. Based on my interaction with trafficked children, I will look at children's processing of life at the NAPTIP shelter within the emotional, social, religious and educational effects the shelter had on children's lives.

36 — Chiedo's vivid depiction of arrival and life in the shelter



2.1. Emotional

The shelter offered children the opportunity, away from their employers or trafficking locations, to discuss sensitive issues revolving around their lives. The fact that children felt a sort of solidarity with other children sharing similar experiences made discussions easier and lightened the weight of remembering. The emotional aspect of children's stories centered around: who to blame for their trafficking, sharing problems and learning to cope with situations; and telling stories and realising that you are not alone with your problem.

2.1.1. Understanding who to blame for their trafficking

For some children, the shelter provided a time for reflections about themselves, their journey and the impact it had on their lives. I noticed during the focus group discussions that the reflections children have about their experiences are likely to affect their adjustments with family and the community after leaving the shelter. This transitioning for children meant identifying who to blame for their trafficking and residency at the NAPTIP shelter.

Children were quick to identify who they blame for their trafficking. Promise, 17, for instance, who was interviewed at the Lagos shelter in 2013 after she was removed from Burkina Faso where she had endured two months of the sex trade, was emphatic about blaming her Mum for her predicament:

I blame my parent and the man that took me abroad. In the first place, I did not know the man and my mother did not know the man before. I wanted to come back to Nigeria but my mother did not want me to come back. She said if I come back to Nigeria I should not reach her house.
— Promise, 17-year-old girl

Gabriella, 16, who in an earlier narrative wondered if her parents were not charmed into handing her over to a strange woman, blames her parents for seven years of domestic work in Nigeria:

It's my family and the people that took me out... It's my family I blame most because they don't know a woman and they just handed me over to her... — Gabriella, 16-year-old girl

Seven-year-old Ola, who narrated her gruesome experience, may be justified if she blames her father for sending her to a place where she was treated as less than human:

I said I did not want to come to Lagos and they carried me to Lagos and my oga beat me very well and I don't like it and my daddy for that. — Ola, 7-year-old girl

Children not only blamed individuals for their trafficking but gave reasons emanating from their trafficking experiences as justification for their decisions.

On the other hand, some children, like 17-year-old Adaeze, interviewed at the Lagos shelter in 2014 and who was removed from a baby factory establishment where she delivered a baby that died after birth, blamed no one but herself for her trafficking:

I am not blaming anybody. I am blaming myself because I am the one that put myself into that temptation. Because if I had respected myself and stayed in my aunt's house, facing my education and doing what my aunty asked me to do I will not have entered this trouble. But no matter, because in any condition we shall give God thanks. So as things happened like they did I also thank God. if some people are saying that they want to leave the shelter, they should remember that their problems brought them to the NAPTIP and the shelter. NAPTIP did not come to their houses to pick them--- — Adaeze, 17-year-old girl

Adaeze went on to say that rather than some children in the shelter blaming NAPTIP for keeping them in the shelter longer than they considered necessary, they should try to endure the situation until their cases are addressed. Adaeze's perspective was not shared by other members of the focus group who enjoined her to speak about her own situation rather than speaking on behalf of everyone. I reminded the children that the side talks went contrary to our ground rules for the focus group discussions that emphasised that whoever had the floor should be allowed to speak their mind.

Chiedo was cunningly taken away from his female trafficker by the woman's husband, brought first to the NAPTIP head office, then moved to the NAPTIP shelter. Chiedo mentioned in his narrative that his trafficker and her husband are separated because the man did not support the shady practices his wife engaged in as well as her exploitation of underage boys. Prior to the husband making the report, the woman had been detained by NAPTIP on similar charges of exploitation of underage boys.

2.1.2. Sharing problems and learning to cope with situations

Sometimes, children felt that their problems were too private to be shared with other children or even the permanent agency staff. Besides, because I

spent one month in each shelter visited, children saw me as someone that they could relate with, because I spoke some of their languages, played with them, shared snacks with them, tried to find out their troubles using different approaches from what they are used to and was a regular face at the shelter. This background led to my discussion

with Amaobi who felt an attachment to me because I was actively involved in her case. I was also the one that documented their case history as well as taking all the girls who were victims of sexual exploitation to the military hospital for physical examinations and HIV tests as mandated by the agency. This set of children experienced a lot of trauma and each time, I would have one of them dropping by for private questions, discussions and to share a bit of laughter:

37 — Amaobi's struggles with thoughts of home while at the shelter



Ifeyinwa: So when you knew why they brought you to the shelter, were you happy?

Amaobi: Yes.

Ifeyinwa: Why were you happy?

Amaobi: Because I was saved.

Ifeyinwa: How do you think your parents will feel when they hear what happened to you?

Amaobi: They will feel bad.

Ifeyinwa: Why?

Amaobi: Because I have not been telling them.

Ifeyinwa: What do you really want NAPTIP to do for you?

Amaobi: I am thinking about the HIV test that we did today.

Ifeyinwa: Why are you thinking about it? You did not want to do it?

Amaobi: I wanted.

Ifeyinwa: So why are you thinking about it?

Amaobi: Because I don't know whether I have HIV.

Ifeyinwa: *[We dwelt on the HIV/AIDS issue for some time]. By the way was the doctor using any protection?*

Amaobi: No.

Ifeyinwa: He never did?

Amaobi: Yes.

Ifeyinwa: And that disturbs you now?

Amaobi: Yes.

My discussions with Amaobi and the other children sharing similar experiences provided insight for understanding how children deal with the trauma of release from sexual slavery. In the case of the doctor who sexually exploited multiple children, the children knew that what they were engaged in was wrong but they had been intimidated into silence until one child, Sandra, escaped and Sandra's relative spilled the beans that led to their release. The children's release brought so many things they had suppressed to the fore. They found out that to sleep with an adult and avoid pregnancy and infections, the adult needs to use protection. As a result, they found that they have to be screened for such terrible illnesses as HIV/AIDS. The period until the test results were released was the most traumatic for the children; anyone sensitive enough could see the anxiety written on their faces and understand their pain. I also found that Amaobi and other children are still dealing with the anxiety of moving on, belonging and trying to act like nothing happened. Moreover, what will they tell people when they are asked why they returned home from a place where they were sent to a good school? A place to seek answers, consolation, sound reasoning and mutual solutions to a problem was something the children needed and expected from the shelter and its management. Sadly, I did not see that provided.

*Unlike the other girls that had to solicit for male customers by the roadside, with the assistance of the lady who told **Serena** she was too young to work on the streets at night, Serena was able to leave the streets of Lagos, the same night she was dropped off by her madam. Serena slept over in the supportive woman's house and the next day, was taken first to the police station, then the NAPTIP zonal office and finally the NAPTIP shelter. Serena acknowledges that NAPTIP has done a great service by providing shelter when she needed a place to come to terms with her experience. However, she confesses that she does not like the shelter. Her perception of the shelter is evident in her drawings. Serena will also be the first to inform you that she is taking away several life lessons based on her residency at the shelter.*

2.1.3. Telling stories and understanding that you are not alone with your problem

My interaction with child victims made me understand that stories about their trafficking experience was something that went beyond the mandatory agency requirement of sharing their stories with NAPTIP officials. Beyond this obligatory sharing, children were constantly making decisions about whom to share their stories. The decision children made about sharing their stories rests on positive and negative factors, some of which built on the previous experiences children had with sharing their stories with others at the shelter:

Positive/Personal

2.1.3.1. Making your story your private thing

When this discussion about their stories came up, I found it was a subject that had caused a lot of tension among children. I also found out those children with a preference for private rather than open chats spearheaded this discussion. The first was 15-year-old Gift from Benue State who was trafficked for domestic labour. Gift was one

of those children who considered her story to be her private thing, to be shared only with those she considered worthy:

In the room that I used to stay, some people used to ask me what brought me here and I will say that I cannot tell people my story. Like X now, she tried to force me and ask me and I will say that I cannot tell you my story because I do not know where you are from. Yes, I told them that. If you tell them and you just leave their side, they will take your story and meet other people. If you tell one person your story, so many people will hear it. That will bring me shame.
— Gift, 15-year-old girl

Gift was passionate about her story and the implications it had on her life, leading to her residency at the shelter for longer than the mandated six weeks. She provided insights that other children did not: the fact that she does not see the need to tell her story to someone she had only met, who cannot identify her roots, and who is likely to share her story, causing a grapevine effect that will add shame to the trauma she is already experiencing from living at the shelter.

Another child Sunday, 17, shared Gift's opinion:

Sunday said he wouldn't want to tell his story here because somebody else might just go and tell it in the village or somewhere else. — Gabriella, 16-year-old girl

But his perspective was conveyed by Gabriella who possibly could not understand Sunday's reluctance in sharing his story. Another quiet participant who opened up during this discussion was Patricia, who supported Gift by adding her own twist with reference to her experience with trafficking:

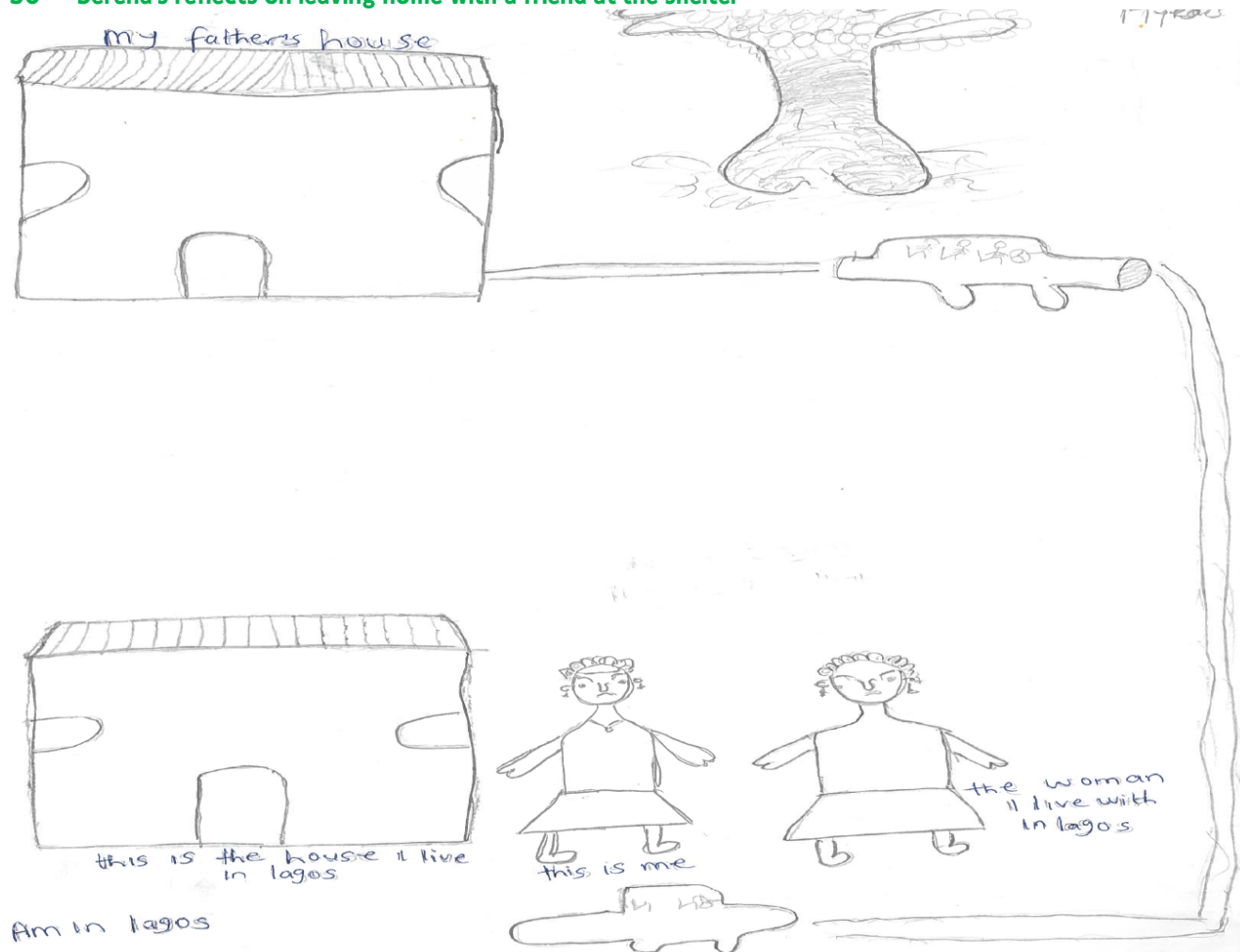
I have not told anyone my story. I do not tell anyone my story. When another person comes, they will tell the person about how your oga is maltreating you and I will not like it. — Patricia, 15-year-old girl

Patricia feels that her experience with maltreatment at her employer's was hers to tell, and not that of others, who must have heard different versions from other people to tell. The question about children's ownership of their stories should revert to researchers who feel that children experiencing trauma should be spoken for rather than re-traumatised with re-telling. From the responses of children in the current research, who actually has more experience to narrate children's experiences with trafficking? Even after my field research, I still find this a difficult question to answer. Based on my interaction with the children in my study, I find myself assigned the enormous responsibility of guardian of some stories that children kept away from other people. The children removed from the baby factory for instance, who are bothered that people outside the shelter have a different image of their experiences, saw me as the platform for telling their actual story. Quite a lot of responsibility. To ensure that their stories are told exactly as they happened, some children actually drop in several times during my residency to re-narrate their experiences, clarify areas of their story they felt were not properly narrated on the first interview and support their stories with additional drawings. I believe that children should be the best people to talk about their experiences, but when the platform for sharing this experience to a large audience is absent, then children should be able to determine those they feel competent enough to re-tell their stories.

2.1.3.2. Voluntarily sharing your story with a new friend

Not all children shy away from sharing their stories with other children at the shelter. Children falling within this category offer several reasons for the decision to share their stories with others. Serena, 17, explains why she shared her story with only one person:

38 — Serena's reflects on leaving home with a friend at the shelter



Serena: Mummy, somebody like me, who I believe I told was Patience because she is the closest person to me. She is like a sister to me here in the shelter and because I trust her, that she cannot say it out. I trust her that she is not that kind of person, that because both of you had little misunderstanding, she will start spreading your story. That was the reason why I told her everything concerning me.

Ifeyinwa: Did your load feel lighter or did you feel better after sharing your story with Patience?

Serena: Yes, because she gave me advice that I needed to hear.

Serena's narrative confirms my earlier observation that often, children need to talk to people other than the agency staff. These are people that children trust, who could be older or even within the same age bracket. Serena needed counselling and sharing her story with Patience provided something else - advice - that made the weight of carrying such a huge load lighter. Another child, Nana, 15, supported Serena's need to share her story with trusted friends.

Other children joined in interrogating Nana to understand the interesting twist she brought into explaining the benefit of sharing her story:

39 - Nana's vivid depiction of arrival and her life in the shelter



Ifeyinwa: Did you tell your story to another person?

Nana: Yes. Emilia, Goodness, Angel and Sarah.

Ifeyinwa: Did they tell you their stories?

Nana: Yes, they told me.

Ifeyinwa: How did you feel, telling them your story and all of them telling you theirs?

Nana: I felt it.

Abraham: How did you feel it, in your body?

Nana: I felt cold.

Abraham and some others: Ah

Ifeyinwa: Explain this coldness to us. Does this mean you felt better or worse?

Nana: I felt better and I felt happy.

From Nana's explanation about the effect of sharing and receiving, you discern a child experiencing a wave of reactions. Remember that Nana's kidnapping to work in Nigeria left her arriving at the NAPTIP shelter where tests were carried out and she realised for the first time that she was pregnant. Her reaction appeared confusing to the other children and made sense to her and to me for that matter. Nana's trafficking story could be a child's worse

nightmare, but hearing other people's stories such as that of Angel (accused of witchcraft) and Goodness (working away from home since the age of 8), she must have felt some spirit of solidarity that she was not alone that sent happy shivers down her spine.

2.1.3.3. Sharing your story because you consider your experience harmless

I found out that some children are more willing to share their story when they perceive the nature of their trafficking as harmless or nothing to be ashamed of:

Ifeyinwa: *Gabriella, who is your best friend at the shelter? [Gabriella looks here and there]*

Ifeyinwa: *You don't want to say because you have many friends at the shelter?*

Gabriella: *Yes, it is true I have many friends*

Ifeyinwa: *Have you told any of your friends how you came to the shelter?*

Gabriella: *Mum, but I can share my story because the thing I did is not bad. It is just house-girl work. It is okay.*

Gabriella actually began by telling me that during one of the religious programmes at the shelter, she gave a testimony, which is a public narrative of what God has done for you. This means you share the good news with everyone present at the event. In essence, Gabriella not only shared her story with her friends but everyone resident at the shelter. She explains that she only worked as a house girl and has nothing to hide. It appears that Gabriella links the degree of sharing one's story to the amount of harm, shame or morality associated with the nature of work done during trafficking.

When I met **Paul**, it was his second time or residency at the NAPTIP shelter. His first residency was to discuss with NAPTIP staff about waves of complaints that Pastor X was selling children. His second residency at the shelter was in 2014 shortly after the death of the elderly woman he was caring for. Unlike the other children, who were first time residents, Paul was already familiar with life at the NAPTIP shelter.

2.1.3.4. Listening to other children's stories for the life lessons they offer

Earlier, some children like Serena and Nana attested that by sharing their stories, they were sure of advice and dialoguing with fellow sufferers. Now another child, 14-year-old Bimbo, assures me that she has gained some life lessons by listening to stories told by other trafficking persons:

Some of their stories help me a lot. First, that before you get married you must have your own job. . . If you are a hair dresser, do it well, not that you will be depending on that husband to give you the money. . . You can't just go to your husband's house, without a job and you just want to be in that husband's house, eating, having children. One day the man will do something you never thought about. Maybe the man knows, "Me, I go to work. But this, my wife, she just sits at home, sleeping, eating. She has to find something to do and she is also very lazy and the house is in a mess." You are not neat, one day, the husband will kick you out. He may collect the children or he may leave you and your children. Second, they also taught me that even if my best friend is going to where I have never gone before or do not feel like going, I do not have the right to follow a friend because I don't know what they are going to do there. Even if they tell me that this is what they are going to do there, I should not believe it because I do not know the particular thing that she wants to go and get from that place. . . — Bimbo, 14-year-old girl

Bimbo was able to listen to stories told by trafficked persons from diverse trafficking experiences because she shared a room with older trafficked persons. I gained a lot from her contribution about another aspect of sharing

stories about trafficking. Bimbo contributes that trafficked children can learn life lessons from temporary shelters by listening to the varying trafficking experiences of other trafficked persons who could be either married or single; Bimbo sees these life lessons as informing her dealings with friends and preparation for marriage which should include arming herself with a career that will make her relevant or appreciated in marriage.

Negative

2.1.3.5. The pain of sharing your story with a friend who uses it against you

There are also negative associations with telling your story to a friend who requested an exchange of stories, only to have your own story used to attack you after a misunderstanding. The pain of this happening is echoed in the narratives of Chiedo, 10, Happiness 17, and Promise, 17. I will present Promise's narrative:

***Promise:** I have shared my story with some people, not the ones that are here but the girls that left.*

***Ifeyinwa:** Why did you share your story with them?*

***Promise:** Because they asked me and they told me their own story.*

***Ifeyinwa:** Did you feel better after telling them your story?*

***Promise:** Even when they are quarrelling with me they will be abusing me with my story. . .*

***Ifeyinwa:** They were using the things you told them about your experience against you?*

***Promise:** Yes.*

***Ifeyinwa:** How did you feel when that happened?*

***Promise:** I felt sad.*

***Ifeyinwa:** At the end of the day, did you like sharing your story?*

***Promise:** No.*

Promise felt betrayed and belittled by the experience and when I met her at the shelter, she was quieter than when she was returning from Burkina-Faso. It was only when I started several group activities at the shelter, the drama especially, that she opened up to new friendships and conversations.

Gift's earlier response of feeling shame when what you wanted hidden is known by all, with your name also linked to it, resonated with other children. And echoing Promise's annoyance with sharing her story was 9 year old Binta, who associates sharing her story with the negative results of having it shared with everyone in the shelter, something which will make her feel bad:

***Binta:** Someone can carry the story around the shelter.*

***Ifeyinwa:** Very good point. How will you feel if your story is passed around the shelter?*

***Other Voices:** You feel shame.*

***Binta:** I will feel bad because they are carrying my story around the shelter.*

To children, their story is their story and sharing it comes with unwritten expectations of respect for the owner of the story.

2.1.3.6. Living with multiple versions of your story that other people know

The discussion on sharing stories began on mild notes for the group from the Lagos Shelter in April 2014 and was even milder when quiet Chinyere, the youngest member of this group, raised her voice to present her experience with sharing her story. This group comprised all the girls removed from the baby factory, with Serena and Patience:

Chinyere: I shared my own with a few people.

Ifeyinwa: Were you happy sharing your story with them?

Chinyere: Yes.

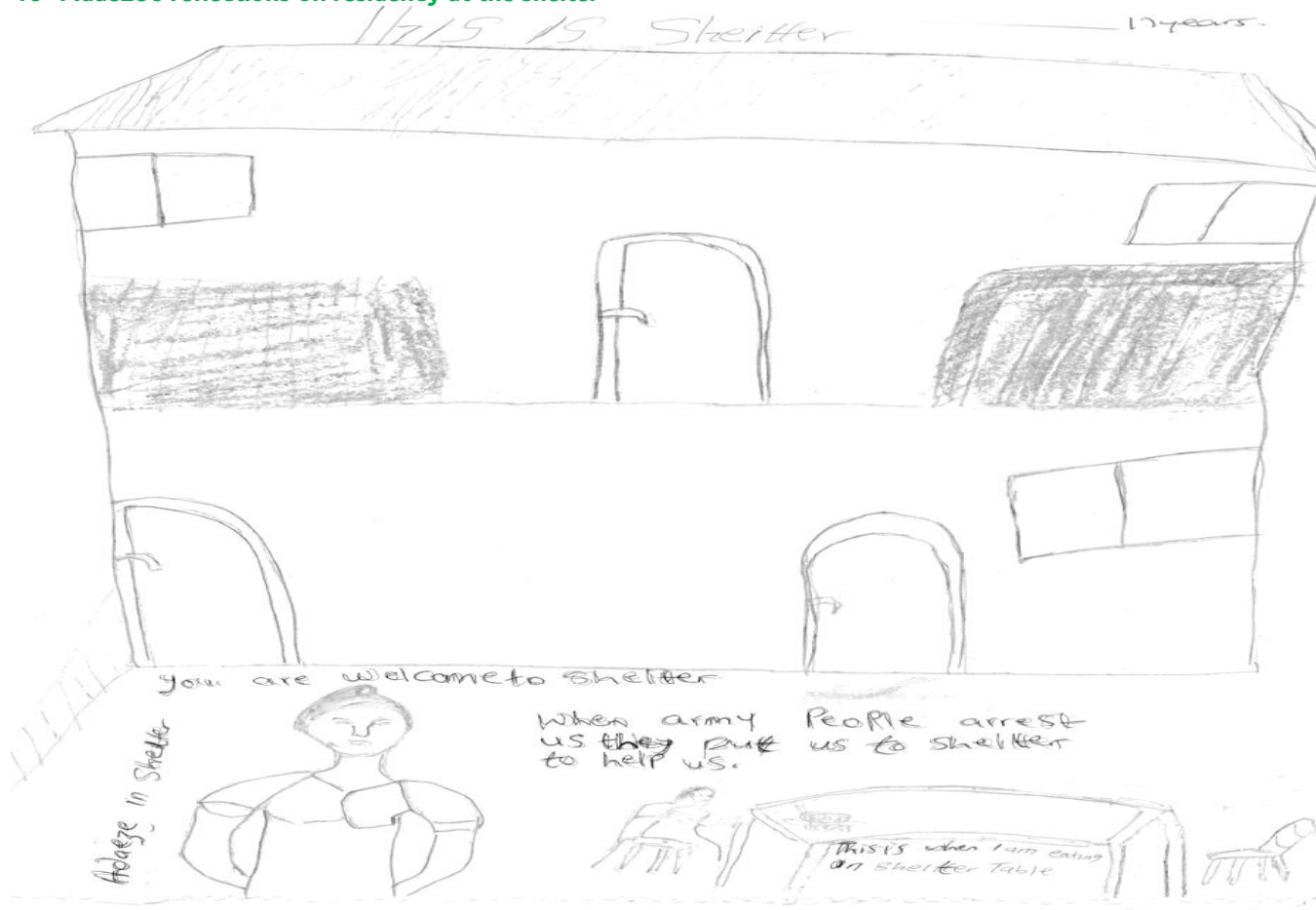
But Adaeze was not satisfied with Chinyere's answer ending on that dispassionate note. Having lived in a baby factory also, she felt she had the authority to continue Chinyere's story by chiming in her own perspective:

Adaeze: I shared my story with some people but not everybody. But even if you share it with everybody or not, they will hear it... unless they have never entered here [shelter]. If you didn't tell them, they will say o I have heard it. So what are we hiding again? So anything that they ask me... even if you tell me your own or you did not tell me, if you ask me my own I will tell you because there is nothing to it... — Adaeze, 17-year-old girl

By the time **Nana** came to the Abuja NAPTIP shelter in 2014, she was already seven months pregnant. Nana was not aware she was pregnant until she came to the shelter. Her life at the shelter revolved around identifying the people connected with her journey to Nigeria, investigating her story, searching for the man that got her pregnant and most of all attending to her needs as an underage pregnant person. Nana was again moved to the Lagos shelter during the final stage of my field work because this was the closest zone for investigating, Ibadan, her entry point into Nigeria and the people associated with her narratives. The Nursing team at both the Lagos and Abuja shelter also provided supportive care for Nana and the other pregnant girls removed from the baby factory. I was at the Lagos shelter when Nana went into labour

Adaeze's felt that people should concentrate on telling their own stories, rather than going around telling other people's stories in ways the person may not like. Since there were two members of Adaeze's focus group that did not share similar experiences of the baby factory but knew their own version of her story, Adaeze had to elaborate that people should concentrate on telling their own stories and not their own versions of other people's stories.

40- Adaeze's reflections on residency at the shelter



She is also willing, as were the other girls in her group, to tell people their stories but what she finds unacceptable is constantly merging them in the media with other girls who were forced to sell their babies because they do not share similar stories. Adaeze ends on an ominous note:

If they ask you questions about us you say that you don't know. . . — Adaeze, 17-year-old girl

There was a lot of uproar about this. Until this incidence occurred, I was humbled into accepting that I never knew the importance children's construction of their experiences and the way their stories are shared affected child victims of trafficking. I was also glad that the children removed from the baby factories had the platform to present their thoughts, as did the other members of the group, Serena and Patience.

2.1.3.7. People doubting your story because they feel you have something to hide

Previously, Bimbo, 14, told me that she gained a lot by simply listening to the stories told by other trafficked persons. When I finally got round to asking her if she has shared her story with others in the shelter, she told me about multiple demands for her story and when she responded to the demands, she was thrown aback by the response she got from her listeners:

Ifeyinwa: Bimbo, can I know why you told the older girls your story?

Bimbo: Mummy, they were disturbing me that what brought me here, that I want to hear some people's stories but I don't want to tell them about what brought me here, that I know what brought them here, I know this, I know that, tell us, tell us, they normally disturb me. So I told them, I told all of them o! The next thing, they did not believe me. So I promised myself that I won't tell anyone my story.

What is it about a story that made it a true story? What is it about a story that made it unbelievable, probably fabricated? Agreed, the listeners may have found some elements of Bimbo's story dramatic but that is her story and she cannot be forced to mellow her actions during trafficking or introduce some dehumanising twists to make her story believable. Bimbo was saddened by the reception to her story because she never questioned any of their stories but accepted each one as they were told to her.

Promise was one of the underage girls removed from different brothels in Burkina-Faso and deported to their home countries. At the shelter, she was quiet but was open to discussions about her experiences and remained grateful to NAPTIP and other government agencies for facilitating her return home.

The lessons to be derived from children's sense of ownership over their stories was new to me as an investigator and invested in me the huge weight of care-taker and trusted disseminator of children's stories to the world.

2.2. Social

From my discussion and interaction with children at the shelter, I found out that the shelter provided a social landscape where some children arrived slightly broken and alone and with time making friends, some with whom they had discussions that made their burden easier to bear.

2.2.1. Forging new friendships and fighting new battles

The shelter was almost like a mini-dormitory setting in established residential schools. Each large room space had a mix of older and younger victims. There were no rules about friendships, just mutual respect regardless of age.

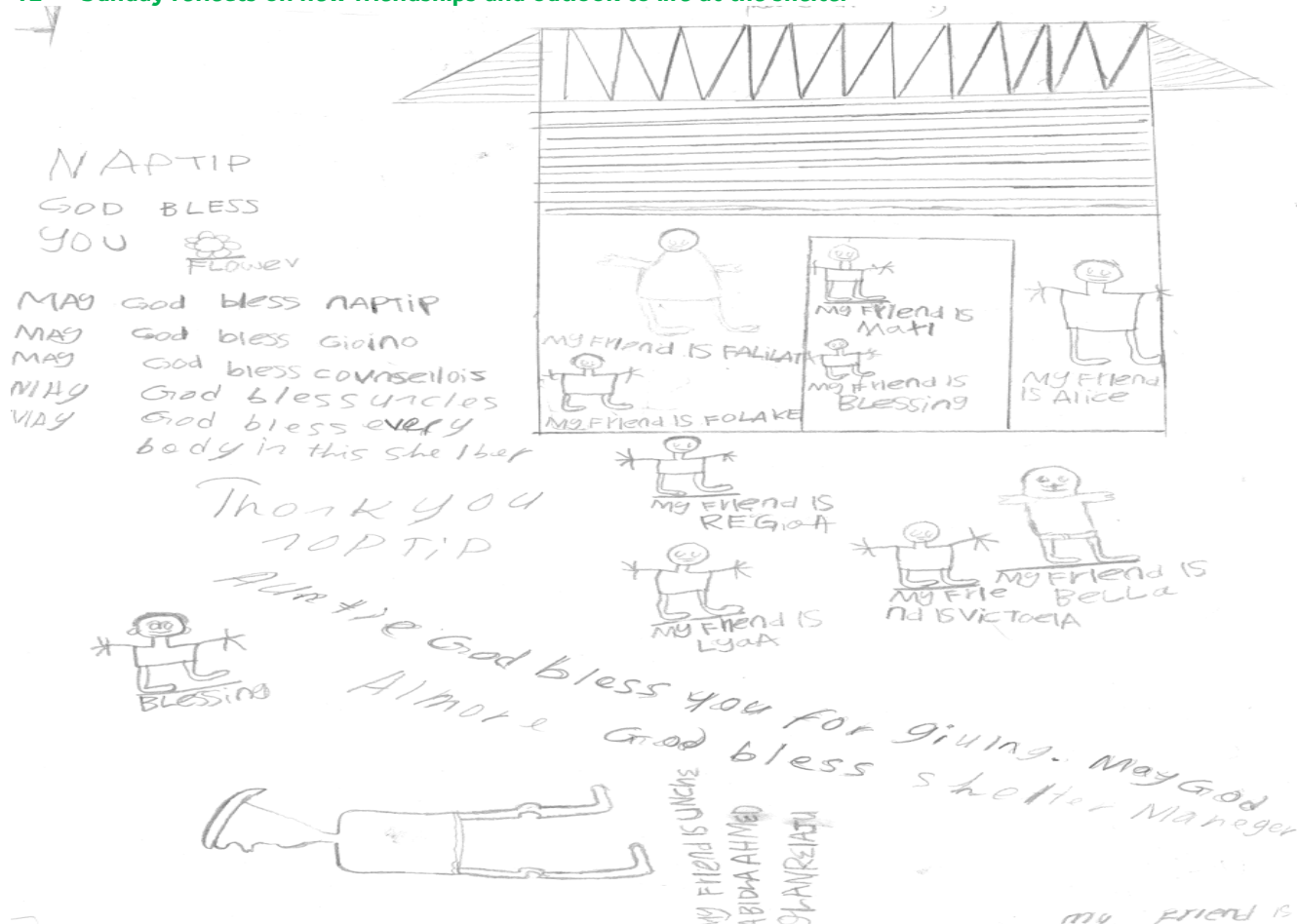
Sometimes, you had a bigger girl of about 12 to 14 years old taking the younger child of 6 to 7 years old as a friend, younger ward or sister who she cared for. That was the case between 14-year-old Bimbo and Nike and Ola, both 7 years old, all victims of domestic labour. Bimbo, who was in the process of completing her junior secondary education, saw the shelter as new grounds for fighting the cause of other children in worse situations than she was:

Someone like me, I will be very happy if they can help Nike and Ola. . I will really appreciate if they can help them to know their village and if after knowing their parents and their village, if they can help put them in school- so that they can have a good future. Like now I am very sure that both of them are ready to learn if they see someone that will help them. — Bimbo, 14-year-old girl

To Bimbo, Nike and Ola were too young to be involved in domestic work. It was also wrong that the girls never attended school.

