

# **‘IT’S EASIER IF WE STOP THEM MOVING’**

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ANTI- CHILD TRAFFICKING**

**DISCOURSE, POLICY AND PRACTICE –**

**THE CASE OF SOUTHERN BENIN**

*Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the*

*Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Development Studies*

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a critical assessment of anti- child trafficking discourse, policy and practice, using a case study of the situation in Southern Benin. It seeks to achieve two main goals. First, to transcend the reductiveness of the dominant paradigm around child trafficking, including dominant representations of it and prevailing policy approaches to dealing with it. Second, to complicate the simplistic nature of much of the academic literature that explains the existence and persistence of this dominant paradigm. Based on 14 months of multi-sited fieldwork, the thesis demonstrates, first, that the institutional narrative of ‘child trafficking’ misrepresents what would be better understood as adolescent labour migration in Benin, and second, that mainstream policy approaches to tackling this fail to account for the socio-cultural or political-economic conditions that underpin it. The thesis suggests that this can be interpreted as a result of the power of three framing *orders of discourse* – ‘Apollonian Childhood’, Neoliberalism and that of the Westphalian State – which structure both what ‘trafficking’ can mean and what can be done about it. The thesis suggests that the material and power structures of the anti-trafficking discourse- and policy-making field are such that, even where individuals within it reject both the dominant paradigm and its (and the field’s) framing orders of discourse, little space exists for them to construct meaningful alternatives. The result is a degree of formal and representational stability, hiding practical hybridity. The conclusion is offered that, while anti-trafficking discourse is presumed to be accurate and while anti-trafficking policy is justified in terms of its contribution to ‘beneficiaries’, the

principle achievement of both is the depoliticised reproduction of the institutions, orders of discourse and political-economic context within which they are constructed.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS USED

*Afoutame* – A Fon word meaning ‘exploitation’

AFJB – Association des Femmes Juristes au Bénin

*Akwe* – A Fon word meaning ‘money’

ASI – Anti-Slavery International

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

BPM – Brigade de Protection des Mineurs, Benin’s child police agency

CATW – Coalition Against Trafficking in Women

CCB – Compagne Cotonnière du Bénin

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CEO – Centre d’Ecoute et d’Orientation

CPS – Centre de Promotion Sociale, the *commune* level branch of Benin’s Child and Family Ministry

CRC – Convention (or Commission) on the Rights of the Child

*Commune* – A French term for a politico-administrative district in Benin

DA – Discourse Analysis

DANIDA – Danish International Development Agency

*Département* – A French term for a politico-administrative region in Benin

*Djoko* – A Fon word meaning short-term, targeted labour migration

DT – Discourse Theory

EU – European Union

*Fon* – The largest ethnic group in Southern Benin; also the name of the group’s language

FAO – UN Food and Agriculture Organisation

FCFA – Franc de la Communauté Financière Africaine, the Francophone West African currency

GAATW – Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HDI – Human Development Indicators

IBECO – Société Industrie Béninoise de Coton

IO – International Organisation, within which category I include bodies such as UNICEF, the ILO, the World Bank and IMF

ILO – International Labour Organisation

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

IMF – International Monetary Fund

(I)NGO – (International) Non Governmental Organisation

IOM – International Organisation for Migration

INSAE – Institut National de Statistiques et d'Analyses Economiques

*Kanoumon* – A Fon word meaning ‘slavery’ - often used as an erroneous translation of ‘trafficking’

LNHCR – The League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

LUTRENA – ILO Subregional Programme Combating the Trafficking in Children for Labour Exploitation in West and Central Africa

The National Study – The National Study on Child Trafficking

NAPTIP – The Nigerian National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons

NEPAD – New Partnership for African Development

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OOD – Order(s) of Discourse

OVC – Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children

Palermo/Trafficking Protocol – The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the Convention on Trans-national Organised Crime

*Patron* – A French term meaning ‘boss’; used to describe the gang-masters in the gravel-pit economy

POA – The National Anti- Child Trafficking Plan of Action

PRA – Participatory Rural Appraisal

PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

*Quartier* – A French term for a politico-administrative area in Benin, smaller than a *commune*

RA – Research Assistant

SAP – Structural Adjustment Programme

SEICB – Société d'Egrenage Industriel de Coton au Bénin

SOCOBE – Société Cotonnière du Bénin

*Sodabi* – A Southern Beninese palm wine

TDH – Fondation Terre des Hommes

TIP – Trafficking in Persons

TVPA – Trafficking Victims Protection Act

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

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

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

USAID – United States Agency for International Development

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

USDOL – United States Department of Labour

USDS – United States Department of State

US TIP Office – United States Office on Trafficking in Persons

*VC* – Village (Vigilance/Anti-Trafficking/Child Protection) Committee

*Vidomègon* – A Fon word meaning ‘placed child’

WCRWC – Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children

WTO – World Trade Organisation

*Yovo* – A Fon word meaning ‘white man’

*Yovotomè* – A Fon word literally meaning ‘the home of the white man’, used to refer to anywhere rich/abroad

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Ultimately, a thesis is supposed to be more than the sum of its parts and a novel contribution to the world. If mine is either, then it is largely due to those above. Where it is neither, the fault remains my own. The task now at hand is to take this, and what I am because of it, as a platform for making that-which-is, more like *that-which-could-be*.



*“But words are things, and a small drop of ink,  
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces  
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.”*

Lord Byron, Don Juan.

*“D’Artagnan admira à quels fils fragiles et inconnus sont parfois  
suspendues les destinées d’un peuple et la vie des hommes.”*

Alexandre Dumas, Les Trois Mousquetaires.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1990s, the trafficking of women and children has mushroomed into an issue of major political and media importance. The ‘Olga’s’ and ‘Natasha’s’ of Eastern Europe (Andrijasevic 2010) have been paralleled by the ‘Ana’s’ and ‘Aria’s’ of West Africa; and the public consciousness has been marked by images of lost innocence and remorseless abuse. Politicians of all shades have stepped forward to call for tough measures to prevent and protect, while former US President Bush even declared ‘war’ on what he and Russian President Putin both described as one of the great ‘evils’ of modern times. Anti-trafficking institutions have flourished – one estimate claiming that almost a thousand were registered as far back as 2005 (Kempadoo 2005:xxix). And the money allocated to them has been enormous – with the US alone spending almost half a billion dollars by 2006 (Dottridge 2007:18).

My own involvement in this field dates back to 2005. Fresh-faced and naïve, I arrived in Benin to work with a child rights NGO on the apparent ‘pandemic’ of child trafficking engulfing the country. Well-versed in the standard horror stories, I understood child trafficking to be the work of criminal gangs kidnapping and enslaving unsuspecting minors, grinding poverty and ‘traditional practices’ rendering them *a priori* vulnerable. Appendix A, which reproduces part of a report I wrote whilst working for this NGO, captures this understanding clearly. When I met young labour migrants, ‘victims of trafficking’ and their communities, however, I quickly learned that all was not quite as it seemed. It became clear to me that there was a disjuncture between the way institutions *represented* and responded to ‘trafficking’

and ‘the trafficked’, and the way ‘the trafficked’ understood and represented themselves.

My experience was paralleled elsewhere (Castle and Diarra 2003, Bastia 2005, De Lange 2007, Morganti 2011, Huijsmans and Baker 2012). In countries around the world, trafficking had been depicted as an issue of un-consenting women and children kidnapped or enticed abroad by promises of wealth and subsequently sequestered and abused by unscrupulous men of evil. Policy responses had focused on ‘protecting’ potential victims by preventing their migration and encouraging or compelling them to stay at ‘home’. Yet, for most of those targeted, migration appeared to have been a conscious *choice* in response to personal, socio-cultural or political-economic contexts, with sedentarisation only compounding their problems (Abbassi and Davies n.d, Aradau 2004, Bastia 2005, Sanghera 2005, Thorsen 2007, Whitehead et al. 2007).

A rising tide of critical literature has developed over recent years, and it has challenged both the dominant global discourse and the mainstream policy around trafficking. In the case of adult women, Aradau, amongst others, has shown that it is fundamentally incorrect to assume that (migrating) females are always and everywhere at risk of abuse (2004). With children and adolescents, a number of authors have confronted beliefs that the young are inherently vulnerable and have therefore called for the disaggregating of ‘trafficking’ from what is willed and legitimate movement (O’Connell Davidson and Farrow 2007, Hashim and Thorsen 2011, Huijsmans 2011).

While critical academics have thus begun to highlight some of the problems with the discourse and politics of trafficking, then, from the perspective of this thesis, a number of clear lacunae remain. First, there is still a dearth of detailed research on the nature, context and impact of the ‘sub-discourse’ of ‘child trafficking’, as a specific yet distinct form of human trafficking (Kempadoo 2005:ix). Though some valuable studies do certainly exist (examples include Hashim 2005, Whitehead et al. 2007, De Lange 2007, O’Connell Davison and Farrow 2007, Alber 2011, Huijsmans and Baker 2012), little long-term, large-scale research such as that carried out over the course of this doctorate has been conducted.

Moreover, there is clear evidence that even within academic circles critical of dominant trafficking paradigms, there remains the assumption that somehow ‘with children, it’s different’. As Julia O’Connell Davidson observes (2005: 71):

‘Those who recognize that the concept of “trafficking” is difficult in relation to adults rarely discuss the same difficulties in relation to children. So, for instance, having noted many of the political and definitional problems associated with dominant approaches to trafficking in women, Derks states that “the vulnerability of children, stemming from the bio-physiological, cognitive, behavioural and social changes taking place during the growth and maturation process, distinguishes children from adults...and thus also their trafficking situation”’ (in Heissler 2009:10).

Second, though frequently critical of the gender bias operating within mainstream anti-trafficking initiatives (targeting predominantly the sexualised abuse of women and girls – see Andrijasevic 2000, Agustin 2003 and 2005, Sanghera 2005 and Chuang 2010), the existing body of critical research around trafficking itself reflects and reproduces this very bias. As Gozdziaik and Bump observe in their recent meta-study of publications relating to trafficking, there remains a fundamental lack of empirics around the trafficking in men and boys (2011:24). Indeed, of the 218 research-based, peer-reviewed articles they include in their trafficking bibliography, a mere 14 discussed the trafficking of men and only one addressed the traffic in boys (ibid.7).

Third, and most importantly, despite the increasing prevalence of critical academic assessments of trafficking discourse and policy, no studies have yet gone nearly far enough in examining the field that constitutes and is constituted by that discourse and policy. Most research focuses either on the nature of formal discourse (as evidenced almost exclusively in public media), or on the way that migrant realities put a lie to that discourse and highlight the shortcomings of its related policy. As yet, few researchers have engaged with the way individuals and institutions live *within* trafficking discourse and policy, with the way inter- and intra-institutional dynamics are reflected in them, with the way these interact with and are influenced by those ‘target communities’ upon whom they act, or with the way that each are structured by wider, more fundamental forces within the social formation. The result has been a propagation of simplistic explanatory tropes that attribute the persistence of problematic paradigms primarily to policy-maker ignorance or malevolence.

It is in the hope of filling some of these gaps and of offering a more comprehensive picture of the anti-trafficking field, and in particular the anti-child trafficking field, that this thesis will proceed. Using data drawn from fieldwork with Beninese male adolescent labour migrants defined as ‘trafficked’, and with institutional employees involved in (or with influence over) Beninese anti-trafficking work, it will argue that the dominant paradigm’s discursive-political focus on extreme, anomalous and non-consensual work and movement obscures and misrepresents the complexities of adolescent labour migration at the margins of the global economy. It will suggest that the power of three particular *orders of discourse* (OOD) (Foucault 1977, 1980a, Fairclough 1995)<sup>1</sup> – those of ‘Apollonian Childhood’, Neoliberalism and the Westphalian State – plays a key role in restricting (and constructing) anti-trafficking discourse and policy, in preventing more nuanced understandings and policies from emerging, and in ensuring that discourse and policy remain relatively stable across time. The thesis will suggest that anti-trafficking discourse and policy are thus *expressions* of these OOD. However, the thesis will argue that although these OOD help explain the nature of trafficking discourse and policy, we need to go ‘inside’ the material realities of how the discourse- and policy-making system operates in order to understand precisely *how* they remain so stable. In essence, while many policy-makers do recognise the problems with the dominant trafficking paradigm, as well as with the restrictions imposed by its three framing OOD, they are practically prevented from developing meaningful alternatives by the material and power relations linking (the institutions comprising) the anti-trafficking field itself, such that those on the inside have little option but to recreate the dominant paradigm along precisely the lines it currently adopts and that itself constitutes and reinforces the

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<sup>1</sup> A detailed discussion of what is meant by ‘discourse’, Discourse and ‘order of discourse’ will be forthcoming in Chapter 2.

dominant and framing orders of Neoliberalism, the Westphalian State and Apollonian Childhood.

### Thesis Overview

This thesis emerged out of an internship I undertook with a Beninese child rights NGO in 2005 and Masters fieldwork I conducted for a thesis on Beninese independent child migration in 2007 (Howard 2008). These experiences led me to the belief that anti- child trafficking discourse misrepresented adolescent labour migration in Benin and the suspicion that anti- child trafficking policy constituted a misguided attempt to protect the young by pre-emptively preventing their work or migration, in part since it failed to account for either the socio-cultural or political-economic structures that underpin it. I embarked on this doctorate seeking to understand whether indeed this was the case and if so *why*. My research questions were:

- 1) What are the empirics of male adolescent labour migration in Southern Benin and how do these differ from the official discourse on child trafficking?
- 2) What is the nature of anti-trafficking policy as pursued in Benin?
- 3) How are anti-trafficking trafficking discourse and policy created and sustained?

In exploring these questions, I carried out 14 months of multi-sited, multi-country fieldwork, during which I conducted over 180 individual or group interviews with a total of more than 300 people and observed and worked with individuals and institutions at almost every level of the anti-trafficking policy chain<sup>2</sup>. As Benin was my focus, I concentrated at the institutional level on those bodies that are at the heart of producing and sustaining the anti-trafficking discourse, and at the forefront of forming and implementing anti-trafficking policy, both in Cotonou, Benin's *de facto* capital, and throughout the country more widely. These include UNICEF and the ILO, from among the International Organisations working in this field, USAID, USDOL, DANIDA, the EU and France, from the donor community, the Child and Family and Justice Ministries, from within the Beninese government, and a collection of national and international child-focussed NGOs operating in Benin. Aside from gathering crucially relevant documentary and observational data, I interviewed over 100 people within these institutions, with interviews focussing on how and why policies and projects are established and represented, the nature of the institutional research process, inter- and intra- institutional dynamics and constraints, understandings of childhood, child work and migration, and views on the role of the state.

At the 'community' level, I chose to concentrate my research entirely in the South of the country, principally because, in Benin, the 'hub' of child labour, trafficking and exploitation has been widely identified as the poor, agricultural *Zou département*, from which male adolescents frequently leave to work in the artisanal quarries of Western Nigeria – a migratory flow that has been dubbed an archetype of child

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<sup>2</sup> This breakdown includes fieldwork and data from my Masters research, since much of that data is drawn on in the forthcoming discussion.

trafficking. Within this *département*, two *communes* – Za-Kpota and Zogbodomey – have been identified as particularly ‘affected’ by the above-mentioned ‘phenomena’ and various national and international studies with young migrant labourers and ‘victims of trafficking’ have identified several villages therein as key source-locations, resulting in their becoming major foci for national and international interventions conducted by the bodies mentioned above. I thus selected four case study villages, two from each *commune*, two with flagship ‘village child protection committees’ and two without.

In the villages themselves I used various research techniques, including principally open-ended individual and group interviews, the focus of which were on how people see their life-worlds, how they experience and view (hazardous) youth work and movement, and what they have to say about current anti-trafficking interventions. In total, I interviewed over 150 people in these villages<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, I conducted a follow-up field visit in February 2012 in order to examine more closely the socio-cultural and economic world of artisanal quarry work in Abeokuta, Nigeria. During this visit, I interviewed representatives of all ‘classes’ involved in the quarry economy, including gang leaders, gravel purchasers, traders and transporters, landowners and Beninese male adolescent migrant quarry-workers from my research region in Benin. My interviews sought to complete the picture I had received on the Beninese side of the border and focussed on the context and experience young migrants have of their work.

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<sup>3</sup> I also interviewed 15 adults and 28 children from various other locations in Southern Benin, the majority of whom were spoken to as part of my Masters fieldwork in 2007.

Throughout the thesis, I will use the term ‘younger children’ to refer to pre-adolescents and the words ‘youth’, ‘young person’, ‘older children’, ‘teenager’ and ‘adolescent’ to refer to older individuals up to the age of 18 (and at times beyond). Though I consider ‘children’ and ‘childhood’ to be situational concepts varying according to time, place, culture and social structure, amongst other things, the institutional literature and policy I am examining take ‘children’ to be all those under the biological age of 18 and ‘childhood’ to be the period before one reaches that age. It will therefore be necessary at times to use these blanket terms in reference to both younger and older children (particularly in the thesis’ early chapters and when discussing official discourse and policy). Additionally, since I am reflecting in part on the appropriateness of these institutional designations, I deemed it important to engage them on their own terms, and used calendar age (as reported by my interlocutors) as a marker when identifying either ‘child’ or ‘adult’ research participants. It should be noted, however, that unless otherwise stated, all of the current and former ‘child migrants’ to whom I refer in this thesis are or were adolescents at the time of migration. Similarly, since I focussed almost exclusively on current and former adolescent male migrant quarry workers, the current and former migrants I interviewed and will reference here are predominantly male.

Though a much fuller discussion of both methods and ethics will be forthcoming, it is important to highlight here that all names pertaining to individuals and identifiable places (such as my research villages) have been changed in line with the anonymisation of my data in order to protect the identity of research participants. I have also attempted, where possible, not to refer directly to institutions, and do so only in cases where this is necessary for clarity and where there is minimal risk of

individual interviewees subsequently being identified. Unless otherwise stated, all translations in the thesis are my own.

The discussion is structured along the following lines. In **Chapter 1**, I will provide the context to the thesis. The chapter begins by giving a historical overview of the rise of what I suggest is the now dominant global paradigm around child trafficking, and includes an examination of mainstream international discourse, policy and anti-trafficking legal frameworks. Subsequently, the chapter turns to the problems with this paradigm, drawing on critical academic and practitioner literature to examine the empirical and theoretical failings that plague it. The critical literature is not without its own drawbacks, however, and the chapter's third section will focus on those, before suggesting how this thesis intends to address and overcome them. Finally, the chapter will move from the general to the specific and will present Benin as a case study for this endeavour, outlining in particular the socio-cultural and political-economic factors making it a propitious choice.

In **Chapter 2**, I will build on the context provided by Chapter 1 and will situate this thesis as an attempt to transcend both the problems with the mainstream trafficking paradigm *and* the failures of mainstream academic critiques to adequately explain its persistence. It thus seeks to provide a theoretical framework within which to analyse both *why* and *how* dominant trafficking discourse and policy remain so reductive. In order to do so, it will draw in particular on Discourse Theory, as well as the Political Anthropology/ Development Ethnography pioneered by Chris Shore, Susan Wright and David Mosse. It will also explore work from the Social Studies of Childhood tradition, from Critical Theory, and from the study of Neoliberal Governmentality. It will suggest that a more thorough understanding of the trafficking field can emerge

by analysing the power of its framing OOD and the practical, institutional power dynamics to which these are related. It will make the case and suggest that anti-trafficking discourse and policy might profitably be understood as expressions of the Neoliberal, Apollonian and Westphalian OOD.

In **Chapter 3**, I explain how the proposition advanced by my theoretical framework was examined with my choice of research ‘sites’ and my methodology. Given that I was trying to provide a more complex analysis of the anti-trafficking field than has hitherto been undertaken, my research attempted to close the gap between work which focuses either on ‘victims’/ ‘target communities’ or on the policy establishment by focussing on both and on the way in which these operate and interact. This meant conducting research at a number of ‘levels’, with bodies at different layers of the policy and discursive chain and with different relevant individuals and institutions at each of those layers. I describe here why I chose to focus on specific institutions, how and why I chose my ‘ground-level’ case study villages and how I collected my data. The chapter will reflect on my methods, my positionality and the ethics that have guided and framed this project.

**Chapter 4** is the first of three empirically-grounded chapters. It provides an ethnographic account of male youth work and migration in Southern Benin, drawing in particular on my qualitative research with communities from which adolescent males frequently migrate for work in Nigeria and with adolescent males currently working in the artisanal quarries of Abeokuta, Nigeria. The chapter explores local notions of childhood, child development, adolescence, work and migration and examines the reasons for and experience of male youth labour migration from my

case study villages and the surrounding region. It thus represents a unique empirical challenge to dominant international anti- child trafficking discourse and policy and the Beninese discourse and policy that will be addressed in the following chapter.

**Chapter 5** outlines the contours of the Beninese discourse and policy in question. The chapter draws on data gathered from various discursive texts, from policy and project documents and from interviews and participant observation with actors integral to the constitution of discourse and policy in (and with influence over) the Beninese anti-trafficking community. It argues that trafficking discourse rests on notions of extremity and non-consensuality with regards to the child/youth labour migration it understands as trafficking and that it consequently pathologises this in a way that sees (and represents) it as possible only in the event of parental deficiencies, criminal deviance, the monetised corruption of traditional social solidarity, or amorphous structural factors such as ‘poverty’. The chapter subsequently addresses anti-trafficking policy in Benin and discusses the way its various elements combine to ‘protect children from trafficking’ through the promotion of ‘healthy’ childhoods and the pre-emptive prevention of child movement.

In **Chapter 6**, I will offer a three-part conclusion to the discussion presented in the previous chapters. In the first, I will draw on Chapters 4 and 5 to argue that my empirics demonstrate quite clearly that the trafficking discourse is inaccurate and that its policy is failing. In the second, I will use empirical and theoretical material to explain why and how I believe this to be the case. In line with the thesis’ theoretical framework, I will argue that it is largely the result of the power of the framing Apollonian, Westphalian and Neoliberal OOD, of which anti-trafficking discourse

and policy can be understood as expressions. This part will also examine the material and symbolic (power) structures of the anti-trafficking field which ensure that, while certain individual anti-trafficking actors may reject dominant (orders of) discourse and policy, and while in practice discourse and policy ‘break down’ or face resistance, this rejection and resistance are silenced and hidden beneath the representational harmony and stability that is a pre-requisite for institutional survival.

Beyond offering reflections as to the academic implications of the foregoing discussion, the thesis will conclude by suggesting that the major consequence of this state of affairs is arguably that little of material relevance actually changes. Though young males continue to migrate and at times be exploited in and around Benin, the institutions working to protect them are able to perpetuate themselves, secure funding, pay employee wages and buttress their legitimacy by *appearing* to do things that, in reality, they do not. All the while, the nature of discourse-policy means that, by palliatively focussing on the ‘symptom’ of trafficking’s exploitative work and movement instead of on the political-economic context thereof, the anti-trafficking field contributes to the reproduction not only of itself but of the very conditions underpinning that which it seeks to prevent and the framing Apollonian, Westphalian and Neoliberal orders of discourse so fundamental to them.

## CHAPTER 1

### SETTING THE SCENE:

#### CHILD TRAFFICKING AND ITS DISCONTENTS

##### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to provide a background and context to the emergence of child trafficking as an issue of major political and media concern, both internationally and in the case of Benin. It begins by giving a historical overview of the rise of what I argue is the now dominant global paradigm around child trafficking, and includes an examination of mainstream international discourse, policy and anti-trafficking legal frameworks. Subsequently, the chapter turns to the problems with this paradigm, drawing on critical academic and practitioner literature to examine the empirical and theoretical failings that plague it. The critical literature is not without its own drawbacks, however, and the chapter's third section will focus on those, before suggesting how this thesis intends to address and overcome them. Finally, the chapter will move from the general to the specific and will present Benin as a case study for this endeavour. It will provide the relevant context to Benin and to Benin's anti-trafficking field, and will highlight precisely why I believe these to represent especially useful cases for this examination.

## **Child Trafficking: The Emergence of a Dominant Paradigm**

### Emergence

Child trafficking began its journey towards the status of Number One international child protection issue in the mid-to-late 1990s (ILO-IPEC 2002:3, Riisøen et al. 2004, O’Connell Davidson and Farrow 2007, Hashim and Thorsen 2011, Morganti 2011, Howard 2012c). This followed on the back of a sharp increase in funding for, media attention to and political discourse around the previous ‘it’ issues of child labour and child sexual abuse, which had themselves spiked in the wake of the 1989 adoption of the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) (Aitken 2001, Myers 2001, Dahlén 2007, Fyfe 2007). In 1992, that spike had seen the establishment of the ILO’s hugely influential *International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour* (IPEC), which became the centrepiece of a highly-resourced and discursively powerful global industry dedicated to eradicating ‘exploitative’ labour for the under-18s and replacing it with mass child schooling (White 1999, Myers 2001, Bourdillon et al 2011). In 1996, it saw the inauguration of the *World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*, which had been set up to fight child pornography and prostitution and which led, in tandem with the ILO, to the first international governmental proposals for a ‘new convention against trafficking in minors’ (Gallagher 2001:982, ILO-IPEC 2002:3).

This advocacy was itself undoubtedly influenced by the parallel growth in global political and media attention to the trafficking of women for sex, which had begun to gather pace at the end of the Millennium. A number of differing factors have been

cited to explain this growth<sup>4</sup>, and although there is debate, what is clear is that it centred around a number of US feminist organisations raising the alarm about the increasing ‘sexual slavery’ of women and girls around the world and culminated in the UN’s adoption of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the Convention on Transnational Organised Crime*, (otherwise known as the ‘Palermo’ or ‘Trafficking Protocol’).

Though the content and operation of this Protocol will be discussed below, what is significant here is that its promulgation entrenched trafficking – of both adults and children – as one of international civil society’s veritable contemporary *causes célèbres* (Doezema 2001, 2002a, 2002b, Chapkis 2003, Chuang 2006, Weitzer 2007). Indeed, the years following its adoption witnessed such a massive expansion of publications, media reports, project money, legal initiatives and political rhetoric around the issue that the 2000s were described by some as ‘the decade of trafficking’ (Field Notes 2009). As Kempadoo has observed, the number of organisations registered globally as active in the fight against trafficking mushroomed from a few to nearly a thousand during these years (Kempadoo 2005:xxix). In parallel, the growing ‘mythology of trafficking’ resulted in what Gozdziaik and Bump identify as an ‘explosion’ in trafficking-related literature, with their 2010 bibliographic search turning up almost 7000 publications beyond the countless many in the public media (2011:9-18). On the legal front, the picture was no different. In their recent study of the worldwide spread of anti-trafficking policies, Cho et al. note that, as of 2009, 177

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<sup>4</sup> These include the break-down of the old Soviet Union (Berman 2003), the spread of neoliberal economic globalisation (Pyle 2002, Sharma 2003, Limoncelli 2009), the rise in trans-national organised crime (Derks 2000:24, USDS 2002), the increasing rigidity of Western immigration regimes (Agathangelou 2004, Anderson 2008, Andrijasevic 2010), the rising number of natural disasters (Shelley 2010:1) and a spate of political opportunism (Kempadoo 2005, Davies 2008).

separate countries had official anti-trafficking policies – a figure which was up from a mere handful a decade previously (2011). Accompanying all this have of course been literally billions of dollars channeled into state and non-state anti-trafficking initiatives. Indeed, the ILO-IPEC budget increased from \$22m to \$130m between 1999 and 2006 alone (ILO-IPEC 1999, 2008), largely on the basis of the anti- child trafficking donations it received (Interview with Carl, 9/6/9).

### Discourse

In her examination of dominant global trafficking discourse, Moshoula Capous Desyllas uses the term ‘discourse’, like ‘narrative’, ‘to describe the set of accepted and relevant concepts related to trafficking which have become socially legitimized as knowledge and truth within society’, and which thus constitute the stock trafficking ‘story’ (2007:58). In reflecting on the past twelve years since child trafficking exploded as an international issue, it is clear that its story and the socially legitimized knowledge and truth that comprise it have centred on notions of ‘exceptionality’ and ‘non-consensuality’. By this I mean that the depictions that politicians, anti-trafficking agencies and the public media routinely give of it focus near-exclusively on *extremes* of abuse and on the role of either *coercive force* or *victim naivety*.

In her assessment of popular perceptions of what trafficking ‘is’, Wendy Chapkis collates a wealth of data to argue that most involve the extreme, non-consensual and ‘massive violation of innocent women and children by depraved sex slavers’ (2003:925). She cites Republican Congressman Smith – one of the key legislators

behind early US efforts to combat trafficking – as indicative of this trend. Smith claimed:

‘Each year, 50 thousand innocent women and young children are *forced, coerced, or fraudulently thrust* into the international sex trade industry with *no way out*. This *brutal, demeaning and disgusting abuse* of women and children is predicated on their *involuntary participation* in sexual acts...The image of a young, innocent child being *forcibly sold* into the sex trade for the fiscal gain of one *sick individual* and the physical gain of another is tragic. The idea that we would allow it to go unpunished is even more so (C. Smith 2000)’ (in Chapkis 2003:925, emphasis added).

Smith’s words have been echoed by politicians and international officials countless times over the last decade. In one particularly emblematic interview, Rimah Salah, then UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa, claimed that ‘millions of children’ were being abducted and trafficked into abuse across the region (in Riisøen et al. 2004:11). In the Foreword to a publication she then co-authored, she states:

‘The trafficking of children is one of the *gravest violations* of human rights in the world today. Children and their families are *ensnared by the empty promises* of the trafficking networks – promises of a better life, of an escape route from poverty – and every year, *hundreds of thousands of children* are smuggled across borders and *sold as mere commodities*. Their survival and development are *threatened*, and their rights to education, to

health, to grow up within a family, to protection from exploitation and abuse, are *denied*' (2003:6, emphasis added).

One of the last decade's most influential ILO publications on this issue – the emotively titled *Unbearable to the Human Heart* – follows almost verbatim:

'Many different actors may be involved in the trafficking process...*Various means may be used to entrap the victims, including persuasion, deception, threats and coercion.* Sometimes it is the children themselves or their families who take the initiative to migrate and who approach recruiters. *Generally they have no idea of the fate that awaits them.* Even if they are aware that hardships lie ahead, *they rarely understand the nature nor the duration of the suffering they will face...*

The consequences of trafficking on both children and their communities are many. In the worst cases, it can be responsible for a child's *disappearance or death*, or can *permanently damage his/her physical and mental health*. It might also encourage *drug dependency, break families apart, and deprive children* of their rights to an education and freedom from exploitation (2002:x-xi, emphasis added).

These perspectives are widely reflected within the public media. A simple internet search for the term 'child trafficking' returns close-up shots of tearful African, South Asian and East Asian girls, shots of battered, half-clothed young women, various symbolic images of girls trapped in jars, their wrists or mouths bound, close-ups of

crying boys and girls, abused toddlers, and boys holding weapons or engaged in physical labour. Unsurprisingly, there is great overlap between these images and those related to ‘child labour’. As Dorte Thorsen has argued, this is because mainstream public depictions ‘equate children’s work and migration with the worst forms of child labour and with trafficking’ (2007:9; see also Bastia 2005, Howard 2008 and Heissler 2009, Morganti 2011). She offers a series of translated extracts from Burkinabé daily newspapers as an illustration:

‘Thousands of children, girls as well as boys, are *victims of this inhuman practice*. These children are *used* either in the plantations or as domestic workers in the cities or even *reduced to prostitutes and totally outside social protection*.

(L’Hebdomadaire No 285, 24-30 September 2004, my translation)

...

The police intercepted 13-year-old Hamado and 15-year-old Larba at Kaya. [...] “The reason why I left was that there wasn’t any work at Maané”, said Hamado when trying to justify his action, though he did not doubt that *he had escaped one of the worst forms of child labour, which could have cost him his life*.

(Sidwaya, 18 May 2005, my translation)’

(ibid.9, emphasis added).

The role of Fagin-like trafficker-figures such as Smith's 'sick individual', who inhabit a realm outside the normal moral spectrum, is key in this discursive world<sup>5</sup>. It is echoed in the widespread association of trafficking with 'organised crime'. From sensationalist media accounts to institutional reports, answers to the question 'who are the traffickers?' consistently identify organised criminals as key. The BBC 'trafficking page', for example, claims that 'Criminal gangs bring [victims] into the country individually or in small, escorted groups. The routes used can change quickly, although some broad routes have been identified'<sup>6</sup>. Similarly, according to the US Government, organised crime groups are a central 'cause of trafficking' (USDS 2004:19), while for the ILO, there are three distinct models of 'criminal body' that facilitate the process (ILO-IPEC 2005:36/7; see also 2005). This understanding is of course reflected in the global legal framework defining trafficking – the International Convention on Trans-national *Organised Crime*.

That this Convention focuses on *trans-national* crime is also significant. It reflects the fact that at the heart of mainstream understandings of trafficking is the notion that migration is a significant, facilitating cause (rather than consequence) of 'vulnerability' to trafficking. As Radhika Coomaraswamy, former UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, so famously stated:

'Traffickers fish in the stream of migration. They prey on the most vulnerable section of the migrants to supply to the most exploitative, hazardous and inhuman forms of work' (see USDS 2008:26).

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<sup>5</sup> Weitzer (2007) calls this the 'folk-devil'.

<sup>6</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/5343036.stm>

Her words have been echoed consistently over the past decade. In offering vignette examples of how migrant children can unwittingly find themselves trafficked, for example, the ILO state:

‘In Nepal, girls recruited to work in carpet factories, hotels and restaurants have been subsequently trafficked into the sex industry in India. Similarly, in the Philippines and many other countries, children who migrate or are recruited for the hotel and tourism industry to work in restaurants, bars, and cafés, for example, often end up in commercial sexual exploitation. In Indonesia, it was found that some girls who are recruited to work in small soft drink and food stalls in Jakarta become involved in providing sexual services in order to have sufficient income to survive in the city’ (ILO-IPEC 2002:14).

Within dominant global discourse, however, migration has not only been characterised as an important proximate cause of child trafficking. Rather, as Hashim and Thorsen argue in their recent wide-ranging study (2011), those involved in international child protection commonly depict child migration as *intrinsically* problematic, because it separates the young from the presumably safe, healthy homes understood as integral for their normal development (see also Hashim 2003, Morganti 2011, Boyden and Howard, Forthcoming). As such, it has seen child migration either equated to or collapsed with trafficking. In Huijsmans’ words:

‘When it comes to independent child migration, the policy arena is dominated by the human trafficking discourse...The image of children

evoked by the human trafficking discourse [is] as passive beings in migration who are being traded, transported and exploited' (2011:1311).

Running throughout this discursive landscape, then, are a number of very clear trends. These include the exceptional nature of the abusive trafficking experience, the total absence of victim consent to that experience, the centrality of extreme, coercive, individualised figures to that experience, and the propensity of mobility to facilitate that experience. The overall image that is constructed by this emphasis on 'exceptionality' and 'non-consensuality' is one in which trafficking is an *anomaly*. Detached from, and outside of, the ordinary (and thus presumably positive) order of things, trafficking is seen as an unambiguously negative state of affairs that is possible only because of otherworldly transgression. As Anderson and Andrijasevic note, the 'stereotyped binar[ies]' that operate in this discursive world – consent/coercion, normal-legitimate/abusive-exploitative, free-choice/force – thus remove from the conceptual framework the ambiguities, nuances and wider structural contexts within which trafficking, exploitation, work and movement take place and are lived (2008:136).

### International Legal Frameworks and Policies

Against such a backdrop, it should come as no surprise that most anti-trafficking strategies have been highly surgical and highly palliative, taking a three-pronged approach that emphasises targeting the individualised transgressors constructed as responsible for trafficking, the extreme working conditions equated with it and the migration that is seen to facilitate vulnerability thereto (Kempadoo 2005, Chuang

2006, Dottridge 2007). Before we examine these policy trends, however, let us first address the international legal framework that underpins them and which, itself, so heavily reflects the dominant discourse.

The first major legal initiative developed to address either adult or child trafficking since their 1990s (re-)emergence came from the US, in the form President Clinton's Directive. This Directive focussed on "the three P's": (1) prevention; (2) protection and assistance for victims; and (3) prosecution of and enforcement against traffickers' (Chuang 2006:449). This led, through the various stages of US law-making, to the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act* (TVPA) of 2000, establishing both domestic norms defining what trafficking is and what the US government should do about it, and a framework for US efforts to pressure other countries to adopt similar measures. The Act defines 'severe forms of trafficking in persons' as:

'(a) sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or

(b) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery' (US Government 2000).

Moreover, the Act 'establishe[d] a sanctions regime authorizing the President to withdraw US (and certain multilateral) non-trade-related, non-humanitarian financial

assistance from countries deemed not sufficiently compliant with the US government's "minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking", and set up a State Department office to produce regular *Trafficking in Persons* (TIP) reports on international compliance (Chuang 2006:449).

Following these developments in Washington was the UN's Trafficking or 'Palermo Protocol', which came into operation in 2003. In Article 3, it defines trafficking in the following fashion:

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

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

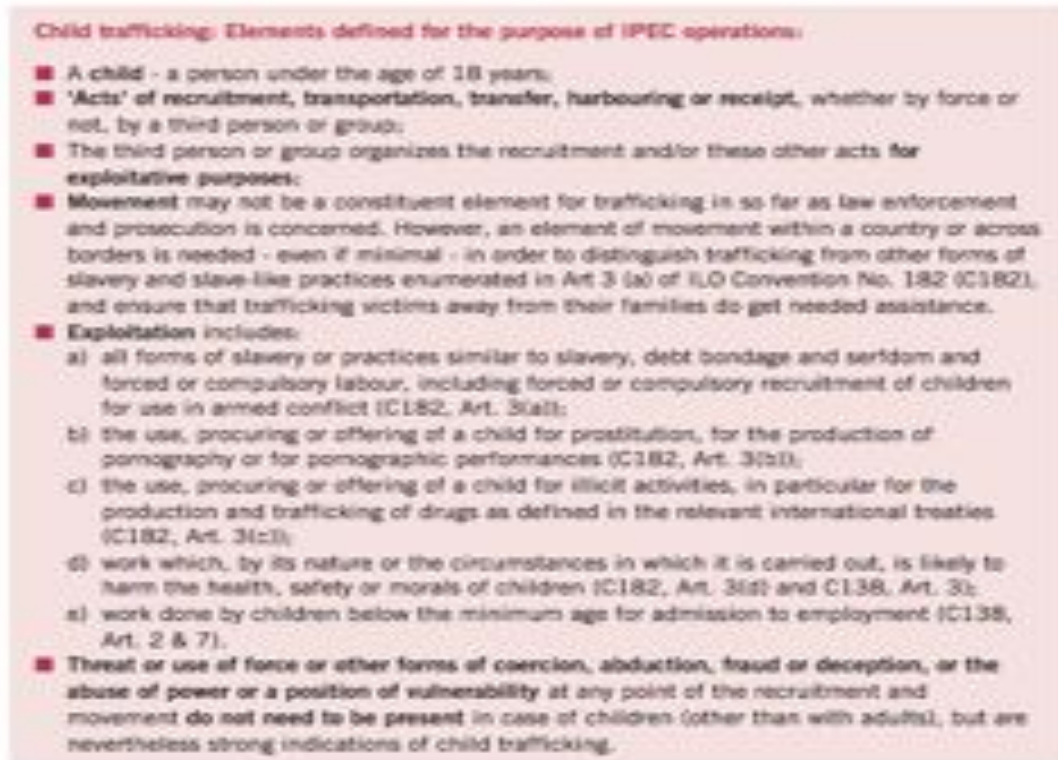
(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons"

even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age’ (UN 2000).

Although these instruments do clearly address the trafficking of children, they alone do not comprise the entirety of the international legal architecture structuring definitions of, and approaches to, child trafficking. This is because child trafficking has historically been constructed as a question not merely of sexual exploitation but also of *exploitative child labour* (ILO-IPEC 2002:v-xi, UNICEF 2003:vii). As such, the international anti- child trafficking legal framework *combines* both the Palermo Protocol and the various anti- child labour conventions promulgated by the ILO. The extract overleaf, from the jointly published ILO, UNICEF and UN.GIFT ‘Textbook’ on child trafficking, clarifies these definitional nuances (2009; Extracted from ILO-IPEC 2007, 2008 and 2008a).

**Figure 1: Definitional Elements of Child Trafficking**



It is worth noting at the outset that three major factors thus differentiate the legal definitions of child and adult trafficking. These are, first, that coercion is not necessary for an exploitative act to constitute trafficking in the case of under-18s. Second, and in contrast to the principle established by the CRC that policy-makers must take into account a minor's articulation of her understanding of her best interests (see Huijsmans and Baker 2012), that a minor's consent to engaging in exploitative labour is rendered irrelevant and legally impossible. And third, that 'exploitation' is defined both more broadly and more specifically than in the case of trafficking in adults. How is this so? Well, as myriad commentators have noted with regards to the Palermo Protocol (see, for example, Gallagher 2001, Chapkis 2003, Kempadoo 2005, O'Connell Davidson 2011, Huijsmans and Baker 2012), 'exploitation' is defined in tautological and minimalist fashion, comprising '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'. As such, in this legal framework, when 'exploitation' is not simply 'exploitation', it is an extreme case of forced labour, slavery or the abrogation of an individual's bodily integrity.

With under-18s, however, the addition to the legal architecture of the key ILO anti-child labour instruments broadens the definition considerably. The two key conventions in question are Numbers 138 and 182, the *Minimum Age* and *Worst Forms of Child Labour* conventions respectively (ILO 1973 and 1999). Let us examine what they say. Convention 138 establishes the minimum age at which it is accepted as legitimate for children to be engaged in work (instead of only being at school) and identifies the kinds of work that are always deemed intolerable and exploitative for children. According to paragraphs 3 and 4 of Article 2:

'3. The minimum age specified in pursuance of paragraph 1 of this Article shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 3 of this Article, a Member whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed may, after consultation with the organisations of employers and workers concerned, where such exist, initially specify a minimum age of 14 years' (ILO 1973).

The types of work identified as always exploitative for children (even those older than 14) are outlined in Articles 3 and 5:

‘Article 3

1. The minimum age for admission to any type of employment or *work which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardise the health, safety or morals of young persons* shall not be less than 18 years.

2. The types of employment or work to which paragraph 1 of this Article applies *shall be determined by national laws or regulations or by the competent authority*, after consultation with the organisations of employers and workers concerned, where such exist...

Article 5

3. The provisions of the Convention shall be applicable as a minimum to the following: *mining and quarrying; manufacturing; construction; electricity, gas and water; sanitary services; transport, storage and communication; and plantations and other agricultural undertakings mainly producing for commercial purposes, but excluding family and small-scale holdings producing for local consumption and not regularly employing hired workers*’ (ILO 1973, emphasis added).

Convention 182 was drafted in order to clarify and build on Convention 138 by adding a degree of nuance to its position. It seeks to ensure that governments take immediate steps to eradicate what it identifies as the most egregious examples of exploitative child work. Article 3 holds that:

‘For the purposes of this Convention, the term the worst forms of child labour comprises:

(a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;

(b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;

(c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;

(d) *work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children*’ (ILO 1999, emphasis added).

Article 4 then specifies that the types of work covered by Article 3(d):

*‘shall be determined by national laws or regulations or by the competent authority, after consultation with the organizations of employers and workers concerned, taking into consideration relevant international standards, in particular Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999’ (ibid., emphasis added).*

The accompanying Recommendation in question (No. 190) completes the return to the language of Convention 138 (despite holding that ‘the views of the children directly affected by the worst forms of child labour, their families and, as appropriate, other concerned groups’ are to be taken into consideration) by declaring:

‘3. In determining the types of work referred to under Article 3(d) of the Convention, and in identifying where they exist, consideration should be given, *inter alia*, to:

- (a) work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
- (b) work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces;
- (c) work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;

(d) work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health;

(e) work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer.

4. For the types of work referred to under Article 3(d) of the Convention and Paragraph 3 above, national laws or regulations or the competent authority could, after consultation with the workers' and employers' organizations concerned, authorize employment or work as from the age of 16 on condition that *the health, safety and morals* of the children concerned are fully protected, and that the children have received adequate specific instruction or vocational training in the relevant branch of activity' (ILO 1999a, emphasis added).

What this all means with regards to the definition of 'exploitation' in the context of child trafficking is twofold. First, work in a whole swathe of economic sectors is illegalised, including many in which poor children across the Majority World<sup>7</sup> necessarily find themselves engaged. These include quarrying, construction, transport and commercial agriculture. Second, it is the responsibility of the government, in

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<sup>7</sup> Castles uses the terms 'North' and 'South' to refer to what could blandly be identified as the 'rich' or 'poor' worlds. He states: 'The North-South divide is, of course, not a geographical expression, but a political and social one. Nor is it absolute, since the North includes areas and groups subject to social exclusion, while the South has prosperous cities and elite groups. The North-South divide is a useful general term for the growing disparities in income, social conditions, human rights and security linked to globalization' (2003:211). While I recognise the heuristic utility of this approach to terminology, following Heissler (2009), I have chosen instead to employ the terms 'Majority' and 'Minority World', since I feel that these a) avoid the geographical confusions arising from an association with cardinal points, and b) underline the empirical reality that great wealth is concentrated in relatively few hands, to the detriment of relatively many.

consultation with representatives of capital and labour (but not children or their communities), to determine precisely which work represents a threat to the very open-to-interpretation ‘health, safety and morals’ of the young, and thus which work constitutes exploitation. Legally, therefore, a 17-year old who has migrated for paid work in conditions to which s/he has consented on the fullest information possible, but which are deemed exploitative by the competent authorities, can nevertheless be defined as a victim of trafficking (with the employer thus a ‘trafficker’). We will have recourse to think further about the implications of this in Chapter 4.

As has been the case with efforts to prevent the traffic in women<sup>8</sup>, what this legal framework has meant in policy terms is that the dominant emphasis of global anti-trafficking efforts has been placed squarely on the targeted abolition of the kinds of work seen as equivalent to trafficking, the pre-emptive prevention of migration as a means to protect would-be victims from arriving at the destination of their supposed exploitation, and an expansion of state law enforcement mechanisms (though not to protect labour more generally).

Beginning with law-enforcement, since trafficking is so often constructed as a problem of deviant criminality, and since such a heavy emphasis is placed within the Palermo Protocol on prevention through tackling that criminality (as opposed to tackling the factors which underpin vulnerability thereto; see Gallagher 2001, Kempadoo 2005, Seagrave 2005, Dottridge 2007, O’Connell Davidson and Farrow 2007, WCRWC 2007, Huijsmans 2012), ‘most countries’ counter-trafficking efforts focus on effectuating a strong criminal justice response to the problem’ (Chuang

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<sup>8</sup> For women, see, amongst others, Adams 2003, Berman 2003, EMPOWER 2003, Zimic 2004, Kempadoo 2005, Kapur 2005, Sanghera 2005, Sharma 2005, Ho 2005, Skrivankova 2007, Jana et al. 2007, Davies 2008, Gaber 2008.

2006:150). As Cho et al. note (2011), this has translated into is a massive global expansion in legal provisions and an increase in funding for policing and border forces. In this, of course, the US TIP office have been central, using their sanctions regime to compel countries to get the right laws on the books and to provide statistics regarding arrest and prosecution (Chuang 2006, 2010). In West Africa, for instance, this has led to the establishment and resourcing of increasingly powerful national anti-trafficking agencies – the *Nigerian National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons* (NAPTIP) being the most prominent – and a rise in often heavy-handed, targeted policing. Again, Nigeria represents a useful example here, with Nwogu’s *Collateral Damage* report concluding that ‘securing access to justice for the victim is not high on the agenda of the government; rather, all initiatives focus on securing convictions of traffickers and redeeming the image of the country abroad’ (2007:161).

With regards to the pre-emptive targeting of migration as a protective-preventive measure, a number of studies from the past decade have illustrated quite how normalised such a strategy has become (Hashim 2003, Castle and Diarra 2003, Bastia 2005, Whitehead et al. 2007, Thorsen 2007, O’Connell Davidson 2011). Dottridge, for example, shows that governments and NGOs from Britain to Bangladesh have launched campaigns aimed at encouraging women as well as children to ‘stay at home’, rather than face the ‘perils’ of a journey that could see them fall prey to traffickers (2007). In South-East Asia, Huijsmans has demonstrated how Lao and Thai authorities conflate youth mobility with trafficking in a way that not only criminalises child and youth movement but that involves nationwide efforts to prevent it (2008, 2011). The same has been true in West Africa, in countries

including Ghana (Hashim 2003), Burkina Faso (Thorsen 2007), Mali (Castle and Diarra 2003) and Benin (Morganti 2011, Alber 2011). Indeed, in each of these cases, the competent anti-trafficking authorities have enacted measures that target *all* youth mobility as a means of catching that which will ultimately lead to exploitation and thus – in legal terms – trafficking.

This points to the third major trend in international anti- child trafficking policy: the illegalisation and targeting of the kinds of economic activity seen as akin to trafficking. Where, with women, such a strategy often means the illegalising of sex work (see, for instance, Kempadoo 2005, Ditmore 2005, Chuang 2010), with children it of course concerns all those activities highlighted above as worst forms of child labour. As Bourdillon et al. demonstrate in their recent overview of *The Rights and Wrongs of Child Work* (2011), this strategy has historical precedent. Indeed, they argue that dominant anti- child labour policies have almost always adopted an ‘abolitionist’ rather than a ‘regulatory’ position. By this distinction they capture the difference between, on the one hand, those who accept that not all child and youth work is negative and thus that, as with adult work, conditions of employment can be regulated and supervised in the best interests of workers (with workers themselves having a say on those interests), and, on the other hand, those who see almost all economic activity for the under-18s as pernicious and in need of being abolished (see also White 1999, Myers 2001, Ansell 2005, Wells 2009). The dominance of the abolitionist position within anti- child labour as well as anti- child trafficking efforts is captured within the legal framework and the associated attempts to ban all child work (and child labour migration to work) in specific industries. Examples here include textiles in Bangladesh (Bourdillon et al. 2011), plantation agriculture in

Ghana (Berlan 2005) and domestic service in Côte d'Ivoire (Jacquemin 2006) and Benin (Morganti 2011). Crucially, and in spite of the evident differences between younger, smaller children and older adolescents, the abolitionist position has historically paid little attention to calls for nuancing legal responses, instead promoting blanket bans as if work were experienced equally by all under-18s (Orkin 2010, Bourdillon et al. 2011).

### **Problems with the Dominant Paradigm**

Criticism of dominant international anti- child trafficking discourse and policy is now widespread. After more than a decade of work and research with apparent 'victims', it has become clear that trafficking's commonly accepted discursive 'knowledges and truths' are often inaccurate and reductive, just as it is apparent that policy is often misguided and ineffective. In particular, critics reject the binary lines underpinning prevailing narratives and strategies, and point to the frequency with which 'trafficked children' are able to and *do* consent to their exploitation, the blurry lines which divide that exploitation from 'legitimate' work, and the importance of structural (as opposed to individual) forces in sustaining that exploitation. Criticism thus centres on the notion that constructing and responding to trafficking as an individualised anomaly based on extremity and non-consensuality simplifies, misrepresents and depoliticises the complex empirical realities of exploitative work and migration. In this section, I will reflect on these critiques, drawing on empirical and theoretical arguments to do so.

Although *some* children do undeniably experience the kinds of abuse depicted by the mainstream trafficking narrative, a good deal of research exists to suggest that a clear majority of those defined as ‘trafficked’ do not. In my own case, pre-doctoral work with young migrant labourers and ‘victims of trafficking’ revealed a radical divergence between representation and reality. Though touted as victims of ‘the worst forms of child labour’ or ‘slavery-like practices’, many of the teenagers I encountered in 2005 and 2007 declared their work to be normal and at times even enjoyable. Similar things were found in Benin by Alber (2011) and Morganti (2011), both of whom researched with migrant domestic worker girls. De Lange (2007), Thorsen (2007) and Hashim (2003, 2005) came to similar conclusions with migrant teenage boys in Burkina Faso and Ghana, as did Heissler with teenage girls in Bangladesh (2009), Bastia with a mixed group of adolescents in Argentina (2005), and Huijsmans with a similar group in Laos (2008).

Though many young people migrating and working under conditions such as those depicted in these studies will often narrate their experiences very equivocally, it is crucial to recognise how often they identify those conditions as similar to, or better than, the other options available, be those at ‘home’ or in other jobs. Morganti’s research is paradigmatic in this regard. She spent over a year working in Beninese shelters housing children and teenage girls ‘rescued from situations of trafficking’, be those in domestic service or market labour. Though expecting to find cowed youngsters with horror stories to tell, the majority of the adolescents she spoke to were level-headed and ambitious labour migrants who saw the ‘suffering’ of their working lives as a necessary part of their journey towards a better future. Few denied that at times they faced mistreatment, abuse or exploitation. ‘What is the

alternative?', they asked, however. 'At least there we can make some money'. Such was the extent of this feeling, she notes, that in one shelter in the Northern Beninese city of Parakou, the major problem the agency operating it faced between 2006 and 2008 was preventing residents from running away (2011).

This of course points to how problematic is the assumption of total non-consensuality within the dominant paradigm. Though many young people can meaningfully offer consent from within only a narrow range of life options, it is clear that many still do so. A rising tide of research is empirically demonstrating as much. In Mali, for instance, Castle and Diarra interviewed 1000 teenagers classed as 'trafficked' and asked them whether they understood themselves as having been forced to migrate. Only four responded in ways that suggested they had. The others had all seemingly agreed to migrate for work (2003). Similarly, in Ghana and Burkina Faso, Iman Hashim and Dorte Thorsen found that the 'trafficked' adolescents they interviewed were predominantly teenagers engaged in consensual labour migration as part of individual or familial livelihood strategies (Hashim 2003, 2005, Thorsen 2007). Though it was assumed that they had been coerced by traffickers, in reality the majority had migrated within their extended village or family networks (see also IRIN 2009). Parallel findings have been recorded in Benin (Alber 2011), Laos (Huijsmans 2008) and Argentina (Bastia 2005), with each case also demonstrating how positively many young migrants experience their movement.

The pre-emptive targeting of labour migration as part of dominant anti-trafficking strategies therefore seems highly questionable, and (likely to be) of at best questionable efficacy (Hashim 2003, Thorsen 2005, de Lange 2007, Howard 2008;

see De Haas 2007 for a wider discussion of migration-targetting policies). Moreover, the (un)intended consequences of such strategies can be serious. Whitehead et al. (2007) argue that in societies where migration represents an entrenched livelihood or survival strategy (particularly among the poor), criminalising it can be extremely dangerous<sup>9</sup>. Abbassi and Davies echo this claim, pointing to the case of Bangladesh, where peasant mobility represents an age-old coping mechanism in times of hardship and where attacks on it have led the authors to conclude that ‘anti-trafficking initiatives could be considered anti-poor’ (n.d:4). This is supported also by Morganti’s work. In her encounters with ‘rescued’ teenage Beninese labour migrant girls, it is the police and the border authorities who are seen as the gravest threat to individual security and prosperity, and who are thus avoided at all costs (2011)<sup>10</sup>.

In reflecting on precisely the nuances revealed by such studies, Anderson notes:

‘The problem is that workers, migrant or not, cannot be divided into two entirely separate and distinct groups – those who are trafficked involuntarily into the misery of slavery-like conditions in an illegal or unregulated economic sector, and those who voluntarily and legally work in the happy and protected world of the formal economy’ (2007:11; see also Anderson and O’Connell Davidson 2003).

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<sup>9</sup> Such criticisms are paralleled in the literature attacking the abolitionist discourse and policy relating to child labour. See, for example, Myers 2001 and Boyden 1997.

<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting here that some academics argue that anti-migratory anti-trafficking policies actually have the paradoxical effect of increasing trafficking, in the terms defined by the Palermo Protocol. This is because, where people are intent on migrating irrespective of the legal framework, anti-migratory policies close down the space for them to do so in anything other than a clandestine fashion, making it thus even more likely that they will find themselves using dangerous or hidden migratory routes or in the hands of professional smugglers. As Sanghera asserts, the ‘lack of legal rights to mobility...compels marginal and vulnerable groups to lead underground lives, enhancing their manifold vulnerability to harms such as trafficking’ (2005:8). The problem, Kapur claims, is that ‘legal barrier methods fail to attend to the complex factors that induce migration, and instead target the individual’ with efforts to stop her movement (2005:36).

Reflecting in similar vein, Bourdillon et al. caution that, whether exploitative or not:

‘Children’s work and related problems can only be understood in their broader context of persistent global inequality, large-scale poverty, and the webs of power within which children are born and grow up, reflecting inequalities based on wealth, social class, gender, generation, ethnicity, etc. When excessive involvement of children in work is a symptom of broader problems, interventions that focus only on children’s work do not offer effective solutions’ (2011:161).

As such, critics argue that the dominant anti-trafficking paradigm needs to develop much greater nuance, first by paying greater attention to the structural context which frames and underpins exploitative work and movement (see, for instance, Chang and Kim 2007), and second by acknowledging and respecting the (constrained) agency of child and youth migrant workers to make reasoned choices and offer reasoned consent despite the restrictions this structural context imposes on them.