Another child, Sunday, 17, who has worked several years in Nigeria without seeing his family in Togo, saw the shelter as a place to make friends, a luxury he has almost forgotten existed and explore hidden talents:

41 — Sunday reflects on new friendships and outlook to life at the shelter



Ifeyinwa: How are you finding the shelter?

Sunday: I like it because I am playing with people here.

Ifeyinwa: When you were working weren't there people to play with?

Sunday: *There were people but I didn't want to play with them. If my mind tells me that I shouldn't play with this person I will not play. It's because of you. That is why I was playing here!*

Ifeyinwa: *Because of me?*

Sunday: *Yes.*

Ifeyinwa: *Why because of me?*

Sunday: *Because of this thing [he lifts up the drawings].*

Ifeyinwa: *Because of the drawings?*

Sunday: *Yes. I have not drawn this thing before.*

Ifeyinwa: *So you like the drawings.*

Sunday: *Yes. I did not know how to draw before.*

Ifeyinwa: *Now look at all the beautiful things you drew*

Sunday: *Is this beautiful? Look at them.*

Ifeyinwa: *They are beautiful because you were able to tell a beautiful story with them.*

I brought in the discussion with Sunday because several children I met at the shelter were simply looking for ways to bond with each other and forget that they are living with expectations of decisions to be made about the next stages of their lives. The activities that we shared together, especially the drawing sessions, drew several children into groups around tables to share colouring pens, markers, paper and ideas. Children who never spoke to each other previously became friends and children who never drew became excited amateurs.

2.2.2. Asking what next?

While at the shelter, children's outlook on life is one of a seemingly endless wait in line for their fate to be decided. This gives them time to think about what their life is like now and what they will like to become in future. This also formed part of their drawings at the shelter. Every day, children woke up asking their counsellors, "What next?" Some children go away happy when they are on the list of those scheduled to return home, while some turn back gloomy because no progress has been made concerning their case. I discussed with children around the thoughts related to forming decisions about what happens next:

Angel was brought to the shelter because Pastor X and his activities were investigated by NAPTIP. Angel says she is tired of living with other people and will like to return home to her parents who she said had enrolled her in school prior to her departure from home on accusations of witchcraft or secret cult membership.

I believe that God knows why all these things are happening. And I also believe that one day I will leave here and if I leave here I will become something in future. I have not even started what God wants me to be. I know that definitely my destiny can be delayed but it can never be denied. And I know that NAPTIP has asked me several times if I need their help but I said no. Why I said no is because I have a father who can help me, who can afford anything I need. I believe that if I leave here I will finish my school. Go to university to become something in life. And I know that those people that helped me when I was in need, when I become something, I will help them too. — Serena, 17-year-old girl

According to Serena, she understands that NAPTIP has done their job concerning taking her to a place of refuge and she is grateful for that. But she understands that even leaving home was a mistake that should not have

happened, she had a horrific adventure, she has learned from her mistakes and needs to go home to a place where she is sure her father can pay her school fees.

2.3. Religious

I saw the huge impact religion played in children's journey within and moving away from the shelter. Children felt it was important to understand who to blame for their trafficking to be able to reflect deeply on whether to forgive that person or not. A major path children explored for knowing if they can forgive the person is first asking if the person who instigated their trafficking was either trying to help or punish them.

***Mercy** was at the NAPTIP shelter because her case was still under investigation. I attended a court session with her in Ogun State where her madam was made to pay a large sum of money into her account as part of the proceeds of her work while in residence at the brothel in Ogun State. Mercy's case is ongoing and she is currently resident in one of the homes for girls managed by an affiliated NGO. Mercy was also registered for vocational classes. She is learning hair dressing.*

2.3.1. Learning to forgive

This area of the discussion was on three levels: if their traffickers were trying to help or punish them, if they are still angry with their trafficker; and if they can or have forgiven their trafficker:

2.3.1.1. Were your traffickers trying to help or punish you?

I presented the discussion in a manner the children will understand by saying: For those of you who were blaming your parents and other people for sending you away from home during our other discussion, do you think these people were trying to help you or punish you? I will present the responses of some of the children from the Lagos shelter in April 2014:

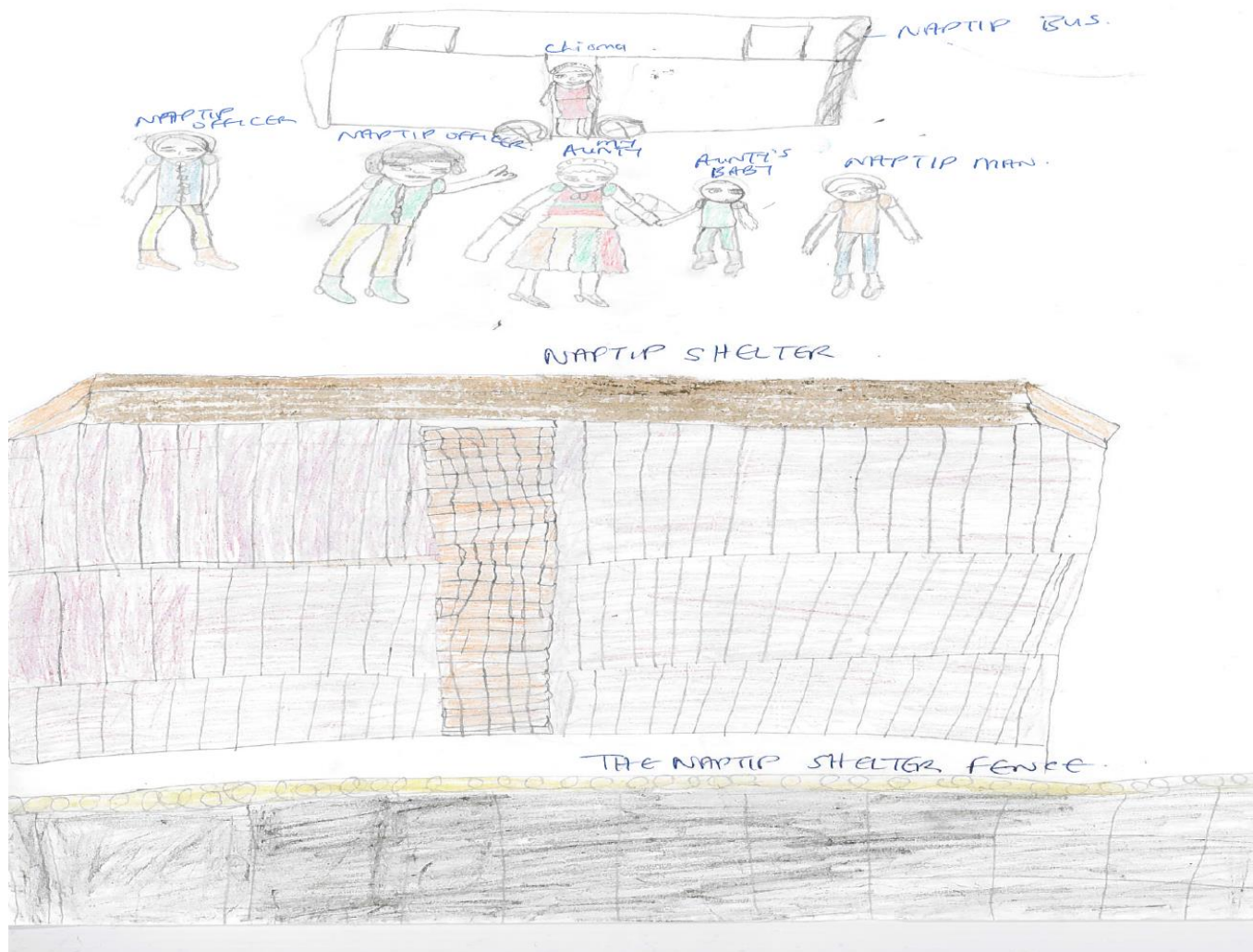
***Bimbo:** For me they were not trying to help me at all. They were trying to push me into a problem.*

***Ifeyinwa:** What sort of problem were they pushing you into?*

***Bimbo:** Because if they want to help me, they will know who and who I want to live with in Lagos. They will know how the person behaves, they will be sure, they will choose the person and the person will choose me. But they did not know. So they were trying to put me into a problem. Now they don't even know who I am living with. They just know that I am in Lagos doing house-help.*

Bimbo has been trafficked multiple times with her father unable to account for expenses made with the income she earned. The child believes that leaving home to live and work in someone's house should be a careful process of assessing compatibility. She has not seen evidence of that and her experiences in multiple places have not helped to change this opinion. Another child Eziuwa, 14, felt her father set out to help her by sending her to live with her aunt in Lagos:

42 — Eziywa reflects on arrival and residency at the shelter



Eziywa: My daddy did not want me to stay in the village.

Ifeyinwa: Was he trying to punish you by sending you to Lagos?

Eziywa: He was trying to help me.

Ifeyinwa: How was he trying to help you?

Eziywa: He said that if I go to Lagos that I will be going to school. That my aunty will be treating me good.

Ifeyinwa: Was he trying to help you?

Eziywa: Yes

Although her aunt maltreated her while in her care, Eziywa believes that her father was only helping by ensuring that she was in a place where education was a certainty. Whereas Eziywa was maltreated by her aunt but still enrolled in school, Mary, 15, who left Togo with her mother's friend who made promises of facilitating her education, regrets leaving home because she never attended school:

Mary: They wanted to help me.

Ifeyinwa: How?

Mary: When I followed my mummy's friend to Nigeria, she was supposed to put me in school.

Ifeyinwa: Did your mummy's friend put you to school?

Mary: No. But the person I blame is my mother because when they took me to Nigeria, she said that she will come and pick me very soon. But she did not.

According to her, she blames her mother for promising to come and take her away to Togo, a promise she never kept. Children were able to understand if people were either trying to help or punish them and they proffered reasons for the conclusions they arrived at on occasion with the assistance of other children.

2.3.1.2. Are you still angry with your traffickers?

The previous discussion on identifying whether people that took you away from home were trying to help or punish you led to knowing if children harboured anger towards the people involved in their movement away from home:

Ifeyinwa: I want to understand. Are you still angry with the people that took you away from home promising to help you but who did not help you?

All: Yes

All the children acknowledged that they were angry, which is expected considering that children left home with expectations, that were not met or they would not be at the NAPTIP shelter.

2.3.1.3. If you are angry will you be able to forgive them?

From anger with those that instigated their trafficking, children moved on to assessing if that anger was consuming enough to warrant forgiveness. All the children were affirmative that they have forgiven everyone involved in their trafficking and would like to move on with their lives. Bimbo, 14, talks about benefiting from her trafficking and lessons learned from it, while Ola, 7 years old, forgives her father and is no longer bothered that he has been collecting her monthly salary since she started working

Bimbo: Mummy, me o, I do not know about others...Before I was angry but now I am no longer angry because I believe that they did not know that they even helped me to push me into a great destiny.

Ola: I forgive my daddy and I give him all the salary he has collected.

It appeared weird or unreal for a little girl to be talking about salary and exploitation, but that is the reality Ola lived and the reality that brought her to the shelter. Children saw anger as something consuming that if they do not forgive, then they will be unable to move on in life. I noticed that some children were hesitant about forgiving and I watched as other children nudged them into understanding the negative sides to harbouring anger and the benefits of forgiveness. In some cases, it took a while but forgiveness was assured at the end of the session.

2.4. Educational

Children have earlier mentioned that their trafficking and residency in the NAPTIP shelter presented lessons they aspire to take away and build on in future.

2.4.1. Why am I here?

Children came into the shelter and almost immediately after they settle in or probably see a sea of children, they begin wondering what they are doing here and when they are likely to leave for home. It was important to assess if

children understood why they were at the NAPTIP shelter. Serena, 17, sees the shelter as a safe haven after liberation from something evil:

I am in the shelter because NAPTIP saved me from the hands of my madam, removed me from bad thing, evil, that is why I am in the shelter and I am still praying to God that one day I will come out of the shelter and go to my family. — Serena, 17-year-old girl

Bimbo, 14, looks at her presence at the shelter from the point of view of government trying to assist people like her who are in need:

The reason why we are in this shelter is because government wants to really help some children. And some people may not need government's help; that is why they are shouting they want to go. Someone like me, now, if I say I want to go to my village, I am thinking what am I going to go do, that I just want to go and waste my time in my village just sitting down for nothing it is better for me to find ---someone who can help me to continue with my education so that I can have a good future— Bimbo, 14-year-old girl.

Bimbo is also realistic in asking what she will be doing in the village and would prefer staying in the shelter for a longer period with the hope that something can be done about her situation.

2.4.2. Time for re-education and challenging oneself based on interaction with other children

With time spent at the shelter, especially remaining behind as some trafficked children left and new ones moved into the shelter, children had time for greater reflection on the experiences leading to their presence at the NAPTIP shelter. Chinyere, 14, who was the youngest victim of the baby factory, offers insight into her reflections and re-education while at the shelter:

Chinyere came to the NAPTIP shelter after the baby factory establishment where she was held captive was raided. She came to the NAPTIP shelter to allow further investigations to situations leading to her residency at the baby factory and to be provided with proper anti-natal care.

I blame myself because if I had been going to school and stopped associating with boys I will not be here. But I did not respect myself. When they were telling me that I should respect myself, I did not want to hear, if it enters here [touches her ears], it goes out of the other. But now I blame myself because I have already learned something from my mistakes. — Chinyere, 14-year-old girl

Chinyere admits learning from her mistakes, which she blames on disrespecting herself with associations with boys that led to an early pregnancy. Serena, 17, has learned through her experience with trafficking to listen to the counsel of parents. Her parents never wanted her to travel but she was adamant and they reluctantly allowed her to experience the adventure:

Hmm, I learnt a lesson...to be obedient to your parents. As in if your parents tell you something, maybe your parents asked you to do this, you do it. If they did not ask you, you obey their instructions. I wish I had followed the instruction of my mother as in when my mother asked me to stay. If I did, I would not have been here. So I learnt a lesson to be obedient and to believe in everything your parents tell you. — Serena, 17-year-old girl

Bimbo, 14, on the other hand, viewed her re-education by reflecting on the benefits of the negative aspects of the shelter such as inadequate or insufficient food for future survival:

About food that people are saying is bad, we just need to endure it because this is not our home. Everything they give us, small food everything, they are even teaching us because when

you live in your house with your parents there is a time that the food your mummy will give you, you will need to manage it. — Bimbo, 14-year-old girl

Bimbo always associated her experiences at the shelter with her adjustment outside the shelter, as did most of the other children. Children also wondered how many of the trafficked persons that stayed at the shelter NAPTIP could really assist. For this group of children, the life lessons and reflections gathered from the shelter are more directed at surviving the external then remaining within NAPTIP settings.

2.5. Institutional

What is it about remaining in the care of an institution that children either appreciated or disapproved of? Moreover, it is important to remember that most of these children are used to running around freely in their homes. Suddenly finding themselves in a place where the bus drives in and the gates are locked could be a bit unnerving and there is the reliance on others, much older than you are for all your needs — communication, spiritual, educational and social.

2.5.1. A time for gratitude and safety

I asked children if they were happy that they were removed from the place they were before coming to the shelter. The majority of the children were happy that they were removed from exploitative work and brought to the shelter as a transit point before returning them to their parents. But to what extent do children want this gratitude to play out in their lives? Serena, 17, has resigned herself to managing whatever the shelter has to offer and promises to express gratitude in the future.

Other children, like Deola, are unhappy about having to remain at the shelter for too long, especially when the person they were living with was nice to them:

Mummy, the place that I am working, I don't like the way that they carried me away from there because the woman is treating me very well. But I have to see my parents and collect all the things that were taken away from me, like all my salary, everything that I have been working for they have not been giving me. So it's like maybe they want to help me to get everything, but I don't like the way they removed me from there. — Deola, 17, girl

Deola, like some other children, may want to leave the shelter to access alternative means of survival especially if they perceive that NAPTIP will only reunite them with their families instead of assisting them. Deola believes that time is wasted at the agency when she should rather be visiting Togo to see her mother, working at her favoured madam's place or having discussions about collecting her salary.

2.5.2. Another phase of discrimination

Sometimes children feel that, though the agency has assisted in taking them away from a helpless situation, the staff do not entirely understand their situation or how to deal with them and/or their issues. Though children learn that there are bureaucratic processes to be followed in addressing their cases, sometimes children, like other people forced to remain in an enclosed environment for a long time, are bound to get tired and long for home. Moreover, agency staff forgetting that diverse children have diverse home situations to go back to, cause pain for children

when they are all fitted into one box, of people that are unwilling to return home because they are enjoying incentives provided at the shelter. This desire for workers to understand that she longed only for home is expressed by 13-year-old Rakiya, who got stranded in Cotonu:

I want to go home to my family. There is one man here that has a car outside. He is always saying that it is because of the food here that people do not want to go home to their family. Yes, this is not my home. I will go home. Once they say, Rakiya, go and collect your clothes, I will not even wait for one minute to wear my shoes, I will leave for home. Mummy, I want to go home o! Anytime I see people leaving this place, I think my world has come to an end. — Rakiya, 13-year-old girl

And in reality, anytime a new friend she made at the shelter left for home, we had to console her through an endless rain of tears. Children are hurt by comments that are made playfully. Solomon, 15, from Ghana, preferred to remain silent when he came to the shelter the second and third time because of insinuations that he may have bad intentions for people at NAPTIP.

First time I came here, I was very happy and I used to play with everybody, but the way they were behaving it's like they are tired of me. Even some people used to come here and ask if they sent you, God will not give you that power to do what they sent you to come and do. It is like I am a witch and I am coming here to destroy the shelter. . . — Solomon, 15-year-old boy

Solomon's case was a special one. Unlike other children that were lured into trafficking by older persons, Solomon smuggled himself across regional borders. NAPTIP staff were wary or suspicious of the child. When Solomon overheard the comments made by some NAPTIP staff, he withdrew into a shell until he was let out by my drawing activities, which he helped coordinate. He was even the director and producer of the drama by children in the Lagos shelter.

Sandra was moved by NAPTIP to Benue State where she started her life afresh and was re-enrolled in school by her mother. She had to be moved to the Enugu shelter after six other girls also living with the medical doctor were removed from his house with the assistance of the girl from Sandra's home State, Benue State. The six girls also cited similar exploitative practices performed on them by the medical practitioner. I was actively involved in providing care and support for Sandra and the other children while at the Enugu shelter.

2.5.3. Waiting as others took charge of your life

Coming into the shelter each day, after the initial greetings which were sometimes joyful and other times mellow, I sat back and waited for the upsurge that followed; this will be a sea of children coming to voice their complaints about the confinement, the endless waiting and the lack of understanding of what is delaying their case and preventing them from going home. Only on internship and not a NAPTIP staff, I can only initiate games, classes or programmes to steer children's minds off their problems. But how long does this last and what happens when I am not around or have to move to a different shelter, which happened a lot during my field research. Children are bound to become restless when answers are not easily accessible or understandable about why they remained in the shelter long after others have left. That was the case with 15-year-old Rashida who was pregnant and, though admitting to making several new friends at the shelter as observed from her cheerful drawing, could not understand why she remained at the shelter:

43 — Rashida's reflection on friendships, life and the future while at the shelter



Rashida: I don't even know what I am doing here, if I will have my baby before leaving here or what?

Ifeyinwa: Why didn't you ask your counsellor?

Rashida: I asked them and they keep saying that I will go home.

It was the lack of concrete answers that children found even more frustrating and confusing about living in the shelter. Rashida, as with other children, could not understand if 'going home' constituted a different thing to the adults they were dealing with from what they understand when someone is told that they will be going home. It appears that "you will be going home" constituted an indefinite number of days; and allowed time to almost stand still while children in the world outside the shelter moved on with their lives. Children would have liked to be responded to with realistic and reliable information about their situation rather than watching helplessly as people took over their lives in an enclosure they cannot escape from.

3. Discussions generated from children's life in the shelter

3.1. Children, the idea of a shelter and the African perspective

I will begin this discussion by voicing and lamenting the minimal research done on shelter residency for trafficked persons, especially children. A closed shelter is, as its name suggests, a place of confinement, intended to offer safety while limiting the ability of children to come in and leave as they please. The shelter is the most common form of assistance for trafficked persons with the communal residency type more favoured. Shelter service is a crucial aspect of the assistance objective of anti-trafficking programmes. It is commendable that Nigeria's anti-trafficking agency, NAPTIP, operates shelters for children and older trafficked persons experiencing diverse forms of exploitation. The availability of shelters shows positive steps in the direction of providing care and safe havens where children cannot be traced by their traffickers (OSCE, 2004; Surtee, 2008). There are shelter models that can be explored to suit the needs of trafficked persons. Some of these take the form of:

...drop-in centres where women can access temporary accommodation and receive information on services available and referrals to police, legal, medical and other supports; secure shelter facilities; or confidential apartments. Physical standards for these spaces should align with general shelter guidelines, although additional security measures may be required (UN Women, 2012).

The NAPTIP shelter adopts the secure shelter facilities option and links children to confidential apartments run by NGOs as mentioned earlier in the chapter. With the shelter models is the need to link accommodations provided by these shelters to the likely users. Accommodations provided to trafficked persons are determined by: victim characteristics, the type of shelter dwelling or facility, period of assistance and shelter location (IOM, 2007; Surtee, 2008).

From children's narratives, I tried to ascertain if shelters actually meet children's needs or revive traumatic experiences of trafficking, especially when they are sharing housing with children sharing similar trafficking experiences and/or having long-term stays at the shelter while awaiting investigations or court cases related to their trafficking situation. I also tried to relate some of the children's narratives on life in the shelter to what is evident in the literature.

The literature on trafficking victims' experiences with shelter services is sparse and, even where present, dwells mostly on women removed from prostitution in Europe and the United States. Additionally, Brunovskis & Surtees (2008, p. 55) lament the minimal "...systematic knowledge production about the services that are offered to victims of trafficking and the ideological positions that underpin these services and programmes..." which they consider different from the attention paid to services for, for instance, refugees or victims of violence.

*By the time 7-year-old **Adaora** was brought to the Lagos shelter, her body was still sore from the blisters resulting from the hot water her madam poured on her. She was also unable to move her arms. The other children at the shelter had to assist in giving her baths and washing her clothes.*

3.1.1. Professionalism

Surtees (2007) is of the opinion that shelters should recruit the right professionals trafficked children can share their problems with, as this aids healing for moving to the final process of reintegration. When necessary, the

agency may also explore external services to source psychological and psychiatry care for needy trafficked persons (IOM, 2007). Deciding who is considered the right professional for children to talk to depends on the shelter management, their needs assessment and the trained professionals available or accessible to children. While some children at the NAPTIP shelter found talking to their counsellors useful, some did not know they had to or could talk to anyone and the mode the interaction with available professionals should take. Similar to children like Serena and Nana in my study, Surtees (2007) claims that children gain more healing by sharing their problems with friends they made at the shelter, which reduces loneliness and allows the realisation that they are not alone with their problems. It is also imperative to respect the privacy of trafficked children and be sensitive to their needs (Nicola, 2007; Terre des homes, 2005).

3.1.2. Who are NAPTIP shelters designed for?

Children acknowledged NAPTIP's mission of removing them from places of exploitation into the shelter. But once children are in the shelter, for most there is this urgency to leave and make it back home. Within the narratives of the children, some blame the urgency to leave the shelter on not knowing what lies in wait for them after leaving the shelter, others on an inability to feel at home at the shelter which they blame on institutional facilities, rules and the inadequate approach to children's wellbeing while at the shelter.

From a closer look at the literature on children in shelters in some African countries, I wondered if the problem was that the shelters were not designed with African children in mind, especially children who have spent their lives outside their homes struggling to survive. A shelter for some of these children becomes a prison, a place of restraint where they are now forced to look out at a world they were previously used to walking in and out of freely. From her study, Gozdzia (2012) warns against shaping shelter services and assistance based on the conceptualisation of the universal trafficked child and their universal needs. Rehabilitation services provided for trafficked children should accommodate differences resonating from their culture, gender, language and age.

3.1.3. Shelter, assistance and applicability to the operating terrain

From my study, I noticed that some children found it troubling that they have to be resident in the shelter to receive some form of assistance from government and its support agencies. This also raises questions about whether shelter care should be the only way to receive assistance for Nigerian and West African children removed from trafficking and if the structure and implementation of shelter care in the country suits the needs of affected children within the peculiarities of their culture and traditions. Some researchers have also pointed out that, though some children may need assistance from government after they are removed from trafficking, the manner in which such services are delivered may not be viewed positively by would-be recipients (Brunovskis & Surtees; 2007).

Also tied to applicability to the cultural terrain is the situation of the children that will be housed at the shelter. Several trafficked young persons have been away from home working for a reasonable portion of their lives. The children consider themselves to possess agency, some of which they forego by respecting the wishes of the service providers that removed them from trafficking. This loss of agency could contribute to or explain trafficked persons

resistance to receive assistance provided by anti-trafficking agencies and, for Cree, Clapton & Smith (2012), it could explain why several trafficked children evade care in the UK.

3.1.4. Shelter workers attitude and resistance of trafficked children

From her study of women in shelter care, Surtees (2007) observed that the likelihood of evading shelter care may not be unrelated to children resident at shelters perceiving worker involvement in all aspects of their lives as controlling and intrusive. While worker involvement in children's lives could be to prevent re-trafficking from occurring after leaving the shelter, the interference and control could send the wrong message to children. Solomon, 15 years, for instance, had a different perspective of shelter life and the attitude of workers. In his case, it is possible that the workers could not understand how a child repeatedly smuggled himself from one country to another and had negative spiritual associations with the child and his act, which caused the child's withdrawal from everyone at the shelter (children and workers alike).

Moreover, without the right training, workers may find it difficult to know what works for each child and adopt the strategy of addressing similar trafficking cases the same way, forgetting that though they have been on the job for an extended period, that no two children or trafficking cases are completely similar, so shelter workers should not explore similar approaches for addressing the problem.

The responses provided by some of the female respondents in the study by Brunovskis & Surtees (2007) show their perception of the shelter as disruptive and intrusive by separating them from their family for extended periods. Some trafficked persons are lonely and want to be united with their family. Sometimes, they are unable to comprehend the reason behind delays in reuniting them with family members (Surtees, 2008). As features in the narratives of the children in my study, not everyone is also used to and comfortable with communal living.

3.1.5. Identifying with and understanding children's perception of shelter residency

There are several reasons why some trafficked children may not want to remain in the shelter. Some of these have been highlighted by children who participated in the study and appear to support some of findings from other studies with trafficked persons in shelters in destination countries. The reasons include: not wishing to listen to stories from other victims as this appears to keep their situation constantly in mind; not having a supportive space at the shelter; the after effects of ineffectively organised group counselling (Brunovskis & Surtees; 2007); not interested in sharing their stories with others or wishing to have some quiet moments (Godziak, 2012); and preference for distancing themselves to avoid shame and remembering (Wirtl, 2009). Several children in my study were very territorial about stories of their trafficking experience, who they shared them with and at what time this sharing was done. The residency at the shelter may expose children to repeated demands to share their stories with counsellors, other trafficked persons and even visitors to the shelter — something children like Gift may not like because it may expose her to shame and hurt.

The shelter is often not the safest space for healing because there could be disagreements and even fights, regardless of the rules existing at the shelter. This also has a lot to do with the inappropriately addressed trauma children may be dealing with and also with having underage children share dormitories with older trafficked persons.

I have had to deal with situations where a previously happy child suddenly withdrew into a shell because she was trying to avoid upsetting and volatile situations with an older victim. Of course, the child felt better when the matron and another shelter staff looked into the situation.

It is also important to look into children's perception of the type of trafficking they were removed from. In an earlier narrative, a child, Gabriella, mentioned that she could talk about her trafficking experience because she did not consider engaging in domestic work a shameful activity. It could be wrong to assume that all children that engaged in domestic work will consider their activity as normal, as Gabriella considers hers. We also see from children's narratives that even children who engaged in similar trafficking activities — domestic work, prostitution or sexual exploitation, had different experiences. Based on their experiences as domestic servants, some children almost considered themselves less than human, while children like Paul and Abraham were treated like members of the family. Service providers interested in ensuring children's acceptance of shelter care should be able to understand that children and their trafficking experiences cannot be placed in a one size fits all box for healing, provision of assistance and support after removal from trafficking.

3.1.6. Reaction to information before and during shelter residency

When West African children are removed from trafficking and sent to closed shelters, there is the unaddressed element of their attitude to the management and the available facilities. For me, children's observed attitude to the shelter experience is traceable to a culture of respect and culture of gratitude that people, who never knew you, did you the huge favour of removing you from trafficking. But then I see it differently, as the duty of the agency towards trafficked persons. The agency was established with the mandate of looking out for this group of children and gratitude should not be expected in exchange for carrying out one's duty. Then there is the culture of respect for older people taking care of younger ones. This is evident in the manner in which children are sent to the shelter. Children are not given information about the nature of services at the shelter. When children realise they will be resident in a closed shelter, they question limitations to their freedom, their survival and what they will be doing in a place with limited answers about the date of departure. The perception of limited answers available at the shelter is evident in the drama presented by children from the Lagos shelter in September 2013. The current extract begins with Buky's initial interaction with the shelter manager at the zonal office and ends with the shelter manager checking in on children resident at the shelter:

Shelter Manager: *See, in this place, we do not fight. We do not steal, too. Have you heard me?*

Buky: *Yes.*

Shelter Manager: *Okay, follow my staff to the shelter.*

Buky: *Okay.*

Another NAPTIP Staff: *Sit down here. Someone will come over to take you to the shelter. . .*

VISIT FROM SHELTER MANAGER [After Buky had moved into the shelter]

Shelter Manager: *Good morning, everybody.*

Children: *Good morning, shelter manager.*

Shelter Manager: How are you?

Children: We are doing fine, ma.

Shelter Manager: Are you eating well?

Children: Yes, ma.

Shelter Manager: Okay, sit down. I can see that the Shelter is making all of you fresh. Very soon, you will all leave. They are looking into your cases in Ikeja [Lagos zonal office]. So you will be going home soon. I spoke with our oga yesterday and they said that you will be leaving soon. So, there will be no fighting and no problems. Do you have problems to discuss, or question? ... You do not want to say anything?

Children: [Silence.]

Shelter Manager: It appears nobody wants to say anything.

Buky: Oh me, I want to talk.

[Buky stands up]

Buky: When are we going to go home?

Shelter Manager: Eh?

Buky: When are we going to collect our papers?

Shelter Manager: Eh, don't worry. Very soon they will come with your papers.

Buky: But we want to leave soon o!

Shelter Manager: Don't worry, you hear? If we finish here, come and see me in the office.

Buky: Yes, ma.

The exchange with the shelter manager or counsellors at the shelter was a routine that children found difficult to understand. Children found it difficult to live with assumptions that everyday appeared to be *the day* - that is the day their papers (this was needed as referrals and permits for children to leave the shelter to another location) will arrive, the day their parents or parent will come calling, the day they will be leaving the shelter, the day they will be seeing family, 'soon' and the long awaited day was something the children almost got tired of waiting for.

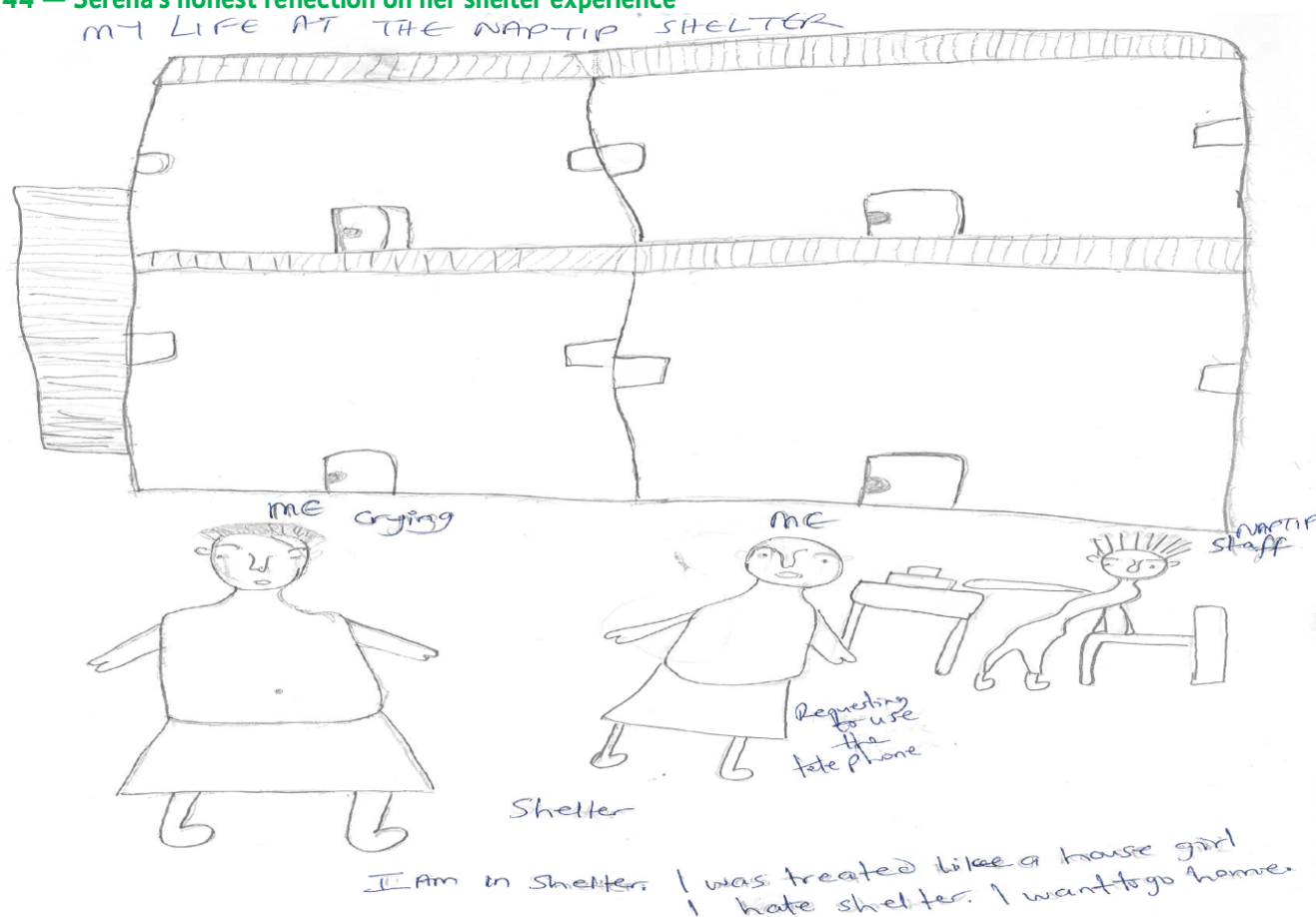
*So that was what my counsellor was telling me, that when my mum comes I will leave. —
Serena, 17-year-old girl*

Could there have been ways of easing the waiting period for children? Even children at the Abuja shelter who had active extra-curricular activities, lovely living quarters and a homey meal plan also got tired of the extended stay at the shelter. This problem is not peculiar to the NAPTIP shelter; some studies have dwelt on the nature of closed shelters for women and the extent to which researchers question if they violate the rights to freedom of movement and association for women resident in them (Gallagher & Pearson 2008). Moreover, there is no way trafficked children can refuse admission into the closed shelter since at the time of their removal from trafficking, it is stated that it is mandatory and in the best interest of the child. From their narratives, children are also grateful to be removed from some of the dehumanising situations in which they have found themselves and welcome humane alternatives. The shelter is also the only platform available for investigating cases of child residents far away from the trafficking destinations or point of 'rescue.' It will cost the agency a lot more to continually return children for investigations to NAPTIP shelters. Moreover, with delayed investigations and court cases for children who are already at home, there is the likelihood that after a while, children and their families may opt to forget about the trafficking cases and move on with their lives.

3.1.7. Attitude to rules: surrendering freedom

Operational rules for shelter residency pose a lot of concern for trafficked children. The rules are necessary to protect children from their traffickers and prevent conflicts with other trafficked persons. Some of the basic rules revolve around: taking meals at scheduled periods, partaking in shelter activities, not using cell phones or surrendering cell phones to shelter management on arrival, not having contact with family since no one can visit trafficked persons at the shelter, and not leaving the shelter.

44 — Serena's honest reflection on her shelter experience



...I don't like the shelter... — Serena, 17-year-old girl

During the personal interview, Serena expressed a dislike for the shelter. In her drawing, she shows herself asking to use the phone, a request that is refused and left her in tears. She also has her feelings about the shelter written within her drawing: "I am in shelter. I was treated like a house girl. I hate shelter. I want to go home."

Narratives in response to life in the shelter from my study bear similarities with research on shelters (mostly focused on women) in other regions. For instance, an ILO report indicated that some trafficked persons from Nepal were against the restricted movement imposed on residents in a closed shelter to which they were assigned and expressed the desire to be returned to their homes (ILO, 2006). Some researchers acknowledge that, though rules are needed in shelters, they question if they are grounded in trafficking realities or rather more suited to therapeutic formats favoured in psychiatry or addiction management (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2007; Gozdzia, 2012). For those

children who do not consider the type of trafficking they were removed from one that would constitute threats to their life and safety, restrictions are more difficult to understand. Restrictions can even be thought to infringe on the rights of this category of children. Once trafficked persons are in the shelter, they are unlikely to leave until investigations on their trafficking cases have progressed to the level where the trafficked person's daily presence at the shelter is considered unnecessary. To avoid control and indefinite residency at the shelter, some older persons may reject assistance (Ferrara, 1983). Brunovskis & Surtees (2008) argue that a restriction to the movement of trafficked persons in shelters is tolerable if for a certain period rather than months or a year. In addition, I consider it helpful to discuss shelter rules with children prior to their entry in the shelter.

3.1.8. Family responsibilities and the new incarceration

Based on her research with trafficked persons in the assistance system, Surtee (2008) reports that when trafficked children are income earners for their families, then remaining in the shelter, not knowing when they will be leaving and not having the shelter contribute anything towards the wellbeing of their family can be traumatic. This was also similar to Gozdiak's (2012) study with children in agency care in the United States. Gozdiak reported that the children were reluctant to enrol in school to obtain a diploma because doing so would defeat their reason for coming into the country — that of earning an income and remitting some of this home. She makes the interesting point that the children's desire to justify their main aim of leaving their original countries did not wane with their removal from trafficking. Deola, 17, from Togo, cited previously, shares her perspective:

...we were selling provisions...with my madam.... So they came that ... they want to take me away. So I was crying that, no, that I don't want to go. So they have to arrest me and my madam [laughs] to this place. ... So NAPTIP now said that they should bring me here, that after the case is settled that they will release me. — Deola, female, 17

Deola could not understand what she was doing at the shelter and why she was delayed from leaving. To the child, she should either be out there trying to retrieve her earnings or working in the house of a madam she has come to admire and respect. For this child, whose sole source of income is herself, since she had been moved around from one home to the other since she was 5 years old, life in the shelter was a waste of time. In the cited cases, trafficked persons considered their stay in the shelter a waste of time when they should be in the real world earning an income to support their future aspirations or family needs.

4. Conclusion

I will end this chapter by exploring modalities for development of shelters for trafficked persons. According to Surtees (2008):

...different shelter models have been developed to respond to different profiles of trafficking victims, different forms of trafficking and also different stages of recovery. However, the most prevalent model globally is that of a communal residential facility geared primarily for unaccompanied adult women trafficked for sexual exploitation (p.15).

Although the literature attests that, despite the high prevalence of underage children removed from trafficking placed in shelters, shelter options are still unavailable to address their needs and the specific type of trafficking in which they were involved. Regardless of the inadequacies in terms of shelter design and limitations in terms of service provision, it is still difficult for me to understand on which platform the NAPTIP shelter is established. Not only does the NAPTIP shelter lodge underage and mature children and women in one shelter facility, there is also no categorisation in terms of trafficking type. Moreover, considering that NAPTIP also sees itself as a para-military organisation, operating shelters from a para-military framework may cause fear and tension in children, rather than the quiet, solitary and healing spaces needed for children recovering from disturbing experiences.

When children complain of inadequacies in shelter services and request better facilities, it is the right thing to do and should not be considered impertinence. A shelter is expected to offer ample space, recreational facilities, timely and healthy meals to cope with the diverse needs of diverse children. I observed from my study that a warm or conducive shelter environment also enhances healing and recovery from the traumatic and exploitative situations from which some children were removed. Sometimes shelter staff may not understand that children are traumatised and want to be left alone (Rigby, 2011). It should not always be expected that, once children arrive at NAPTIP offices or shelters, they are immediately willing to respond when interrogated or spoken to. Their trafficking experience and the level of trauma associated with it may delay the child's interaction with shelter staff and even other trafficked persons. Wirtz (2009) reinforces information presented in children's narratives by identifying factors such as shame and fear as contributing to children's reluctance to share their experiences. Also, shelter management should explore culturally sensitive and familiar healing strategies for addressing the trauma experienced by children (Gozdziak, 2012).

Anti-trafficking measures will be aided by understanding the experiences of children in shelters and the reasons behind certain children terminating their assistance or vocational programmes to engage in new forms of trafficking (Gallagher & Pearson, 2008). One of the children in my study, Mercy, made attempts to terminate her vocational programme to move into another under-researched attempt at working as a house girl. I would have expected the management to look deeply into understanding why the child would make another such ill-informed attempt at trafficking. Mercy's decision cannot really be swept under the carpet of not learning from her mistakes or keeping bad company

Moreover, when children have remained in a shelter for extended periods because of investigations and court cases associated with their trafficking journey, they should have access to additional facilities or incentives different from incoming residents. These incentives could include better housing, educational and vocational activities within the shelter available to long-term child residents, to ensure that they are not missing out on crucial moments of their childhood. The same shelter could be designed to provide long- and short-term facilities to trafficked persons and possibly recruit volunteers who come in at scheduled periods to offer crucial life enhancing services to long term residents.

Chapter Ten — Findings and Discussions

Going Home or Moving On

Author's Reflections on Going Home or Moving On

What are children going home to meet? Do all children want to return to their homes? I already mentioned that I spent almost my entire existence in Lagos State. Lagos State is a place almost all trafficked children from Nigeria and West Africa hear about and long to live and work. Moving around the streets and seeing children working while their mates are in school, my resolve is always first, asking why the children are away from the classroom and the processes leading to their presence on adult turfs. Sometimes, I have also tried to follow children home to understand if what I actually desire for them is what the children themselves want. The same applies to children removed from trafficking and taken into temporary shelter facilities. Who determines what children want and how involved are children in the decision making process? How much time is spent with children and their families away from institutional constraints to understand how children live and how the elements within their home play out to determine who they are and their future aspirations?

Going Home or Moving On?

Having spent months moving from one shelter to the other, the interaction with children became familiar as did children's discussions concerning remaining in the NAPTIP shelter or returning to their homes. There were also children who, from the first day they stepped into the NAPTIP shelter, all they wanted was to thank NAPTIP for their assistance and be allowed to return to their homes. Rakiya, who was stranded in Cotonu, is a case in point. What do children hope to do as they near the end of their interaction with the NAPTIP shelter? Are children even sure of their next moves or would they rather have the agency take decisions about their future? These questions and the responses to them from trafficked children will guide the discussions in this chapter on going home or moving on. The discussion will fall under three major sections: leaving the shelter (do children really want to go home?); options accessible to children; and the process of reintegration and the future. As with the findings chapters on remembering home, experience of trafficking and life at the NAPTIP shelter, the current chapter will feature text boxes presenting the narratives of twelve children that participated in the study on their experiences with going home or moving on after 'rescue' from trafficking.

1.1. Leaving the shelter (Do children want to go home?)

With the information from literature on child trafficking in West Africa that I had leading to my research, I might assume that West African children left home as a result of poverty and have nothing to look forward to at home. Was this what I saw with the children I worked with? I will address this question using children's narratives on three identified categories: shelter and mid-point to home; who gets support and who gets left aside; and level of attachment to the shelter.

For the period of my field work, **Princess** was still relying on NAPTIP for investigation into her trafficking case and prosecution of her trafficker. NAPTIP enrolled her in a private primary school and she was resident in one of the private homes managed by an NGO. Princess has to remain close to the area of her trafficking, western Nigeria, to make things easier for discussions with her lawyers and attending court sessions. I traveled with Princess to attend one of the court sessions in Ogun State.

1.1.1. Shelter and mid-point to home

When children are in the NAPTIP shelter, they are considered to be removed from trafficking and in a temporary residence until the best decisions for moving on are made. Adaeze, 17 who I met at the NAPTIP shelter in March 2014 and remained there months after that period describes her thoughts on her residency at the NAPTIP shelter and how bureaucratic issues at NAPTIP could cause delays for children intending to move on from their temporary space (shelter):

NAPTIP did not come to my house to pick me. It was the situation I placed myself and found myself that made NAPTIP come and carry me away from the place. So people that are saying that they want to go home, they have to be patient... Those people that are trafficked--- some people knew that they were going to such a place [their trafficking destinations]. As for me I didn't know, if I knew I would not have gone to such a place [baby factory]. So those people that know where they are going, those are the people that will say I want to go, I want to go. They don't know what God is using this NAPTIP for; they don't know whether if they get home today, they don't know if there will be some problems that they have to face. That is

why as they say NAPTIP is delaying us, it's good because God knows the reason why we are here and God knows why we are still delaying until God's time. God's time is the best. Any day that God shows us that we are going to leave this shelter, that is the day that we are going to leave. — Adaeze, 17-year-old girl

In presenting her understanding of her journey with NAPTIP, Adaeze sees NAPTIP and the NAPTIP shelter as two mutually affecting entities — one depends on the other and cannot work without the other. To Adaeze, this is because when victims, adults and children are removed from trafficking, there should be a temporary housing where they are placed until investigation is carried out. It is for this reason also, that she is asking everyone to be patient. She also sees NAPTIP and its shelter as a place of domicile for children like her who were unaware of the exploitative trafficking situation that they would end up in until they found themselves there. This temporary place is the mid-point to home, where children are housed after NAPTIP has completed investigations. While she observes that some people that knew the precise place they were headed when they undertook the trafficking journey may not appreciate the delays experienced by living in the shelter, she adopts a spiritual approach in explaining that everyone should be patient because everything that happened, including delays by NAPTIP, were preordained by God.

Children like Aduke, 14, who I worked with in September 2013 after she had already spent more than the six-week limit at the shelter, are more expressive about how they see the NAPTIP shelter and its usefulness towards attaining their future goals. Like Adaeze, Aduke sees NAPTIP and the shelter as two reinforcing entities. When the child informed me that she had spent several months at the shelter, I became interested in knowing her intentions and how NAPTIP can assist with taking her home, away from the shelter. But the child responded by remaining silent on the shelter and dwelling more on NAPTIP, which she considered the more forceful entity:

45 — Aduke's reflections on going home or moving on



Ifeyinwa: What do you want NAPTIP to do about taking you back to Togo?

Aduke: I want to learn a trade here.

Ifeyinwa: Oh, so you like Nigeria?

Aduke: Togo is far away.

Ifeyinwa: But Togo is your country or don't you want to return to your country?

Aduke: I want to return to where my mummy is [her mother is in Nigeria].

Ifeyinwa: But your mummy sent you to become a house-help.

Aduke saw the shelter as a place where she reflected on her life, ending up with the decision that she wanted to learn a trade. She also saw the shelter as the place where she strategised to ensure that the agency worked with her in actualising her dreams rather than their dreams for her. While it is okay to learn a trade, Aduke does not want to learn that trade anywhere else but in Nigeria. She also does not want NAPTIP to return her to Togo, the country from which she came to Nigeria, a country she now considers from a distance. When she is reminded that she is Togolese rather than Nigerian, she gives the intelligent response that she wants to remain where her mother is, which happens to be Nigeria. As an underage child, she deserves to choose which parent to live with and choosing to remain with her mother who is now married to a Nigerian gives her higher bargaining power to deliberate with NAPTIP about learning a trade in Nigeria, which she did. Even when I had left the Lagos shelter, she called to inform

me that she was enrolled to learn a trade and quartered in a private NGO residence affiliated with NAPTIP. I visited herself and some other girls that participated in my study in April, 2014. While Aduke is one success story about a child knowing what she wants and formulating plans to meet those goals, I also had reason to wonder how decisions are made about what child stays and what child gets left aside. What made Aduke's experience so unique that she remained at the shelter long enough to warrant assistance?

1.1.2. Who gets support and who gets left aside?

The interaction with the children indicated that they could not clearly understand who remained in the shelter, for how long; and who gets to leave the shelter to settle down with their family. While some children expressed the desire to remain in the shelter, the decision about whether they remain in the shelter, get reintegrated into a business or into a formal school setting was something beyond the comprehension of children. I also remained in the shelter long enough to see some children to their homes and others move on to school or to learn a vocation or trade. I also saw some children that did not want to return home because they saw a bleak future associated with a return to those homes.

Martha is one of few children rescued from regional trafficking for prostitution before they have been handed over to the madam or pimp at the destination or user country. Martha's wish is to return home to her parents where she will either complete her secondary school education or continue with the sewing profession. Based on her experiences, Martha vows to be an advocate against questionable invitations to work abroad because people could end up in places and situations they never imagined.

Which child stays and which child gets left aside was a thought that resonated during my activities with children who appeared to be in a perpetual state of alertness for news on decisions taken about their future. This was more pronounced for children who had been in the shelter for a long time. I will take 12-year-old jovial Yvonne as a case in point. Yvonne, as mentioned earlier, was sent by her parents through her uncle to live with a woman that molested herself and her cousin. Yvonne sustained lasting scars from her servitude, a scar she attributes to acid. I met Yvonne at the shelter in September 2013 but she had been resident at the shelter

months earlier. When I returned to the Lagos shelter in March 2014 and met her there still, I had to ask if she knew why she had not returned home:

Ifeyinwa: *Why are you still at the shelter?*

Yvonne: *I don't know. That time I went to Ikeja³⁹, the oga [referring to a senior staff] said that I will come back and that they will carry me to school if my uncle does not bring my aunty to NAPTIP.*

Ifeyinwa: *Will you like to attend school in Lagos or in Benue?*

Yvonne: *If I go to school in Benue, they will carry me back to Lagos to work. That is why I said I will like to go to school in Lagos.*

Ifeyinwa: *But you have to see your mummy and daddy first.*

Yvonne: *Yes.*

³⁹ NAPTIP Zonal Office in Lagos is situated in Ikeja.



Sometimes, children find it difficult to even explain why they were still at the shelter and the decisions taken about their cases. It could have something to do with the culture of respect for elders that has to be sustained even when your future trickles away. Apparently, the child was open enough to understand and express what she finds useful in her life, which is going to school. She is also wise enough to realise that sending her home to Benue to be reunited with her parents, who will be counselled into enrolling her in school, opens up the risk of re-trafficking. The child expressed the desire to have NAPTIP enrol her in school in Lagos because, as illustrated in her last drawing showing herself in the future, Yvonne aspired to become a nurse:

47 — Yvonne's reflections on going home and future aspiration in 2014



But school enrolment will only happen after she had seen her parents. At the end of April 2014, I had to institute a long break in my English and Math classes as my tearful students and I watched as little Yvonne packed her minimal belongings, waving frantically as she, acting stronger than her 12 years, boarded the bus to her native Benue and her parents. How was that decision made? Was it in the best interest of the child? And what steps are taken toward ensuring that parents understand the implications of their children's trafficking experiences and the options available to their children through NAPTIP or partner agencies?

Still with thoughts on who gets support and who gets left aside in mind, I address the situation of Odinaka, 17, a victim of a baby factory. She had a male child while at the shelter. I met Odinaka at the Lagos shelter in March 2014 and our discussion occurred late in April 2014:

Ifeyinwa: How do you move on after this?

Odinaka: That is something I am still contemplating. . . They [NAPTIP] are asking if we will like to learn work. But I will like to learn work.

Ifeyinwa: You don't want to complete your SSS3?

Odinaka: I want to finish my SS3.

Ifeyinwa: What vocation will you like to learn?

Odinaka: I can easily learn hairdressing. If I learn hairdressing and I perfect it, maybe I will go to pastoral school. I want to go to theology school.

Odinaka has always maintained that she would like to be a pastor and attending a pastoral school is something she has always desired. The fact that she deliberates over other choices could be because she is being presented with alternatives, that of learning a vocation. The other girls from the baby factory also told me that they were asked to learn a vocation. The child is expected to spend longer in reflection when an option is presented, that further delays completing her senior school leaving certificate, which is a requirement for attending the university or the pastoral school. I was not sure if the child expressed her desire to be a pastor to the agency as she did to her friends and I. Moreover, Odinaka, like the other girls, was willing to learn a trade since it will be something else to add to their resume and will be paid for by the agency, after which they return home to continue their education.

I was left with several thoughts after my discussion with Odinaka. How are decisions made about what works best for a child? Are children allowed to express their needs? Moreover, I have been to different NAPTIP shelters and remained in them long enough to continually reflect, like the children did, on who gets support and who gets left aside. I observed that several children, like Margaret, Patricia and Yvonne, had to remain in the shelter while their cases

Chiedo was in the Abuja NAPTIP shelter longer than the children he met at the shelter due to the peculiar nature of his case. There were also discussions about the best person to hand him over to, his grandmother, who Chiedo speaks highly of and who he attests will take good care of him; or his older siblings, aunts or uncles.

were investigated. But all they did was remain in the shelter. Too often, the vocational education classes or formal instruction classes were erratic and dependant on availability of instructors. The Abuja shelter had a better package in terms of social and educational classes or activities for children. The result is that some children spend about a year in the shelter, adding nothing to their learning or education, while children outside the shelter moved on with their lives and their education. On the other hand, some children could be sent to affiliated NGOs where they lived and attended school while their cases were in court. With this thought in mind, I pondered why the decision to enrol these girls from a baby factory in a trade, in contrast to other girls I met at the shelter, was taken. It could be argued that the girls removed from the baby factory are now saddled with the additional responsibility of caring for their babies, making learning a vocation the best option. I will argue that not everyone who has learned a vocation has the managerial skill to facilitate generating profits after starting a business. Further, I will expect that the two other girls, Adaeze, 17, and Chinyere, 14, whose babies passed away should be allowed to make decisions between returning home to continue their education and learning a vocation.

1.1.3. Level of attachment to the shelter

I have looked at situations where children place importance on the shelter and NAPTIP as co-influencing factors in decisions to either return home or remain with NAPTIP. Who are children likely to opt for - remaining at the shelter and with NAPTIP or returning home? I will take extracts from my discussion with Praise, 14, concerning the shelter:

Ifeyinwa: *How are you managing in the shelter?*

Praise: *I love grandmamma [matron], I love mummy R [cook]*

Ifeyinwa: *Why do you love them?*

Praise: *Because grandmamma, every morning and evening she will make us laugh every day, she will cook for us, we will follow them to the kitchen and we will help them in the kitchen. Every day she will call - You, come my dear. Let me talk to you. That is why I like the grandmamma's character.*

Ifeyinwa: *What about mummy R?*

Praise: *Mummy R too is the same. . .*

From her response, you can discern that Praise loved the shelter and did not mind remaining in it. It could also be that Praise saw the shelter as a bargaining tool for remaining in Lagos. As mentioned in previous narratives, Praise has remained excited about her trafficking journey and has no intention of returning home. Nevertheless, I observed that the manner (sad, happy, with relief, with nostalgia) in which children leave the NAPTIP shelter had a lot to do

Serena responded to a call to work, hoping to earn money to assist her parents with paying her school fees during a period of household shortfall. Serena claims that she does not need NAPTIP's help because she expects that on returning home her parents will be able to take care of her educational needs, the way they had done before the temporary economic impact

with children's level of attachment with the shelter and the relationships they foster, such as Praise helping out in the kitchen and seeing her own grandmother, whom she loves, in the matron.

Not all children share this attachment to the NAPTIP shelter. Serena, 17, as did some other children, made no pretences about fondness or attachment to the shelter. Although she is happy that she was removed from a place that would have led to her sexual exploitation, she simply wants to return

home to her family. Unlike the drawings of other children showing happy situations with new friends and the shelter management, her drawing presented in the previous chapter expressed the situations she found difficult to deal with at the shelter:

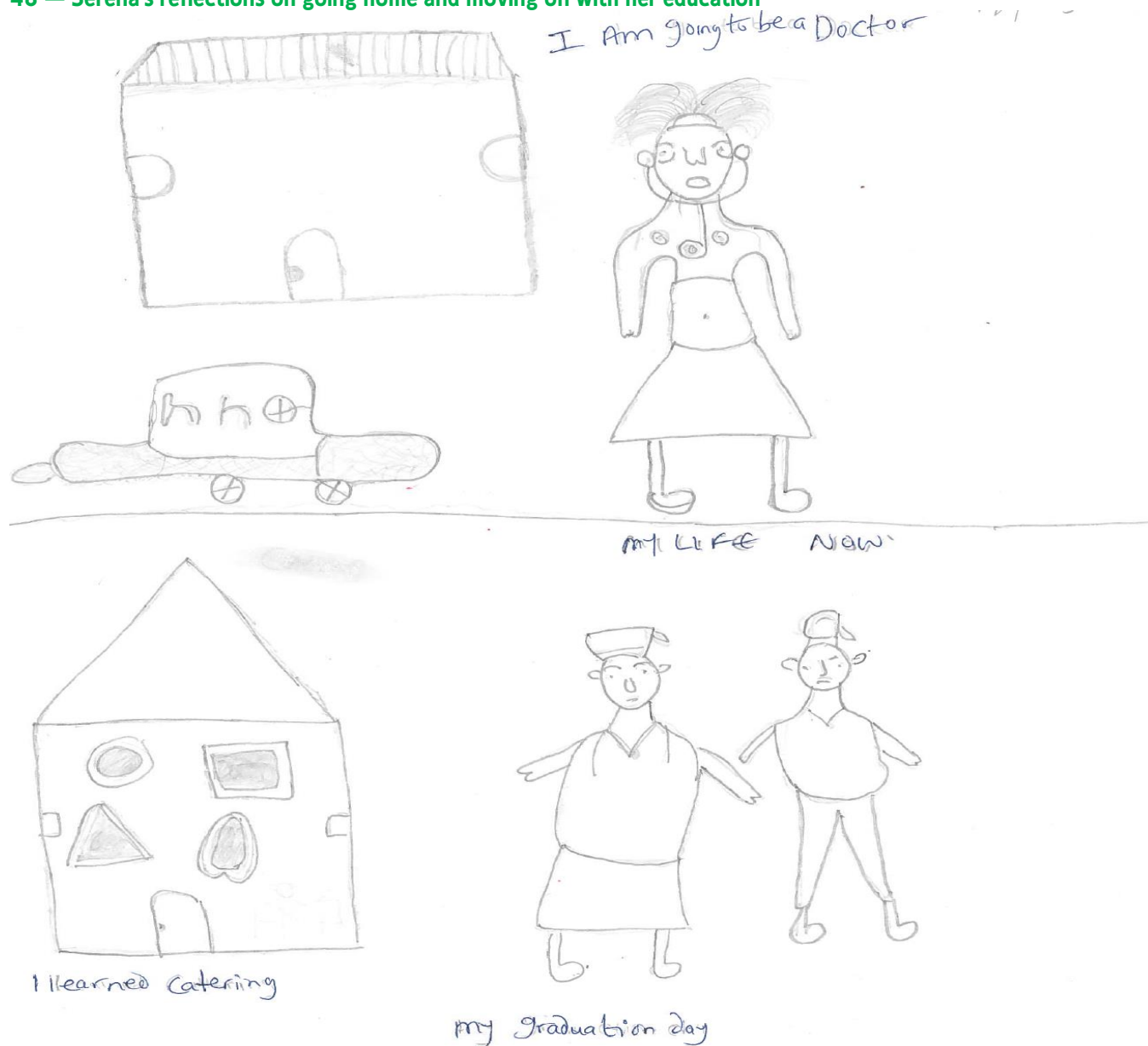
Ifeyinwa: *Why don't you like the shelter?*

Serena: *They keep us and we don't eat to our satisfaction. That is number one. Number two, no electricity and number three, they treat somebody as if they don't have their own kids at home. They treat us as if they don't have human sympathy. I just pray to God that one day I will just go, I will go away from here.*

Serena took the time to express and present pictorial depictions of her dissatisfaction (cited in the previous chapter) with services at the shelter and how this impacted her overall perception of the shelter. Serena's perception of shelter services have to do with child-staff relationships which caused her to question if the staff treat their children the same way they do child victims at the shelter, power supply and feeding. Other children have similar views but chose to express them differently, as Bimbo did with reference to the small food rations, which she saw as education on coping with different situations that life may throw at you. While Serena has remained grateful to

NAPTIP for assisting in her moment of need, she draws a line between NAPTIP and the shelter. Serena's ultimate goal is to leave the shelter as soon as possible and follow up on her dreams of becoming a medical doctor.

48 — Serena's reflections on going home and moving on with her education



1.2. Options accessible to children

Children at the NAPTIP shelter are in different stages of recovery from both visible and invisible harms, physical and emotional wounds inflicted on them in the course of trafficking. With the extent of trauma experienced by children, it may be difficult for them to think about the options they have without someone (like NAPTIP counsellors and other agency staff) nudging them in the right direction. Moreover, how many children know they have options besides returning home to family? Discussions in this section will focus on: options accessible to children after trafficking; knowing what to look forward to at home; and falling back on NAPTIP.

1.2.1. Options opening into another world after trafficking

How do children know what options are accessible to them and how are they involved in negotiating the acceptance of these options by their parents and guardians? How do things work for children that have spent their entire life forced to do what others dictate of them? The case applies to 15-year-old Rosemary, previously mentioned, whose greatest wish is to attend school and, if she cannot do that, to learn hair dressing. She was not allowed to explore any of her favoured options but was sent instead to act as caregiver to an old woman, a job she did until the old woman passed away. Even after the old woman's passing, she was still tossed from one person to another at the dictate of the old woman's daughter:

Ifeyinwa: *Do you want to go back to your daddy and mummy?*

Rosemary: *I do not know anything for now. . . and I want to go to school.*

Ifeyinwa: *So you don't want to go back to them?*

Rosemary: *Yes.*

Ifeyinwa: *Where do you want to go now?*

Rosemary: *To the place where they will take me to school.*

Rosemary is one of those children who does not want to return home to her parents, because home means re-trafficking, lack of enrolment in school and disregard for what she desires for the future. Although Rosemary did not want to return home, she was reunited with her parents and may spend some years repeatedly running away from the homes that her parents and uncle will send her to work.