What would this mean in practice? With regards to structure, though writing in a different context, White’s words speak for many: ‘*political* changes, with respect to taxation, social security, military spending, monetary policy, commodity pricing and political accumulation are much more essential than the technical interventions of dominant approaches’ (1999a:325). With regards to respect for an individual’s agency, many advocate what Abramson has termed the ‘autonomy position’ (2003; see also Hernández-Truyol and Larsen, 2006). This involves distinguishing between those who meaningfully agree to their migration and work on the basis of the fullest

information possible about the type and conditions of work they will be expected to perform, and those whose consent has been abrogated by any form of coercion or deception. It also means working to *ameliorate* rather than abolish the kinds of sub-optimal labour that structural constraints impose on people. Though this is a position most frequently heard in debates regarding the trafficking or exploitation of adult women working in the sex sector<sup>11</sup>, Bourdillon et al. capture it well with regards the under-18s:

‘A parallel might be drawn with sports. Children’s participation in sports is generally considered physically, socially, and psychologically developmental for them, especially when properly organized and overseen by adults. Adults coach children in skills, enforce rules of safety and fairness, encourage effort and good sportsmanship, and counsel children as needed in order to make sport as developmental as possible. But sports also come with risks, and almost all children who play them suffer minor wounds such as scrapes, bruises and sprains, and sometimes more serious injuries as well. Some sports are so violent, exhausting, or otherwise inappropriate that responsible adults do not let children engage in them. But nobody deals with risk by banning children from all sports. Instead,

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<sup>11</sup> Abramson explains the position as one that ‘respects the right of adults to make decisions about their lives, including the decision that working under abusive or exploitative conditions is preferable to other available options (ibid.388)’. Martha Nussbaum is perhaps its most eloquent exponent in relation to female sex work. In arguing why a woman’s consent must be legally recognised as possible and valid, she states:

‘We should begin from the realization that there is nothing per se wrong with taking money for the use of one’s body. That is the way most of us live, and formal recognition of that fact through contract is usually a good thing for people, protecting their security and their employment conditions. What seems wrong is that relatively few people in the world have the option to use their body, in their work, in what Marx would call a “truly human” manner of functioning, by which he meant (among other things) having some choices about the work to be performed, some reasonable measure of control over its conditions and outcome, and also the chance to use thought and skill rather than just to function as a cog in a machine. Women in many parts of the world are especially likely to be stuck at a low level of mechanical functioning, whether as agricultural laborers, factory workers, or prostitutes. The real question to be faced is how to expand the options and opportunities such workers face, how to increase the humanity inherent in their work, and how to guarantee that workers of all sorts are treated with dignity’ (1998: 723-4).

schools, communities and even governments organize child and youth sports to be as safe and as developmental as possible. Children are encouraged to participate as an experience conducive to their development. Might not children's work be handled similarly?' (2011:82).

That the answer to their question has so frequently been no has had grave consequences in both the fight against child labour and the fight against child trafficking (Dottridge 2007; Bourdillon et al. 2011). With the former, Bourdillon et al. highlight the paradigmatic cases of football stitching children in Sialkot, Pakistan and garment-working children in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In both instances, international initiatives aiming to protect these children from exploitation revolved around having them removed from work that was deemed too dangerous for them. In both instances, though the vast majority of children perceived themselves as having consented to that work and were deriving significant benefits from it, they were forcibly ejected and consequently found themselves in serious economic hardship.

With trafficking, Mike Dottridge and the *Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women* (GAATW) have compiled a similar series of 'collateral damage' accounts. The most emphatic comes from Nigeria, where in 2003, 26 young adults and 48 adolescents were famously 'bundled' out of the country after being found working illegally and thus having been identified as 'trafficking victims'. None were given 'the option to remain in Nigeria or to seek alternative work there – even though a regional treaty recognises their right to do so' and even though they had agreed both to the work they were doing and the migration that led them there (2007:16). No

space was offered for the exercise of their individual agency in designing their ‘protection’, because the abolitionist stance refused their right to do so.

### **The Critical Literature and Its Drawbacks**

The existing critical academic literature successfully identifies a number of the major problems with the dominant child trafficking paradigm, both in terms of discourse and in terms of policy. Where the critical literature is less strong, however, is in offering sufficiently nuanced or empirically detailed explanations for *why* the dominant paradigm takes – and continues to take – the form that it does. This is a problem that plagues the critical literature regarding trafficking more broadly. Despite the wealth of academic publications now addressing the topic, none I am aware of looks in great empirical detail at precisely *how* the dominant paradigm is formed and sustained. There are a number of general explanatory trends which can be detected, however, and this section will begin by examining those, before subsequently pointing to what I see as their major failing, which this thesis has in part been designed to overcome.

#### The Whys and Wherefores: Critical Explanations for the Paradigmatic Status Quo

##### *Ignorance and Inertia*

The major explanation given by scholars and practitioners for the perpetuation of current anti-trafficking discourse and policy in spite of their shortcomings is that the individuals and institutions on whose shoulders these rest simply do not understand

the realities they depict and respond to. This is not a controversial claim, since it is widely acknowledged that good quality data on trafficking are very hard to come by (Chuang 2006, Weitzer 2007, Shelley 2010, Gozdziaik and Bump 2011). UNICEF have even admitted this. In one report, we read:

‘It continues to be problematic to determine the exact numbers of victims of trafficking and the severity and consequences of the problem, in any region of the world’ (2005:2).

The report continues:

‘This is partly due to the lack of a clear national priority on the collection of such data. However, there are also some very real difficulties to gathering numerical data on a reality as hidden and multi-layered as the trafficking of children’ (ibid.).

The ILO concur:

‘The trafficking of children for labour and sexual exploitation is generally hidden from the public view, making it almost impossible to quantify, so that most statistics are *illustrative* rather than *accurate*’ (ILO-IPEC 2002:9, emphasis added).

In reflecting on the implications this has for US anti-trafficking work, for instance, Janie Chuang asserts:

‘Producing the yearly TIP Report assessing and ranking countries’ efforts to combat trafficking is an ambitious endeavor. The TIP Office reporting staff – comprised of approximately 10 individuals – is responsible for collecting and analyzing data regarding the anti-trafficking laws and policies of 150 countries. Given the clandestine nature of trafficking, data is difficult to obtain and assess for reliability. Although the TIP Office staff travel to some of the countries assessed to collect data, *the reports are based primarily on information received from US embassy posts, international and nongovernmental organizations, and foreign embassies, which, in turn, rely on other sources*, including academics, journalists, and victims, for their information. Because they rely heavily on second-hand data, the credibility of the TIP Report country assessments depends on the quality of the sources to which the TIP Office has access’ (2006:475, emphasis added).

The credibility of TIP Office reports or reports from similarly authoritative institutions nevertheless rarely comes into public question. As Weitzer has noted, the opposite is in fact the case – what they write is often taken as gospel, despite their own caveats. This is perhaps best illustrated by the infamous global repetition of the ILO’s ‘estimate’ that 1.2 million women and children are trafficked each year<sup>12</sup> (2007:455). Despite the flimsy empirical foundations for that estimate, it is parroted in almost every relevant publication (see also O’Connell Davidson 2011). In this context, the narrow paradigm of trafficking finds itself perpetuated even in the

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<sup>12</sup> Weitzer cites a New York Times article which could have been from any other publication: ‘Around the world, about one million women and children are seduced into leaving their homelands every year and forced into prostitution or menial work in other countries’ (ibid.).

absence of solid empirical bases, as a result of the inertia associated with the meaning-making power held by the institutions involved in propagating it.

### *The Power of Received Ideas*

The second major explanation for the state and stasis of the dominant child trafficking paradigm centres on the power of received ideas. Drawing on the critical advances inspired by the sociology of childhood tradition<sup>13</sup>, academics in this field commonly hold ‘childhood’ to be a socially constituted phenomenon, varying with time, place, culture and social structure. The actors responsible for anti-child trafficking discourse and policy, however, are seen to hold a narrow, rigid, and predominantly ‘Western’ understanding of what childhood *is* and *should be*. This, it is argued, colours and ultimately restricts how they are able to understand and respond to realities such as children’s work or migration.

Iman Hashim was one of the first academics to formulate this critical position. In a 2003 paper entitled *Pathological or Positive?*, she argues that the dominant policy-maker view of children as ‘vulnerable, dependent beings whose place is with their parents and not in work’ leads policy-makers to locate analysis and explanation of children’s migration ‘within individual psycho-pathology’ (2003:12). Dorte Thorsen made a similar case in 2007 with regards to young migrants in Burkina Faso. She claimed that the ‘taking on board [of a] globalised notion of childhood was instrumental at policy level in condemning adolescents’ migration’ as trafficking and

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<sup>13</sup> This tradition has drawn on the emergence of a ‘social constructionist’ perspective in anthropology (Boyden and Levison 2001, Boyden 2003, Heissler 2009, Bourdillon et al. 2011), sociology (James and Prout 1997, Zelizer 1994, Ansell 2005, Wells 2009), psychology (Woodhead 1990 and 1999, Rogoff 2005), and history (Ariès 1962, Cunningham 1990, 1991 and 2006, Hendick 1997). Collectively, these developments challenge static, unitary conceptions of what children or childhood are, were or can be by positing the generative importance of *context* and its dialectical relationship with the individual.

in entrenching perspectives on mobility that hold it as somehow *abnormal* (2007:8). In the five years since this article was published, a wide range of academics have echoed her analysis (see, for example, O’Connell Davidson and Farrow 2007, Whitehead et al. 2007, O’Connell Davidson 2011, Morganti 2011, Howard 2012, Huijsmans and Baker 2012). In the main, it is one that I share, though further development – which this thesis seeks to provide – is needed in explaining *why* so many policy-makers hold such apparently restrictive notions of childhood.

### *Power at Play*

While the above explanations might be termed ‘benevolent’ (in that they assume a lack of knowledge rather than malice on the part of those propagating problematic dominant discourse and policy), that which follows certainly cannot. Indeed, the third explanation to be examined here revolves explicitly around a degree of assumed malevolence, since it attributes stability within the trafficking paradigm to the fact that the individuals and bodies who promote it do so disingenuously and for their own gain. As will be seen, this gain can be political or economic<sup>14</sup>.

- State Power and Political Capital

It is a commonplace amongst academic critics that politicians ‘use’ trafficking for their own ends. John Davies, for example, uses the term ‘political traffickers’ to describe politicians who play on the image of the innocent trafficking victim in order to accrue popularity and political capital by ‘taking a tough stance’ against the

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<sup>14</sup> It could also quite clearly be ideological, as is most strikingly demonstrated in the case of radical feminist advocacy to have trafficking understood as an extension of pornography and prostitution (see Ditmore and Witjers 2003, Kempadoo 2005, Weitzer 2007)

traffickers who threaten her. Since such tough stances themselves so frequently involve 'getting tough on migration', this also allows politicians to play into and stoke popular anti-migratory sentiments, resulting in further electoral popularity (2008:127)<sup>15</sup>.

Caroline Ausserer echoes Davies' analysis, arguing that states use trafficking to further their control over their people and their people's movement. This works through the discursive construction of trafficking as a problem of (forced) migration, which legitimises the increasingly rigorous surveillance strategies deployed by state bureaucracies in 'defence' of their borders and in the supervision of the people within them (2008:101). Her perspective is paralleled both by Sharma (2003) and by Aradau (2005), each of whom see restrictive migratory policies, enhanced border control and 'risk analysis' of 'vulnerable populations' as key to the exercise and expansion of state power.

Ausserer also argues that the discursive construction of the trafficking victim as an example of the dangers of migration serves to further entrench wider anti-migratory (and anti-foreigner) prejudices among the native citizenry. Such prejudices, she claims, serve the interests of state power, because, as Foucault suggests (1977, 1980abcd), they are integral to the creation of the sedentary, nationalistic subject(ivities) most useful to (read: easily controlled by) the state (2008). Such is arguably also true with the kinds of strategies deployed by anti-trafficking policy – mass information campaigns, awareness-raising or the establishment of local committees dedicated to changing perceptions of movement and thus encouraging

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<sup>15</sup> Paul Statham (2003) has given a detailed account of how this garners political popularity.

potential migrants to remain 'at home'. In this understanding, the entrenching of a sedentary bias renders people complicit in their own domination, by aligning their attitudes towards movement with those of the regulatory, 'legibility'-requiring state (Scott 1998).

- Economic Self-Interest

Other critics argue that the current anti-trafficking paradigm is employed and sustained by influential political and economic actors specifically for their own, narrow economic gain. Davies again hints at this and is supported by a detailed argument from Kempadoo (2005). She suggests that, given the dependence of big capital on a cheap, malleable labour supply, anti-trafficking policies actually serve to drive migrants underground and thus into the 'reserve army of labour' positions from which they cannot but accept the low wages offered to them by employers. She cites the case of Tyson Foods in the US as an example of this practice, as the company made enormous wage savings through employing illegalised/trafficked Mexicans with the full complicity of the US Government (2005:xix). Additionally, it is suggested that the anti-migratory sentiment which is in part stoked by anti-trafficking rhetoric further serves the interests of such large corporations by ensuring that vulnerable 'indigenous' workers remain hostile to their similarly economically vulnerable immigrant counterparts, as opposed to uniting to defend their mutual interests against those of big capital.

Drawing heavily on the Gramscian notion of 'hegemony' as the elite-state construction of 'intellectual and moral leadership' underpinning the existing structure

of relations of production (Fairclough 1995:93), a number of academics have also argued that the trafficking discourse is utilized to draw attention away from the need for economic reform and the structural problems within (neo)liberal capitalism.

According to Nandita Sharma:

‘By problematizing migration itself, we are led away from a discussion of the socially organized conditions of both people’s displacement and subsequent migration and the structuring of a contemporary Global Apartheid through national (im)migration regimes’.

She continues:

‘The problematization of the migration of undocumented people fails to address why certain people’s mobilities are celebrated (those of tourists, intellectuals and members of non-governmental organizations [NGOs], for example) while those of Others is seen as detrimental’ (2003:54).

Indeed, she suggests that such questions are intentionally discouraged by the focusing of discursive and political resources on an approach to trafficking that points attention elsewhere than towards the wealth of the Minority World and the coordinated interplay of capitalist investors, national state leaders, and members of international bodies to ‘liberalize’, ‘privatize’ and ‘militarize’ in a way that benefits the rich but not the poor (2003:55). Moreover, by focussing attention on the extreme, anomalous and absolutely non-consensual form of labour that is outside of the apparently liberal norm of ‘free’ contractual engagement, trafficking as a discourse

can be used to obscure the reality that labour is never fully free but, as Marx suggests, exists on a continuum between freedom and un-freedom (itself in part a result of the ‘double freedom’ that comes from most labour having been divorced from the means of subsistence). In this understanding, the anti-trafficking paradigm constitutes a specific form of hegemonic adaptation. Rather than reform fundamentally in a way that would benefit others and instead of acknowledging the contradictions within (neo)liberal capitalism, the dominant configuration of power instead simply adjusts the conceptual, coercive foundations of the consent it engineers to buttress its own position.

#### Problems with Critical Explanations

Though the explanations examined above clearly have much to commend them, it should perhaps be intuitive that they remain insufficient, in particular since so few are based on any detailed empirical investigations. Indeed, it is highly improbable that all (or even most) of the many and varied individual actors operating within (and constituting) the chain of anti-trafficking discourse and policy are either ignorant or committed to instrumental malevolence. For one thing, many former anti-trafficking actors have been open about the problems with dominant discourse and policy. For another, while it would be churlish to dismiss the suggestion that malevolence could be an important factor (in that *certain* political or economic actors will benefit from and thus actively strive to instrumentally structure the field of action within which anti-trafficking discourse and policy can unfold and within which their fellow actors may act), my own early investigations pointed much more clearly to what Boyden has termed ‘misguided good intentions’ on the part of the majority of relevant

individuals (1997).

Additionally, to derive a cause such as ‘anti-trafficking actors *seek* to depoliticise class relations within the global economy’ from the effect that the dominant discourse and policy enacted by those actors *does* depoliticise those class relations is to engage in a teleology that is itself highly questionable. As Tomas Bierschenk suggests, such analysis:

‘[suffers] from a functionalist fallacy of *deducing motives from effects*, from a misunderstanding of the function of policy formulation, and from insufficient familiarity with organisational sociology’ (2008:12, emphasis added).

Or, in the words of Loïc Wacquant, it:

‘tends to slip from model to reality – to reify the structures it constructs by treating them as autonomous entities endowed with the ability to “act” in the manner of historical agents...It thus destroys part of the reality it claims to grasp in the very movement whereby it captures it’ (in Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:8).

As David Held has pointed out, it is inaccurate to view or depict ‘the state’ as ‘a monolithic, sovereign entity...with its goals assumed and little or no differentiation among its elements’ (1995:24/5). ‘The state’, as such, does not exist. It is not the conscious, cogent agent implied by the noun that describes it; rather, it is a

confluence of individuals, institutions, norms and practices, each of which can and do pull in different directions at different times (see, for example, Clay and Schaffer 1984, Calavita 1992). The same is also true of institutions beyond the state, including of course organisations involved in anti-trafficking work. Indeed, as David Mosse's scholarship has shown, even where institutional policy and project *representation* creates the sense of agentive harmony, the hidden reality remains one of *corporate bodies* wracked by conflict, collaboration, fragmentation and dissent, against a framing backdrop of powerful discourses and the material power relations to which they are related (2004; see also Shore and Wright 1997).

What this of course suggests is that the principal critical explanations for the nature and stability of discourse and policy within the anti-trafficking field remain insufficient. Though the critical literature arguably correctly identifies the ways in which the dominant paradigm falters and the consequences to which this leads, by depicting the multiple corporate bodies at the core of this faltering as conscious, monadic, Machiavellian agents seeking the result they produce, it collapses cause and effect, leading to teleological explanations of both how and why. In reflecting on the impasse reached here, therefore, David Mosse asks:

'If policy can be regarded neither in terms of its own proclaimed rationality, nor as a dominating discourse [serving to legitimate ulterior motives]...how are we to view the increasingly sophisticated ideas, models or designs elaborated and disseminated from the headquarters of international development agencies?' (2004:648).

It will be the purpose of the next chapter to offer a theoretical basis for answering this question in relation to the construction, spread and stability of international anti-child trafficking discourse and policy.

### **Benin as a Case Study**

This thesis has been designed to achieve two principal goals. First, to shed further empirical light on the problems with the dominant paradigm around child trafficking, and second, to go beyond the existing critical literature in explaining why that paradigm is structured in the way that it is. This section will offer an overview of Benin as a case study for this endeavour, explaining why I believe Benin to be an especially propitious choice.

#### **Map 1: Benin within West Africa<sup>16</sup>**



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<sup>16</sup> Map available a and downloaded from: <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:LocationBenin.svg>.

## History and Overview<sup>17</sup>

The Republic of Benin is a multi-party constitutional democracy, currently under the Presidency of former West African Development Bank head, Yayi Boni. Its contemporary history can be traced back to the powerful West African Kingdom of Dahomey, which ruled from its capital at Abomey, in today's *Zou département*, between the early Seventeenth and the late 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The Kingdom was famous for its highly-centralized state bureaucracy and its fearsome military, while its economy, along with that of neighbouring Oyo, relied heavily on the procurement of slaves for the European market centred at Ouidah, on the Atlantic Coast.

In 1894, after a long period of economic and military decline, Dahomey lost the second of its wars against imperial France, and along with it its independence. In 1895, the Dahomean Kingdom was disbanded, Dahomey became a French protectorate, and the territory was incorporated into colonial French West Africa. French authorities quickly set about exploiting the region's natural and human resources, introducing plantation agriculture (with a focus on cotton), monetising the economy, and turning Cotonou, now the country's *de facto* political and economic capital, into a major regional port, linked to the interior by railroad.

Throughout the early decades of French rule, Beninese elites rose rapidly up the colonial administrative ladder, travelling widely across the region and forming alliances that would ultimately lead towards the push for independence. Though, in 1946, Paris offered the concession of Dahomean representation in the French

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<sup>17</sup> This section draws variously on Argyle (1966), Szentes (1975), Savary (1976), Le Meur (1996), (1999), Le Meur et al. (1998), Bierschenk (2009), Bierschenk et al. (2003), The CIA Factbook 2012 (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bn.html>) and the UNDP's Benin Data Section (<http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BEN.html>).

parliament, independence was ultimately granted in 1960. This ushered in a period of great political instability. Between 1960 and 1972, a series of coups and regime changes encapsulated the battle for patrimonial spoils fought by representatives of each of the country's three political-geographical regions.

That battle ended in 1972, when Lieutenant-General Mathieu Kérékou seized power and re-organised the country administratively so as to put an end to regional infighting. Kérékou purged his enemies, strongly centralised the state, and changed the country's name to the 'neutral' Republic of Benin in 1975. In 1974, he adopted Marxist-Leninism as the country's guiding ideology, forming an alliance with the Soviet Union, and pursuing a variety of social and economic development policies under the veil of authoritarian rule.

In the mid-1980s, Kérékou's regime began to teeter badly. Balance of payments problems, the declining terms of trade and a rise in interest payments on international debt saw the state edge towards bankruptcy. This, coupled with the mass influx of Beninese nationals expelled from Nigeria in 1983, meant that the regulative balance achieved by Kérékou – 'that of a centrally-administered rentier state' able to absorb elites into the state bureaucracy – 'had reached its financial limits' (Bierschenk 2009:346). When the Berlin Wall fell and Soviet support disappeared, Kérékou had little alternative but to surrender control and open Benin to the on-rushing 'second wave' of African democratisation. This began with the famous 'National Conference' in 1990 and led a year later to the first free, multiparty elections held in over three decades. Four subsequent rounds of elections have since been held and Benin is now

seen as a model of democracy on the African continent and a darling of the international community for its open embrace of liberalisation.

Benin's population today stands at almost 10 million people, with the majority aged 15 or under. Most people belong to one of the major Southern ethnic groups – be those Fon, Adja or Yoruba – and the majority live either in the Southern coastal cities or in the many villages and small towns dotting the South of the country. Life expectancy now averages 60 years, although infant mortality is still high and a fifth of the country's children are still underweight. More than half of all Beninese cannot read, and most will not complete secondary schooling. Benin is consequently ranked 167<sup>th</sup> on the UNDP's HDI chart.

Economically, Benin is considered one of the 'Least Developed Countries' in the world, with a GDP per capita of \$1500 and nearly 40% of people living below the poverty line. The economy is almost entirely informal, with four out of five jobs located in the informal sector (Maldonado and ILO 1998, Bierschenk et al. 2003) and taxation thus accounting for only 18% of government revenue. Agriculture is by far the country's dominant activity, generating 40% of GDP and 70% of export earnings. Of these, cotton is the only significant contributing cash crop, and beyond cotton, Benin's major revenue-earner is as an entry- or transit-point for goods on their way to Nigeria. As Bierschenk et al. note, Benin's economy 'remains inherently fragile, because of its dependence on world market prices for cotton and on the overall business environment in Nigeria, to which the Autonomous Port of Cotonou largely caters' (2003:162).

The state in Benin remains relatively weak. Financially, it relies heavily on export revenues and even more acutely on debt and foreign aid. Public debt stands at over 30% of GDP and aid finances a similar percentage of public expenditures, as well as almost all public investments. In 2001, Benin began a massive wave of liberalisation under pressure from international donors and creditors. This led to the privatisation of agricultural markets and also the telecommunications sector, shrinking the state considerably. External actors are highly influential in determining national policies (see, for instance, Assilamehoo 2003), and although the country is a formal democracy, the state's weakness and the economy's informality mean that 'on the national and on the local level, the political system is characterised by a high degree of clientelism, institutional and legal pluralism, politicisation of administration, rampant corruption and weak state regulatory and implementation capacities' (Bierschenk et al. 2003:163).

### The Emergence of Child Trafficking

Child trafficking began to emerge as a 'problem issue' for Benin in 2001. Though child labour had long been a focus of international and national attention within the country, child trafficking displaced it as the central preoccupation with the development of the Palermo Protocol and with the advent of the 'Etireno Affair' (see also Berlan 2005, Morganti 2011). The Etireno was a Nigerian trawler used by a gang of people-smugglers to illegally transport Beninese and other West African adolescents to Gabon, where they were destined to work in various Gabonese industries. After a night raid, the Gabonese authorities uncovered the smuggling ring and refused to let the Etireno dock in Libreville, ordering the captain to return his

passengers to Cotonou. The captain instead tried to return the ship to his native Cameroon in order to flee impending prosecution and in the process a multi-country diplomatic crisis ensued, as no country would allow the ship to dock, resulting in its passengers remaining stranded at sea in difficult conditions for a number of days. This, in turn, prompted the world's media to descend on the Gulf of Guinea and led both to a flurry of high-profile reports on 'the slave ship' that heralded the uncovering of 'a modern-day slave trade' (see, for example, *The Independent*, 18 April 2001), and to the identification of Benin as 'the epicentre' of the international traffic in children.

This status was solidified in 2003 by a second media-political scandal of similar magnitude. This involved the 'uncovering' of a number of Beninese 'child slaves' working in the artisanal quarries and gravel pits of Abeokuta in South-Western Nigeria (Feneyrol and TDH 2005, ILO and MFE 2008:11). An internal power-struggle had developed between two rival claimants to the status of 'community leader' among the Beninese expatriate labour-force central to the Abeokutan quarry economy. In order to bolster his claim, one of the men denounced the other as a purveyor of 'child labour' by providing the Nigerian media with 'shocking' images of adolescent boys engaged in taxing manual work. This, in turn, led to an open conflict between the supporters of the two men, which garnered significant media attention on both sides of the border, and ultimately proved deeply embarrassing for the Beninese and Nigerian authorities, with the result that 261 minors were publicly repatriated amidst governmental promises to re-double efforts against the 'trafficking' that had apparently brought them to Nigeria in the first place (Interview with Olaf, 24/8/7, Feneyrol and TDH 2005, Dottridge 2007, Morganti 2011).

Though initially very reluctant, the Beninese authorities began acknowledging what international agencies described as the country's 'child trafficking pandemic' shortly after the Abeokuta crisis (Interview with Ayala, 13/3/10). This opened Benin to a massive influx of international aid money and involved a variety of international agencies setting up their own national anti-trafficking initiatives, either in concert with the government or independently. It also began a three-year advocacy battle that would culminate in the government's adoption of both a national anti-child trafficking law and a national anti-child trafficking strategy, in 2006 and 2007 respectively.

#### Why is Benin a Useful Case Study?

There are a number of reasons why I believe Benin to represent a particularly useful case study for examining the dynamics at work in the anti-trafficking field and for assessing the nature and structure of the dominant anti-trafficking paradigm. First amongst these of course is practical. Benin has long been identified as a global 'hotbed' of the trafficking in children and as such represents something of a textbook example of discourse and policy at work. Moreover, my prior experience within the Beninese anti-trafficking field had meant that, as I began my research, I was already exposed to many of its problems as identified by the critical literature. This also meant that I was well-placed in research terms to enjoy an empirical 'head-start' in investigating these and the reasons for their continued existence there in a way that simply would not have been possible elsewhere. Beyond practicalities, the nature of Benin's political economy, its indigenous histories of migration and the (changing) nature of Beninese social structures all provide what I believe to be useful contexts

for making Benin illustrative of wider trends within both the anti-trafficking field and its dominant paradigm. The remainder of this discussion will elaborate on these contexts, providing background data that will be of relevance as the empirical discussion unfolds in later chapters.

### *Questions of Political Economy*

Benin's political economy strongly resembles that of many post-colonial African states and this has important implications for understanding the country's anti-trafficking field and for examining how the dominant trafficking paradigm operates and is deployed. In this sub-section, I will focus on 'aid' and its relationship to the state, and on cotton-production and its relationship to poverty.

- 'Aid' and the State

Tomas Bierschenk characterises Benin as a 'rentier state' (2009). For him, 'rent' is 'unearned', 'surplus revenue' which has not been derived from the factors of production, and a 'rentier state' is one in which the state machinery represents a site of competition between actors who 'compete for monopoly positions and preferential access' to those rents (ibid.346). Currently, in Benin, the major 'rent' over which such actors compete is the 'aid' channelled to the country by donors and international agencies. This has a number of consequences. First, it means that Benin's state architecture and political class are very 'externally-focussed'. Bierschenk notes:

‘In Benin, the political discourse is easily adapted to the latest fashion emanating from the West. Often this is simply done by adding up words. The latest fashion is to add “poverty” to longer-established development buzzwords: “women and poverty”, “employment and poverty”, “informal sector and poverty”, “health, poverty and development”, “decentralization and poverty”, “corruption and poverty”, “governance and poverty”, and the like’ (ibid.349).

This characterisation echoes the way in which trafficking exploded as an issue in Benin. From barely registering on the political radar, it became almost overnight *the* big development and social policy issue in the country, as state and pseudo-state agencies adapted to and configured themselves around the influx of external discourse and money relating to it (Alber 2011, Morganti 2011, Interview with Ayala, 13/3/10).

This points to a second consequence of Benin’s political-economic association with ‘aid’, namely what Bierschenk has characterised as ‘institutionalized aid dependence’. In certain respects, the Beninese state is inseparable from the donor hierarchies that fund so many of its operations. Donor staff are seconded to and work with the Beninese state, state priorities are determined in tandem with donors and work is itself paid for by those donors. This means that the Beninese ‘state’ cannot be understood as an entity separate from those donors and their agendas. Additionally, given that each different state bureaucracy is funded by and coordinates with a separate donor, there is a real degree of state (policy) fragmentation. As Bierschenk notes, ‘Poorly coordinated aid – with each donor pursuing its own agenda, creating

its own local clientele within and outside the government administration, working according to different funding cycles, timeframes and procedures – has been a major factor in limiting the coherence of government action’ (ibid.349, Bierschenk et al. 1998, 2003).

Finally, one must consider the ‘recent swing in development philosophy towards decentralized aid that tries to directly reach beneficiaries’. This has meant that ‘the search for “development rent” has been decentralized and generalized’ (Bierschenk 2009:349), with the result that there is now a proliferation of civil society bodies which have emerged to work with and ultimately become a part of the decentralised donor-state-NGO architecture (Le Meur 1996, 2000). When examining Benin’s political world and the place of the anti-trafficking field within it, then, attention must be paid to the myriad civil society bodies that represent business or social enterprise initiatives designed to access ‘development rent’.

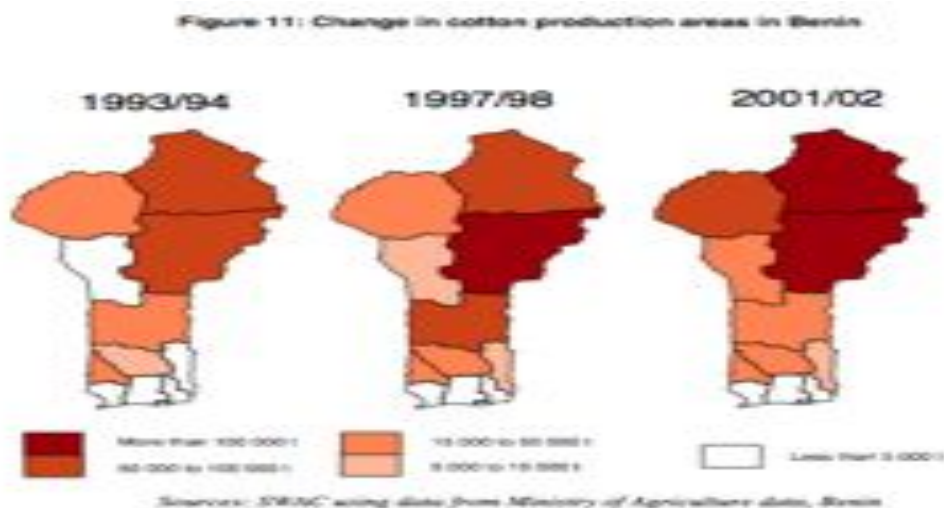
- Cotton

Various academics critical of the dominant trafficking paradigm argue that anti-trafficking discourse and policy fail to address the wider political economy of labour, migration and exploitation. My pre-doctoral work and research suggested that this was also the case in Benin, as indicated in particular by the way in which ‘poverty’ is depicted and understood. Though routinely identified as trafficking’s ‘major cause’, almost no discussion exists analysing where poverty ‘comes from’ and thus what can be done to address the structures that underpin it. A classic example of this comes with the country’s *National Anti-Trafficking Plan of Action* (POA). In its section on

the ‘structural’, socio-economic causes of trafficking, it highlights ‘poverty’ as the number one culprit, stating that trafficked children normally come from poor families and that parents are ‘pushed’ by their lack of means to accept the work, migration and even ‘sale’ of their offspring. At no point, however, does the document feature any discussion of why parents lack these means, of what shapes this ‘structure’, or of how and why it has led ‘poverty’ to become so prevalent (MFE and ILO 2008:13). ‘Poverty’ and the fact that individual households lack money are thus viewed as realities that are ‘out there’, objective and formless, but without any political-economic context.

This flies in the face of a decade of research and advocacy in particular on the political economy of cotton production in Benin. Cotton is Benin’s major cash-crop. It accounts for almost 40% of the country’s export receipts (OECD 2005:15; see also though Ton and Wankpo 2004), provides up to 29% of total employment (Alston et al. 2006:2), and generates economic externalities that likely touch the majority of the population (OECD 2005, Minot and Daniels 2005: 458).

**Figure 2: Map of Cotton Production in Benin**



In response to the devastation reaped by years of low cotton prices, Benin and three other West African nations (the so-called 'C4 Countries'), submitted a dossier to the *World Trade Organisation* (WTO) in 2003, arguing that US subsidy support for American cotton farmers was artificially deflating the international cotton price in a fashion which not only contravened WTO rules but which also contributed directly to the impoverishment of cotton farmers. This case echoed a similar one brought and won by Brazil in 2004 (Sumner 2007). In that case, the WTO ruled that US subsidies did cause 'serious prejudice to Brazil's interests by significantly suppressing the world price of cotton' (Sumner 2007:7; ). This depression occurs because subsidies de-couple US production from world cotton prices such that, when world prices are low, US cotton-growers do not respond in 'economically rational' terms by reducing production. The effects of this are exacerbated by the fact that the US occupies a price-setting role in the world cotton market, meaning that when prices fall as a result of over-supply, subsidies ensure that the fall in question is both more severe and more long-lasting than would otherwise have been the case (Fok n.d, Biadane et al. 2002, Oxfam 2002, Fadiga et al. 2004, Cross 2006, IFATPC 2007, Sumner 2007, Eagleton-Pierce 2008).

Macro- and micro-economic research suggests that this is devastating for countries such as Benin and for their cotton-farmers. OXFAM, for example, suggest that 'in 2001, sub-Saharan exporters lost \$302m as a direct consequence of US cotton subsidies', with 'two-thirds of this loss (\$191m) sustained by eight countries in West Africa', including Benin (2002:17). Similar estimates were made by the World Bank, which calculated that 'removing US cotton subsidies would generate \$250m/year in additional revenues for West African cotton farmers' (Minot and Daniels, 255:455;

see also Miroudot 2004), a figure supported by the IMF (Goreux, 2003:6). In Benin alone, it is estimated that the losses accruing to US subsidies in 2001/2 accounted for fully 1.4% of GDP, 9% of export receipts, and \$33m, which was twice the country's aid budget at the time (OXFAM 2002:17).

These figures are echoed at household level. Working on the assumption that global price falls are felt by individual farmers, Minot and Daniels calculate that, in Benin:

‘A 40% reduction in the farm-gate price of cotton reduces the income of cotton growers by 21%. Taking into account the incomes of nongrowers, which do not change in this simulation, the average income falls by 7%...With a 40% fall in the cotton price, the average incidence of poverty, including both cotton growers and other farmers rises 8 percentage points, from 40 to 48%. In absolute terms, this implies that about *334 thousand additional people* would fall below the poverty line as a result of a 40% reduction in cotton prices’ (2005:460-1, emphasis added).

In the Zou region where I conducted my fieldwork, it is suggested that ‘a 40% reduction in cotton prices results in a 15% decrease in per capita income’ and a reduction in paid labour, since ‘cotton is 15% more labour-intensive than the area-weighted average of other crops and uses 23% more hired labour per hectare than the average of other crops’ (ibid.). In very real terms, Alston et al. suggest that ‘estimated price increases [concordant with the removal of US subsidies] would generate additional net revenue per hectare in the range of 16,800 FCFA to 42,000 FCFA, given a price transmission of 80 percent...and additional net revenue per

hectare in the range of 10,800 FCFA to 26,400 FCFA, given price transmission of 50 percent' (2006:9)<sup>18</sup>. 'If we put these figures in terms of the resources to feed a child for a year', they continue, 'the gains from a 6 to 14 percent'<sup>19</sup> increase in the world price would provide enough resources to the family to maintain at least one child for about 10 months of the year and up to three children for the full year. For a household at the margin of subsistence, modest improvements in income from a higher price of cotton can determine whether food is available or not' (ibid.10).

Despite the compelling nature of this case, however, the US has consistently refuted any causal relationship between its subsidies and the impoverishment of either the Beninese state or Beninese cotton farmers, claiming that no tangible evidence exists and shifting the blame from its policies to factors including national-level corruption or mismanagement. At the time of writing, the C4 dossier has been killed, swallowed by US diplomatic pressure and government refutation, with the result that cotton-producer 'poverty' remains depicted as an objective but cause-less phenomenon (see Eagleton-Pierce 2008 for a detailed discussion of this process). This will be challenged, in relation to the youth migration understood as trafficking, as the thesis unfolds.

### *Social Families*<sup>20</sup>

The discussion above explained that, according to many critics, one of the primary

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<sup>18</sup> At the time of writing, 1000 FCFA was worth around \$1.75. These are therefore huge sums.

<sup>19</sup> This is the margin accepted by most economists as likely in the event of US subsidy removal.

<sup>20</sup> This and the following sub-section draw on and reproduce sections of my Masters thesis (see Howard 2008).

reasons for the anti-work and anti-movement emphasis of the dominant anti-trafficking paradigm is the predominance within the anti-trafficking field of a particular notion of what childhood (and, by implication, the family) should look like. This childhood is one centred on a ‘Western’ model, is work-free, should involve schooling, and should evolve within the protective sphere of the sedentary, nuclear family. The argument holds that, by constructing such a childhood as the universal norm, those models of child and family life which differ from it are automatically seen and understood through the lens of deviance, thus bringing criminalisation down upon them (Boyden 1997). Though I believe this argument needs further elaboration (which I will attempt to provide in the next chapter), it is one that I think has much merit. It is also of great relevance to Benin, since the types of family and childhood prevailing here deviate radically from the dominant Western norm, and since, as Chapter 4 will show, this has important consequences for understanding the youth work and movement that are themselves understood as trafficking. How do childhood and family ‘deviate’ here?

In contrast to the nuclear model of the industrialised West, Southern Beninese families are generally large, non-nuclear and highly communalistic (Mercier 1963, Argyle 1966, Adihou and ASI 1998, Morganti 2006 and 2007, Alber 2011)<sup>21</sup>. This is illustrated in group linguistics. As Argyle’s historical ethnography shows, the Fon word translated as ‘family’ – ‘*gbe*’ – actually means any ‘large group’, and has historically been deployed interchangeably with ‘*hwe*’, meaning ‘house/household’ (1966:129). When I enquired about this interchangeability in 2007, my research assistant and a group of gathered interviewees explained that it was normal.

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<sup>21</sup> Beyond mere household size, this communality is expressed in communal living and eating arrangements, group linguistics (see Savary 1976, Adéèkò 2005:122; Kopytoff, 2005:131) collective property-management (Argyle 1966:137), asset sharing, and responsibility sharing (Le Meur et al. 1998, Le Meur 1999, 2000).

Moreover, in this and a series of similar discussions about the nature of familial ties, it was underlined that the narrow terms of Western genealogy simply do not apply. The French word for 'brother', for instance, is consistently used to refer to what in the West would be either a cousin, second-cousin or village acquaintance, while the Western genetic notion of 'brotherhood' is always consequently prefaced by the clarificatory phrase 'same mother, same father'.

That relative definitional fluidity is paralleled in child caregiving practices. Southern Beninese groups are all characterised by what Weisner has termed 'multi-caregiving' and what Nhlapo has described as 'social parenthood'. For Nhlapo, 'as a concept, social parenthood relates to those pro-parental institutions where the roles of parenthood are split, delegated or transferred, while the link between the child and the biological parents remains intact' (1993:37; see also Goody 1982, Alber 2003). What this means is that children are routinely cared for and socialised by a wide number of caregivers, be they siblings or non-parental adults. At the most basic level, this is reflected in a diffuse, collectivised approach to the chores of child rearing, and means that children can receive instruction from any social senior.

At the more structural level, 'social parenthood' means that children can find themselves 'fostered' to adults other than their genetic parents and in geographic locations far away from those parents. During my various trips to Benin, I have found it very common for children to be living with adults other than their 'mother' or 'father'. Of the ten children and young people I stayed with in Cotonou in 2005 and 2007, for instance, only two were the biological offspring of the household heads, while the rest had come 'from the village'. This arrangement was paralleled in

all of my case study villages, as families were often comprised of children from distant relatives or acquaintances. The literature on child circulation in Benin and the wider sub-region demonstrate quite how typical this is (see, for example, Alber 2003; Isiugo-Abanihe 1985). The extended, networked nature of families and of the ‘collective parenthood’ they provide is in fact so widespread that one author suggests that as many as 17% of 6-9 year-olds and 22% of 10-14 year-olds live away from their ‘parents’ in Benin (Pilon 2003:11), while the 2001 census claimed that over 20% of Benin’s people live in households other than those of their biological progenitors (2003:xxxii).

Though children and the young do often live (for at least certain periods) away from their mothers and fathers, neither my nor related research indicates that this results in distress or in their ‘development’ being impaired by ‘separation’. In explaining why, Gillian Mann draws on the work of Thomas Weisner to argue that the multi-caregiver societies that comprise much of West Africa produce children characterised by ‘the diffusion of affect’ and ‘attachment to community’. In environments such as these, where caregiving is diffuse and multiple, parental ‘attachment’ and the parent-child ‘affectional bond’ are relatively less central to a child’s life. While they are still important, they remain contextualised within the wider, structuring relations of the sociocentric and highly networked *community*, such that ‘separation’ is not experienced as a crisis (2001:33). My research at village-level and with young migrants away from their villages overwhelmingly confirms this picture. When I asked one man whose daughter had recently moved with an uncle to Gabon, for example, how he could be certain that his daughter would be well treated when away from home, he replied: ‘she’s not going *away*, she’s going to be with my brother and

sister, my own flesh and blood, so she'll be treated *just as if she were here*' (Interview with Winston, 21/8/7).

Although this emphasises the importance of shared collective responsibility for forming members of the next generation, it should not be forgotten that such socialisation is similarly a question of collective *resource*-sharing (Adihou and ASI 1998:5). In a sociocentric space in which the collective is key and in which human beings are the prime economic resource, individuals (and especially the young) are conceived as collective assets that have to be formed for the good of the group and to which needy members of that group must have access. 'The-child-as-collective-asset' thus reveals two other central functions of the social family: namely, 1) to mould the next generation into actively contributing collective assets and, 2) to allow different parts of the collective to access the (labour) value that children and young people currently represent (and will represent in the future).

As Alain Adihou explains, therefore, it is not uncommon for children to be sent to adults with whom it is believed that they will develop more positively into the gender- and age-appropriate roles expected of them. Sometimes this can include elders who are considered more authoritarian, particularly if biological parents are unable to command the respect necessary to instil discipline in their offspring (ESAM and ASI 1998:9), while at others, as Le Biavant-Aureggio observes and my research confirms, it can include relatives who simply live in different places, as it is felt that such an experience will teach the young 'to adapt and cope in different

environments' (1994/5:22)<sup>22</sup>. Relatedly, research demonstrates that children and the young are often relocated from biological to social parents specifically in order to respond to more immediate, wider, collective labour imperatives. According to Alber, these can be many and varied and include the need to reallocate able (and age/gender-differentiated) hands from households in which there are too many for production to be efficient, the need for elderly relatives to have daily support and the need for the child (and through him or her, the family) to access opportunities (2003:488; see also Isiugo-Abanihe 1985 and Akresh 2005).

What this points to is of course the overall importance of inter-household (and specifically inter-generational) *mutuality* in the securing of collective and individual survival and well-being, and the apparent *normality* of child and youth movement as a central component of doing so. This will become further apparent in Chapter 4.

### *Histories of Mobility*

It was explained above how mainstream global anti-trafficking discourse often collapses migration and trafficking, depicting migration either as intrinsically problematic or as a facilitating cause of exploitation. This arguably underpins anti-trafficking policies which target migration as a pre-emptive tool to prevent eventual trafficking. While many critics suggest that this is in itself problematic, a range of literature suggests that it would be particularly so in Benin, since (labour) mobility here has a long and complex history that is deeply embedded within Beninese social groups. What is that history?

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<sup>22</sup> The importance of 'coping' is of course crucial in a resource-poor context such as this, since unexpected economic shocks can require a multitude of different mitigation strategies, and since group survival itself depends on the ability and willingness of each able member to actively contribute their labour-power (see Hashim 2005).

The national and regional historical literature draws a clear distinction between the periods before and after the European imperial encounter. Prior to European arrival, the region was 'a scene of mass movements of people', with groups moving to escape conflict, find better land or attain social freedom (Amin 1972:66, Mercier 1963:17). Indeed, 'the current peopling of Benin', it is claimed, 'is the result of many mass migrations, long pilgrimages...ethnic assimilations and environmental adaptations' (MPD and INSAE 2003a:32). As such, mobility is seen as having represented a natural component of life, an inherent force 'engrained' in the history of the societies that populate the area (De Bruijn et al. 2001:1). Crucially, this force affected the young in much the same way that it affected adults. Mass migrations included whole clans or families and, thus, children also inevitably migrated (see Adepoju 1995:89).

With the advent of colonial and post-colonial political-economic and social restructuring, however, these movements were replaced largely by 'migrations of labour' (Amin 1995:29). The arrival of the French saw forced territorialization accompanied by state efforts to proletarianise the peasantry, as the government sought to tie people to their 'appropriate' places and to lay the foundations for the expansion of mercantilist capitalism (Mamdani 1996, MPD and INSAE 2003:32). The introduction of large-scale concentrated forms of production and the imposition of tax levies worked to stimulate the mass migrations necessary for colonial surplus extraction by forcing people to move in order to access the monetary resources essential in a rapidly monetising economy. Once the Europeans departed, the state bureaucracies that ruled in their absence continued in similar vein, such that once

again, though in different form, labour migration became a norm (see Greuter 1984; Le Meur 2006). Crucially, although these ‘new’ migrations were predominantly a male preserve, they were certainly not restricted solely to adult men. As the last section explained, the young in Southern Benin are progressively socialised into the economic roles and responsibilities that they will have to adopt. As such, they become economically active well before the age of 18. Boys and young men have thus always comprised a significant proportion of the labour migrations that characterised the last century (Le Meur 2006).

All indications suggest that these trends are continuing in the present. Alice Sindzingre, for example, demonstrates how central mobility is for generating the networks and social capital so fundamental to social or economic advancement in the region (1998). Jennifer Mandel makes a similar case, pointing to the intra-regional economic disparities that offer advantages to anyone able to deploy their own mobility in exploiting them as a business (2006). Pierre-Yves Le Meur goes further still, arguing that labour mobility, in particular of young males, represents more than a mere economic strategy – it is, he states, no less than a right of passage enmeshed in cross-geographical socio-economic networks (2006:105-7). Again, we shall have recourse to reflect further on this in Chapter 4.

#### *Gaps in the Critical Literature*

While some critical literature does exist examining the nature of Beninese anti- child trafficking discourse and policy, there are still major gaps which this thesis seeks to fill. First, no researcher has yet methodically documented precisely what shape the

‘official’ discourse and policy takes. A number have offered overviews (Alber 2011 is a good example), but none have engaged in rigorous empirical detail. Second, as is the case with the critical literature more widely, no studies have been conducted which look in detail at the inner-workings of the anti-trafficking field itself. Indeed, of the handful of articles which are in the public domain, none involves in-depth research on how and why that field is structured in the way that it is or on why it operates in the way that it does. Third, though Erdmute Alber (2011) and Simona Morganti (2011) have both recently looked at the experience of migrant domestic worker girls and contrasted this experience with the discourse of trafficking built around them, no one has done the same with any male labour migrants defined as trafficked. As such, and in light of the historical, socio-cultural and economic importance of male labour migration in the region, a potentially huge population is slipping through the academic cracks. It will be the goal of much of the rest of this thesis to fill precisely those cracks.

## **Conclusion**

Child trafficking has emerged over the past decade and a half as *the* major international child protection issue and a focus of considerable media and political concern. The dominant paradigm constructs trafficking as an anomaly, its narratives pivoting around notions of extremity and non-consensuality, and its policies reflecting a draconian attempt to prevent the kinds of work or mobility collapsed with it. The chapter has suggested that this paradigm remains severely reductive, as it fails to account either for individual agency within the (child/youth) labour migration process or the structures of political economy that underpin it. Critical academic

literature has repeatedly highlighted these flaws, though that literature is itself bedeviled by some serious drawbacks. In particular, these involve the fact that whilst it is able to explain *how* the dominant paradigm falls short, it has been unable to offer suitably nuanced explanations for *why*. This thesis will be using a case study of the anti-trafficking field in Benin in order to push that literature further, and it is in this vein that the thesis will proceed.

## CHAPTER 2

### A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: TOWARDS MORE NUANCED UNDERSTANDINGS

#### **Introduction**

The last chapter argued that neither the dominant child trafficking paradigm, its discursive ‘knowledges and truths’, nor its related policies can be taken uncritically as accurate or appropriate. The chapter also argued that although the literature critical of this paradigm does offer some useful insights, it remains insufficiently complex, in part because much of it reifies corporate bodies to the status of conscious agents, assigning explanatory power to a putative ‘collective malevolence’. How may we transcend this impasse? How can we explain discursive and political stability in spite of their apparent weaknesses? In seeking to offer a response to these questions, I will draw in this chapter on what has been termed ‘the interpretive turn’ in social theory. Specifically, I will use elements of Discourse Theory to examine the constitutive power of discourse and the three framing OOD which I believe and will subsequently argue underpin the construction and propagation of the dominant discursive-political child trafficking paradigm. These OOD are ‘Apollonian Childhood’, the Westphalian State and Neoliberalism, the power of which rests in their wider shaping of the (possible) conceptualization and articulation of trafficking as discourse and anti-trafficking as policy. In order to examine the very real, inter- and intra-institutional, material power dynamics that sustain these orders, the chapter will also draw on literature from the Anthropology of Policy and the Ethnography of Aid traditions.

## **Beyond Structure and Agency**

In their study of the ‘construction of childhood’, James and Prout cite ‘the interpretive turn’ in social theory (1997) to refer to work which drew on the Critical Theorists of the Frankfurt School and the early Semioticians in order to overcome both the Realist-Idealist and the Structure-Agent binaries prevalent within philosophy and sociology until the advent of post-structuralism. Though this term encompasses the work of numerous differing theorists, their positions are linked by a number of key threads. The first, as Norman Fairclough has suggested, is that they are based on a ‘critical realism’ which accepts – in contrast to earlier Idealist theories – that there is a tangible, material world which exists independently of how humans perceive it (2010:4-5). The second is a shared belief in a ‘realist social ontology (Sayer 2000), which sees both concrete social events and abstract social structures as part of social reality’ (Fairclough 2010:74), and which accepts that structural aspects of the social world are ‘real’ and have material consequences. The third, and perhaps most significant, is the departure from the dominant structuralist-functionalism of classical Marxism and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century sociology to recognise the agentive capacity of human beings in building and maintaining the structures that structure their own lives<sup>23</sup>.

The three most influential articulations of these theoretical tenets are Bourdieu’s ‘Theory of Practice’, Giddens’ ‘Theory of Structuration’ and the various strands of ‘Discourse Theory’ (DT). Though each differs from the other, their overlap is clear

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<sup>23</sup> It is important to briefly highlight here that there the concept of ‘agency’ is not identical to that of ‘subjectivity’, which will be invoked repeatedly below. While the former may be understood as concerning an individual’s capacity to make decisions and to act, the latter has more to do with human consciousness, including the perceptions and identities that themselves form the basis for agentive decisions.

and this can be found in their seminal formulations<sup>24</sup>. What unites them is the notion that, in examining social phenomena, we must see structures and agents/events as existing *dialectically*. That is, structures are comprised of structuring agents/events, agents/events reflect the structuring properties of those structures while recursively reconstituting them through their actions, and the apparently static configuration of power that these comprise is in fact more ‘a spiderless web of power relations’ than the conspiracy theory-esque work of all-dominant, malignant puppet masters (Hardy and Palmer in Mautner 2010:2). While each of these theories has much to commend them, it is the discourse theoretical model that I will draw on for this thesis and it is to DT in particular that the thesis will now turn.

### Discourse and Discourse Analysis

Though united with Structuration Theory and the Theory of Practice in seeing structures and agents/events as mutually and dialectically constitutive, within DT itself there are various divergent trends which differ on a number of explanatory elements (Van Dijk 1996, Jaworski and Coupland 2006). Authors such as Gee, for instance, see “‘little d’ discourse’ as including any element of communicative action (2005:7), while in more narrow usages, Critical Discourse Analysts including Fairclough see discourse as simply ‘use of language as a form of social practice, and discourse analysis [a]s analysis of how texts work within sociocultural practice’ (1995:7).

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<sup>24</sup> See Bourdieu (1977:72), Giddens (1984:25) and Fairclough (2010:75/554).

In this thesis, I will be interpreting the term ‘discourse’ in ways consistent with many of the Critical Discourse Analysts who have pioneered its use in the social sciences since the 1960s, including Fairclough, Candlin and Howarth. As Candlin explains, discourse in this sense refers to ‘a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds...which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds, and in so doing both reproduces and reconstructs afresh particular social-discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the overarching social formation’ (in Jaworski and Coupland 2006:2). Similar to Foucault’s understanding, discourse here equates to a kind of stock ‘narrative’ – like that of trafficking – that has been ‘socially legitimized as knowledge and truth within society’ and which itself has self-perpetuating constitutive power in that society through its ability to frame and mould what people think and do, but also through its expression of and relationship with the structures comprising the overarching social formation (see Chapter 1 and Lessa 2006).

A crucial discourse analytical concept relating to the wider social formation and of core relevance to this thesis is the notion of *orders of discourse*. DT recognises that different discourses operate at different levels, have different levels of reach and social legitimacy, and thus differential constitutive power in both the discursive and non-discursive realms. In Gee’s terms, those discourses which operate at a macro, framing level can be viewed as “‘big D’ Discourses’, which are similar to Laclau’s ‘imaginaries’ (Howarth and Stavarakis 2000:14) or to Gramsci’s ‘ideologies’ (Fairclough 2010:73). These can be understood as hegemonic organising principles of the social order, pertaining, for instance, to the structure of the economy or the polity, which serve to structure consciousness, discourse and material practice, and

find themselves recursively reconstituted by them across space and time. An OOD is thus both a macro, framing narrative *and* also the material and discursive framework for reproducing that narrative, which filters in or out possible (alternative) meanings for and practices of it. In Fairclough's terms, an OOD may be understood as:

‘a specific configuration of discourses, genres and styles<sup>25</sup>...which *defines a specific meaning potential*, or, to put it somewhat differently, *which constitutes distinctive resources for meaning-making in texts*. The relationship between what is semiotically possible (as defined by semiotic systems) and the actual semiotic features of texts is mediated by orders of discourse *which filter out certain possibilities but not others*' (2010:74, emphasis added).

In their discussion of (South African) *Social Work in Times of Neo-Liberalism*, Sewpaul and Holscher clarify:

‘The term discourse, then, refers in the first place to the entire process of social interaction around a text, that is, discursual action. However, discourses also operate beyond and through texts; they are indications of particular interpretations of social reality, which can be discerned via the use of language and terminology in a specific text. Such operations beyond

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<sup>25</sup> These theoretical terms ‘genre’ and ‘style’ can be defined as follows: genres are ‘ways of acting’; styles are ‘ways of being’ (Fairclough 2010:75). Fairclough goes on to state (2010:555):

‘Critical discourse analysis aims to provide a framework for systematically linking properties of discursual interactions and texts with features of their social and cultural circumstances. The network of social practices is described from a specifically discursual perspective as an ‘order of discourse’, consisting of discourses and genres in particular relationships with each other, but with an orientation to shifts in boundaries within and between orders of discourse as part of social and cultural change.’

and through texts are determined by discursal conventions...such conventions are not ‘free-floating’ and distinct entities. Instead, *discursal conventions of any society are bound together as interdependent networks, which exist in relation to its social order. These networks are termed “orders of discourse”* (Foucault cited in Fairclough, 1989, p. 29). Following from this, one could argue that orders of discourse which operate at the level of society as a whole, serve to structure orders of discourses which operate at the level of this society’s various institutions. These in turn tend to structure the actual discursal actions taking place at the respective institutions, which then serve to structure, constrain and enable individual subject positions’ (2004:9-10, emphasis added).

Implicit within this discussion is the notion that meaning and meaning-making cascades down from (and flows between) different layers and networks of (individuals comprising) structured social institutions. Fairclough calls this process ‘re-contextualisation’ (2010:79; see also Salskov-Iversen et al. 2000:191) and, following Foucault, we can understand this as referring to the fact that ways of thinking about reality intertwine with institutionalised practice within reality to form individual subjects who then think about and recursively enact that reality (and its institutionalised practice) according to the lines of the particular OOD of which it is comprised.

What would such a theoretical position suggest in helping us to theorise an understanding of anti-trafficking discourse and policy? First, that anti-trafficking discourse serves to structure individual subjectivities, particularly of those within the

anti-trafficking field, who in turn recursively enact and reproduce that discourse, including in the form of anti-trafficking policy and practice. Second, as will be argued in the case of Neoliberalism, Apollonian Childhood and the Westphalian State, that anti-trafficking discourse and policy (along with the field that they comprise) may themselves exist within and as expressions of wider, framing OOD, the traces of which can be revealed through textual and non-textual analysis. Third, that any complex analysis of the nature and stability of anti-trafficking discourse and policy in spite of empirical challenges can and must go beyond reductive claims of collective malevolence or teleological attributions of agency to structures/effects.

There are two further points which need clarification. The first is that, as Ferguson highlights, discourse and OOD must not be understood as ‘monolithic, anthropomorphized Subject[s] that bludgeon [their] way through history leaving only hegemonic subjects in [their] wake’ (1990:92). While it is true that many do unquestioningly internalise and reproduce the dictates of dominant (orders of) discourse, many do not, many resist, and many reject. This relates to our second point – that although the anti- ‘puppet master’ leanings of DT can appear somewhat benign (putting emphasis as they do on the generative and internalising dialectic between structure and agency), this should not be read as implying that DT sees the process of meaning creation, transmission or maintenance as devoid of the exercise of power. Far from it. As Howarth and Stavrakis argue, ‘discourses...always involve the exercise of power’ (2000:4-5), since the stability of discourse and discursive structures depends in part on the ability of certain agents to actively ensure their stabilisation, while different agents have differential access to meaning-making and

stabilising power. In his seminal discussion of *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA), Fairclough therefore writes:

‘The power to control discourse is...the power to sustain particular discursive practices with ideological investments in dominance over other alternative (including oppositional) practices...Power is conceptualized both in terms of asymmetries between participants in discourse events, and in terms of unequal capacity to control how texts are produced, distributed and consumed (and hence the shape of texts) in particular sociocultural contexts’ (1995:1-2).