Still other children will like more options, different from returning home, made accessible to them. Promise, 17, who had believed she would be working for a White family in Senegal but ended up in Burkina Faso working for 2 months as a prostitute, would not like to return home. For this young girl, she is still unable to forgive her mother for making her vulnerable to the sex trade and cannot face living at home with her. During the focus group discussion, Promise was one of those vocal about those they blame for their trafficking and their readiness or not to forgive:

Ifeyinwa: *If you see your mother now, what will you tell her?*

Promise: *I will not like to go back there again. I want to go back to my sister's house.*

During the personal interview, when Promise was asked what she would like NAPTIP to do for her, she again expressed the desire to be reunited with her sister rather than her mother:

Promise: *I asked them to take me to my sister. She has two children and a hair dressing salon, she has her own shop.*

Ifeyinwa: *Do you think your sister will help you?*

Promise: *Yes, she will help me. I have gone there before.*

The day trafficked persons were transported from Lagos to Benin, as an indigene of Delta State, Promise should have been on that bus. She was not. The agency must have understood her decision and based on discussions with her sister and mother, Promise remained in Lagos.

1.2.2. Knowing what to look forward to at home

Who understands the home children are going to better than children themselves? When children are kept engaged and made to understand the importance of the discussion and the information they present to their future or

wellbeing, they are likely to provide more detailed information about their home and relationships between its occupants to enable decisions to be made about the next stage in their lives.

From my initial discussion with her, Bolaji, 13, is unhappy that her mother took her away from the mummy living in Abule Egba's home where she was enrolled in school, to send her to people's homes to work as a domestic servant. She has also asked her mother if the money earned from trafficking will be set aside for her education:

Bolaji: When I tell her, she will say that I should not worry, that if I do another house-help work, the money will be used to pay my school fees. That was how I came to aunty's place and now came to the shelter. They said that if they finish with my case, then I will go to my village, that I will not go to that place [aunty's place] again.

Ifeyinwa: What will you do when you get to the village?

Bolaji: They have asked me in this place [NAPTIP] before and I told them that I want to go to school. Later, I thought that my mummy does not have money. I now thought that I should finish my school then go back to my village.

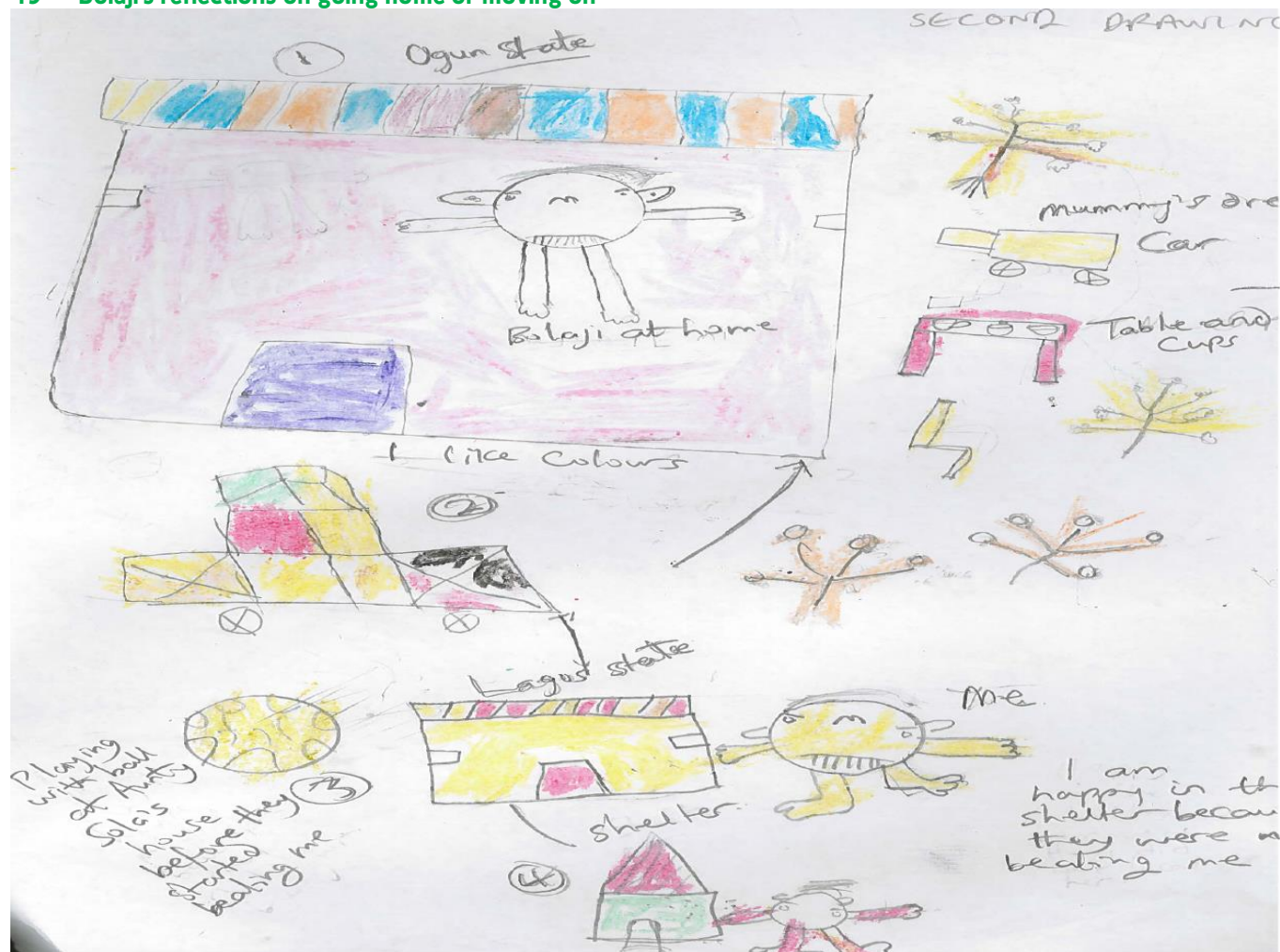
Ifeyinwa: Who will pay your school fees?

Bolaji: The mummy that lives in Abule-Egba. She was paying my school fees until... my brother took me away. My mummy said that they should bring me from school... They took me as their child because they know me very well and I know her very well.

Ifeyinwa: Do you think that the mummy lives in Abule-Egba will take you back?

Bolaji: Yes... She said that if I want to go to school that I should come back.

49 — Bolaji's reflections on going home or moving on



From her drawings, Bolaji reflects that the shelter is a place of escape and rest from the beatings received at her last place of employment. She shares that she was asked by the agency if she would like to attend school. The child was quick to evaluate her options. First, viewing the manner in which her mother habitually sent her off to work, if she opts to school in the village, she faces chances of re-trafficking. Second, considering that her mother never saved the money earned during her trafficking, her mother will not have money to fund her education. After this deliberative process and knowing what to expect at home, the child is likely to require the agency's assistance in ensuring that her mother allows her to move to mummy Egba's house where she is sure of been treated as a part of the family and attend school as well.

Another child that knows what to expect from home is Praise and she expressed this knowledge when I asked what she would do in the likelihood that NAPTIP reunites her with her family. Some children like Praise already know what to look forward to at home, so she is quick to respond that if NAPTIP chooses to return her to her home, she will refuse going:

Ifeyinwa: *What if NAPTIP takes you back home?*

Praise: *I don't want to go. I want to go to school. If I reach my village, I will still come back to Lagos*

Ifeyinwa: *How will you come back? Will you use the same man as the last time?*

Praise: *The man is already in the jail cell.*

Ifeyinwa: *You will look for another person?*

Praise: *Yes.*

Praise's response may sound comical but the response comes from a mind that has spent time weighing her options: returning home, then searching for another channel to return to Lagos and leaning on NAPTIP for support - and planning a strategy for obtaining that support. Other children face the likelihood of returning home and getting re-trafficked by their parents. On the one hand, if Praise is returned home, she will find alternative means of returning to Lagos since home for her calls up associations of a place where there is no money to fund her dream of learning to sew. On the other hand, Praise's parents have assured her of learning dress making after she had made enough money to cover her training.

*For **Paul**, he was only passing through the shelter to address complaints against his trafficker (Pastor X). He was not moving back to his parents' home because the elderly woman's (he was recruited to care for) children have promised keeping him in the family and paying his school fees, a turn of events that gives Paul so much joy.*

1.2.3. Falling back on NAPTIP

When children consider NAPTIP their sole option for meeting their future aspirations of moving on after trafficking, it is often because children's narratives of the home environment reveal the household's inability to meet their goals. The parents may have also been invited to NAPTIP office and, after discussions, are willing to have their children remain to access other options presented by NAPTIP. In some cases, development agencies (for example, IOM) may have shown interest in the nature of a child's trafficking experience and are willing to support the child in their selected training programme. Praise, 14, shares the process of discussions leading to the decision to fall back on

NAPTIP. From the discussion, Praise's father was invited to the agency when the children were removed from the child-depot:

Praise: They saw him [her father] but it was only one girl that her father did not come because her father was sick. . .

Ifeyinwa: But why are you still here?

Praise: Mummy, I have told them that I want to learn work but, since I told them, I don't know what I am still doing here.

Ifeyinwa: You don't want to return to Cross River State? You prefer learning a trade?

Praise: Yes.

Ifeyinwa: Have you discussed this with your father?

Praise: I don't have my father's phone number and my father doesn't have a problem.

Ifeyinwa: So your father will not be returning to NAPTIP?

Praise: I don't know. I have told them before that I want to learn a trade. Now my mind is not even in learning the trade again. I want to go to school.

Ifeyinwa: What trade did you want to learn?

Praise: I want to learn tailoring.

Praise indicates that she had already expressed a desire to learn a trade to the agency and cannot understand the delay in meeting her request. She is also certain that her father will not have a problem with allowing her to learn a trade, especially as he will not be making a financial commitment toward her sewing programme.

Amina, 17 years, on the other hand, had to stop school when the family faced economic shortfalls. Amina was asked to go and work as a domestic servant to support the family. She was moved to multiple locations until she ended up in the sex trade. In this discussion, Amina was explaining a note she scribbled during one of our presentations. Amina is one of those children who knows what to expect from home and would rather explore other options that will not expose her to exploitative and dehumanising practices:

Ifeyinwa: Okay, what did you write here?

Amina: I want NAPTIP help.

Ifeyinwa: How do you want NAPTIP to help you?

Amina: If they can help me put me in school or help me to learn a trade.

Ifeyinwa: What type of vocation or trade?

Amina: Catering.

Like Praise, Amina is falling back on NAPTIP to assist with either enrolling her in school or to learn a vocation. Praise and Amina fell back on the agency for support and that was granted. Before the end of my field research, Praise, Aduke, Daniella and Gabriella were moved to a residential NGO facility where they were taught their preferred vocations — sewing for the first three and hair dressing for Gabriella. Amina who opted to return to primary school, lived in a different residence with easy access to her school.

1.3. Process of reintegration and the future

Whether children were reunited with their families or moved on to other programmes funded by NAPTIP, while in the shelter, children still indicated their aspiration to be successful in future. Children's future aspirations were

expressed in some of their drawings. My discussions in this section will dwell on three key areas: process and assurance of a future; and opting to remain with the familiar;

1.3.1. The process and assurance of a future

Children have aspirations to become something in the future. But what is the process for becoming that person they desire to be in future? And what is the assurance that the children can begin this process without getting frustrated in the end? Mary, from Togo, for instance, has the aspiration of becoming a nurse. This is depicted in her beautiful drawing:

50 — Mary's reflections on meeting her future aspirations at the shelter



Her drawing beautifully indicates this pathway and the requirements of the profession. She is aware that there is a hospital, you will have patients and wear the nurse's uniform. But is that all there is? Her life story may not create the pathway for ensuring that she realises her dreams. The only time she went to school was when she came over to Nigeria. She never attended school in her native Togo. The last time I returned to visit the shelter while attending a conference in Nigeria, Mary had returned to Togo. Who follows up on the process? NAPTIP or the affiliated agency in her country? In the course of working on trafficking, so many children and the pathways to their dreams

are lost within the process. Who do you help and who do you pass over? How are these decisions made? Deola, 17, who had worked several years in Nigeria, was involved in a battle to keep her last salary with madam Bose who was willing to assist her with fighting for her rights. Her trafficker was also cunningly trying to take her away from madam Bose with the offer of taking her home, something the child considers a lie and a petty plot to have her married off to a farmer or re-trafficked.

I told Iya B that I don't want to go, that I want to stay with madam Bose, that I want to be living with her. She said no, that I have to go, that my parents are calling me at home. The reason why I didn't go is that if I go, it is either they take me to one farmer like that to marry or they may take me to another place to work. They won't take me to the village. So Iya B was shouting that madam Bose should bring me back. Madam Bose did not bring me. So that was when she reported to the Togolese embassy.— Deola, 17, girl

In her case, Deola knows what to expect on returning home and does not want to go home. She is more concerned with her embassy and NAPTIP working together to ensure that she collects her salary. She would also like to remain and work with her current madam, an option that may not be feasible since she is not legally allowed to work in Nigeria. Deola left the Lagos shelter for Togo in May 2014 and she called me from her country, a place she left when she was only five years old. Things were not the way she expected and this left me wondering how her embassy handled the process of adjustment and reintegration. Deola collected some of her salary from madam Bose, was not allowed to work for madam Bose, was deported to Togo and had to rent a temporary apartment because the home she left was not the home she returned to. The last time we spoke, Deola is still determined to return to Nigeria because Togo, though her homeland, appears strange and new to her, making it difficult to plan around education, work and the future.

Nana was taken to the hospital but had a difficult labour. She needed to deliver her baby through a caesarian session. Finally, her parents were contacted; they arrived just in time to take her to Ghana, where she must have had her baby.

1.3.2. Opting to remain with the familiar

Other children did not want to be involved in negotiations with the agency or affiliated NGOs about their future. They also do not need the agency to assist with their re-integration into a place they consider themselves familiar with. This group of children found their trafficking experience traumatic, frightening and, in some cases, a waste of time. They simply wanted to move on with their lives by getting transported back home to the familiar — parents and family in their village.

The first child is Angel, 12, who was accused of witchcraft and her parents were lured into handing her over to a pastor for prayers and other assistance he had to offer. From her narratives, Angel considered her trafficking a setback because the pastor delayed her progress and, when she was eventually sent to live with a woman who beat her at the slightest provocation, she was delayed from starting school:

Ifeyinwa: Do you want to go home to your parents or do you want to go back to that woman's house?

Angel: I don't want to go back to her house.

Ifeyinwa: You want to go home to your parents.

Angel: Yes.

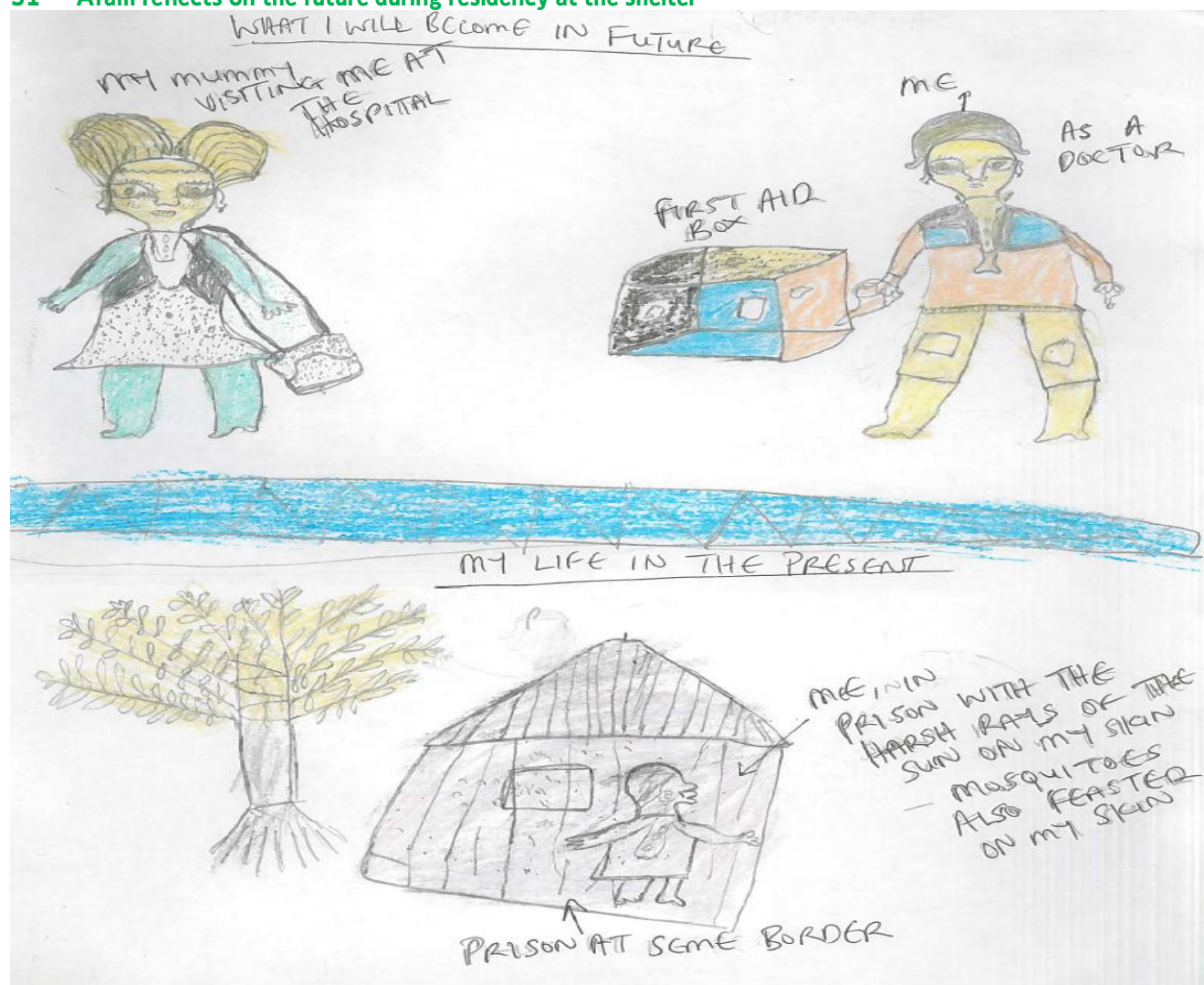
Ifeyinwa: Were you attending school while with your parents?

Angel: Yes.

Angel is adamant about not returning to her madam's house and would rather return to more familiar settings with her parents. She had also lost several years of school caused by the movement away from home and may find herself many classes behind her former classmates in the village. I also asked Angel how she will deal with likely remnants of the witchcraft accusation that warranted her departure from home. Exhibiting great wisdom, Angel assured me that with the prayer and fasting she engaged in with Sarah, she felt that God will assist. She also felt she was better off at home. She missed her parents and family.

The second are the boys, Afam and Obinna who were travelling to Cotonu to learn a trade after dealing with inadequate funds to continue their education in Ebonyi State.

51 — Afam reflects on the future during residency at the shelter



My discussion with the boys revealed that they were no longer interested in learning a trade either in Cotonu or any Nigerian State but would rather be allowed to return home to their parents and family:

Ifeyinwa: Do you want to return to Cotonu?

Afam: No o. I will rather go to the village and sleep.

Ifeyinwa: What will you be doing in the village?

Afam: I will be farming. Right now, it is raining season. When we move from this season to April then everyone will go to the farm.

Ifeyinwa: So you will become a farmer.

Afam: Yes.

Ifeyinwa: Are you saying that the journey you engaged in frightened you and you do not want to go on it again?

Afam: Yes.

Ifeyinwa: What frightened you about the journey?

Afam: Being in a cell is not an easy thing or experience.

Ifeyinwa: Were you well fed?

Both: No, we were always hungry.

Afam: When they give us food in the night, we will stay until about 3 in the afternoon of the following day before we eat again. We used to pray in the cell that hunger should not kill us. Me, Obi and our brother [their trafficker], we all used to pray.

Ifeyinwa: So where is that brother now?

Afam: When they took us away we did not know where they were taking us. They decided that they were going to separate three of us.

Ifeyinwa: I will come and visit your farm sometime. What do you cultivate?

Afam: We grow yam, palm nuts, cassava, ede, potato.

Ifeyinwa: That is amazing! Which potato, Irish or sweet potato?

Afam: Any one.

Ifeyinwa: Do you sell these items?

Obi: Yes.

Afam: We also grow rice.

Ifeyinwa: You have to grow rice. Abakaliki is known for rice. You must be making a lot of money.

Afam: We are not the ones making the money. It is our father and mother.

From our discussions and the pictorial illustration, the boys were still traumatised by their experiences during the journey to Cotonu and the repatriation process to Nigeria, which included sleeping in a cell where the piercing sun dealt mercilessly with them, eating minimally, engaging in nightly prayers of survival with their older relative and watching their relative humiliated for trying to assist them in carving a better future. The boys told me that, if they are unable to realise their original goals of attending school, then they would rather remain at home and invest in farming like their parents.

Promise claims that she blames her mother for her trafficking and has no intention of returning home. Promise asked NAPTIP to re-unite her with her older sister who manages a hairdressing salon in Lagos.

1.4. Discussions generated from children's decision to go home or move on

Building on findings from children's narratives about moving on after trafficking, discussions in this section will focus on: children's narratives and the portrayal of their homes as places of return and/or departure; and the theoretical perspective of 'rescuing' children and the appeal for Western interventions.

1.4.1. Children's voice and assessment of homes of return or homes of departure

When anti-trafficking agencies mention reintegration with reference to underage children, the understanding is usually that children have to be returned home to family or parents. Reintegration could also be in a different community in their home country or a new country. The ultimate goal of reintegration is to empower the trafficked

person (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2012) for effective social, economic and educational (if applicable) adjustment after trafficking. If home is the most common reintegration site for underage trafficked children, what does research on trafficking know about the families and homes of trafficked children? Much of the understanding of family for trafficked children, I must regretfully repeat, is the broad reference to families living in situations of poverty, broken homes, polygamous settings and the migration of helpless children from home at the bidding of insensitive parents. More targeted research with trafficked children and their families is needed to understand their needs which will inform effective reintegration after trafficking (Bjerkan 2005; Brunovskis & Surtees, 2012; Derks, 1998; Surtees, 2008). Broader studies of the family as the site for vulnerability of children to trafficking and healthy reintegration of children are almost absent.

What do children do after leaving trafficking? Should the next action be to go home or to move on to other things? Sometimes even children themselves find this question difficult to understand. It is easy to know what you will do on returning home if you understand the home you are returning to and can deduce what awaits you on returning home. Some children, like 12-year-old Angel, knew she was returning to a place where her parents could send her to school without needing to re-traffic and re-exploit her. She knew where she was headed because she was safe and happy at home with her parents and siblings until a Pastor came to destabilise her world with accusations of witchcraft. Fourteen-year-old Bimbo also knows the home she is returning to. But unlike Angel, Bimbo knows that

*While **Angel** was at the shelter, she would engage in spiritual fasts with Sarah, another girl from her home State. The aim of their fast was for God's intervention to enable them return home to be reunited with their parents and family members who they had not seen for some years. Ultimately, their prayers were answered and they went home to their family in Taraba State.*

the home she is heading to is a place where she had always been exploited to perform caregiving roles for a father who she considers unable to account for the income she generated from work. Returning home will likely make it impossible to actualise her dreams of becoming a medical doctor.

Unlike some of the other children, Bimbo has been in and out of trafficking, returning home for brief periods before setting out to seek new opportunities. With the recklessness with which her father spends the money made from her work, she does not believe the family understands the strain involved in working for the family's benefit. For her, after leaving the NAPTIP shelter, she would only be returning home for the holiday, before carefully planning her relocation to a place where she is sure that her education will be taken care of, probably looking up to NAPTIP if they can provide funding opportunities for her education. Bimbo's case can also be related to findings from Brunovskis & Surtees' (2012) study with 43 trafficking survivors, 22 of whom were minors at the time of their trafficking. One of the study participants expressed frustration with returning home to a family that is unable to help with her healing, since they perceived some of her stories about her trafficking experiences abroad as based on excessive complaints and exaggerations that could only be the result of watching too many horror films.

52— Bimbo's reflections on going on or moving on



The assessment of home based on the child's understanding of that home, helps the child discern whether the best option is to allow themselves be reintegrated into that home or not.

I also came to see the role that funding plays in decisions taken about the form of assistance to apply in handling a child's case. A child's return home could also be problematised based on the platform for reintegration adopted by the agency. With evidence from her research with some of NAPTIP's partner agencies, Nwogu (2014) does not feel that NAPTIP pays as much attention as it should to the reintegration of victims. She sees NAPTIP as operating within a platform that favours the desires or needs of funding or donor agencies rather than that of trafficked children and their families. She also accuses donor agencies of operating a top down approach that looks to project and promote an agenda that has nothing to do with the realities of trafficking in the receiving country:

... EU Migration and Asylum Thematic Programmes initiative, for instance, usually issues a call for proposals to identify potential initiatives to fund in yearly cycles. NGOs, UN and government institutions that apply have no say in these objectives and tend to adjust or abandon whatever

strategic objectives they may have set for themselves in order to pursue the available funds (Nwogu, 2014: 49).

Nwogu (2014) emphasises that there should be more consultation with trafficked persons and professionals in designing anti-trafficking programmes. The professionals deal directly with trafficked persons and the trafficked persons are those with the experiences and in most cases experiencing the services offered.

My findings show that children understand the homes they left into trafficking better than the service providers offering assistance after their removal from trafficking. I suggest that the trafficking literature should give children more credence than the vague reference to helpless children who were bundled off from home into trafficking — the same place they will be returned after their ‘rescue.’ Moreover, when children talk about home, their net of focus stretches to include neighbours, friends and relatives. For instance, when Bolaji narrated that she is sure that her education will be sponsored by a relative who took a liking to her, the agency continuing to focus their reintegration on her immediate family alone may not provide what is in her best interest. I found during my residency that careful interaction and listening to children for significant others in their trafficking stories provide more information for determining what is in the child’s best interest for moving on after trafficking.

1.4.2. Theoretical - rescuing of children and the appeal for Western interventions

Also crucial for moving on is the policy implication of children living in a government-owned shelter. When children are removed from trafficking and placed in a government-owned shelter, there is the expectation that they will receive some form of support from their respective governments who should make more economic and educational investments in addressing their plight. I use this argument as the basis for responding to the growing literature on the relationship between child trafficking and household poverty. If indeed the relationship exists and has gained acceptance in the regional and development community, then how does this translate to making changes in children’s lives?

From my discussions with children during my field research, I see this questionable reason for child trafficking (household poverty) as a development objective for marginalising African children and their families, thereby instituting and reinforcing the development mission of

While **Mercy** was at the shelter to attend a court session, she was under probation by NAPTIP because she had escaped from the home managed by an NGO which she was assigned to while learning hair dressing. She left that home to move in with an unidentified girl. She also mentioned that a man had collected her passport pictures and details to get her a proper job as a house air!

saving these children and their families from harm. In my understanding, such narrow discourse on the causes of a social problem prevents one from understanding the agency of the children, the family interactions, decisions and goals of families when children are sent away, or even finding solutions for curtailing or ending the problem. And the children’s agency is undisputed, as evident in my study with the negotiations they engage in with family members prior to their trafficking and insight from other studies with West African children migrating for labour (Dougnon, 2011; Hashim, 2006; Thorsen 2012).

Or is it not important to curtail the occurrence of child trafficking? Then again, if there is a relationship between child trafficking and poverty, what is done to sever this link? I often wonder if this link is severed by countless research and policy papers emphasising the link or by emphasising that policy makers in affected countries should invest in social protection programmes that provide meaningful assistance to vulnerable families, as operates in developed countries. When the social protection option is addressed, it appears meaningful that when children leave the NAPTIP shelter, they are more certain of returning to a home where they will not be re-trafficked as a result of identified poverty or economic upsets existing in their households. When trafficked young people needing assistance to attend school or learn a trade are reintegrated with family without receiving this assistance, it opens the floor to several debates about the goal of the country's anti-trafficking mission. The 'rescue' and reintegration mission is to stop underage children from engaging in exploitative work. When children do not work, especially when they need it, what alternatives is government offering to children and their families especially when its reintegration support is not automatically available to all children removed from trafficking.

For effectiveness in reintegrating trafficked children, the anti-trafficking mission has to be aligned with: the reasons for establishing the agency, the models or approaches adopted to address trafficking and ensuring they are a good fit within the cultural landscape of the country. Nwogu (2014) adds that funding of anti-trafficking programmes and the reintegration mission of any anti-trafficking agency has to align with the needs of the sending communities.

Chinyere delivered her baby but there were some complications. The baby required urgent surgery and passed away after this was done. Chinyere now needed time to heal after getting pregnant and losing her baby at the age of 14.

Several motivators for children's departure from home have been identified in writings on child trafficking. Building on these common triggers and working with sending communities, it is likely that more progress will be made in identifying effective reintegration strategies

for young trafficked persons.

Building from aligning with the needs of sending communities is the observation from my study and research with trafficking survivors that children have to be adequately prepared for reintegration. Armed with relevant professionals, the shelter should be the initial stage for identifying the peculiarities of children's trafficking and the experiences within it. In my observation, it appears that the 'treatment' and assistance process for the various types of trafficking exploitation that children face are treated within one universal box. From the children's narratives, they do not see their trafficking types as carrying equal weights in terms of disclosure and shame in retelling, as eloquently voiced by 16-year-old Gabriella. If shame is associated with a person's trafficking experience, then there is the likelihood that in returning home, the trafficked person will avoid accessing assistance with establishments that will expose the reason for their absence from home (Corrigan 2004). It then means that service providers should try to identify the likely emotional and psychological effects of children's trafficking at the reintegration stage. This is important because, with insight from Brunovskis & Surtees' (2012) study, trafficked persons, especially victims of sexual exploitation, were not adequately prepared to deal with social stigma, versions of their trafficking stories to tell family or new friends and taunting remarks by male acquaintances associated with reintegration in their communities after trafficking. Also based on their study with trafficked young persons from

Ethiopia, Yoseph, Mebratu, & Belete (2006), identified some of the likely psychological and emotional problems that could result on returning home from trafficking. The same study also showed that, based on the trafficking situation experienced by returnee trafficked persons, their families may stop the reintegration process, disallowing them from entering their erstwhile homes.

Additionally, when there is no clear format for understanding how reintegration is facilitated and who obtains assistance from anti-trafficking agencies, children will continue questioning the 'rescue' mission — while researchers arrive at their own calculations about who is considered 'a victim' and gets assistance from anti-trafficking agencies. Based on their discussions with trafficking persons in the assistance system, Brunovskis & Surtees (2008) looked into the politics of victimhood. The researchers see that when trafficked persons have a "decent" appearance or behaviour- such as displaying 'good girl' traits — they receive more sympathy, attention and assistance from service providers. The Poppy Project's (2008) research with women from 34 nationalities trafficked to the UK for prostitution found that there is the tendency to distinguish between "real" victims (who did not know the nature of their trafficking prior to leaving home) and those who knew the nature of their trafficking. In other words, children who are unable to display these desirable social and dramatic traits are likely to leave the shelter without assistance because they do not fit the picture of the real victim of trafficking.

We have also seen from responses from children in my study and research with persons removed from trafficking in other parts of the world that assistance provided by service providers is usually tied to residency at shelters. When trafficked young persons opt (if provided the chance) to return home rather than remain for extended periods at the shelter, it is usually not because they do not desire the assistance (if any), but for a range of reasons that I observed with interaction with my study participants:

Sandra and the other children that were sexually exploited by the medical practitioner left for their homes shortly before Christmas.

- Preference to remain in a conducive home environment rather than the controlled space shelters offer;
- Discomfort with living in a communal environment;
- Needing privacy to heal in the company of more familiar faces;
- Discomfort with having a constant reminder of their trafficking experience when they are surrounded with so many others with similar experiences;
- Ability to return home and take stock of their lives and aspirations rather than remaining in the shelter still unsure of whether or not they will be receiving assistance;
- Loneliness and boredom with shelter life, especially when recreational and educational facilities are deficient or non-existent;
- Inability to endure the controlled, restrictive environment the shelter offers and remaining at the mercy of service providers for their every need, especially those needs trafficked persons previously took for granted that they could handle themselves.