In Foucault’s famous phrase, naming is ‘a sovereign act, [for] the name is the *end* of discourse’ (1960:117/8), and the right or ability to name is often bought or exercised with *material* as well as discursive power. CDA is thus a method for studying the ‘connections between language, power and ideology’, a means of deconstructing both ‘how power relations constrain and control productivity and creativity in discourse practice, and how a particular relatively stabilized configuration of discourse practices (“order of discourse”) constitutes one domain of hegemony’ (Fairclough 1995:1-2). In this, CDA intersects with both the Anthropology of Policy and the Ethnography of Aid traditions in ways that offer a profitable framework for examining the lived, material, power dynamics that operate to ensure discursive (and thus also political) stability within (the institutions comprising) fields such as that of anti-trafficking.

What is the Anthropology of Policy? In their seminal articulation, Shore and Wright suggest that it involves study of ‘the workings of multiple, intersecting and conflicting power structures’. As such:

‘The anthropologist [of policy] is seeking a method for analysing connections between levels and forms of social process and action, and exploring how those processes work in different sites...The key is to grasp the interactions (and disjunctions) between different sites or levels in policy processes. Thus, “studying through” entails multi-site ethnographies which trace policy connections between different organizational and everyday worlds, even where actors in different sites do not know each other or share a moral universe’ (1997:13-14).

In articulating his call for a parallel ‘ethnography of aid’, Mosse echoes:

‘The ethnographic task is to show how, despite fragmentation and dissent, actors in development are constantly engaged in creating order and unity through political acts of composition. It involves examining the way in which heterogeneous entities – people, ideas, interests, events and objects (seeds, engineered structures, pumps, vehicles, computers, fax machines, or data bases) – are tied together by translation of one kind or another into the material and conceptual order of a successful project’ (2004:647).

What might the insights of these traditions tell us about the exercises and dynamics of power through which the stability of/within (orders of) discourse is maintained?

*Top-Down Agenda-Setting*

In their landmark study of the anthropology of development, Lewis and Gardner argue that one of the major ways in which power manifests itself in the process of developmental (discourse and) policy-making is through the top-down agenda-setting of bureaucratic hierarchies. They state:

‘Planners usually do not wish to involve local communities; they have institutional deadlines and a predetermined agenda, which by the time it reaches the community cannot be changed. These contradictions show how easily an objective of participation can feed effortlessly back into existing models of “top-down” development and become neutralised by the dominant discourse’ (ibid.113).

They continue:

‘An example of the exclusive nature of planning procedures is the project framework, which some donors now insist upon before providing funds. This involves an organisational chart in which planners specify project objectives, inputs, timings and the criteria they will use to measure successful output. While this is undoubtedly a useful way of clarifying plans, the production of such a framework is also clearly much easier for administrators accustomed to particular ways of thinking and planning, and may require time-consuming training’ (ibid.97)

This can have the effect not only of imposing certain kinds of action or rationality but also of excluding particular aspects of reality from discussion, consideration, representation and thus even existence within discursive (and their related policy) frameworks. As Giddens suggests, this can be either an unintended consequence of the particular configuration of structure and structural practices, or it can be a strategically sought-after result. He states:

‘In many contexts of social life there occur processes of *selective “information filtering”* whereby strategically placed actors seek reflexively to regulate the overall conditions of system reproduction either to keep things as they are or to change them’ (1984:27-8, emphasis added).

In the case of trafficking, this might reasonably include, for instance, certain powerful actors using their influence to frame discussion in ways which exclude analysis of either the political or economic structures that condition it.

### *Self-Silencing, Resistance and Playing the Game*

Actors with relatively less power within such systems are of course not without agency, however. In some instances, though they may reject the paradigm imposed from above, individuals will still consciously reproduce that paradigm by modifying their behaviour in anticipated response to its expected ‘policing’ from above. As Easterley quips, ‘the aid professional has a tremendous fear of his own writing’ (2002:31), in part because he fears that what he writes will be to the distaste of his superiors, such that he actively averts instances in which he must honestly ‘speak

out' and resist (Edwards and Hulme 1998:14; see also Elliott 1987, Fisher 1997, Lecomte and Naudet 2000). Again, with trafficking, one might assume this to manifest in a refusal on the part of particular institutional actors to report 'honestly' on which factors they believe are of significance to an understanding of the crime.

Nonetheless, those in the position of being relatively dominated can and do also engage tactically and strategically within the framework and under the weight of that domination. Scott's seminal *Weapons of the Weak* argued that even acts such as a peasant's slovenly bow can constitute instances of micro-resistance in the presence of the King (1985), while Hobsbawm's famous 'Peasants and Politics' argued incisively for the ability of the downtrodden to 'work the system...to their minimum disadvantage' (1973).

More recent work on 'development brokerage' has argued from much the same perspective. Bierschenk (2008), De Noray (2000), Le Meur (1999, 2000), Naudet (2000) and Olivier de Sardan (1996, 1998, 2008) all argue that 'Development aid has created in Africa a peculiar group of social characters: the "intermediaries" between project beneficiaries and potential project givers' (Bierschenk and Elwert 1998:104). These figures adopt the role of 'translating' between the languages and rationalities of project agencies and project 'beneficiaries', positioning themselves so as to extract greatest material benefit from donors by articulating beneficiary needs in terms acceptable to donor frameworks, even if in practice their behaviour does not conform to that desired by those frameworks. Mosse uses the term 'mirroring' to describe this process ('whereby villagers shaped their needs to match project schemes and administrative systems – requesting only what was most easily delivered'

[2004:652]), while Manzo suggests that NGOs engage in similar practices in order to elicit funding (2006, 2008). Crucially for our purposes, what this can mean is that even where dominant trafficking discourse and policy are (privately) rejected and resisted as inaccurate or insufficient, they are formally maintained precisely by the public ‘game-playing’ which represents a tactical resistance to their total domination.

*The Symbolic-Economic Capital Trade-Off and The Politics of Representation*

How can these two observations be brought together to make sense of the stability existing within (orders of) discourse and the policy practice to which this relates? Here we need to turn to Bourdieu’s re-theorisation of ‘Capital’. In his 1986 *Forms of Capital*, Bourdieu argues that capital can come in three types – economic, cultural and social<sup>26</sup>. Uniting these three is the overarching notion of ‘symbolic capital’, which ‘defines the tools used by individuals and institutions within a field to gain dominance and thus to reproduce themselves over time’. Symbolic capital is therefore a question of socially-conferred legitimacy, itself underpinning socially-sanctioned reproduction in different fields (Lawley 1994, Bourdieu 1977, 1984, 1987, Wacquant 1997).

Applying this to discourse- and policy-making, one might argue that, while ‘beneficiaries’ depend materially on the top-down benevolence of those donor bodies prepared to confer on them their economic capital (such that they modify their behaviour accordingly), the very existence of these donor bodies depends

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<sup>26</sup> He writes: ‘Depending on the field in which it functions, and at the cost of the more or less expensive transformations which are the precondition for its efficacy in the field in question, capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations (“connections”), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility’ (1986:47).

sympiotically on the symbolic capital that they are able to accrue through successfully having conferred their economic capital on those beneath them, which they then cash with the elected officials who control the public purse strings from above<sup>27</sup>. This has a number of implications. First, the notion of ‘dependence’ must give way to one of ‘dynamic dependence’ (Naudet 2000, see also Lister n.d and Mosse 1997), since that dependence, though unequal, can be mutually constitutive – as Lecomte observes, ‘the hand which gives also depends on the hand that takes’ (2000:167)<sup>28</sup>. Second, in the efficiency and prudence-inflected contemporary age, the ability of (the individuals comprising) institutions such as the development agencies, NGOs and government departments constitutive of fields like ‘anti-trafficking’ (in countries like Benin) to *represent* what they do as well-planned, coherent and ultimately successful is the *sine qua non* of reproduction (see Bierschenk and Elwert 1998, Mosse 1997, 2004, 2005). Third, understanding (what constitutes) the criteria of success is therefore integral to understanding the contours of both representation and reproduction.

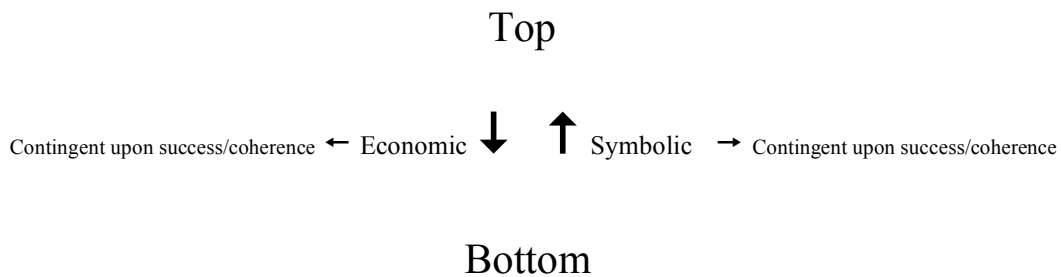
In two-dimensional, diagrammatic form, the relationship outlined here might look something like this:

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<sup>27</sup> It is of no small importance also that the symbolic-capital-underpinned survival of these donor bodies itself guarantees the continued transfer of economic capital in the form of wages to those individuals who comprise these institutions in the first place.

<sup>28</sup> As Benoît states, this translates into the spectacle of development agencies ‘in search of populations to support – in other words, their *raison d’être*’ (2000:130).

### Figure 3: The Symbolic-Economic Capital Trade-Off



As suggested above, in practice, the likely consequences of this are both a degree of top-down control (particularly with regards to representation, if not practice [Mosse, 2004:646]), and a degree of self-silenced game-playing (Easterley, 2002:6/29) – each of which will arguably combine to ensure (relative) stability within (orders of) discourse and policy. The rest of this chapter will examine the three OOD at the nexus of which this thesis shall argue that the dominant child trafficking paradigm, its discourse and policy exist, and of which it shall contend that they represent expressions. These are ‘Apollonian Childhood’, the Westphalian State and Neoliberalism, the dovetailing of which in trafficking will be addressed in the chapter’s final section.

#### ‘Apollonian’ Childhood<sup>29</sup>

The last chapter highlighted the defining importance of a particular ‘received idea’ of childhood as underpinning much of the dominant anti- child trafficking paradigm. In this section, we will reflect further on that childhood and its context and will examine in more detail its spread as a dominant OOD. The section will then break down the

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<sup>29</sup> This section draws on and extracts from Howard 2008.

various components of this OOD and will look at the policies to which these are related, as well as at the lived consequences they engender.

### The Development of the 'Universal, Apollonian Child'

In his historical overview of *Childhood*, Chris Jenks argues that the '*Apollonian child*' came to replace the 'Dionysian child' in dominant, Minority World culture (and cultural practice) with the advent of modernity. In the pre-modern period, he suggests, the young were expected to be silent, respectful and disciplined in their preparation for the future (viewed as they were as closest to the corruptible 'state of nature', represented by Dionysus, the god of wine, revelry and sin). By the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, however, children had come to be seen as somehow innocent, pure and vulnerable human 'becomings' who needed special care, play, adult protection and an almost sacralising shelter from the adult world (hence the association with Apollo) (Cheney 2010a, 2010b). Wells explains: 'the idea [emerged] that childhood should be a time set apart from the adult world...that childhood should be happy, a time devoted to play and learning rather than work' (2009:10-12). Children were thus progressively removed from the economic sphere and incorporated into state school systems, with children's immediate families increasingly responsabilised for ensuring their appropriate protection and socialisation (Ariès 1962, Hendick 1997, Zelizer 1994, Cunningham 2006). Over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries, this Minority World model became a dominant global norm, embodied in the CRC and the anti- child labour legal framework discussed above (Boyden 1997, Myers 2001, Ansell 2005, Fyfe 2007, Thorsen 2007, Hindman 2009, Schmid 2009, Vogler et al. 2009, Cheney 2010a).

How can this be explained? Various deterministic sociological theories have been advanced. According to some, for instance, improved hygiene in the Minority World led to declining infant mortality, which in turn led parents to have fewer children and thus (to be able) to bond more closely with each. The specialization of capitalist production also meant that fewer, more educated workers were necessary, such that families became smaller and a child's socialization lasted longer, while the continual expansion of market values led workers to take emotional and psychological 'refuge' in the nuclear family and the children who subsequently became its centrepiece (Zelizer 1994).

The strength of these structural explanations cannot be over-emphasised, however, since their sweep is so broad that they fail to account for the individual and institutional realities that exist within and ultimately constitute them. Again, therefore, we must turn to DT and to the notion of OOD. As Prout and James argue, 'different discourses of childhood constitute childhood (and children) in different ways – not only as sets of academic knowledge but also in social practices and institutions' (1997:24). They continue:

'This is not simply a matter of habit, convenience, false consciousness or vested interests, but of what Foucault refers to as "regimes of truth" (1977)...[T]hese operate rather like self-fulfilling prophecies: ways of thinking about childhood fuse with institutionalised practices to produce self-conscious subjects (teachers, parents and children) who think (and feel) about themselves through the terms of those ways of thinking. The truth about themselves and their situation is thus self-validating' (ibid.23).

In the Minority World development of these self-validating ways of thinking, the influence of the twin meaning-making forces of child developmental psychology and professional social work was crucial (Prout and James 1997, Boyden 1997, Hart 2010). In the case of the former, it was the work of Jean Piaget and John Bowlby that was most influential. Piaget held that ‘normal’ children everywhere develop according to a set of ‘stages’ demarcating the gradual transition of an individual’s cognitive development (Inhelder and Piaget 1958). He argued that these stages were inevitable and, in the absence of crisis, ‘invariable: normal children go through [them] in the same order’ (Mussen et al. 1984:227). This analysis was echoed by Bowlby’s ‘theory of attachment’. For Bowlby, ‘attachment’ is ‘the affectional bond’ that humans form between one another. His research focussed on what he saw as the foundational bond between mother and child, and he argued that any interruption of this bond’s ‘normal’ development (for instance by separation, abuse or absence) will interrupt and derail the process of a child’s healthy, Piagetian growth (1968[2007]:84/5). Though these theories have now been widely challenged (amongst other things for their ethnocentricity and their class bias [see Mussen et al. 1984, Woodhead 1990]), it is hard to over-state quite how influential they have been. Foucault demonstrated that invoking the methodology of Newtonian science lends a gravitas and a ‘truth-power’ to that which is being claimed (Foucault 1969, 1980c, 1980d). In this case, the combination of scientific truth-power with assertions of *normality* and *universality* led Piaget and Bowlby’s work to gain almost unquestioned credence within relevant policy-making institutions, and it entrenched the narrative belief that children walk a teleological path towards a development that is supposedly guaranteed by the ‘proper’ functioning of the nuclear family (Boyden and Levison 2001:24, Woodhead 1990:74).

Ensuring the proper functioning of that nuclear family is a task that has historically been entrusted to the second major meaning-making force under discussion here – professional social work (Zelizer 1994, Boyden 1997). As Boyden argues, the construction of a ‘normal, universal’ childhood led Minority World social work to pathologise all those models of childhood and parenting that did not correspond to the norm, with blame for ‘deviance’ inevitably placed on individual or family failure (1997). Such approaches have been ‘premised on fixing dysfunctional parents...through an investigative, stand-alone child protection system’ (Schmid 2009:4). As Hart observes, they have therefore:

‘tended to focus on addressing problems at the immediate level: with the individual child and his/her immediate family. Questions about the structural factors – and the processes of political economy that lie behind them – that may cause grave and systemic threat to children and which therefore need to be addressed as a priority have generally arisen little’ (2010:10).

What this means then is that the very practice of social work has tended to reinforce the hegemonic, Apollonian notion of childhood, precisely by materially and discursively acting out (and thus reproducing) the contours of normality and deviance according to the opposition between which it has always existed as a profession.

Significantly, though these trends first emerged and flourished within the context of the Minority World, the combined processes of colonial expansion, the growth and spread of post-colonial international organisations such as UNICEF and the ILO

(which are of course funded and staffed predominantly by the Minority World), and cultural and economic ‘globalisation’ have seen them take on increasingly global proportions (Prout and James 1997, Boyden 1997, Schmid 2009, Wells 2009; see also Haas 1989, Adler and Haas 1992 and Salskov-Iverson et al. 2000). OOD structure and frame both individual and institutional subjectivity, as well as possibilities of thought and action, and this holds as each expands. Thus, in the emblematic case of South Africa, Schmid explains:

‘South African policy makers and practitioners are particularly susceptible to international ideas because, like other Anglophones, they do not access alternative views because of limited language proficiency (Pinkerton, 2006), as well as being on the periphery of the development of dominant discourse...Another dynamic is that South Africans, like others who have been colonised, construct “first world” approaches as superior and attempt to meet “international standards”. Further, there is limited support in the international arena for discourses emanating from the Global South (Hokensted and Midgley, 2004)...The “international” debate [thus] imprints its priorities and language on the local South African child welfare discourses’ (2009:6).

As Boyden suggests, this imprinting has reached its apex with the CRC, which she describes as ‘one of the most potent models of globalization emerging at present...used as a policing mechanism to bring governments and others to account’, as well as of course to maintain and further spread the contours of Apollonian Childhood (1997:220).

### Universal, Apollonian Childhood and Related Policies

What specific characteristics does this Apollonian child have? How is its OOD shaped and what policy mechanisms undertake this shaping? The following section will seek to answer these questions, outlining the various constitutive elements of (the discourse of) Apollonian Childhood and addressing the types of policy measures to which these relate.

#### *Defining Factors*

- Age

Zelizer argues that the early emergence of the Apollonian child saw ‘age become the defining boundary’ between who could or could not legally work and thus for what constituted an adult or a child. In the US, from 1879 to 1909, the number of states with legal working-age provisions rose from seven to 44 (1994:76). Similar trends were noted in Western Europe (Dahlén 2007, Fyfe 2007). By the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the ‘generalised developmental model of childhood’ discussed above had led to boundaries between child and adult being fixed, regulated and understood solely on the basis of chronological age (McNamee et al. 2005:227). Now, as Wells observes, there is a conceptual, legal and institutional framework ‘that seeks to regulate childhood at a global scale’, primarily through the metric of biological age (2009:18).

- Vulnerability and ‘Innocence’

Crucial to this metric of biological age is the apparently inherent vulnerability that defines under-18’s within the Apollonian OOD. Kendall states:

‘[M]any current state and international models of childhood and vulnerability are based on a set of assumptions central to late 20th and 21st century Western concepts of childhood and wellbeing that codify the age of adulthood at 18, and assume that childhood is a time that is different than adulthood and that requires special protections (Bourdillon 2006). The assumption [is one] of children’s need for protection from adults; their inability to participate in “public sphere” activities such as politics, economics, and marriage; and their need to gain rights through adults’ (2010:27-8).

As Cheney (2010a, 2010b), Daniel (2010) and O’Connell Davidson and Farrow (2007) argue, there exists an assumption that relative weakness and size translates into an automatic susceptibility to harm. In this discursive world, vulnerability is not transitive (in the verbal sense) – it is a nominal property characteristic of *all* the young. Lee refers to this as a ‘vulnerability complex’ in which ‘innocence equates to vulnerability’ (in Kendall 2010:27). Crucially, in this understanding, children are ‘innocent’ to the extent that they are ‘pure’, by virtue of their non-corruption into the state of adulthood.

- Children as Non-Agents

Unsurprisingly, where children are conceived of as inherently weak and in need of protection by others, they are also conceived (and constructed) as being unable to exercise their own independent agency (Boyden and Levison 2001). Van der Hoek asserts:

‘Children have been mostly regarded as playing only a passive role: they have either been reduced to numbers or have been depicted as inactive victims waiting the eventual outcomes at the sheer end of rather static analytical models’ (2005:111).

Similarly, McNamee et al.:

‘The child, *by virtue of being a non-adult*, is deemed to be not competent, to be dependent and thus subject to the hegemony of adult views and judgements. In this sense, the law, in itself, serves as a barrier towards seeing the child as an individual’ (2005:234).

Indeed, as James and James contend, it is precisely the fact that children are seen through the prism of the category of ‘childhood’ that prevents them from being understood as individuals capable of acting as individuals (in Wells 2009:14).

- School and the Safe Family Home

The weak, vulnerable, non-agentive child needs both protection and formation for her future. In the Apollonian OOD, this can only be provided in two settings. The first is the nuclear family home – deemed the proper and necessary locus for the child's healthy, Piagetian development and somehow constituting a space of shelter from the 'outside world' (Zelizer 1994). This is made implicit in the 'movement' section in Figure 1 on page 51. The second is the school, which has historically been seen as an extension of the family, the appropriate social body through which the child can be safely socialised while simultaneously being sheltered from assumed real-world danger (Boyden and Levison 2001, Bourdillon et al. 2011, Chapter Six).

- Non-Economic Childhood

The major danger represented by this outside world – aside from its containing stock, predatory characters – comes in the form of the economy, and specifically its incorporation of the child as an agent of production. As Hendick suggests, 'the campaign to reclaim the wage-earning child for civilisation was one of the first steps along the road of what can be described as the social construction of a *universal* childhood' (1997:42). Similarly Zelizer, who posits that, for early anti-child labour activists, 'true parental love could only exist if the child was defined exclusively as an object of sentiment and not as an agent of production' (1994: 72). This is because, as Wells observes, 'work is assumed to compromise children's future health and employment and the formation of human capital' (2009:109).

*Policy Consequences*

In the context of such a discursive framework, it should be unsurprising that policies relating to child protection and development have historically adopted highly interventionist forms. In order to ensure the Apollonian child's growth and well-being, policy strategies have consistently focused on constructing the 'right' kinds of individuals and families, with the state and its apparatuses frequently deployed to mould (or bludgeon) citizens into the shape desired.

- Family Building

The key institution within the Apollonian OOD is the nuclear family. Historically, therefore, state agencies have attempted to ensure that those families which do not fit the developmentally appropriate norm either transform themselves accordingly or cede control over their children (Boyden 1997, Wells 2009). In her history of the emergence of the 'priceless child', Adriana Zelizer demonstrates how US authorities gradually regulated children out of the 'cash nexus', such that working-class families had to reconfigure both their household economies and their child-rearing practices in order to adapt (1994). In South Africa, Jeanette Schmid has shown similar processes at work. When dealing with 'deviance' from accepted familial and socialization norms – often termed 'abuse' – social workers historically engaged families in an effort to modify their behaviour or simply removed children from their parents in order to confide them to 'appropriate' foster carers (2009:5).

International child protection efforts in the Majority World continue to adopt such patterns. Hart's recent work in the Occupied Palestinian Territories has demonstrated that, even in the context of structural violence instigated by Israelis, it is Palestinian families who face the brunt of protection 'interventions' in order to guarantee child welfare, with issues of domestic violence and schooling top of the institutional list of concern (2010). Similarly, in Ghana (Hashim 2003) and in Benin (Howard 2008), efforts to ensure the development of family 'responsibility' in the face of child migration focus on the need for sedentary, nuclear structures that guarantee nutrition, schooling and 'care'. As Wells states, current frameworks thus 'concentrate on disciplining, regulating and controlling the family from the outside' (2009:76). In the words of Boyden:

'Social policy can be an extremely blunt instrument and its application in the consolidation of a universal standard of childhood can have the effect of penalising, or even criminalising, the childhoods of the poor, *often for the simple reason that poor families are unable to reach this standard*' (1997:207-8, emphasis added).

- Schooling

Existing alongside the universal family standard is the unparalleled push within the Apollonian world to expand formal schooling as the sole legitimate activity for all children worldwide. Emerging first from within the 'school-not-work' anti-child labour activism of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Europe and the US, the belief that all children *should* be in school is now almost unchallenged within policy-making

institutions concerned with child welfare (Bourdillon et al 2011). The major international child rights instruments almost all promote schooling. Each of the anti-child labour conventions discussed in the last chapter promote school as ‘children’s work’, while the CRC – the most widely ratified convention in international legal history – enshrines access to school as a child’s ‘right’, placing responsibility on states to ensure its fulfilment (UN 1989). Primary schooling is now compulsory across the world. The ‘goal’ of universal child schooling is the second of the world’s ‘Millennium Development Goals’, while efforts to promote it receive more funding than almost any other ‘development’ issue through globalised channels such as UNICEF and the ILO. As Ariès famously lamented when discussing the birth of the Apollonian child:

‘Henceforth it was recognized that the child was not ready for life, and that he had to be subjected to a special treatment, a sort of quarantine, before he was allowed to join the adults. This new concern about education would gradually install itself in the heart of society and transform it from top to bottom’ (in Aitken 2005:121).

- Preventive Impositions

The policies emerging from (and dialectically constituting) the Apollonian OOD are not only productive (in the Foucauldian sense); they are also highly disciplinary. Existing in symbiosis with efforts that promote certain kinds of behaviour are those which forcefully seek to prevent others. Paradigmatic examples here concern child work and migration.

As Wells notes, ‘Campaigns on child labour take it as axiomatic that children shouldn’t be working’ (2009:109). The ILO ‘is founded on the idea that children should not be involved in work or employment of any kind below a certain age’ (White 1999:134). This has led, throughout the world, to the systematic targeting of working children and their employers in an effort to get children out of the labour market and into school (Bourdillon et al. 2011). Examples of such efforts – and their failures – are legion. Bourdillon et al. begin their powerful recent discussion of *The Rights and Wrongs of Children’s Work* with one from Morocco. Towards the end of 1995, they explain, the British retail chain, *Marks and Spencer*, visited a Moroccan supplier factory to demand that all child workers be summarily dismissed, in order that the company be able to comply with international law. This happened, and although the many teenage girls previously employed by the factory had admitted to feeling exploited at work, all subsequently claimed that their lives post-dismissal were poorer and harder. One girl, Amal, described crying ‘for two weeks’ when she was dismissed. ‘For Amal and her friends, dismissal meant a reduction in family incomes. The employer, not the children, was responsible for violating the regulations on working conditions for apprentices, but it was the children, not the employer, who suffered the consequences of dismissal’ (ibid.1-5).

Similarly, as was argued in the last chapter, institutions engaged in child protection seemingly take it as a given that the under-18s should remain ‘at home’ and thus should not migrate independently. The conceptual framework within which they conceive of the young and their families means that doing so is understood as almost entirely ‘pathological’ (Hashim 2003, Thorsen 2007, Howard 2008 and 2011, Hashim and Thorsen 2011). What this has meant in practice is that, in various

different contexts around the world, state and pseudo-state agencies have enacted policies that attempt to forcibly prevent the young from moving – often with little attention to how the young and their communities perceive either their movement or their best interests as embodied in it (Castle and Diarra 2003, Bastia 2005, Whitehead et al. 2007, Alber 2011, Huijsmans 2011, 2011b).

- A-Political, Individualised Protection

In her examination of the Minority World emergence of the Apollonian (or ‘priceless’) child, Zelizer devotes significant attention to the public and public policy battle for control over the streets of New York. Though, for poor children, the streets were at once a site of learning, play and work, with the arrival and expansion of the automobile industry, streets also became a place of danger and saw a rapid rise in child deaths at the hands of new drivers. What was the policy response?

‘The focus of safety programs [was] on child socialization, [which] conveniently diverted public attention away from the automobile industry and from drivers. It was easier to regulate children than adults and certainly cheaper to educate children than to buy or develop improved safety equipment...Saving child life meant changing the daily activities of city children, pushing them indoors into playrooms and schoolrooms or designing special “child” public spaces, such as playgrounds’ (1994:51-2).

Though this is a case study from over a century ago, it serves as a microcosm of the often a-political, individualized and non-structural approach to protecting children

from arguably structural threats. In her discussion of international 'aid' efforts, Burman believes that this is in part because 'the abstraction of childhood that the genre promotes renders the innocence of children at the expense of implying the culpability of others (parents, families, communities and governments)' (1994:243).

She explains:

'In her influential application of psychoanalysis to film theory, Laura Mulvey (1975) interprets the narrative positions set up in watching a spectacle in terms of voyeurism and fetishism. The viewer identifies with the characters but this identification is moderated and mediated through the distance between the spectator and the screen. This distance serves as a psychic defence both to express and displace identification: it is safer to watch another than to be the participant. Pornography fetishises women's bodies, and fetishists invest a body part, or an accoutrement, with desire. In aid and emergencies the child is the principle fetish. Abstracted from social and political context, the focus on suffering children avoids addressing the broader circumstances that give rise to the problems. We pin our anxieties and desires onto a small signifier of the invested object to avoid confronting the enormity of their (our?) need. Hence Plan International's call to "Change the World One Child at a Time" invites the belief that political and environmental crises can be resolved through helping single children, and change is rendered individual, gradual and discretionary' (ibid.247).

This evasion of questions about structural inequalities is arguably a result of the

framing power of the two other crucial OOD of relevance to this thesis – the Westphalian State and Neoliberalism – and it is to the Westphalian State that we now turn.

### **The Westphalian State**

We live in a world of states. Or, in, J.D.B. Miller's famous words: 'The world of states is the world we live in. For better or worse, it is what the human race has made of its condition' (1981:1). At the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and despite social evolution, change, challenge and resistance, 'the central fact of the organisation of mankind is still the sovereign state' (ibid.). Indeed, as McLennan et al. note, '[the state's] secular growth is one of the few really incontrovertible facts' of recent times (1984:v). In this section, I shall attempt to provide an overview of this fact, and shall address it in terms of what I am identifying as 'the Westphalian OOD', or what others have described as 'the sovereign territorial ideal' (Murphy 1996), the 'territorial state' (Biersteker and Weber 1996 and 1996a), and 'the idea of the modern state' (McLennan et al. 1984, Hall 1984, Held 1984). The discussion does not aim to offer an overarching synthesis of all the myriad thinking on either the state or state sovereignty, but rather to introduce a concept which I shall argue is of central importance for understanding the anti-trafficking field and the structuring of anti-trafficking discourse and policy. The section will begin with a historical overview of the emergence of the Westphalian state. It shall then examine the place of 'legitimacy' within it, before turning to the role that IOs play in perpetuating it, as well as to certain of its major consequences.

### The Emergence and Rise of the Westphalian Order

Where, exactly, does ‘the state’ come from? And what, exactly, is it? On the latter question, David Held remarks: ‘There is nothing more central to political and social theory than the nature of the state, and nothing more contested’ (1984:29). In his summary of more than four centuries of thinking on the issue, he argues that scholarship can be divided into four dominant trends following the liberal, liberal-democratic, Marxist and political sociological lines of analysis (ibid.). While each of these schools will differ on whether they see the state as a collection of bureaucratic institutions for the mediation of group conflict and the management of complex modernity, a vehicle for class domination, the least worst institutional option for the protection of ‘natural’ laws such as the right to life and property, or a (contractarian) tool for protection under counterfactual conditions of anarchy, what they will agree on are two things (see also McLennan 1984, Dale 1984). First, that ‘The state is a *historical* phenomenon: it is a product of human association...not of Nature (Hall:1984:1)’. Second, that as an idea and a framework for practice, the (Westphalian) state comprises institutions, practices, processes and effects for the recognised, legitimate and exclusive exercise of authority over a people within a territory (Biersteker and Weber 1996a:5).

When and how did this phenomenon emerge? Though Stuart Hall asserts that ‘the idea of a “modern state” is hard to date precisely’ (1984:9), most scholars take the 1648 Peace of Westphalia as a starting point, in particular because of its codification of the relationship between sovereignty and space. While recognising the contribution of Greek democratic thinking, Roman Law, or Absolutist centralising

(Held 1984, Hall 1984, Murphy 1996, Haddad 2003), it is the *territorial*-sovereign shift articulated at Westphalia that is most frequently seen to mark the epochal moment. Prior to this, in Europe at least, sovereignty, rule and allegiance had been multilayered, overlapping and not necessarily territorially distinct, with individual and ‘solidarist’ loyalties existing under the overarching banner of the spiritual unity and authority of Papal Christendom (Haddad 2003:300).

By the mid- 14<sup>th</sup> Century, the emergence of independent city-states in Flanders and Northern Italy coupled with the rise of territorially-based, centralising and Absolutist monarchies in England and France to offer a challenge to this status quo. That challenge was paralleled in Central Europe, where religious change and unprecedented religious (or religiously-justified) warfare laid the groundwork for the emergence of geographically-distinct realms of sovereignty (Hall 1984). In 1555, the Peace of Augsburg drew years of conflict to a close and sought to establish peace by instituting the principle whereby the ruler of any particular area retained the right to determine its inhabitants’ religion – *cuius regio, eius religio*. This led historian, Quentin Skinner, to argue that already by the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the territorial state was becoming ‘the most important object of analysis in European political thought’ (in Murphy 1996:83), such that by the time that Westphalia put an end to the Thirty Years War, the division of European political authority into territorially distinct units was already well under way.

What happened after Westphalia? In the Century after peace was established, the ‘sovereign territorial ideal’ (Murphy 1996) further entrenched itself. The peace allowed rulers the freedom both to consolidate their authority *within* their borders

and to act as ontologically-distinct equals with other sovereigns *across* those borders. As Murphy notes, ‘an international society of states was coming into being, and a commitment to the right of individual rulers to control matters within their own territories lay at its core’ (1996:92). These trends gathered pace during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The desire for peace led to the development of numerous inter-state alliances designed to secure it. Increasingly wealthy ‘Great Powers’ swallowed their smaller neighbours. And the domestic centralisation of authority coupled with a rise in communications technology (see Anderson 1983) to mean that while the differences *within* states withered to be replaced by national identities and nationalist identifying, the differences *between* those states only grew larger (Murphy 1996:95; see also Gellner 1983, Hobsbawn 1990).

The Napoleonic Wars provided what Murphy has described as ‘a short detour’ on the road to the consolidation of the sovereign territorial ideal (1996:96). After Napoleon was defeated, the Congress of Vienna returned the map of Europe to one of distinct and mutually exclusive spheres of influence, with ‘participants opt[ing] for a system of juridically independent sovereign states’ in the hope of re-establishing the balance-of-power peace so desperately sought by all (ibid.). Commitment to this peace (and to the ‘Concert System’ of inter-state diplomacy designed to secure it) was such that, beyond the emergence of Greece and Belgium, no major changes to the sovereign-territorial map were permitted until the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when powerful integrationist movements succeeded in ‘unifying’ both Italy and Germany.

The rise and increasing significance of Nationalism during this period was of profound importance. In Murphy’s words, ‘nationalism fed directly into the

sovereign territorial ideal' by '[b]uilding on territorial ideals that had developed over the preceding centuries' and embodying 'a reconceptualisation of the state as an entity providing identity, autonomy, security and opportunity for national betterment' (1996:97). This territorially-based, 'Romantic nationalism' was typified both in the political theory dominant at the time, and, of course, in the search for prestige (as well as the wealth and labour necessary for capitalist expansion) that was constituted by the colonial subjugation of almost the entire earth's surface by powerful European states.

Moreover, as Haddad asserts, the preponderance of nationalism saw the territorial state become 'the uncontested political location for the realigning of power, place and population', such that 'the problem of how to make all individuals fit into such exclusionary spaces was born' (2003:301/2). This necessarily led to conflict, to secessionist movements, population transfers and the warfare that spanned the period between the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the end of the Second World War in 1945. As with previous rounds of European conflict, the peace treaties signed in 1871, 1918 and 1945 only served to further entrench the notion of separate sovereign spheres as a means to avert violence. State leaders began in this period 'to embrace a systemic notion of sovereignty' (Murphy 1996:99). According to this, aggressive force was deemed illegitimate, geographically discrete polities were to be left to manage their own affairs, and the inter-state bodies including the League of Nations and then the UN, would work to manage any disagreements between them.

Decolonisation in the 1950s, 60s and 70s completed the process begun at Westphalia, resulting in nearly all of the world's people and almost every inch of the world's land

being divided under the authority of separate sovereign states. At the start of the Third Millennium, and despite the challenges offered by migration, digital communication and globalised capitalism, the Westphalian order has become so deeply engrained in human political consciousness that it has arguably ‘crowded out’ alternative ideas for governance, to the extent that it has become ‘the only imaginable spatial framework for political life’ (Murphy 1996:91).

### The Place of Legitimacy

The discussion so far may have given the impression that the Westphalian state has somehow been deposited over the earth’s surface entirely un-problematically and from above. It should not. The emergence and spread of the Westphalian state has always and everywhere been contested, resisted and re-shaped by those existing within and against it, be these relatively privileged people of power or the relatively powerless groups so frequently disciplined by those in authority. It is against this backdrop that we must understand the sovereign power embedded within the Westphalian state as having been progressively ‘tamed’ and conditioned by both struggles for and discourses of *legitimacy*. As Max Weber’s famous definition has it, the state is ‘a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the *legitimate* use of physical force within a given territory’. Legitimacy, then, refers to the *right* of a state to exercise what is recognised as its *capacity* for authority, or, in Hall’s words, ‘power which the state is *licensed* or *authorized* to exercise’ (1984:17, emphasis added). As such, it implicitly involves questions as to *who* does the authorizing and *what* ultimately is authorized.

In Held's analysis of the development of these whos and whats, it is the liberal, liberal-democratic and contractarian thinkers who have been most fundamental. For all of these, 'The idea that the consent of individuals legitimates government and the state system even more generally was central' (1984:47). Their tradition begins with Thomas Hobbes in 17<sup>th</sup> Century England. Hobbes argued that the state's proper role was as a Leviathan power to which the community of free men *delegated* their authority as a means of protecting themselves from the 'nasty, brutish and short' existences that would inevitably accompany human nature's proclivity towards an anarchic 'Warre of All against All'. John Locke built on Hobbes' position by challenging what he saw as the ultimately excessive authoritarianism inherent in it. For Locke, to defer to the Leviathan would be 'to think that Men are so foolish that they take care to avoid what Mischiefs may be done to them by Pole-Cats or Foxes, but are content, nay think it Safety, to be devoured by Lions' (in Held 1984:37). For Locke, therefore, repeated and renegotiated consent to state authority was of paramount importance, since this provided a mechanism for guaranteeing basic 'natural' freedoms – to 'life, liberty and estate' – *even from the state itself*. As Held has it, 'In most respects, it was Locke's rather than Hobbes's views which helped lay the foundation for the development of liberalism and prepared the way for popular representative government' (1984:32-41). Crucially, this was because his position incorporated both limits to what a state could legitimately do and an expansion of who could decide on what that was.

The most celebrated advocates for the representativity of government following Locke were Jeremy Bentham and the two Mills. Though undoubtedly 'reluctant democrats' (ibid.44), they and their fellow 19<sup>th</sup> Century liberal-democrat thinkers

promoted the development within the Westphalian state of ‘a political apparatus that would ensure the accountability of the governors to the governed’ (ibid.42). For them, it was only through more widely democratic procedures – including regular elections during which ‘men of means and sound mind’ could vote – that authority could legitimately represent and advance the public interest. In Hall’s words, their thinking represented the emergence of a ‘bourgeois state’, under which ‘the principles of market and contract...became, for the first time, the metaphor for a new conception of the state: a *contractual* state, where power was shared’, first as a liberal entity guaranteeing contract, private property and the (theoretical) freedom of the individual from interpersonal and state molestation, then as a liberal-democratic entity guaranteeing the same principles but for a deeper, more popular base (1984:9-11).

The battle to expand this popular base was, of course, the major issue within the Westphalian order until the establishment of universal suffrage across the states of the Westphalian system in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. By that point, constitutional guarantees enshrined the state’s legitimacy as conditional upon the consent of all adult citizens (as embodied narrowly in elections) and in return for the protection of ever-expanding basic freedoms<sup>30</sup>.

Crucially, however, and of major relevance to this thesis, is the fact that, as the Westphalian state itself universalised, the contours of its legitimacy necessarily broadened, and from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century onwards they were no longer (solely)

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<sup>30</sup> Though these freedoms and the number of people enjoying them have demonstrably expanded, however, it is important to note here that inscribed within this very expansion is and always has been the spectre of the autonomous, propertied, white male (Losurdo 2011). Indeed, as myriad writing from the feminist or post-colonial traditions will tell us, the independent, white (and heterosexual) man has remained implicit within – and at the basis of – the liberal edifice from Hobbes through Locke and right up to the present day.

determined *internally* by the population over whom the state was sovereign. As Biersteker and Weber note:

‘[Contemporary] sovereignty provides textual and/or contextual prescriptions for what a state must do to be *recognized* as sovereign. Whether considered as an institution, a discourse, a principle, a structure, or a context, sovereignty is about *the social terms of individuality*, not individuality per se, and in that sense it is an historically contingent social category rather than an inherent quality of stateness’ (1996:12, emphasis added).

Ever since the 1948 adoption of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* established what Eleanor Roosevelt described as ‘a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations’, these social terms of individuality have at least formally centred around ‘international human rights norms [that have] challenge[d] state rule over society and national sovereignty’ by establishing global principles to which all should adhere as a condition for membership within the society of states (Risse and Sikkink 1999:1-4). As Risse and Ropp argue:

‘International human rights norms have become constitutive of modern statehood; they increasingly define what it means to be a “state”, thereby placing growing limits on another element of modern statehood, “national sovereignty”’ (1999:236).

Though many state elites do still of course fail to observe these international human

rights norms, and while leaders of certain non-liberal states have even suggested that such norms are little more than a cover for more sophisticated forms of (cultural) imperialism, it is significant that few leaders will ever openly admit to breaching the major components constitutive of human rights treaties. Indeed, most will at least either pay lip-service to the kinds of behaviour enshrined with them or they will deny accusations of their violation (Risse et al. 1999). In Risse and Sikkink's words, 'human rights define a category of states and, thus, relate to identities' (1999:14). For those states wanting to be included, say, within the community associated with the identities 'liberal', 'modern', or civilised', certain norm-based behaviour is therefore essential.

One final point is worth making here. In the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and in line with the discussion above on Apollonian Childhood, it is arguably children, and the protection of *their* core human rights, which have become *the* major signifier of (state) modernity and civilisation (Burman 1994). As Boyden has argued, 'The anxiety about young people in the present day is such that the political and social condition of whole societies is gauged by the status of their children' (1997:191). UNICEF have even stated this. They suggest:

'The day will come when the progress of nations will be judged not by their military or economic strength, nor by the splendour of their capital cities and public buildings, but by the well-being of their peoples...and by the protection that is afforded to the growing minds and bodies of their children' (ibid.218).

Contemporary Minority World discussions of ‘child poverty’, statistics pertaining to ‘child fatalities’ in zones of conflict, and the media-political frenzy around ‘child trafficking’ all underline this fact. Modern sovereign legitimacy seems inherently to be tied to the protection or promotion of particular norms of childhood.

### The Role of International Organisations

What role have International Organisations played in these developments? Are they not inherently in conflict with state-based sovereignty? And how have they contributed to the emergence and expansion of the Westphalian OOD? In this section, I will reflect on these questions and on the place of IOs in world politics. I will examine their positionality with regards to the spread and maintenance of the Westphalian OOD, and I will address certain of the techniques with (and through) which they accomplish these ends.

Two of the first major international bodies established by states to coordinate activities between and on behalf of them were the *League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (LNHCR) and its successor, the *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (UNHCR). In certain respects, these agencies have been absolutely fundamental to the spread of the Westphalian state and its OOD (Chimni 1998, Haddad 2003). In her discussion of the history of the refugee, Emma Haddad explains how. For Haddad:

‘Refugees are not the consequence of a breakdown in the system of separate nation-states; rather, they are an integral part of the system – as

long as there are political borders constructing separate states and creating clear definitions of insiders and outsiders' (2003:297).

She continues:

'Without the modern state, there could be no refugees. It is a characteristic of sovereignty that the attempt to place all individuals within (homogeneous) territorial spaces will inevitably force some between the borders, into the gaps and spaces between states and thus outside the normal citizen-state-territory hierarchy' (ibid.).

What this means of course is that, while the refugee is an inevitable product of the Westphalian system, she is also a *threat* to that system, since she falls outside of its (conceptual) boundaries<sup>31</sup>. Haddad again:

'The citizen is unproblematic and rooted in her territorial space. The refugee constitutes a problem by lacking effective state representation and protection; she is uprooted, dislocated and displaced...In a world that abhors the presence of unadministered spaces or people, the presence of forced migrants must be treated as abnormal' (ibid.309).

Indeed, it was precisely in order to deal with this abnormality that LNHCR and then UNHCR were established in the first place. Through introducing identity papers for those without passports, by promoting 'durable solutions' such as repatriation or

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<sup>31</sup> The same could arguably also be said of the migrant.

resettlement, and by coordinating refugees as anomalies in need of reinsertion into what Malkki has termed 'the national order of things' (1994), LNHCR and subsequently UNHCR have been instrumental in both 'institutionalising the refugee in statist terms' (Haddad 2003:317) and 'restor[ing] order to international society by reincorporating the refugee within 'the citizen-state-territory hierarchy' (ibid.309; see also Chimni 1998). As such, and through both their material and discursive practice, these agencies have reinforced and entrenched the political and conceptual order constituted by the Westphalian system.

IOs have not only been influential with regards the relationship between people and place, however. In their seminal discussion of the contemporary role IOs play on the world stage, Barnett and Finnemore argue that IOs 'have never been more central to world politics', adding that their significance is such that they can at times even 'remake states' (2004:1-2; Harrison 2007). In reflecting on how this might be the case, it is worth noting that while standard thinking on IOs (in particular from within the fields of political science and international relations) has it that they 'have no agency and cannot act in any meaningful way' (Barnett and Finnemore 2004:2), in reality the truth is much more nuanced. IOs certainly are constrained by the influential donors whose decisions control their material existence and this does often lead them to act, at least as far as those donors are concerned, only 'within a zone of discretion' (ibid.3). That zone is significantly wider, however, when it comes to the less wealthy countries whose material independence is even less secure than most major IOs. As such, in Barnett and Finnemore's words, although 'the most economically powerful states will have a fair bit to say about what the IMF proposes', 'the IMF may be able to tell Zambia, Bolivia or even Argentina what to

do' (ibid.6). In this, as in so much, IOs often serve as a vehicle for 'the transformation of non-Western societies into Western ones' (ibid.34).

Moreover, whilst the IMF or its fellow international agencies may not be able to coerce rich or powerful states into adopting forms they see as optimal, they can and very often do use what has been termed their 'soft power' in order to foster certain important changes. How does this work? In providing an answer, we should recall the discussion above on the international constitution of contemporary sovereign legitimacy. In Barnett and Finnemore's estimation:

'IOs are often the actors to whom we defer when it comes to defining meanings, norms of good behaviour, the nature of social actors, and categories of legitimate social action in the world. IOs thus help to determine the kind of world that is to be governed and set the agenda for global governance' (2004:7).

Indeed, it is the international human or child rights community that is most central in determining a) what rights need protecting, and b) which kinds of behaviour constitute appropriate protection on the part of states. At the level of discourse and meaning, therefore, they are crucial for the formation of legitimacy.

In line with this, it is important also to acknowledge the *non-material* power that IOs are able to and do exercise within the international arena. As Risse and Sikink note:

'Moral consciousness-raising by the international human rights community

often involves a process of “shaming”. Norm-violating states are denounced as pariah states which do not belong to the community of “civilised nations”, as was the case with South Africa [under Apartheid]. Shaming then constructs categories of “us” and “them”, that is, in-groups and out-groups, thus reaffirming particular state identities. Some repressive governments might not care. Others, however, feel deeply offended, because they want to belong to the “civilised community” of states’ (1999:15; see also Black 1999)

When this shaming combines with domestic and international advocacy, diplomatic pressure and material inducements, a change in the nature of those states failing to reflect the dominant liberal-democratic norms prevalent within the system may be forthcoming.

#### Certain Consequences of the Westphalian Order

What consequences do the Westphalian system and its OOD have for life in the contemporary world? Though necessarily not exhaustive, this section will seek to outline three that I believe are of crucial relevance to understanding the anti-trafficking field.

Foremost among these is that concerning the relationship between people and place. The Westphalian system is one of inherent stasis. Its very essence involves the presumed ‘naturalness’ of an un-changing link between certain groups and certain spaces (Malkki 1994, Mbembe 2000, Turton 2003, Haddad 2003, Scalettaris 2007). This has led state bureaucracies to seek to make their populations more ‘legible’ by controlling their mobility and further wedding them to ‘their’ place (Scott 1998). It has also meant, as Scalettaris argues, that:

‘Movements of people are always seen as problematic, almost pathological. The problem to be solved is related to displacement itself, rather than to the circumstances that induced displacement. As the term “dis-placement” itself seems to indicate, it is assumed that there is a place which individuals belong to, where their roots are and this is the place where they are naturally supposed to stay’ (2007:46-7).

Such an assessment is echoed by De Haan, for whom ‘views about migration and migrants are often based on an assumption of sedentarism, that populations used to be immobile and have been uprooted by economic or environmental forces’ (1999:5)<sup>32</sup>.

Beyond mobility, a second major consequence facilitated by the Westphalian OOD concerns the *depoliticisation* of international phenomena. In Murphy’s assessment:

‘It is difficult to exaggerate the impact of the territorial assumptions that have developed in association with the [Westphalian] order. In general terms, they have made the territorial state the privileged unit for analyzing most phenomena while discouraging consideration of the nature of the territorial state itself. In the political sphere they have directed overwhelming attention to state government and governmental leaders at the expense of extrastate or substate actors and arrangements. In the economic sphere they have prompted us to frame most basic theories of development in state terms’ (1996:103).

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<sup>32</sup> These paragraphs have been abstracted from my Mphil thesis, published as Howard 2008.

In Chimni's analysis, this has led to an overwhelming preponderance of 'internalist' explanations for issues ranging from poverty to 'immigration' or forced displacement. Rather than assess global or trans-national cause factors, 'seeing like a state' leads policy-makers to diagnose problems and proscribe solutions that are themselves reductively statist. With the paradigmatic case of refugee flows, Chimni asserts:

'The internalist explanation of the root causes of global refugee flows is tied in a self-evident way to the advocacy of repatriation as the principal solution to the global refugee problem. It focuses attention on the responsibility of the state of physical origin to create conditions for the return of refugees' (1998:63).

Finally, the third major consequence of the Westphalian OOD regards the reproduction of that OOD and the Westphalian system itself. As Wendt notes, 'The sovereign state is an ongoing accomplishment of practice, not a once-and-for-all creation of norms that somehow exist apart from practice' (1992:413; see also Linklater 1996). Or, in the words of Biersteker and Weber:

'The modern state system is not based on some timeless principle of sovereignty, but on the production of a normative conception that links authority, territory, population (society, nation), and recognition in a unique way and in a particular place (the state). Attempting to realise this ideal entails a great deal of hard work...[It] is a product of the actions of powerful agents and the resistances to those actions located at the margins of power'

(1996a:3).

This brings attention to the material and discursive means through which the state and its discursive order embody and thus recreate themselves. These means include its materialisation or performance in rituals such as deportation, border checks or the granting of citizenship (Anderson et al. 2012). They also include the promotion of institutional frameworks that structure both individual consciousness and the contours of (possible) individual action. Examples here include the division of international agencies into the national-level field offices that reproduce precisely the state distinctions they are designed to reflect as well as the frameworks through which their bureaucrats ‘see the world and perceive the problems they face’ (Barnett and Finnemore 2004:18).

### **Neoliberalism and its Governmentality**

Neoliberalism is at once an ideology, a governmental strategy and, at the intersection between the two, an OOD. Over the past 30 years, it has been defined in a variety of different ways. According to Mitchell:

‘As a political philosophy of governance, Neoliberalism is an ongoing formation with different moments and sites in its evolutionary trajectory. Although it is articulated and implemented in different ways depending on the context, most scholars across disciplines concur that it is a philosophy premised on a mantra of market rationality and on the active encouragement of laissez-faire economic systems worldwide’ (2004:389).

Palley agrees, stating that ‘contemporary Neoliberalism...emphasises the efficiency of market competition, the role of individuals in determining economic outcomes, and distortions associated with government intervention and regulation of markets’. It is, he continues, based on the twin theoretical premises that factors of production are paid what they are worth and that free markets do not let valuable factors of production lie dormant (2005:20). Sewpaul and Holscher further elaborate, suggesting that in practice it involves:

‘an increasingly undisputed primacy of economic over other forms of rationality, where complex political, social and cultural constellations seem to have been reduced to economic issues, where policy decisions appear to make very little sense unless they make economic sense, and where the concept of welfare seems to have been reduced to the limited version of economic welfare’ (2004:3-4).

Going further still, Saad-Filho and Johnston identify Neoliberalism as ‘part of a hegemonic project concentrating power and wealth in elite groups around the world, benefiting especially the financial interests within each country, and US capital internationally’ (2005:1). Like Duménil and Lévy, they see this as an ideological project for the restoration of naked class power (2005) and a mechanism ‘which has evolved to protect capital(ism) and to reduce the power of labour’ (Saad-Filho and Johnston 2005:3; see also Colás 2005).

David Harvey agrees that Neoliberalism is heavily inflected with class politics, and in his seminal 'History of Neoliberalism', he offers the following touchstone definition, which will be adopted throughout the rest of this thesis:

'Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political-economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defence, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit' (2005:2).

As a theory, framework for the governance (and construction) of society, and thus ultimately OOD, Neoliberalism began to emerge in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century, with the

establishment of the Mont Pelerin Society around Austrian economist, Friedrich von Hayek<sup>33</sup>. The society's aims were a revival of classical political economy and its accompanying governance in order to protect personal freedom, private property and free market exchange in the face of state totalitarianism and rising, centrally-planned, welfare-capitalism. Though for much of the 1950s and early 1960s it remained in relative obscurity, the strategic placement of prominent neoliberals in influential university economics departments (notably in Chicago), the creation and funding of powerful, neoliberal think-tanks, the exponential growth in support from important business, media and political leaders and the continued publication of academic and propaganda pieces gradually saw Neoliberalism gain credence and then become dominant as a political and economic theory-cum-governmental-strategy<sup>34</sup>.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, the Minority World post-war class compromise of 'embedded liberalism' (in which capitalism was dominant but was constrained by a web of social and political measures designed to protect the working class) found itself increasingly prone to crisis. The oil embargo of 1973 and the declining rate of profit accompanying increased union strength and rising inflation saw Keynesian welfarism questioned as a sustainable economic model. This provided the opportunity for the neoliberal alternative to gain ground.

In 1973, Neoliberalism was given its first 'trial run' as a programme for governance.

After General Pinochet overthrew Salvador Allende and took power in Chile, he

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<sup>33</sup> This brief history draws variously on Harvey (2005), the numerous essays within the volume edited by Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005; in particular Clarke, Munck, Veltmeyer and Petras, and Palley), Campbell and Pederson (2001), Dean (1999) and Chalfin (2010).

<sup>34</sup> It is important to note at this juncture that Neoliberalism was always an ideological and fundamentally *discursive* project. As Clarke states: 'Neoliberalism presents itself as a doctrine based on the inexorable truths of modern economics. However, modern economics is not a scientific discipline but the systematic elaboration of a very specific social theory' relying on the questionable liberal presumptions of atomised and economic human self-interest, the constructive necessity of competition and, at root, the risk of conflict. 'Liberalism, therefore, is not so much the science of capitalism as its theology' (2005:50-51).

invited a group of Hayek-trained ‘Chicago school’ economists to run the country’s economy. Quickly shifting towards monetarism and instituting widespread privatisation, social spending cuts and anti- collective bargaining legislation, macro-economic and currency stability was achieved, capital accumulation increased and the living standards of the poor plummeted.

In 1979, two major historical events saw Neoliberalism catapult itself from the Chilean ‘experiment’ to a position of global political-economic dominance. These were the election of Margaret Thatcher in the UK and ‘the Volcker coup’ within the US Federal Reserve. In the case of the latter, US Federal Reserve Chairman, Paul Volcker, massively raised US interest rates overnight, wiping out inflation, radically indebting government and thus beginning the cycle of welfare rollback and privatization. In the UK, Thatcher began a similar programme and, with the election of Ronald Reagan as US President in 1981, both sides of the Atlantic saw neoliberal regimes adopt neoliberal policies at home and promote them culturally, economically and politically abroad.

The 1980s were the key decade in the globalization of neoliberal theory and its attendant modes of governance. Debt spirals followed Volcker’s interest rate hike across the Majority World and this, combined with the declining terms of trade, saw fewer and fewer governments able to keep up with their repayments. As bankruptcy threatened or engulfed states throughout Latin America and Africa, the World Bank and IMF – by now institutionally aligned with neoliberal theory/ideology – promoted debt restructuring in exchange for the widespread adoption of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). These were eminently neoliberalising projects designed to

reconfigure Majority World states, promoting fiscal prudence, the reduction of state welfare support, privatization, and an opening to foreign capital. As has been illustrated in the case of Benin, the practical contours of such policies involved the sell-off of the state cotton monopoly, a removal of state subsidies for farmers, a roll-back of labour inspectorates and a the institution of 'favourable' tax-breaks to foreign capitalists.

Though increasing global civil society unrest emerged in the 1990s and 2000s as a result of the effects of some of these neoliberal policies, the 'Third Way' politics of UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, US President, Bill Clinton, and the 'reformed' World Bank and IMF 'Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers' (PRSP) and 'New Partnership for African Development' (NEPAD) managed and ultimately sidelined these challenges (Bond 2005, Johnston 2005). At the time of writing, as the EU response to, and media coverage of, the recent 'financial crisis' aptly demonstrates, 'Neoliberalism has been spectacularly successful' in winning the battle for meaning and for governance (Harvey 2005:3). As Harvey states:

'Neoliberalism has, in short, become hegemonic as a mode of discourse. It has pervasive effects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world' (ibid.).

### A Note on Governmentality

The concept of ‘governmentality’ was first developed by Michel Foucault in his 1977 lectures at the *Collège de France*. The term – a neologism combining *gouverner* and *mentalité* – indicates that ‘it is not possible to study the technologies of power without an analysis of the political rationality underpinning them’ (Lemke 2000:2). It was developed in order to examine the emergence of Harvey’s common-sense (neo)liberal ways of understanding the world, the modern techniques and practices of state/rule characteristic of contemporary (neoliberal) power and the intricate relationship between the two that forms and expresses the overarching Neoliberal OOD. It is a concept that will be of analytical and explanatory use throughout this thesis. Foucault’s initial definition states:

‘By this word “governmentality” I mean three things. First, by “governmentality” I understand the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument. Second, by “governmentality” I understand the tendency, the line of force, that for a long time, and throughout the West, has constantly led towards the pre-eminence over all other types of power – sovereignty, discipline, and so on – of the type of power that we can call “government” and which has led to the development of a series of specific governmental apparatuses (*appareils*) on the one hand, [and, on the other] to the development of a

series of knowledges (*savoirs*). Finally, by “governmentality” I think we should understand the process, or rather, the result of the process by which the state of justice of the Middle Ages became the administrative state in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and was gradually “governmentalized” (2007:108).

There is a strong historical component to this definition, which reflects Foucault’s interest in tracing the development both of a particular (predominant) configuration of power – the modern, administrative, capitalist state – and the political rationalities underpinning its operationalising in practice as ‘state effect’. Crucial for our purposes, however, is the three-pronged first component of this definition, which focuses on the contours of governance that find their genesis in the liberal era and have subsequently come to dominance within the contemporary neoliberal order – *‘power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument’*.

Foucault argued that the signal innovation of early liberalism (and one of the things which remains crucial to it in its current neoliberal guise) as a political, economic and social philosophy for governance was its ‘critique of state reason’ (Burchell 1991:15). This consisted in the belief that no authority could effectively design a system to manage each individual in every contingent situation, and thus that the ‘art of government’ should involve a *laissez-faire*<sup>35</sup> stewardship that allowed the ‘invisible hand’ of the market to drive the world forward, but which tried, ‘like a good father managing his family’, to prudently handle and deploy – when necessary

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<sup>35</sup> Laissez-faire ‘implies, in Foucault’s words, an injunction “not to impede the course of things, but to ensure the play of natural and necessary modes of regulation, to make regulations which permit natural regulation to operate” (Burchell 1991:17).

– what resources it had for the common good (Burchell 1991, Foucault 2007). As Burchell notes, the analogy with the father here is not merely incidental, since the liberal turn is characterized by ‘the sense of a profound connectedness between the principles of political action and those of personal conduct’. The ‘activity of government’ is thus understood as ‘essentially interdependent with the government of self, on the part of ruler and ruled alike’ (Burchell 1991:12).

This had a number of significant implications for the techniques of rule that Foucault argues crystallized in the liberal era and which have now reached their apogee under Neoliberalism (and as elements/instantiations of the Neoliberal OOD). These can be divided into three types – those operating at the macro-level and concerning the structures that frame society, those operating at the micro-level and concerning the individual subject(ivities) constituting that society, and those specific, targeted ‘environmental interventions’ designed to address particular ‘problems’ plaguing (the interaction between) the two (Foucault in Weidner 2009:402s).

At the macro-level, Foucault argues that within (neo)liberal governmentality, governmental strategy operates according to the lines of (classical) ‘political economy as its form of knowledge’. As the discussion of neoliberal doctrine above indicates, this means that a government’s role is reduced to the technical maintenance/establishment of a capitalist market economy, with all its attendant political, monetary, legal and policing structures. Necessarily, within this ‘laissez-faire’ framework, existing distributions of the factors of production are taken as given and left unfettered by state intervention. Governmentality at the macro-level consists, therefore, in regulating what Foucault famously called ‘the rules of the

game’ (see Weidner 2009). As Hamann observes, ‘it is a matter of trying to determine the conditions within or out of which individuals are able to freely conduct themselves’ (2009:54; Lemke 2011).

This ‘free’ conduct is, however, the precise concern of governmentality at the micro-level. According to Foucault, a defining characteristic of government under both liberalism and Neoliberalism is its attention to ‘the conduct of conduct’. Li suggests that, in this, ‘government operates by educating desires and configuring habits, aspirations and beliefs. It sets conditions, “artificially arranging things so that people, following only their own self-interest, will do as they ought”’ (Li and Foucault in Li 2007:5). For Binkley, this involves government establishing ‘an apparatus through which subjectivities are produced’ and through which they ultimately ‘self-produce’—what Foucault termed ‘subjectivation’ (2009, see also Mitchell 2004, Foucault 2008, Lowenheim 2008 and Weidner 2009). This process implies a form of ‘self-policing’, whereby the citizen internalizes and acts upon the norms structuring and embodied in the state, which, under capitalism, means (re)configuring oneself as a rational actor capable of responding to the market (Burchell 1991:10-1).

The final component of Foucauldian neoliberal governmentality to be addressed here concerns the concept of ‘security’. Beyond establishing the ‘rules of the game’ and (thereby) the subject(ivity)s able to (dutifully) play it, government also retains a role, according to Foucault, in addressing certain issues defined as problems. Since, under the aegis of liberal political economy, government neither should nor can afford to regulate all aspects of life across time and space, deviance must be regulated within ‘the apparatus of security’. In Burchell’s account, ‘Foucault characterizes the method

of security through three general traits. It deals in series of possible and probable events; it evaluates through calculations of comparative cost; it prescribes not by absolute binary demarcation between the permitted and the forbidden, but by the specification of an optimal mean within a tolerable bandwidth of variation' (1991:20). In practice, what this means is not actively repressing all undesirable behaviour; rather, it involves drawing on the modern technologies of (population) statistics and insurance to calculate potential risks – which are 'not the same for all individuals, all ages, or in every condition, place or milieu' (Foucault 2007:61) – and (preemptively) responding accordingly. As Castel argues, 'The new strategies dissolve the notion of a subject or a concrete individual, and put in its place a combinatorial of factors of risk' (1991: 281). They involve 'preventive policies' which 'thus promote a new mode of surveillance: that of systematic predetection'. There is, therefore, 'no longer a relation of immediacy with a subject because there is no longer a subject. What the new preventive policies primarily address is no longer individuals but factors, statistical correlations of heterogeneous elements'. Crucially, 'to be suspected, it is no longer necessary to manifest symptoms of dangerousness or abnormality, it is enough to display whatever characteristics the specialists responsible for the definition of preventive policy have constituted as risk factors' (ibid. 288). We will examine in detail what this means in practice under Neoliberalism below.

### *A Word on Discipline and Production*

Though the encompassing concept of (neoliberal) governmentality came to dominate Foucault's later scholarship, it should not be assumed that his earlier (and more

widely known) work on the disciplinary and productive aspects of power no longer maintains an important place in his oeuvre. On the contrary, he explicitly states:

‘The idea of a government as government of population makes the problem of the foundation of sovereignty even more acute...and it makes the need to develop the disciplines even more acute...So we should not see things as the replacement of a society of sovereignty by a society of discipline, and then of a society of discipline by a society, say, of government. In fact we have a triangle: sovereignty, discipline, and governmental management, which has population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanism’ (2007:107-8).

This can be made clear from even a brief examination of the concepts of ‘discipline’ and ‘production’. In his early research, Foucault took ‘discipline’ to refer to the juridical establishment of what is and is not acceptable conduct, enforced by the compulsion of punishments which accrue to deviance (Foucault 1976 and 1977). Though often distinguished from ‘production’, Foucault sees this as existing hand in hand with discipline. He asserts:

‘I think it is indisputable, or hardly disputable, that discipline normalizes... Disciplinary normalization consists first of all in positing a model, an optimal model that is constructed in terms of a certain result, and the operation of disciplinary normalization consists in trying to get people, movements, and actions to conform to this model, the normal being

precisely that which can conform to this norm, and the abnormal that which is incapable of conforming to the norm' (2007:56).

Discipline and production, then, are symbiotically related. A norm of behaviour is established (or crystallized), and part of its enforcement rests on encouraging its widespread internalisation, either through coercion, fear or through persuasion, such that individuals come themselves to reflect and mirror that dominant norm. With regards to Neoliberalism, Hamann suggests:

'Neoliberalism is an apparatus that produces only certain kinds of freedom understood in terms of a specific notion of self-interest, while effectively preempting other possible kinds of freedom and forms of self-interest (including various collective, communal, and public forms of self-interest) that necessarily appear as impolitic, unprofitable, inexpedient and the like. Rather than representing a new paradigm of power, Neoliberalism perhaps constitutes a sovereign-disciplinary-governmental triangle of power' (2009:51).

We will return to this triangle throughout the thesis, as we examine the practical consequences of anti- child trafficking policy in the context of Neoliberalism's overarching OOD.

### Components of Neoliberalization and its Governmentality

It is now time to address the specific policies and material forms that neoliberalization and the governmentality of Neoliberalism have taken around the world. In this section, we will examine the various ways in which Neoliberalism has been operationalised and will look at the policies and practices that constitute expressions of its OOD. Though the discussion will of course refer to examples from Benin, the global reach of Neoliberalism requires illustration beyond this case alone.

#### *Fiscal 'Responsibility' and the Rollback of State Service Provision*

From Pinochet's Chile, through Thatcher's Britain and across the SAP-reconfigured African continent to Benin, the fiscal 'prudence' of balancing national budgets, reducing inflation and achieving monetary stability has been the cornerstone of neoliberalization. The stagflation and balance of payments crises of the 1970s and 1980s and subsequent financial collapses have been attributed within the neoliberal narrative primarily to government corruption, profligacy and excessive welfare provision (Harvey 2005, Palley 2005). As Saad-Filho suggests:

'Neoliberalism implies that the main reason why poor countries remain poor is not because they lack machines, infrastructure or money (as used to be generally accepted by economists) but, rather, because of misconceived state intervention, corruption, inefficiency and misguided economic incentives' (2005:114).

In the case of Africa, it was Robert Bates' analysis of African political corruption and market distortions, along with the seminal World Bank 'Berg Report', which codified and entrenched this macro-economic diagnosis (Arrighi 2002, Bond 2005). In Arrighi's words:

'The most influential text in launching the standard interpretation was a World Bank document of 1981, known as the Berg Report. Its assessment of the causes of the African crisis was highly "internalist", sharply critical of the policies of African governments for having undermined the process of development by destroying agricultural producers' incentives to increase output and exports. Overvalued national currencies, neglect of peasant agriculture, heavily protected manufacturing industries and excessive state intervention were singled out as the "bad" policies most responsible for the African crisis' (2002:7)

The remedy? –

'Substantial currency devaluations, dismantling industrial protection, price incentives for agricultural production and exports, and substitution of private for public enterprise – not just in industry but also in the provision of social services – were singled out as the contrasting "good" policies that would rescue Sub-Saharan Africa from its woes' (ibid.)

Structural Adjustment subsequently ushered in a wave of currency devaluations, the extensive reduction of government (welfare) expenditure and the removal of

‘artificial’ market distortions across Sub-Saharan Africa (Cornia et al. 1989). In Benin, this happened from the collapse of the Kérékou regime at the start of the 1990s and continued right through the Soglo and subsequent Presidencies until the new Millenium. The state thus found itself reconfigured along the technical, governmental lines of a managerial political economy.

### *Privatization and the Creation of Markets*

Integral to these changes has been the massive privatization of supposedly ‘inefficient’, overly ‘expensive’ or corrupt state agencies, based both on the aforementioned drive for fiscal prudence, the assumption that ‘the market knows best’ and thus that private enterprise is most likely to generate production and growth. Harvey states:

‘According to theory...private enterprise and entrepreneurial initiative are seen as the keys to innovation and wealth creation...Under the assumption that “a rising tide lifts all boats”, or of “trickle down”, neoliberal theory holds that the elimination of poverty (both domestically and worldwide) can best be secured through free markets and free trade...Neoliberals are particularly assiduous in seeking the privatization of assets. The absence of clear private property rights – as in many developing countries – is seen as one of the greatest of all institutional barriers to economic development and the improvement of human welfare. Enclosure and the assignment of private property rights is considered the best way to protect against the so-

called “tragedy of the commons”...Sectors formerly run or regulated by the state must be turned over to the private sphere’ (2005:64-5).

In the Minority World, this has resulted in the massive sell-off of public transportation services, energy industries and, in some cases, healthcare. Under the aegis of SAPs, PRSPs and NEPAD, it has seen the fire-sale of state monopolies across Africa. In agriculture, it inaugurated an era of ‘privatisation, decollectivisation, land registration and land titling’ (Byres 2005:87), as well as the dismantling of state-controlled supply and purchasing chains in strategic export markets such as that of cotton for the Beninese (Oya 2005). In the paradigmatic case of Ghana, Chalfin has documented how it led to a rise in private sector involvement in (and management of) both policing and customs control, transforming former sovereign institutions into kinds of state-market hybrids (2010). With ‘aid’ delivery, money that was formerly channelled through the state (and upon which state sovereignty often relied) found itself re-routed through the rising capillary network of service-delivery NGOs (Kothari 1986, Edwards and Hulme 1998, Veltmeyer and Petras 2005)

Precisely because of the ideological-theological faith in the power of private enterprise, however, one of the great paradoxes dividing Neoliberalism in theory from Neoliberalism in practice (‘actually existing Neoliberalism’) and Neoliberalism from liberalism has concerned the presence and function of ‘free markets’. Binkley states:

‘While classical liberalism viewed the agencies and initiatives constitutive of market conduct as generic to social life itself, from the standpoint of Neoliberalism, such dispositions had to be actively fostered through state interventions. The problem confronting early liberalism in the eighteenth century was how to establish a market within and against an existing state, and how to limit the interventions of that state in order that the market could assume the dynamism and rationality to which it was naturally inclined...What distinguishes Neoliberalism from classical liberalism, then, is their differing views on the naturalness of these market rationalities, and consequently their contrasting views on the role of the state in creating the conditions for market activities’ (2009:68).

As Polanyi reminds us, ‘a market economy can only function in a market society’ (in Munck 2005:60-1). In the era of Neoliberalism, this has meant that ‘where markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution), *then they must be created*’ (Harvey 2005:2, emphasis added). This creation is not solely a question of the privatised ‘unbundling’ of the state, however (Ruggie in Chalfin 2010:37). It also involves the active pursuit of *marketisation* and the introduction of market relations into previously non-market spheres. Good examples include the establishment of the emissions-trading regime as a tool for tackling climate change, the marketisation of higher education in the Minority World and the encouraged transformation of the producer into the networked ‘prosumer’ across the globe (Lazzaratto 2004, Weidner 2009)

*'Responsibilisation' and the Creation of the 'Homo Economicus'*

In the context of a shrinking state and expanding market relations, it should come as no surprise that the costs of social reproduction under Neoliberalism are necessarily borne more and more heavily by individuals and communities. Wells reminds us that 'social reproduction is a concept that refers to the material and discursive practices which enable the reproduction of a social formation and its members'. She continues: 'It can be conceptualised as a "social wage" – the cost of paying for the material goods necessary for the maintenance and reproduction of life'. Currently, with the state's service-provision progressively under attack by 'the global prevalence of neoliberal norms', it is at once the community, the family and the individual that are (forced into) becoming 'the site for the labour of social reproduction' (2009:78-9).

Harvey asserts:

'While personal and individual freedom in the marketplace is guaranteed, each individual is held responsible and accountable for his or her own actions and well-being. This principle extends into the realms of welfare, education, health care, and even pensions' (2005: 65).

Mexico's recent education reforms offer a paradigmatic case in point. Blasco explains that, in the 1990s, secondary schooling was made compulsory in Mexico and parents were made 'co-responsible' for enforcing attendance. Far 'from being portrayed as a state responsibility', social rights such as education were 'reframed in terms of self-help, shared responsibility and the need for an active, participatory role for society'. Under this new regime, parents who are unable to afford for their

children to attend school are portrayed either as moral deviants or as social failures who mis-allocate their ‘human capital’ (2005:127-131). In Burchell’s analysis, ‘this is what [is] called the responsabilisation of individuals’ under Neoliberalism (in Lowenheim 2008:259; see also Merlingen 2003).

Crucially, while the macro-level reforms instituted by Neoliberalism’s governmentality *compel* individuals to ‘responsibilise’ themselves by shouldering a greater burden for their own survival or welfare, the micro-level manifestations of that governmentality involve an active pursuit of the creation of the kinds of *subject(ivity)s* able and prepared to do so. Just as real-world market conditions need to be created (and then maintained) in order to respond to the theory-cum-ideology of productive private enterprise, so real-world market actors need to be developed in order to respond to (and act out) these market conditions, embodying at the level of the individual the ideological-discursive norms operating at society’s macro-level<sup>36</sup>. This is what is understood in the Foucauldian critical literature as ‘the creation of the *homo economicus*’.

The ‘homo economicus’ was a concept that began to receive widespread academic attention after Foucault analysed it in his 1978-79 lectures on *The Birth of Biopolitics*. It refers to:

‘a specific form of subjectivity with historical roots in traditional liberalism. However, whereas liberalism posits “economic man” as a “man of exchange”, Neoliberalism strives to ensure that individuals are

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<sup>36</sup> It is at this point that we should perhaps recall Margaret Thatcher’s (in)famous words: ‘Economics are the method, but the object is to change the soul’.

compelled to assume market-based values in all of their judgments and practices in order to amass sufficient quantities of “human capital” and thereby become “entrepreneurs of themselves”. Neoliberal homo economicus is a free and autonomous “atom” of self-interest who is fully responsible for navigating the social realm using rational choice and cost-benefit calculation to the express exclusion of all other values and interests’ (Hamann 2009:38).

As Weidner states: ‘With this invention, the subject exists no longer as one merely pursuing some interest, but rather as a potential source of capital that can and should work on itself in order to achieve the best return on its own investment’ (2009:401). One classic example of how this subject is created and exists comes in the domain of micro-credit. Rankin documents how the restructuring of rural development in Nepal saw state-led provision of both welfare and finance for the rural poor replaced by an exponential rise in the presence of private micro-credit enterprises promoting individualised loans and devolving ‘responsibility for securing economic opportunity to individuals acting as responsible agents of their own well-being’. Within this framework, ‘the subjects of development [shifted] from beneficiaries with social rights to clients with responsibilities to themselves and their families’ (Rankin 2001:19-20). As such, it was the ‘rational economic woman’ – a kind of *femina economica* – able to access capital and realize herself as capital that became the new agent of change.

*Structural A-Politics*

In his discussion of the micro- and macro- structures of Neoliberalism, Weidner suggests that:

‘What is crucial for neoliberal governmentality is that the subject not only exercises her capacity for rational choice but that this choice is made within a social setting where *she alone is responsible for, and bears the consequences of, the outcomes of that decision*’ (2009:404, emphasis added).

As the discussions of both liberal and neoliberal doctrine above have demonstrated, central to the political economy of (neo)liberalism as a form of knowledge and governance is the notion that pre-existing distributions of wealth and the factors of production must a) be taken as ‘natural’, and b) be left un-touched by the state. As Seabrook laments, ‘The first person plural is never used when it is a question of how the riches of the world are to be redistributed’ (2001:48). As a result, those ‘environmental interventions’ characteristic of neoliberal governmentality never address the political-economic conditions underpinning the ‘problems’ they are ostensibly designed to resolve. Robins offers a paradigmatic example from ‘the tip of Africa’. He documents the history of Cape Town City Council’s attempts to ‘save’ the township of Manenberg from crime, violence and poverty. Rather than embark upon a strategy of land or income redistribution; instead of creating public works or employment schemes; policies actually concentrated on privatizing home ownership in the hope that this would both turn residents into active members of the market

economy and spread the structure of the nuclear family, in the belief that these changes would breed better, less violent citizens (2002; see also Li 2007 for an excellent study of similar a-politics in Indonesia).

### *Securitized Governance*

While governance expressive (and constitutive) of the neoliberal OOD remains ‘laissez-faire’ with regards to distributional politics, it reserves the right, as Foucault observed, to intervene strategically and along the lines of cost-benefit analysis in order to address certain issues constructed as problematic. In doing so, it draws on techniques of ‘insurance’ to preemptively calculate and respond to constructions of ‘risk’. Ewald explains: ‘The risk defines the whole, but each individual is distinguished by *the probability of risk which falls to his or her share*’. In calculating such risk, the technique of insurance individualises and defines ‘each person as a risk, but the individuality it confers no longer correlates with an abstract, invariant norm such as that of the responsible juridical subject: it is an individuality relative to that of other members of the insured population, *an average sociological individuality*’ (1991:203, emphasis added).

One of the best examinations of the insurance-influenced ‘technologization of risk’ and ‘risk management’ under Neoliberalism comes with Claudia Aradau’s work on human trafficking. She explains: ‘the governance of human trafficking relies on technologies of delimiting and categorising “high risk” groups, groups which are at risk of being trafficked’. This involves trafficked or potentially trafficked women being ‘profiled for preventive purposes’. She continues: ‘it is these specific

profiles...that make possible the constitution of these women's identity as a subject of governance, [since] the identification and calculability of risk depends on the construction of risk profiles'. Crucially, in formulating such profiles within the EU, 'a report by the European Parliament (EP) explicitly defines and limits vulnerability as specifically due to "poverty, lack of education and professional opportunities", while related studies emphasise 'the victim's "wish for a better life"'. For example, 'a study by the IOM office in Romania found that 38 percent of girls between 15 and 18 years of age in orphanages were ready to "emigrate to a foreign job", thus putting them at risk of being trafficked' (2004:269-75).

The policy consequences of this are easy to imagine. Again, rather than address the causal factors underpinning either 'poverty' or the 'desire for a better life', 'potential victims' face targeted bombardment with anti-migratory propaganda (see, for example, Davies 2008).

### **Implications for Trafficking Discourse and Policy**

How might an understanding of these OOD and their dovetailing furnish greater understanding of the nature and stability of anti-child trafficking discourse and policy? First, since OOD structure ways of seeing, representing and creating the world, it is clear that seeing children through the lens of the Apollonian OOD as inherently weak, vulnerable and innocent structures the ways in which their experiences can be and are understood. Consequently, it is not unreasonable to assume that working or migrant children will *automatically* be conceptualized through the prism of individualized exploitation by the institutions responsible for

their protection, with their work and movement pathologised even in instances where those children who are working and moving do not consider themselves to be victims of abuse and exploitation. In the case of movement in particular, this will inevitably be exacerbated as a result of Westphalian territoriality, which underpins static notions of the ‘normal’ relationship between people and place.

Second, as has been emphasized, ways of thinking about children fuse with and structure institutional practices around them. In a world in which Apollonian Childhood is a dominant (order of) discourse, particular productive and disciplinary policies become normalized and thus shape children, their worlds and the possible policy responses to issues that concern them such as labour exploitation and ‘trafficking’. These will be likely to include both disciplinary and productive measures designed to promote the emergence of the Apollonian child.

In line with this, it is worth noting that Neoliberalism intertwines uniquely with Apollonian notions of childhood in ways which lead to (techniques of) the promotion of very specific kinds of subject(ivities). Wells posits that the Apollonian ‘model of childhood constructs healthy childhood as one that orientates the child towards independence rather than interdependence, towards school-based rather than work-based learning, and separates them from the wider forces of politics, economy and society’. She continues: ‘I call this model of childhood the “neoliberal model” because of the compatibility between liberal ideas that value independence, rational choice and autonomy, and the concept of childhood inscribed in this model’ (2009:4; see also Mahon 2010). Moreover, central to the creation of this model is of course the paradigmatic institution of Neoliberalism’s subjectivity-creating governmentality –

the school. Schools are, in Wells' words, 'a moral technology' centred on 'the conduct of conduct' (ibid.110). Crucially:

'Capitalism claims that some ways of being are natural to humans – that we are competitive, that we always put individual desires and needs before those of a larger group (neighbourhood or community), that we use rational (that is, not emotional) choice to minimize costs and maximize benefits to decide between courses of action. Despite the conviction of capitalists that all this is natural human behaviour, *governments invest significant resources in education partly to produce the kind of person that values one side of the binary rational/emotional, individual/social, autonomous/interdependent more than the other*' (ibid.113, emphasis added).

Third, the a-political nature of the Apollonian, Westphalian and Neoliberal OOD will likely intersect to limit the development of structurally-inclined child protection policies. In this regard, just as the Apollonian narrative individualizes the child by abstracting her from her lived context, and just as the Westphalian State abstracts the child and her community from the global political economy, so Neoliberalism is an inherently individualizing OOD which locates both the causes and remedies of individual suffering at the level of the individual, thus foreclosing the possibility of structural explanations for phenomena such as exploitative work and trafficking from emerging. As such, rather than considering why those who migrate to work in difficult circumstances often describe their decisions to do so as the best of a (structurally) narrow(ed) set of options, those whose analysis is framed by the these

OOD will often be able to think solely in the binary terms of ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’ work, with individual criminality explaining the division between the two, and with repressive laws promulgated as the ‘solution’.

Fourth, as a consequence of this, social policy-making such as that in evidence in the anti-trafficking field will necessarily be reduced to the quixotic spectacle of surgically intervening to (preventively) address symptoms (at a national level) in a manner that does little other than to reproduce their (global) causes. As Ferguson famously observed, by rendering individual or technical problems such as ‘poverty’, policy-making can both obscure and ultimately entrench the power relations which create and sustain it in the first place (1990). In the case of trafficking, this is likely to be especially apparent. As Nandita Sharma has shown, it is precisely the impoverishment of Majority World populations under Neoliberalism that has led to a rise in both the necessity-induced (international) migration and exploitative working practices that themselves comprise the constitutive elements of the crime of trafficking, even as this is excluded from discussion (2003).

Fifth, even in instances where the individuals comprising the institutions which express these three framing OOD reject their dominance, their undoubtedly hegemonic spread and power is likely to ensure that any resistance offered to them will be of little effect. Top-down disbursement chains and performative re-creation are likely to be a norm. This is particularly the case because, if it is the strictures imposed by the Westphalian State and neoliberal governmentality that compel (individuals comprising) institutions to accumulate symbolic capital in order to ensure their reproduction, it is often precisely through enacting the contours of

Apollonian Childhood that they are able to do so. Children in this understanding thus represent a primary source of symbolic capital and it is consequently reasonable to assume that it is through (representing themselves as) ‘saving’ them that institutions are able to access it – and thereby to save themselves.

## **Conclusion**

Over the course of this chapter, I have sought to establish a framework through which we might examine how, why and in what ways anti- (child) trafficking discourse and policy are able to remain so stable despite their apparent inaccuracy and lack of effectiveness, as well as to offer a basis for understanding why exactly anti-trafficking discourse and policy take the forms that they do. I have argued that the use of DT offers a profitable way in which this can be achieved and have suggested that, in applying it, we might examine child trafficking discourse and policy as instrument effect consequences and expressions of three particular and fundamental framing OOD – those of Apollonian Childhood, the Westphalian State and Neoliberalism. Chapters 4-6 will make this case empirically with reference to Benin. The following chapter will address the methodological approach adopted in building this case.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH REFLECTIONS

#### Introduction

This thesis has been designed to achieve two main goals. First, to shed light on the gap between representation and reality in the anti-trafficking field, and specifically to examine more concretely whether anti-trafficking discourse in the case of Benin accurately reflects the empirics of (exploitative) youth work and mobility in that country. Given that my initial working hypothesis was that it does not, the second major goal was to account for why, and to develop a more nuanced explanation than those which currently pertain for the stability and immutability of anti-trafficking discourse and policy in spite of the evidence which points to their inappropriateness. In this chapter, I will reflect on how I set about attempting to achieve these goals. The chapter will begin with a brief definitional discussion of what I argue constitutes the (components of the) discourse and policy under examination. I locate this discussion here because it has great bearing on questions of methodology. The chapter will then address the crucial question of ‘site’ selection, which is of unique importance in a study of dynamic, processual realities such as those I address in this thesis. The chapter will explain why I chose to research (with) the individuals and institutions that I did and will outline the relevant context to each. Subsequently, it will reflect in more detail on the methods employed across my varied research settings and will consider their relative success or failure, as well as which other methods could have been used but were not. Finally, the chapter will reflect on my

positionality as a researcher within the research process and on the ethical framework which has guided this entire project.

### **A Definitional Note on Discourse and Policy**

Given that, beyond merely offering an ethnographic account of the adolescent labour migration so frequently identified as ‘trafficking’ by the child protection literature relating to Benin, my research has sought to detail and examine Beninese anti-trafficking discourse and policy, as well as to engage the ‘worlds’ that constitute and are constituted by that discourse and policy, it has necessarily involved working from an assumption that ‘discourse’ and ‘policy’, as such, do actually exist. This was an assumption I felt confident in making at the outset of my research, in light of my previous experience in Benin as both Masters-level student and professional anti-trafficking actor. In the following chapters, I hope to demonstrate conclusively that this assumption was correct. First, however, I will identify what, concretely, are the elements that tangibly comprise the said ‘discourse’ and ‘policy’ and which are thus available for examination.

Within the voluminous literature addressing ‘policy’ from various points across the academic spectrum, surprisingly few definitions of ‘policy’ are to be found. Whilst political scientists often analyse the ‘why’, economists examine its ‘cost’, and ethnographers engage with the ‘how’, most never explain what ‘policy’ actually ‘is’. Notwithstanding, certain central trends do appear to run through the few classifications that are available. In the Oxford English Dictionary, for instance, we learn that ‘policy’ is ‘a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a

government, party, business, or individual'. Similarly, in a paper designed to answer this question, Torjmann determines that 'policy' 'represents the end result of a decision as to how best to achieve a specific objective' (2005:4), while David Mosse calls 'policy' a 'process', inherently linked to 'practice', but often divorced from its intended consequences (2004). These definitions are linked by the notion that 'policy', as a positable and examinable reality (or 'field', in Bourdieu's terms, 1977), exists independently of that to which it leads. Moreover, as it is understood above, 'policy' consists of goals, means and ends, such that it can perhaps reasonably be defined as *the course of action determined and embarked upon as the manner best to achieve a particular result.*

What, methodologically, would this mean for an analysis of what (if anything) constitutes anti-trafficking policy in Benin? I believe identifying the components of our analysis to require a three-step process. First, we must establish which actors are involved in determining and embarking upon a course of anti-trafficking action; second, we need to identify what constitute the main lines of that anti-trafficking action; and third, we must pinpoint the particular end result towards which they work. Beginning this process in reverse, it was clear even at the start of the last decade that the major end result desired by every actor engaged in anti-trafficking work was the 'protection of children', generally, and 'from trafficking' in particular. This is of course intuitive, but it was also obvious from even a cursory examination of official documentation. 'The major actors in the field of child protection', declared the ILO-funded, Child and Family Ministry's *National Anti- Child Trafficking Plan of Action* (POA), include the said ministry, the Justice Ministry, UNICEF and the

ILO (MFE and ILO 2008:2), for all of whom ‘protecting children’ and protecting them from trafficking in particular is a key goal<sup>37</sup>.

In terms of which actors collectively determine and embark upon anti-trafficking initiatives in Benin, these four bodies have always formed the core. The POA explicitly states that it was they, alongside a group of others, who decided in 2006 that an official strategy needed to be developed, in order to harmonise the interlinked and overlapping, yet officially un-coordinated, actions of the previous half-decade (MFE and ILO 2008:2). These agencies have been accompanied by a number of other important actors. They include, first, major donors such as the EU and US, both of whom have provided the bulk of material assistance for Beninese anti-trafficking initiatives since the early 2000s and whose embassies have consistently played a role in top-level strategy meetings. Second, there is a central collection of national and international NGOs which have a long presence in Benin, which have inserted themselves strategically into the anti-trafficking financial and policy chain since 2001, and which constitute the ‘civil society’ voice in planning meetings, within policy consultations and as project/policy ‘deliverers’.

What of the ‘course of action determined and embarked upon’ by this group of actors? Identifying any singular course of action is inevitably a difficult task, since it requires examining the activities of multiple, disparate bodies operating across time and space. It is one that I believe is possible, however. First, because, since 2007, an official national anti-trafficking strategy has been in place, under the leadership of

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<sup>37</sup> UNICEF Benin have recorded it on their website as one of their key activities for much of the last decade; the Child and Family Ministry’s *raison d’être* is child protection and their work against trafficking has consistently been the major component thereof. Similarly, the Justice Ministry has possessed an office focussing explicitly on child protection and on anti-trafficking work for nearly a decade, while the ILO’s flagship initiative in the entire West African region, LUTRENA, was dedicated specifically to protecting children from trafficking.

the Child and Family Ministry and in partnership with all the central players identified above (MFE and ILO 2008:2). Second, and equally importantly, because while this official(ised) strategic coordination dates only to 2007 (even if the early phases of discussion and planning took place in 2005/6), the years after trafficking's explosion in Benin in 2001 (as well as those after the POA in 2007) saw actions and trends in actions which were sufficiently similar, overlapping and collectively focussed to be identified as a 'policy', in the terms laid out above.

What were these trends and actions? As I will elaborate in more detail in Chapter 5, the major emphasis of the varied actions undertaken by the key bodies in Benin's anti-trafficking panoply has consistently been on the pre-emptive protection of children from the exploitation that is inherent to the crime of trafficking by regulating, managing and ultimately discouraging their migration away from the 'family home' for work and by encouraging the development of a particular kind of 'safe, healthy childhood'. This was clear almost immediately that trafficking emerged as an issue in Benin, with notable early initiatives including the Danish Embassy-funded, Child and Family Ministry project to 'fight against migration and trafficking' (MFPSS and ARD 2002), UNICEF and the same Ministry's establishment of 'village committees' to prevent migration and promote 'responsible parenthood', the international community's collective pressure to pass a law 'regulating' (and reducing) child movement (Interview with Alexia, 1/9/7; Interview with Jerome, 1/9/7), and the first phase of the ILO's LUTRENA project, which senior sources admitted to have been little more than an anti-migratory push centred on sensitising around good parenting. Any examination of policy will thus necessarily involve examining its manifestation in precisely these kinds of initiatives.

What, then, of discourse? The last chapter defined discourse as ‘a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds...which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds’, constituting systems of practices that form the identities of subjects and objects. ‘Discourses’ can thus profitably be understood as kinds of ‘narratives’, which depict, represent and thus constitute particular beings and realities. How are these narratives articulated? For discourse theorists, articulation takes place through the medium of ‘texts’ which, as Howarth and Stavrakis note, can include ‘a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic data’ (2000:4-5). Some theorists see these as encompassing ‘anything that has been made and can be interpreted and thus analysed’ (Van Dijk 1996:2), while others argue that they include spatio-temporal ‘events’ (Fairclough 2010), and still others ‘ways of acting, interacting, feeling, believing, valuing, and using various sorts of objects, symbols, tools and technologies’ (Gee 2005:7). Given that those who are most central to anti-trafficking policy are necessarily also those who play the greatest role in determining the contours of the (anti-)trafficking narrative – since it is they who have the material and informational resources necessary to publicly represent what they do and *why* – it is to these actors’ ‘texts’ that our analytical lens must be turned. This means examining everything from institutional and governmental publications, pronouncements or policy documents, to project proposals, websites, posters, official communiqués, legal frameworks, media representations, individual articulations on the part of particular, situated actors, and more.

Let us now briefly restate the major lines of what this section has argued. Taking a working definition of ‘policy’ to comprise *the course of action determined and embarked upon as the manner best to achieve a particular result*, I have suggested

that, in the context of anti-trafficking work in Benin, such a ‘policy’ has long existed. This policy has been the collective effort by multiple institutional actors, including Beninese Ministries, International Organisations, donor representatives and (I)NGOs to regulate, manage and discourage child (labour) migration away from the family home as a means to preventively protect children from the crime of trafficking and to promote the kinds of families and childhoods that do not involve exposing the young to labour or migration. The various channels through which this collection of actors represent what they do and why also comprises the trafficking ‘narrative’ in Benin and thus the components of ‘discourse’ that this research has set out to examine. In the following section, I will identify the various ‘sites’ at which this examination took place.

### **‘Site’ Selection And Research Contexts**

It is important to begin this section by prefacing that, in a study of fluid, dynamic and processual realities such as ‘trafficking’, discourse and policy, site selection represents far more than a mere decision over where a researcher deploys her methods. Indeed, in such a study, site selection, and the very choice to conduct research across multiple sites, itself represents an integral methodological decision and a core component of one’s research *methodology*. (Lewis and Gardner 1996, Shore and Wright 1997). As Shore and Wright observe:

‘The sheer complexity of the various meanings and sites of policy suggest they cannot be studied in participant observation in one face-to-face locality. The key is to grasp the interactions (and disjunctions) between

different sites or levels in policy processes. Thus, “studying through” entails multi-site ethnographies which trace policy connections between different organizational and everyday worlds, even where actors in different sites do not know each other or share a moral universe’ (1997:14).

Lewis and Gardner share this position (1996:9), and their perspective, along with that of Shore and Wright, should be borne in mind when reading the present section not solely as a description of research locations.

In terms of which locations a researcher should choose when examining discourse and policy, it is instructive to consult the following diagrammatic typology, which Lewis and Gardner provide as an illustration of the central sites and linkages crucial to any ‘developmental’ discourse and policy, and thus also to the workings of any Majority World state (ibid.):

**Figure 4: Typology of the Discourse and Policy Chain**



In the case of Benin's anti-trafficking field, I was fortunate to begin my doctoral research enjoying a degree of familiarity with a number of the institutions positioned as links in this chain. My previous work in Cotonou had exposed me both to a local and an international anti-trafficking NGO, while I had also worked with children and young people defined as 'victims of trafficking'. Crucially, I was consequently aware of which real-world institutions comprised the hierarchy depicted in Lewis and Gardner's diagram and thus began with an idea of who to access when tracing the material, symbolic, discursive, social, political and practical linkages between them.

In order to start the process of tracing these linkages, I felt that it would be most propitious to begin at 'ground level', by selecting a case study population of minors deemed either to be victims of trafficking or to be from a community that was considered vulnerable thereto. Once identified, I knew that I could then navigate my way back up Lewis and Gardner's chain by accessing the various different organisations shaping the discourse, policy and practice around this case study population. Though it should of course go without saying that, in embarking on such a journey of multi-sited and fundamentally qualitative research, the findings generated can never be entirely generalisable (since one can never fully master each and every connection in a field as dispersed as that of anti-trafficking), it is my contention that the breadth of the data thus gathered can provide a platform from which to make important analytical inferences. The remainder of this section will describe the sites at which this research was conducted and will give details as to how and why particular sites were chosen.

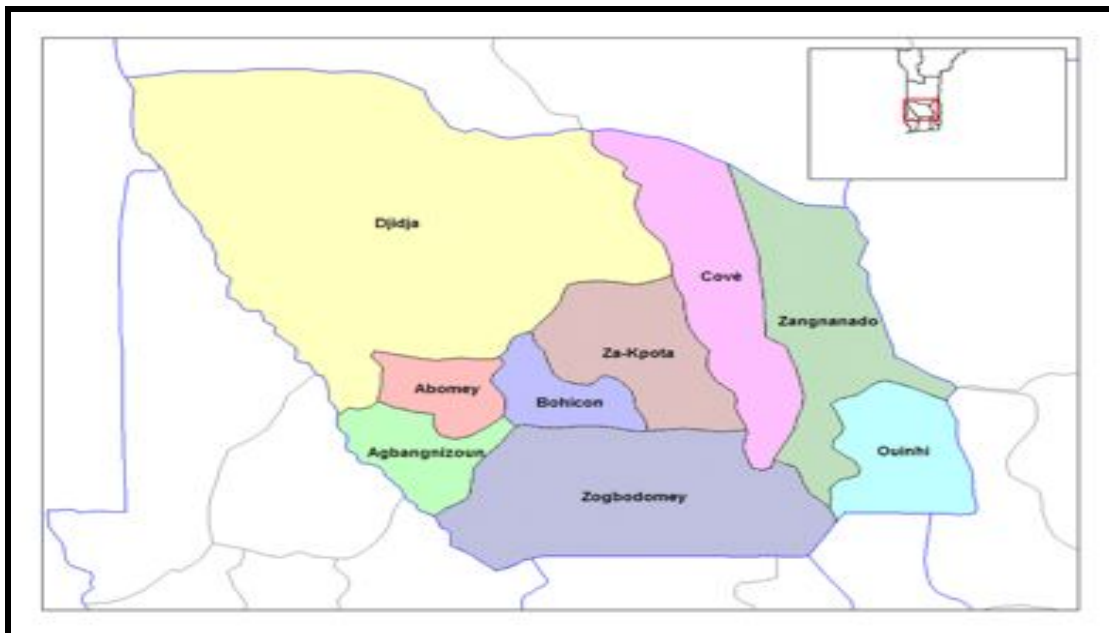
'Sending'/Target Villages

Chapter 1 explained that child trafficking emerged as a major 'problem issue' in Benin at the start of the last decade, first with the 'Etireno affair' of 2001 and then with the Abeokutan 'crisis' and accompanied mass repatriation of Beninese child and adolescent labourers in 2003. Given that all of those repatriated from Abeokuta and many of those 'rescued' from the Etireno had come from the *Zou département*, and within it the *communes* of Za-Kpota and Zogbodomey, one of the major consequences of these episodes was that the Zou became identified by the child protection community as the localised 'hub' *par excellence* of child trafficking, labour and exploitation within the wider 'hub' that was Benin. This impression was further entrenched by two early and influential government reports citing the Zou as an area of particularly high child and youth labour mobility, and thus of trafficking (MFPSS and ARD 2002, MFPSS and UNICEF 2002).

One necessary corollary to this identification was that the Zou, and within it the *communes* of Za-Kpota and Zogbodomey, became major targets for national and international anti-trafficking interventions. In 2005, the Beninese NGO I worked with was in the process of launching its flagship anti-trafficking initiative in Za-Kpota; in 2007, the INGO I worked with was heavily involved in a large, internationally-funded anti-trafficking project in the same *commune*. Even as far back as 2002, the government, in partnership with two donors and a major IO, had begun intensifying its nationwide push to establish 'village (anti-trafficking) committees', and its resources were targeted explicitly at the various *communes* of the Zou, notably Za-Kpota and Zogbodomey. In particular, this was to stem the flux of male

adolescent out-migration (especially to Abeokuta), which had begun to be seen as one of the paradigmatic national cases of trafficking.

In light of this, and given my already existing personal, professional and academic links to the Zou region, it seemed appropriate to choose Za-Kpota and Zogbodomey as the sites for my ground-level case studies, and in so doing to focus in particular on emic understandings both of labour migration to Abeokuta and of dominant anti-trafficking interventions. As such, and in concert with my research assistant, who was himself an NGO worker with many years of anti-trafficking experience and who was from the locality, I selected four case study villages, two in Za-Kpota *commune* and two in Zogbodomey. The villages themselves were selected primarily on grounds of accessibility – I had previously worked in one and my research assistant was active in the other three. Each village was also located within 15km of the *commune*'s small urban capital, Bohicon, where I lived during fieldwork, and from where I made daily trips to the villages. In making our selections, we were also attuned to the fact each village had been exposed to a significant degree of anti-trafficking discourse and policy intervention in light of the persistently high levels of male adolescent out-migration identified by the policy community as trafficking. Additionally, and for comparative purposes, we ensured that one village from each *commune* be equipped with a 'village (anti-trafficking) committee', while one was not. The following maps should help situate the reader and will provide an indication of the relative location of these villages.

Map 2: Benin<sup>38</sup>Map 3: Zou Département<sup>39</sup>Map 4: Communes of the Zou Département, including Za-Kpota and Zogbodomey<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Map available at and downloaded from: [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Benin\\_carte.png](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Benin_carte.png).

<sup>39</sup> Map available at and downloaded from: [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Benin\\_Zou.png](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Benin_Zou.png).

<sup>40</sup> Map available at and downloaded from: [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Zou\\_communes.png](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Zou_communes.png).

Within Za-Kpota *commune*, the two villages I chose were *Sehere* and *Zelege*; in Zogbodomey, I worked in *Tenga* and *Atomè*. In important respects, all of these villages are typical of their wider *départements*. They are predominantly inhabited by members of the Fon ethnic group, population density averages over 100 people per square kilometre, and the annual population growth rate is at almost two per cent. Family sizes are generally large and fertility rates stand at over six births per woman. The majority of inhabitants are aged 15 or under. Families are patrilocal and patriarchal, and religious beliefs involve a synthesis of animist traditions and Catholic Christianity. Economically, agriculture is by far the dominant activity, accounting for almost 75% of the workforce in Za-Kpota and 60% in Zogbodomey. Around 15% of people in Za-Kpota are involved in commerce, while this figure rises to 26% in Zogbodomey. Most households are very poor, a situation that is worsened by declining soil fertility and the poor functioning of agricultural markets. Cotton is the region's major cash crop, and this suffers from serious price volatility. Industry is barely present and in each of my villages 'under-employment' is bemoaned as a major problem. Of the four villages I studied, Tenga was by far the poorest, followed by Sehere. Atomè had benefited from a number of development projects, while Zelege was wealthier on account of its previous relationship with an international company purchasing the oranges for which it is famous. Nonetheless, (male) outward labour migration remains high for every village, such that each possesses a wide 'expatriate' network of those who have moved for work and settled elsewhere (FIDESPRA 2004a, 2004b, Fahala and Afrique Conseil 2006, Guidibi and Afrique Conseil 2006, Bierschenk 2009).

In the villages themselves, the goal of my research was to generate what Geertz has termed ‘thick description’ or ‘deep data’ (1994:214), in the aim of ultimately ‘guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions for better guesses’ (Geertz 1994:224), rather than to claim the representative authority sought by positivist, natural science (Johnson 1998). My focus was predominantly on engaging current, former and potential male adolescent labour migrants, ‘victims of trafficking’, their families and members of their communities. I wished to develop an understanding of the way that they understood and experienced their life-worlds and to examine their economic, social and cultural realities, their views on and experiences of migration, labour, the transition from childhood to adulthood, appropriate gender and age norms and models of social and economic success. Given this, and since my time in each village was limited, I used purposive sampling to identify those most closely related to the process of adolescent labour migration (‘trafficking’), developed personal ‘migration histories’ with these informants, and subsequently snowballed other relevant interviewees around them. Additionally, and in line with the anthropologists of policy on whose work this study draws, since I was also ‘seeking a method for analysing connections between levels and forms of social process and action, and exploring how those processes work in different sites’ (Shore and Wright 1997:14), I was particularly attuned to the nature of the interactions between ‘representatives’ of discourse and policy at the village level. This meant accessing village committee members, investigating how the village committees were perceived, and analysing the wider community perceptions of the discursive and political anti-trafficking structures that impact on life in and beyond the village.

Though further and more detailed reflections on data quality will be forthcoming below, it is worth noting here that for all the data provided by this approach may have been ‘thick’ and rich, my sample was in no way random. As such, it remains un-representative and inferences should be read with caution. Additionally, I was interviewing current or former migrants for whom many researchers argue that there exists a social incentive to depict that migration *post-facto* in positive terms (see, for instance, Lieblich et al. 2008). Moreover, as Hardgrove notes in the case of her own similar research in Liberia (2012), my sampling inevitably generated a severe gender bias across my informants. Given the focus of my research, although I strove to access women and girls as often as I could, and though the time I spent in each village necessarily also brought me into contact with a number of the peripheral figures in my main interlocutors’ lives, my sample at village level was almost entirely comprised of males, and in particular those who are young.

**Image 1: Za-Kpota Turn-Off, Towards Zelele<sup>41</sup>**



<sup>41</sup> All pictures featured in this thesis were taken either by me or by a colleague. They are reproduced with permission.

**Image 2: Road to Sehere**



**Image 3: Boys in Tenga**



**Image 4: Typical Farmland in the Zou, near Atomè**

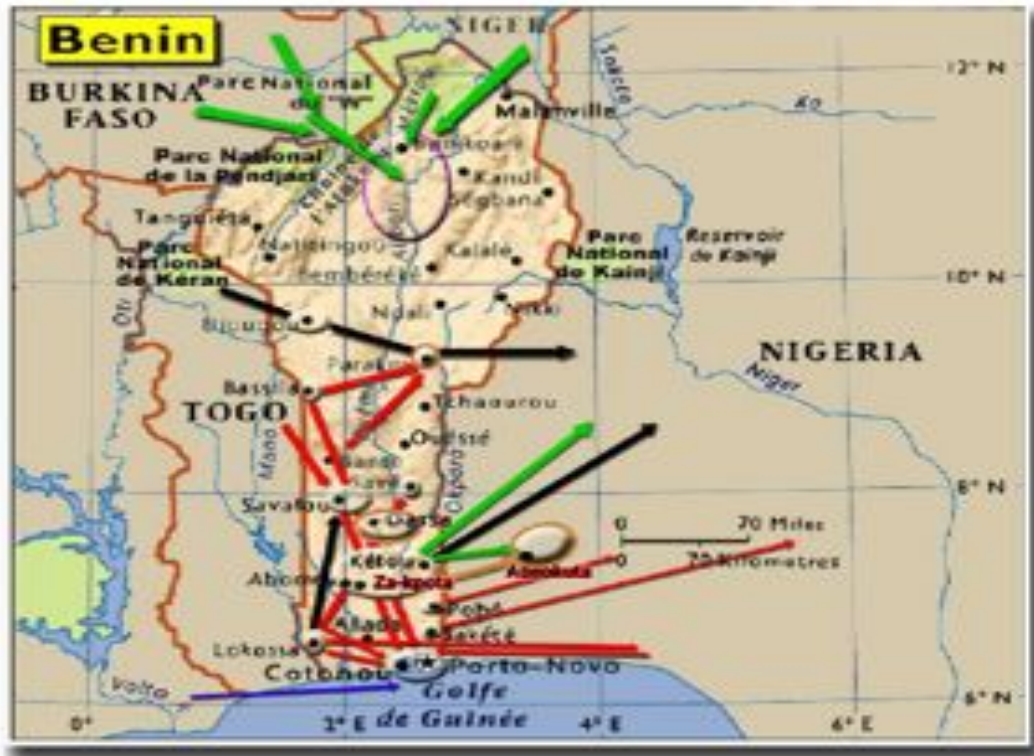


### Migrant Destination Zone

I selected my Beninese case study villages because of the high levels of adolescent male out-migration characteristic of the region in which they were located and because this out-migration had been understood and responded to by the child protection community as an example of child trafficking. As was suggested above, one of the reasons why the child protection community understood that migration in this way was because it frequently led the young to work in the artisanal gravel pits of Abeokuta, Nigeria. While in Benin, I therefore took pains to access as many people as possible who were currently or formerly engaged in that gravel pit economy. This included current or former adolescent migrants, their employers, those facilitating their work and migration and those whose livelihoods depended in

part on that labour migration. Although, in beginning my fieldwork, I had been aware that the migrant labour network linking the *Zou département* (and in particular the *communes* of Za-Kpota and Zogbodomey) to the quarry economy of Abeokuta was significant, it was only *during* this fieldwork that I began to understand quite how far that network extended and quite how important a role it played in structuring life both in Abeokuta and in the Zou. As a result, and order to give myself a chance to triangulate the data I received *about* that economy but *in* Benin, I decided to make a return trip to the region in 2012 and to conduct a short period of very targeted research in and around Abeokuta and its quarry economy. This involved, first, observing living and working conditions in the quarries, and second, interviewing representatives of all the ‘classes’ engaged in the quarry economy, including gang leaders, gravel purchasers, traders and transporters, landowners and Beninese adolescent migrant quarry-workers from villages across the *Zou département*, including those which had formed my original ‘ground-level’ case studies. My interviews sought to complete the picture I had received on the Beninese side of the border and focussed on the context and experience that young male migrants have of their work, as well as on their views about how this is understood, represented and responded to by the discourse and policy establishment. Further discussion of the quarry economy will be forthcoming in Chapter 4.

**Map 5: Map Showing Migrant Flows to and From Benin and Identifying the Location of Abeokuta in Relation to Za-Kpota<sup>42</sup>**



**Image 5: Gravel Pits in Abeokuta<sup>43</sup>**



<sup>42</sup> Map excerpted from Fenevrol and TDH (2005:8).

<sup>43</sup> It should be noted that I will be using the terms 'gravel pits' and 'quarries' interchangeably throughout this thesis, since in practice the French words for both terms are used to identify the Abeokutan quarry economy.

**Image 6: Teenage Boys Working in Abeokuta Gravel Pits**



### The Cotton Sector

My previous work and research on trafficking and on anti-trafficking discourse and policy in Benin had led me to believe that the wider political economy of labour, migration and exploitation remained un-accounted for and un-addressed by mainstream anti-trafficking discourse and policy actors. Other critics have suggested that this is also true globally, and in Benin I felt that I had a unique opportunity to test whether this was indeed the case by examining the relationship between cotton price depression and labour mobility in my case study communities. This was for six reasons. First is the fact that cotton is the major cash crop in Benin and, for many farmers, represents their only source of a cash income. Second, the *Zou département* (and within it Za-Kpota and Zogbodomey) comprises one of the country's major cotton-producing regions. Third, as Chapter 1 argued, there is widespread macro-

economic evidence as to the deleterious effect that US agricultural subsidies have on the international price of cotton and thus on the poverty of cotton-producers such as those in Benin. Fourth, though the US refutes any causal relationship between its subsidies and Beninese peasant immiseration, my prior experience in Benin had suggested that this immiseration was only too real. Fifth, that experience had also led me to suspect that it had a direct impact on both adolescent migratory decisions and experiences of exploitative labour. Finally, sixth, in light of the above, and in light of the US's global position as both prophet of 'free trade' and pioneer in the 'war on trafficking', I saw the silence within the anti-trafficking community over the (potential) impoverishing effects of US subsidies as constituting an archetypal and bitterly ironic example of how the discursive frame of trafficking can depoliticise the phenomenon to such an extent that issues of real substance remain un-addressed by its related policy.

Drawing, therefore, on the anthropologists of policy and on studies of neoliberal globalization that seek to examine both 'chains of causality' and the lived effects of macro-economic decision-making (see Blaikie 1999, Makhoul et al. 2003, Satyarthi and Zutshi 2006, Morrissey 2010), I decided to focus a part of my 'ground-level' research on cotton markets and on cotton production, and in particular on the household-level effects that cotton price deflation has had in the *Zou département*. Though this did not involve research in any different 'sites', it meant that I took pains to access and interview cotton farmers and those who had worked on cotton farms in each of my case study villages and within the wider *département*. Questions in these interviews focussed on perceptions of the cotton market, experiences of price fluctuation, the lived consequences of price falls and the relationship between male

adolescent labour migration and lower prices. Additionally, in order to complete the picture I was building, I spoke with senior national and international cotton market experts, as well as with prominently placed employees of government and private sector cotton market institutions. I also quizzed anti-trafficking actors on their perceptions of cotton markets, their impressions of agricultural subsidies and their understanding of the linkages between the political economy of agriculture and labour, migration and trafficking.

Though work on political-economic chains of causality is becoming increasingly widespread (particularly within the field of political ecology; see Blaikie 1999, Makhoul et al. 2003, Satyarthi and Zutshi 2006, Morrissey 2010), it should of course be borne in mind that any causal relationship this thesis points to must necessarily be seen as potential or probable rather than definitive. My samples were non-random, they were not large, and they did not involve enough long-term, in-depth research to be certain that other factors were themselves not more significant than cotton price manipulation in explaining youth labour mobility/trafficking. However, the point of this component of my fieldwork was *not* to definitively attribute male youth labour migration from the Zou to Abeokuta to US subsidy-induced cotton price suppression. Rather, it was to examine whether or not evidence exists to presume a *likely* relationship between one and the other, and thus to shed light on and illustrate the a-politics of anti-trafficking discourse and policy.

**Image 7: Cotton Fields in the Zou**

### National Government Agencies

So far, all of the research ‘sites’ I have discussed have been those predominantly occupied by my ‘ground-level’ research populations – those individuals and communities who are (mis-)represented *by* the anti-trafficking establishment and who form the target for its policy interventions. It is now time to turn to the various institutions existing on the ‘inside’ of the anti-trafficking field. As highlighted in the previous section and in Lewis and Gardner’s diagram reproduced in Figure 3 above, the bodies comprising this field are many and varied. In Benin, they include two important Government Ministries (the Child and Family Ministry and the Ministry of Justice), two International Organisations (UNICEF and the ILO), various donor bodies (in particular those representing the US, the EU and certain EU member states) and a core of national and international NGOs. It is important to remember

that each of these are corporate structures which are themselves organised hierarchically across time and space. Examining them thus requires being attuned not only to their external interactions but also to their internal dynamics and to intra-institutional operations (see, for instance, Fisher 1997).

In the case of the Beninese state, this meant researching at both a 'central' and a 'regional-local' level. In Cotonou, where the headquarters of government agencies are located, I interviewed a variety of senior civil servants working on the trafficking or related briefs for their Ministries, spoke with current and former government ministers, and took pains to access other, non-interview data that would shed light on intra- and extra- institutional relationships. Within each of the Ministries concerned, I triangulated my data by asking similar questions to different people and I endeavoured to speak to those employees best placed within their institutional frameworks to shed light on the various aspects I wished to understand. My interviews focused on how and why policies and projects are established and represented, the nature of the institutional research process, inter- and intra-institutional dynamics and constraints, understandings of childhood, child work and migration, perspectives on trafficking and anti-trafficking policy, views on the role of the state, and obstacles to its successful operation. At the regional-local level, my interviews had a similar flavour, but were necessarily coloured by site-specific nuances. For each of the two relevant Ministries, I spoke with the *départemental* and then the *communal* representatives responsible for operationalising and overseeing state policy in their locality.

**Image 8: Zogbodomey CPS<sup>44</sup>**

### (I)NGOs

In the neoliberal era of ‘decentralised development’ and as a result of the advance of the ‘good governance’ agenda, NGOs have become increasingly important actors within most Majority World states. Constituting – as Lewis and Gardner’s typology makes apparent – an essential channel for the disbursement of donor funds, they now represent a key, widespread vehicle for the provision of services formerly delivered by the government (Le Meur 1996, 1999, Le Meur et al. 1998, Clarke 1998, Edwards and Hulme 1998, Moore and Stewart 2000, Wallace 2009, Bierschenk 2004 and 2009). In the case of Benin’s anti-trafficking architecture, this is abundantly clear, as (I)NGOs feature prominently in roles varying from sub-contracted project

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<sup>44</sup> The CPS is the Child and Family Ministry’s arm at the *commune* level.

implementation to national round-table policy planning. Both the government's *National Study on Child Trafficking* (The National Study) and its POA underline this fact – whole sections of each are dedicated to reproducing NGO analyses and documenting NGO work.