I do not know about other West African countries (since West African children removed from trafficking in Nigeria participated in my study), but as a Nigerian, I maintain that a lot can be done to enhance the living standards of children removed from or vulnerable to trafficking.

Moreover, minimal headway made in government or NAPTIP's efforts at addressing trafficking has a lot to do with the importance attached to issues relating to children at the legislative level.

With about 12 years of anti-trafficking experience, key drivers of trafficking should be collated based on victim profiles and interactions with them. Data derived from these should arm the agency, government and donor agencies in identifying triggers of trafficking among underage trafficked persons and

*With time **Adaora's** wounds healed and she was ready to be taken home by her mother. Her case was still under investigation when I left the Lagos shelter for Abuja at the end of September 2013.*

explore the best social, economic, political, religious, cultural and gender-based platforms for addressing them within the peculiarities of the Nigerian terrain, rather than borrowed Western platforms. This is not to say that I am against adopting what may appear to be innovative anti-trafficking platforms from Western countries. I would rather say that while borrowing across continents is well-intentioned, the borrowing country should be able to refine what is borrowed to fit within the needs of eventual users in their own country.

1.5. Conclusion

Although discussions and findings from my study as well as that from other studies with trafficked children have reported children opting to be returned home, especially when they are unsure of assistance from the anti-trafficking agency, I have also seen from assisting with returning children home during my research that the reintegration process is more complicated than reports indicate. Brunovskis & Surtees (2012) show that more attention should be placed on understanding the family, the nature of family dynamics and the social support that will be provided to trafficked children on returning home. Although the majority of their study population appears to be women with adjustment issues relating to availability of housing and jobs to cater for their children on returning home, certain aspects of their findings appear relevant to trafficked underage children, especially in understanding how receptive the family will be to children's return home. Especially when children's trafficking journey was cut short and children returned without money. How will parents who sent children to work respond to requests against the re-trafficking of their children? It is also important for family members, parents and siblings to know what the returning child went through during trafficking to aid with understanding and dealing with the child's trauma, should it manifest in any form (anger, crying, silence or social withdrawal) while at home.

In the course of my interaction with trafficked children, it was interesting that some children could not understand why they were 'rescued' by anti-trafficking agencies. To them, the idea behind a 'rescue' mission should be removing them from a bad situation and moving them to something better. This was not the case with all trafficked children because the children were almost always reunified with their families, which means taking them back to the poverty or other household shortfalls they were escaping from. It is not surprising that most research with trafficked

persons always has respondents asking what the alternatives to trafficking may be in the absence of economic alternatives to forestall household poverty (Howard, 2012; lyanda, n.d.).

Based on the progressive nature of children's involvement in trafficking, discussed in the chapter on children's experiences during trafficking (Chapter 8), it is obvious that it is impossible to promote a universal image of the typical trafficked child that will aid the design of anti-trafficking programmes. This observation makes it important for social workers and relevant frontline workers working with trafficked children to contribute toward building empirical knowledge that will identify and deal with diverse emotional, psychological, economic, cultural and social issues facing trafficked persons in the re-integration process.

Chapter Eleven — Conclusions and Recommendations

Author's Reflections

My conclusions and recommendations build essentially from the qualitative data and the surprises in the field in three essential areas.

First, my fieldwork opened up the many voices that struggled to be heard from my research on child trafficking. The voices became louder as I worked to derive meaning from the disclosures of my respondents. Based on these disclosures, I struggled to understand myself, but this was difficult, because I was also part of the unfolding that my data involved. In essence, I had to first understand myself, to understand the data before me. I mentioned in Chapter 1, that a classmate drew me to understand what I chose to silence: that is the role of my family, my experience within that family and its actors in who I am and the nature of my research direction, which did not change during the doctoral programme. I continued a family tradition that advocated for the voiceless, especially children.

Second, as someone whose previous research experience had always explored the quantitative approach (for example, studying appropriate interventions for creating awareness of child abuse in Nigeria), I found that engaging in a discourse on child trafficking using the qualitative approach was more revealing than I gave that methodology credit. The insights from trafficked children made me understand that it will be difficult to stand aloof from the data before me, the people that make up that data, and the environment within which they live. Any notion of reducing child trafficking is not only about children and the work they do or situations in which they find themselves; it is about locating child trafficking within the local, cultural, religious, political, economic and family obstacles within which children (and their households) have to both function and survive.

Third, before setting out into the field research, I wanted to understand children's explanation for participating in trafficking. The initial planning platform, though recognising home as the point of departure for trafficking, did not place as much emphasis as the data did on its relevance for understanding and explaining child trafficking in West Africa. As the data unfolded, with each child, the interplay of the social, cultural, political, religious, economic and educational situations resonating from children's homes, all contributed to understanding the drivers for departures from home and their effect on re-entries to those homes. Simple explanations given about the preponderance of child trafficking in homes where parents are unemployed, illiterate, single parents or polygamous, while contributing to understanding child trafficking, do not present sufficiently detailed pictures for understanding what differentiates the West African situation from child trafficking in other regions.

Essentially, these surprises from the field shaped the direction of my discourse because they offered the real key that opened the door to my discussions, conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter presents an overview of the major findings from discussions with children during the study, the theoretical and policy implication of these findings, the limitations of the study and implications of the current study for future research and social work practice.

1. General recap of major findings and their theoretical implications

Within my dissertation, new insight has been provided for understanding the nature of child trafficking in Nigeria and other West African countries. Before engaging in the study, I worked with the knowledge from previous research that the prevalence of child trafficking is mostly triggered by high rates of poverty afflicting vulnerable families. It was difficult to isolate other silent triggers of children's departure from home and the intersectional nature of their influence. In this area of the dissertation, I present an overview of what my research is contributing that makes it different from previous studies on child trafficking in Nigeria and/or West Africa under two sections. The first set of contributions will be within departures from home by looking at: the centrality of Home for understanding children's involvement in trafficking; children's vulnerability to trafficking goes beyond poverty; family decision making prior to trafficking and beneficiaries from children's departure from home; unexplored situations leading children to trafficking; education as a major trigger for children's movement away from home; recognising that child migration could be strategic or targeted; and understanding the experiences and expectations of children in government-operated closed shelters for moving on. The second set of contributions will be within the theoretical implications of the study by: recognising the Nigerian or West African context rather than imposing the European view; the importance of children's voice for understanding their trafficking experiences and needs after 'rescue; addressing the confusion between fostering and child trafficking; looking at the place of children's gender, power, class and agency in child trafficking in West Africa.

1.1. The centrality of Home for understanding children's involvement in trafficking

Why do children leave home? Are children almost always lured away from home based on the manipulations of unscrupulous trafficking agents, poverty in households or at the request of parents, as the literature tells us (UN, 2001; UNICEF, 2007)? Findings from my study reinforce the need for further insight into the home-child trafficking link by showing that home is an encompassing factor for understanding children's movement into trafficking, ability to cope with their trafficking experience; and move on after their removal from trafficking. Children in many cases are trying to carve out a future for themselves, thinking of fulfilling their educational dreams and aspiring for economic independence in future. All these factors are ignored when efforts to understand children's reasons for leaving home do not include the voices of children removed from diverse types of trafficking.

Findings from my field research identify other factors, presented within economic, social, educational, cultural and religious markers that make children vulnerable to trafficking. Some of these include: the greed of parents that leads

to the coercion of children into acts such as sexual exploitation; the role of religious and cultural factors in the aggressive physical and emotional treatment that children are exposed to in the course of trafficking; and children's agency in seeking educational or vocational opportunities.

1.1.1. Multiple actors in decisions about children's departure from home

As summarised earlier, children's narratives present multiple reasons for their involvement in trafficking and the actors determining how they leave home, with whom they leave home, when they leave home and the likely time children will return home. There also appears to be a link between children's reasons for leaving home and the people giving final assent to the time and mode of the departure from home. I also did not observe a clear structure of people determining children's departure from home across the 55 children constituting my study participants. For instance while 14-year-old Bimbo and 15-year-old Margaret blame their older sisters for their initial departure from home to work in big cities, the final consent for their departure was given by their parents and that is where the similarity ends. While Bimbo ended up schooling and working as a domestic servant, Margaret never attended school and, coupled with her domestic duties, she had to assist in her madam's family business where the frequent haunting laughter of customers to the shop (which Margaret attributed to her poor mastery of Yoruba and English) led to her running away in search of her older sister. Unfortunately, Margaret never made it to her sister's; she ended up sexually abused.

1.1.2. Are parents really innocent?

Initially, I approached my research on a neutral foundation regarding parent's involvement in their children's departure into trafficking. But my neutrality was jolted by narratives of some children that showed the extent to which their parents are willing to go to have them (children) consent to, for instance, international or regional prostitution, something that remains undocumented in research on child trafficking. Children, for instance, like 14-year-old Eziwuwa and 15-year-old Emilia who were sent by their parents to live with their father's younger sisters, will not blame their parents for leaning towards this arrangement that ensures school attendance for them. Other children, like 14-year-old Bolaji and 15-year-old Rosemary, present narratives that indicate the greed exhibited by their parents when they were sent off to work to garner monthly revenue for their families, when they would have preferred attending school. The same applied to 17-year-old Promise, who ended up in prostitution in Burkina-Faso, and 14-year-old Success, who would have shared the same experience were she not 'rescued' by policemen at the Burkina-Faso border.

There could be pointers to a one-sided story since parents were not interrogated for my study. With my findings documenting a complex list of participants in children's departure from home, parents cannot take all the blame for children's participation in trafficking. Besides, while some children attest to instigating their trafficking by expressing their frustration with idling away at home in rural settings with minimal access to education, my findings show that the same children are unlikely to contribute to decisions taken about which families they will be placed in the course of trafficking.

1.2. Children's vulnerability to trafficking goes beyond poverty

The trafficking literature is relatively silent about children forcefully taken into trafficking without parental and child consent; the role of peers in instigating trafficking; the adventurous inclination of children, especially those escaping maltreatment, cultural or religious stigma and how this motivates children's movement into trafficking. Another area warranting research focus is the issue of poverty and the associated conceptualisation of the universal 'home' all trafficked children appear to be leaving. The idea of poverty and child trafficking, as observed in every chapter of my thesis, is something I have struggled with before and during my field research and even more while analysing or making sense of the data derived from children that participated in the study. Not surprisingly, in several areas of my findings and discussions I have asked if child trafficking is all about poverty. With the array of triggers influencing the departure of children from home and their endurance of severe abuse during trafficking, to me, too much attention is given to poverty to the detriment of exploring new directions for addressing the problem.

1.2.1. The myth of poor families and children on household rescue missions

I found during my research that not all trafficked children are from poor homes. And even for children that may be considered from poor homes, some of the parents and children within these homes would rather have their children remain at home with them than travel to live with unknown households in the course of trafficking. One such child is 12-year-old Sandra:

Ifeyinwa: *What did she tell you to make you leave your mother's house?*

Sandra: *She said that I will go to school in her place. She will send me to school. They do not teach well in my school [in the village]. My mummy said that I should not follow her. My mummy went to farm, so she [the trafficker] now took me to Doctor's house.*

Sandra's narrative defends the fact that not all parents from poor backgrounds, including Sandra's mother who is a widow, send their children out for trafficking. In some situations, children may be stolen without the knowledge or consent of their parents.

In contrast with the literature on trafficked children in West Africa, I found from children's narratives that not all affected children are from poor homes or instructed by their parents to leave home to assist in alleviating temporary economic shortfalls in the household. Dougnon's (2011) earlier reference to parents in Mali questioning the claim that they sell their children into trafficking lends voice to making hasty generalisations about parents luring their children into trafficking. These hasty generalisations could also be reinforced by the erroneous assumption that poverty is the basis of trafficking and the inability to explore the likelihood that many West African parents might be poor and still want to remain at home with their children.

1.3. Family decision-making prior to trafficking and beneficiaries of children's departure from home

Research needs to look into and understand who benefits from the trafficking of children. When emphasis is placed on people luring children away from home — it is difficult to understand the decision making process prior to children's departure from home, children's role in it and, as highlighted in several narratives, how children expected to

benefit from their journey into trafficking had things not gone wrong. I will provide 14-year-old Gift's narrative, tainted with her frustration about leaving home in Benue State because her aunt wanted her to earn money for her education. However, things went wrong and the middle man could not provide the promised job:

The person that brought me to Lagos brought me to help me to find work, so that if I reach my village, I will go to school. And as I am seeing things. . . he did not help me but punished me. He said that I will be working as house-girl but right now I did not do the work that he said I will do. . . — Gift, 14-year-old girl

With reference to Gift and other children who participated in my study, understanding who benefits from children's trafficking often provides insight to children's desire to return home, remain in the 'rescue' agency's shelter or seek other re-integration options.

In my findings and discussions, I focussed on 17-year-old Promise, who during our meeting was still traumatised by the role her mother played in her trafficking to Burkina-Faso for prostitution. As far as Promise is concerned, home is a place to which she does not plan to return. In the first place, home is the site of her mother's betrayal or agreement with strangers to send her off for exploitative work. She also recalls the absence of consoling counsel from her mother when she called from Burkina-Faso to inform her that she was asked to engage in prostitution rather than domestic work in Senegal, as she had been led to believe:

She [her mother] cut the phone. I called her back. She said that I should manage the work, that there is no money in Nigeria. I said oh!
— Promise, 17-year-old girl

Promise had to endure trafficking because she was abandoned by the one person she trusted, the same person who told her to consent to prostitution to support her family members struggling to survive in Nigeria. Understanding who benefits from children's departure from home helps determine crucial motivators for children's resilience, level of endurance during trafficking and desire to run away or remain in trafficking. Understanding who benefits from a particular child's trafficking will assist NAPTIP with ascertaining appropriate shelter and re-integration services.

1.4. Unexplored situations leading children to trafficking

The study also provided new information for understanding some unexplored circumstances leading children into trafficking. The traditional trafficking stories would most likely build on children lured into trafficking by parents and relatives or to save the family from economic shortfalls. The narratives of several children, particularly those involved in baby factories, indicate that children were motivated to leave home because they were pregnant, a situation that came with a lot of stigmatisation in some of the children's families and communities. Also associated with the stigma, was the level of maltreatment and neglect experienced by affected children. For some of the children, the fear and confusion associated with their pregnancy led them to make hasty decisions often in consultation with virtual strangers. Adaeze, 17, narrates that when she became pregnant, her aunt, whom she lived with, sent her to live with her boyfriend's mother. Adaeze became uncomfortable with the abusive nature of her boyfriend's mother and sought other options that led her to the baby factory. Other children, like Nana, 15, from Ghana, enjoyed a happy and comfortable existence with her father, mother and step mother until she was kidnapped from her private

school and recruited for exploitative work in Nigeria. A similar story of kidnap, this time by a close relative, when her mother left for the farm is narrated by 12 year old Emilia. Still other children, like Sarah and Angel narrate how their accusation of witchcraft, led to their movement away from home, initially for deliverance sessions with a Pastor, then to work as domestic servants in homes arranged for them by the Pastor. While the traditional stories of motivators of children's departure from home are important for addressing child trafficking, even more attention should be paid in the literature to new triggers or situations leading children into trafficking.

1.5. Education as a major trigger for children's movement away from home

Virtually all the children in the study attributed their departure from home as motivated by the need to acquire formal education or learn a vocation. Obiada now 17 years has had several breaks in her school programme because she would always leave home for a few years to work as a domestic servant and earn an income to facilitate her education. Rosemary, 15, who has worked as care-giver to the elderly, has never attended school, but ran away from her last employment, because she is resolved to acquire a vocational skill, hairdressing, that would provide an income in the future. Children's stories indicate how education was used as a manipulative tool by those (who could be relatives or intermediaries) taking them away from home. For some children, like Eziwuwa, 14, access to education was provided by her aunt but her busy domestic work schedule made it difficult to have sufficient sleeping hours or attend to her school work. It is important to explore the education-trafficking link for research, policy making and programme development for vulnerable children.

1.6. Child migration could be Strategic or Targeted

Discussions with trafficked children also exposes an intricate trafficking chain, with parents acting as trafficking agents in some instances, intermediaries or collaborators in other cases. I found from the narratives of affected children that how children leave home is influenced by the motivators for leaving home. Some children, like 16-year-old Gabriella, left home because a strange lady promised her mother that after working in Nigeria for some years she will come back with a car and even build a house for her family. Based on this promise, Gabriella was handed over to an intermediary. Some other children, like Yvonne, Margaret and Bimbo who departed to the city with close relatives, had different goals in mind — work, schooling or learning a trade. My research presents diverse contexts and collaborators (siblings, friends, religious leaders, strangers and relatives) for children's departure from home. The simple fact of children been away from home may not imply that they were trafficked. It could actually be labour migration engaged in by older children like 17 year old Obiada who wanted to work to save up for her education. There are also boys, Obi and Afam, that travelled with a relative to Cotonou to engage in the African practice of apprenticeship fostering. When things go wrong in the course of this movement for work, then it may be called trafficking.

Dougnon's (2012) paper on migratory activities of young people from Mali is the closest thing to a discussion on home as points of departure for young West African children and understanding why children leave home within an African perspective. To Dougnon, children's departure from home is essentially to fulfil a rite of passage for boys to be considered men in Malian villages. Even though mandatory tasks for attaining this shift from adulthood to

manhood are not specified, children's departure from home appears to seek "...the realisation of young people's dreams and social aspirations" (p. 149). He also points to the influence stories of children who have already engaged in and returned from an adventure have on the desire of other children to leave home to fulfil their aspirations in distant cities. This reference to the influence of stories from previously trafficked children is evident in the narratives of 14-year-old Praise, who was inspired to leave home with her trafficker because he had taken another girl from her village to the city. While the girl returned to the village without learning any skills to keep her busy, Praise believed that unlike the girl, she will enrol for a vocation, sewing and make a difference on returning home.

Understanding why children leave home and the type of arrangement, contacts or negotiations they made prior to or during trafficking helps in understanding how they leave home and possibly link this with the type of trafficking they were involved in — migration, smuggling, domestic servitude or prostitution. When definitions for understanding the problem are unclear, it may also influence decisions NAPTIP favours concerning which child is returned home or offered further assistance after the 'rescue' mission.

1.7. Understanding the experiences and expectations of children in closed shelters

The extended stay with children at the various NAPTIP shelters provided a better understanding of where children are coming from and their desire to move on with their lives after they have been 'rescued' from trafficking. Two questions guided my daily interaction with children in NAPTIP shelters. They were about children: questioning reasons for their removal from trafficking; and questioning if their removal from trafficking is ultimately in their best interest. As seen from some of the narratives in the findings chapters, when children are removed from trafficking and brought to a government shelter, there are expectations from children that the agency will provide them with alternatives for moving on, which for majority of the children should revolve around vocational training or returning to formal education. When children are presented with options after removal from trafficking, then children are better placed to determine if the option offered by NAPTIP is better than what they will meet on returning home. Discussions with children on these questions were as emotional as they were informative as presented in the findings chapters. There is need for further literature on children's encounter with shelter care and professionals after trafficking in the West African region as evidence from this will help understand motivators for children's decision about returning home or remaining in agency care after 'rescue' from trafficking.

2. Recap of findings that build from the theoretical implications of the study

The entire trend of adopting intervention strategies and speaking for trafficked children without having their input in problems affecting them, called for the need to adopt alternative platforms that speak to the power relations that exist between the makers of ideology and those powerless victims affected by these ideologies and the decisions resonating from them. Based on this, the findings in this area of my thesis called attention to how concepts — class, power, education, economic, gender and the idea of 'rescuing' children — resonating from children's narratives

influenced and/or contributed to children's experiences during trafficking, their coping strategies and decisions for moving on after removal from trafficking.

2.1. Recognising the Nigerian or West African Context rather than imposing the European View

From the overview of the doctoral research to the conclusion, I have defended my adoption of the concept 'rescued' to describe children removed from exploitative activities. The term 'rescued' is what comes out of the trafficking literature and the anti-trafficking frameworks. The essence of the doctoral thesis was to contest the use of a concept that disempowers trafficked children by understanding its origin and how academics have used it across the world. Building up to the theoretical question, the idea of 'rescuing children' resonates to seek a theoretical framework that responds to the silent voices of trafficked children, highlights issues of their agency, culture and race in a discussion where power structures and relations contribute to their marginalisation and oppression as people with substandard contribution to knowledge about a problem they face.

I also recognise that discussing my theoretical approach to child trafficking may introduce biased perceptions based on my social location as first an African, then a Nigerian scholar who has worked extensively with families at risk to child trafficking. Based on research with children, I have discovered that adopting foreign frameworks as interventions with Nigerian children has limited success, especially when they are used, for instance, in reintegrating street children by placing them to be fostered by non-relatives, which is a practice that is still alien to the Nigerian culture. The best alternative for reintegrating street children is usually placing children with people with whom they are familiar or who can understand them, such as extended family members. The same trend persists in adopting international frameworks that sanction the 'rescue' of children without asking whether children want to be 'rescued' from trafficking and trying to understand and address the factors pushing children into trafficking.

2.2. Counter-Storytelling and children's voice

By using counter-storytelling as the methodological approach, the findings from the study showed how, unlike traditional theories (such as: behavioural, social learning, intergenerational, systems, migration, rational choice, modernisation and security theories) guiding discussions of child trafficking, I was able to highlight, in children's words, 'how' trafficking and their experiences within it affected their lives in ways that were positive for some and negative for others within a framework that was flexible enough to adapt to the ethnic or cultural leanings of children's narratives. While critical race theory focuses on institutional structures and relationships that reinforce racial inequalities, it also recognises that various systems of subordination can converge in complex ways to allow for an analysis that focuses on historical, socio-economic and political differences existing between marginalised groups that reinforce a consciousness of their limitations and helplessness (Gillborn, 2009).

Whose story should be heard and whose story should not be heard? When should children be allowed to tell their stories on their own? These were important questions I asked myself from the first day of my research until the end. These were important questions, especially when some NAPTIP staff questioned the essence of my 10 months' residency solely focussed on interrogating children on reasons behind their journey into trafficking. Some NAPTIP

personnel were honest in asking why I should spend so much time, energy and resources in research that could be done in one month (or less). These personnel felt they had ready answers to all my questions about the children currently in their care and those long gone or re-integrated. I also questioned the reason behind their work at the agency, especially the research, investigation and monitoring units of the agency, when research (investigations too) were too often produced without involving the voices of the targets of that research. I spent a huge chunk of my research time explaining why children should have voice and be listened to about their perception of a problem concerning them. Thankfully, this view was held and expressed by a small fraction of the agency staff I interacted with.

It then follows that listening to children's voice is not a common practice in today's societies (Grover, 2004; Lansdown, 2011). Researchers and service providers are still used to speaking on behalf of children. Even when it is important to listen to children, there is a limit to which children's voices are heard. In trafficking situations, children are listened to in providing evidence about their traffickers and their employers. And after that, several children are left wondering, what happens to us? Has the system abandoned us? Are the suspects given adequate punishment? Are we compensated for lost years? How do we move on without getting re-trafficked?

For several children I met during my research, the focus group discussion offered a test platform for practise on countering the stories told about their trafficking experiences and their role in the process. I regret that, though children wanted to spend more time on the focus group discussions that acted as a group therapy session for them, shelter schedules and the unpredictable nature of children's reintegration made this impossible. I found that some children wanted to correct the impression other children at the shelter had about their fellow children and their trafficking situations. I never imagined that children were concerned about the impression other children had about them and their involvement in trafficking. It also points to the fact that, even among children, forms of trafficking are weighed according to the gravity of the child's involvement and stigma associated with it. And for the first time, I heard children use the word 'shame' to describe their trafficking experience. Or feeling that working as a house girl is an 'okay' job. Implying that involvement in prostitution or other forms of trafficking were shameful acts and stories about them should be shared with other children with a bit of caution. Several children, especially those removed from baby factories, felt that countering the stories told about their experiences should begin with their peers because children could form a wide chain of information sharers that could perpetuate the enduring chain of deceitful information that could tarnish their image for a long time.

Children demanded a platform for countering stories about them that: began with the media, was passed on to their peers and then, through my research, they would have their voices heard by the external world of influencers of ideology and policy making. Are children voiceless and lacking agency then? My research indicated children with immense agency for discerning the situation they are in and when not beneficial exploring ways to get out of difficult situations.

2.2.1. Voiceless children and the 'rescue' approach

During my research, I found that there are various reasons why children's voices are never heard in the course of research. One is the nature of the rescue approach adopted by NAPTIP. As previously stated, children are only officially allowed to remain in the shelter for six weeks. The main mission of the 'rescue' approach is to reunite children with their parents or family members. There is also a limit to the amount of funding available to NAPTIP to keep children for longer periods. I observed that immediately after children were brought to NAPTIP, a lot of effort was made to get children to provide information about their family members, even when they are not emotionally ready to speak to anyone. Information obtained from children is essential for understanding their problem and arresting their traffickers. Nevertheless, the degree of trauma children experience, a private battle within them, is not really addressed and recognised, especially within the Nigeria context. Children have been schooled culturally to respond to questions asked by older NAPTIP staff about their trafficking experiences, even when they are not predisposed to provide responses. The whole culture of respect (Damachi, 1972) detracts from children's need for periods of silence to live through and accept their recent ordeal or pain. All these practices infringe to some extent on the rights of the trafficked child to grieve over certain losses to their innocence or right to safe nurturing especially when in the care of familiar family members.

2.2.2. Are children really voiceless?

The trafficking literature in Nigeria is also restricted to certain forms of child trafficking (for instance: street hawking and begging), where affected children are easier to identify on the streets or large market settings than children involved in, for instance, prostitution. Some other studies have presented information for understanding why Nigerian women recruit underage domestic servants (Tade & Aderinto, 2014). The hasty nature of researchers' interaction with these trafficked and working children suggests that not much is known in the children's words about their experiences during trafficking and the factors leading to their involvement.

During my field interaction with children in NAPTIP shelters, I was exposed to the world of children removed from humiliating acts of sexual violence who, regardless of the trauma to which they were exposed, exhibited unique agency in speaking about and presenting pictorial depictions of their experiences. Seventeen-year-old Zainab, from Togo, was one of the children that maintained that her resolve to be vocal rather than silent is, first, not only to bring traffickers and violators to justice but to prevent the same thing befalling other vulnerable children and, second, to break the vicious circle of children of trafficking agents or users of trafficked children perpetuating the practice.

Prior to my research, minimal empirical data on the voiced narratives of trafficked Nigerian and West African children projected the impression: that trafficked children below 18 years old have little understanding of their experiences; that talking about their trafficking experiences would rekindle trauma associated with them; and that children should be spoken for by adult, guardians or parents. My thesis provides the re-education and re-direction for understanding trafficked children by adopting a theoretical framework that allows the introduction of multiple

themes in addressing the problem, that resurrects the voices of previously silent people, and recognises that solutions to a problem can only be found with the participation of people experiencing the problem.

2.3. The confusion between Fostering and child trafficking

There is further need to understand who is trafficked and who is not trafficked within the context of agency roles or responsibilities to ‘rescued’ children. I found it difficult to understand how the agency allocated assistance and care to children based on the type of trafficking from which they were removed and their family demographics. It could be argued that some of the children that participated in my study were moving away from home with parental consent and within the context of age-old fostering or apprenticeship practices, which some of their parents themselves experienced, in leaving home for various reasons — to earn an income, learn skills that prepare them for a profession in future, learn new skills to become good wives in future, assist relatives with household chores, or access educational opportunities in the city.

2.3.1. To what extent do children need to be “rescued” from fostering?

Should children that are fostered by close relatives fall into the category of trafficked children? In the agency’s defence, NAPTIP’s role is to protect children from all forms of exploitative practices in the course of their movement away from home. I will use the context of 14-year-old Eziuwa who was fostered by her aunt. Eziuwa endured several abusive practices while in residency, abuse which became so traumatic for neighbours that one of them made a call to NAPTIP, leading to the removal of Eziuwa from her aunt’s home. But what does Eziuwa say about her fostering? Does she blame her father for sending her away to be fostered or her aunt for the maltreatment she experienced? No. Because she was sure her father only wanted the best for her. Within the cultural context of fostering, there should be questions about what happens after such effectively planned fostering, as in the case of Eziuwa, goes wrong. There are also different types of fostering — kinship, educational, apprenticeship and domestic (see Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985 for an exhaustive discussion). The implication, for me, is that the broad range of activities NAPTIP and the literature categorise as trafficking could actually be the effects of fostering gone wrong. Since Eziuwa was not one of the children I accompanied home during my research, we can only imagine the nature of the relationship that will exist between siblings (Eziuwa’s father and his sister, her aunt) on Eziuwa’s return home to her father.

Traditionally, there were checks by family and community (Rwezaura, 1998) when children were sent to live with trusted family members. But now there appears to be an absence of community checks. The absence of community checks⁴⁰ explained why some foster children in my study complained of abuse meted out to them by members of their fostering families, something which those who grew up in the old traditional fostering system in West Africa may not completely agree. I do realise that, even within that era, there were families that maltreated their fostered

⁴⁰ In the traditional setting, when children are given out to relatives under fostering, there are community, communal or kinship practices put in place to check on the wellbeing of the child and ensure that the objective of fostering is met for both child and foster family. The community checks could involve sending relatives for occasional visits to the fostering household or inviting both child and foster family home to ascertain their wellbeing. With these checks, early signs of abuse, maltreatment or neglect are noticed and dealt with.

relatives but the fear of being answerable to the immediate community and facing community sanctions guarded against high rates of discrimination by foster parents.

To buttress differences between expectations of the traditional and the current practice, I tap into my family situation with pictures to buttress relationships existing between the head of the family, children of the family and foster children. The pictures below show that foster children, especially my female cousin who grew up with my older sisters, were always a part of activities in the home, shared similar clothing, attended similar events, shared household chores, attended similar residential secondary schools (as long as she met the entry requirements to those schools) and was never discriminated against.

Picture 3 - A typical children's outing with my siblings (Franca, Chinelo, Francis and Rosarii), cousins and friends



If you look closely, you will notice a number of children adorned in similar patterned fabric - those are my sisters and my cousins. Again, below, you see the same cousin that featured in my introductory chapter in the background. There were also other cousins in residence at that time, as seen in this picture and another below. My mother assures me that every child's birthday was remembered and celebrated.

Picture 4 - My second sister's birthday — a party that included everyone



It would not have appeared normal for my cousin to be excluded from family activities. After all the only reason her mother allowed her leave the village for Lagos was based on trust and assurance of care by her younger brother and his wife.

Picture 5 - A typical family portrait in the life of my parents — all relatives (including a family friend) in the house were part of the portrait



In the photo above, I can identify five young foster children (cousins or children of my father's older siblings) and older foster relatives all living with the family and still part of every family portrait. On the far right is my father's friend who was resident with the family while searching for a job in Lagos.

Additionally, I find that a step for guarding against the discrimination faced or experienced by foster children builds on understanding the relationship family heads have with each other. The children in my study made constant reference to relationships between their uncles and aunties and how this influenced the way they were treated in the household. Fourteen-year-old Eziyuwa indicates that her uncle protected her from her aunt's abusive tendencies:

Eziyuwa: *It was only after her husband travelled that she started all these.*

Ifeyinwa: *That was when she started beating you?*

Eziyuwa: *Yes.*

Seven-year-old Adaora also sees her uncle as the only one that attends to her needs and wounds after experiencing maltreatment in the hands of her madam.

...she asked me to be using a cloth to cover the wound very well so that her husband does not see it. So when it was Thursday morning... there was something that happened that made her husband look. It was open [the cloth came apart and the wound was uncovered] and her husband looked and asked me what happened to me there. I started telling him what happened to me... So the husband gave his sister 1000Naira to take me to the hospital. — Adaora, 7-year-old girl

Unlike Eziyuwa and Adaora, Emilia was supported by her aunt but both their lives (Emilia's and her aunt's) were made unbearable by her aunt's husband who used them as punching bags. There was also 13-year-old Bolaji who reported that both her aunty and uncle would join hands in beating her. Children's narratives draw us to understand that the treatment of children in a household is determined by the views the couple share concerning the treatment of foster children.