In order to conduct a comprehensive analysis of Benin's anti-trafficking field, then, one must necessarily be attentive to these institutions, examining both their internal and their external workings and relationships. In my own case, I was fortunate to begin my doctorate having already established strong links with a number of them. In 2005, I had worked with a national NGO set up at the end of the 1980s and now internationally recognised as a pillar of the Beninese child protection community. In 2007, I had worked with an international NGO of similar repute, and my personal and professional ties to these two organisations have continued to remain strong. This meant that, as I embarked on my fieldwork, I already possessed a well-grounded 'insider's perspective' on the positionality occupied by (I)NGO staff and a solid understanding of the dynamics operating within and around the institutions of which they are a part. Additionally, I benefited from a well-established network of contacts including representatives of each of the most important major non-governmental bodies involved in anti-trafficking. As such, in conducting my research at this level (or metaphorical 'site'), I was able to reflect and draw heavily on my own continuing personal experience. I was also able to snowball a wide range of centrally-placed interviewees, with whom I addressed subjects including donor relations, 'beneficiary' populations, intra-organisational hierarchies, understandings of children, childhood, work, migration and trafficking, views on dominant discourse and policy, and experiences of past and present project work.

### International Organisations

If (I)NGOs are now important actors within the world of discourse and policy and in the operations of Majority World states, International Organisations such as inter-governmental bodies and the panoply of UN agencies are even more so. At the global level, it has been well documented how the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and their UN partners embed themselves within, and secure influence over, Majority World governments and their departments (Cornia et al. 1987, Ferguson 1990, Escobar 1995, Stiglitz 2002). Using massive financial leverage, IFI and UN representatives literally occupy seats at the national policy and decision-making table. In the case of Benin, this is especially pronounced. In his account of the elaboration of the country's last PRSP, Emmanuel Assilamehoo, former Special Advisor to Benin's then Finance Minister, tells of the *joint* development of national strategy by Beninese national authorities and the IO and donor 'partners' providing funding for it (2003). As Bierschenk et al. note, this is hardly surprising in a context where 'aid' 'financed over 30% of public expenditures and 80% of public investments over the 1992-7 period' (2003:162).

This dynamic is no less apparent when it comes to social or welfare policy formation. In her discussion of the power of UNICEF and the role of its Country Programmes, Siobhan Laird suggests that the organisation 'is a principal agent in the determination and pursuit of welfare policy in relation to children across the developing world', since, beyond its 'expertise' and legitimacy, it is 'an agenda-setting multilateral donor' (2001:457-9). So too the ILO, whose role in norm-setting, knowledge production, policy design and project financing in the areas of child labour and child

trafficking has been widely documented in contexts across the globe (Groves 2001, Bourdillon et al. 2011). Naturally, this also includes Benin, where UNICEF and the ILO have long provided the bulk of direct financing for research, policy and project work relating to children and their protection (even if that money does come first from the US or EU), and where, as the POA suggests, they have been crucial to anti-trafficking policy.

In order to research at the site of these IOs, therefore, when in Cotonou, I took pains to access a wide range of individuals currently or formerly engaged with them, and my interviews sought to address the role that they play within the country's anti-trafficking (and wider governmental) architecture. It is important to remember, however, that these agencies are themselves global, corporate, structures with highly developed internal hierarchies and a myriad of external relationships with the Minority World donor bodies that ultimately fund their operations. In her 'vertical slice' ethnography of the ILO, therefore, Leslie Groves argues that it is impossible to 'understand' such institutions by researching them in only one of their localities. The relationships between headquarters and field offices and between different departments and individuals are such that it is only by conducting research *across* locations that nuanced analyses can emerge (2001). As a result, in researching the IOs active in Benin's anti-trafficking field, I was sure not only to spend time with those present in Benin but also with those whose positionality involves influence *over* those in Benin. This meant carrying out an extended period of participant observation in the global headquarters of one IO, conducting face-to-face interviews with a wide range of individuals employed at the headquarters of the other, and conducting telephone interviews with employees located in country offices around

the world. As may be expected, the focus of these investigations was on understanding how and why policies and projects are established and represented, the nature of the institutional research and knowledge production process, inter- and intra-institutional dynamics and constraints, understandings of childhood, child work and migration, perspectives on trafficking and anti-trafficking policy, views on the role of the state, and obstacles to its successful operation.

Beyond the two IOs most clearly present as pillars of the Beninese anti-trafficking establishment, there are a number of other international bodies that play a role internationally in the creation and spread of both the discourse and policy norms which are then inflected in Benin. In Adler and Haas' terms, they and their employees form part of the upper echelons of the global anti-trafficking 'epistemic community' (1992), and they occupy the 'multilateral' position in Lewis and Gardner's typology. In order to develop as deep an understanding as possible of life on the inside of this community, therefore, I strove to access well-placed employees from all of the institutions most clearly falling within this category. This involved field trips to New York, Geneva and Vienna and also telephone interviews with former employees able to speak 'freely' after having left the employ of the agencies they used to work for.

### Donors

Within the totality that is capitalism, theorists from Marx to Bourdieu agree unambiguously that ultimate power resides with those who possess greatest quantities of capital in its most important form – money, the 'universal equivalent'.

Put simply, he who pays the piper, or pulls the purse strings, calls the tune, and the history of ‘development’, ‘aid’ and international policy-making provides a litany of examples of the persistent, ‘top-down’ influence of donors over these processes (Lister n.d, Edwards and Hulme 1998, Olivier de Sardan 1998, Easterley 2002). Any examination of anti-trafficking discourse or policy, and any exploration of the field constituted by the organisations that form and maintain that discourse and policy, particularly within Majority World states, must therefore analyse the power of donor agencies.

In order to do this myself, I began my research at the metaphorical ‘site’ of the donor ‘ground-level’ by identifying, first, which donor nations had provided most material support for the anti-trafficking activities of the Beninese state and its IO and (I)NGO partners and, second, which donor nations had representatives in Cotonou. This was accomplished by analysing publicly available donor disbursement data and through consulting a handful of confidential, internal (state and donor) documents obtained through my contacts in the field.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this process identified the most active donors in Benin’s anti-trafficking panoply to be the EU, certain EU member states and the US, through its Department of State (the TIP Office) and the Department of Labor. In Cotonou, I thus interviewed a number of the bilateral, embassy and project staff seconded by these bodies with the Beninese state. Moving upwards, I interviewed current and former donor employees placed at a variety of levels within the headquarters of these different donor hierarchies. I also interviewed the staff of particularly significant politicians (those, for instance, who secure central funding for anti-trafficking work

dispersed through their donor agencies) and a handful of (current and former) ambassadors and politicians themselves. Where possible, I focussed my questioning on how and why donor priorities are formed and operationalised and on what behind-the-scenes politics structure this process. I also strove to access and obtain any documentation that would shed light on the dynamics of being a donor.

### Assessing the Overall ‘Success’ of Site Selection

Assessing the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of any methodological decision is always a complicated endeavour and depends ultimately on the submission of one’s work to the scrutiny of well-informed peers within academia and beyond (Bourdieu 2011). Nonetheless, and despite the material and temporal constraints inherent to a doctorate, a number of events during and after my fieldwork suggested that my site selection had been positive. First, those I accessed at each ‘level’ of my fieldwork recommended that I access precisely those other individuals and bodies I targeted at their and other levels. Access was thus an iterative process with validation checks at each stage. Second, the documentation I obtained strongly indicated that the agencies I had identified as of importance within the anti-trafficking field were indeed those with greatest material and symbolic significance. My interview and documentary data thus usefully triangulated each other. Third, my participant observation provided me with various occasions in which to ‘live’ precisely that significance. In one example, for instance, I had been invited as a ‘trafficking expert’ to attend a major national workshop in Cotonou organised by an important INGO on child protection. In attendance were representatives of all of the most important institutional actors in the field, including from each of the bodies I had researched (Field Notes 30/3/10). In

another, when returning to Abeokuta to examine at ‘destination’ the migrant labour realities I had been told about at ‘source’, I was able to witness and participate in experiences that reflected accurately what I had previously heard, thus allowing for further essential triangulation.

This is in no way to suggest, however, that my site selection was ‘complete’ or that my research can thus claim any authoritative representativity. Far from it. A study of dynamic, fluid realities such as those under examination here could involve a literally infinite number of research locations, since chains of causality and explanation themselves branch off in potentially infinite directions, incorporating intersecting and overlapping objective fields and sites which in turn encompass the myriad individuals or bodies of relevance to the creation and maintenance of discursive and material realities such as ‘trafficking’ and ‘anti-trafficking discourse and policy’. In particular, my research could undoubtedly have benefited from greater access to the very highest echelons of policy-making structures, including donor government ministers, senior elected officials and IO heads. It could also have been deepened by engaging more with those un-elected individuals such as lobbyists, global ‘business leaders’ and party donors who do so much to structure the field of discursive and political action, without themselves explicitly or clearly forming a part of the field in question. Undoubtedly, my inability to access these figures, as a result of limited time, resources or simply social capital, must be borne in mind when reading the following empirical chapters.

## **Discussion of Methods Used<sup>45</sup>**

Having discussed the various physical and metaphorical sites at which I carried out my research, it is now time to reflect in more detail on the specific methods I used to do so. This section will outline those methods and will consider the debates as to their merits, explaining precisely why each was chosen. It will also address their limitations, both theoretical and practical, and will discuss how these were or were not overcome.

### Interviews

Perhaps inevitably in a multi-sited study bound by the temporal and financial constraints of a doctorate, the most important tool I drew on for my research was the interview. Appendix B reproduces the question schedules I used to loosely guide those interviews and for each ‘category’ of interviewee, while Appendix C gives a detailed breakdown of the approximately 300 people I spoke to across the research sites examined above. These appendices should be borne in mind and consulted as the empirical discussion unfolds over the following chapters.

My major reasons for choosing the interview as a central pillar of my methodology were twofold. First was the fact that, in line with Veale and the feminist tradition that has inspired her, I believe that research must be about ‘the “generation” of knowledge, rather than its capture or extraction’ (in Campbell and Trotter 2007:33). Rejecting the positivist paradigm that sees the goal of research as to develop an ‘objective’ picture of ‘true’ reality, I follow the critical, feminist and post-modern

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<sup>45</sup> Some of this section draws from or reproduces the methodological discussion in Howard 2008.

thinkers who see much of reality as multiple, varying and constituted predominantly between the often unequal inter-subjective space between different individuals (Johnson 1998). As such, I see it as both a methodological and a moral-ethical imperative to gather the personal perspectives and testimonies of those individuals whose life-worlds I wish to understand and then represent. I also believe that, for all there may exist problems with recall and subjective positioning (both of which will be addressed below), understanding how people themselves understand and make sense of their worlds is crucial if we wish to develop narratives, representations and, in the case of anti-trafficking, *policies* around them.

A useful illustration of why I adopt this position and the data benefits it yields can be provided by contrasting my approach with that employed by Ouensavi and Kielland in their highly influential World Bank paper on child labour migration, exploitation and trafficking in Benin (2000). This is an especially worthwhile comparison as their methodology characterises so much of the research in this field, and in particular that conducted by institutions involved in propagating anti-trafficking discourse and policy (see, for instance, Benin's National Study and the POA). In Ouensavi and Kielland's study, the goal was to build a comprehensive picture of why under-18s leave home for work. In order to do this, rather than interview young migrant workers themselves, the authors developed a closed survey questionnaire which they then administered to thousands of systematically sampled mothers (and *only* mothers) so as to provide a regression-based, quantitative analysis of what they claimed were the reasons behind their children's migration. The rationale for this methodology was, first, that large-scale data is more reliable, and second, that 'a mother knows best' why her child has migrated. In a similar study conducted in

Burkina Faso, this same methodology allowed Kielland to conclude simplistically, and without supporting evidence, that ‘when children are prematurely separated from their parents in modern day West Africa, they are statistically much less likely to have their most basic needs, such as love, protection and education, covered’ (2002:1).

Though the data presented in the following chapter should speak for itself regarding the different and more nuanced conclusions that a more qualitative, person-centred and interview-based methodology can provide, I would like to briefly draw attention here to the moral-ethical value of giving a voice to those one wishes to understand in one’s research<sup>46</sup>. In my research, the uniqueness of the fact I asked young migrants *themselves*, as well as those involved directly or tangentially in their labour or migration, how *they* made sense of their experiences, led me to be hugged, clapped and fêted on a series of separate occasions. Perhaps the most significant of these came during my field visit to the quarries of Abeokuta. So attuned are the young workers there to the danger of ‘outsiders’ (who normally manifest themselves in the form of the police or NGOs bent on rescue and repatriation), that a visit from outside usually leads workers to flee or to provide responses which are a conscious web of falsehoods. When my research assistant, who was one of the very few civil society members to have gained the trust of the quarry-working hierarchy and the quarry-working community, explained, however, that I was interested in understanding and then representing to the wider world their own perspectives on their lives, a group of those assembled downed tools and broke into a Fon song of thanks (Field Notes, 4/2/12). In my view, this reflects the emotional importance of giving people the

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<sup>46</sup> I should underline that this also applies to the many anti-trafficking actors I interviewed, who are themselves often misrepresented by the critical academic literature. I cite the case of young migrant labourers here, however, because I feel it more emphatically makes my point, and because the power differential between us makes this approach even more imperative.

opportunity to speak on their own behalf, instead of perpetuating power imbalances by having others speak for them.

My second major reason for employing interviews as the cornerstone of my research methodology was that, in studying dynamic realities such as those which form the focus of this doctorate, breadth is arguably as important as depth, and it is the interview which most clearly allows one to develop understandings across a broad swathe of time and space when unlimited research time or resources are not available. Undoubtedly, my research could have benefited from my being able to spend far greater time living amongst, talking to, and talking again and again to, all of the different individuals and groups who comprised the focus of my study. Under the constraints of a doctorate, however, this was simply not feasible, and so taking pains to talk to as many people as possible, as many times as possible, seemed like the next best alternative.

This approach is of course not without its problems. As Heissler (2009:144), Foddy (1993) and Francis (1993) all highlight, the quality of data gathered through interviews can often be undermined by a participant's failing memory or indeed by the picture of themselves that the present leads them to wish to convey. In this, it is worth quoting at length from Hardgrove's work with Liberian ex-combatants:

‘When people narrate their experiences, they “select, mold, and edit cultural meanings into their stories” (Lieblich, Zilber & Tuval-Masiach, 2008, p.614). This is done in retrospect as re-presentation. As Schafer (2001, p.217) reminds us, “All historical sources are grounded in a

particular present...it may be that the stories people tell in the post-war period are very different from those they told while the war was still raging, because of current pressures and influences as well as simply the tricks of memory". The passage of time and experience make it impossible to remember with absolute clarity the way that events unfolded and were understood while they were happening. Memory, then, is "as much about the present and future as it is about the past. People remember not for scientific or historical reasons, but as members of current social communities, and they tend to edit the record accordingly" (Peters, Richards & Vlassenroot, 2003, p.14).'

These caveats are important and apply as much to current or former young migrants as to their employers and indeed to the entire anti-trafficking hierarchy built around them. It should be noted, however, that these caveats notwithstanding, the sheer number of interviewees I accessed, the fact that so many interviewees were able to shed light not only on their but also on their fellow interviewees' lives, and the large amount of complimentary data I was able to gather through my other research methods, mean that a degree of confidence in my ability to triangulate the data I received is not misplaced.

In terms of how I actually conducted my interviews, I endeavoured to employ what Levy and Hollan describe as the 'person-centred approach', which involves open-ended questions that invite participants to elaborate the interview in ways they see fit, rather than being heavily directed (and thus constrained) by the researcher (1998). This style allows participants to exercise their agency in shaping the encounter,

which can in turn provide more (and more contextual) data than that which can often be obtained through the closed survey questioning of traditional social science research (Boyden and Ennew 1997:8). An example of how useful such an approach can be is provided in the following extract from my Field Notes, which captures the way I endeavoured to end my interviews by throwing the field of questions open to my interlocutors in order to have them tell me what I had missed. In this particular instance, I am talking with a group of men formally recognised as ‘traffickers’ for their role in facilitating and organising male adolescent labour migration to and within the Abeokutan quarry economy. Much of our discussion had focussed on the political hypocrisy of anti-trafficking initiatives:

**‘At this point, I asked them if they thought there were any other questions I should have asked, or whether there was anything else they thought I should know?’**

One of them immediately jumped in with “the state has started to talk about birth control and planning births here, trying to get us to reduce the number of kids we have. But then they are building *schools*? Who’s going to go to these schools? And more importantly, what about the ‘*allocation familiare*’”? I asked what this was, and was told that it’s basically a policy that means that every state employee gets a certain amount of money every year for each of the children they have, kind of like child allowance in the UK. What an enormous hypocrisy, in a context where villagers get nothing and are told ‘have less kids’!! “Why doesn’t anyone think of us peasants?”, someone asked. “These are the people we need to help”.

(Extract from Field Notes, Interview with Group 2, 12/4/10)

While my interviews were thus person-centred and, to a large extent, interviewee-guided, I did ensure that most of them were *semi-structured*, working loosely around the themes covered in the question schedules reproduced in Appendix B. This was primarily because I had already identified a number of core topics that I felt were important to address with each interviewee and at each site. My choice was also motivated by two further factors. First, with influential and often busy members of the anti-trafficking community, I recognised that purely open-ended questioning might become frustrating, since it can appear too directionless for people with limited time (as Winkler notes, access to such ‘elites’ can itself be very challenging [1987:134]). Second, with my ‘ground-level’ interviewees, the fact that I wished to engage multiple communities across two *communes* over a period of 6 months meant that I needed to find a balance between the long-term ethnographic research that facilitates real ‘entry’ into a community (Johnson 1984) and the ‘in-out’, ‘Landrover research’ of which Boyden and Ennew caution (1997:88). I therefore felt it necessary to adopt a compromise by conducting regular trips to each research site, by purposively sampling those I wished to access and of course by using a loose, semi-structured guideline for many interviews<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> Though some may argue that such an approach can be extractive or insufficiently participatory, it is important to remember that, with ‘elites’, semi-structured interviewing can offer a positive confirmation of status (Levy and Hollan 1998:338). In my own experience, anti-trafficking actors frequently admitted that our discussion had been ‘a pleasure’ and many promised to be available when any further help was needed. At the community-level, this was obviously much less the case, though I was accompanied to all these interviews by a research assistant who was both a close friend of mine and a recognised figure in the community, thus facilitating entry and reducing the risk of respondents feeling unsatisfied at our encounter. It is true that I could have chosen to employ alternative, genuinely participatory methods of the kind advocated for in rural research by PRA specialists or those who specialise in research with children, but a number of factors motivated against this. First was time, second was my having attempted this without success during my Mphil fieldwork (see Howard 2008), and third was the fact that I was mainly researching with those aged in their teens or older, for whom conversational communication is much less daunting.

A second method of achieving this compromise between breadth and depth in the context of limited time was the *group interview* or *focus group discussion*, which I utilised on a number of occasions in and around my case study villages. This method was particularly helpful in obtaining village-level data, or when I wished to investigate collective perceptions or commonly-held norms. The following extract from my Field Notes offers a good example of how this worked in practice. These notes were taken on the occasion of an interview I conducted with a group of non-schooled adolescents in Tenga, where I was trying to understand how young people perceive the concept of migration and relate to the idea of 'elsewhere'. Having initially struggled to make myself understood with questions such as, 'How do you feel about the idea of leaving home for work?', I turned to word association and asked everyone to shout out the first thing that came to mind when I mentioned the names of common migrant destinations.

**'What do you think of when I say the word "Cotonou"?'**

Here the responses varied more and were somewhat more like I suspected, though I worry that they may have been reactively biased:

- One boy said that he thinks there are lots of opportunities down there. They have electricity, they have radios. He himself wants to go there and get a job, but since he didn't go to school and learn French he knows it will be hard.

- Another said that when he hears the word “Cotonou”, he thinks of a place that everyone dreams of going to. He would like to go there, to discover it and enjoy the amenities, but he would also like Tenga to develop into a Cotonou itself.

- A third boy also said he’d like to work there and that he’d even like to get someone to interpret for him as he doesn’t speak French either.

- I asked the girls at this point but they were very reticent. This could have been because they were younger than some of the over-bearing boys. Either way, W said that “Cotonou doesn’t mean much to them”.

We moved on and **I asked them what they thought of when we mentioned Europe, which, tellingly, is translated as “yovotomè” – “home of the white man”?**

Before they responded, W explained that we weren’t just asking whether they’d be interested in working there, and that we weren’t offering them a job, but that we wanted to know what they thought. Then they piled in.

- The boy who spoke good French and had clearly been better schooled than most said, “when we say *yovotomè*, I think there is money there”.

- Another said that there is loads of business there, loads of work, and that that is what we need in Benin. W interjected at this point to explain to me that “all their answers relate to materiality”.

- I asked the girls what they thought and two also said that there were loads of material goods there and that they needed those to be brought here, to help them have jobs. A third girl added that she thought in Europe the language is French and she doesn't understand it, but she would like to, so that she can communicate with Europeans.

(Interview with Group 11, 14/5/10)

This extract offers a useful indication of how collective methods like group interviews can be valuable for quickly obtaining data such as that pertaining to widely-held beliefs – in this case, that major migrant destination centres represent riches and potential resources. More examples of this kind will be forthcoming in the following chapter.

Beyond simple expedience, the focus group or group interview has a number of other advantages. One is triangulation, since with village-level data, responses can be and are cross-referenced and validated by those present (Hershfield et al. 1993:249). Some suggest that this also means that individual responses are likely to be more ‘truthful’, because, as my research assistant argued, ‘no-one can lie if everyone knows they are lying’. Additionally, interviewing in numbers can provide greater comfort for younger and adolescent participants. Many commentators have noted

how, given the social power imbalance between adult and ‘child’, and between researcher and researched, some younger research participants are more at ease when surrounded by their peers. This was indeed something I found during my Masters fieldwork in 2007, when interviewing adolescent girls in a shelter in Cotonou (Howard 2008).

None of this should be read as implying that group interviews or focus group are without their pitfalls, however. For one thing, such encounters can often find themselves dominated by one or two particularly vocal individuals who drown out other participants. For another, and in spite of my research assistant’s confidence, the chances of participant reactivity are arguably much higher in such settings than they are in one-on-one encounters. It is not difficult to imagine, for example, a shy teenager offering opinions which are more socially acceptable than honest, while it is likely that some participants – and in particular the most timid – will modify their responses according to those articulated by the most gregarious. In the worst cases, this would reduce data such as that cited above to little more than a record of the social power that certain adolescents hold over some of their neighbours. Triangulation is therefore crucial.

As regards *data recording*, I opted against using a voice recorder at any point during my interviews, in large part because I wished to avoid alienating any participants. With anti-trafficking actors, it should be recalled that I sought frequently compromising information that only promises of anonymity were able to guarantee. The presence of a voice-recorder and of the subsequently irrefutable ‘evidence’ this would have provided would undoubtedly have prevented many from sharing with me

the information they officially should not have. In my case study communities, my concerns were similar, since I feared both that the trappings of officialdom might scare those who were telling tales of illegality and also that the existence of voice-recordings could compromise participant security. Though I believe this to have been the right decision, there is no doubting that it will have affected the quality of my data, since the presence of a notebook can add to the ‘artificiality’ of the interview and thus alienate participants, and since note-taking is unlikely to be as accurate as any voice recording.

That said, there are three factors which might have helped minimize inaccuracy. The first is that, having long researched solely with pen and paper, I have become particularly adept at shorthand recordings of key interview content which I then write up in ‘transcript’ form immediately the interview finishes. The second is that, with anti-trafficking actors, many of my interviews were conducted over the telephone, meaning that I was often spared the necessity of maintaining eye contact and could consequently scribble furiously and record almost verbatim. The third is that, at community level, I was accompanied in all my interviews by a research assistant, whose presence meant that I could subsequently verify what I had recorded post-interview.

This last point raises one final issue that must be addressed here – *language*, and the fact that my inability to speak Fon meant that I had to work in my case study communities and in Abeokuta with a *research assistant*. Levy and Hollan note that ‘it is deeply distorting not to work in the respondent’s core language’ (1998:338), and there is no doubt that my inability to fully grasp all the social and cultural

nuances embedded in any language and encompassing the Fon words which my interviewees will have used to describe their lives will have distanced me from the fullness of what they were saying. This will have been further compounded by the presence of my research assistant, who literally embodied the structural gap between me and my research participants, as well as of course between me and what they said (Fontana and Frey 2003:77). Moreover, as Morrissey observes, ‘instead of being passive conveyors of knowledge, [translators/interpreters] actually constitute active participants in the research process and make important judgements about what information is conveyed. As a result, what is commonly thought of as passive translation might actually constitute an active transformation of the messages that are being conveyed’ (2010:148-9). Indeed, everything I was told at village level was refracted through the subjectivity of my research assistant, meaning that his positionality unquestionably inflects and affects all of the data I have and am now representing.

That being said, it should not be assumed that the presence of an interpreter/research assistant is always and everywhere a drawback. Far from it. For one thing, I simply would not have been able to communicate meaningfully without him in any of my case study villages. For another, my research assistant was both a close friend and a well established social worker within the anti-trafficking field. As such, he was well trained in working as an interpreter and in anthropological methods and consequently proved an enormous source of personal and professional support throughout my fieldwork. For example, as a result of his positionality, our relationship and the licence I offered him during research, he would frequently pick up on note-worthy information shared by interviewees and would take the initiative in exploring

propitious research angles. This often led us to obtain information that I otherwise would not have accessed. He also had myriad useful interpretations, anecdotes and reflections to share both about our research encounters and the wider field we were examining. Moreover, as a community ‘insider’, he proved invaluable in facilitating my entrance to, and acceptance by, the communities with whom I engaged, serving therefore as far more than a mere linguistic bridge between me and my interlocutors.

### Participant Observation and ‘Hanging Out’

Bernard describes participant observation as the ‘sine qua non of anthropological fieldwork’ (1998:16), while for Atkinson and Hammerseley, all ‘social research is a form of participant observation because we cannot study the world without being a part of it’. In this view, ‘participant observation is not a particular research technique but a mode of being-in-the-world characteristic of researchers’ (1994:249), or what Mosse would call ‘participant deconstruction’ (2005:13). In examining the realities of male adolescent migrant labour in Southern Benin and in researching the field of anti-trafficking discourse and policy, participant deconstruction was thus a key component of my methodology and one I tried to draw on to deepen my understandings at various levels of the chain.

Within the anti-trafficking community, this was easier to accomplish than it was at the level of my case study villages. Indeed, upon embarking on my doctorate, I had already accumulated significant prior experience as a ‘mid-ranging’ member of that community. I had spent years associated with a Beninese NGO occupying an important position within the country’s anti-trafficking hierarchy, first as an agent of

a British donor NGO funding and facilitating its operations, then as an intern, and finally as a member of its wider network of associates. Similarly, during my Masters fieldwork, I had volunteered for a major INGO in Cotonou and the relationship I developed both with the institution and with some of its senior employees (in Cotonou and at its international headquarters) continued well beyond that period. This meant that I already had an invaluable participant observer's perspective on what life is like as a country-level anti-trafficking actor and as an (I)NGO engaged in the anti-trafficking field. It of course also meant that I was 'known' within Benin's anti-trafficking community and was thus welcomed during my doctoral fieldwork into conversations, workshops, experiences, email chains and discussions of internal documentation that an otherwise positioned researcher would not have been.

An example of this can be gleaned from the following extract from my Field Notes. These were taken right at the start of my 2010 fieldwork in Benin, after a visit I conducted with Beninese former colleagues to a village in which we had previously worked together. This visit was timed to coincide with an external 'project proposal assessment' conducted by a donor Embassy employee, since it was believed that it would be good to have me, another white face, around for her assessment. The extract is lengthy, but I include it all because it reflects the sheer richness and depth of the kind of data gathered by this type of research.

### **Box 1: Participant Observation**

<p>'Eventually we arrived at the village. It was great to see everyone, to recognise some of the kids, and to be recognised and welcomed by so</p>
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many people. The school had also made massive progress, the three first classes now almost being built, and the land on which the dorms will be built already having been cleared...

Such pleasantries aside, the “project assessment” by the Embassy’s representative was a gold-mine of information, especially about the interaction between the triplet of donor- development broker- community. N immediately said it was important for the villagers to ham up their participation, to “sell their project”. Equally, S said that whilst project work did happen bit-by-bit, the extra number of people on show today, including the local “women’s group”, had turned out specifically in order to market their participation. The Family Ministry’s local rep also chimed in, organising the women workers to sing a welcome song to the Embassy staff.

After briefly meeting each other, we gathered in the school room, were welcomed by the kids, and sat down to the business of discussing the project. N brought out his standard spiel about how this was a key initiative to help keep kids stay at home, and to fight against trafficking and migration. He really exaggerated, and it was difficult to listen to, given that I respect him, but he did at least say that, as trafficking is a market-based phenomenon, offering kids skills or a trade so that they can “defend themselves” when they do inevitably leave is important.

All the while, the Embassy rep looked so tired and *so* uninterested. Her

body-language was totally disengaged and it was clear that she'd been doing this all day. The visit itself was in many ways merely representative, and what impression she could have gained about the community, its needs or even the project presented from the time she spent there I just don't know.

It was interesting to note how numbers- and target-focussed the Embassy people were. Her Beninese assistant asked how many kids are at the primary school, noted it down, and then noted down how many girls this included. When we mentioned the participation of the "women's group", he noted that too. After a bit, we got on to what the community was expected to do. It was so painfully patronising when he said "we expect the community to raise 25% of the cost of the project", before asking "what will the community be doing to ensure that the project survives after it has been started?". So frustrating to sit through...

Once the meeting had finished, everyone got up to leave and the Embassy woman and I made a beeline straight for each other. It was clear she was interested in what a white man was doing here, and also that she was interested in my opinion. Our interaction was pleasant, but it smacked so loudly of colonialism my ears hurt. She told me how she had been all over the region today seeing projects. Only this one was mildly impressive, she said, and she asked what I thought...

My overall impression of her was of an upper-class donor woman who

meant well but didn't really know what was going on. She criticised the sprouting of NGOs, saying everyone and their dog has one now, which is troubling, even if she understands why "our governments" don't want to give money to African governments. She then complained about the "stupid villagers" who hadn't taught their kids to swim but had built their school on an island. She also mentioned something about grief and thought it was "barbaric" that parents seem not to grieve their kids here as much as she would at home. And she even complained about a woman being smelly in her car, in a real hush-hush, white-person-to-white-person, look-at-these-natives-who-don't-use-water kind of way, which she knew was out of line, and retracted, but which seemed to encapsulate everything that is wrong with the system she is a part of.

(Extract from Field Notes, 9/2/10)

Had time permitted, I would have loved to parallel this kind of participant observation with lived research at *every* level of the anti-trafficking chain. I was obliged to content myself, however, with complimenting my country-level experience with six months engaged as an intern on the global 'trafficking desk' of one of the UN agencies so central to international anti-trafficking discourse and policy. This was a difficult internship to arrange, but my previous experience as a participant observer had convinced me that it would be useful for me to gain an insight into the anti-trafficking field from a positionality that was different to the one

I had previously inhabited. This is precisely what the experience proved. It gave me the chance to see and live – first-hand and in fine detail – the inner workings of the institution that arguably represents the lynchpin in the material and symbolic chain that links donor states, recipient governments like Benin’s and civil society bodies like the one with whom I met the Embassy employee above. It offered me a window onto the relationship between different layers of the internal IO hierarchy, as well as onto the relationships of power and subordination vis-à-vis recipient and donor governments respectively. It also allowed me to experience what life is like situated at another ‘level’ in the Lewis and Gardner chain extracted in Figure 3. Moreover, my association with this institution enabled me to access dozens of IO-level anti-trafficking interviewees, along with highly relevant, confidential documentation pertaining to the creation and maintenance of discourse and policy.

Though this kind of institutionally-affiliated participant observation therefore represented a crucial component of my research methodology, it was not without its difficulties. Not least of which was the need to balance personal and professional responsibilities and aims. Whilst I never felt the fear of being co-opted, in the way that O’Neill (2001) argues that one might, I did have to be careful to avoid being sidetracked from my research goals. Despite taking the precaution of clearly explaining my primary focus to all relevant actors (to avoid the conflict of interests and expectations that Hilhorst [2003] or Mosse [2006] encountered), I still found balancing the aims and needs of an ‘employer’ and a research project at times difficult, meaning that I frequently experienced the tension between being, on the one hand, a ‘participant’, and on the other, an ‘observer’ (Dewalt et al. 1998). In addition, the fact of my being *both* researcher-observer and employee-participant meant that I

sometimes had serious trust issues to navigate. In one particularly telling example, a colleague I worked with at her agency's HQ often half-joked to others that I was 'a spy' and thus recommended that real care be taken when talking to me.

At the level of my case study villages, time constraints and the fact that I chose to divide myself between four villages and a destination zone meant that I was unable to live truly 'inside' these communities in the way that I did within the anti-trafficking field, or in the way that a researcher conducting fully ethnographic research would have done. This undoubtedly affected the depth of the data I was able to gather. For instance, it meant that I missed meandering through the rhythms of daily life in the villages, I failed to observe many of the micro instances of power characteristic of all social relationships, and I was denied the chance to observe the full thickness of different individuals' social positionality. It also meant that I necessarily faced a constant battle to develop the trust and confidence necessary for a researcher to be taken beyond the mere 'surface'. In one indicative example of this, I was told by a man in Sehere who I had first met back in 2007 that when people initially saw me in and around their village, 'all they thought was money'. 'You represented', he explained, 'no more than a dollar bill', and over the course of our conversation he made it clear just how important my repeated visits to the village had been in breaking down such barriers.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, and whilst recognising the importance of repeated village visits in overcoming my ultimately *non-* full participation in village life, it should be noted that my doctoral and pre-doctoral experience in Benin did still furnish me with many of the insights and access points particular to an 'insider' in

these communities. This was in large part because I had already spent six months living in the country by the time I began my 2010 round of fieldwork. This had involved living immersed among Fon families, engaging in the daily rituals of community life, working, talking, playing with Beninese children, and ‘hanging out’ in the truest ethnographic sense of the term (Rodgers 2004). I was consequently already familiar with a good number of the rhythms, norms and practices of the case study communities I wished to understand before even arriving to meet them, and this greatly facilitated my more speedy acceptance. Indeed, ‘he’s already a Beninese’, ‘he’s definitely not a real white man’ and ‘he’s just like us’ were some of the refrains I heard when displaying my *initié* status through cultural performances that a non-*initié* would not have been able to offer.

### Critical Discourse Analysis

There is one final method (or, rather, methodology) that was integral to my fieldwork and that has indeed framed my entire doctorate – Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Norman Fairclough is widely recognised as having pioneered CDA and he describes it as a ‘three-dimensional’ process involving ‘analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice’ (1995:9). It is, therefore, ‘relational, dialectical and transdisciplinary’ (Fairclough 2010:3); it is ‘not just analysis of discourse (or more concretely texts), [but] part of some form of systematic transdisciplinary analysis of relations between discourse and other elements of the social process’. Moreover, ‘it

is not just general commentary on discourse, it includes some form of systematic analysis of texts' (ibid.10-11).

There are a number of important aspects to this definition. The first is that it combines micro, meso and macro levels of analysis. It is thus an optimal strategy for examining the linkages between different social sites and processes and for analysing the symbolic and material manifestations (and relations) of power (between them). The second is that, in examining both concrete instances of discourse (as 'text') and the structures, practices and relations that frame (and are embodied within) that text, it encompasses and incorporates both of my other key methods. This is because an understanding of (con)text (or, in Mosse's terms, 'a sociology of the document' [2005:15]) necessarily requires focussing on the kinds of data that one is able to gather through interview and participant observation research. What kinds of data would this include? At the macro-level, it could involve anything relevant to the structures of political economy, ranging from information about behind-the-scenes political negotiations, to lobbying practices to policy-maker beliefs. At the meso-level, it could include (inter- or intra-) organisational documentation (in particular that which reflects on official practice), ranging from public records of funding agreements to confidential guidelines for the production of project proposals, reports or press releases (Fairclough 1995:9, Lewis and Gardner 1996:97, Apthorpe 1997, Mosse 2005). At the micro-level, it will include individual documents themselves, publicity material such as leaflets or films, interviews with organisational representatives and much more. As may be imagined, CDA thus heavily shaped my interview and participant observation research, since it led me specifically to seek out particular kinds of data, particular documents and particular individuals.

CDA is not merely concerned with what you access, however, but also with *how* you subsequently analyse that which you have gathered. Fairclough mentions the importance of ‘systematic analysis of texts’ in discourse analysis, while theorists from Gee to Van Dijk emphasise the centrality of fine-toothed textual (and inter-textual) combing. What does this involve? For Gee, ‘language-context analysis’ involves looking at the interactions between textual language and its wider milieu, attempting to tease out the ways in which particular discourses, identities, ‘Conversations’ and meanings are evoked, sustained, created or challenged (2005:57). Similar to Foucault’s notion of ‘archaeology’, an example of ‘language-context’ analysis is given in De Noray’s wry take on ‘dev-speak’. She draws on her familiarity with the lives of development practitioners and the OOD they inhabit to conclude that when a project report states that ‘the programme involves sensitising women about family planning and thus contributes to the promotion of women’s rights’, what is really meant (and what, practically, is hidden under the surface of these words) is ‘we, your donors, would like you to have less children because we think it’d be better for you’ (2000:113). A language-context analysis can thus reveal what is going on *under* the textual surface as well as how that textual surface works to hide what lies beneath it.

A second type of textual analysis is what Gee terms ‘form-function’ analysis. He explains:

‘Linguists use the word “form” to designate structural aspects of language, things like the parts of speech (e.g., nouns and verbs), types of phrases (e.g., noun phrases and verb phrases), or types of clauses (e.g., independent

and dependent clauses). They use the word “function” for the sorts of meanings a given form can communicate or the sorts of interactional work (purposes) a given form can accomplish’ (2005:54).

What this means is that since ‘speakers and writers use the resources of grammar to *design* their sentences and texts in ways that communicate their perspectives on reality, carry out various social activities...and allow them to enact different social identities’, analysing what they say or write means being attuned to the structure, order and content of things like clauses, conjunctions, verbs, nouns, what is implicit as opposed explicit and who or what is being invoked (ibid.5). We can illustrate what such an analysis might look like by adapting Gee’s own example (ibid.55). We shall begin with the following phrase:

*Though the project did not achieve everything it set out to, it did help many people.*

Here we have two clauses, one independent (‘it did...’) and one dependent (‘though the...’). Normally, in English, dependent clauses follow independent clauses, such that the above sentence would be written ‘The project helped many people, though it did not achieve everything it set out to’. In this alternative construction, the emphasis of the sentence lies in the dependent clause, with the important message thus being that the project failed to achieve everything it set out to. In ‘front-loading’ the sentence by reversing the order of the dependent and independent clauses, however, what is achieved is a minimising of the significance of the fact that the project did not accomplish all it set out to. In other words, the ‘form’ of the sentence

accomplishes an obfuscatory function. Chapter 5 will offer further examples of such textual deconstruction in the case of the trafficking discourse as it operates and manifests itself in Benin.

### **Personal Positionality**

In her seminal piece on the importance of understanding ‘positionality’ in research, Mullings defines the term as denoting the ‘unique mix of race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality and other identifiers’, each of which can shift fluidly with time and place, and each of which can interact and intersect with the various vectors of other people’s identities in a way that necessarily impacts on research understandings (1999:337).

In my case as a white, male, adult, graduate student from a Minority World, Anglophone society, I inhabit identities which are at once ‘similar’ to many of the anti-trafficking actors I researched and demonstrably different from the black, Francophone-African, frequently unschooled, young people whose labour migration I was studying. This unquestionably impacted the nature of the bonds I was able to form and thus the understandings they enabled me to cultivate, though not only in negative fashion. For Mullings, it is not simply that ‘insiders’ or ‘outsiders’ get better information, because in different contexts being ‘the same’ or ‘different’ can help or hinder the research process in equal measure. Where identity is multiple and fluid, what is most important is to seek common ground which can ‘engender trust and co-operation’ (1999:340), or in Berreman’s terms, to learn ‘impression management’

(1972) and activate different aspects of one's identity at different points in order to better relate to different others.

In managing my impressions, I was careful never to be dishonest about who I perceived myself to be or where I recognise myself as from. That said, different aspects of myself (or selves) naturally came to the fore at different times. In my case study villages and in Abeokuta, for instance, explaining clearly that I was a researcher vehemently opposed to the dominant anti-movement emphasis of anti-trafficking policy and that I advocate for changes in that policy was integral to my gaining the trust and acceptance of interviewees and to being able to transcend the socio-economic baggage of being a white man in an African country. The following example clearly illustrates this, as it involves my emphasising these aspects of myself in order to persuade one of my key informants to help me assemble and interview a group of men involved in the migrant labour network linking Za-Kpota to Abeokuta and thus formally and legally identified as 'traffickers'.

**Neil:** Trevor, my friend, who else do you think should I talk to [vis-à-vis "trafficking" and the structure of the migrant labour network]?

**Trevor:** Hmm, it's going to be difficult to talk to anyone really, because people will definitely lie to you. No matter what you say, they'll think you're going to arrest them, or that you're going to report them to NGOs or the police...

**Neil:** Oh come on, man, you know that's not me!!!

**Trevor:** Yes, but I really don't think there's anything you can do. Even me, I was only honest with you originally because I've left this activity behind.

**Neil:** But you know I'm not with the police...

**Tevor:** Sure, but the problem is that people here don't respect your word when you give it. It's not like where you're from where you can trust someone. Here people lie, they don't trust each other. Even the President lies. He came here promising to pave our roads and he never did a thing!

**Neil:** I know, but I really think I need to talk to at least *some* of the guys involved in Abeokuta, taking kids across and avoiding the authorities, you know?

**Trevor:** Yes, I do see that...

**Neil:** Well how about this then – you know what I'm researching, that I'm against the way you and your boys have been defined as “traffickers” and also that I'm against the attempts to stop people moving. Can't you try and round up some of your people, tell them and emphasise who I am, emphasise that I'm just here to learn what they think and show the world a different picture, and then see what they say?

**Trevor:** [After a pause] Alright, I can try that, I'll vouch for you and we'll see what we can do. [We then agreed to try and meet next Wednesday at 10, with a few of his friends, for a beer at the *Maison du Peuple*].

(Interview with Trevor, 7/4/10)

With influential members of the anti-trafficking community, however, I had to be careful how I negotiated my identity as a researcher opposed to the establishment position. In this, while I was always honest in my critiques (even if these were necessarily couched more diplomatically), it was precisely my embodying the global establishment elite – as an educated white male researcher attached both to Oxford and to certain respected anti-trafficking institutions – that gave me the *right* to remain critical and still open doors that would otherwise have been closed. Myriad examples can attest to this. Take Franz, for instance. Franz coordinates research for his UN agency and although we disagreed regarding our assessment of the dominant anti-trafficking paradigm, the fact that I was backed by the educational capital of conducting PhD research at Oxford ensured not only that he agreed to talk to me but also that he took pains to introduce me to his colleagues (Interview with Franz, 9/6/9). The same was true for Ronald, whose openness towards me was undoubtedly conditioned by the fact that he was himself also an Oxford alumnus (Interview with Ronald, 8/6/9). More interesting still are the cases of Rodrigo, who was the ‘trafficking head’ of his IO, and Carl, who was in charge of his IO’s trafficking-related fundraising. Despite being aware of my critical position, both of these men *volunteered* critical information that I had not even thought of trying to seek. In doing so, both drew on their own previous academic credentials and on their

familiarity with some of the critical academic literature relating to anti-trafficking policy (Interview with Rodrigo, 2/6/9; Interview with Carl, 9/6/9). In making notes after my interview with Carl, I reflected:

‘When I first managed to get hold of this guy (we had already exchanged emails and I had tried to call), he was very excited about my proposed subject of research. He said “Wow, that is exactly what I wanted to do my Doctorate on”. He is interested in funding chains – “following the money so to speak” – and seeing what happens along the way. He told me briefly about his ideas on the phone and then again as we began in person.

Unlike others in this field, he explained, he has some ground-level experience, in Nepal, where he worked for a couple of years before moving to HQ. He was also an anthropologist, and I sense he may have told me that, even sub-consciously, to establish his own credentials in our interactions. Once he had done, he just opened up about how the process works’.

This discussion points to a particularly interesting aspect of my research positionality, which was the frequently liminal space I inhabited and which I believe allowed many people to feel comfortable with me in ways that would not have been possible had I been definitively one or another thing. For example, in Benin, being a Francophone enabled me to converse freely with people in a way that an Anglophone could not, but in being British/Irish, I was able to avoid the negative colonial and post-colonial associations of French politics in the region. Furthermore, the fact that I

had lived and worked in Benin previously and thus already attained a certain level of intimacy with Beninese cultures meant that, in contrast to many researchers, I was an *initié* to a number of the situations I was experiencing. This undoubtedly worked in my favour, just as my being both an academic and a pseudo-member of the anti-trafficking community led many anti-trafficking actors to see me both as ‘one of them’ and as an informed observer whose opinions were worthy of respect.

### **Image 9: In Research**



### **Ethics**

There were a number of crucial ethical considerations that factored in this research. Foremost amongst these was of course the obtaining of informed consent from research participants. Throughout my fieldwork, I was careful to obtain and

continually renegotiate this consent. As Boyden and Ennew argue, this ‘is especially important in research involving children because they are much less able than adults to exercise, or indeed recognise, their right to refuse to participate’ (1997:41). Consequently, I took great care to ensure that all of the teenagers and younger children I worked with were both aware of this right *and* fully informed as to what the research entailed, in order to be able to exercise it from an informed position. One means of achieving this was to ask them if they could explain to me what they thought I was trying to understand after having introduced my work. Another was to ensure that they, along with all other participants, were offered the opportunity to reaffirm or withdraw their consent at different points throughout our interactions. In line with Laws and Mann (2004), I declined to obtain written consent from anyone I worked with for fear that this could either alienate them (where literacy was low) or cause discomfort amongst those unfamiliar (or too familiar) with institutional authority.

Another critical concern in any research project is guaranteeing the security and safety of all participants and I took all measures necessary to ensure this. With adults and in institutional settings, security naturally posed less of a problem. For village and migrant youth, however, I took care to conduct research encounters in as safe and comfortable a setting as possible, which was largely a shaded location of their choosing, to which we repaired after authority figures had been suitably convinced of what we were doing. Now away from fieldwork sites, I have continued to protect the identity of all respondents and any sensitive data they gave me, by coding and securing my notes and by anonymising anything that could potentially see individual participants identified.

Another important issue in a study such as this is reciprocity. In line with critical theorists from Horkheimer to Habermas (Held 1990), with sociologists including Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), with anthropologists such as Adkins (2004), Lewis and Gardner (1996) and with discourse analysts from Fairclough (2010) to Jaworski and Coupland (2006), it is my belief that research should be both ‘action-oriented’ and beneficial and empowering for participants. In the words of Seymour-Smith, researchers must try to ‘perform some useful or valued service in return for the collaboration require[d]’ (in Robben and Sluka 2007:9). In my case, the attempt to do so took a number of forms. At its most basic it involved treating all participants as equals entitled to my respect. With the young and with my case study communities, this began by asking for their views on their life-worlds, a practice all too uncommon amongst those who generally create ‘knowledge’ around the trafficked or vulnerable to trafficking, and one which was consequently received with genuine gratitude. Similarly, in such encounters, I endeavoured to validate my interlocutors by mirroring their behaviour. An example of this would include my drinking from the same cup as interviewees and also pouring a drop of water on the ground in honour of our shared ancestors. Beyond such symbolism, though I never offered payment to anyone involved in my research, I expressed my gratitude materially by buying coffee or lunch for anti-trafficking actors, by giving things such as footballs to groups of young people, or by buying and sharing either a round of drinks or a bottle of *sodabi*, which is Benin’s famed palm wine. I felt this to be a much more equal gesture and the joy with which it was generally greeted suggests that it was perceived as such.

My attempt to ensure reciprocity has also continued long after the end of my fieldwork. Research participants ranging from donor agents to migrant teenagers asked me to ‘tell the truth’ or to ‘get this information out there’, reflecting at once the need to be heard and the desire to change hegemonic practices which are maintained in part precisely because such voices are not frequently heard. I have therefore written newspaper articles, published open-source academic papers, worked on a documentary film and engaged in persistent corridor advocacy to see institutional discourses, policies and practices shift in the direction that both I and the majority of those who participated in my study believe that they must.

Relatedly, my last crucial ethical concern is with the politics of representation. Hastrup and Ellass (1999) show how even when advocating for a group (or for a more ‘accurate’ representation of that group), one has to be careful to avoid the homogenising tendencies of almost all representation. With a group as broad and, frankly, externally defined as ‘trafficked children’ (and their communities) this is especially true. It is similarly the case with blanketly identified groups such as ‘policy-makers’, ‘donors’ or ‘the UN’. In order to avoid misrepresentation, therefore, I took pains to discuss and reassess my interpretations with participants as I was making them and am still in contact with many sources with whom I continue to discuss and elaborate my position.

**Image 10: Interview Reciprocity****Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to provide an outline of how, why and with what success I carried out the research that underpins this thesis. Given the complexity and the dynamism of what I was examining, only a mixed-method, multi-sited study seemed appropriate. Though this approach enabled me to generate a lot of data, the breadth of my sample and its non-representative nature necessarily mean that my inferences and conclusions must be read with caution. I also faced a number of inevitable research obstacles. As such, and as Clark warns, the picture I shall paint will only ever be ‘partial’ (in Hardgrove 2012:42), and it must be recognised as such. It is, however, hoped that its contours will attain the descriptive ‘thickness’ desired. The following chapters will begin the task of elaborating that description.

## CHAPTER 4

### MALE YOUTH WORK AND MIGRATION IN SOUTHERN BENIN

#### **Introduction**

This represents the first of the thesis' three predominantly empirical chapters. In it, I will draw on data gathered from each of my 'ground-level' research sites, including from my four case study villages, from those interviewees active in or associated with the artisanal quarry economy in Abeokuta, from those involved in the Zou's cotton farming and from my wider experience of life as a resident in Southern Benin. Though the chapter cannot offer a fully representative account of Southern Beninese life-worlds, it does provide a contextually grounded picture of how many young males currently or formerly engaged in the kinds of (migrant) labour understood as trafficking and from an area deemed vulnerable to trafficking view and experience their work and movement. It will also reflect on the way their communities more generally understand that work and movement, as well as on the wider socio-cultural and (political-)economic context to it. The chapter begins by examining how work, and in particular the work of young people, is understood and experienced locally. This section will examine in detail the economy of Abeokuta's quarries. Subsequently, the chapter will reflect on young males' migration for work and will address the reasons my research participants gave to explain that migration. Finally, the chapter will reflect on the importance of cash, both in perceptions of migrant

destination ‘elsewheres’ and in the decision to migrate towards them, before ultimately concluding with a discussion of the political-economic context to the region’s prevailing ‘cashlessness’.

### **Perceptions of Work<sup>48</sup>**

As in much of the Majority World, work (and economically productive activity in general) is not seen as a specifically ‘adult’ sphere in Southern Benin from which children and the young are to be sheltered, nor in fact as anything other than an eminently positive and necessary part of being young and growing up. In most of the households I encountered during my research, children as young as three may be asked to perform basic tasks such as filling pots with water, progressing at five or six to keeping an eye on their very smallest siblings, at eight or nine to washing those younger than themselves or sweeping the courtyard, and at 12 to cooking, cleaning, working in the fields and taking care of the rest of the tasks performed by adult household members at home or within the context of their small-scale economic activities. As one village elder in Tenga village explained to me with regards to the incorporation of young males into the agricultural labour force: ‘already at eight you can go to the field. At 12 you can begin to work like a man’ (Interview with Group 8, 9/5/10).

It should be noted that such realities are not viewed by anyone as a grave hardship. For one thing, with young children, the line between ‘work’ and ‘play’ is often very thin, and inventive children regularly incorporate pot-filling and sibling care into

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<sup>48</sup> Much of this and following sections draw on work published in various journals, including Howard 2012, 2012b and 2012c.

various entertaining games (see Johnston 2006 for further discussion of this point). For another, children young and old regularly profess to enjoy the activities they are asked to do, even if at times those activities may be taxing. In one of the many interviews I conducted with groups of children and teenagers during which we discussed this issue, I asked how everyone felt about working and whether they liked it, and received in response a cacophony of ‘yeses’, with the addendum ‘because it feeds us!’ (Interview with Group 12, 14/5/10).

This addendum is crucial, because it points to what lies at the core of both the positive view of (child) work and the gradual incorporation of even young children into the working collective. The situational understanding of work dominant in this region is fundamentally reflective of the need to secure subsistence in what is a materially poor environment. ‘We’re not in France, after all’, one of my former migrant worker interviewees in Sehere mused (Interview with CS, 12/4/10), and the young, along with all other able-bodied household members, are thus both needed and expected to contribute as best they can to the collective endeavour that is survival. Within this logic, the work children and adolescents perform, whether remunerated or otherwise, represents both an immediate necessity/duty *and* a fruitful way of socialising them into the self-sufficient, responsible adults they will have to become as integral, contributing members to collective well-being.

That this is the case is underlined by a good deal of widely deployed local-level symbolism. On the one hand, in each of my case study villages, it is *the thief* who represents the figure of universal revilement, since the thief embodies the unacceptable principle of taking without giving. On the other hand, I was repeatedly

told that children young and old were put to work precisely so that they could have the opportunity of *avoiding* taking without giving – of ‘doing nothing’ – and ‘so that they can learn how to take care of themselves’. Crucially, in this context, ‘to take care of oneself’ is translated in French as ‘*se prendre en charge*’ which has at once the simple meaning of ‘looking after oneself’ and, more subtly, of carrying one’s own burden, since ‘*une charge*’ can be used to refer to a weight, responsibility or other load that one must carry. In line with this, I came across a number of cases in which people explained that a child or teenager had been sent elsewhere specifically to learn how to ‘*se prendre en charge*’ and to avoid him or her ‘doing nothing’. My discussion with Trevor showed this particularly clearly. He had been institutionally designated as a ‘former trafficker’ because he had been a central facilitator for many years in the migrant labour network linking Za-Kpota to Abeokuta. Having ‘placed’ dozens of adolescent boys in various gravel pits, he explained that frequently it was a boy’s parents who would approach him to arrange the boy’s labour migration as they wanted to avoid him wasting his time unproductively at home when he could be learning how to ‘look after himself’ elsewhere (Interview with Trevor, Southern Benin, 30/8/7). In this sense, it is believed that ‘*la poussière des pieds est mieux que celle des fesses*’ – ‘it is better to have dust on your feet than on your bottom’ (Imorou 2009:7; see also Imorou 2008).

#### ‘Acceptable’ and ‘Unacceptable’ Work

That the dust on one’s feet may lead to work in Abeokuta’s artisanal gravel pits is not seen as intrinsically problematic by the communities with whom I researched in the Zou *département*, or indeed by the young people themselves working in those gravel

pits. While, as Chapter 1 suggested, the international anti-child labour/anti-child trafficking legal framework rests on absolute binaries that construct such work as an exploitative, slavery-like, ‘worst form of child labour’ (and thus a *de facto* case of trafficking when under-18s migrate to engage in it), within the communities involved in the world of Abeokuta’s quarry economy, it is predominantly the *nature* of the work and its relation to an individual’s capacity that determines whether or not it is exploitative.

This difference has led to a great deal of frustration amongst interviewees in my case study villages. Former migrant quarry workers and their families frequently complain of outsiders ‘coming here and saying don’t let your kids leave for the quarries because what they experience there is *slavery*, when it is not’ (Interview with Artur, 12/4/10), while on two separate occasions I received appreciation from quarry working men for being ‘the first person ever to come here and ask us how *we* see our work’ (Man in Interview with Group 2, 12/4/10; Interview with Group 16, 24/1/12). Importantly, though some, including Placide, whose story we will encounter below, do admit that quarry work can be challenging and at times too much for younger workers (in which case it is termed ‘*afoutame*’, or ‘exploitation’), it is never seen as intrinsically equivalent to slavery or trafficking (‘*kanoumon*’ in Fon). My interview with a group of women whose sons had migrated from Sehere village to the quarries was indicative in this regard. Below is an extract from the notes I took during our exchange:

**‘Is the work that the boys do in Nigeria exploitation/*afoutame*?’** In the cases where a contract is not respected, this is exploitation. But, sometimes,

the kids pester the boss for some of their wages throughout the time they are there, so he'll give them money bit by bit and eventually, when the time comes for them to leave, he'll deduct what he's already given them and they moan. This is not exploitation. **What about the type of work they do – is that exploitation, or is it normal?** Sometimes they do work that is too hard for them. But when they are grown there is no problem. It's not exploitation then. To clarify here, I pressed on with my questions and asked: **At what age is a boy strong enough to do hard work?** They responded that 15 was absolutely fine. To further clarify, I pointed to a boy who was about 14 or 15 – he himself later said he was 14 – and who was stood nearby, **asking whether a lad of his size could do hard work?** At this we all had a good laugh – they said “by his age and size, you are more than old and strong enough to do any job whatsoever!!”.

(Interview with Group 10, 10/5/10)

Pietro, who was himself a former migrant quarry worker, recalled his experience in the gravel pits in a manner that echoed this perspective. Having first migrated in his late teens, he did two years and earned the 140,000 FCFA (about \$260) promised to him. Though the work was, by his own admission, ‘very difficult’, involving constant digging and lorry-loading, he said it was tolerable and had gotten easier over time. He also added that the ‘boss’ (*le patron*) feeds you and puts a roof over your head. In this vein, he even migrated for another two-year contract, after which he returned and built himself a dwelling with what he had earned (Interview with Pietro, 10/5/10).

Petrov, who I spoke to alongside Pietro in Zelele, had a similar story to tell:

**Neil:** What was the work like there [in Abeokuta]?

**Petrov:** Very hard, very physically demanding. Plus it meant being under the sun all day. And, when you're sick, the boss moans because it means he's losing money, so if you don't get well again you just get sent home, because you are expensive.

**Neil:** Do you define this as exploitation?

**Petrov:** Yes and no, it depends. It can be, if you're asked to do too much, and seeing as wages are so relatively low, but then we do agree to them, and we are looked after. Sometimes we refuse to work too hard as well.

**Neil:** Did you make friends there?

**Petrov:** Yes, loads. I could be working here and then I'll have my mate working by that tree over there, and another by that bush. There are loads of kids from round here and they are always bantering whilst working, just as they all eat together at meal times. Daily life there is ok.

**Neil:** Are you happier here?

**Petrov:** Yes, but there was also good, there was a good atmosphere. Plus, if you do 5 or 6 years and get on with your boss, he will show you the ropes and you can then become a boss yourself’.

(Interview with Petrov, 10/5/10)

When I went to the gravel pits myself, observing the work that teenagers and young men do, talking to them about their experiences and interviewing the various other classes involved in the quarry economy, this picture was fully confirmed. In essence, it revealed that Beninese teenage labour migrants constitute a consciously consenting and relatively well treated but vulnerable bottom rung on the complex ladder that is the Abeokutan gravel pit economy. That economy is structured along the following lines.

First, absentee Nigerian landlords own and rent out patches of land rich in the gravel that is ideal for use in the construction industry. Second, female Nigerian gravel dealers lease this land from those landlords and have contracts with them which date back two or three generations. These women represent the lynchpin in this economic world. They have come together to form a gravel dealers’ union and contract with a third class – lorry owners/drivers, who themselves operate under the auspices of a union – in order to have the extracted gravel transported to a fourth class, the gravel purchasers in Lagos. Gravel prices and prices for the services rendered by each of the links in this chain are predominantly set through negotiation between the unions representing these latter three classes.

The gravel dealers also contract with a fifth group, however – Beninese ‘bosses’ who provide the (migrant) labour used to extract that gravel. These bosses are all men from the *Zou département*, and come predominantly from Za-Kpota and Zogbodomey. They have themselves all worked six-year ‘apprenticeships’ under their own bosses until eventually they were ‘liberated’ and given licence by the hierarchy of the Beninese expatriate community providing and managing the labour-force in Abeokuta to hire their own gangs of labourers, for whom the task is to work according to the directions of these bosses in extracting the gravel. As may be imagined, the teenage migrant labourers identified as ‘trafficked’ from my research villages and around are precisely the young men who constitute these gangs of labourers.

Each individual is hired on a two-year contract, and is expected to work six days a week for his *patron*, who in return houses, clothes and feeds the young worker and ultimately pays him 140,000 FCFA (or an equivalent sum in material terms – for instance a motorbike) upon completion of the contract. If the boy is a younger worker, it is possible that some of this sum will have been advanced to his parents before he departs for work, since younger boys’ income is treated as family income much more freely than that of older boys. The boys are free to work ‘on their own account’ on their day off or when they have already loaded the lorry that is their day’s work for their boss. Though the work is hard, they work in groups of three (see Image 6 in Chapter 3 and also Image 11 below), with the biggest and strongest pick-axing the ground, the second biggest and strongest shovelling the gravel and the smallest sifting it through a filter. They rest when they need to, share the load of work between them and are often helped by the *patron* who is in many ways

dependent on them. This dependence is not only intrinsic to the employer-employee relationship, however; it is also reflected in the fact that each *patron* relies on his reputation as a good employer in order to attract the labourers whose surplus he will ultimately extract, such that he has an interest in treating each of his charges sufficiently well that they will not tarnish his image when they return to Benin. Consequently, whilst no-one would deny the inherent physical challenge of the work performed by these adolescents, for few it is an experience that over-taxes them, and rarely is it any worse than the farm work they would otherwise be doing at home (as will be made clear in the case studies dotted throughout this chapter).

In line with this, it is worth noting that these quarry-working adolescents and their communities strongly advocate what amounts to an ‘autonomy position’ vis-à-vis their work (see Nussbaum 1998 and Abramson 2003 in Chapter 1). Few deny that it could be easier, that they could be paid more, or that conditions could be improved. Almost nobody I spoke to believes it should be illegalised, however, since for many it represents the best of a very narrow set of economic options. As such, when I asked people how they would like to see the problems involved in their lives and in this work addressed, the dominant response was, ‘give us alternatives’ and ‘improve our contracts’. Crucially, since improving contracts often means raising wages, it should also be recalled that these wages are themselves subject to serious structural pressure, being heavily contingent on the balance of class forces within (and beyond) the quarry economy. Only recently, and for the first time in history, the *patrons* went on strike in order to renegotiate the cut they take from the process and from which they then pay their workers.

### Case Study 1: Trevor

Trevor is a fascinating character. He is in his mid-40s, is a figure of influence in Za-Kpota *commune*, and runs a successful local business that employs many young interns, including a number sponsored by an NGO to stay at ‘home’ instead of migrating for work. We first met in 2007, during my Masters fieldwork, when I was introduced to him by a local government official as ‘a former trafficker’ who had apparently repented and decided to mend his ways. He became one of the most significant participants in my research, meeting with me on myriad occasions and facilitating my access to a large group of ‘traffickers’/*patrons* involved in the migrant labour network linking the Zou *département* to the quarries of Abeokuta in Nigeria.

Trevor first migrated to Abeokuta himself when he was 11 or 12. He did so because he was poor and because he and his family had seen others from their community migrate and return with riches. He worked for five years in Abeokuta and returned with a bike, a radio and 25,000 FCFA (about \$45) – not an insignificant haul for a 16 year-old in the 1980s. At 16, after a brief period at home, he returned to Abeokuta for a further six years, becoming a *patron* and also engaging in the production of *sodabi*, the region’s palm wine.

During his time as a *patron*, Trevor returned to Za-Kpota every two years and constantly brought more boys back with him. Parents and boys themselves would approach him on every visit and ask him if he could find them work. Sometimes, when boys were young (between 10 and 13/14), an advance on the boys’ wages would be paid to the parents, who would negotiate the contract on the child’s behalf.

In this case, a boy's earnings would be considered like any other component of the family economy, which parents (and particularly fathers) organise by making decisions over the allocation of household labour-power. It is notable that, unlike the dominant discourse around trafficking, communities do not equate this relationship to a *sale* of their offspring.

By contrast, when the boys Trevor 'placed' were older (in their mid to late teens), they would themselves often negotiate their own two-year contracts and would keep their wages upon its completion. Trevor was adamant that his relationships with all his workers were good and that he never mistreated any of them, even if he admitted that some other *patrons* certainly did. He emphasised this by introducing me to some of the men sat around his shop, who are now his friends after having themselves 'graduated' from under him in Abeokuta.

Trevor left Abeokuta and Nigeria, returning to Benin to set up his business, in 2003. He explained this decision as a result of the 'crisis' that befell the Beninese expatriate labour community during that year and the violence and conflict in which this resulted. He said that at one point he was mugged, that the police had raided the quarries and made him pay a fine, and that quarry work was declining in profitability. He therefore cut his losses and exited the quarry economy.

Trevor maintains personal links with the world of that economy however and today remains one of the most articulate and trenchant critics of dominant anti-trafficking strategies. In each of my many encounters with him, he waxed lyrical at the corruption of politicians and formal institutions, each of which he believes promise

riches to encourage people to stay at home or to vote for them and yet never deliver. In one of our discussions, he picked up a piece of sellotape and shouted, ‘if I earn one of these here but five of them there, why they hell would I stay here?’. He was also very clear that although at times the work in Abeokuta can constitute exploitation – ‘especially if, as the boss, I am sat in the shade with a beer while the boys work in the sun’, or ‘if I don’t pay what I’ve agreed’ – in the majority of cases, it is not. In an ideal world, he believes, working conditions would be improved across the board and alternatives to labour migration would be provided.

### **Case Study 2: Jack**

Jack is 15 years old. He is from a village on the border between *Za-Kpota commune* and the *commune* of Bohicon. I interviewed him in Abeokuta at the site of his place of work. He is an open, friendly, confident and independent young man. Our encounter was very jovial. In particular, we laughed a great deal while comparing tattoos, since I asked him about the one he has on his right arm, which he explained that he designed in order to be ‘fashionable’, and which he suggested was more fashionable than mine.

Jack came to Abeokuta a year ago and will be staying to work in the quarries for a further year, in order to complete the standard two-year contract. In return for his labour, he is to be bought a motorbike at the end of his two years, which was the price agreed between him, his parents and his *patron*. On top of this, Jack also works in his free time and ‘on his own account’. He said that he is able to earn around 2000

Naira (about \$12) every week by doing this. His relationship with his boss is also very good – he is not mistreated, is never shouted at and is well fed.

Jack saves his money week by week and is aiming to return to Benin in order to set himself up in a trade. When I asked him why he came to Nigeria, he was very clear that his goal was to earn money. Work here is much better than it is at home, he believes, because here he can earn a lot and also keep what he earns. Though the work can be difficult, the fact that he earns makes it all worthwhile. Jack was also very clear that working on the family farm is much more physically demanding than work in the gravel pits, even though the former is legal while the latter is not. He is strongly opposed to any laws which say that young people such as him should not be able to migrate to Nigeria for this kind of work.

**Image 11: Teenagers Working in Abeokuta**



### **Case Study 3: Placide**

Placide is a small, sickly young man of 16. He is small for his age, very listless and evidently not in full health. Unlike the majority of my other interviewees, his experience of labour migration to Abeokuta was very negative. He migrated when he was 14. He had been an apprentice mechanic for four months beforehand but when his boss asked for some money from his parents and they were unable to pay it, his apprenticeship ended. This was when a fellow villager suggested that he go with him to Nigeria to make the money necessary, which Placide accordingly did.

Before long, the work overcame Placide and he fell ill. For six months, his *patron* took care of him. Since his condition never improved, however, the *patron* brought him home to his parents. Eventually, when healed, the same *patron* came to ask him to come back and work with him, but Placide refused, since he claimed that the man had lied about how difficult the working conditions actually were. Placide's father supported his refusal, and so now he works in the fields with his father. It is arguable that Placide's case represents an example of trafficking, both in the formal legal sense and in the sense that is more commonly understood, given the apparent presence of deception on the part of the man who exploited his labour.

### School as Work

We saw in Chapter 2 how the Apollonian OOD establishes an opposition between work and school for the under-18s. It is assumed that school is where the young should be, that work is incompatible with school and thus that communities whose

children and young people work instead of going to school need either to be taught about the ‘value’ of school or compelled to send their children to school. Data from my case study villages contradict each of these assumptions.

First, as is the case across much of the African continent (see, for example, Young Lives 2009), schooling in the Zou seems steadily to be gaining in importance across all social classes. This was indicated to me in a number of different interviews, as children and adults repeatedly articulated that school was ‘good’, ‘great’, or ‘the way forward’. In Zelele, John, for instance, told me that his major wish was to fulfil his father’s dream and ensure that his own children were well educated (Interview with John, 3/5/10). Similarly, Artur, a resident of Sehere, had the following to say:

**Neil:** What do you think of the village committee?

**Artur:** The fact that it has been established is a good thing, because personally I have never been to school and I regret this fact. I therefore really want kids to be able to go to school, before anything else, in order to have some basic education, to be able to understand French, etc.

...

**Neil:** What would be needed to improve the quality of life here?

**Artur:** Schools. Education. There are villages here where kids have gone to school and they are no longer so poor, because the kids have gone on to

make something of themselves and have come back to develop their villages’.

(Interview with Artur, 12/4/10)

Artur’s opinions were paralleled in a conversation I had with PJ in the same village, who spoke of his determination to keep his daughter in an NGO education centre with which I had been involved. After first explaining the difficulties of accessing schooling in his village, he stated that he would do everything possible to keep his daughter in school – including forbidding her from leaving home – since he was convinced that this was the path to a better future (Interview with PJ, 31/8/7).

Implicit within Artur and PJ’s perspectives is the notion that, beyond any intrinsic worth that education may have, it is first and foremost a vehicle for social advancement, for the schooled individual and then, through him or her, for the wider family. This is understandable in a context where the richest and most powerful figures (at both village and national level) are educated cadres or businessmen. It is no coincidence that in discussing with my adolescent village interviewees what constituted a ‘successful person’, it was local state employees and men ‘who had been to school and gotten good jobs’ who were most frequently identified as examples.

What this indicates of course is that school in this region is seen *not* as the un-economic half of a binary that includes ‘work’; rather, school itself represents an economic activity, as an instrumental kind of individual and collective investment

that is akin almost to a job (with all the attendant responsibilities), but for which the payoff merely comes at a later date<sup>49</sup>. Shia's story is emblematic in this regard. Though already 20 when I interviewed him in Sehere, Shia was still a school-goer, trying to finish his secondary education. In discussing different people's individual economic activities, he explained that his was school, and that although being in school meant that he might not reap the immediate financial rewards that some of his employed peers currently enjoyed, he and his family would benefit in the future – since 'paper offers an alternative' (Interview with Shia, 7/4/10).

This perspective is echoed in many migratory decisions. Parents often make choices to send some of their children to school and others to work, with the wages earned by the latter group partly cross-subsidising the former's schooling. During my Masters fieldwork, I met a man known to me as 'Elisabeth's father', who explained that one of the reasons he had sent Elisabeth away to work as a domestic servant was because he needed her wages to support her younger brothers in gaining the education that it was assumed would pay off for them and thus the entire family in the future. Even though Elisabeth had suffered abuse during her placement, it was the concomitant failure of the family's education-related future economic plans that most pained her father (Interview with Elisabeth's Father, 26/7/7).

Teenagers, particularly boys, also make decisions to migrate independently for work in order to support their schooling. In Fon, this is known as '*djoko*', which refers to

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<sup>49</sup> This was also reflected in my discussions around when and why children and the young can and should migrate. If we recall the saying from above that the dust on one's feet is better than the dust on one's behind, interviewees frequently suggested to me that it was OK for youngsters to leave for work if they were doing nothing, if they were neither in school nor employed. One adolescent boy in a group interview in Atomè, for instance, explicitly stated, to the approval of his peers, that 'it is not good to stop school and migrate, but if you are not in school and aren't doing anything else, then migrating is a good thing' (Boy in Interview with Group 12, 14/5/10). In this understanding, school is an economic 'activity' unto itself, a 'contribution' to the collective like any other.

short-term periods of targeted labour migration, usually over the summer holidays, and predominantly in order to put together enough money to pay for the next year's school fees. I met many teenage boys in Cotonou who were engaged in *djoko* during my Masters fieldwork in 2007. Darren was a classic example. He was working as a blacksmith with a number of other adolescents in Cotonou's main market. His parents had said they were unable to afford his school fees and so he came down to the city every summer to work with his father, also a blacksmith, and to put together enough money to pay for the coming year's fees (Interview with Darren, 22/8/7). Euan and Ethan had similar stories, though both of them spent their holidays as itinerant scratch-card sellers (Interview with Ethan, 12/8/7, Interview with Euan, 24/8/7). The same was true also in my case study villages in Za-Kpota and Zogbodomey. In every group interview I conducted, with those in or out of school, teenagers admitted to engaging in *djoko* on a yearly basis. Many of those in question would go to quarries in Abeokuta, as is illustrated the following extract from my Field Notes, made after one particularly revealing interview with a group of teenagers playing football in Sehere:

**‘Have some of you ever been away to do holiday work?** “Yes”, they shouted, “every single one of us!!! That is what allows us to continue at school!! You can go to Nigeria or Savè and earn 30 or 40 thousand in a summer”. **What work do you do?** In Savè, it is the land. In Nigeria, it is the land, but also the quarries. **How is it?** It's hard but it's ok. **Do the small kids go as well?** Yes, from 11 onwards’.

(Interview with Group 14, 14/5/10)

**Case Study 4: Zack**

Zack is 15 years old. Though we met in Za-Kpota, he was born in Abeokuta, where his parents and older siblings actually live and work. He spent his first years amongst them in Nigeria, forming part of the Beninese expatriate community centred around the quarry economy. His family still work within that economy, though some of his older brothers are also taxi drivers.

When Zack was four or five, his parents decided that he should return to the family home and village in Benin, since they wanted him to attend Beninese school and thus to acquire the French that would ensure him a livelihood in Benin. He therefore currently lives and attends school in his ancestral village in the Zou, living with his extended family.

When he was younger, Zack's schooling was paid for by his parents and older brothers. Now that he is an adolescent, however, he is expected to find his own way and contribute as a social adult would. As such, he migrates back to Abeokuta every summer for three months of *djoko* quarry work with his family. Every summer, he earns about 40,000 FCFA (about \$75), half of which covers a year's school 'contribution', half of which is used for other expenses.

Zack says that the work he does in Abeokuta is fine. He finds it more difficult than farming, but this is how he earns his money and so he has no complaints. He therefore strongly disagrees with those who say that young people like him should not be working in Nigeria. 'What am I going to do if I don't work there?', he asked

me. 'That's what pays my school fees. If I don't work, I'll be sat here all year doing nothing'.

Zack does not dislike the work he does, nor does he see it as exploitation. It is important to emphasise that he works with and under the direction of his family, who help him, guide him and support him. This is not to suggest that the family is always and everywhere a safe, protective environment. In Zack's case, however, he is adamant that it is. The only problem he has with this arrangement, however, is that whereas when he works independently, he is able to keep all of what he earns, when he works with his father, his father is able to commandeer a portion of his wages for use within the wider household economy.

### **Decisions Around Migration**

In this section, the chapter will reflect in more detail on how and why decisions were made for teenage and younger male migrants from my research communities to migrate for work. Mostly, the migration in question was to Abeokuta, though in some instances children were placed in service elsewhere, while a number also migrated to Abidjan, where there is a significant Fon expatriate community that forms part of an extended kin and labour network for certain villages in the region, especially Zelele. The section will begin with the cases of labour migration involving parents deciding on behalf of their children. In accordance with local developmental norms, these were when boys were young or in their early teens. In the second half of the section, the discussion will address the labour migration of middle and older male teens, who either made collaborative decisions with their parents or who decided independently

to move for work. The kinds of collective, intergenerational mutuality discussed in Chapter 1 will be clear throughout.

### Parental Decision Making

#### *Burden Release*

As much of the micro-economic literature on risk-sharing will tell us, in times of economic hardship, the maintenance of communal welfare can become a struggle. When it does, migration, of either individual family members or of the family as a whole, can represent a go-to crisis-response (Dercon 2005; Dercon and Krishnan 2000). That this is at times the case in Southern Benin was made clear to me during my interviews in 2007, 2010 and 2012, as various adults and children explained the difficult events that had precipitated a departure from the village. In particular, this was true in Zelele, where I purposively sampled a group of former young labour migrants who had been involved in the informal building sector in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, before 'returning' to Benin. It is notable that each of these young males experienced more challenging and arguably more exploitative labour conditions than many of their counterparts in Nigeria, a fact that is correlated both with their relative youth and size and their economic desperation at the time of migration.

Jeg is an example of this. He is about 20 years old. He grew up with his family in Zelele and all was 'normal' in his world until his father fell ill. A lengthy period of sickness and his father's ultimate death resulted in the family being forced to sell their land and assets, ultimately leaving them destitute. This was when Jeg was 10.

Short of the resources necessary to care for her children, Jeg's mother had little alternative but to send Jeg and his sister to work in Abidjan, where Jeg stayed working in the informal building sector for a decade. When I spoke to him, Jeg had just returned to Benin and was very critical of his experience. His first 'boss' rarely ever paid him and extracted a huge surplus from Jeg and his fellow boy-workers. His second mistreated him constantly, and it was only the kindness of a third boss who gave Jeg some money and a bus ticket that enabled him to return to Benin (Interview with Jeg, 3/5/10).

For John, the story was similar. Coming from a family which had seen both grandfather and father migrate for work in Abidjan's informal building sector, John was already embedded within this particular kin-labour network, and had in fact been born in Côte d'Ivoire. When his father also fell ill, however, John and his family travelled back to their native village in Benin – Zelele – so that his father could either heal or die at home. When he eventually did pass away, the family became destitute, so John and his brothers were sent by elders back to Abidjan, confided to a *patron* and employed for seven years in building informal dwellings. Like Jeg, John also had a very difficult time doing this work, explaining that it was physically exhausting and that, aside from food and board, all he got in return was an eventual bus ticket home (Interview with John, 3/5/10).

According to Isiugo-Abanihe, the type of decision-making leading to this kind of migration can be characterised as 'crisis fostering'. For Isiugo-Abanihe, crisis fostering is 'child relocation resulting from the dissolution of the family of origin by divorce, separation, or death of a spouse' (1985:57). Its purpose is simply to mitigate

the shock that has been experienced by the family and that has rendered ordinary coping mechanisms futile. In some situations, however, no exogenous shock is apparent and parents decide to crisis foster their child simply because their situation is so dire that they recognise no alternative if the child and the wider family are to survive. This, in fact, was the case with a number of the children I spoke to while working in an NGO shelter for rescued children in 2007. One boy of 10 had been sent away because, in his own words, his mother ‘had no money’, while another, also 10, had been placed as an apprentice on a building site outside Cotonou because his extremely poor parents could no longer afford to keep him.

In discussing these and other similar situations with my research participants, the key refrain I heard was: *‘c’est une question de moyens’* – ‘it’s a question of means’. Children, and in particular young children, are often apparently sent away because their parents lack the ‘means’, or money, to care for them, and, as such, the decision is described as a result of necessity. Freddy, himself a former child labour migrant and now a relatively educated adult, put it thus: ‘Poor people...are the ones that send their children away – they have to’ (Interview with Freddy, 18/8/7). Trevor, who we met above as a former facilitator in the Za-Kpota-Abeokuta migrant labour network, concurred. ‘It’s all about poverty’, he exclaimed, when explaining why many parents wish to place their children in work abroad (Interview with Trevor, 30/8/7).

### *In Response to Demand*

A ‘lack of means’ was also cited as an important factor in the decision to send younger children away when employers manifested demand for their labour power.

The paradigmatic example of this was Adri, a young man who had been one of the apparently ‘trafficked children’ caught up in the infamous Etireno affair, and who I met while working with an INGO in 2007. In his own words, Adri was at school in his village when a man from the area came to look for apprentices to take back with him to the fishing regions of Gabon. While he hesitated to go at first, he ultimately accepted the view of his father that to migrate would be beneficial given how poor his family were. In leaving, he was accompanied by four other boys, all sent from the same village and for the same reasons (Interview with Adri, 21/8/7).

A number of the other boys I interviewed in Zelele who had also been employed in Abidjan’s informal building sector had comparable experiences. Jay was one of them. He had done eight years working in the city’s Bio district, which is apparently the neighbourhood populated predominantly by expatriate Beninese. Though he too found the work very difficult, unlike John and Jeg, he was paid, ultimately returning with 160,000 FCFA (about \$300), after having been sent by his parents when a returning son of the village had come home in search of children to help with his business (Interview with Jay, 3/5/10). For Jojo, the story was similar, and it was his father who had sent him to work with another man who had likewise returned to look for young ‘apprentices’. Jojo was about 11 when he left, and although he said his *patron* made a huge profit on his labour, he had the ‘fortune’ to mainly be working in plantations, which he described as ‘the easiest work of the lot’ (Interview with Jojo, 3/5/10).

In Jay-Jay’s case, when I asked, ‘Why did you migrate to Côte d’Ivoire?’, he simply said:

‘It wasn’t my decision. I was in the field working and then when I came home I saw my parents in a meeting with a man I didn’t know, after which I was told I had to leave. I said OK, respecting my father’s wishes, and the next day the *patron* came for me and we were off’.

(Interview with Jay-Jay, 3/5/10)

Jay-Jay also ultimately returned with 160,000 FCFA but maintains the same bitter memories of an employer who kept a far higher proportion of the earnings than he felt would be fair.

The process and reach of parental decision-making in response to labour demand is further illustrated in the following extract from my Field Notes, made after a mixed group interview with 10 adults congregated at the entrance to Zelele village:

‘...One of the guys interjected here to say that he too had even been to Côte d’Ivoire. **What was your experience, I asked?** He went with 27 other children from the village. His Dad told him to go since the family was struggling. Someone came to the village and took them. He arrived and told people he needed children, and then he and the other employers took groups of four or five, for house building’.

(Man in Interview with Group 5, 26/4/10)

Such processes are widespread in Southern Benin and even characterised the experience of certain young migrant labourers currently or formerly engaged in the Abeokutan gravel pits. It is important to note that, in most instances, even when those in question had had negative migratory experiences, when I asked how they now feel about the decision their parents (and predominantly fathers) had made on their behalf, a shrug or a shy smile of resignation was the dominant response I received, since it is entirely normal within this socio-cultural space for the individual(s) seen as the head of the family to make labour-related decisions.

#### *Individual and Familial Investment*

While the data above suggest that, in times of crisis, or in response to generalised economic difficulty, parents do opt to send their children away to alleviate the strain on both household and individual, parental decisions are in no way always reactive. Indeed, the importance of individual and familial ambition, and child/youth labour migration as a vehicle for pro-actively realising it, cannot be underestimated.

Jay-Jay's story offers a good case in point. When I probed further into his father's decision to send him away, he revealed that his father had apparently initially refused, until he conferred with his peers and was urged to let Jay-Jay go, on the understanding that '*he'll be able to make something of himself there*' (Interview with Jay-Jay, 3/5/10). Similar experiences were recounted by boys who had returned from Abeokuta, while Tim, currently an Abeokutan gravel pit *patron* and himself a former teenage migrant labourer, explained that the successful migrant returnee brings

respect and material wealth to himself and his family, which is of real significance in many departure decisions (Interview with Tim, 31/8/7).

In discussing this with Sam, a Beninese INGO employee from the region containing my case study villages and involved in a project working with one of them, I was told that just as 'if there is food for one, there is food for all', so if one child is a success through migration then all will experience its rewards (Interview with Sam, 8/8/7). How so, I enquired? Sam explained that this simply reflects the collectivist and intergenerational mutuality that is so normal in Southern Benin and across much of sub-Saharan Africa. Though of course marked by relations of power that operate along the lines of gender and generation, households and extended families normally pool their resources such that one individual's earnings will frequently subsidise another's lack thereof, just as one individual's purchase of a generator will benefit everybody living under the same roof.

### **Case Study 5: Julian**

Julian is 17 years old. He first came to Abeokuta from Benin at 14. He is from a poor family and said that, in his home village, he and his parents noticed that if people want a better life, they migrate to the gravel pits and come back with money. His parents therefore contacted an extended family member who was a gravel pit *patron* and asked if he would take Julian back with him to work. The man agreed and in return paid to roof Julian's parents' home. Julian is now on his second two-year contract and intends to continue working in the quarries until he is 'liberated' and free to either be a boss or work on his own account.

Julian sees the work he does as hard, but certainly not too difficult for a young man like himself. He also fundamentally believes that it is worth it, since it is a way of earning money. Indeed, he earns 3000 Naira (around \$18) every week when working for himself. His daily routine is simple: from 8am til around 11 or 12 he works for his boss, then he breaks with his team for lunch. They pick up tools again after lunch and continue working until around 5pm. At this point, work for the boss ceases, and Julian continues to work, but this time on his own account and for his own profit. Julian would recommend this work to anyone who is poor and needs to make some money. 'Don't steal or sit around idly' is his mantra, 'come to Abeokuta'.

### Adolescent Decisions

In the interviews I conducted with young males who had migrated to Abeokuta in their later adolescence, the exercise of individual agency in the migratory decision was much more apparent. This is entirely consistent with prevailing developmental and gender norms in the region, as teenage boys are progressively incorporated into social adulthood and afforded the freedoms and responsibilities conferred by this status.

As with parental decisions, the accomplishment of wider familial goals still represented an important motivating factor in many choices to migrate. This was evidenced by the sheer number of young men who had handed their wages over to their fathers directly upon returning from Nigeria. 'It's the done thing' one stated, as he explained that it was normal to defer to paternal authority in such matters. In reflecting on this position, Tim articulated what became a kind of motif during my

village interviews. Migrating to Abeokuta, he said, allows you to return and ‘put a roof on your father’s house’. When Tim first went to the quarries as a teenager, roofing his father’s house was precisely his goal; now he sees himself as facilitating the same for the next generation in his position as a gravel pit *patron* (Interview with Tim, 30/8/7). Pietro, who we first saw above, is an example of that generation. Having first migrated at the age of 17 with his family in mind, he returned two years later and also handed his wages over to his father, who used them for the family dwelling (Interview with Pietro, 10/5/10).

Though these decisions reflect the fact that young migrants frequently internalise and actualise the mutuality and communal underpinnings characteristic of extended families here, they should not obscure the important *individual* ambition that is also often encapsulated in a teenager’s decision to migrate. This ambition can involve simple material aspirations, the desire to establish oneself as a figure worthy of social respect and the wish to transition from the status of youth to that of man. Petrov’s migration was an example of the interplay between all three. He told me that, after his father died, when he was 15 and at the time still in school in Zelele, he left for the gravel pits in the face of great opposition from his mother because she did not have enough money to keep him in school and because he therefore wanted to ‘move on’ and earn enough money ‘to set himself up in life’ (Interview with Petrov, 10/5/10). For another quarry-working teenager I spoke with during a group interview in Tenga village, it was the material promise of a long-coveted motorcycle that had sealed his departure (Interview with Group 11, 14/5/10), while in various other quarry-related interviews the prospect of returning with a motorbike was cited as a central motivator behind the decision to leave.

In terms of social respect, it is significant that one of the major motifs I heard when reflecting with interviewees on the value of migration was that, if successful, migration can offer the chance for an individual to become ‘considered’. To be ‘considered’ (or ‘known’) in Southern Benin means to be well thought-of, respected, seen as an important or successful person. It is an essential goal for many people, and successful migration is a principal means of achieving it. Nourredine and Red offer a classic example of this. Both are well-to-do, Cotonou-based civil society figures working for NGOs that provide a healthy income for them and their families. In discussing why villagers where they come from often see the city as so alluring, they told me their own migratory history. When they were teenagers, they explained, both had been enamoured with an uncle who frequently returned from Cotonou on his motorbike. He was a highly esteemed, ‘considered’ man, a son of the village who had made good and who showed this precisely by possessing a vehicle on which he returned to the village. The boys therefore decided one day to follow him down to the city, in order to themselves eventually become ‘considered’. Though, as they admitted, they had struggled at first, their very presence in their ancestral village on the evening of our discussion was the perfect testament to their ultimate success. We had travelled together from Cotonou in Nourredine’s car, after collecting Red from his middle-class home, and when we spoke it was in the most prestigious house in the village – itself a material embodiment of their new status – after a group of residents had come to pay their respects to the two men (Interviews with Nourredine and Red, 18/8/7).

My discussions with various of my current and potential adolescent migrant interviewees echoed this picture. Numerous interviewees explained that returning

with material goods such as a motorbike, clothes or a generator represented evidence of an individual's successful migration and thus constituted a material path to their being 'considered' by those around them upon their return. In one especially revealing instance in Tenga village, a young man rode past the group I was talking with on the motorbike with which he had just returned from Abeokuta. Immediately, and amidst much boisterousness, members of the group began identifying him as a case in point of what constituted a newly 'considered' returnee (Interview with Group 11, 14/5/10).

It is not only material possessions that mark out success and thus confer status, however. One young man that Cynthia, a local government official working to prevent trafficking, spoke to before our interview, was determined to migrate to Abeokuta despite her horror stories because he believed that it was through 'suffering elsewhere' that he could earn respect and be considered (Interview with Cynthia, 30/8/7). Similarly, in a discussion I had with an NGO colleague in 2007, the importance of the *experience* of migration to attaining the status of being considered was made abundantly clear. Though a university student in urban Cotonou, this man lamented to me his dissatisfaction with his current social and geographic situation. 'I want to go to France', he said, 'I pray that I can'. When I asked why he explained that 'a man who goes away is "considered" by his community'. 'Just look at all the big people in Africa', he continued, 'and just look at you, you all travel and return with your experience and people are impressed'. Such a perspective is corroborated in the literature, particularly by Caldwell, who penned one of the early seminal works on West African rural-urban migration. For him, the successful migrant returnee

‘enjoys the respect he receives in the village, and there is widespread agreement that [he] deserves it’ (1969:215).

Intricately linked to this are the gendered and classed social transitions that young people go through as they move through life phases and from being categorised as either children or youth to adults. My village interviews revealed that the understanding predominant in this region of when and how one transitions from the status of ‘boy’ or ‘youth’ to ‘man’ is neither fixed, nor universally attributed to biological age, but contingent upon the attainment of economic independence. In one group interview in Tenga, for instance, an adolescent explained with the agreement of his peers that one is a man in his community when ‘he works and eats without the help of his parents (Interview with Group 11, 14/5/10), while his assessment was echoed by Pietro in Zelele, who declared that to be a man in his village is ‘to farm, to have a big harvest, and to be able to sell your crops’ (Interview with Pietro, 10/5/10). As Yomana and his friends lamented to me, however, this transition and the related transition to marriage is now more difficult than ever (Interview with Yomana, Frederic, Paul and Bernard, Southern Benin, 2/9/7). Where being self-sufficient through successfully farming lots of land had, historically, been the major indicator that one was a ‘man’, with declining soil fertility, the decreasing size of landholdings as a result of titling and population growth, and the increasing importance of the monetised economy, more and more teenage boys are finding their path to the material independence that underpins one’s status as a man – and thus as a potential husband – blocked. In Sommers’ terms, these youth are ‘stuck’ (2012), and thus need new strategies for self-articulation. Crucially, as is the case elsewhere in the region (see, for instance, Thorsen 2006), it is often independent labour migration

which represents their go-to strategy. Current, former and potential labour migrants in my case study villages thus repeatedly articulated that migrating is a good thing, since it gives you the chance to put together the goods you need, and to attain the independence necessary for social adulthood. This is perhaps most evidenced by the fact that, although many value being able to return and share their earnings with their parents, frequently the motivation to leave is precisely that being able to work far enough *away* from your parents enables you to *keep* what you earn and deploy those earnings for individual livelihood goals.

### **Case Study 6: Zeze**

Zeze is 17. He, like Jack, is from a village on the border between the *communes* of Za-Kpota and Bohicon. I interviewed him while he was working in Abeokuta. He first came to the Abeokutan quarries as a result of family tragedy. He was in his village in Benin when his father fell seriously ill. After a long and drawn-out illness, his father eventually passed away. At this point, older male relatives suggested that Zeze come to work with them in Abeokuta, but Zeze's mother refused. She herself then fell ill, however, passing away shortly afterwards. It was at this point that Zeze migrated with his relatives. This was when he was 11.

Zeze is now finishing the third of three consecutive two-year contracts. After the first two years, he earned enough money to return and build himself a house. His earnings from the second two years gave him enough money to equip that house. Now, with the money he earns from this third contract, he intends to buy a motorbike. For Zeze,

work here is not a challenge. He grew up working in the fields, he says, which more than prepares you for the lesser rigours of life here.

Since he will soon have performed the six years necessary to finish with his ‘apprenticeship’, Zeze will soon be ‘free’ either to work entirely for himself and on his own account, or to hire other young labourers to work under him. His plan for now, however, is to return to Benin and see whether he can set himself up in business, though he is very frank that if this is unsuccessful, he will simply keep returning to Abeokuta to earn money.

Money is, for Zeze, the single primary motivation for his continued presence here. When I asked him why people come, money was his simple, one word answer. Of course if there were alternatives in Benin, he suggested, if the state were to set up formal apprenticeships and give people jobs, he would stay and do work there. But he has little belief that this will happen, and is consequently very disdainful when asked what he thinks of the anti-trafficking message that says young people such as him should not migrate for work. Such migration is crucial, he feels, if one wants to make something of one’s life.

### **Elsewhere and the Centrality of Cash**

The last section reflected on trends in the reasons given by individual labour migrants or their families for each individual decision to migrate for work. In this section, by contrast, the chapter will draw on data obtained from those who have migrated, from those yet to migrate and from members of the wider communities in which I

conducted my research to reflect on how (labour) migration is understood more generally as a phenomenon in this region and why. The discussion will draw particularly on data gathered from group interviews and from focus group discussions which were designed to access collectively held understandings. What these revealed is that the decision to migrate is *commonly* viewed as a constructive one, in large part because it is the principle vehicle through which people can access paid work and the opportunity that this underpins for self, family, and wider village. This was expressed to me especially when discussing how people perceive the anti-trafficking, anti-migratory messages they hear from the authorities. Below is an example I have extracted from my notes. It is taken from an interview/focus group discussion conducted in Atomè village with 20 teenagers, 15 of whom were male, five of whom were female. Most of those present were school-goers, though many had engaged in temporary labour migration and two were non-schooled adolescents.

**‘Do you often hear the message at school that leaving is bad?’**

Unanimously, like a chorus, there were cries of “yes”. **Why? What do people say?** Most said that it is their teachers. Some said occasionally also their parents. They say that you can’t be better off than where you are from and that you shouldn’t leave. **What do you think when they say this?**

- One boy said, “We think it’s rubbish, because we see people coming back with motorbikes and other things and so we know it’s untrue”. There were lots of nods and sounds of agreement.

- Another boy added that dropping out of school to migrate isn't great, but if you're not at school or doing something else then there is absolutely nothing wrong with it.

- "It's true that you shouldn't leave if you are a pupil", a further boy echoed, "but if you are doing nothing and your Dad says no you can't go away, then that is bad even on his part. Even in the summertime you can go and make some money you know".

- One smallish boy who must have been about 12 said he always goes to work in Ouessé for short periods, where he works the land, farming yam and the like. **Do you enjoy it I asked?** He said he loved it – that's why he always goes back!

- The girls, through their elected spokesperson, said that as far as they are concerned, "if no-one helps parents to send their children to school, then it is absolutely fine for kids to leave and find work. They have to!"

**What do you think more generally about the idea of leaving for work then?**

- One boy said "no, it's not a good thing", in response to which a second boy interjected, saying that he thought that leaving was very good, "because here there is no money, but when someone leaves he can come

back with money”. Again, there were lots of echoes and numerous nods of agreement were forthcoming.

- The girls said that they also thought that leaving was good, because there was no money in the village and because the people who leave come back with money, are able to build things for themselves, and then can quickly get married’.

(Interview with Group 12, 14/5/10)

These views evidently depend on the concentration of economic opportunity in locations outside of one’s home village. Indeed, and not without good reason, common perceptions of migrant destination centres in my research villages – Cotonou, Nigeria or ‘*yovotomè*’ (‘the home of the white man’) – underline the notion that ‘elsewhere’ represents a generalised land of opportunity, a place where life is materially richer than ‘here’, and where one can and must go if one seeks to advance. The following extracts offer a further flavour of this understanding. They are drawn from the same discussion as that cited above and reflect my quick-fire noting of the responses that were thrown out by those present.

**‘What do you think of when we say “Cotonou”?’**

*Boys:*

- it’s a big town that people go to.
- it makes me think of business.

- it's an economic centre and is where people go to find things.
- it is choc-a-bloc full of NGOs and their projects, which we would like to see come here.

*Girls:*

- traffic lights, big roads, things that are there but not here.
- electricity.

**What about “yovotomè”?**

*Boys:*

- there are only whites over there, that is where they are from.
- many machines.
- big, beautiful buildings.
- cold weather with strong winds.

*Girls:*

- aeroplanes.

**How do you know that money is elsewhere and that leaving will help you get it?**

*Girls:*

- we have relatives who are well-off in Cotonou and when they come back here to visit we can see that they are living much better than us.

*Boys:*

- we see it on the TV, on the serials, the teachers tell us that there is great wealth in Europe, and when a peasant goes away to sell his goods he quickly returns with lots of money’.

(Interview with Group 12, 14/5/10)

In the following extract, I am asking similar questions to another group of adolescents, this time in Sehere village. There are eight of us present and we have gathered in the village’s meeting place/veranda, shortly after lunch.

**‘What do you think when we talk of “Cotonou”?’**

- it’s a big city, a city in the true sense of the term.
- villas, money, big houses.
- water, electricity, roads.
- one small boy, to the laughter of the others, said “there is rice to eat there”.

**What about “yovotomè”?**

- one boy said, in English, “dollars”.
- people live well there and those who go come back with lots of stuff.

**How do you know?**

- when people leave there and come here their skin has a different tone, because of the climate.
- many of the things we have here, including even our clothes, are made over there. When we buy them we see on the label that that is the case.
- the TV shows us.

**What do you think it must be like, compared to here?**

- Here is poor.
- Here is poor and if people there helped us we wouldn't even bother wanting to go there.
- No-one really wants to have to go to work elsewhere, like there, it's just that we have no choice.'

(Interview with Group 14, 14/5/10)

Later in the same afternoon, I conducted a further focus group discussion in Sehere village, with another group of teenage boys, all of whom were school-goers recently home from the day's classes.

**'I asked them what they thought of when we speak of "Cotonou"?**

- it's a big city, it's the biggest city round here.
- me too.
- ditto.

- it's where everything is concentrated. Big buildings, cadres, institutions, industries.

**What about “yovotomè”?**

- that's where the whites are from and where it is cold.
- everything that exists in terms of inventions, including football, machines and even our clothes comes from there.
- *that is where the people that run the world live?*

(Interview with Group 7, 14/5/10)

These teenagers' perceptions are evidently quite acute. It is clear that economic wealth is concentrated in large urban centres relative to the countryside, in Nigeria relative to Benin, and in the Minority World relative to sub-Saharan Africa. Unsurprisingly, then, notions of 'elsewhere' as a land of opportunity are not confined only to my interviewees, or indeed only to the rural poor. Large-scale work by the UNDP in Benin on rural and urban perceptions of poverty and socio-economic well-being clearly echo what I found in my interviews. In one study conducted with a series of rural and urban communities in the South of the country, for instance, both populations saw themselves as relatively poor, both saw one's own location as synonymous with negative economic prospects and both saw various alternative destinations as embodying opportunity (PNUD and MPD 1995, 1996).

Given such understandings, many of my interviewees articulated the belief that the migration of both young and old can serve as a tool for local development. In one particularly telling example, two female elders in Atomè railed passionately against the anti-trafficking policy establishment:

**Neil:** What do you think of the message that young people shouldn't leave the village?

**Woman 1:** Those who tell us this are those who hold back the development of the village!! It is a terrible message! And they give us nothing in return. The NGOs come here but they bring nothing with them!

**Neil:** Why do NGOs and the government do this and say these things?

**Woman 2:** They don't want people to leave the village because they don't want to see us go and develop elsewhere instead of here. That's fair enough, but their words are useless to us, because they bring us nothing'.

(Interview with Group 6, 28/4/10)

Though expressed with less vitriol, the words of another adult respondent offer a similar analysis. This time I am in Tenga village:

'There is just no money in Benin in general. Nigeria has lots of opportunities and so people prefer to go there, work or buy things and then

come back. This helps the village. For example, if one youth leaves and comes back with a generator, that means that the whole village can have access to light at festival times’.

(Man in Interview with Group 11, 14/5/10)

### The Centrality of Cash

The above examples demonstrate the fundamental importance of cash and access to it both in the decisions of young people, or those who decide on their behalf, regarding migration for work, and in the wider perception that labour migration is a positive phenomenon. That cash is so important was further emphasised when I examined with my case study communities what was meant by the Fon word ‘*ya*’ – ‘poverty’. Though ‘poverty’ frequently featured as an answer to the question ‘why do young people leave here?’, further discussion revealed that ‘poverty’ in this context means specifically a lack of the cash necessary to ‘evolve’. Accordingly, when I asked people if ‘poverty’ ever meant ‘starvation’ and whether ‘poor’ people remaining in the village ‘would go without food’, most people responded with an amused and resounding ‘no’. Pointedly, one man explained that ‘people don’t die of hunger here’, while another declared that ‘even when there are no fish to eat, people don’t starve...people wouldn’t let you starve, it’s just that there’s no money’.

Such linguistic digging was not necessary with all my interviewees. As the above examples including that of Zeze in Case Study 6 clearly testify, the importance of accessing money or material opportunity is either implicit in the migrant narrative or

voiced explicitly as an inevitable part of life under capitalism. A selection of responses from a group interview conducted in Tenga provide a further indication of this:

‘There is nothing in the village, there is no work. Parents are obliged to let their kids go and when kids decide themselves to leave, parents are obliged to accept. When they go, kids at least make some money, they at least send some back to us. We understand the NGOs’ message, *but we can’t eat their words can we?*’

(Man during Interview with Group 3, 16/4/10)

‘I was in Nigeria until only 5 months ago. If I’m not in Nigeria, I’m in Savè working, because that at least gives me some money. I remember that one NGO came and said don’t leave, promising to bring money for those who stayed, but they never did. Those who stayed had been tricked and were really sad, especially in comparison to those who did leave, and who made some money’.

(16 year old male during Interview with Group 3, 16/4/10)

‘We don’t have the same view as the NGOs. We think it can be a good thing to leave, especially as it is a way to find money. We leave despite what they say’.

(Woman during Interview with Group 3, 16/4/10)

‘When I work in Nigeria, I earn some money and am able to put some aside to buy a motorbike, buy electricity for my house or other such things. I can keep migrating back and forth like this every time I need to put together some funds. The only problem for me is that when relatives are sick, I have to send some of my wages back’.

(17 year old male during Interview with Group 3, 16/4/10)

When I returned to Benin and Nigeria for my follow-up fieldwork in 2012, I explored more widely the importance of money in both the migratory decision and the perception of migration. Among all those I spoke to in Abeokuta and within each of the interviews and group interviews I conducted on the Beninese side of the border, money emerged as *the* central motivation. In perhaps the most emblematic example of this, I accompanied a colleague on a visit to a school attended by children and teenagers from two of my case study villages. When introducing myself and my research to a mixed class of about 40, I asked publicly why people here seemed to see migration as such a good thing. When my question was translated to the class, a sea of voices erupted with the Fon word ‘*akwe! akwe!*’. What is ‘*akwe*’, I asked? ‘Money’.

### **The Political-Economic Context of Cashlessness**

In light of the importance of money within the decision for the young to engage in labour migration in Southern Benin, an obvious question to ask is ‘what is the cause of this lack of money?’ In this section, I will draw on my qualitative research with cotton-farmers and their communities, young migrants from cotton-producing regions and their families, and representatives of the Beninese cotton industry, to make the case that there is likely a causal relationship between the existence of massive US cotton subsidies, household immiseration and the youth migration identified as ‘trafficking’ in and around Southern Benin.

The section builds on the discussion of this issue outlined in Chapter 1. It does not claim that cotton subsidies are the *only* ‘structural’ factor affecting migratory decisions in Benin, nor does it suggest that there exists a simple, direct or mono-causal relationship between subsidies and male adolescent labour migration. What it does suggest, however, is that enough evidence exists to argue that some form of causal relationship does very likely exist and thus that we arguably have an identifiable case of political-economic decision-making impacting ground-level realities in a way that has significance for an understanding both of that which is identified as trafficking and the discourse and policy built around it.

The section will begin by addressing the most basic component of the US’s response to the WTO case brought by Benin against US cotton subsidies. This is the US claim that subsidy-induced cotton price deflation is not experienced by cotton farming households in Benin since the Beninese government does not transfer global prices

down to producers. It will then examine empirical evidence relating to the household-level effects of cotton price depression, before finally arguing that this itself plays an important role in prompting much of the adolescent labour migration discussed above.

### *Price Transfer Despite Multi-Causality*

My research in the *Zou département* with dozens of cotton farmers and a series of state agents occupying varying positions within the Beninese agricultural hierarchy suggests that multiple factors *can* affect whether or not an individual farmer will have a more or less profitable year. Which factor is identified as most important depends largely on who is doing the identifying. Alastair, for example, is a state-employed agronomist with a doctorate from a French university and years of national and international expertise behind him. For him, the major issue was the forced liberalisation of the cotton market by the IFIs. This, he argued, had created even more opportunity for rent-seeking and cutting corners. It had also meant that government had less control over the quality and price of fertiliser inputs, such that farmers were both more exposed to price fluctuations and to the profit-motive within fertiliser firms (Interview with Alastair, 27/4/10). Camilo, a former regional extension agent speaking from the neutrality of retirement, shared blame more widely by claiming that incompetent and corrupt officials coupled with ‘ignorant’ and stubborn farmers and their associations to negatively affect farm gate incomes (Interview with Camilo, 9/4/10). Donald, a regional state agricultural official, blamed central government mismanagement, declining soil fertility and principally farmer ‘bad practice’ (Interview with Donald, 26/4/10), while his views were echoed

throughout the official ranks. Yegbidi and Fadiga, for instance, lamented ‘poor farming techniques’ as the major issue, whilst still recognising corruption or poor fertiliser provision as problems (Interview with Yegbidi and Fadiga, 27/4/10). Peasant farmers, by contrast, unsurprisingly disagreed, citing predominantly unspecified ‘corrupt officials’ from the distant state as the major issue.

Though there is clearly agreement then that numerous factors *can* and indeed *do* play a role in preventing the perfect functioning of the agricultural chain and in thus providing a wedge between peasant production and peasant income, none of this should create the mis-impression that farmers do not benefit significantly from higher prices, or suffer from lower ones. Indeed, across the board, and in contrast to US claims, both farmers and state officials agreed that, for all the problems with the market, prices *do* trickle down from the global level to the state and to the farm gate, such that when the government or private companies are earning well on international markets, so too is the farmer. Yegbidi, Fadiga and Camilo all explained to me that this was in fact inevitable, since the very nature of the purchasing process in Benin ensured that it would be the case. How so, I asked? First, they replied, the government and the private companies working with it base the pre-harvest price they set for farmers on close observation of international market data indicative of global price trends. Then, if prices rise, when farmers bring their harvest to the ginning factories to be weighed and receive payment, they receive a ‘*ristourne*’, or ‘windfall’, representing the added difference between the pre- and post-harvest prices (Interview with Camilo, 9/4/10; Interview with Yegbidi and Fadiga, 27/4/10). Added to this, Octavio, the National Cotton Producers Union representative, explained to me that there are the ‘peasant organisations’, which form a part of his union, and whose

very *raison d'être* is to watch over state and private company agents in order to ensure that the genuine world price *is* being transferred down to the grower (Interview with Octavio, 29/4/10).

Whilst these voices therefore all speak in unison in a manner which refutes US denials of price transfer from market to farmer, by far the greatest indication I received that Beninese farmer wealth and poverty are indeed related to world prices (and thus to US subsidies) came with cotton grower identification of the timing of the cotton price crash in the 1990s. In my first cotton-related interview with Cliff, for example, I asked simply whether he was a cotton farmer and if so how the crop was faring. 'I used to be', he explained, 'but the problem here is that our former President, Soglo, used to understand the market and so things worked, we had good fertilisers and good prices. When he left, everything changed' (Interview with Cliff, 7/4/10). Somewhat confused, I asked the same question to many other farmers, alone or in groups, and every single one repeated the same mantra: with Soglo, times were good, prices were good, we had good quality inputs and we earned good money. It was only when speaking to a member of one of the peasant organisations Octavio had mentioned that I began to understand. Again, this man underlined that during Soglo's reign, up until 1996, things were positive. When Soglo left, however, and Kérékou, the former dictator, was (re-)elected, an agricultural extension agent came to explain that prices would have to be fixed somewhat lower and inputs might have to change because 'they were having international problems' (Interview with Group 2, 12/4/10). When one cross-checks the dates of the Soglo presidency with the beginning of these 'international problems', one can see quite clearly that Soglo was in office right up until the major international price crash of 1996. This was precisely

the point at which US subsidies kicked in, remaining high right throughout the Kérékou presidency and into the 2000s.

What this suggests, therefore, is 1) that the international price crash and then depression *was* felt by Benin's cotton farmers, 2) that it was felt because, in contrast to US claims, prices *are* transferred from state to farmer, 3) that the added downward pressure that US subsidies placed on an already strained market did, as the WTO has acknowledged, both prolong and aggravate international price depression, in a way that was felt by cotton farmers, and finally, 4) that in the absence of a wider political economy perspective, these farmers simply made sense of their situation as citizens do around the world: by blaming their own distant government.

#### *Household Effects of Price Depression*

If, as my data suggest, it is true that international price volatility, whether natural or aggravated by particular political-economic decisions, is indeed felt at the lived level of the Beninese cotton farmer household, it would stand to reason that such volatility provokes observable household-level effects. As such, where Chapter 1 points to the theoretical literature pertaining to these household-level effects, it will be the purpose of this sub-section to document what is, to my understanding, unique empirical data from interviews and participant observation with cotton farming communities in Southern Benin regarding the actual lived reality of these effects.

When asking what constitutes the household-level difference between periods of high and low prices, then, the major message I received from cotton farmers and cotton

industry employees was ‘when cotton works, things are good, we have money, we can develop’. By contrast, ‘when cotton doesn’t work, we have problems’. A group of men and women in Atomè village explained this to me succinctly. A kilogram of cotton used to bring in 350 FCFA (about \$0.65), they said, whereas now the price is only 175 FCFA, even though the cost of production has remained stable. One older woman opined, ‘with the old price, all was good. All the young people earned some money. Kids worked the fields and the old owned land and paid them’ (Woman in Interview with Group 6, 28/4/10).

Agricultural officials echoed these claims. Marcello, a regional official responsible for research with farmers in the Zou region, put it simply: ‘a higher cotton price can change a peasant’s life. He can accomplish things, put his plans into action<sup>50</sup>; he can build, buy a vehicle, send his kids to school’ (Interview with Marcello, 29/4/10). Vakiri, a colleague of Marcello and himself a cotton farmer, offered exactly the same conclusion. When I asked what is the daily, lived impact of a higher cotton price, he simply stated: ‘it will improve life, across the board, in all basic respects. There will be more food, more clothes, more solid houses, more education, more disposable cash’ (Interview with Vakiri, 29/4/10). Even more emphatically, Donald, an agricultural extension agent, enthused as follows:

‘I was an intern in the cotton regions back then [before and during the Soglo presidency]. I can tell you, the farmers used to look after us, they were so well off. They had money, people built houses, wells, had

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<sup>50</sup> In French, the answer I received to this question was ‘*il peut réaliser des choses*’. The verb ‘*réaliser*’ has numerous meanings, all of which turn around the notion of ‘making something real’, giving form to that which is planned.

weddings and ceremonies, kids had money and went to school, people bought tractors. When it works, *la vie est belle*'.

(Interview with Donald, 26/4/10)

In the examples above, two major factors stand out: 1) yet again, the centrality of cash, and 2) the narrowness of household margins. On the first point, the last section demonstrated that, for the majority of the subsistence farming families with whom I researched, being poor does not equate to starvation ('they are subsistence farmers after all', said Alastair, 'all but the genuinely destitute will at least have their food crops to keep them going'); rather, it equates to a lack of cash. More than anything, this reflects how incorporated the Beninese rural poor have become into the capitalist market economy. As elsewhere in the world, life in rural Southern Benin depends on money, and without money, the farmer is poor – 'he can't send his kids to school, he has no available liquid for ceremonies, or for basic purchases' (Interview with Alastair, 27/4/10).

This points to our second factor – the narrowness of margins. Econometric research conducted by Alston et al. suggests that an increase in international cotton prices concomitant with the removal of US subsidies would hypothetically lead to an increase in Beninese cotton farmer household income of between 10,000 and 40,000 FCFA (around \$20 to \$85) (2006:9). In a context where many survive on less than a dollar a day, where young males migrate for over a year of hard quarry work in order to return with around \$170, where schoolboys engage in a summer of agricultural migrant labour to earn the \$40 necessary to pay their coming year's school fees, these

are huge sums. What my research clearly suggests, however, is that they are also *real* sums. Households do fundamentally change how they live based on the very narrow margins resulting from higher or lower cotton prices, just as they would arguably change their behaviour if prices were not artificially deflated.

What unites and indeed explains these two factors in is the reality that, for the farming communities in which I researched (as for so many in the region – see OXFAM 2002:8), cotton is literally the only cash-providing game in town. As Vakiri explained, ‘today, in Benin, the only properly organised cash-crop sector is the cotton one, so substituting for other crops is very difficult. Soy is a classic example, where we have tried to substitute, but it has been so hard to make it profitable’ (Interview with Vakiri, 29/4/10). His words were confirmed by two separate groups of farmers I interviewed in Tenga village. Both explained to me that, after years of declining cotton prices, they had decided to shift to soy cultivation, but had found it extremely difficult to turn a profit (Interview with Group 3 and Group 8, 16/4/10, 9/5/10). The same was true with pineapples, the agricultural officials Yegbidi and Fadiga explained. ‘The climate here is perfect for them’, Yegbidi stated. ‘We grow enormous amounts, but it is fundamentally difficult to make them profitable, in large part because of the quality and tariff barriers set by the EU’ (Interview with Yegbidi and Fadiga, 27/4/10).

What this suggests of course is that, in contrast to US claims, household economies are in fact affected not only by generalised market fluctuations, but also by the artificial market manipulations represented by USDA subsidies. In a context where cash is so central, so scarce and so contingent on cotton and its prices, US subsidies

would thus appear to play a determining role in what poor households can and cannot do.

### *Increased Youth Mobility*

One of the major consequences of this, my data suggest, is an increase in migrant labour in and beyond Benin, including on the part of young people. This is hinted at even by the Beninese census. Historical migratory data show the *Zou département* to have consistently represented an area of net immigration within the country. Indeed, of Benin's predominantly rural departments, *only* Borgou and the Zou – the country's two major cotton-producing regions – recorded figures of net in-migration between 1980 and 1992. During the period 1996-2002, however, when cotton prices crashed and were pushed to below previous minimum levels by US subsidies, this situation radically changed. The Zou went from a *département* of net immigration to one of net emigration, with 75% of emigrants registered as being under 30, and a good deal moving to Nigeria (MPD and INSAE, 2003:168-75).