This brings me to the relationship existing between my parents prior to their marriage. My mother told me that during her engagement to my father, which was about the time she started her first teaching job, she had a vivid view of the man with whom she would be spending her life and the restless, busy but fulfilling path their lives together will entail. She said that even during courtship, my father's ideas were all about service, changing society and ameliorating the situations of young people. During her first teaching job, my father brought his recently orphaned nephew to live with her — a child my mother often refers to as her first son. While people thought that act unconventional for people who were only engaged, my mother had a different view. It could also be that my mother found my father's assistance to others easy to accept because she grew up as an only child with her mother fostering two older children who she regarded as her older siblings. The day the two children said they were returning home to their family was one of the most traumatic experiences of her life — for while the children knew they were fostered, my mother had no idea because the children were treated exactly the way her mother treated her. In an earlier family picture (see Chapter 1), my oldest sister and brother sat on either side of my parents and grandmother. However, the sitting arrangement changed once our other older brother joined the family portrait.

Picture 6 - A family picture with my Mother's other first son.



Is there a difference between the story woven around my pictures and the life I knew growing up with my parents and siblings in Nigeria and the practice of fostering in the same region? Or to be even more explicit, is fostering the new trafficking? When evaluated within the present situation of the growing number of children removed from what is considered fostering practices, it appears that good fostering is good fostering. On the other hand, abusive fostering as experienced by some of the children in my study can fall under trafficking — viewed within the operational definition of the ‘rescuing’ agency (NAPTIP).

2.4. Gender and child trafficking

The gendered nature of child trafficking was obvious in the number of female victims at the NAPTIP shelter. For the duration of my research, girls always dominated at all shelters visited and constituted about 95% or more of the number of trafficked persons. For my study, I was able to interview 9 boys that were resident at the NAPTIP shelter. Although I saw about twelve other boys, one boy’s interview was eliminated because he could not explain the reason for his presence at the NAPTIP shelter, four other boys were below five years old, two other boys completed the initial drawings but were moved from the shelter before personal interviews could occur and the remaining five boys were removed from places of accusation of witchcraft but excluded from this study. I wanted to concentrate

on data obtained from children that participated in all stages of the research process (drawing, drama, interviews and focus group discussions). A larger number of girls were also excluded from the study for similar reasons.

What is it about the female child that makes her more susceptible to trafficking than her male counterpart? Some answers were provided by the children who participated in the study. Priscilla and Promise, 15 and 17 years old respectively, attribute their exploitation for prostitution in Burkina-Faso as reinforced by their age, gender, respectful nature and inability to fight male customers:

Ifeyinwa: *What do your male customers say when they see how small you are?*

Priscilla: *They do not bother. It's small small girls they even like.*

Ifeyinwa: *Is that what they tell you?*

Priscilla: *The big ones used to insult them when they carry them inside.*

Ifeyinwa: *So the small girls don't insult them?*

Priscilla: *Yes.*

Ifeyinwa: *Do they give you extra money because you are small?*

Priscilla: *No, they do not give me extra money.*

Also, as mentioned in the findings and discussions chapters, apart from sex trafficking, there are other girls in the study who were trafficked mostly for domestic work. Why are girls preferred for domestic servitude? Some girls, like Bimbo 14, are seen as people who can be sent off to earn an income that is used to boost family wellbeing while their 'more treasured brothers' are kept safe at home. Amina, 17, from the Republic of Benin, shared similar experiences. Amina had to drop out of school when her parents were unable to afford school fees for all the children in the household. She also was asked to go and work as a domestic servant to assist the family. When she eventually accepted to work as a domestic servant, she found that whenever her jobs were terminated abruptly, her parents would not even allow her to spend some time at home before her father shipped her off to a new domestic work location.

Girls also appear to be more likely than boys to be withdrawn from school to work when the family is in need. Bolaji, 13 years old, narrated that her mother came to the home she was living in with a relative who had her enrolled in school, withdrew her from school, and sent her to work as a domestic servant in a different Nigerian city. It makes one wonder if there is a different value attached to girls' education. When Emilia, 15, took ill, her aunt returned her to her parents in the village. When the child got better and tried to move back with her aunt, her aunt indicated that she had found an alternative, this time, her husband's relative. Emilia's attempts to find ways of returning to school were not heavily supported by her mother who suggested that she should think of getting married:

My mother said that I should go and marry that education is a waste. . . — Emilia, 15-year-old girl

Emilia may be hurt that her mother said that education is a waste. But there are even deeper implications of the statement. Emilia's mother may actually be looking at things from her own perspective of probably having married early and having 11 children. To her, the education of a female child is a waste because, with marriage and childbirth, little value will be placed on her education and qualifications.

It appears that girls are more socialised to take on caregiving and motherly roles, roles the children may come to accept by living within a culture that trains them to be like their mothers who have a love for cooking and child

bearing. Their mothers may not have a voice, as with Emilia's aunt who could not denounce the abuse they faced in the home. The fact that female children have been socialised to take on motherly roles, which involve enduring pain, suffering and deprivation for the sustenance of loved ones (parents and siblings), could also explain their endurance and acceptance of exploitation, only reaching out to escape from captivity when the dehumanising treatment became unbearable or is noticed by people external to their homes of residency.

Building from their socialisation and motherly roles, girls are also likely to be the ones to remain in their jobs even when they observe that the money from their work is not judiciously utilised for the wellbeing of the family. For instance, Rashida, 15, complained that her sister's husband embezzled the money for her work and was not sending the money to her parents as arranged before leaving Togo. But the child persevered in work, until she ran away from her madam's house. Bimbo, 14, also complained that her father would use the proceeds of her work to drink and buy presents for others, without taking care of the household needs. This knowledge did not stop the girl from returning to work.

The socialisation of girls within a culture that makes them second-class citizens, forever on the household rescue mission, makes them attractive to their future employers as domestic servants or caregivers for the elderly. The employers of domestic servants, who are mostly women, want someone they can manipulate into performing tasks, even tasks they themselves cannot perform, someone who is made to work around the clock without complaining, someone who works with limited sustenance (food and drink), someone who allows them save on household materials (as in the case of Mary, 15, who was not allowed to use toilet paper after using the washroom) and someone who may be beaten at the slightest provocation but remains in the household, probably because she made an arrangement to come back with an income to alleviate household poverty, does not know her way home, or is afraid to say no to abuse or report to law enforcement agents. Tade & Aderinto's (2014) study of women employers of domestic servants report that they have a preference for girls because: most household duties are considered feminine in nature; they (employers) are female and want another female in the house; females are easier to correct when they err, unlike males who are perceived to be more assertive, aggressive and boastful, more likely to leave their female children at risk of sexual assault. These are just some of the reasons why girls are preferred to work as domestic servants (see Tade & Aderinto, 2014 for an exhaustive discussion) but all this is summed up in the few words of Obiada's previously used conclusion that:

...these people do not want male children. . . — *Obiada, 17-year-old girl*

There has been a lot of attention on girls. What about boys? What are they trafficked for and what are their experiences in receiving households? I had fewer boys than girls participating in my study. This may not be unrelated to boys being more likely to be recruited in more manually-intensive jobs in, for instance, farms, cocoa plantations and mechanic workshops. However, the boys in my study were also recruited as domestic servants and one of them, Paul, 15, worked both as a domestic servant and, later, a caregiver to an elderly lady. Abraham, 15, lived with his caring aunt and, after her passing, moved on to work as domestic servant to a lady resident in Ibadan. Ahanna, 12, left home to work in South East Nigeria, with his earnings used for his education. Sunday, 17, from Togo, was

also recruited to work in several family businesses in Lagos State. Another boy, Chiedo, 10, was initially recruited as a domestic servant and companion to an old lady, before moving on to work on the streets of Abuja, begging and stealing for his madam. I will focus on the experiences of these five boys.

Unlike the majority of the girls in my study, Abraham was lucky, first to have lived with his aunt. Then the Pastor got him work as a domestic servant to a business woman in Ibadan who promised to send him to university. None of the girls in the study lived with anyone who promised to fund their university education. Then Paul, who also lived with the Pastor, started off by getting sent to acquire panel beating and soya drink-making skills, after which he was sent to work as a domestic servant to a man in Lagos. After spending some unsatisfactory months with the man, without getting enrolled to school, Paul asked his employer to return him to the Pastor. On returning to the Pastor, Paul's fortune changed and he was recruited by a lady to act as a caregiver to her old mother. Paul was enrolled in school and, even after the old lady's death, he remained happy in that household. The only girl in my study, Rosemary, 15, who worked as caregiver to an old lady was not enrolled in school and was so badly treated after the old woman's death that she ran away.

Ahanna, 12, was a special case, because he had not started work in Lagos before he was 'rescued' by NAPTIP. Ahanna instigated his departure from home, even when his mother resisted because her husband had passed away, leaving her with two children, a boy and a girl. Knowing that he held a special position in his Igbo culture as the first child and only son, he understood his mother's reluctance. Ahanna said that he left home because he wanted to acquire a university education that was unattainable by remaining in the village. The next boy, Chiedo, 10, was happy and well treated when he lived with the old woman but his sister came to take him away. When he could not endure his sister's abusive nature, he ran away from home and ended up with a woman who exploited him for begging and stealing. The fifth boy, Sunday, 17, was the only one whose experiences appeared similar to those shared by majority of the girls in my study. Sunday thought he was coming to Lagos to learn a trade, but he found himself moved from one job to the next, while his madam (trafficker) collected his salary, never sending the money to his mother and never releasing him to return home to Togo. Eventually, he found a way out of captivity and led the police to the madam's (trafficker) hideout where about 40 other children were released.

Why are the experiences of majority of the boys, even within domestic work, different from that of the girls?

Abraham provides further insight with his own experience:

When I am there, in the morning I will wake up and clean everywhere. . . then sweep outside. . . But if she has other things she wants me to, I can do that too. If there is nothing to do, I may wash her car if she is going out with it, and after washing the car I may go and rest. When I stayed there [the woman's house] for some time, the woman now observed the way I am staying [his behaviour], she now took me to school and paid my school fees. When I came back---or if I am not going to school. . . and I have finished everything that I am doing at home, if she [his madam] is at home, I may tell her that I want to go to the shop. She may say that I should go to the shop or she may say that I should rest at home. . . . — *Abraham, 15-year-old boy*

From Abraham's narrative, his madam did not enrol him in school immediately he came to live with her in Ibadan. It was a gradual process of the boy trying to understand the woman's nature and doing things that would endear him

to her. Everything worked out and he was enrolled not in a government-owned school, but a private school in Ibadan.

But was his behaviour and duties different from those performed by the girls? From the narratives of several girls, they also had to observe, understand and endure their madam's nature or behaviour. Rashida, 15, from Togo, for instance, had to endure living with a madam who would cook, offer the food to her children, lock the kitchen door and leave Rashida hungry. Rashida never confronted her madam; she endured the beating and the starvation and even had a relationship with a neighbour's friend in exchange for money to buy food. Another girl, Daniella, 14, did all the cooking in her madam's house, made sure her madam's children were fed, but she was only allowed to eat once every day. For these two girls, their madams never considered enrolling them in school. So, what made Abraham's situation different from that of the girls in domestic servitude?

Another issue resonating from children's narratives was the extent to which women were involved in the recruitment of girls for trafficking and provides a break from the preconceived view of men as the only traffickers. In several cases, women orchestrated both the departure of children from home and their eventual recruitment into trafficking.

2.5. Power

Power was a critical factor in children's narratives about the authority people had over them, also reinforcing their vulnerability to trafficking. So many people had power over children in the course of trafficking: their parents, relatives, guardians, their employers and other people they interacted with during the trafficking journey. Adults also exhibited power over children in the form of kidnapping them against their will and forcing them to engage in practices they ordinarily would not engage in. For instance, 15-year-old Nana was kidnapped in Ghana and spent 8 years in Nigeria working as a domestic servant. Then there is 10-year-old Chiedo who was lured away from home by a strange woman he met in the market:

After we have finished bathing in the morning, sometimes she will give us transport money for the tricycle or motorcycle, but if she does not give us, we will trek to the begging point. We were begging and this made her husband very angry. . . — Chiedo, 10-year-old boy

Chiedo and two other young boys fell for the manipulative intents of the strange woman and spent their days begging and stealing to meet her diverse urges — for cell phones, carpets, bus, shoes and clothes.

Power was also a factor in children's dependency on the system, in the form of the NAPTIP agency, to both fight for their rights and also to determine when they can be released from the system. NAPTIP became both a saviour and a jailer, so to say.

2.6. Class:

Contrary to my previous understanding from the literature, questions arise about the class of people benefitting from the trafficking of children. Ordinarily, one would imagine that it is the wealthy who are able to afford the services that trafficked children provide. But this safe way of narrowing the discourse on child trafficking in relation to class fails to address the diverse forms of trafficking that children are exposed to and the equally diverse social

stratification of the beneficiaries of the services of trafficked children. I found that even low-income earners take on the services of trafficked children and use them for domestic work, street hawking and begging. An example is the case of 15-year-old Mary who came from Togo for temporary residency with her mother's friend, during which time she would attend school. The arrangement changed once Mary arrived in Nigeria and the poor child was upset that her mother never came to take her away as promised at the time of leaving home:

Ifeyinwa: *How did you come to Nigeria?*

Mary: *It is my mummy's friend that brought me to Nigeria, that I should come and work for her.*

Ifeyinwa: *How is she your mummy's friend? Did your mother know her from Togo?*

Mary: *Yes.*

Ifeyinwa: *She wanted you to come over to Nigeria and do what sort of work for her?*

Mary: *She is selling akamu with ice blocks.*

The eventual services provided by the trafficked child at their final destination are in most cases unknown to the parents but determined by previous discussions between the recruiter or trafficker and the employer. What results in reality therefore, are situations where people who ordinarily cannot afford the monthly salary due child domestic servants devise ingenious ways to have children work for them without remuneration.

2.7. Children's agency

My discussions with children in the NAPTIP shelter question the direction of trafficking research with minimal platform for the voices of trafficked children to be expressed. My discussions with trafficked children also question if the interventions for curtailing child trafficking in Africa should reinforce Western stereotypes of childhood and children as innocent or vulnerable beings, unexpected to work, to be protected and for whom sacrifices should be made (Berlan 2009; Montgomery 2007) or rather recognise the African perspective of children being strong-willed enough to make decisions about migrating to unknown destinations in search of work and a better future. I will again revert to my discussions with 14-year-old Praise:

Ifeyinwa: *Why did you move away from the house?*

Praise: *Because of money.*

Ifeyinwa: *But there is money, oil money in Cross River.*

Praise: *There is money but it is not for everybody.*

From Praise's response, it is obvious that the child understands the differences existing among citizens of a country. Praise understands that she is a victim of the social class in which she has found herself by virtue of birth. But she is not hindered by this, rather seeks to exploit it to her advantage, by going out to search for work as a domestic servant (the only likely job she can be offered with limited educational qualification) and hopefully earn money towards learning a trade. The child's resolve to move away from Cross River State, one of Nigeria's top five oil-rich states, to Lagos State in search of work and a future is in line with Dougnon's (2012) assertion that young Africans have a desire to migrate, just like their ancestors, to Europe or other African countries, even if it involves risking their lives and safety.

3. Implications for child trafficking and policymaking in Nigeria and West Africa

There is bound to be economic dependency in any region with glaring disparities between the rich and the poor. More importantly, there is a need to engage in a contextual understanding of the problem of trafficking for remedies to be relevant at country or even specific regional levels. Sometimes what parents understand as child trafficking is in conflict with what the literature and international conventions for addressing the problem see as trafficking. It therefore calls for more country-specific conventions that meet the peculiarities of trafficking within its shores.

My findings have indicated cultural expectations warranting the departure of some children from home. Their activities cannot be explained away as simply trafficking. When cultural or traditional expectations exist, parents are often unable to prevent their children's departure from home. From my study, teenagers Afam and Obi were probably responding to a migratory activity that their parents must have engaged in themselves and which, like participating parents in Dougnon's (2011 and 2012) study in Mali, they cannot prevent their children re-enacting. Dougnon (2012, p. 164) asks for a "...deepened study of cultural parameters and economic constraints..." without which not much impact will be made in addressing the problem. Like Dougnon (2012), I consider it crucial to present a historical and social context to the issue of trafficking to see if what we consider trafficking had existed previously and learn from strategies for addressing it at that historical point.

There are crucial issues that policy makers should address in formulating effective programmes for tackling child trafficking in Nigeria. These issues relate to: formulating policies and programmes using appropriate definition of working terminologies and professionals; the reach of legislation in protecting trafficking victims; providing adequate funding for NAPTIP's activities; providing education for disadvantaged children; ensuring community involvement; and the need to include gender and poverty in anti-trafficking initiatives.

3.1. Implications of unclear definitions of what is considered child trafficking

Based on children's narratives, I contemplated, similar to Amin (1994), whether the trafficking journey some of the children engaged in was all bad. We have to be careful ascribing tags such as bad, injurious, and dehumanising to whatever it is we conceive as trafficking. From Dougnon's (2011) study referred to earlier in my dissertation, we see some level of confusion from the local language about what trafficking means. Trafficking, to parents, means selling their children, an activity in which parents insist they do not engage. Rather, parents confirm encouraging their children's decision to engage in an age-old practice of migration for socialisation and not trafficking. Do we see the same trend in my research? In several narratives, children acknowledge moving away from home to engage in practices that elevate their socio-economic and/or educational situation. There is indication of benefits achieved in several ways - help, assistance, getting educated, learning a trade — all geared towards their future. I acknowledge also that in the course of the journey some children are exploited, abused, dehumanised and maltreated; and in other instances, children found themselves in homes where they are appreciated and treated as human beings.

A large number of the children see it as socialisation where they have learned to function as better adults and have a better understanding of people they would never have met had they remained at home. Only in extreme cases of

victimisation and exploitation do children blame their parents for spearheading their departure from home or their traffickers for their negative experiences with trafficking.

What then is the practice? Is it trafficking or migration? I started the research with my conceptual definition of migration that builds from the African connotation of contractual apprenticeship usually based on kinship relationships; children are made to 'serve a master or mistress' for a specified number of years, after which they are released and provided with funds to begin their own businesses. This is more apparent in the case of Obi and Afam. This is probably what several children, like 17-year-old Sunday from Togo, expected but things went awry and turned out to be exploitative trafficking or 'slavery' as some of the children referred to their period of work. It appears that several children leave home intending to work as apprentices but ended up exploited.

Could it also be fostering by a different name, based on the degree of exploitation of children like 8-year-old Chidi, 12-year-old Sandra, 13-year-old Ozioma and Ezinna (and three other girls) sent for educational fostering to a medical doctor who exploited them sexually?

Building further on the inhibiting constraints of definitions, Sanghera (2005) questions the efficiency of international definitions of 'children' in the African setting and how useful it is to label all children under 18 years old who migrated for work victims of trafficking (VOT). While the exploitation of children for work in cocoa plantations and so on is an infringement on the fundamental human rights of children, Sanghera reported that some trafficked children considered themselves old enough to migrate for work. Some of these children also attested that their exploitation was tolerable in comparison with the new opportunities presented by their trafficking. Agbu (2009) also argues that there is a lot of detachment in mainstream literature disseminated by mostly international organisations and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). They fail to shed light on the African situation, spurring children to opt for exploitative work that cannot be separated from the economic declines and social relation existing at the national and international levels. I contend that during my field research and analysis of collected data, I found the range of trafficking activities covered within each concept a major dilemma even for discussions on data derived from participating children.

3.2. Misconceptions - the practice of child fostering and cultural or regional tones

I would like to clear some misconceptions that may appear in my discussion on child trafficking and exploitation in the area of policy making. In my writing, I have not condemned the practice of child fostering. This is a practice that has always existed in the African continent. In several parts of this thesis, I have commended the practice for its role in the socialisation and opening of pathways to a better future for several children. I also created room for better understanding of the practice within the private world of my family situation and the fostering of relatives. I emphasised the fact that I grew up in a home where my parents were firm believers in that practice, the way it should be practiced, not the bastardised version that exists in so many parts of West Africa today. If a fostered child is well cared for, I would be the last person to ask for the removal of that child from a place they find peace and a

sense of belonging, as in the case of the boys Paul and Abraham. In line with this position, NAPTIP does not remove children from homes (especially those of close relatives) where it is apparent that they are cared for.

3.3. Exploring the education-child trafficking link in policy making

A key solution for eradicating child trafficking is investing in child-focussed programmes. The existing child-focussed programme in Nigeria is the Universal Basic Education programme (UBE), which is meant to enforce the right to free education for all children. But relevant educational ministries do not enforce these laws. Most states of the federation complain of inadequate funds to implement the free education programme in their states. Resources are also inadequate to ensure that all children are off the streets and in classrooms during school hours. The present situation where teachers are absent from schools because their salaries are unpaid and they need to seek alternative means of survival does not encourage poor parents to invest in education in preference to work for their children. Seeing the importance several children in my study attached to educational attainment, it is hoped that Government would make an effort to provide free, high quality education to all children attending public schools in all states of the federation. Seeing the difficulties children are experiencing accessing basic education, it may be necessary to ensure that the basic items creating barriers to school attendance are provided for children (ex. books, school and games uniforms). Ewelukwa (2005) adds that there should be laws imposed on guardians, parents and relatives who withdraw children from school or make them late to school. Apart from compulsory education the law on retaining children in school should be stretched to include punishing teachers who disrupt children's school attendance by, as some of the children in my study mentioned, sending them out of class to buy their groceries, cook, sweep and help out in their homes.

3.4. Children and the national budget

Policy makers in West African countries need not stretch their minds too far to understand why child trafficking persists. A lot of studies have blamed trafficking on poverty. While this has been an accepted platform for looking at the problem for more than two decades, what has been done by policy makers to reduce poverty in families? In Nigeria, for instance, where about 70% of the population live below the poverty line, there is a wide margin between the rich and the poor. The implication is that a large percentage of the population is hungry and hunger triggers desperation. The Federal Government is the largest employer of labour in Nigeria, a situation that is beset with occasional problems of delayed payment of salaries due to budgetary constraints. When these delays persist for several months, indigent parents are bound to seek alternative means of survival. Some parents could send their children to hawk wares on the streets and when money derived from this is inadequate, they fall prey to promises of better education and earning power for their children in distant towns or foreign lands.

Such problems of trafficking in children could be reduced by ensuring that low-income earners are assured of timely payment of their salaries. This will prevent parents from feeling inadequate about providing for their children and less likely to subject both themselves and their children to unwholesome means to escape starvation

Policy makers can reduce the resort to the desperate practices of selling and exploiting innocent children by reducing widespread poverty and giving all Nigerian children, regardless of gender, access to free basic and quality

education. In other words, the areas of poverty and gender shall be looked into as reinforcement for Nigeria's anti-child trafficking efforts; and prevention should move beyond creating awareness of child trafficking to empowerment of susceptible victims or families with effective and sustainable poverty eradication programmes. Even more, there should be a change in budgetary allocations across African countries. In Nigeria, for instance, I followed the sequence leading to the invitation of then Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Sanusi Lamido Sanusi to appear before four committees of the Senate to answer to portions of his public lecture where he expressed his views, backed by data from the Office of Budgets, that about:

... 25 percent of the overhead of the Federal Government goes to the National Assembly... Total government overhead is [N536Billion]. Total overhead of the National Assembly is N136,259,768,112, which is exactly 25.1 percent of Federal Government overhead. The overhead of the National Assembly as a percentage of the Federal Government budget in 2009 was 19.87 and in 2008 was 14.19. . . (Ajani, Agande & Binniyat, 2010)

With the assumption of power by Nigeria's 5th democratically elected President, Muhammadu Buhari, a major debate across the country is the huge salaries and benefits earned by Nigerian legislators. I observed that a governor and his deputy from Northern Nigeria have voluntarily agreed to accept only half of their official salaries. The President, Muhammadu Buhari and his Vice President have also announced the decision to take only 50percent of their annual earnings (Adetayo, 2015). But what difference does this salary cut make in a country with legislators, governors, commissioners and ministers selected to represent 36 States of the federation? There should be a budget reversal to ensure that a sizeable portion of the annual budget is assigned to addressing the social, economic rights of millions of Nigerian (West African too) children.

3.5. Coordination of government agencies for effective child protection

Despite the commendable efforts made by Nigeria in eliminating trafficking, government should increase efforts to prosecute and convict trafficking offenders. The penalty for trafficking is considered too mild (Oluwabiyi, 2015) to make traffickers forego the huge benefits from partaking in the illicit practice. Another way of tackling the judicial issue is to create special trafficking training for judges. That way, judges will have better knowledge of the nature of trafficking, its effects on victims and their families, and the problem of adjustment after trafficking. Armed with such training, judges will be unlikely to confuse trafficking with smuggling or migration and be better informed to impose sentences based on the gravity of each trafficking case, rather than making each trafficking case seem related to the other.

Also, related to effective legislation is the problem of corruption, which government and policy makers should tackle in reducing child trafficking in Nigeria. Even when policies are in place, corruption makes it easy for trafficking to persist in the country. Government agencies have to deliberate on the key areas that make government officials fall prey to the enticement of traffickers. If corrupt government officials working in immigration and the armed forces are identified and apprehended, reducing child trafficking could become a possibility.

NAPTIP's duties to trafficked children cannot be fulfilled in isolation. For instance, the public enlightenment unit performs the sensitisation duties of the agency. I question how sensitisation about child trafficking is effected in

areas that have high records of susceptibility to trafficking and, if sensitisation is carried out in these areas, why do such low levels of awareness of the dangers of engaging in trafficking exist in sending communities (Nwogu, 2014)? Policymaking is aided with clarity of the role of specific agencies for addressing the welfare of children. NAPTIP has to work with other arms of government, ministries and the legislature to ensure for instance that: interventions and policies targeted at trafficked children are evidence-based, that there are multiple levels for reporting cases of suspected trafficked persons or traffickers (especially when the public does not have access to NAPTIP hotlines), that there is effective border control and coordination of re-integration programmes for trafficked persons across diverse government agencies among others. At the moment, there appears to be a conflict or repetition of roles and, in many cases, for example, people with good intentions who would like to report cases of child maltreatment do not know where to go. Even law enforcement agents are not properly sensitised to assist in this area. To Emelukwa (2005), the lack of coordination between government agencies prevents an all-inclusive method for protecting the interests of affected children.

During my field research, I had reason to position NAPTIP as a shy agency in terms of publicity about its role in curtailing child trafficking in Nigeria and the West African region. Prior to my field research, I had done a lot of reading on the activities of the agency. On getting involved in my field research, I encountered an agency that did a lot to address the trafficking of persons — work of which the populace remains unaware. To create more awareness for the agency, the Third International Law Conference on Women and Children, 2013, held in Lagos State, Nigeria, was strictly on the trafficking of women and children. NAPTIP was offered two panels: in the first, it engaged in enlightening the public (a multidisciplinary audience comprising: legal practitioners, researchers, representatives of civil society, personnel from development agencies, medical profession, students and more) on its duties; and in the second, it invited the public to tell NAPTIP what they expected of it. I found the panels an enriching platform for a large number of Nigerians that were unaware that the agency even existed.

3.5.1. NAPTIP and effective child protection

NAPTIP has started the process of directing that the assets of convicted traffickers were confiscated and lodged in an account for victims of trafficking. Efforts should be made to ensure that victims of trafficking are compensated by their apprehended traffickers for the trauma and discomfort they were exposed to during the trafficking transaction.

While writing the concluding part of my dissertation, recent information from NAPTIP reveal that, prior to leaving office, Nigeria's 4th democratically elected President, Goodluck Jonathan, approved the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act on March 26, 2015. Some of the crucial amendments to the Act, which I do not consider much of an improvement on the 2005 amendment, are presented below:

- Criminalising the removal of organs in line with the Palermo Protocol, which has been ratified by Nigeria.
- Restructuring of the Governing Board of the Agency to include relevant government agencies such as the Federal Ministries of Justice, Women Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Immigration Service and National Intelligence Agency. It also made provision for the

inclusion of civil societies organisations. This is to ensure a comprehensive and strategic policy response in the national anti-trafficking efforts.

- Change in the nomenclature of the Chief Executive of the Agency from Executive Secretary to Director General. This is to reflect the command and control structure of the Agency as a Law Enforcement Agency.
- Prohibition of the employment of a child below the age of 12 years as a domestic help, while the exploitation of a child under the age 18 years who is employed as a domestic help is also prohibited.
- Stiffer punishment for aggravated circumstances like defilement of a child (NAPTIP Press Release, 2015)

Apart from the inclusion of the exploitation of persons for organ harvesting, which was stipulated in the Palermo Protocol, the new Act does not recognise and so cannot criminalise the broad range of exploitative practices leaving children vulnerable to trafficking (such as teenage pregnancy, witchcraft accusation, early girl-child marriage). Moreover, it is unclear what benefits positioning NAPTIP as a law enforcement agency has for addressing trafficking in Nigeria. I observed during my field research that the positioning of the agency as a law enforcement agency constituted a major problem for child victims of trafficking. The notion of dealing with and having encounters with people that acted in a military-like manner posed a lot of fear for children, which staff of the agency probably did not notice or noticed but chose to ignore or exploit. It is also left to the agency to explain to the Nigerian populace how it intends to perform its role in a manner that depicts it as a law enforcement agency that recognises and ensures that the fundamental rights of children removed from trafficking are upheld in performing its duties.

The issue of shelters is an unending problem in child trafficking discourse. NAPTIP is said to have nine shelters in nine Nigerian states with the Lagos State shelter having the largest capacity for victim care, however more funds need to be allocated to ensure that victims are adequately cared for while they are in NAPTIP shelters. NAPTIP should actually be commended for managing its shelters within budgetary constraints but, even then, enhancing external collaborative efforts could work in the best interest of trafficked persons in the shelter. The narratives of some of the children in my study who were brave enough to express themselves (hoping that by doing so, better services will be provided for future child residents), can promote a better understanding of the pain that children experience when those who should care for them do not use the right words (tone, language or mode of expression) or approach to explain or convey simple tasks or requirements to them.

At the moment, it is my view that further training is needed for shelter staff (especially incoming counsellors) on handling and dealing with children coping with diverse trafficking situations. Such training should dwell on empathy, language, care, support and understanding of counselling, the relevance and benefits of group therapy. Group therapy is a useful activity that can enhance the coping capacity of affected children, but it is one that I did not see explored for the benefit of children at the shelter. I saw several broken children (such as the seven children sexually exploited by the medical doctor) leave the shelter for homes that are ill-equipped to deal with the trauma that they went through. A shelter equipped with the right professionals would have assisted this set of children through the process of unfolding, acceptance and coping.

Another issue with shelter care is exploring if children and adults should be kept in the same or separate shelters. Some children, like 14-year-old Bimbo, enumerated the lessons they will be taking away for the future based on their interaction with older trafficked persons. Notwithstanding, the undocumented and private problems I handled, which were shared by children, and building from their interaction with older trafficked persons during my stay at the shelter — all these inform my recommendation that NAPTIP explore the possibility of having separate shelters for children.

There is a relative consensus that closed shelters are relevant for protecting children who experienced exploitative and risky forms of trafficking that remain likely to endanger their lives and that of family members. However, NAPTIP should focus on looking into providing adequate services to children that are liable to remain in these closed shelters for extended periods. Gallagher & Pearson (2010) report that trafficked young persons are more likely to be detained in shelters and endure extended residency than older trafficked persons. I also observed that children facing extended residency are likely to remain in shelters without attending school. Shelters should also be provided with functional recreational facilities that allow children an avenue to engage in leisure activities that put their trafficking problems on hold for reasonable number of hours each day. When children are left to just sit around the shelter without functional vocational or recreational facilities, there could be eminent dangers to their mental and emotional wellbeing. Children without adequate vocational or recreational activities may also be drawn to options that include shelter-breaks (running away), which can be considered an indictment on the competence of the staff (security staff especially) in whose care they were placed.