My research with cotton producing communities and migrants to Abeokuta suggests that this demographic shift is clearly correlated with the collapse in international cotton prices, and thus also the deleterious effect of US subsidies. Cliff, for example, as head of Sehere village and chair of that village's anti-trafficking committee, bluntly stated that the demographic consequences of the cotton price collapse and continued depression were 'enormous'. 'When cotton worked, children and families all worked and earned good money', he explained. 'When it worked, *no-one went to Nigeria* because there was so much to do, people had disposable cash, children even

had money, and went to school'. More than this, Cliff continued, 'when the prices were high, people would come from Nigeria and *even stay here*' (Interview with Cliff, 7/4/10). Tom, a fellow member of Sehere's anti-trafficking committee, painted a similar picture. 'I saw it with my own eyes', he exclaimed. 'When cotton worked, young people helped and worked with us and earned some money. They didn't leave'. Now though, 'there is nothing here to help them evolve. They think things are better elsewhere', and so over recent years there has been an increase in out-migration (Interview with Tom, /4/10). Such an assessment was paralleled also by Donald, with whom I had the following exchange:

**'Neil:** What are the effects of cotton not working on migration and exploitation here?

**Donald:** They are big. People stay in villages more often when it works, because there is work to do. It allows you to be a man, because if you farm cotton, you make money. I saw this clearly in Bante [in the centre of the country], when things fell apart, and 50% of the young people would migrate to Nigeria, even if they only went to do farm work'<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> It is worth noting that the story outlined here with regards to cotton was paralleled in my fieldwork by the case of orange production, and particularly by the story of the nationalisation and ultimate destruction of a formerly very successful Israeli-owned factory producing orange juice under the name of *Sonafel*. Charley, the chief of Zelele village, worked for *Sonafel* for 20 years, along with friends and colleagues from his and a number of the neighbouring villages, and it was he who related the story to me. During the *Sonafel* period, he said, hundreds of hectares of the surrounding land were under orange cultivation, and all the farmers sold their produce, en masse and for a good price, to *Sonafel*. 'In those days', Charley opined, 'times were good. The Israeli developed a new crop of orange that was sweet and lovely, and farmers all around took cuttings and began to grow the same'. Success came to his village, and that success is still apparent in the unusually high proportion of village houses built '*en dūr*' – with solid bricks and mortar. When the factory was nationalised, however, everything changed for Charley. First the government stepped in, but after two or three years of total failure, the factory and business were closed, people were laid off, and orange producers from across the region were forced to sell their produce wholesale to any small-trader who would buy it. Much of the crop began to go to rot, no substitute crops or markets have been introduced and prices (along with household incomes) have plummeted so that a 2.5 tonne truck-load of oranges brings in less than 50% of what it used to. 'What are the effects of this in real terms?', I asked Charley. 'They are enormous', he replied. 'Before, people used to come from Nigeria, see how good things were, and not go back'. Now, by contrast, the opposite is true. Families lack the money to send their many children to school, and there is little prospect for youth employment. Unlike before, Charley concluded, 'even the young from these villages must leave to Nigeria to find work'.

(Interview with Donald, 26/4/10)

Such a picture is of course also supported by the data presented in the chapter's previous sections on the reasons why many teenage males leave home to migrate for work in Abeokuta. As that data showed, access to money is a central factor in individual decisions to move. It should stand to reason, therefore, that when the means of accessing that money without movement dry up, movement to access it elsewhere increases in prevalence. Fundamentally, one could consequently make the case that what is at issue here is a classic case of the lived effects of global neoliberal politics. While the US, and with it the IFIs, have encouraged Benin to liberalise agricultural markets, the US has failed to liberalise its own, perpetuating subsidies that both affect international prices and arguably also diminish the household earnings of small-scale Beninese cotton farmers. This, one might say, is part of the political-economic backdrop to the adolescent labour migration identified as trafficking in Southern Benin.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have attempted to paint a contextually grounded picture of male youth work and migration in Southern Benin. Drawing on data gathered from my various 'ground-level' research sites, I have argued that, in this region, youth work and movement form an integral part of individual and collective life strategies in a context of moneylessness that is framed by the neoliberalised global economy. The chapter does not wish to romanticise either the work or the movement that young males undertake in this region; rather, it seeks to paint a nuanced and detailed picture

of how that work is understood and experienced, and of how it relates to the wider socio-cultural and political-economic realities of which it forms a part. The picture that has been painted should be kept in mind as the thesis now turns to the anti-trafficking discourse and policy which depicts and attempts to repress precisely this work and movement.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCOURSE AND POLICY: CHILD TRAFFICKING AND THE FIGHT AGAINST IT IN SOUTHERN BENIN

#### Introduction

In this chapter, the thesis will trace the contours of the trafficking discourse as it operates in Benin and will examine the anti-trafficking policies with which this discourse is intertwined. Drawing primarily on a selection of official ‘texts’ which reflect the formal, narrative position of institutions engaged in the Beninese anti-trafficking field, and on interview data from interviews with relevant institutionally-employed anti-trafficking actors, the chapter will show that, as is the case internationally, the dominant Beninese anti-trafficking discourse rests on notions of ‘extremity’ and ‘non-consensuality’ when it comes to the child and adolescent labour migration/ exploitation it equates with trafficking. The chapter will begin by outlining the common portrayal of the trafficked child and the trafficked child’s experience in Benin and will do so by referencing depictions which include those of ‘the Etireno affair’ and the migrant labour performed by boys in Abeokuta. Subsequently, it will discuss the various elements of what I have elsewhere termed ‘the pathological paradigm’ (2008), which is the causal narrative that has developed and spread to explain *why* children and teenagers are apparently so routinely trafficked in Benin. Moving on to the policy, the chapter will draw on data gathered from policy and project documents and from interviews and participant observation with actors integral to the constitution and operation of policy in (and with influence

over) the Beninese anti-trafficking community. It will show how the overall thrust of anti-trafficking strategy is to stifle child/youth movement and to promote the spread of components and institutions seen as integral to a ‘healthy’ childhood.

### **The Experience of Child Trafficking in Benin<sup>52</sup>**

Within the dominant narrative, child trafficking is depicted as a problem of epic proportions in Benin, one which is engulfing the country and leading to serious abuse for countless numbers of children. In the wake of the ‘Etireno’ and after the first wave of repatriations from Abeokuta, the country became known (in both policy-maker parlance and public documentation) as ‘*la plaque tournante*’ – the ‘epicentre’ – of the international traffic in children. As one UNICEF report puts it:

‘Benin is today recognised as a country of origin, transit and destination for child victims of trafficking. The phenomenon is present both nationally and internationally, with cross-border movements. These children are reduced to slavery, separated from their families, exposed to serious risks and illnesses’ (UNICEF Benin and UNICEF WACARO, 2001:1)<sup>53</sup>.

Appendix E offers examples of the kind of language used when describing ‘the phenomenon’, while Image 12 below represents an archetypal and succinct illustration of many of the discourse’s major components:

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<sup>52</sup> Parts of this section draw on or reproduce material from Howard 2008.

<sup>53</sup> Note the parallel with the US TIP report:

‘Benin is a source, transit, and destination country for children trafficked for the purposes of forced domestic and commercial labor, including child prostitution...Beninese children are trafficked to Nigeria, Ghana, Gabon, Cote d’Ivoire, and Cameroon into forced labor situations, including agricultural labor, quarries, domestic service, and prostitution. The traditional practice of poor, rural Beninese families placing children with wealthier urban relatives has become corrupted, resulting in many situations of forced domestic labor’ (USDS, 2004:44).

**Image 12: Extract from USAID Briefing Paper<sup>54</sup>**



It should be noted that the picture elaborated here clearly echoes the extremity and non-consensuality characteristic of the global trafficking discourse discussed in Chapter 1. Children are apparently reduced to the status of 'commodities', they are 'threatened with physical and emotional abuse', while 'nearly all suffer from neglect or diseases'. The various official sources cited by the articles in Appendix E parallel Image 12 and talk similarly of the 'human trade' that involves 'buying' children for work, while Tomorrow Children's publication laments that children are 'often abducted' before becoming 'slaves' and enduring 'emotional, psychological, physical

<sup>54</sup> Available at: [pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PDACP134.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACP134.pdf).

and sexual abuse'. In stark contrast to the stories of Abeokutan quarry work recounted by quarry working adolescents themselves in the last chapter, the Avèkes and HuHu articles both headline around the phrase 'child slaves' in reference to that quarry work, while the HuHu piece cites UNICEF sources describing Abeokutan quarry labour as 'trafficking' and again claiming that working minors 'have been sold'. The economic activity performed by minors in this narrative is characterised as inherently exploitative and abusive, while no differentiation is made between younger and older children. As is the case internationally, nuance, the presence of (even structurally limited) consent and an acknowledgement of the validity of the autonomy position are entirely absent.

A further factor of importance in this discourse is the way that migration is commonly equated with trafficking<sup>55</sup>. One classic example of this comes in the 2002 report by the Beninese Family Ministry and the Danish Embassy which aimed at developing 'a strategy to combat *migration and trafficking* in the Zou region' in light of the high rates of adolescent labour migration to Abeokuta (MFPSS and ARD, emphasis added). In this report, the reader is told that migration has a historic precedent in this part of the country. Immediately thereafter, however, the text slips imperceptibly into a discussion of recent trafficking trends and concludes that 'the problem persists still today in the form of child placement' (ibid.1). The textual movement from migration to trafficking and back again thus leaves the reader with the impression of a conceptual interchangeability between the two. This interchangeability is further entrenched later in the report, as one central recommendation offered for the dual 'fight' is to 'sensitise' villagers to 'the negative

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<sup>55</sup> Migration is also generally demonised within the anti-trafficking community working in Benin. It is variously a 'phenomenon', a 'curse' or a 'problem' in the institutional literature, and is lambasted as integral both to the 'rural exodus' that 'condemns the country to under-development' and to the 'rupture' that breaks down the family unit.

consequences of child migration' in general (ibid.38). Similar ellipses are present also in various other documents, including a CEO and UNICEF report on international child trafficking in Southern Benin. In this report, international trafficking is described as 'a simple outgrowth of domestic trafficking', after which the clarificatory parenthesis tellingly reads '(rural-urban migration, familial placements, etc.)' (1998:31).

Other, related, documents make the problem with migration even more explicit. In one, we read: 'nowadays, a child's life can sometimes oblige him to work for other people or for far-off relatives who deprive him...His physical, nutritional, intellectual, social and economic development are consequently all often under threat' (UNICEF 1999:11). The lived consequences of this are depicted emphatically by Fangbo Egin, whose work is a point of reference in Cotonou's UNICEF library:

'Given that he left his place of birth when still very young, that he returns as an adult with no qualifications, and that he is at a loss for how to survive, [the former child labour migrant] becomes a beggar. In the worst cases, he becomes the local criminal; he vandalises, takes drugs, becomes an armed robber. [He] needs to be rehabilitated' (2003:46).

The movement here then is clear. Implicitly, we begin with a happy, Apollonian Childhood, guaranteed and secured by the protection of the 'home'. This childhood develops accordingly until, at a certain stage, it is shattered by migration, inverting the developmental process and leaving us, at its end, with the antithesis of harmonious evolution.

### **The ‘Pathological Paradigm’: The ‘Causes’ of Child Trafficking in Benin**

In light of the extremity and non-consensuality characterising depictions of the work and migration constitutive of trafficking in Benin, it should come as no surprise that a central feature of the discourse is to attribute trafficking’s causes entirely to abnormal, extraneous conditions. In this discursive world, it is assumed that no well-intentioned, informed adult would willingly *choose* to let a minor engage in the labour migration equated with trafficking, such that poverty, ignorance or a host of other pathological factors must form the explanatory background. Similarly, since no ‘proper’, liberal-democratic (Westphalian) state would allow its citizens to experience the kinds of extreme labour equated with trafficking, the pathology of state failure must necessarily also be invoked. Given that this pathological paradigm is not only central to the discourse but also serves as a justification for the kinds of anti-trafficking policies in place in Benin, this section will dwell at length on its various components.

#### Placement as Trafficking

*‘All those who have been placed have been trafficked’.*

(Beninese INGO Employee)

Without doubt, the centrepiece of Benin’s anti-trafficking narrative is the notion that trafficking is a corrupted outgrowth of the once positive tradition of child placement (see also Howard 2011, Morganti 2011). The last chapter showed how child

relocation and adolescent (labour) migration are perceived as normal and constructive by the extended family networks of collective mutuality characteristic of Southern Benin. Within the pathological paradigm, however, this mobility is constructed as essentially problematic, since it is seen to have been distorted under the influence of money and modernity. Within published and unpublished material of all sorts, therefore, and in my interviews with state, IO and civil society actors working on or in Benin, questions as to ‘where trafficking came from’, ‘what causes it’, or ‘why it is particularly pronounced in Benin’ were met with an almost rote-narrative akin to that in the USAID briefing above regarding the bastardisation of ‘*vidomègon*’ – the Fon term denoting child circulation/placement. An indication of both the stability and reach of this narrative can be garnered from the interview and documentary extracts highlighted below:

““Child placement” has deviated from its original function of communal solidarity, underpins child labour and fans the flames of domestic and international trafficking’.

(Extract from the POA, 2007:18)

‘The phenomenon of child placement, once considered a means for reinforcing inter-familial links and social cohesion, has undergone a number of contemporary transformations. Over the course of recent decades, the combined effect of moral decline, the negligence of certain parents, the impoverishment of certain regions...has dealt a death blow to the cultural practice of placing ones child with others in the hope of

contributing to his education or socialisation. This ancient tradition is now a bedrock of irregular and uncontrolled youth mobility’.

(Extract from a study into anti-trafficking effectiveness in Benin, UNICEF and MFPSS 2004:1)

‘The practice of vidomègon is not dissimilar to what happened in Italy and Ireland back in the day when people were poor. It has changed in recent years though, especially because of economic factors and changing morals, according to the Beninese. Now it is very much about labour power, which must obey. It is a form of slavery, especially because most kids have no family link to the family they go to. This can mean that they lose their identity’.

(Interview with Alexia<sup>56</sup>, 1/9/7)

### Problem Parents

Intricately related to this notion of ‘placement corrupted’ is the discursive caricature of ‘the problem parent’. As the country’s National Study highlights, ‘poverty is by far the major cause of children’s vulnerability to trafficking’, but since ‘not all poor households are prepared to send their children away’, we must also consider questions of ‘responsible parenthood’, ‘poor family planning’, ‘polygamy’, and the

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<sup>56</sup> Alexia is an INGO employee based in Cotonou.

propensity of 'ignorant' villagers to be 'duped' by false dreams and promises as important factors (MFE and UNICEF Benin, 2007:7/8).

In my research on the discursively constructed 'problem parent', there are three central tropes that recur with greatest frequency. These are *ignorance*, *irresponsibility* and *wanton reproduction*. In the case of 'ignorance', it is precisely the fact that parents continue to place their offspring (or allow them to migrate), either with extended family members or with third parties whose responsibility to the child is much more akin to that of an employer than a guardian, that is said to encapsulate their total naivety. As such, Dibi, a senior state official overseeing the country's anti-trafficking operations, explained to me that in order to eradicate trafficking 'we need first off to show that sending a child away will not make you or your child rich. *Parents think that departure leads to wealth, but it doesn't. Kids suffer*' (Interview with Dibi, 10/3/10). Echoing his words, in a child protection workshop I attended in Cotonou, James claimed that 'placement is already a problem because the best protection for a child is to be at home with his family, so we therefore need to prevent parents from letting their children go *and show them that it's bad*' (Field Notes, 29/3/10). Perhaps even more emphatic was the exchange I had with Sandra, at the time a senior INGO representative working in Benin:

**Neil:** How do communities themselves perceive the concept of trafficking?

**Sandra:** There is a history of child placement here which has evolved and changed for the worse. It started with rural-urban transfers of children for school because there were no schools in the villages. One of the reasons

why it has changed so negatively is the liberation of women, which means that women now have to work and so need a hand at home. This is also one of the reasons behind the way placement has developed into such an economic transfer. *Because of the history though, parents don't see placing their children as a crime.* The problem of course is that now these kids are often abused, they are not educated and their personalities are undone. It's clear that many parents let them go for their own good, but a child needs affection and doesn't often get it when placed. *Parents don't realise this'.*

(Interview with Sandra, 1/9/7)

Sandra's assessment of good-willing but ingenuous parents is not matched across the discursive board. Often, it is simple parental 'irresponsibility', 'neglect' or 'negligence' that are cited as causal of a child's placement-cum-trafficking. As such, in the POA, we read that NGO actors cite 'weak engagement on the part of parents and communities' and 'the breakdown of traditional values' as of central import (MFE and UNICEF: 2007:64), while in a further UNICEF and Family Ministry study, we are informed that it is key to get parents 'to realise that they must participate in the fight against poverty...prioritise appropriately...and share food resources' (MFE and UNICEF 2006:15).

Echoing this, I had the following interaction with Jemima, a Beninese state agent working on child protection in one case study *département*:

**Neil:** Why do you think that teenagers want to leave here and why do parents send their children away?

**Jemima:** That is a very pertinent question. We say it is “poverty, poverty”, but this isn’t true. People just don’t want to work, and they are tempted by the riches of Nigeria, so close. People don’t weigh up the costs and benefits of leaving. And we see that the payment a child receives from having gone to work can never equate to the amount of work they’ve done. It’s exploitation. And it’s absurd, they go away to work there but if they used all that energy here, just think what we could achieve in terms of local development. People just don’t want to work here’.

(Interview with Jemima, 17/3/10)

This perspective was paralleled also by Cynthia, Veronica and Celestin, all Beninese state officials working directly or tangentially on trafficking in each of my two case study *communes*. ‘Parents just don’t want to look after their offspring here’, Cynthia claimed, ‘parents are running away from their responsibilities’, argued Veronica, while Celestin opined that ‘people being people, they like the easy life, they don’t like working, so the lazies leave and the lazies let their kids leave’ (Interview with Cynthia, 28/8/7; Interview with Veronica, 7/4/10; Interview with Celestin, 6/4/10). In each of these cases, as with the literature citing ‘moral decline’, the key refrain is ‘*le gain facil*’, which can be loosely translated as ‘easy money’. Irresponsible parents are, apparently, after ‘easy money’, which is why they either fail to work enough, let

their children work, or allow/encourage migration in a way that fails to develop family or community.

Closely related to this trope of irresponsibility is the notion that (particularly rural) parents cause untold trouble for themselves and their young, impoverishing their families to the point of having to place/traffic their own offspring, by consistently and wantonly reproducing. Ayala, for instance, is a former government minister, and complained that the ‘statistics have shown that large families are a problem’ (Interview with Ayala, 13/3/10), while Sandra intoned parallel feelings when claiming that ‘what we need is more family planning’ (Interview with Sandra, 1/9/7). In similar fashion, when responding to the question as to how to eliminate trafficking, Jemima had this to say:

‘Firstly, we need to make sure people have less kids. Families should only have as many as they can afford. We can’t have people having kids just to then send them off to trafficking (some parents even do this you know, they have kids just to sell them). We need to sensitise’.

(Interview with Jemima, 17/3/10)

### Criminal Deviance: Wily Traffickers and Tricky Intermediaries

A corollary to the poor or ignorant parenting that is supposed to contribute to the prevalence of trafficking in Benin is the assumed presence of widespread criminal deviance, predominantly in the form of cunning traffickers who prey on the naïve,

vulnerable and poor. Internationally, as any USTIP report will testify, it is criminal gangs who are largely identified as culprits in this regard. In Benin, however, the trafficker is much more frequently depicted as a crafty, individual operator who plays on rural innocence and ingenuity in order to make a quick, moral-free buck.

This figure of the ‘wily trafficker’ can be found in myriad state and civil society publications identifying the causes of trafficking in Benin. He is best encapsulated though in the nationwide ‘sensitisation campaign’ centring on the film and cartoon strip *Ana, Bazil et le Trafiquant*. Created as part of UNICEF’s anti-trafficking work in the early 2000s, ‘Ana, Bazil and the Trafficker’ is the story of a bright young girl, Ana, from a poor village in Southern Benin. The story opens with scenes depicting Ana’s (emblematically Apollonian) home life, her love of school, her housework, and the struggles her family face to get by. Shortly thereafter, the arrival of a mysterious stranger heralds the shattering of Ana’s world. The smooth-talking outsider approaches Ana’s loving, yet misguided, parents and begins to persuade them that Ana does not need to remain in school, that she could work and help the family, and that if she came with him he would be able to place her in a wealthy household that should set her up for life.

Though at first reluctant, Ana’s parents ultimately acquiesce to his suggestion, believing that the sad choice to let her leave will be in her best interests. It is at this point in the narrative that ‘The Trafficker’ secretly reveals his evil plan to actually sell Ana into servitude, and the audience are led to see how the combination of the crafty trafficker and Ana’s parents’ well-intentioned ignorance mean she is lost. Fortunately for both Ana and the audience, however, Bazil, Ana’s young classmate,

happens to get wind of The Trafficker's plan and is thus able to alert the authorities shortly after Ana leaves.

**Image 13: Screenshot of Ana from *Ana, Bazil et le Trafiquant***



In the penultimate segment of the story, we are briefly treated to an image of Ana in bondage. She is shown working and being mistreated as a domestic servant, missing her family and school and deeply unhappy at what has befallen her. Before long, however, Bazil and the police arrive, rescuing Ana from her nightmare, arresting The Trafficker, and bringing Ana home, happy and well, to her delighted, loving and repentant family. The film and its attendant comic strip close with Ana beaming as she returns to school with Bazil, safe now from evil traffickers and parental errors.

Even the most cursory language-context analysis can identify a number of important hegemonic concepts invoked by this story. Implicit is the notion that a 'proper' home

is the safe, caring and protective, parental nest and that this parental nest is twinned with the school, which represents the family at the level of the state (embodying as it does of course the nation-family). Similarly implicit is the protective, liberal-democratic state safeguarding its vulnerable and disciplining its deviant. In this, it is significant that it is the intervention of responsive state agents – themselves acting at the behest of a responsible citizen – which leads to Ana’s rescue and repatriation and to the re-incorporation of her anomalous experience of bondage within the framework of protective normality. Crucially, however, we have the notion that departure from the home-school is both implicitly and explicitly damaging, with The Trafficker in this narrative the pivotal figure representing at once a real, material threat and also the metaphorical embodiment of the nefariousness that awaits innocence upon its pre-emptive embarkation into the world of the ‘economy’.

This caricature is a powerful one invoking both the Apollonian and Westphalian OOD and while it has been screened to thousands of villagers up and down the country as part of efforts to deal with Benin’s ‘trafficking problem’, my interviews suggest that its acceptance goes well beyond the rural citizens who form its intended target. In an interview with the former government minister, Ayala, for instance, I was recounted almost the exact story of *Ana, Bazil et le Trafiquant*, as an illustration of one of the many causes of trafficking (Interview with Ayala, 13/3/10; see Appendix E). Similarly, in discussing the nature of the anti-trafficking law, both Dibi and Marti, central and local government officials respectively, pointed to the threat posed by traffickers as a crucial justification for the movement-restricting legal framework and the parallel actions of the state. ‘The easier we make it for people to move, the easier it will be for traffickers to trick and get round the authorities’, Marti

said (Interview with Marti, 23/3/10). ‘We must do this, because traffickers are clever’, echoed Dibi. ‘They convince kids to go and abuse them, but now we have the law we can stop them’ (Interview with Dibi, 10/3/10).

### The Naïve (Non-Agentive) Child

Anti-trafficking actors and anti-trafficking ‘texts’ do at times acknowledge that not all children are young and that older children and adolescents can exercise agency in the decision to leave home for work. When they are seen to have done so, however, their choice is invariably explained either as a function of the ‘false belief’ that elsewhere is the path to riches, or as a result of the tricky tales of the devious trafficker. As such, naïve children and young people are themselves frequently identified as leading to their own trafficking demise.

Key examples of this construction include one of the earliest reports on trafficking in Benin, an internationally-funded study from 1999, in which we learn that some children, ‘seduced by the generous lies of traffickers, leave to then suffer’ as victims of labour exploitation abroad (ESAM and ASI 199:57). Such an understanding is echoed also in the Tomorrow Children pamphlet extracted in Appendix E, where we read that children ‘held in captivity...are often enticed by offers of education or a good job...’, as well as in the National Study and a variety of common media depictions.

Notably, this is also a frequent component of the representation of the labour migration linking Za-Kpota to Abeokuta which was discussed in the last chapter.

Even organisations I have worked with have in the past espoused the narrative that the young are ‘tricked’ here, while interviewees working for the state in my case study *communes* routinely cited the ‘false belief’ that leaving for Abeokuta would help young people set themselves up for the future. In one paradigmatic case, Tata, a local NGO employee frequently sub-contracted by the state or larger organisations to conduct village-level ‘sensitisation’, refuted my suggestion that adolescents and their families are conscious of the conditions of work they face in Nigeria. ‘They are tricked’, she declared (Interview with Tata, 7/4/10).

### ‘It’s All About Poverty’

Underlying all of the above causal tropes and linking each to the other is the ever-present and all-important notion of ‘poverty’. In interview after interview, anti-trafficking actors repeatedly pointed to ‘Benin’s economic weakness, especially when compared with [it’s] neighbours, like Nigeria’ (Interview with Marti, 23/3/10) as key to understanding the problem. Ayala, for example, reminded me that ‘we mustn’t forget that it is poverty which underlies placement (Interview with Ayala, 13/3/10), while Toto, a crucial figure in the government’s anti-trafficking panoply, similarly cautioned:

‘We must of course also remember that poverty is at the root of this. If a father doesn’t have the money to either feed his children or send them to school, these children are going to be vulnerable to trafficking’.

(Interview with Toto, 3/3/10)

Such views are not confined solely to individual actors. Even in the official government and IO literature, ‘poverty’ is at the core of any analysis. The POA identifies ‘poverty’ as ‘the underlying cause of the emergence and growth of child trafficking’ (2008:13), and on its very first page highlights that ‘parental neglect, the disintegration of family structures and monetisation’ all exist within the framework of ‘the growing immiseration of poor households’ (ibid.1).

Whilst poverty is universally decried as forming the ultimate backdrop to trafficking, however, engagement with what *causes* that poverty is almost non-existent. Indeed, within this discursive framework, and as a direct reflection of the Neoliberal OOD, ‘poverty’ and the fact that individual households lack money are viewed as realities that *just are*, without any causal underpinning. As mentioned in Chapter 1, a classic example of this comes from the POA. In its section on the structural causes of trafficking, we are told that ‘poverty’ is the number one culprit, that trafficked children predominantly come from poor families, that parents are forced by their poverty to accept untold abuses of their children. At no point, though, is there any engagement with why parents are poor, with what underpins this ‘structure’, or with how and why it has led ‘poverty’ to become so prevalent (MFE and ILO 2008:13).

Such dynamics are also observable in my interview data. Take the words of Veronica, the local official so critical of rural parenting, for example. When I asked what had led to the explosion of trafficking as a key issue at the start of the last decade, she responded:

‘In Africa, *with under-development*, we acquired the practice of placing our children with better-off relatives...but with evolution and poverty, parents started to place children just for money’.

(Interview with Veronica, 7/4/10)

Her assessment was echoed by Marcello, another Beninese state employee working in the Zou, who simply declared, ‘this is the African reality – we are backward, *under-developed*’, before shrugging his shoulders as if to indicate inevitability (Interview with Marcello, 29/4/10). Here, the language of poverty has been translated into the similarly anchorless language of ‘development’. Such perspectives are not unique. Indeed, in over 100 interviews with institutional employees, only one independently elaborated on Benin’s poverty beyond simply acknowledging that it was a reality (Interview with Iggy, 9/6/9). In most instances, when I myself suggested that we examine where poverty comes from, reactions ranged from blank stares to periods of silence. In response to the question, ‘Why don’t you take a more structural focus and look at things like subsidies?’, Linda and Charlene, two donor government employees, simply said, ‘these are trade aspects, so it’s not really our thing’ (Interview with Linda and Charlene, 22/10/9), while Rosa, the assistant to an extremely powerful international donor figure central to the work of IOs in this field, calmly replied, ‘in India, there are 138 million child labourers and also 138 million people who are unemployed. People want to employ kids because they can pay them less. It’s that simple’ (Interview with Rosa, 23/10/9). Perhaps even more emphatic was my interaction with Cecilie, a donor government agent working in Benin:

**Neil:** What about the macroeconomic situation underpinning poverty? EU agricultural policy or US cotton subsidies, for instance?

**Cecilie:** Yes, well, unfortunately there are major economic problems and Africa is so perpetually weak in this regard that it is always screwed. They are affected by everything. They will believe anything too though, mind. My sister-in-law in Chad even believed that Lake Chad was shrinking because the Nigerians were stealing the water. With cotton, Benin may well be being affected by the US, but it also has domestic problems. There is so much more they could export but they don't.

(Interview with Cecilie, 17/12/9)

### *Monetisation*

Monetisation is a crucial sub-element of the explanatory trope represented by the equation poverty=trafficking. If we recall the explanations offered for the 'corruption' of *vidomègon* cited above, the 'economisation' of social relations and of child work/movement features heavily. In his own assessment, Didi had the following to say:

'I think it all comes back to the monetisation of social relations and the entrenching and expansion of serious poverty and suffering. This is what led to the explosion of trafficking. In the beginning, placement was about solidarity. Money wasn't involved. Sometimes kids went with people to

whom they were not related, but they were well treated. Monetisation made kids become a way of earning money’.

(Interview with Didi, 3/4/10)

In contrast to the picture painted in the last chapter, where children and youth accessing money is seen as a way out of poverty, within the formal trafficking discourse in Benin, the cause-less cloak of poverty leads to the invasion of money in a way that renders otherwise non-monetary relationships inherently exploitative. This notion reaches its apex and is indeed most emphatically demonstrated in the tendency of the dominant discourse to construct the parent-child-employer contractual negotiation around younger males’ labour migration to places such as Abeokuta as a *sale*. As the HuHu article cited in the Appendices explicitly states: ‘Many of the families who *sell their children into slavery* are unapologetic’. Likewise, in the National Study, we learn that one of the major forms trafficking takes in Benin is ‘placement akin to sale’, whereby ‘the child is entrusted to a third party in exchange for a certain sum’ (2007:4; see also BIT 2006). In this discursive world, any advance paid to a family for a child’s future labour power represents a case of parents commodifying their own offspring.

### State Weakness

The final causal link in our pathological chain is that which identifies failings on the part of the putatively protective Westphalian state encapsulated in its ideal form so clearly in the story of *Ana, Bazil et le Trafiquant*. In my interviews with anti-

trafficking actors from across the political and institutional spectrum and in myriad institutional documents relating to trafficking, 'state weakness', non-enforcement and, before the passing of the anti-trafficking law, the lack of a suitable legislative framework were cited as fundamental factors underpinning the prevalence of child trafficking in Benin.

In the 2005 US TIP report, for instance, we read that:

'The Government of Benin does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Benin is placed on the Tier 2 Watch List for its failure to show evidence of increasing efforts in combating trafficking since last year. Anti-trafficking legislation, though now under debate in the National Assembly, has not yet been enacted and endemic corruption inhibits the government's ability to confront traffickers effectively. To increase its anti-trafficking efforts, the government should increase law enforcement efforts, finalize the much needed national strategy to address trafficking, and enact specific anti-trafficking legislation' (USDS 2005:67).

In 2012, though the sought-after laws had been passed, criticism remained strikingly similar and can be seen in these following 'Recommendations for Benin':

'Finalize and enact draft legislation to criminalize all forms of adult trafficking; increase efforts to convict and punish trafficking offenders, including using existing statutes to successfully prosecute trafficking

crimes committed against adults and sex trafficking of children; train law enforcement officials to identify trafficking victims among vulnerable populations, such as women and children in prostitution and children in the informal labor sector, and refer them to protective services; and improve efforts to collect law enforcement data on trafficking offenses, including cases involving the trafficking of adults prosecuted under separate statutes in the penal or labor code, and make these data available to other government agencies and the public' (USDS 2012:88).

Interviews with anti-trafficking actors strongly echoed these recommendations. In fact, one of the dominant trends in interviewee responses to the question 'how can trafficking be combated here?' was to emphasise the importance of strengthening the state. Antienne encapsulated the perspective of many of his Cotonou-based donor colleagues when he explained that 'our first step is always to ensure that there is an appropriate legal and institutional framework and this is crucial in the fight against trafficking' (Interview with Antienne, 4/3/10). Jeremia, who represented his IO's point man on trafficking in Benin, echoed Antienne, explaining that, for his organisation, the key to Benin's being able to protect children from trafficking was 1) to improve its legal framework, and 2) to develop the institutional capacity necessary to ensure that the state can implement that framework. Unsurprisingly, this was consequently the focus of his agency's work in Benin (Interview with Jeremia, 2/9/7). So too for Handel's agency. Handel was his organisation's global anti-trafficking chief and he explained that, as far as he was concerned, 'the key beginning is always making sure that the legal framework is right'. From there, implementation is the major challenge – and indeed, in Benin, as elsewhere, that is

the major problem in ensuring that the ‘protection’ encapsulated on legal paper is lived in reality (Interview with Handel, 21/5/9).

It is important to note that for anti-trafficking actors and within anti-trafficking documentation, the state is frequently the ultimate point of reference both in causal and remedial terms. What does this mean? It means that, when examining what causes trafficking, the lack of an appropriate legislative or implementational framework is bemoaned at the *national* level, just as governmental corruption or intransigence is blamed *nationally*, but never internationally. As a consequence, and in line with the Westphalian OOD, remedial action always focuses on national political remedies. Emblematic in this regard is the interview I conducted with Idyl, an EU employee working on trafficking in Cotonou:

**Neil:** What about the macro structural causes [of trafficking]?

**Idyl:** To be honest, I had never even thought about it, never even thought about putting it in the project. There is a difference between being an academic and a practitioner. I am not sure what it'd achieve. For me, the national level is key. The government is the key. This is why, though I hate them, the CRC in Geneva and the US TIP reports are great, because they are the only thing that forces the government to do anything

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**Neil:** What do you think of the government and its work here then?

**Idyl:** They are weak...They are incompetent, everyone will tell you!’

(Interview with Idyl, 1/3/10)

### **Anti-Trafficking Policy in Benin<sup>57</sup>**

As was suggested in Chapter 3, and as will become clear below, Benin’s anti-trafficking policy has multiple overlapping strands which build on the pathological narrative outlined above and consequently pull in two central directions – the promotion of (the components and institutions contributing to) ‘safe, healthy childhoods’ and the pre-emptive discouragement of the migration seen to lead to or be the equivalent of trafficking. The dominant line of force running through policy is thus to create both the kind of state and type of citizenry seen as best able to prevent and protect against trafficking. In this section I will offer an outline of what this policy looks like and will draw on a decade of policy documentation, on published and unpublished reports, and on interviews and participant observation with central actors from all levels of the policy chain in order to do so.

#### The Law

Undoubtedly the major plank of Beninese anti-trafficking policy is and has been the ‘Law Regulating the Movement of Minors and Suppressing the Traffic in Children’

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<sup>57</sup> Much of this section draws on work that has been published elsewhere – see Howard (forthcoming 2013).

(Loi N° 2006-04)<sup>58</sup>. Though only given Presidential assent in 2006 (with accompanying Decrees of Application finalised in 2009), actors across the anti-trafficking spectrum in (and with influence over) Benin pushed, cajoled and lobbied for the drafting and adoption of this law almost immediately the dust had settled from the Etireno affair in 2001.

Back in 2005, when I first worked in Benin, NGO representatives with whom I collaborated repeatedly bemoaned the lack of necessary anti-trafficking legislation in the country in much the same terms as those of the TIP report above, while their complaints were echoed at around the same time by the CRC in Geneva. Various international and bilateral representatives in the country had been extirpating the value of legislation since much earlier. When discussing its eventual adoption with colleagues between 2007 and 2010, it became clear quite how invested the Beninese government's partners had been in such an event. Cecilie, a senior donor representative working in Benin, explained that donors and (I)NGOs had come together to draw up a draft text for legislation well before the government gave its assent for them to do so (Interview with Cecilie, 17/12/9). JR and Alexia, both high-level INGO representatives working in Benin, explained that one donor and one UN agency in particular had placed massive pressure on the government to 'get a law on the books' as quickly as possible (Interview with JR, 5/6/9; Interview with Alexia, 1/9/7). The donor had, according to various interviewees, even threatened the Beninese government with a cut in funding if such legislation were not forthcoming, while the UN agency had, according to its then representative, pulled together figures from all the Western embassies, bilateral agencies and major INGOs in Cotonou in

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<sup>58</sup> See Appendix D for the original text of the law.

order to get them to support these threats and calls for legal change (Interview with Phil, 9/11/9).

As to the content of the law itself, it seeks both to establish norms around which kinds of child movement and economic activity are legitimate and to ban and suppress all others. Building directly on the ILO's global framework as discussed in Chapter 1, it defines children as all those under the age of 18 and their trafficking as 'recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt' for the purposes of exploitation. Exploitation constitutes at a minimum:

(a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;

(b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;

(c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;

(d) work which, *by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children*'.

In line with the international legal framework, such work includes ‘mining and quarrying; manufacturing; construction; electricity, gas and water; sanitary services; transport, storage and communication; and plantations and other agricultural undertakings mainly producing for commercial purposes, but excluding family and small-scale holdings producing for local consumption and not regularly employing hired workers’, thus effectively *de facto* criminalising the economic activities engaging the majority of Beninese young people, including those mentioned in the last chapter.

As the law’s title suggests, it does not merely outlaw certain kinds of work or the ‘trafficking’ seen to lead thereto; rather, it also regulates the conditions under which minors may legally migrate. What does this regulation entail? Article 7 establishes that children cannot legally be displaced within the borders of the country unless accompanied either by a direct parent or guardian or with the consent of a local government official. The law thus empowers state agents to directly implicate themselves in personal and familial labour mobility decisions. The law and its related decrees go on to explain that state consent for that (labour) mobility will only be forthcoming if a number of conditions are met. First, a family ‘placing’ a child must have all the child’s papers in order. Second, they must have enough money to pay for the child’s return. And third, they must be able to demonstrate that the child’s relocation is for the purpose of school attendance or for an official apprenticeship in a state-sanctioned sector. Article 14 makes clear that it is illegal for a child to relocate independently of her legal guardians, and empowers the state to forcibly return the child to her family in cases where she has done so. In similar fashion, Article 4 establishes that relocation for ‘exploitation’ constitutes trafficking and is

thus illegal, irrespective of any consent offered. What this of course means is that the work performed by young migrants to Nigeria and discussed in the last chapter is classed as inherently exploitative and thus equivalent to trafficking when the young migrate to engage in it. It also means that the state, formally, can prevent it.

Evidently, one of the prime goals of this legislation has been to give Benin's law enforcement agencies a platform for both arresting and discouraging the traffickers and migrant labour facilitators that are seen to be so central to child trafficking in the country. From the head office of his IO, Fulani lamented that all too often traffickers are able to 'get away with their crimes' and argued that governments must use these kinds of laws to prosecute and establish a deterrent (Interview with Fulani, 28/5/9). Toto, a very senior figure within Beninese law enforcement, concurred, declaring that when the government wants to stop something, a law is needed, and from there 'we can hit the crime hard' (Interview with Toto, 3/3/10). An example of what that hard-hitting looks like on the ground came in an interview with two men whose brother had been arrested when accompanying his nieces on a journey to another brother's house in Gabon. Unaware of the legal changes, the man was arrested as a trafficker and, according to a colleague present during our interview, was sent to prison (Interview with Winston; Interview with Wilis, 19/8/7).

These 'traffickers' are not the only target of the law, however. When offering his opinion as to its wider purpose, Alec, a Beninese national working for an IO in Cotonou, declared that movement control and the prevention of child movement

more generally were central. ‘We need a return to the Revolution!!!’<sup>59</sup>, he shouted, ‘all movement should be controlled!!’ (Interview with Alec, 23/2/10). When I sought clarification with a senior government official over whether such anti-movement tendencies were widely shared, or whether the anti-movement tone of the law had simply been the result of judicial heavy-handedness, this was the exchange we had:

**Neil:** Is [the law] practicable though? How can a poor, illiterate villager get together the money and documents necessary to legally place his child?

**Deg:** That’s the point. It isn’t practicable. The goal is to ban placement. You can’t tell the difference between placement and trafficking anyway, so we need to ban it all’.

(Interview with Deg, 10/3/10)

Similarly Phil, the IO country representative who had been so instrumental in the development of the law in the first place, explained that it ‘allows us to go into villages and tell people that the rules have changed, that behaviour must change, and that transgression will be severely punished’ (Interview with Phil, 9/11/9).

Not all anti-trafficking actors share this understanding, though. Many accept that, in practice, there can be a difference between consensual and acceptable youth work or movement and trafficking or exploitation. In light of this, I asked policy-makers why national strategy did not try to fight against labour exploitation more generally,

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<sup>59</sup> By ‘revolution’, Alec means the authoritative rule of Mathieu Kérékou, officially termed a Marxist-Leninist Revolution. During this period and under former President Maga, mobility was severely curtailed in the country.

instead of solely against that exploitation in the context of movement. Sandra, an IO employee based in Cotonou, responded by agreeing that this would be ideal, but stated that ‘it’s difficult to do this in Africa and in poor countries in general, because you need a lot of money to do so’ (Interview with Sandra, 1/9/7). Similarly Didi, a senior Beninese government official, who said that in an ideal world, the country would be able to massively reinforce its labour inspectorate to protect all its workers wherever they may be. Unfortunately, he lamented, ‘we lack the means to do this. In fact, the whole state lacks the means since it was rolled back in recent decades’ (Interview with Didi, 3/4/10). Perhaps most emphatic are the words of Celestin, a local government official, with whom I had the following exchange:

**Neil:** Why don’t we work to stop exploitation instead of movement?

**Celestin:** That’s impossible. It’s too difficult, how can we go to all workplaces in Nigeria or Benin? *It’s easier if we stop them moving*’.

(Interview with Celestin, 6/4/10)<sup>60</sup>

Rather than develop individualized policies that respond to particularized vulnerabilities and social realities, then, many in the anti-trafficking community adopt the premise that, in the aggregate, children migrating away from the family home for work are *likely* to end up in situations of abuse and thus trafficking. As a

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<sup>60</sup> Such analyses are not only shared by those on the ground in Benin. Key IO figures based internationally are of the same understanding. Cat, for example, told me that she had met with US officials at an OSCE gathering and had found them all receptive to the idea that movement-reduction did not constitute optimal policy. ‘We’re doing the best we can with the resources we’ve got’ was the reply she received (Interview with Cat, 21/5/9). The same was also true in my interview with Mitch and Yaya. Much more is needed to deal with the material underpinnings of youth migration, they admitted, but both lapsed into helpless laughter when contemplating the prospect of money being made available to do so (Interview with Mitch and Yaya, 3/6/9).

result, anti-trafficking strategy, as encapsulated in its legal framework, seeks to tackle this ultimate abuse by preemptively targeting the entire category of people deemed vulnerable to it – a clear expression of Neoliberal Governmentality. In the words of Dibi, a major figure in the state’s anti-trafficking architecture: ‘our strategy is essentially one of risk management’ (Interview with Dibi, 10/3/10).

### Cooperation with Nigeria

Intricately related to the promulgation and implementation of the anti-trafficking law was the signing and operationalising of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Benin and Nigeria. Again, Phil explained:

‘Nigeria was a big issue for us, because we realised that Nigeria was the major destination for Beninese kids. We therefore needed to establish a partnership with them. Our agency convinced both governments to get together and have regular meetings on trafficking. We wanted to develop an MOU on the issue, which we eventually did. I was the facilitator for the meetings and chaired all the sessions, which included ministry people, civil society, etc. Times were hard at the beginning. There was tension and animosity, because of the asymmetrical balance of power, and of course because of the nature of the issue. Ultimately, the agreement was finally signed in Cotonou at the Foreign Ministry in 2006. It is a very good document, stating the multi-level cooperation that is to take place between the countries, from police, to border officials to NAPTIP and the BPM<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>61</sup> The Nigerian Anti-trafficking Agency and Benin’s special child police unit, the *Brigade de Protection des Mineurs*.

Each country also developed concrete joint and separate plans of action, including the border sensitisation of which [your friend] has been a part. That component of the work was developed as a result of our previous surveys. Ministers and our staff went to border villages in the Zou and told people that the law had changed and that behaviour must therefore also change. They told people that there were severe punishments for transgression, including 25 years in jail. Some people have in fact now been arrested. We got data on it, which the US were really keen on getting and publishing’.

(Interview with Phil, 9/11/9)

Phil’s description and assessment were echoed by Dibi, Benin’s most senior civil servant responsible for the country’s anti-trafficking work. In expounding on the various strands of Benin’s anti-trafficking strategy, he explained:

‘Another major component of what we do is international agreements, particularly with Nigeria. We have lots of meetings to address our coordination, develop and check the implementation of the joint plans of action. This is what we renew each year, and did so only a month ago. As part of this, we have even set up a brigade specifically to stop trans-national traffickers and to monitor and if necessary shut the borders. This brigade is composed of police, customs officers, the BPM and communities themselves in order to strengthen borders with Nigeria, Niger and Togo.

The Nigerians have set up the same thing on their side, on the Porto-Novo road’.

(Interview with Dibi, 10/3/10)

Further interviews and documentary analysis confirm this picture. Indeed, my friend and colleague, who represents a civil society presence on both the coordination committee for the MOU and in the ground-level ‘sensitisation’ teams, explained that the MOU is precisely about harmonising institutional responses at the political level, providing support for the expansion of national border controls and persuading border communities to desist from the (labour) mobility that the discourse constructs as so problematic.

### The Village Committees

Perhaps the major component in the state and pseudo-state anti-trafficking arsenal has been the establishment of what were first denominated ‘village vigilance committees’, and what have subsequently become known as ‘village child protection committees’. Abidi was the IO employee responsible for establishing the very first of these, in an initiative that partnered the state, two influential IOs, two particularly active donors and a collection of local, sub-contracted NGOs. He explained:

‘This was an innovative thing for us. They were good and people came from all over to see them in action. At the start it was a result of the willingness of citizens to help vulnerable kids. They were volunteers and

helped NGOs and our agency. We told them to organise and that it is within the community that you can find an answer to the problem. They were very informal at the start and then we decided to spread the model around the country as we went to villages to sensitise people. We tried to form committees everywhere. We got influential people involved to convince parents not to let kids leave. When they had been sensitised, we built on that...Now if I evaluate I cannot say that they were totally informal as the state got involved and worked with the communities via the local authorities. The Mayor helps, while the state and our agency sustain them materially’.

(Interview with Abidi, 12/1/10)

His narration was paralleled by Dibi, by Salama, Dibi’s central level colleague, and by Veronica, a state employee who represents the Child and Family Ministry’s point-person in one of my research *communes*. All three offer an indication of the way in which the committees are set up, the fact that they represent, capillary-like, the state’s arm in the village, and the fact that their goal is both to promote and prevent certain behaviours:

‘**Neil:** How are the village committees set up? How do you decide who is on them?’

**Veronica:** We go into a village and meet the local authorities first, then we explain our goal, discussing why this particular village has been chosen.

We then call the village together for a general meeting, explain to everyone the purpose of the visit, citing the national study, and discussing the consequences of trafficking. After this, the villagers themselves break out into deciding who will be on the committee, though every committee must contain the village chief, a representative of the women's group, a youth rep, a representative of the local nobility, and a traditional healer. Everyone must be literate because they need to be able to fill in forms that allow us to write reports. After all this has been done, the committee comes together for a week-long training on what they have to do. They learn sensitisation skills and are taught about concepts such as abuse. Then, together with the CPS and [the relevant IO], who pay for and provide the training, we put together a plan of action and a monthly plan, after which the CPS advocates for funding with donors for equipment like bikes and torches'.

(Interview with Veronica, 7/4/10)

'We thought that if we really want to fight trafficking, we need to involve the communities themselves, so we decided to try and install local committees in each and every village...Currently we are in 30 out of 67 national *communes*, totalling 1696 villages. They work on informing the population about the law, sensitising people against movement, encouraging school, etc'.

(Interview with Salama, /3/10)

‘We are very strongly supported by our donor, especially in the sending zones, where we have set up committees and strengthened communal authorities. Last year, for example, 38 village committees were set up in Donga and Atacora alone, taking the total to over 1400 throughout the country. These are a key initiative, because they permit the communities to participate. The DEA<sup>62</sup> sets up the committees and [the donor] pays for them. The CPS’ manage and coordinate them at the local level, while NGOs are involved to help with the job. Added to this, there is the national coordinating body, which gets together every three months and sees experts divided into four relevant thematic groups, one of which is for trafficking. This body is now also paralleled at the level of the *département* and the *commune*, based in the CPS and bringing together relevant local actors, including NGOs. They are present throughout the country and their job is to sensitise and prevent abuse. They are supported by our village committees who in turn receive training and equipment, but no money. The goal of all this, including particularly the village committees, is to stop kids leaving, because leaving home is what leads to trafficking. They therefore liaise with the local police and the CPS, working together to prevent departure’.

(Interview with Dibi, 10/3/10)

Though official documentation points to a wide variety of tasks performed, and goals worked for, by the village committees, these interviews, interviews with committee members in my case study villages, and myriad unpublished material relating to

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<sup>62</sup> The regional branch of the Child and Family Ministry.

committee operation suggest otherwise. Indeed, it seems that the major objective of the committees is to preemptively protect minors by thwarting their movement. Thus, an important internal IO document from 2006 reveals that the emphasis in activities is squarely placed on ‘community surveillance [regarding movement]’ (Field Notes 2010), while an allegedly suppressed consultant’s report into the work of the committees offered precisely the same conclusion, arguing that most of the work they do is ‘anti-movement’ (Interview with Miguel, 31/4/9; Botte and UNICEF 2005:16).

Such an assessment is paralleled in one rarely seen report documenting committee plans of action. In this publication, we learn that committee goals are to ‘watch over suspicious movements’, to ‘denounce and dissuade’, and to provide ‘social surveillance’ (MFPSS and UNICEF Benin 2006), while plans of action for villages including those I researched list as their major activities ‘putting in place a network for the surveillance of child movement’, as well as ‘interception of [departing] children’ [ibid]. This was echoed by numerous committee members in my research villages in a series of separate interviews. Charley, head of his village committee, said that each village *quartier* has an official who is tasked with ‘watching over’ child departures (Interview with Charley, 19/4/10), while Cliff, also a committee head, explained that the committees were ‘vigilance bodies to stop children leaving’. In elaborating on this point, he described how he and his colleagues would sometimes sit in wait at night on the paths that lead to Nigeria in the hope of intercepting departing adolescents (Interview with Cliff, 7/4/10).

Sensitisation and ‘Responsibilisation’

*‘People don’t realise how important our Ministry is –  
we’re here to change people’s behaviour’.*

*(Interview with Salama, 11/3/10)*

Though the Beninese government and many of its institutional partners would seemingly like to be able to stifle child and youth movement as widely as possible, policy-makers are acutely aware that the resources for total surveillance and enforcement are lacking, and thus that a degree of individual self-policing is necessary. Given that much of their work is based on the understanding that departure from the family home for work is attributable to parental ignorance or ‘irresponsibility’, a major component of this drive for self-policing involves attempting to address parental ignorance and irresponsibility by ‘raising awareness’ and ‘changing peasant mentalities’ through the power of reasoned persuasion.

The key watchwords in this drive are ‘sensitisation’ and ‘responsibilisation’. In examining how important such work is to the wider anti-trafficking panoply, it is significant to note that every single official document relating to anti-trafficking policy in Benin features ‘sensitisation’ as one of the key project activities undertaken or to be undertaken. IO internal reports show ‘sensitisation’ to have been central to anti-trafficking efforts every year for the last decade, each of the organisations I have worked with have used ‘sensitisation’ or ‘responsibilisation’ as a core plank of their activities, the Government’s POA lists ‘sensitisation’ as one of its major strategic

recommendations in ramping up the fight against trafficking (MFE and ILO 2008:26), and the National Study concludes much the same (MFE et al. 2007).

What does this entail? Individual activities vary. They can include widespread public information and advocacy messages broadcast on national radio, on national television and in public or roadside poster campaigns. They can include NGO staff heading into villages to bring together inhabitants to ‘inform’ them of the dangers of ‘x’ or ‘y’. Or, as mentioned above, they can include the development and dissemination of material such as *Ana, Bazil et le Trafiquant*. Below are examples of two anti-trafficking posters and a series of photographs from a sensitisation session based on *Ana, Bazil et le Trafiquant*. They are from the website of an NGO that was sub-contracted by the state and its central IO partner to tour the country with a ‘mobile cinema’, screening the film and using it as a platform for breakout sensitisation sessions.

**Image 14: Anti-Trafficking Poster 1**



**Image 15: Shots of A Rural Film Screening<sup>63</sup>**



<sup>63</sup> Source: <http://www.c-n-a.org/news42.htm>.

**Image 16: Anti-Trafficking Poster 2**

What is the dominant content of these sensitisation and responsabilisation sessions? There are two main strands. The first revolves around creating ‘modern’, ‘aware’, ‘responsible’ parents, attentive to their children’s needs as rights-bearers, aware that ‘home’ and school is where they should be, and wary of the dangers of work. In this regard, Banda, a donor representative in Cotonou, encapsulated the general trend of such work when saying that his agency funds efforts that focus on ‘evolving peasant mentalities’ (Interview with Banda, 2/3/10). Similarly, at one major child protection workshop I attended, I repeatedly heard discussions about how vital sensitisation is for helping ‘social norms evolve’, with one colleague describing this as ‘the single major challenge we face’ (Field Notes 29/3/10). This colleague’s views were echoed by Sharon, a West African IO employee based in Nigeria and working on the Benin file, who argued that ‘the extended family syndrome’ is a ‘pandemic’ that needs

addressing through awareness-raising (Interview with Sharon, 28/9/9), as well as by Jayjay, a donor government agent working in Benin, who claimed that ‘a full change of mindset, including people understanding the dangers of placement’ is what is needed and what must be worked for (Interview with Jayjay, 2/4/10).

Such opinions found favour also with Idyl, a major donor representative based in Cotonou, who explained that key to all her work was the notion that parents abdicating their ‘responsibilities’ needed to be ‘responsibilised’. This was the exchange we had:

**Neil:** Is your goal to keep children at home?

**Idyl:** Yes, absolutely.

**Neil:** Why?

**Idyl:** Our understanding of the fight against trafficking is that local development and family responsabilisation are key.

**Neil:** So what would policy look like in your ideal world?

**Idyl:** It would teach parents how to parent, because it’s not easy. We’d get rid of bad practices and build on good ones. We’d get kids in school...’

(Interview with Idyl, 1/3/10)

Idyl's words here point to the second main strand of what sensibilisation/sensitisation means in practice – reformulating peasant opinions so that people 'understand' child and youth movement as negative, and thus that they self-police by keeping their offspring at home. Abidi, Salama and Dibi, quoted above, indicated as much in their descriptions of the work of the village committees. Celestin, a local government official responsible for the commune in which two of my case study villages were located, said much the same. Asked if he was involved in any such 'sensitisation', he replied in the affirmative, explaining that his staff, NGOs and the committees with which he works frequently go to 'backwater' villages to describe 'why leaving is bad' (Interview with Celestin, 6/4/10). Such claims were echoed both by village committee members and by ordinary villagers in my case study villages. Both Charley and Cliff, mentioned above, highlighted this kind of sensitisation as part of what they are supposed to do (Interview with Cliff, 7/4/10; Interview with Charley, 19/4/10), while two separate groups of villagers from Tenga confirmed their statements. In similar fashion, a group from Atomè claimed unanimously that they repeatedly hear the message that leaving is a major problem, at school, from white people, and from NGOs who come to 'sensitise' (Interview with Group 3, 9/5/10; Interview with Group 8, 16/4/10; Interview with Group 12, 14/5/10).

### School Promotion

When asking policy-makers the question, 'in an ideal world, how would you deal with child trafficking?', one predominant response was 'by getting children into school'. Similarly, when discussing with policy-makers what childhood *should* look like, a frequent refrain was 'school is where children should be'. This is reflected in

the dominant ILO anti-child labour platform adopted by Benin, and indeed in the related legislation that mandates schooling for all under-14s. It should perhaps be no surprise, therefore, that the promotion and expansion of schooling represents a key target for the anti-trafficking community, with interviews and policy documents revealing its strategic centrality.

In discussions with Idyl, for example, I heard flatly that, instead of an anti-trafficking law, what Benin actually needs is a law (and related enforcement) that obliges all children to attend school, and for this schooling to be truly free (Interview with Idyl, 1/3/10). Veronica, a local level government official, explained that a key strand of the work she does is educating people about the importance of schooling, particularly for girls. UNICEF have been especially supportive of this, she stated, including by funding sensitisation, schools and school places, all of which have led to an increase in enrolment (Interview with Veronica, 7/4/10). The POA also supports Veronica's position, citing the correlation between being out of school and being trafficked and thus recommending an increase in schooling as one of the major axes through which the country can tackle the crime (MFE and ILO 2008:66). Importantly, though in practice major problems exist – with informal fees charged as a rule in most schools (see CARE Benin 2004) – the introduction of national school gratuity has been widely highlighted and hailed by Benin's political establishment as a major step on the road to protecting the country's young from traffickers.

Getting children into school thus represents at once both a crucial general *end* for the anti-trafficking community in Benin and a key *means* for achieving the specific goal of preventing trafficking. On the one hand, school is 'where children should be' (as

opposed to away from home working), and thus ensuring that that is where they are is critical. On the other, having them in school is believed to prevent them from departing for work, and ultimately ending up in situations of exploitation and trafficking. As the POA states, children in school are less likely to be trafficked. Or, in the words of Abidi, good schools have been proven to prevent child departures, so their establishment is now encouraged (Interview with Abidi, 12/1/10). Elaborating on this point, Deg, a Beninese civil servant working on education and trafficking, explained:

‘The major strategy now is to promote mass schooling...The two major goals of schooling are a) to make it harder for kids to leave, because if they are in school people will notice that they’re gone, and b) to ensure that they have something to do, because the kids that leave are often the kids that are at home without an activity’.

(Interview with Deg, 10/3/10)

This mixture of anti-movement surveillance and giving children something to do so as to prevent departure was also highlighted by Jemima, a local government representative in one of my research communes:

‘**Neil:** Can you tell me about the communal committees that have been set up?’

**Jemima:** Yes, me and the Mayor are very involved in these, and it is usually either me or him that chairs the meetings. UNICEF help us with it, and one committee that they've established, which also fights against trafficking, is EDUCOM, the role of which is to ensure that kids don't leave school until at least after they've completed primary level.'