Moreover, the judicial process affected the extended stay of children at the shelter. During my field research, I attended several court sessions for children who participated in my study that were adjourned because the defendant did not show up or sought new counsel who had to be given time to become familiar with the case. Such delay tactics have often caused children and their families to become uninterested with prosecuting traffickers, preferring to move on with their lives. One of the results of the NAPTIP panels at the aforementioned 2013 conference on women and children was the suggestion by conference participants (mostly legal practitioners) for Special Courts to try trafficking offences (not contained in the NAPTIP amendment). Considering the problems in Nigerian courtrooms, I would advocate that a special court be created for trying human trafficking suspects and offenders. Such special courts, if created, would provide privacy for child victims and ease the congestion of trafficking cases in Nigerian courts. Legal professionals always maintain that justice delayed is justice denied. If trafficking offenders are speedily brought to justice it would serve as a deterrent to trafficking.

3.6. Need for gender-based policy making

Considering the large number of children involved in trafficking, it is expedient to seriously isolate and address the triggers with closer attention to the voiced experiences of survivors. At the moment, I am uncertain about NAPTIP's source of data informing its choice of interventions for addressing the plight of children, especially the contested 'rescue' approach, and how this is expected to work within an agency that is now officially fashioned as a law enforcement agency. There is also the long-term effect of inadequate or inefficient policymaking as it relates to the

girl child. Emelukwa (2005) attests to the psychological and economic effects of discrimination that manifest in low self-esteem and future involvement in abusive relationships.

Apart from the foregone, Dottridge (2002) pointed out that policymakers in West African countries, especially, should show more commitment to actions that keep female children in school rather than the current practice of relegating issues relating to female children to the relevant ministries handling women and children's issues. Child trafficking, especially in relation to the girl child, has become an issue that should also be addressed by the Ministries of Labour and Education. Clearly, public programmes to end child trafficking for exploitative purposes (including work) will have more impact when they are backed by insightful research on factors that lead children to work, the reasons why parents send their children to work, the gender of children likely to be sent to work from households and the sex of children preferred for work in urban and rural settings in not only Nigeria but also in other African countries. As Milivojenic (2009) points out, different trafficking-related practices require different treatments for curtailing their prevalence. And as Bastia (2006) emphasised, women and the girl-child will never benefit from policies that are not gender-aware and that do not reflect the influence of gender relations on prevalence of any knotty social problem. Without these details, public programmes, when they are present, will persistently hit the wrong target and score low at reducing child trafficking.

3.7. Information dissemination and policy making on child trafficking

Preventing child trafficking is not a one-step process that ends with legislation and a vigilant anti-trafficking taskforce. Preventing child trafficking should involve a nation-wide intervention process that should be open to constant monitoring and evaluation to address the weak and strong points of the campaign. Moreover, eradicating child trafficking requires a massive countrywide education campaign. Raising awareness about child trafficking should not be restricted to the public; it should involve the police, social workers and immigration officers, among others. All these service providers should be properly equipped to detect traffickers and their victims and be aware of relevant services to provide and actions to take to handle desperate situations as they occur.

4. Limitations of the study and direction of future research

Though useful information was generated from my research, a major limitation was the inability to visit NAPTIP shelters in the Northern zones of Sokoto and Kano. The inability to visit these zones was due to ongoing religious or terrorist (Boko Haram) attacks in the Northern zone. It is likely that a richer knowledge of the types of child trafficking and the experiences of trafficked children would have been yielded with research that included NAPTIP shelters in these zones.

Based on my exploratory study of trafficked children at the NAPTIP shelter in 2010, I adopted and tested a questionnaire for the quantitative part of my expected mixed method research. I noticed, however, that children had an unpredictable residency period at the shelter, which made it difficult to arrange proper scheduling and application of quantitative research tools in particular. The level of trauma associated with the trafficking experiences of each participating child was also a limiting factor for determining to what degree they could be involved in the study. The

quantitative tool also relied on a relatively high educational or literacy level for the participating child, something that was not always the case. For these reasons, the quantitative aspect of my study was dropped and I elected to use a mix of qualitative data, instead, for the duration of the research. The inability to obtain quantitative measures of children's views is, for someone such as myself who has always operated within a quantitative research framework, a major limitation but not one that detracts from the richness of data derived when children are allowed to express their voice in research.

5. Implications of the study to social work practice

Since the mid-1980s, social workers have promoted the idea of ethnic-sensitive practices that transcend race. However, this approach should move towards addressing systemic and institutionalised oppression (Abrams & Molo, 2009). The issue of child trafficking should not be seen as simply a problem for developing countries that supply the children. It should be understood as a global problem affecting developed and developing countries alike. Everyone should be implicated in the trafficking of children.

The current frameworks for addressing child trafficking should be flexible enough to accommodate the input of trafficked children in shaping their own future, while social workers with their privileged role as professionals working with marginalised sectors should contribute to these best practices by reporting new lessons in their interaction with trafficked persons that will shape the direction of policies, interventions and research on child trafficking. Salett (2006) is of the view that social workers are crucial in identifying trafficked children, making trafficked children aware of their rights or services they can access in their locality (such as health or legal), asking the right questions that will provide insight into the type of exploitation trafficked children are subjected to and the trauma associated with it, and making referrals to social service and advocacy groups that aid trafficked children in varying ways.

My dissertation supports the need for social workers to be more involved in discussions on child trafficking. Considering the growing number of Nigerian universities offering bachelors and graduate programmes in social work, it was disheartening that NAPTIP had barely a handful of professional social workers working in the crucial unit that handles counselling and rehabilitation for children removed from trafficking. While it is commendable that the agency reaches out to the Department of Social Work, University of Ibadan, for social work-related training for staff of the counselling and rehabilitation unit, still more should be done to increase the visibility of social workers in providing care to children in anti-trafficking agencies.

6. Implications of the study to future research

Further, most academic literature in the field of child trafficking is contributed by researchers from economics, international development, legal studies and anthropology. The absence of publications by social workers makes it appear as if the problem does not exist and should not form an essential focus of social work advocacy and practice. The absence is more glaring in developing countries like Nigeria where organisations addressing trafficking

are devoid of social workers and services for trafficked children are provided by nurses, psychiatrist and counsellors. As social workers, we should be engaged in questioning the development discourse which creates new subalterns by preventing mediums for knowing, viewing, understanding, working with, and relating with the world of trafficked children. These thoughts set me wondering if:

1. Is there a difference between the experiences with authority for children removed from trafficking and housed in NGO and government owned shelters?
2. If children are provided with clearly stated options (such as, formal education, skill acquisition, job options) to returning home on removal from trafficking, what is the likelihood of acceptance across male and female children removed from trafficking?
3. What is the likelihood that parents whose children accused of instigating their trafficking for prostitution will collaborate their children's stories?

Essentially, tackling the problem of exploitation of Africa's children requires intensive research and listening to multiple voices: children, parents, endemic communities, field workers and policy makers. Within the current study that focussed solely on data derived from affected children, children's narratives resonate with the following pointers that will guide future research into the problem of child trafficking:

- Children's involvement in trafficking and perception of 'home' is very complex
- The African child's perception of 'home' is different from the western context
- Based on some children's narratives, children will not deny that 'Home' is a place where poverty exists and parents are without jobs; yet the same children defend their parent's struggle to get the household out of poverty
- Children defend their own agency in contributing to the struggle to get out of poverty, be educated and become something in life
- With reference to the literature and listening to children's narratives, one wonders, is the trend 'trafficking' or 'migration'; 'trafficking' or 'fostering'; 'trafficking' or 'smuggling'; 'trafficking' or 'slavery'; 'trafficking' or 'kidnapping'?

Undoubtedly, my doctoral research has dwelt on understanding child trafficking through the unexplored world of children. My research approach has also demonstrated:

- The need for alternative theoretical approaches for addressing child trafficking in West Africa;
- The innovative use of a mix of art based methodological approaches for eliciting responses from children removed from traumatic trafficking in West Africa;
- The importance of listening to children's voice to further identify a wider range of triggers of trafficking;
- The likelihood that children involved in trafficking would respond to researchers spending longer residency periods rather than those children perceived as walking in and out of their lives for data gathering purposes.

It has to be emphasised that my research does not advocate for a lack of parental input in children's lives; it reinforces this input. However, since child trafficking is all about children and their experiences of the activity,

affected children should be allowed to express their thoughts on the issue with the hope of impacting on policy changes and other children's lives who may be susceptible to trafficking in the future.

7. Contribution to disseminating new knowledge on child trafficking

It is intended that findings from the research will be disseminated to different audiences (academic, practice, policy) through articles written in peer-reviewed Journals and book chapters on related themes, which I am personally well-placed to do. I will also make presentations at conferences and workshops that offer opportunities to share my findings and obtain feedback from professionals working in similar fields (such as human trafficking, migration, displacement, violence against women and children). Currently, I contribute articles to one of Nigeria's foremost newspapers, *THIS DAY Newspaper*, and it is my intention to use that medium to disseminate my findings and raise awareness of the plight of trafficked children in Nigeria and West Africa.

I will also send a copy of my dissertation to NAPTIP with the hope that my research findings will assist the agency in running their shelters and providing better services to 'rescued' children. Essentially, it is crucial to keep child trafficking and interventions for curtailing its occurrence constantly in the minds of people across Africa. I also initiated the annual International Conference on Women and Children (see conference website: www.conference-on-women-and-children.com) with the 2013 theme focussed on: *"Women and Children as New Tools of Trade in the 21st Century: Exploring Policy, Research, Community and Legal Frameworks for addressing Human Trafficking"*; and the current 2015 theme on: *Global Approaches to Violence against Women and Children: Identifying Triggers, Remedies and Policy Frameworks*. I also plan to establish anti-trafficking clubs in Nigerian schools that will motivate young people to support the drive against the exploitation of their peers. Finally, building on the theme of the 2015 conference, I have also begun a call for book chapters from African researchers working on trafficking and/or violence to women and children. Such documentation of important academic research with exploited children will provide better understanding of the problem from an African perspective.

8. Conclusion

First, I ask if the colonial era is ended or still ongoing. My literature search prior to undertaking my field research was haunted by the limited relevance of African scholarship in addressing a largely African problem. I understand that when African children are dispatched for international trafficking, they are likely to leave the shores of Africa to pose dilemmas in destination countries. But it makes sense that there is a molecule of opportunity for African researchers to have their voices heard in proffering their lens for understanding the foundation of the problem. I see a trend where situations or interventions for addressing a social problem are built on limited strategic research because the root of the problem of child trafficking is still unclear.

It appears that the strategic research required for identifying the root of the problem and assist in finding solutions or formulating appropriate policies to curtail child trafficking in Nigeria and West Africa are currently absent. Bastia (2006) attributes the absence to the fact that children's trafficking may have been organised by community-based,

family-related informal networks, which should be the focus of further research. What I understand from Bastia's work is that we should not see the migration and trafficking of children for work as an individual activity but one that involves social networks that assist individuals in reaching their destinations; and we can only have better knowledge of these social networks by working with trafficked children. Moreover, when stories about how people experience oppression is narrated by those who live these experiences, researchers and policy makers are better armed to initiate and guide social change (Freire, 1970). On a similar note, Adesina (2009) adds that:

...while policy learning from other parts of the world is important, more important is policy learning from within Africa itself; not only in getting the attention of policy makers, but in understanding that development is fundamentally about engaging with the local and learning to use what one has, to achieve what one wants (p. 2).

In the final analysis, we are likely to end up where we started. Should we listen more to the voices of children in addressing a social problem affecting them or should we persist in adopting western policy frameworks to address child trafficking in Africa?

Second, while undertaking my dissertation, I have expressed dissatisfaction for dependence on the West for interventions to address Africa's problem with child trafficking in the 21st century. But this dependence on the West provided room to carry out my research. I sought a platform to present an African researcher's voice in addressing the situation of child trafficking in West Africa, but the African voice was difficult to express for reasons similar to the methodological and funding challenges faced by other African researchers. My anticipated 8-month research ran into almost a year and I would probably never have accessed funding for the envisaged comprehensive structure without my own dependence on an agency in the West, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) that supported my research. I question the lack of importance in government budget allocations to issues dealing with the wellbeing of children on the African continent because, as Andvig, Canagarajah & Kielland (2001) emphasise:

African child [trafficking] is an African problem, and the Africans themselves should take responsibility for developing effective and sustainable strategies to eradicate its harmful aspects. The World Bank and other international bi- and multi-laterals should consequently support the good local forces that strive to improve the welfare of African children (p. 31).

Africa's children are Africa's future, so there is an intense need to formulate effective strategies for enhancing their wellbeing with policies, programmes and interventions that are facilitated by evidence-based research into social problems affecting them.

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Appendix 1: Status of African Countries for the Ratification of the UN Protocol

	Participant	Signature	Ratification, Acceptance(A), Approval(AA), Accession(a), Succession(d)
1	Algeria	6 Jun 2001	9 Mar 2004
2	Benin	13 Dec 2000	30 Aug 2004
3	Botswana	10 Apr 2002	29 Aug 2002
4	Burkina Faso	15 Dec 2000	15 May 2002
5	Burundi	14 Dec 2000	
6	Cameroon	13 Dec 2000	6 Feb 2006
7	Cape Verde	13 Dec 2000	15 Jul 2004
8	Central African Republic		6 Oct 2006 a
9	Congo	14 Dec 2000	
10	Democratic Republic of the Congo		28 Oct 2005 a
11	Djibouti		20 Apr 2005 a
12	Egypt	1 May 2002	5 Mar 2004
13	Equatorial Guinea	14 Dec 2000	7 Feb 2003
14	Gambia	14 Dec 2000	5 May 2003
15	Guinea		9 Nov 2004 a
16	Guinea-Bissau	14 Dec 2000	10 Sep 2007
17	Kenya		5 Jan 2005 a
18	Lesotho	14 Dec 2000	24 Sep 2003
19	Liberia		22 Sep 2004 a
20	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	13 Nov 2001	24 Sep 2004
21	Madagascar	14 Dec 2000	15 Sep 2005
22	Malawi		17 Mar 2005 a
23	Mali	15 Dec 2000	12 Apr 2002
24	Mauritania		22 Jul 2005 a
25	Mauritius		24 Sep 2003 a
26	Mozambique	15 Dec 2000	20 Sep 2006
27	Namibia	13 Dec 2000	16 Aug 2002
28	Niger	21 Aug 2001	30 Sep 2004
29	Nigeria	13 Dec 2000	28 Jun 2001
30	Rwanda	14 Dec 2000	26 Sep 2003
31	Sao Tome and Principe		23 Aug 2006 a
32	Senegal	13 Dec 2000	27 Oct 2003
33	Seychelles	22 Jul 2002	22 Jun 2004
34	Sierra Leone	27 Nov 2001	
35	South Africa	14 Dec 2000	20 Feb 2004
36	Swaziland	8 Jan 2001	
37	Togo	12 Dec 2000	
38	Tunisia	13 Dec 2000	14 Jul 2003
39	Uganda	12 Dec 2000	
40	United Republic of Tanzania	13 Dec 2000	24 May 2006
41	Zambia		24 Apr 2005 a

Source: UNITED NATION (2011). UNITED NATIONS TREAT COLLECTION. Retrieved December 10, 2011, from http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_

Appendix 2: My Interview Guide for Children

Interview sessions with children will last between 30 minutes to one hour and children are free to end the interview at any point.

My Pilot study and insight to my selected style of interview questions or discussions

Based on my pilot study in Nigeria in 2010, I observed how challenging it can be applying strict interview questions / guide to trafficked children even when the intent is to collect their stories in a narrative style. Children have an unpredictable style that makes it necessary to have an interview guide with many questions that keeps you on track when a child moves from attending to an idea you did not expect to another that is at the bottom of your interview guide. For instance I observed that the question, “can you tell me about yourself?” may elicit just one sentence from one child; while eliciting an entire narrative from the second child.

Drawing will be incorporated in the face-to-face discussions with each participating child, during the interview, the child will be provided with drawing materials: paper and colourful pens. Each child will also be asked to explain the people in their drawings, how they relate to them and the story behind their drawing. The interview questions are structured in a way that builds children’s stories, discussions and drawings to depict different stages in children’s trafficking experiences.

OPENING QUESTIONS

Child History

- Can you tell me about yourself?
- How many people are in your household?
- Or how many siblings do you have?
- What is your position in the family?
- Where does your father work? (Or what type of job does your father do?)
- Where does your mother work?
- Do you attend school?
- If yes, in what class are you?
- If no, when were you last enrolled in school?
- Do you know why you are out of school?
- Do your siblings attend school?

Decisions about participation in trafficking

- Can you tell me how the decision was taken to send you away from home?
- Who was the primary decision maker about your involvement in trafficking?
- Were other people involved in this decision making?
- Did you contribute to this decision making?
- Was your contribution considered important in making final decisions about your involvement in trafficking?
- Were you familiar with the person taking you away from home before your departure?
- Were there formal arrangements made between your family and the person taking you away from home before your departure?
- Was a written arrangement made and how many people were involved in this?

INTERMEDIATE QUESTIONS

Child and trafficking

- Tell me a story about your typical day at home with your family?
- Were you happy at home?
- Did you miss home when you left to participate in trafficking?
- Tell me a story about a typical day during trafficking?
- Who were you living with and what were you doing?
- Were you working or going to school; or were you doing both?
- Were you happy or unhappy in your new location?
- Did you receive any monetary compensation in your new location?
- Were you happy with the arrangement?
- Why were you taken away from this new location?
- How did you feel when you were taken away?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

Child and agency care

- When did you come to the NAPTIP shelter?
- Do you understand why you are in the NAPTIP shelter?
- Who explained the reason to you?
- Did you understand and accept the explanation given by the person?
- If you understand why you are in the NAPTIP shelter, do you accept the reason given for taking you away from where you were before now?
- How have agency workers treated you since your arrival; or what do you like about your stay in the NAPTIP shelter?
- Will you rather remain with the agency or return home?
- Has your stay in the shelter changed your decision about participating or not participating in trafficking in future?

Attitude to trafficking

- What do you think about the participation of children in trafficking?
- Do you think that children are involved in trafficking because they want to or for some other reason(s)?
- Do you think that government should put an end to child trafficking?
- What do you think government should do for children involved in trafficking?
- Will you be happy if government does those things?

Appendix 3: Guide for Focus Group Discussions with Children

Focus Group sessions with children will last from 30 minutes to one hour and children are free to end the discussion at any point. I will have a focus group discussion guide, however children are expected to instigate the discussion questions themselves. My role is to moderate the discussion or exchanges between participating children and create a comfortable atmosphere for the exchanges to occur.

My Pilot study and insight to my selected style of focus group discussion

From previous interactions (during the pilot study), I would sit around with children taking snacks and having an idle chat. During this activity I will get them to think about events that are unrelated to the NAPTIP shelter and then suddenly bring children back to the present by asking them to reflect on their presence at the NAPTIP shelter. In the course of these discussions, I find children taking the group discussion to different aspects of their lives without me instigating the questions. I find that it works that way, because children feel in control of their own lives and the direction of discussions about it. It also reduces the power dynamics that would have been at play if I had completely instigated the focus group discussions. This type of exchange is only possible when the researcher has spent some time interacting and building rapport with children. Ultimately the discussion comes back to me, because children want to talk about my presence in the NAPTIP shelter and what I intend doing for and with them (they want the answers to come directly from me).

When a child introduces discussion areas that are likely to make other children uncomfortable I would respectfully stop children from addressing that discussion. I would also take the child that introduced that line of discussion outside for a different chat at a later period (to make this less obvious to other children). Building on my pilot study, I have come to understand that when a child introduces sensitive discussion topics, it is a clear indication that the child needs someone to discuss their concerns surrounding that topic or issue.

General Instructions:

The children and I will get together to form a circle.

Through our impromptu discussions, we will decide on mutually agreeable discussion topics.

Our interaction during this session will be based on dialogue with group members

Since drawing will be incorporated in the focus group discussions with children, children will be provided drawing materials: paper and colourful pens. Each child will also be asked to explain the people in their drawings, how they relate to them and the story behind their drawing.

DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS

Opening

1. What does trafficking mean to you?

Intermediate

2. What leads to trafficking?
3. What helps children get out of trafficking?

Closing - NAPTIP

4. What is it like after trafficking?
5. What has your experience being at the NAPTIP shelter?
6. What will you really need or want now?
7. Do you think that government can help meet this need?

Appendix 4: Drawing Guide for Children

Drawing is intended as part of both the focus groups discussions and interview sessions for all child participants. However, it is likely that some children may select to participate in only drawing activities because they exhibit a preference for drawing rather than speaking about their trafficking experiences.

Drawing sessions with children will last between 30 minutes to one hour and children are free to end the session at any point. Children will be provided drawing materials: paper and colourful pens. Children are allowed to use the materials in ways they consider comfortable enough to express their stories.

OPENING DRAWING

1. Tell me about your family?
2. How many people are in your family?
3. What is your position in the family?
4. Where does your father work?
5. Where does your mother work?

GENERAL INSTRUCTION: Children will be asked to explain the people in their drawings, how they relate to them and the story behind their drawing.

INTERMEDIATE DRAWING

1. Why did you leave home?
2. What were you doing when you left home?
3. Who took care of you when you left home?
4. Were you happy when you left home?

GENERAL INSTRUCTION: Children will be asked to explain the people in their drawings, how they relate to them and the story behind their drawing.

CLOSING DRAWING

1. How do you feel at the NAPTIP shelter?
2. Can you draw a picture of where you will like to be now?

GENERAL INSTRUCTION: Children will be asked to explain the people in their drawings, how they relate to them and the story behind their drawing.

Appendix 5: My Interview Guide for NAPTIP workers and Partner NGOs

Interview sessions with adult participants will last between 30 minutes to one hour and respondents are free to end the interview at any point.

WORK EXPERIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD TRAFFICKING

- Can you tell me about yourself and trends leading to your current position at NAPTIP?
- Based on your work experience and discussion with families, what reasons do parents give about trafficking their children?
- Have parents ever told you something that can be done to prevent their underage children from engaging in trafficking?
- From your own perspective, why do you think a lot of child trafficking occurs in Nigeria and Africa?

DEPARTMENT AND ROLE IN ADDRESSING CHILD TRAFFICKING

- What role does your department play in addressing child trafficking in Nigeria?
- How many people are involved in implementing department functions?
How are your activities implemented?
- Do you liaise with other organisations?
- Do you have direct contact with affected children and their families?

NAPTIP INTERVENTIONS AND REMOVING CHILDREN FROM TRAFFICKING

- What are the major forms of child trafficking addressed by NAPTIP?
- Why is the focus on these forms?
- Who should be appropriate stakeholders in designing effective interventions aimed at reducing child trafficking in Nigeria?
- Does NAPTIP interact or dialogue with these stakeholders before deciding on approaches for addressing child trafficking?
- Do you agree with your agency's mandate of removing children from trafficking whether children desire it or not?
- How was this approach for addressing trafficking adopted in Nigeria?
- Has the approach been effective in addressing the problem in Nigeria?
- Has the approach met with a lot of resistance or support from affected children and their parents?
- How receptive are children to the short stay in agency care?
- After children are removed from trafficking where does NAPTIP's role end?
- Are there attempts to prevent children reunited with their families from returning to trafficking?
- If yes, how is this done? Are children receptive to this effort?

PERCEPTION OF STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING CHILD TRAFFICKING

- Do you feel marginalised in deliberations on policies for protecting children at risk of exploitation?
- Do you feel that interventions (including those adopted by your agency) for preventing child trafficking reflect the nature of the problem in Nigeria?
- Do you feel that adequate resources are channelled into ensuring that children are protected from trafficking?
- Do you feel that the Nigerian government encourages you with funds to undertake proper research into viable solutions for eradicating child trafficking?

Appendix 6: Certificate from the McGill Ethics Review Board



Research Ethics Board Office
James Administration Bldg.
845 Sherbrooke Street West, Rm 429
Montreal, QC H3A 0G4

Tel: (514) 398-6831
Fax: (514) 398-4644
Website: www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/human/

Research Ethics Board III **Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans**

REB File #: 71-0613

Project Title: Understanding child trafficking from the point of view of trafficked children: the case of rescued children in Nigeria

Principal Investigator: Ifeyinwa Mbakogu

Department: Social Work

Status: Ph.D. student

Supervisor: Prof. Jill Hanley

Approval Period: July 4, 2013–July 3, 2014

The REB-III reviewed and approved this project by full review in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct For Research Involving Humans.

Lynda McNeil
Manager, Research Ethics

* All research involving human participants requires review on an annual basis. A Request for Renewal form should be submitted 2-3 weeks before the above expiry date.

* When a project has been completed or terminated a Study Closure form must be submitted.

* Should any modification or other unanticipated development occur before the next required review, the REB must be informed and any modification can't be initiated until approval is received.

Appendix 7: Research Script for Children

Hello,

My name is Ifeyinwa Mbakogu and I am conducting interviews and focus group discussions as part of my doctoral research on child trafficking in Nigeria. I am a student in the department of social work, McGill, Canada and I am working under the supervision of Professor Jill Hanley also in the department of social work.

Here is what will happen during the period we are together.

I am inviting you to participate in a face—to-face interview or discussion that will take about 60 minutes. I will ask you questions about your home, trafficking experience and your stay in the NAPTIP shelter. I will take handwritten notes when necessary and use an audio recorder to ensure that I document everything you say accurately. Please I will like you to understand that I will only tape what say during our discussion if this is okay with you. You do not have to agree to having our discussion recorded either. You are also allowed to stop the interview and/or pull out of the interview at any time for any reason.

Based on your acceptance to participate in the interview, we can set up a time and place within the NAPTIP shelter that is comfortable and convenient for us.

During the face-to-face discussion, you will also be allowed to engage in activities that will include drawing or having pictorial representations of your experiences or your thoughts.

After the face-to-face discussion, you will be invited to participate in a group discussion with other children at the shelter. You are also free to say yes or no to this request. Just as with the face-to-face interview, the focus group discussion will be audio recorded; this is to ensure that I document everything that children say accurately.

If you feel uncomfortable, tired, uneasy or anxious at any time during the research do not hesitate to draw my attention to this. If I ask questions that make you feel uncomfortable, please also feel free to draw my attention to this. You can also end the interview process at anytime or ask that some things you said during the interview be deleted from the transcript.

Thank you

Ifeyinwa Mbakogu

Appendix 8: ASSENT FORM FOR TRAFFICKED CHILDREN (INTERVIEWS)

TITLE OF RESEARCH: UNDERSTANDING CHILD TRAFFICKING FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TRAFFICKED CHILDREN: THE CASE OF 'RESCUED' CHILDREN IN NIGERIA

RESEARCHER: IFEYINWA MBAKOGU, PhD. Candidate, Social Work

CONTACT INFORMATION: Tel: 514-433-0212; Email: ifeyinwa.mbakogu@mail.mcgill.ca

SUPERVISORS: Prof. Jill Hanley; Email: jill.hanley@mcgill.ca

Hello,

I am carrying out a study to understand children's involvement in trafficking. I will be happy if you will share your trafficking experiences with me.

In order to understand the experiences of children involved in trafficking, I will be happy to involve children who are interested in discussing with me privately about their families, their experiences during trafficking and how they arrived at the NAPTIP shelter. Our discussion will take place anywhere in the NAPTIP shelter that you will feel comfortable sharing with me. You are also free to select the best time for this discussion. I will simply ask some questions and have you engage in some drawing activities too.

Before you decide whether to participate in the face-to-face interview or not, I will like you to know that talking about or sharing your trafficking experiences with me may upset you. Whenever you want me to stop the questions or activities; you are free to say so. Your name shall be not mentioned anywhere in the study.

Also, if it is okay with you, I would like to tape what you say during the interview. No one else but my supervisor and I will listen to the tape. Please understand that whatever information you share with me during our discussion will not be shared with other people but the overall results or findings from all participants in the study will be shared with the public and used to write my school paper. If it is okay with you, I would like to use the drawings you made during the interview for my school paper too.

Please sign below if you agree to be part of the focus group. Please remember that even if you sign, you don't have to answer any question you don't want to and you can stop being in the group for any reason.

ASSENT: I agree that the interview can be audio-taped ___ YES ___ NO

I agree that the interview and drawings can be used for the purposes stated above ___ YES ___ NO

Child's Signature: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Child's Thumb Print: _____

Child's Name: _____

Date: _____

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

Appendix 9: ASSENT FORM FOR TRAFFICKED CHILDREN (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS)

TITLE OF RESEARCH: UNDERSTANDING CHILD TRAFFICKING FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TRAFFICKED CHILDREN: THE CASE OF 'RESCUED' CHILDREN IN NIGERIA

RESEARCHER: IFEYINWA MBAKOGU, PhD. Candidate, Social Work

CONTACT INFORMATION: Tel: 514-433-0212; Email: ifeyinwa.mbakogu@mail.mcgill.ca

SUPERVISORS: Prof. Jill Hanley; Email: jill.hanley@mcgill.ca

Hello,

I am carrying out a study to understand children's involvement in trafficking. I will be happy if you will share your trafficking experiences with me.

In order to understand the experiences of children involved in trafficking, I will be happy to involve children who are interested in discussing with me privately and with other children in a group about their families, their experiences during trafficking and how they arrived at the NAPTIP shelter. Our discussion will take place anywhere in the NAPTIP shelter that you and other children find comfortable. Children are also free to select the best time and date for the discussion. I will simply ask some questions and we can all discuss around these questions. You and other children may also engage in drawing activities around the questions.

Before you decide whether to participate in the focus group discussion or not, I will like you to know that during the focus group discussion, other children in the group may say or talk about things that may upset you. Whenever you want me to stop the group discussions; you are free to say so. No participating child's name shall be mentioned anywhere in the study.

Also, if it is okay with you, I would like to tape what you say during the focus group discussion. No one else but my supervisor and I will listen to the tape. Please understand that whatever information you share with me during our discussion will not be shared with other people but the overall results or findings from all participants in the study will be shared with the public and used to write my school paper. If it is okay with you, I would like to use the drawings you made during the focus group discussions for my school paper too.

Please sign below if you agree to be part of the focus group. Please remember that even if you sign, you don't have to answer any question you don't want to and you can stop being in the group for any reason.

ASSENT: I agree that the interview can be audio-taped ___ YES ___ NO

I agree that the interview and drawings can be used for the purposes stated above ___ YES ___ NO

Child's Signature: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Child's Thumb Print: _____

Child's Name: _____

Date: _____

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

Appendix 10: CONSENT FORM FOR TRAFFICKED CHILD'S PARTICIPATION BY NAPTIP OFFICIAL GUARDIAN

TITLE OF RESEARCH: UNDERSTANDING CHILD TRAFFICKING FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TRAFFICKED CHILDREN: THE CASE OF 'RESCUED' CHILDREN IN NIGERIA

RESEARCHER: IFEYINWA MBAKOGU, Ph.D. candidate, Social Work

CONTACT INFORMATION: Tel: 514-433-0212; Email: ifeyinwa.mbakogu@mail.mcgill.ca

SUPERVISORS: Prof. Jill Hanley; Email: jill.hanley@mcgill.ca

Dear NAPTIP Official Guardian,

I am carrying out a study to understand the experiences of trafficked children before their involvement in trafficking, during trafficking and at NAPTIP shelters across five States in Nigeria.

In order to understand the experiences of children involved in trafficking, I will like children interested in participating in the research to discuss with me privately and with other children in a group about their families, their experiences during trafficking and how they arrived at the NAPTIP shelter. Our discussion will take place anywhere in the NAPTIP shelter that the children will find comfortable. Children are also free to select the best time and date for the discussion. I will simply ask some questions and the children and I can discuss around these questions. The children may also engage in drawing activities around the questions during the private and group discussions.

Before children decide whether to participate in the face-to-face interview, I will let them know that talking about their trafficking experiences with me could upset them. To minimise this risk, I will inform children that they are free to stop the private or group discussions whenever they want. No participating child's name shall be mentioned anywhere in the study.

Also, if it is okay with interested children, I would like to tape what they say during our discussions. No one else but my supervisor and I will listen to the tape recordings. The information the children share with me during our discussion will not be shared with other people but the overall results or findings from all participants in the study will be shared with the public and used to write my doctoral research paper. I will also request your consent in using the drawings the children made during our discussion for my doctoral research publication.

As the official guardian of children removed from trafficking while in the NAPTIP shelter, I will need your consent before interviewing or involving children in focus group discussions. Please sign below if you agree that the child participate in the interview and focus group discussion.

CONSENT OF NAPTIP OFFICIAL GUARDIAN:

I grant consent for the child to participate in the study ___ YES ___ NO

I grant consent for the child to participate in the interview ___ YES ___ NO

I grant consent for the child to participate in Focus Group Discussions ___ YES ___ NO

I grant consent for the interview with the child to be audio-taped ___ YES ___ NO

I agree that interview and drawings with the child can be used for the purposes stated above ___ YES ___ NO

NAPTIP Official Guardian's Signature: _____

NAPTIP Official Guardian's Name: _____ Date: _____

Participating Child's Name: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

Appendix 11: CONSENT FORM FOR NAPTIP OFFICIALS

TITLE OF RESEARCH: UNDERSTANDING CHILD TRAFFICKING FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TRAFFICKED CHILDREN: THE CASE OF 'RESCUED' CHILDREN IN NIGERIA

RESEARCHER: IFEYINWA MBAKOGU, Ph.D. candidate, Social Work

CONTACT INFORMATION: Tel: 514-433-0212; Email: ifeyinwa.mbakogu@mail.mcgill.ca

SUPERVISORS: Prof. Jill Hanley; Email: jill.hanley@mcgill.ca

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: A number of studies have looked at child trafficking in relation to the poverty of parents and other economic triggers causing families to fall prey to trafficking agents. The proposed research seeks to extend this discourse by capturing the perspectives and experiences of children about trafficking. Often, researchers have spoken on behalf of trafficked children based on their assessment of the situation and interpretation of data derived from sources that do not include the actual experiences of trafficked children themselves. Consequently, not much is really known why children are involved in trafficking. In essence, my proposed research intends to uncover the motivation behind the decisions of trafficked children. Also, based on discussion with personnel of Nigeria's anti-trafficking agency, the study hopes to provide insight into factors guiding the selection of anti-trafficking interventions directed at Nigerian children. The proposed study is for my doctoral research and will involve the participation of selected trafficked children in agency care that fall between the ages of 7 and 17 years, NAPTIP officials and frontline workers from partner NGOs. It is hoped that information derived from the study will inform policies and programmes for addressing child trafficking in Nigeria.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN PARTICIPATING?: You will be asked to answer questions on your perception of child trafficking in Nigeria, the current programmes undertaken by your agency to address child trafficking; and your suggestions for curtailing child trafficking in Nigeria based on your assessment of the needs of trafficked children in your agency's care.

The format for conducting the interview as well as the location will be determined by you. The interview is expected to last about an hour. You could also spend as much time as you wish on any of the questions.

With your permission, the interview will be audio-taped but you are free to opt out of the interview whenever you wish. This implies that you may request that the interview or participation in the study is stopped at any time. You can also request and review a copy of transcripts of the interview.

During my field trip, data such as consent or assent forms will be kept in locked cabinets in secure locations while transcriptions of the interviews and focus group discussions will be stored in password protected files on my computer. After the field trip, records of this interview will be kept strictly confidential with the audio-tape stored in a secure cabinet with a lock at the School of Social Work. Details of this audio-tape will be destroyed seven years after it has been used for publication. Records of the interview will be solely transcribed by me; with pseudonyms used, so identifiable data is known only to and accessible to the researcher and her supervisor. The interview content will also be kept confidential. Moreover, responses to the interview questions will not be attributed to you without your consent.

Also, records of this interview will be private and used only for my research. Your employers will not be informed that you participated in the study.

Data derived from this study will be used for writing a doctoral dissertation and journal articles on the experiences of trafficked children in Nigeria; and for future related research purposes.

Appending your signature below indicates your consent to participate in the current study.

CONSENT: I grant consent for the interview to be audio-taped ___ YES ___ NO

I agree to be identified in the report ___ YES ___ NO

I agree that the interview can be used for the purposes stated above ___ YES ___ NO

Participant's Signature: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Participant's Name: _____

Date: _____

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

Appendix 12: CONSENT FORM FOR OFFICIALS FROM PARTNER NGOS

TITLE OF RESEARCH: UNDERSTANDING CHILD TRAFFICKING FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TRAFFICKED CHILDREN: THE CASE OF 'RESCUED' CHILDREN IN NIGERIA

RESEARCHER: IFEYINWA MBAKOGU, Ph.D. candidate, Social Work

CONTACT INFORMATION: Tel: 514-433-0212; **Email:** ifeyinwa.mbakogu@mail.mcgill.ca

SUPERVISORS: Prof. Jill Hanley; **Email:** jill.hanley@mcgill.ca

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: A number of studies have looked at child trafficking in relation to the poverty of parents and other economic triggers causing families to fall prey to trafficking agents. The proposed research seeks to extend this discourse by capturing the perspectives and experiences of children about trafficking. Often, researchers have spoken on behalf of trafficked children based on their assessment of the situation and interpretation of data derived from sources that do not include the actual experiences of trafficked children themselves. Consequently, not much is really known why children are involved in trafficking. In essence, my proposed research intends to uncover the motivation behind the decisions of trafficked children. Also, based on discussion with personnel of Nigeria's anti-trafficking agency, the study hopes to provide insight into factors guiding the selection of anti-trafficking interventions directed at Nigerian children. The proposed study is for my doctoral research and will involve the participation of selected trafficked children in agency care that fall between the ages of 7 and 17 years, NAPTIP officials and frontline workers from partner NGOs. It is hoped that information derived from the study will inform policies and programmes for addressing child trafficking in Nigeria.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN PARTICIPATING?: You will be asked to answer questions on your perception of child trafficking in Nigeria, the current programmes undertaken by your agency to address child trafficking; and your suggestions for curtailing child trafficking in Nigeria based on your assessment of the needs of trafficked children in your agency's care.

The format for conducting the interview as well as the location will be determined by you. The interview is expected to last about an hour. You could also spend as much time as you wish on any of the questions.

With your permission, the interview will be audio-taped but you are free to opt out of the interview whenever you wish. This implies that you may request that the interview or participation in the study is stopped at any time. You can also request and review a copy of transcripts of the interview.

During my field trip, data such as consent or assent forms will be kept in locked cabinets in secure locations while transcriptions of the interviews and focus group discussions will be stored in password protected files on my computer. After the field trip, records of this interview will be kept strictly confidential with the audio-tape stored in a secure cabinet with a lock at the School of Social Work. Details of this audio-tape will be destroyed seven years after it has been used for publication. Records of the interview will be solely transcribed by me; with pseudonyms used, so identifiable data is known only to and accessible to the researcher and her supervisor. The interview content will also be kept confidential. Moreover, responses to the interview questions will not be attributed to you without your consent.

Also, records of this interview will be private and used only for my research. Your employers will not be informed that you participated in the study.

Data derived from this study will be used for writing a doctoral dissertation and journal articles on the experiences of trafficked children in Nigeria; and for future related research purposes.

Appending your signature below indicates your consent to participate in the current study.

CONSENT: I grant consent for the interview to be audio-taped ___ YES ___ NO

I agree to be identified in the report ___ YES ___ NO

I agree that the interview can be used for the purposes stated above ___ YES ___ NO

Participant's Signature: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Participant's Name: _____

Date: _____

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

Appendix 13: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FOR PARTICIPATION IN STUDY

Hello,

My name is Ifeyinwa Mbakogu and I am a doctoral candidate at the School of Social Work, McGill University, Canada. I am conducting a study for my doctoral dissertation on understanding the experiences of Nigerian children involved in trafficking. Also, the study will examine motivators of interventions adopted by NAPTIP to address the problem of child trafficking in Nigeria.

My intention is to interview staff of agencies involved in the removal of children from trafficking, such as your agency, NAPTIP, about general observations of the problem of child trafficking in Nigeria as well as the effectiveness of current anti-trafficking programmes and policies. Further, I want an opportunity to discuss with some of your staff, if possible because discussions with frontline workers will help provide better understanding of child trafficking and agency interactions with children removed from the activity.

It is my hope that discussions with selected staff from your agency will provide information for understanding problems that trafficked children encounter in navigating between home, trafficking and agency care experiences. Of course, participants in the study will not be identified in the final doctoral dissertation.

I will like to know if the interview could be scheduled within the days: June 21, 2013 to December 1, 2013. The interview should last about an hour.

I will be grateful if you could make out time to respond to my email.

Best regards,

Ifeyinwa

CONTACT INFORMATION: Tel: 514-433-0212; **Email:** ifeyinwa.mbakogu@mail.mcgill.ca

SUPERVISORS: PROF JILL HANLEY; **Email:** jill.hanley@mcgill.ca

Appendix 14: Calendar of Field Research Activities

The following table outlines activities undertaken for each month of my research:

August 2013 Abuja Aug 1 – 31	September 2013 Lagos Sept 1 - 30	October 2013 Benin Oct 1 - 31	November 2013 Uyo Nov 1 - 30	December 2013 Enugu Dec 1 - 31	January 2014 Revisiting NAPTIP Abuja/ Jan 1 – Feb 15	February 2014 Revisiting NAPTIP Lagos Feb 15 – Feb 31	March - May 2014 NAPTIP Lagos/Partner Agencies/NGOs March 1– May 31
Weeks 1 and 2: NAPTIP HEADOFFICE Collect a letter from the NAPTIP headquarters in Abuja to enable me conduct field research in multiple NAPTIP centers and have links for discussions with NAPTIP's partners NGOs. Documentary analysis: Collect initial information from NAPTIP libraries on the state of child trafficking in Nigeria and NAPTIP's role in designing and implementing programmes for addressing the problem. The collection of documentary evidence will be finalised in March. Week 3 - 4: Visit to NAPTIP departments at head office/worker interviews:	Weeks 1 and 2: Participant Observation: I began keeping a diary of days spent in each shelter and my interaction with children and agency officials; Still building rapport with children by partaking in agency activities. Introduced games and activities that enhance rapport with children. Introduced an initial drawing activity for children that acted as a friendly or warm insight into my research Participated in teaching the children vocational and life building classes on Math and English especially. Over the weekend, the children and I watched a movie called TANGLED. At the end of the second week, I began the first set of interviews for children which at this	Week 1: I was given group lectures each day by representatives selected from the different departments at the Zonal Office Week 2: My movement to the shelter Arrival of about 18 victims previously in Lagos Zone to the Benin Shelter Week 3: Involved in reunification of victims. I accompanied NAPTIP personnel from the counselling and rehabilitation unit to locate the homes of some victims. In one case the victim was handed over to a guardian until the parent returned. In another, the child was returned to the shelter because the guardian was discovered to be mentally unstable.	Week 1: Familiarisation with agency activities at the Uyo office Week 2: In the absence of victims at the shelter, I was given a letter to an affiliated agency for women affairs where trafficked children are housed. I spent the remaining weeks at Uyo following up on obtaining permission to access the shelter with much resistance from the officials of the Akwa-Ibom State Ministry of Women Affairs. Week 3: Still following up on the visit to the shelter managed by the Akwa-Ibom State Ministry of women affairs without success. The Zonal commander approved my visit to a support NGO, CRARR, in Eket that looked into children made vulnerable to trafficking by their accusation of involvement in witch craft	Week 1: Due to shortage of staff at the shelter and the counselling and rehabilitation unit of NAPTIP, I was introduced early into the lives and experiences of children resident in and recently brought to the shelter I acted more as a staff social worker than a research person at the request of the acting Zonal commander; Took children removed from domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation to the Government – owned hospital for physical examination and HIV/AIDS tests At the end of the week, the children and I watched a movie called TANGLED. Week 2: Took case histories of seven children rescued from domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation	Week 1: After the initial paper work and office memos, I was moved to the Abuja Shelter There were 10 victims under 18 years on my arrival. Over the weekend, the children and I watched the movie: TANGLED Week 2: I engaged the children in drawing activities during the second week of my visit and got involved with the vocational training that children were involved in such as bead making, hair dressing and dress making. Over the weekend, the children and I watched the movie: SNOW WHITE AND THE HUNTSMAN Week 3: Over the weekend, the children and I	Week 1: Getting familiar with the children and the shelter Week 2: Began drawing activities and interviews for children Began teaching the children vocational and life building classes on Math and English especially. Week 3: Visit to court in different Nigerian states in the Western Zone but all court sessions attended during that period were adjourned Week 4: Initial practice session of Drama written and directed by Children	Week 1: Continued teaching the children vocational and life building classes on Maths and English especially. Week 2: I collaborated with other NGOs to feed children and victims at the shelter on Sunday. During the feed-the-children day, the children expressed some of their needs, which included the request for a party that was organised for them two weeks after. Week 3: Travelled for a child trafficking trial at Abeokuta that was also adjourned for hearing. Week 4: In collaboration with other NGOs, a party was held for children and victims at the shelter

	<p>stage, will incorporate more detailed and targeted drawing activities</p> <p>Week 3:</p> <p>Child interviews:</p> <p>Week 4:</p> <p>Drama written and directed by Children</p> <p>Focus Group Discussions</p> <p>Building on the fact that children have become used to my presence at the shelter, I ended with focus group discussions with interested children on their trafficking experiences. The line of discussion was instigated by the children.</p> <p>Ended with presents for participating children and other victims at the shelter</p>	<p>Week 4:</p> <p>Involved in further reunification of victims</p> <p>Attended the 3rd International Law Conference on women and children which I initiated and encouraged NAPTIP's presence at two public enlightenment panels at the two day event. The conference theme was: <i>Women and Children as New Commodities of Trade in the 21st Century</i></p>	<p>Week 4:</p> <p>Follow-up visit and interaction with children and staff at CRARR, Eket</p>	<p>Week 3:</p> <p>Continued trying to ease the pain of sexually abused children by constantly interacting with them, tried to bring smiles to their faces with drawing activities, engaging in individual counselling and answering their personal questions especially those to do with exposure to HIV/AIDS;</p> <p>Followed up on children's hospital visits and provided children with needed support during the visits</p> <p>Week 4:</p> <p>Followed up with all the drawing activities and interviews.</p> <p>The focus group discussion could not be held because there were breaks in the hospital and interrogation schedules of the children. The children were also taken to be re-united with their families earlier than expected.</p>	<p>watched the movie: SOUND OF MUSIC</p> <p>I began taking the children in dance and drama classes for which the shelter lacked instructors.</p> <p>Week 4:</p> <p>DRAMA, FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND FAREWELLS</p> <p>The shelter staff organised a farewell party for some National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) members on one year mandatory national service and I;</p> <p>The children re-enacted their drama with a number of the initial participants already reunited with their family members or guardians</p> <p>The children had a very interesting focus group discussion or group counselling activity which they enjoyed;</p> <p>Over the weekend, the children and I watched the movie: KING OF PERSIA</p> <p>Ended with presents for participating children and other victims at the shelter</p>	<p>The Children had two groups of focus group discussions.</p> <p>The first with children under 15 years</p> <p>And the second with children 14 years and above that were removed from sexual exploitation related charges.</p> <p>Ended with presents for participating children and other victims at the shelter</p> <p>NOTES</p> <p>Similar activities were repeated for weeks in the months from March to May</p> <p>I also interviewed some officials in partner NGOs and collecting documentary information on the state of child trafficking in the country.</p>
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Appendix 15: Sheltering

This is to ensure a warm, protective and supportive environment for the personal development of the child.

1. One bedroom should accommodate not less than 4 children and not more than 10 depending on the size of the room.
2. Under no circumstance should children of different sexes be accommodated in the same room or within adjoining rooms.
3. Children of the same age group should be accommodated together as much as possible.
4. The age difference between the youngest child and the oldest in any bedroom should not be more than five years.
5. The matrons or Care givers should assign a bed space to the child and introduce him or her to the other children in the shelter in a dignifying manner on arrival.
6. The matron or authorised Care giver should ensure that the child is given immediate care, that is, food, shower, clothes and reassurance, as soon as the child has been received into the shelter
7. A child should be fed at least three times daily with a balanced diet from a management approved facility or caterer.
8. There should be an adequate number of plastic plates, cups and cutlery for the individual needs of the children in the shelter.
9. There should be a systematic counselling program for each child supervised by the case officer or primary Care giver. Within the program there should be, where necessary, provision for group counselling.
10. A schedule of routine activities aimed at ensuring mental, physical, social, emotional and economic well-being must be developed for each child.
11. Adequate measures should be put in place to ensure that the environment is safe and that children are protected from accidents and injury while in the shelter.
12. Where the child poses danger to other children, he or she could be taken to the interview room to enable meaningful intervention by matrons or Care givers.
13. Visits by relatives should be arranged and supervised by the institution in such a way that it will not endanger the child and/or other children in the facility.
14. At night there should be a minimum of one matron or Care giver for every 10 children. Where there are 10 or fewer children in the shelter, there should be at least two Care givers on night duty. See table below:

Source: NAPTIP (2009). *Guidelines for Protection of Children in Formal Care*. Retrieved July 27, 2015 from <http://www.naptip.gov.ng/counselling.html>

Appendix 16: Obligations of children in formal care

A CHILD IN THE SHELTER SHOULD **ALWAYS**:

1. Tell the truth.
2. Respect and be polite to other children and Shelter Officials.
3. Take part in daily chores and activities in the Shelter.
4. Freely express his/her concerns either:
 - i. Verbally to the Child Protection Officer or
 - ii. By using the Complaints Box.
5. Dress neatly and decently at all times.
6. Obey all rules and regulations.
7. Comport himself/herself before other children and Care givers in a good manner.
8. Be available for educational and vocational training.
9. Keep his/her environment clean and tidy.
10. Disclose required information to the Care givers, counsellors or other officials.
11. Quickly report when he/she feels ill.
12. Eat his/her food.

A CHILD IN THE SHELTER SHOULD **NEVER**:

1. Hit, fight or quarrel with other children or Shelter Officials.
2. Tell lies or give false information.
3. Steal
4. Be absent from educational and vocational training.
5. Make fun of or/gossip about others including shelter officials.
6. Dirty the shelter or do things that can destroy or deface any Shelter property
7. Refuse meals.
8. Fail to observe the rules and regulations in the Shelter.

AN UNDERTAKING

- I have been informed about my rights and obligations
- I understand them clearly.
- I hereby agree to abide and adhere to them

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Source: NAPTIP (2009). *Guidelines for Protection of Children in Formal Care*. Retrieved July 27, 2015 from <http://www.naptip.gov.ng/counselling.html>

Appendix 17: Demographic details of the research participants

No	CHILD'S ID	CHILD'S AGE	CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL STATUS		FORM OF TRAFFICKING	TRAFFICKED BY WHOM?	MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS		HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (PARENTS)		PROFESSION OF PARENTS		NUMBER OF CHILDREN		CHILD'S POSITION IN THE FAMILY	RELIGION	NIGERIAN STATE OR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
			Before trafficking	After trafficking			Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Boy	Girl			
1	SERENA [FEMALE]	17	SS2	SS2	Domestic trafficking for prostitution	Self and child's peer networks	Still together		Not provided		Trader	Retired Military person	6	3	7	Christianity	Delta
2	GOODNESS [FEMALE]	15	Not in school	JSII	Domestic labour	Male Cousin on the father's side	Still together		Not educated		farmer	farmer	6 children		4	Christianity	Kogi
3	PRINCESS [FEMALE]	13 /trafficked when 11 years old		Primary 5	Domestic prostitution	Self and child's network from working in a bar	Divorced 2 nd wife out of three	Married three times	Not provided	University level	Not stated	Medical doctor			1st of her mother's 2 children	Christianity	Anambra
4	DEOLA [FEMALE]	17 /trafficked into Nigeria when 5 years old	Not attending school	Started school for 2 years in Nigeria but her trafficker told them to stop	Regional trafficking for domestic labour	Father	Separated	Separated	Not provided		Not provided		6 th and last child of her mother. Not stated how many children her father has			Christianity	Togo
5	EZINNA [FEMALE]	13	Primary 2		Domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation	Mother's friend	Still together		Not sure	Secondary school	Farmer	farmer	2	2	1st	Christianity	Enugu
6	SANDRA [FEMALE]	12	Primary 5	Primary 2	Domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation	A woman from the same village stole her away when her mother went to the farm	Widow – did not remarry	Dead					5	3	Last	Christianity	Benue

No	CHILD'S ID	CHILD'S AGE	CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL STATUS		FORM OF TRAFFICKING	TRAFFICKED BY WHOM?	MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS		HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (PARENTS)		PROFESSION OF PARENTS		NUMBER OF CHILDREN		CHILD'S POSITION IN THE FAMILY	RELIGION	NIGERIAN STATE OR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
			Before trafficking	After trafficking			Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Boy	Girl			
7	OZIOMA [FEMALE]	13	Was in school with another aunty in Lagos prior to the last location in Onitsha	JSIII	Domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation	An aunty from their kindred/clan			Secondary School		Farmer		3	3	2nd	Christianity	IMO
8	EMILIA [FEMALE]	15 Fostered by her aunt when 4years old	Not in school	SS2	Domestic Labour	By parents to live with Dad's sister	Separated and having custody of the 11 children	Remarried with 3 more children	No formal education		Not provided		11 children		3rd	Christianity	Delta
9	ABRAHAM [MALE]	15	JSI	SS1	Domestic Labour	By mother via a Pastor	Still together		Not provided		Not provided		6 children		4th	Christianity	Taraba
10	OMALANMA [FEMALE]	12	Primary 2	Primary 1	Domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation				No formal education	Secondary school					Last	Christianity	Anambra
11	ADAORA [FEMALE]	7	Not provided	Not provided	Domestic labour	Handed over to stay with woman they knew from the village	Still together		Not provided		Farmer	farmer	4	2	4th	Christianity	Anambra
12	PRISCILLA [FEMALE]	15	JSII	JSII	Regional prostitution	Wandering on the streets and met her male trafficker	Separated Father remarried has three younger children	Separated	Not provided		Brick layer	Not provided	2 children from mother and father		Twin	Christianity	Delta

No	CHILD'S ID	CHILD'S AGE	CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL STATUS		FORM OF TRAFFICKING	TRAFFICKED BY WHOM?	MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS		HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (PARENTS)		PROFESSION OF PARENTS		NUMBER OF CHILDREN		CHILD'S POSITION IN THE FAMILY	RELIGION	NIGERIAN STATE OR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
			Before trafficking	After trafficking			Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Boy	Girl			
13	PROMISE [FEMALE]	17	JSIII (Stopped school due to lack of funds before trafficking)	JSIII	Regional prostitution	Mother handed her over to a woman who is member of their Church	Father dead	Mother remarried had 3 more children	Not provided		Not provided	Visionary	8 children by mother		4	Christianity	Delta
14	SUCCESS [FEMALE]	15	Not in school	Not in school	Regional prostitution		Remarried	Dead	Not provided		Not provided		2	1	Not provided	Christianity	Edo
15	ROSEMARY [FEMALE]	15	Never went to school	Never went to school	Care giving and domestic labour	Parents	Still together		Not provided		House wife	Farmer	8 children		3rd	Christianity	Osun
16	CHIDI [FEMALE]	8	Was in school	Primary 4	Domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation	Mother's older sister	Still together		Educated but not stated	Educated but not stated	Seamstress	Carpenter	1	1	Last	Christianity	
17	MARTHA [FEMALE]	15	JSIII – quit school and started learning sewing	JSIII	Regional trafficking for prostitution	Father's older brother (Uncle)	Father's second wife	Remarried had one child with first wife			Trader	Plumber	7		2 nd	Christianity	Edo
18	AMAOBI [FEMALE]	12 (left home at 7years)	Not specified	Primary 6	Domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation	Father told her to follow his older brother (Uncle & pedophile)	Still together		Secondary school	Secondary school	Popcorn and groundnut seller	Motorcycle transportation operator	3	1	1st	Christianity	Anambra
19	QUEEN [FEMALE]	12	JSI	JSII	Domestic trafficking for prostitution	Mother	Separated Remarried had one other child	Separated Remarried had 3 other children			Seller (Not sure what she sells)	Motorcycle transportation operator	2	2	3rd	Christianity	Anambra

No	CHILD'S ID	CHILD'S AGE	CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL STATUS		FORM OF TRAFFICKING	TRAFFICKED BY WHOM?	MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS		HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (PARENTS)		PROFESSION OF PARENTS		NUMBER OF CHILDREN		CHILD'S POSITION IN THE FAMILY	RELIGION	NIGERIAN STATE OR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
			Before trafficking	After trafficking			Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Boy	Girl			
20	EZIUWA [FEMALE]	14	Fostered by her aunt at an early age	Primary 5	Fostering/Domestic labour	Father told her to live with her aunt	Dead	Living with children	Not provided		Dead	Farmer		4	1 st (twin)	Christianity	Imo
21	BOLAJI [FEMALE]	12	No school attendance	Attended school briefly	Domestic labour	Parents sent her to intermediaries	Father left	Mother remarried	Not provided		Water fetcher	Motorcycle transportation operator	2	3	1st	Not provided	Ogun
22	RAKIYA [FEMALE]	13	No school attendance	No school attendance	Domestic labour	Mum sent her through a female friend	Still together		Not provided		Housewife	Tailor	3			Not provided	Oyo
23	BIMBO [FEMALE]	14	Primary 3	JSIII	Domestic labour	Older sister started the process	Still together		Not provided		Farmer	Farmer	3	5	Last (twin)	Muslim	Ogun
24	AMINA [FEMALE]	17	Primary 2	No schooling	Domestic labour & prostitution	Father took her to someone	Still together		Not provided		Farmer	Farmer	1	5	3rd	Muslim	Bene Republic
25	RASHIDA [FEMALE]	15	Left Togo as a child	No schooling	Domestic labour	Consent of parents	Still together		Not provided		Farmer	Food seller	3	1	Last	Muslim	Togo
26	SUNDAY (MALE)	17	Secondary school	No schooling	Domestic labour	Through mother's friend's network	Widow	Dead	Not provided		Trader	Dead	6		3rd	Christianity	Togo
27			Schooling but stopped after father's death	No schooling	Domestic labour	PATRICIA [FEMALE]	15	Dead				Dead				Christianity	Togo

No	CHILD'S ID	CHILD'S AGE	CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL STATUS		FORM OF TRAFFICKING	TRAFFICKED BY WHOM?	MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS		HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (PARENTS)		PROFESSION OF PARENTS		NUMBER OF CHILDREN		CHILD'S POSITION IN THE FAMILY	RELIGION	NIGERIAN STATE OR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
			Before trafficking	After trafficking			Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Boy	Girl			
28	MERCY [FEMALE]	17 (trafficked at 15years)	Schooling before trafficking	No schooling	Domestic trafficking for prostitution	A man she met by the roadside	Dead	Dead	Dead	Dead	Dead	Dead	3		1 st	Christianity	Akwa Ibom
29	ODINAKA [FEMALE]	17	SS2	No schooling	Baby factory	A woman she met by the roadside	Widow	Dead	Not stated		Retired from trading and farming	Dead	9		8th	Christianity	Imo
30	ADAEZE [FEMALE]	17	SS1	No schooling	Baby factory	Her baby daddy's brother in law	Dead	Dead	Not stated		Dead	Dead	4		3 rd (twin)	Christianity	Abia
31	DANIELLA [FEMALE]	14	Primary 5	No schooling	Domestic labour	Her father's brother	Still together		Not stated		Farmer	Farmer	5	5	Last	Christianity	Cross River
32	PRAISE [FEMALE]	14	Primary 4	No schooling	Domestic labour	Father handed her to a man from their village	Still together		Not stated		Farmer and rice seller	Farmer	1	4	3	Christianity	Cross River
33	NIKE [FEMALE]	7	Schooling	No schooling	Domestic labour	Brought by her father	Still together		Not stated		House wife	Mechanic	4	3	Last		Ogun
34	OLA [FEMALE]	7	No schooling	No schooling	Domestic labour	1st her father; then second an aunty	Still together		Not stated								Egun
35	MARY [FEMALE]	15 (left Togo when she was 10years old)	No schooling	No schooling	Domestic labour	Brought by her mother's friend	Not stated		Not stated		Not stated		6		1st	Christianity	Togo
36	ADUKE [FEMALE]	14	Schooling in Togo	No schooling	Domestic labour	Mother gave consent	Remarried in Togo	Remarried in Nigeria	Not stated		Soft drinks seller	Motorcycle rider, Togo	Not stated		Not stated	Christianity	Togo

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			Before trafficking	After trafficking			Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Boy	Girl			
37	CHINYERE [FEMALE]	14	JSIII	No schooling	Baby factory	Through one of her mother's customers	Still together		Not stated		Tomato seller	Farmer	7		6	Christianity	Imo
38	GABRIELLA [FEMALE]	16 (LEFT Togo when she was 9years)	No schooling	No schooling	Domestic labour	Mother gave consent for woman to take her	Not stated		Not stated		Farming	farming	Not stated		Not stated	Christianity	Togo
39	OBI (MALE)	Teenager		No schooling	Regional migration for apprenticeship fostering	A male relative	Still together		Not stated		Farmer	Farmer	5	1	1st	Christianity	Ebonyi
40	AFAM (MALE)	Teenager	Primary 6	No schooling	Regional trafficking for apprenticeship fostering	A man from their village	Widow	Dead	Not stated		Farmer	Farmer	4	3	1st	Christianity	Ebonyi
41	CHIEDO (MALE)	10	Primary 5	No schooling	Domestic labour, begging and stealing	Process started by older sister	Parents are died when he was 6 years old		Not stated		Not stated		3	3	Last	Christianity	Imo
42	HAPPINESS [FEMALE]	17	No schooling	No schooling	Baby factory	A man she met by the roadside	Still together		Not stated		Runs a provision store in the village		5		3rd	Christianity	Imo
43	EMPRESS [FEMALE]	17	Completed SS3	No schooling	Baby factory	Aunty and gateman at the motherless babies home	Dead	Dead	Not stated		Dead				Last child	Christianity	Imo
44	SOLOMON (MALE)	15	In school	On hold	Migration	Self	Separated	Remarried	Not stated		Not stated		Not stated		Last child	Christianity	Ghana
45	PAUL (MALE)	15			Domestic labour and care giving	By Pastor	Still together		Not stated		Farming	Farming	8		Last child	Christianity	Taraba

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			Before trafficking	After trafficking			Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Boy	Girl			
46	FREEDOM (MALE)	15									Farming	Farming					
47	ANGEL [FEMALE]	12	In school	In school	Domestic labour	By Pastor	Still together		Not stated		Farming	Farming	1	5	4	Christianity	Taraba
48	SARAH [FEMALE]	9	In school	In school	Domestic labour	By Pastor	Still together		Not stated		Farming	Farming	1	3	Last	Christianity	Taraba
49	MARGARET [FEMALE]	15	In primary 3	No schooling	Domestic labour & sexual exploitation	By Mum's sister to go to a good school in the city	Still together				Farming	Farming	2	3	Last	Christianity	Benue
50	YVONNE [FEMALE]	12	In primary 2	No schooling	Domestic labour	Parents gave consent for a man from their village to take her	Still together				Makes and sells Garri	farming	5		Last	Christianity	Benue
51	GIFT [FEMALE]	15			Domestic labour											Christianity	Benue
52	NANA [FEMALE]	15 (kidnapped at 7years)	Nursery school	Not in school	Domestic labour & sexual exploitation	Kidnapped by a stranger	First wife	Father has two wives	Did not go to school	Did not go to school	Not stated	Farmer		1	1	Christianity	Ghana
53	AHANNA [MALE]	12	Primary 6	Not in school	Domestic labour	By woman from village	Widow	Dead	Not stated		Farming	Dead	1	1	1st	Christianity	Imo

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			Before trafficking	After trafficking			Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Boy	Girl			
54	OBIADA [FEMALE]	17	JSIII	Not in school	Domestic labour	By woman from village	Still together		Not stated		Farming	Bakassi job/Vigilante job	9		3rd	Christianity	Imo
55	GRACE [FEMALE]	12	Started school	Not in school	Domestic labour								5		1st	Christianity	Togo