(Interview with Jemima, 17/3/10)

As Bibi, an IO staffer working on child labour and trafficking at headquarters, explained: 'our goal is elimination; education is a means to get there' (Interview with Bibi, 4/6/9).

**Image 17: Roadside School Promotion Poster**



### Family Planning and Birth Registration

Similarly understood as both means and desirable end is the drive by Benin's anti-trafficking and wider child protection community for comprehensive family planning and birth registration in the country.

In the case of family planning, BØRNEfonden's recent assessment of their anti-trafficking work encapsulates an understanding that transcends the policy community: much more work is needed on 'causes' of trafficking, 'such as large family sizes and the lack of family planning' (2009:38). The logic behind this thinking is that large families are generally poor, it is poor families who place or allow their children to work and migrate, and thus a reduction of family sizes will be useful for preventing trafficking. In the words of Jemima:

'We need to make sure people have less kids. Families should only have as many as they can afford. We can't have people having kids just to then send them off to be trafficked'.

(Interview with Jemima, 17/3/10)

Similarly Cynthia, a fellow local government official working in the neighbouring *commune*:

'It is absolutely essential to reduce family sizes. Two children should already be a maximum, because resources are so limited for child support.

What we need is to get NGOs to sensitise about family planning. I try myself whenever I can’.

(Interview with Cynthia, 38/8/7)

Campaigns to this effect have already been initiated and are currently expanding. My research at village level revealed that the ‘have less children’ message has long since reached the ground. A mixed group of adults in Tenga told me that they frequently heard how important it was to have less children, ‘both on the radio and in the health centres’ (Group 8 Interview, 9/5/10). The same story was recounted by a group of adult males in the communal centre near my case study villages – ‘the state has started to talk about birth control and family planning here, trying to get us to reduce the number of children we have’ (Man in Group 2 Interview, 12/4/10) – while with a group of women in Sehere Village, I had the following amusing exchange:

**Neil:** Have you people also heard the message that you should have less kids?

**Woman 1:** Yes, very often. It’s because we are poor and looking after kids can be expensive. [There was much laughter at this point. They all began gesticulating, pointing to their tummies, and one woman said:] We’d like to be able to have less children, but before we know it, we’re pregnant again. We have no idea a baby is coming and then, oops, we’re pregnant...’

(Interview with Group 10, 10/5/5)

With regards to birth registration, although the chain of causality is not articulated quite as clearly as it is with large family size, the lack of total birth registration is generally portrayed as representing a pseudo ‘cause’ of trafficking in Benin, and thus it is believed that registering births must form a preventive policy response<sup>64</sup>. In the country’s POA, for example, we read that:

‘In 2001, it was estimated that a third of Beninese children had not had their births registered with the state. These children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, because they cannot be expected to receive healthcare and education, or be watched over by these services. Without an official national identity, resulting from this lack of official documentation, these children are often a trafficker’s first victims’.

(MFE and ILO 2008:21)

Thus, in one study of the work of village committees, we learn that promoting and ensuring that villagers register every birth represents a top-level priority (Botte and UNICEF 2005:17). Similarly, in the National Study, we are told that expanding birth registration constitutes a major recommendation for winning the fight against trafficking, while it emerges that 27.1% of all bodies involved in trafficking ‘prevention’ already engage in precisely this effort (MFE and UNICEF 2007:77). Again, we have an example of the Westphalian OOD in operation.

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<sup>64</sup> For an especially accessible example of this discourse, see Beninese singer and UNICEF Ambassador, Angélique Kidjo, linking birth registration and trafficking here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDa31Hrsy-I>.

### The Fight Against Poverty and 'IGAs'

What with its centrality to the trafficking discourse, it should naturally be expected that tackling 'poverty' forms a cornerstone of the fight against trafficking. And indeed, on paper at least, for many bodies involved in the field, it does. The National Study, for instance, trumpets 'fighting poverty' as one of the main ways Benin must address trafficking (MFE and UNICEF 2007:77), while the POA highlights that this is central to national efforts and is being undertaken transversally through certain measures that comprise part of Benin's Poverty Reduction Strategy elaborated with the World Bank (MFE and ILO 2008:65-7). In similar vein, Jayjay, a donor government officer working in Benin, explained that while much more needed to be done, including by his employers, we must not forget that money is being donated and 'transversal' contributions are made through finance for agricultural projects, infrastructure and 'other structural issues' (Interview with Jayjay, 2/4/10)

Jayjay's mention of structure here is significant, since it points to the way in which the 'tackling poverty' component of anti-trafficking policy tends to play out in practice. While certain related institutional initiatives do work on large-scale (or 'structural') issues related to poverty, most specifically anti-trafficking poverty reduction efforts target what little resources they have at individuals, families or small communities, predominantly in the form of time-bound donations or support for 'Income Generating Activities' (IGAs), and explicitly *not* involving any structural measures. In order to illustrate how this approach functions, I will draw on a case study of the ILO's LUTRENA project, which was the organisation's flagship anti-trafficking initiative in West Africa throughout much of the 2000s, and which centred

on a 'Poverty Reduction Strategy'. I have chosen this project as an example because I believe it encapsulates the way poverty is addressed within anti-trafficking policy more widely, with the analysis below mirroring ones I have seen and myself offered elsewhere. These extracts come from an independent IPEC evaluation of LUTRENA's success at the conclusion of its first round in 2007 (ILO-IPEC 2007:v-17).

The document begins with an introduction to the LUTRENA project:

'The program to "Combat the Trafficking of Children for Labour Exploitation in West and Central Africa" (LUTRENA) is a multi-donor funded program covering 12 countries in West and Central Africa. The first phase of this program, with United States Department of Labor (USDOL) funding, started officially in July 2001'.

Next we learn what exactly LUTRENA comprises:

'LUTRENA consists of a comprehensive set of activities in each of the program countries, implemented in stages and aiming at contributing to the effective prevention and abolition of trafficking in children for exploitative employment in West and Central Africa, considered one of the worst forms of child labour. The main components are:

- Institutional Development
- Direct Action

- Research, Documentation and Monitoring
- Sub-Regional Cooperation and Joint Action’.

The importance of poverty as a cause of child trafficking – ‘CT’ – is made clear in the paragraph below:

‘The poverty which exists in those areas mostly touched by CT is generally recognized as one of the most determining factors of this phenomenon, together with social practice, ignorance, parents’ greed and the high demand for child labour. Consequently, poverty reduction by supporting income generating activities (IGAs) to the benefit of parents of CT victims or potential victims has become an important prevention element of the program strategy. In fact, it is hoped that with the increase of family income parents will be discouraged to pass their children on to persons who promise to “take care of them” and will instead themselves ensure their children’s required schooling and well-being’.

Elaborating further, we see how this relates to LUTRENA’s use of targeted ‘Action Program’s’ (including IGAs) as part of its ‘Direct Action’ component:

‘This is why the program has financed Action Programs (AP) offering parents the type of services needed to develop and succeed in certain income-generating activities. Amongst these activities we find – to name just a few: textile painting, sewing, simple cosmetics production (powder

soap, soaps in blocs, ointments, and shampoos), the production of jewels for women (pearl necklaces), and cake and pastry shops’.

Unfortunately, such targeting is not, in the view of the independent evaluators, quite as successful as it would have been hoped. They conclude:

‘It is true that the reintegration of trafficked children and the support to their families and communities necessarily needs to address the short-term creation of more resources for the family. However, overall poverty eradication in the concerned areas will certainly provide a much more sustainable program success. The evaluation’s conclusion therefore is that as far as the victims, their families and their communities are concerned, it seems more logical that the implementation of income-generating activities be assigned to other agencies and that LUTRENA focus on more strategic and policy tasks such as advocacy and lobbying.’

As may be imagined, of course, and in line with the three OOD which the next chapter will suggest are expressed in anti-trafficking discourse and policy, such ‘strategic and policy’ structural advocacy has not been forthcoming.

### Protection

Thus far, all of the policy strands examined have fallen into the category of trafficking *prevention*. In the final two, I shall examine how the anti-trafficking

panoply seek to protect those who have already been ‘trafficked’ and to produce and disseminate knowledge about them.

Though there are some that seek to intervene directly to remove children and adolescents from working situations deemed equivalent to trafficking, protection efforts in this field revolve predominantly around the funding and running of shelters for ‘rescued’ children and the re-insertion of children returned from ‘situations of trafficking’. All of the major actors in the field contribute in some way to this kind of protection. Large donors, from the state, through IOs to bilaterals, limit their contributions to financing, but it is their money which pays operational overheads. In the INGO shelter I worked in, for instance, UNICEF had for many years footed the bill as part of its anti-trafficking work, while USTIP Reports show the US paying over \$150,000 to Caritas in 2005 alone in order to fund that organisation’s vocational training centres for former victims (USDS 2005a).

While the major institutional players pay, it is the ‘service provider’ national and international NGOs that run protection operations on a daily basis. Usually, this will involve a mixture of activities. At times, long-term shelter is offered and centres function almost as orphanages. At others, shelters provide shorter-term rehabilitation, including of course food and accommodation, but also psycho-social support, until a child or teenager is ready to be ‘reinserted’. Sometimes, such reinsertion is not necessary, and a child will be supported ‘*en milieu ouvert*’ – literally, ‘out in the open’ – while living with his or her family.

A major component of all these different means of protection is support or preparation for the child's growth into an economically independent adulthood. Without fail, this consists of one of two things. Either children will be schooled or will receive small bursaries (be they financial or in kind, with school materials) in order to remain in school. Or they will receive a '*formation*' – 'a professional training/apprenticeship' – in one of a number of different fields. In my experience, the options from which beneficiaries 'choose' these apprenticeships are very narrow, and remain highly gendered. Thus, boys will almost invariably be trained as mechanics or craftsmen, while girls will, as one INGO employee lamented, 'have either hairdressing or sewing!' (Interview with Alexia, 1/9/7).

#### Gathering Information?

The final component of anti-trafficking work in Benin, also engaged in by the majority of organisations active in this field, is the generation of information around 'the phenomenon' of trafficking – or, more appropriately, the conducting and publishing of reports and studies. As an example of the importance of such an activity, we need only cast our eyes back over US TIP funding records, which show that in 2005 the US paid UNICEF \$350,000 to conduct 'a baseline study of trafficking' in Benin. I have been reliably informed that this was precisely the tranche of money used by UNICEF to then pay a consulting firm to produce Benin's 2007 National Study, which was then both stamped and reported as an 'output' by UNICEF and the Child and Family Ministry.

Such money and information chains are not unique. The NGO I worked with, for example, received the major portion of its funding from having been sub-contracted by larger INGOs, bilaterals and the state to produce studies on trafficking in Benin, assessments of national policy, and investigations into particular migrant flows. So too for numerous other NGOs, and for the ILO, which, with USDOL money, funded the National POA.

The importance of the money chain relating to the production of knowledge is widely accepted within the policy community. Antienne, for example, explained that his donor employers had a two-fold overall strategy, one half of which was to engage in advocacy and support this by paying for a ground-level study conducted by an NGO (Interview with Antienne, 4/3/10). Similarly Sandra, whose IO employers saw the production of research as one of the pillars of their intervention, this time with the focus on trafficking's causes (Interview with Sandra, 17/2/10).

## **Conclusion**

In discussing anti-trafficking discourse and policy as it operates in Benin, this chapter has revealed trends strongly reflective of those outlined in Chapter 1's analysis of the global trafficking paradigm. It has been shown that the formal discourse constructs youth work and movement through the lens of extremity and non-consensuality, equating that work and movement to trafficking and thus explaining it as the result of a variety of pathological cause factors. Similarly, anti-trafficking policy follows analogous patterns, tending broadly towards the productive promotion of certain kinds of 'safe, healthy childhood' and the disciplinary, pre-emptive prevention of

child work and movement. That policy also seeks to create the kind of state most likely to guarantee the protection and the childhoods its citizens apparently require. The contrast between what has been examined here and the empirics of youth work and movement as analysed in the previous chapter thus could not be more stark. It will be the purpose of the thesis' final chapter to reflect on how and why this contrast exists and persists in such apparent stability, and with what consequences and implications.

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Introduction

This thesis has intended to achieve two main goals. First, as the introduction highlighted, to answer questions as to whether anti-trafficking discourse misrepresents adolescent labour migration in Benin and thus whether anti-trafficking policy consequently constitutes a misguided attempt to protect the young by preemptively preventing their work and migration. Second, in the anticipated expectation that these questions can be answered in the affirmative, to offer a more nuanced explanation than is common within the critical literature for how and why this situation pertains. In the first part of this chapter, I will briefly reflect on the discussion presented in the previous two chapters and will suggest that the data examined offers a solid foundation from which to draw the conclusion that the trafficking narrative *does* diverge from the lived realities expressed by those it seeks to depict and that anti-trafficking policy *does* fail, in large part since it is unable to account for and respond to the socio-cultural and political-economic conditions underpinning the labour migration it treats as trafficking. In the second part of the chapter, I will elaborate what I believe to be an explanation for why and how this situation pertains, as well as for why and how it has pertained with such stability over the course of more than a decade. In doing so, I will return to the material discussed in the thesis' Theoretical Framework. The section will begin by reflecting on the (non-) applicability of the dominant critical analyses that that Framework sought to

transcend. It will then reflect on how, as was suggested in Chapter 2, discourse and policy can actually be understood as expressions of their wider, framing OOD – the Apollonian, Neoliberal and Westphalian. The section will go on to examine the very real, material and symbolic power dynamics operating within (*and to sustain*) these orders, that discourse and its related policy, in spite of resistance and rejection<sup>65</sup>. Finally, in the chapter's third and final part, I will reflect on the implications that this discussion has, the contribution it has made to the field, and the future research directions to which this study points.

### **Part One: Discursive Inaccuracy and Policy Failure?**

In the introduction to this thesis, I explained that my early work and research in Benin had led me to suspect that anti-trafficking discourse mis-represented youth labour migration in Benin and that anti-trafficking policy deployed questionable strategies to respond to it. Even a brief perusal of the divergence between the pictures painted in Chapters 4 and 5 strongly suggests that these suspicions were correct. In this section, I will further reflect on that divergence, and will do so by touching on the differing understandings of *why* adolescent males are trafficked/ migrate for work, of how those adolescents *experience* that work and of the potential policy *responses* to it.

According to the discourse elaborated in the last chapter, work such as that performed by teenagers in Abeokuta constitutes a worst form of child labour, akin to slavery, often involving horrific exploitation and abuse. In short, it represents a

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<sup>65</sup> This chapter draws on and reproduces material I have published elsewhere, including Howard 2011, 2012b, and forthcoming 2013.

classic example of ‘trafficking’ in the commonly understood sense of the term. By contrast, data obtained from precisely the young migrants thus identified as ‘victims of trafficking’ presents an altogether different image. In Chapter 4, various young migrants were cited as suggesting that, whilst often very challenging and at times even overwhelming, their work was nothing like slavery, it was normal for their context, and was *rarely more taxing than that which they would have been doing had they remained on their family farms*. Similarly, whilst the anti-trafficking discourse was shown to characterise the monetisation of a minor’s mobility as inherently constitutive of abuse/trafficking, for the minors whose mobility was depicted as trafficking it was precisely their ability to access money that made their mobility worthwhile in the first place. The ‘economisation’ of childhood therefore only seems problematic for those whose understanding of the life-course has it that the young should be excluded from the ‘cash nexus’ (Zelizer 1994). In places such as Benin, where such luxuries are and always have been impossible, incorporation of the young as agents of production within the ever-expanding grasp of capitalism is materially and socially essential.

Such dissonance is paralleled in the two causal narratives which serve to explain why young people leave home for what they define as work and what the anti-trafficking establishment identifies as trafficking. In Chapter 5, I outlined the contours of what I have termed the discursive ‘pathological paradigm’. This paradigm is the explanatory framework constitutive of the trafficking discourse in Benin and comprising the various cause-effect tropes which make sense of that ‘trafficking’. Since it is assumed that no well-informed, well-intentioned parent would *choose* to let a child migrate for work/trafficking, and that no minor either could nor would make such a

choice independently, 'poverty', 'ignorance', 'trickery' and 'the corruption of tradition' are all identified as the agency-denying dominant cause-factors. The very essence of this discursive edifice thus implicitly narrates away *any* of the mediating micro-level, socio-cultural or political-economic nuance that studies of migration clearly demonstrate to pattern and refract almost any (labour) migratory decision (see ASI and Kaye 2003, De Haas 2007, 2010a, 2010b, Morrissey 2010).

In contrast, engagement with the young labour migrants defined as trafficked and with their communities demonstrates quite clearly how complex and multilayered individual migratory decisions actually are. It is rarely ever the case that a decision is made in the absence of carefully considered, contextually-grounded and well-reflected volition. Hence, parents who send their young away for work will do so in the socio-culturally and economically situated belief that this will be of benefit for the individual and the family, in large part because it will allow the migrant to access the opportunity, education, life experience and material resources necessary for one and all to advance. Otherwise, this decision is made as one of survival, in cases where other coping strategies have come under strain and appear no longer sustainable. Where adolescents choose independently to migrate – for my data suggest clearly that they do – decisions are articulated in terms of individual and collective ambition, with the widespread and not unreasonable understanding that advancing in life means leaving to access the (financial and social) opportunity that is concentrated elsewhere. Whilst 'poverty' is therefore a significant factor in many individual labour departures, that poverty is almost never understood as total destitution; rather, it is predominantly a by-word for the relative lack of money necessary to progress within a monetised economy.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, the kinds of policies that young migrants and their communities would *like* to see deployed in an effort to ‘protect’ them or to improve their living conditions differ radically from those adopted as part of dominant anti-trafficking strategy. As Chapter 5 indicated, that strategy rests on a draconian attempt to promote a sedentary, schooled childhood that avoids engagement with the world of work, placing emphasis therefore on policing child and youth mobility, or on creating children and parents opposed to that work or mobility. By contrast, when asked what policies *they* would like to see pursued, those young men engaging in work or mobility and their communities offered responses that can be divided into two very clear and entirely predictable trends. The first can be summarised as *the provision of economic alternatives to labour migration*. ‘Give us jobs’, ‘promote development’, ‘bring industry here’, ‘pay us more for our crops’, ‘give us what you have’ and ‘train us in skills’ were all refrains I frequently heard. The general point being made – as is so often the case among labour migrants subject to repressive policing – is that ‘if we want to progress, we need to migrate, so if you don’t want us to migrate, you need to bring here what we and you can access there’. The second major trend in responses was similarly widespread and is encapsulated in the phrase *‘improve our working conditions’*. Since very few see the kinds of work that young males engage in when they migrate as inherently problematic, and since all seem to accept the structural unavailability of monetised social relations under capitalism, it is extremely rare to find anyone who would like to see that work illegalised. At best, people desire improved labour relations. ‘Pay us more wages’, ‘have us work fewer hours’, or ‘let the government stop employers from exploiting us’ are thus the alternatives one most frequently encounters.

In light of the dual fact that anti-trafficking policy avoids engaging with the structures that prevent this sought-after investment or that impede any region-wide economic growth, and given its refusal to even countenance as legitimate the work that many young migrants do and would like to see improved, these desired policies are fundamentally not forthcoming. Young migrants and their communities, therefore, perceive themselves as having little option but to navigate the obstacles that policy puts in their path, and to go about their business as they otherwise would have done were those obstacles not in fact a reality. This is clearly illustrated by how open people were with me, once I had gained their trust, about the fact that they ignore or resist formal, anti-trafficking dictates. From my Field Notes:

**‘Do you pretend to the NGOs and government, saying one thing to them and doing another?’**

There was lots of laughter amongst those that understood my question. Everybody said yes, they do’.

(Interview with Group 5, Zelele Village, 26/4/10)

**‘So you just pretend to the authorities then?’**

Yes, of course. We say “sure, we won’t leave” in the hope that they’ll bring us something.

(Interview with Artur, Sehere Village, Zakpota, 12/4/10)

**‘How do you go about getting around the authorities?’**

They said the state has set up village committees all over the place, but these are corrupt. “We can easily turn them and take kids away no problem”. There are also many paths that you can take towards and across the border and the state has no idea about them all. The police sit there and guard the ones they know about and so we just take the others’.

(Interview with Group 2, 12/4/10)

In his discussion of *Why Migration Policies Fail*, Stephen Castles posits that, ‘in an analytical sense, policy failure can be said to occur when a policy does not achieve its stated objectives’ (2003:207). While my data cannot and do not claim to be statistically representative, it seems plain from the discussion above that Beninese anti-trafficking policy *is* indeed failing in these terms. At the very least, it is not preventing the apparently paradigmatic flow of migration-trafficking from the Zou to Abeokuta, and it appears to constitute little more than an irritating obstacle that labour migrants and those facilitating their migration must work to overcome. As such, and in response to the first of the questions posed by this research, it seems reasonable to conclude that dominant Beninese anti-trafficking discourse and policy do reproduce many of the same shortcomings documented at the global level and examined in the thesis’ first chapter. Discourse is inaccurate and policy is inappropriate, both in its own terms and in terms of the desires articulated by those it seeks to influence. Over the course of the second part of this chapter, I will attempt to offer an explanation for why (and how) I believe this situation to pertain.

## **Part Two: Explaining Discourse and Policy**

### Assessing Dominant Critical Explanations

If, as has been argued, the dominant trafficking paradigm (both in Benin and internationally) falls short in terms of discursive accuracy and policy efficacy, and if, as has been suggested, this has been the case for many years, it is incumbent upon us as critics to ask ‘Why?’. Within the existing critical literature, Chapter 1 suggested that the principal explanations for the nature and stability of this problematic dominant paradigm centre around claims of malevolence, ignorance and received ideas on the part of anti-trafficking and other powerful actors. Are these claims fair? And does my research empirically bear them out? In the case of malevolence, plainly it does not. My engagement with anti-trafficking actors and the institutions they comprise in fact strongly suggests that any (collective) malevolence can be disregarded as a viable explanatory hypothesis. There is no doubt (as will be argued below) that the *effects* of dominant discourse and policy can be and are problematic. Similarly, there can be little doubt that some individuals may actively seek to produce those effects, using ‘trafficking’ for their own personal, Machiavellian ends. None of the actors I spoke to, however, can be accused of such actions. Indeed, while levels of individual ‘commitment’ to the well-being of ‘beneficiary populations’ do undoubtedly vary, a clear majority of the anti-trafficking actors I researched seemed genuinely concerned to ensure that their work contributed to the protection of those groups they understood as in need of support. Whilst often recognising the constraints under which they operate and the problems with the paradigm that they reproduce, one is more likely to hear ‘we are doing the best we can’ than ‘we simply

do not care'. It seems fair to conclude, therefore, that malevolence remains largely insufficient as an explanation, while Boyden's 'misguided good intentions' are more appropriate. What, then, of ignorance, received ideas and inertia?

*Ignorance, Received Ideas and Inertia?*

In assessing the extent to which ignorance plays a role in creating and sustaining problematic discourse and policy, it should be recalled that, in Chapter 4, I recounted how villagers in my case study communities lamented that I was the first person *ever* to ask them how they understood the realities depicted as trafficking. When I either put this to anti-trafficking actors or quizzed those actors on their familiarity with their target populations, the gulf between them and these target populations became even more apparent. Among the myriad anti-trafficking actors I interviewed, few had ever encountered those represented by their discourse or impacted by their policy, and even fewer had based their interventions on anything like what the academy would consider defensible research. Abidi, for instance, was central to the early evolution of the anti-trafficking field in Benin and yet declared: 'we didn't have to work too hard to have a good idea of what was going on [before establishing our interventions]' (Interview with Abidi, 12/1/10). Mitch and Yaya, who are responsible for research at the headquarters of their IO, explained similarly with reference to their organisation's wider work on trafficking: 'With mining kids, it doesn't matter if [they] have been trafficked or not, we know they shouldn't be there, so we just take them out before research even begins' (Interview with Mitch and Yaya, 3/6/9). Likewise, when I asked Carl whether research plays a role in his organisation's project and policy work, he simply replied, 'It never really happens that way. This isn't a ground-up

thing’ (Interview with Carl, 9/6/9), while with Martin, a former donor government employee now working for an NGO, I had the following exchange:

**Neil:** Did your new approach take a long while to develop?

**Martin:** Yes. Most people don’t have an in-depth understanding of what we’re dealing with. There’s a lack of conceptual clarity as well as information sharing. There are huge battles between various organisations over intelligence. We need a better understanding across the board and we need some coordination in what we do.

**Neil:** Do people have on-the-ground understandings?

**Martin:** No. Zero. There is a major problem, data-wise, with where people get their information in this field. Look at the example of the *Global Report on Human Trafficking*. It’s awful but people believe it because “the UN says so”. There’s a major problem with UN authority in this regard – reports such as this take on a life of their own, despite the problems with accuracy and the excessive focus on sexual exploitation’.

(Interview with Martin, 8/6/9)

These quotes suggest that a degree of ignorance *does* pertain in this field and that, in spite of that empirical ignorance, the major institutions comprising the field have such foundational meaning-making power that what they say is accepted un-critically

as true nonetheless. This can be further illustrated in Benin by examining the unquestioned (and ultimately *received*) notion that at the root of trafficking lies the monetised bastardisation of the previously positive practice of *vidomègon*. Though policy-makers recite this narrative by rote, when questioned as to how and why they are so certain of its accuracy, responses vary from blank stares, to stutters, to simple assertions that ‘we just know’. From my data, two particularly important instances stand out. The first is an interview I conducted with Didi, a senior Beninese civil servant at the heart of the Child and Family Ministry and thus a cornerstone in the anti-trafficking pantheon. In response to my question as to why trafficking had exploded as an issue-area in Benin a decade ago, he opined that ‘it all comes back to the monetisation of social relations’. ‘In the beginning’, he continued, ‘placement was about solidarity. Money wasn’t involved. Sometimes kids went with people to whom they were not related, but they were well treated. Monetisation made kids become a way of earning money’. ‘Do any studies exist which demonstrate or prove the supposed link between monetisation and exploitation?’, I asked. ‘I don’t think so’, he said. ‘At least I don’t know of any’ (Interview with Didi, 3/4/10).

In similar fashion, as a participant at a national child protection workshop organised by one of the major INGOs active in this field, I had the opportunity to sit for three days amongst what was effectively the entire quorum of the Benin-based child protection community responsible for national anti-trafficking policy. During one of the early sessions, the ‘history and context of trafficking’ in Benin was presented by an academic who was also a senior figure in one of the agencies represented at the workshop. Once his presentation had finished and the floor was open to questions, I asked the presenter and my fellow participants whether anyone was aware of the

existence of any single study that demonstrated a link between the monetisation of child placement and the increase in the level of abuse that placed minors experienced, since this was apparently the base assumption from which we were working. My question was greeted with total silence. No-one responded, and eventually, somewhat sheepishly, the session chair looked over and conceded that there was no such study, and that this was problematic (Field Notes, 29/3/10).

That I had such interactions naturally begs the question ‘where, therefore, did the understanding that placement equals trafficking come from?’. Here the exchanges I had with two further institutional interviewees are telling and worth repeating, since they point quite clearly in the direction of the critical literature’s received ideas and discursive inertia. In the first case, I was interviewing Moussa, another senior civil servant working in the Child and Family Ministry. Below is an extract of the notes I made after our encounter:

**‘I asked whether the anti-movement components of the anti-trafficking law made it easier for corruption to flourish?’** At this point he went off on a huge discursive tangent. He opened up a document that he’d been working on entitled “history repeating itself”, in which he makes the socio-cultural link between the slavery of the past and child trafficking today. “The weight of tradition is really very heavy”, he began. “Child trafficking has deep, deep roots in Beninese society”, he continued. “In Africa, the child belongs to the community, is a gift, a richness, and this communal feeling is what underlies the fact that the child can comfortably go and live with any member of the extended family, if it is believed that this will help

the child on the path of life. We call this practice ‘*confiage*’, or ‘*placement*’, in French”, he added. “However, at a certain point in time, this previously positive tradition deviated from its core purpose, such that now it has become monetised, and leads to abuse. Kids are not sent to school, they are transactionalised”. **I asked him where he got his information?** *He said it was all based on the UNICEF studies’.*

(Interview with Moussa, 8/3/10)

Similarly illustrative was my discussion with Marti, a frank and critical local government official responsible for child protection in one of the *départements* in which my case study villages were located. When talking over the process of policy formation, Marti explained to me the ideal of the procedure as it should be. ‘We start by taking stock and understanding the phenomenon’, he began. ‘We investigate, we do studies, and we come to the realisation that what was once a mark of mutual support and solidarity has recently transformed itself into trafficking’. Then he smiled – ‘it doesn’t always work like this, of course’ – before conceding that, in this instance, *they had relied on studies from the UNICEF Library in Cotonou* (Interview with Marti, 23/3/10).

I subsequently visited the UNICEF Library in Cotonou, aware that, in light of what I had been told, and as the only child-focussed documentation centre in Benin, it occupied a place of singular importance in this field. Having searched extensively for any studies that might have been of relevance to the topic at hand, I made two findings of significance. The first was that, as suspected, no work existed empirically

examining the correlation between the changing nature of placement and the changing nature of child experiences of that placement – in other words, nothing empirically validated the assertion that placement had morphed into trafficking.

My second finding was that, without fail, all the major studies contained in the Library and relating to child trafficking, child movement or child placement cited in their literature reviews two of the earliest related studies present in the Library's archives – UNICEF's 1998 '*Study Prepared for the Sub-Regional Workshop on Trafficking, Child Domestic Workers, Particularly Girls in Domestic Service, in the West and Central Africa Region*' and the 1994 study on '*Vidomègon Children, Unaccompanied/Estranged Children, Abandoned Children in Benin*'<sup>66</sup>, by UNICEF and the precursor to the Child and Family Ministry. Whilst the very titles of these documents make clear the assumed equivalence between child placement or domestic service and trafficking/other forms of suffering, a brief discourse analysis of the texts themselves reveals that both studies were conducted on the basis of the assumption that placement and domestic service are exploitative and problematic *in and of themselves*. At various points throughout the texts, therefore, placement or child domestic service are described as 'problems', while at one point we are told of 'the dangers *inherent* in these situations' (emphasis added). Moreover, readers are informed that 'the existence of an economic motive on the part of one or both parties [to the child's placement] is enough to qualify it as trafficking' and that 'payment for child domestic workers...is a salient indicator of the exploitative nature of the situation' (UNICEF 1998:iii-vi). At no point, however, do we encounter *any*

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<sup>66</sup> The original title of the study is *Les Enfants Vidomègons, Les Enfants en Rupture, Les Enfants Abandonés au Bénin*. This is noteworthy because the phrase 'en rupture' encompasses all general parent-child separation and is imbued with highly negative connotations. Similar language pervades also UNICEF Benin 1994 and 1999.

*empirical research* examining the situation of children themselves in relation to that of their forbears in the pre-monetary past.

The point being made here is not that the nature of child circulation, child placement or child/youth migration has not changed, nor even that the advent of modernity (or, more appropriately, the deepening of capitalist relations) has had no effect on the way in which children and the young move or on the experiences they have when they do move. Indeed, related historical sociological data (see, for instance, Jacquemin 2000, 2006 and 2008) and my own research demonstrates very clearly that migration and labour relations have evolved under the influence of capitalist entrenchment. The point, however, is simply that, despite the doxic certainty within which the narrative of ‘tradition corrupted’ is cloaked, no empirical analysis to this effect actually exists. Rather, what we seem to have are the deeply rooted and widely accepted, received ideas that, on the one hand, children being away from their kin is negative, and, on the other, that the monetisation of child (domestic) work and movement *automatically* transforms something unproblematic into something that is *essentially* exploitative (and thus qualifiable as trafficking). Crucially, it is to the inertia arising from the sheer meaning-making power of an institution such as UNICEF that the widespread and unquestioning internalisation of these ideas can be attributed.

What does this imply? First that, as the critical literature suggests, ‘ignorance, received ideas and inertia’ *do* indeed play a role in perpetuating the dominant trafficking paradigm across individuals, institutions, time and space. Second, and in light of the discourse theoretical discussion presented in Chapter 2, that what this

reflects is the fact that the operation of discourse as a kind of self-perpetuating, self-fulfilling prophecy that recursively structures both individual and institutional subjectivity is at evidence in this field. What this necessarily points to, of course, is the need to examine the forces which are *themselves* responsible for structuring that discourse, and it is to these forces that the discussion will now turn.

### Discourse and Policy as Expressions of Their Structuring Orders of Discourse

Trafficking discourse and policy do not exist in a vacuum. In Chapter 2, I introduced the concept of *orders of discourse* to refer to both the macro, framing narratives organising the social world *and* the material and discursive frameworks for reproducing those narratives (to the exclusion of others). In the case of the anti-trafficking paradigm, its discourse and policy, I suggested that all could profitably be understood as expressions of three very widespread, powerful and constitutive OOD – those of Apollonian Childhood, the Westphalian State and Neoliberalism. In this and the following sections, I will argue that my research in Benin demonstrates that this is indeed the case and will examine the material power dynamics which ensure that it remains so. First, I will briefly address the discourse and policy laid out in the last chapter and will deconstruct it to indicate the ways in which I believe these to represent expressions of their constitutive OOD. Subsequently, I will address the mechanisms through which these OOD and the discourse and policy that they frame remain as stable as they do. Though the effects and expressions of these OOD cannot be divided discretely along their separate lines, I divide them here for the sake of clarity.

*Apollonian Childhood*

Implicit within the received ideas and discursive misrepresentation of adolescent labour migration discussed above are all the contours of the Apollonian OOD. It will be recalled that, according to this OOD, children are inherently vulnerable and largely non-agentive, their normal development is best guaranteed within the protective bosom of the sedentary, nuclear family, and school is the place in which they should evolve, safe from the putative dangers of economic activity. Crucially, this OOD posits itself as *universally* valid, since it is based on apparently scientific notions of human development. As a consequence, all models or experiences of childhood that fail to reflect its outlines *necessarily* find themselves pathologised as problematic or deviant (Boyden 1997). This is clearly evidenced both in the pathological paradigm that (literally) makes sense of why the young leave home for work, and in the way that money is understood as generating an ontological shift in the meaning of the exercise of youth labour-power. In the case of the former, young labour migrants and their communities depict their work and migration as the consequence of a complex web of socio-cultural and economic factors. For the anti-trafficking paradigm, however, it is always and everywhere the result of *anomalous* or *extreme* cause-factors, such as neglect, economic crisis or criminal trickery. This is because the picture of ‘normal’, healthy child development that dominates the Apollonian OOD means that actors within the institutions that comprise and are structured by it, can *only* construct the physical separation of parent and child, as well as the child’s engagement in remunerated activity, as problematic or ‘unnatural’, and thus *outside* the bounds of supposed ‘normality’. With monetisation, we should recall the words of UNICEF cited in the previous section that ‘payment [for work]...

is a salient indicator of the exploitative nature of the situation'. Why so? Because, as Zelizer (1994) has indicated, money is taken as a proxy for 'work' within this conceptual edifice and work is supposedly a preserve of the adult world which is beyond the capacity of 'innocent' children. As such, when minors exercise their labour-power at 'home' and without payment, the act has a 'meaning' that is discursively, politically and legally 'OK'. By contrast, should the same child expend the same energy performing the same task, but this time in return for a wage and for an employer, exploitation is said to have taken place.

These Apollonian echoes of course are not just implicit. Interview and documentary data demonstrate that they quite clearly explicitly permeate the field. The semantics used in policy and strategy documents offer an indication of this. Anti-trafficking policies are frequently bracketed under the reductive term 'childhood protection' – '*protection de l'enfance*'. Benin's Child and Family Ministry, for instance, elaborated part of its national anti-trafficking strategy with UNICEF under exactly this title (2007), while French anti-trafficking assistance to Benin comes under the very same rubric<sup>67</sup>. Similarly, a review of the work of respected civil society bodies focussed on trafficking reveals a 'childhood home', 'a defence of childhood' project and a 'vulnerable childhood' initiative. Now, while this language might not necessarily indicate the predominance of a unitary, globalised understanding of what constitutes that 'childhood', analysis of the way in which it is presented confirms that it is. Thus, in the document outlining Benin's national child protection strategy, we read that the child is 'vulnerable by nature' (MFE and UNICEF 2007:21), while in a crucial ILO examination of child trafficking in Benin, we learn that a child requires

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<sup>67</sup> See <http://www.ambafrance-bj.org/spip.php?article1036>.

‘special’ care and protection that is different from that pertaining to other human beings (BIT 2006:vi-vii). This care and attention is of course supposed to be provided at home – the National Study indicating as much when it claims that ‘children who have migrated away from their biological parents are exposed to violence, physical, moral, sexual abuse, and thus trafficking’ (OIT and INSAE 2008:49), which is a message starkly reinforced by the concluding moral of the emblematic *Ana, Bazil et le Trafiquant*. Moreover, the same document tells us with regret about the ‘unacceptable reality’ that awaits half of ‘child victims of trafficking’ (working more than six hours a day), with 10% working nights, and 5% beginning in the early morning – all trends characteristic of working life more generally in Benin, but seen as *de facto* intolerable for minors (MFE et al 2007:27). In lieu of participation in this world of work, then, school is of course enshrined as the child’s proper place, referred to across the literature as ‘where children should be’.

Anti-trafficking *policy* also clearly echoes the trends operative within the Apollonian OOD. As Chapter 5 made clear, the two key pillars of anti-trafficking policy are the disciplinary and productive promotion of a safe, work-free childhood (along with the families able to provide it) and the pre-emptive prevention of the migration seen to compromise it. This is evidenced in various coercive measures, including the establishment of border patrols to deter mobility, the promulgation of the anti-trafficking law, and the establishment of the village committees designed to compel families to keep their children at ‘home’. It is also evidenced in the productive effort both to encourage citizen self-policing and to mould those citizens into the (Apollonian) shape desired by the policy establishment. Hence the importance of

‘sensitisation’ efforts, the massive drive to expand schooling and to reduce family sizes, as well as to ‘responsibilise’ parents such that they understand that ‘families’ involve children being kept ‘at home’.

### *Neoliberalism*

The policy establishment’s deployment of productive as well as disciplinary power is also strongly indicative of the effects of Neoliberalism’s OOD. As Chapter 2 explained, under Neoliberalism’s governmentality, policy often involves the twin pillars of a *compulsion* to individual responsabilisation and a *creation* of the kinds of subject(ivity)s able and prepared to self-responsibilise. Thus we see efforts to produce parents who see parenting and their children according to the lines propagated by the discursive and political establishment.

Even more clearly illustrative of this neoliberal trend is the dominant type of person anti-trafficking policy seeks to formulate through the promotion of its protective, healthy childhoods. If we recall which activities are viewed and pushed as legitimate for children in this policy world (be that through sensitisation, legal norms or ‘reinsertion’ after having been trafficked), it is notable that options are restricted either to school or to a professional, pre-work apprenticeship. What does this mean? Beyond operationalising the Apollonian model, it means that, through formal education and skills development, the anti-trafficking establishment is working towards creating the self-sufficient, responsible and independent economic actors able to thrive in the world of the market as ‘an entrepreneur of themselves’ – in other words, *the ‘homo economicus’*.

The homo economicus is further evidenced in the way in which anti-trafficking policy tackles poverty in Benin. Rather than address (or even mention) poverty's structural underpinnings, anti-trafficking governmentality operates through the vehicle of individuation. As such, it either blames individual transgressors for their own poverty ('parents have too many children') or it provides relief through the targeted distribution of IGAs and the village committee-based promotion of 'solutions from within the community', all of which leaves the wider context of the market economy a-politically untrammelled by the hand of policy intervention.

Similarly un-trammelled are the labour relations constitutive of the neoliberal market economy. As David Harvey has argued (2005), a core element of Neoliberalism is state rollback and the deregulation of the labour market. Thus, in the *Minority World*, we have seen the progressive erosion of labour rights, while in countries such as Benin, the already insignificant labour inspectorate has been reduced to a handful of individuals. As a consequence, protection from the exploitation associated with trafficking has *not* involved an improvement of working conditions, but *has* involved a policing of mobility concomitant with the creation of captive, sedentarised labour pools absent of government protection (see Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2000).

The neoliberal governmentality of anti-trafficking policy goes beyond this, however. It is also present in the central role that state-bureaucratic-fiscal *efficiency* plays in determining precisely how to construct that policy. As has been suggested, while migration is generally demonised within the discursive-policy establishment, many policy-makers accept that not all migrant children and young people necessarily end up in situations of trafficking. Yet still they target all migrant children's movement as

a pre-emptive strategy to protect the majority that they believe do. This is a clear example of what Aradau has identified as neoliberal governmental profiling against the backdrop of cost-effectiveness (2004). Instead of designing particularised policies that respond to the specificities of an individual's context, anti-trafficking policy in Benin has securitised the entire, categorised population, dealing with trafficking on a group level and on the basis of statistical proportions and probabilities, by targeting *all* minors migrating away from home as *likely* to end up in situations of abuse and thus trafficking. This, of course, comes in the context of (and is justified by) state and pseudo-state agencies having to make (publicly unacknowledged) trade-off decisions over how to make the most efficient use of their very limited resources.

### *The Westphalian State*

The third OOD of which the dominant anti-trafficking paradigm represents an expression in Benin is that of the Westphalian State. How does this manifest? First, in the a-political nature of the analysis around, and policy approach to, the labour migration collapsed with trafficking in Benin. Indeed, where Chapter 4 pointed to certain of the (potential) global political-economic underpinnings of youth labour migration in Southern Benin, *nowhere* within the Beninese anti-trafficking field are similar analyses forthcoming. Indeed, when I asked Sandra, a Beninese national working for a major Minority World donor in Cotonou, why things such as the effects of international subsidies were not addressed within her institution's remit, she explained 'we just can't talk about this. For us, *it's all about the national level*, the local government (Interview with Sandra, 17/2/10). When I pressed Jayjay – one

of Sandra's most senior superiors at the donor delegation – for clarification on this issue, this was the exchange we had:

**Neil:** Why don't we go beyond the limits of a country with our work?  
Why don't we address global issues?

**Jayjay:** We can't. This is a national structure, it's a national delegation. *We structurally cannot go beyond borders.* If we want to do something like this regarding EU and US subsidies, we need to have a formal political position sent down to us'.

(Interview with JayJay, 2/4/10).

This position was echoed repeatedly across my interviews with employees constitutive of the anti-trafficking field. It indicates that the segmentation of global political authority into the modern nation-state system, and the division of international agencies into the 'field offices' reflective of and responsible for (the individual components of) that system, has had the effect, in international discourse and policy-making, of depoliticising the relations *between and across* states and the consequences for citizens in one state of the actions of citizens in another. Just as the state is now the ultimate bearer of responsibility vis-à-vis those citizens born within its borders, then, so the explanatory and thus the policy framework in a world system of states delimits itself to the *individual* state in question.

This is further emphasised by the massive emphasis donor agencies place in Benin on ‘getting the right laws on the books’, and in thereby having Benin, formally at least, correspond to the norms of the global, liberal-democratic model of a functioning and legitimate government protective of its inhabitants’ *de jure* rights. As was explained in the last chapter, when ‘diagnosing’ Benin’s anti-trafficking problem and thus prescribing a ‘remedy’ for it, the majority of the anti-trafficking field rallied around ‘state weakness’ and ‘state strengthening’ respectively. As such, in Sandra’s words, there was a huge, collective push by those individual representatives in Benin to get Benin’s government to pass an anti-trafficking law in 2006, ‘after which everyone stopped coming to our coordination meetings’ (Interview with Sandra, 17/2/10). Where engagement did not stop at the level of having the state tick the appropriate legal box, emphasis was still placed either on improving national-level ‘implementation’ or on properly policing Westphalian borders. Accordingly, for Sharon, ‘our major job, as an international agency, is to get the government to pass the right laws and then to ensure that they are implemented’ (Interview with Sharon, 28/9/9). The abstracting of everything that those laws seek to redress from the globalised context of capital and labour is thus complete.

### Dynamics of Stability and Stabilisation

How can we make sense of the extent to which Beninese anti-trafficking discourse and policy reflect and express the wider, Neoliberal, Westphalian and Apollonian OOD? Are these simply internalised and reproduced unquestioningly by all anti-trafficking actors? If so, is that an ‘automatic’ process, devoid of the exercise of power? Or are the dynamics of reproduction and stabilisation more complex? In this

section, I will draw on data gathered from *within* and *across* the anti-trafficking field to examine the dynamics through which I believe discourse, policy and their structuring OOD to be maintained and sustained in stability. While it will be seen that no overarching, malignant Puppet Master can be identified, and whilst it will be acknowledged that many actors *do* internalise and thus unquestioningly reproduce the dictates of dominant OOD, there are very real, material exercises of power which combine to ensure that, in spite of those who do not, the field and the OOD with which it is dialectically intertwined maintain and reproduce themselves in relative stability over time.

#### *A Word on Internalisation*

Before addressing the exercises and experiences of power that stabilise both the anti-trafficking field and its framing OOD, I will first briefly turn to the fact that, as the above discussion of received ideas should already have made clear, discursive internalisation is undeniably a crucial factor in systemic reproduction. As James and Prout highlight in relation to the Apollonian OOD:

‘[W]ays of thinking about childhood fuse with institutionalized practices to produce self-conscious subjects (teachers, parents and children) who think (and feel) about themselves through the terms of those ways of thinking’ (1997:23).

In this regard, it was noticeable in my interviews that the closer an interviewee was situated to the ‘centre’ of the anti-trafficking field, the more likely s/he was to have

internalised and thus mechanically reproduced its contours. Although lines were inevitably blurred, and although neither time nor resources permitted a genuine class analysis, there was a clear aggregate distinction within my research participants among those who espoused a bourgeois, neoliberalised, Apollonian understanding of what a child (and thus an adult) *should* be, and those who did not. As may be expected, the general trend in this division saw anti-trafficking actors on one side and those upon whom anti-trafficking initiatives acted on the other (see Howard 2012; see also Adler and Haas 1992, Salskov-Iverson et al. 2000, Fairclough 2010). Thus, despite being a Beninese national, Toto, a senior figure in the national anti-trafficking hierarchy and consequently an upper-class individual with significant exposure to the international discursive architecture, saw fit to declare at a national child protection workshop (Field Notes, 30/3/10):

*'A family is a father, a mother and their children'.*

Likewise Sharon, a Nigerian national who lamented 'the extended family *syndrome*' as causal of trafficking (Interview with Sharon, 28/9/9), or a collection of well-to-do Beninese anti-trafficking actors who suggested that nuclear family promotion is 'the way forward for protection'. As Wells has observed:

'There is sufficient evidence to suggest that we are witnessing the diffusion of a bourgeois or middle-class model of family life across different country contexts...The elite, at least in newly industrialising countries, and despite widely different local cultural forms...is increasingly networked into a shared global culture [which expresses itself in...] increasing continuity in

the structures and practices of the middle-class or bourgeois family on a global level' (2009:76).

Further research will be necessary to more fully expand on this observation, but for now it is important merely to underline the fact that one's field positionality, in the sample I have gathered, seems fundamentally to influence the extent to which one adopts and reproduces dominant power frameworks.

Those frameworks are only ever '*relatively* stabilized', however, and over the rest of this section, I will draw on my data to reflect on the very real, material dynamics through which that stability is both challenged and maintained within Benin's anti-trafficking field.

#### *Peasant Resistance and Performativity*

The sheer level and normality of adolescent labour migration documented in Chapter 4 should provide an indication of the extent to which many Beninese citizens *ignore* and *resist* the strictures of dominant anti-trafficking policy. In each of my case study villages, and amongst the migrant community I met in Abeokuta, awareness of the official position has not translated into a widespread reduction in youth work or movement. Quite the opposite. As suggested above, many now simply take greater precautions in getting around the authorities, while others accept engagement with them as either a necessary hazard or an opportunity to be exploited. Illustrative of this is the following exchange I had with Artur in Sehere village:

**Neil:** Do you guys just pretend with the authorities when they come here and say don't migrate?

**Artur:** Yes, of course. We say "ok, sure" in the hope that they'll bring us something, but they never do.

**Neil:** Wouldn't it be better to be honest and just tell the truth to the likes of UNICEF?

**Artur:** Sometimes we do. But if we tell them to go away and they don't come back, they will just speak far away on the radio and we'll have no chance of getting anything from them.

**Neil:** What about the local NGOs?

**Artur:** [Laughter].

(Interview with Artur, 12/4/10)

Similarly, after an interview with a mixed group of teenagers in Atomè, I made the following notes:

**‘When you hear the “don't move” message in school, do you pretend to agree, or do you speak up?** The response was divided here. Some yeses, some nos. One boy added that it wasn't really NGOs that say this, it was

more their teachers. One said “we say ok, we won’t leave, but then we leave anyway because we need money and since there isn’t any here we have to go off to find it”. I tried to clarify a bit here, so I reformulated the question by saying **do you pretend to agree or do you say openly to the teacher that you disagree?** “No-one can ever say they disagree with the teacher!”, they all cried out. “He will hit us! You can’t contradict him! What we think stays inside our heads but doesn’t come out of our mouths”.

(Interview with Group 12, 14/5/10)

Such performativity is widespread. My research assistant was a native of the *département* in which I conducted my ground-level fieldwork and he had long worked for NGOs in the anti-trafficking field. Though the official line of his employers had consistently been that of the anti-movement anti-trafficking hierarchy, there existed between him and his target populations a tacit acknowledgement that this was misplaced and that villagers would therefore merely pretend to any outsiders visiting that the message had been taken on board. ‘It’s all a play’, he declared, referring to the occasions on which villagers say ‘sure, we won’t let our kids migrate’, before promptly allowing them to do so.

As the discussion of ‘development brokers’ in Chapter 2 suggested, it is not only villagers who engage in such symbolic game-playing in the hope of extracting resources from those who set the rules of the game; so too do people like my research

assistant and certain of the NGO staffers with whom he has worked. On one occasion, he recounted how a former boss had gone to one of his project villages the day before a donor visit explicitly to brief residents on exactly what had to be said to the visiting dignitaries. The reason? That performing ‘appropriately’ would convince the said dignitaries to provide the village with much-needed resources. I myself also witnessed such behaviour. During one project visit with an NGO to which I was attached, for instance, I sat through a donor ‘evaluation’ which involved a ‘field visit’ on the part of an embassy attaché whose brief was to determine whether or not funding would be continued (see Box 1 in Chapter 3). Much of the morning before her arrival was spent amongst NGO staff and project ‘beneficiaries’ collaborating to ‘get the story right’.

### *Self-Silencing*

Playing the game by avoiding truthfully challenging or contradicting the formal framework established as a reflection of dominant (orders of) discourse is a practice that goes well beyond the ground-level. Indeed, amongst anti-trafficking practitioners, a degree of discursive self-silencing is so widespread as to constitute somewhat of a norm. As a result, when I asked Angela, a UN employee working on trafficking at her agency’s headquarters, whether she had the freedom to say what she wanted, she explained:

‘[Long sigh]. Look, it depends. Generally speaking, yes of course you can say what you want, but you’ll be blasted right and left and bullied by

countries if you do. We therefore try to be constructive and point out future directions. Some people criticise us for not being critical enough. We know it means that the process takes a long time but we take a long-term view because we don't want to endanger long-term collaboration and cooperation with the states. Personally, I am not super critical. You must also remember that, if you want to say something at [this agency], you need to get the institutional OK as well'.

(Interview with Angela, 24/9/9).

Similarly, Ellen, a former country-level UN employee, stated:

'In [that agency], you have to be diplomatic. Often that's just an organisational culture thing, there isn't always even direct political pressure, it can just be staff over-compensating and trying to avoid alienating states. One example was a harsh report I wrote on the state of migrant workers in Thailand, which the agency wanted me to edit, even though the Thai government's representative said it was cool. There's just a lot of self-censorship, which in part is about money and jobs. Many people here are just international civil servants and don't have the genuine commitment of bodies like Human Rights Watch'.

(Interview with Ellen, 6/9/9)

Alice and Fulani also described themselves as ‘international civil servants’, and they have authored documents which are critical at a global level to forming and sustaining the dominant (orders of) discourse (and policy) around trafficking. In discussing the process by which they produced their most recent, and enormously widely distributed, report, we had the following exchange:

**Neil:** Did you have freedom with the data?

**Fulani:** We did, we were able to do a lot of analysis with it, but we didn’t. We decided not to because we wanted to play it safe, in case this, as a first report, becomes an annual thing. Avoid making enemies, you know. We were of course both fully aware of why we did this – because we know that states will moan if they’re made to look bad. We had to do a lot of persuasion just to get it off the ground. So, we limit ourselves to a gentle report.

**Neil:** Outside of this report, how much freedom do you have here?

**Alice:** Being the UN, we have freedom but also constraints. We have to be diplomatic. So usually criticisms are couched in terms of recommendations. Remember that we depend on funding’.

(Interview with Alice and Fulani, 28/5/9)

Funding-dependent ‘diplomacy’ was also evident in discussions around ‘exploitation’. Gigi and Ronald, for instance, were both senior figures at their IO’s headquarters and both referred to the Palermo Protocol’s (non-)definition of exploitation as ‘the Pandora’s box’ issue plaguing their field (Interview with Gigi, 3/6/9; Interview with Ronald, 8/6/9). Along with a number of colleagues across a variety of different organisations, both lamented that the free/unfree binary so central to the liberal capitalist discourse of contractual and thus legitimate labour failed to reflect the nuances of individual lived realities. ‘Reality is just much greyer’, Ronald opined, arguing that ‘freedom’ is a spectrum and that its boundaries are structurally determined. Is this something that can be publicly acknowledged? Neither Ronald nor Gigi have ever done so. As Sara, their colleague, explained: ‘*Even those who agree that things are grey in reality turn the grey to black and white when they put it on paper*’ (Interview with Sara, 28/9/9).

### *Silencing*

Not all silencing is so pre-emptively self-imposed, however. When I quizzed certain of my interviewees as to whether it would be possible to advocate a removal of US cotton subsidies as part of the fight against the poverty that all agree underpins trafficking, they admitted that doing so would be politically impossible. Rose, for example, is a senior IO figure working in Cotonou. She explained that she would love to address such structural issues but that it would be ‘politically unacceptable’ (Interview with Rose, 29/9/9). Sandra, a senior donor government employee based in Benin, offered a similar assessment. ‘Many of the Westerners working here know that their policies cause poverty and trafficking’, she said. ‘Some want to change that, but

they can't even mention it' (Interview with Sandra, 17/2/10). Likewise Cheng, a former US government employee who had worked in Washington on trafficking. When I asked her whether she was able to speak openly and be critical of dominant paradigms from inside her bureau, 'absolutely not' was the response. 'We're constrained by US interests and restricted to corridor discussions', she added (Interview with Cheng, 29/10/9). Perhaps most revealing was a conversation I had with Matt, a man at the heart of the US' global anti-trafficking donor hierarchy. 'I have tried and will try to raise the issue of subsidies', he told me, 'but the chances of success and of public discussion are slim-to-none, as there are very big interests to fight' (Interview with Matt, 16/9/9). In this policy-world, formal discussion of the political-economic forces that create poverty and exploitation is off limits. As per the Neoliberal OOD, pre-existing distributions of wealth and the relations of power that sustain them are taken not only as a given but as beyond questioning, with powerful actors ensuring that this remains the case.

The same is also true with the discursive order of Apollonian Childhood. Though, as explained in Chapter 5, Benin's anti-trafficking legal framework demands the blanket abolition of work defined as 'exploitative', some policy-makers are aware that this is impractical and accept that what constitutes exploitation will vary from place to place. Some therefore privately advocate the adoption of a 'regulatory' as opposed to an 'abolitionist' strategy, based on the recognition that work can be positive for many children and young people and that abolition often fails (see Bourdillon et al. 2011). Despite this, however, when I asked senior IO figures from the anti- child labour bodies fighting trafficking in Benin why they did not pursue a regulatory instead of an abolitionist line, I was told flatly that this was impossible because it did not fit with

institutional discursive norms. ‘What if a 13 year-old has no alternative but to migrate for work?’, I asked Handel, who had global responsibility for his organisation’s anti-trafficking programme. ‘It doesn’t matter’, he responded. ‘We cannot finance anything that disagrees with our normative framework. We have to be consistent with our positions even if children are working. If not, in 20 years, where will we be?’. ‘What if the individual is fully cognizant of the work that they’ll be performing?’, I retorted. ‘We must stick to the party line’, concluded Handel (Interview with Handel, 21/5/9).

Handel was not alone in adopting this position. Frequently, anti-trafficking actors told me how they had been briefed on which language was or was not acceptable and which did or did not fit the formal, discursive framework<sup>68</sup>. As a result, it was said to be common practice amongst the major organisations in the field to send reports up to global desk officers in order to receive the institutional OK. Andrea openly admitted as much. When he had worked at his UN agency, he said, ‘all reports got sent to HQ to be checked and edited, especially with regards to terminology’ (Interview with Andrea, 20/5/9). On two other occasions, interviewees told me how reports which had contradicted the agency’s formal position had either been ‘savagely edited’ (Interview with Cat, 21/5/9) or actively suppressed (Interview with Miguel, 31/4/9). My own experience of participant observation within such institutions corroborated these stories. On one occasion, when I wished to formally question the public discourse of the agency in which I was embedded, my superiors flatly refused, explaining that this would be impossible ‘on the inside’. As Nina lamented, it seems as if ‘working for the

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<sup>68</sup> In one particularly revealing instance, an interviewee explained to me that at his UN agency, the donor funding the project on which he worked had actually sent a representative to brief all relevant staff against the use of the term ‘sex work’ in any public material. This then penetrated the whole organisation, he lamented, sapping integrity and leading to top-level directives preventing anyone from deploying the said terminology, or indeed from inviting conference or workshop participants likely to do so.

UN is like being a gymnast going to the Olympics in a strait-jacket' (Interview with Nina, 28/5/9).

### *The Politics of Representation*

What the previous sections suggest is that there exists a wide gap between the realities of institutional practice and the formal representation of (the consequences of) that practice, and between individual perspectives and collective representations of those perspectives. This can be further evidenced when examining the gulf between the messy realities of policy and project implementation and how that implementation is formally depicted in terms of successes or 'outputs'. There are a number of examples which can be drawn on to illustrate this point.

Let us begin with Benin's anti-trafficking law. Once the President ratified the law, US TIP reports went from lambasting Benin's lack of a suitable legal framework to congratulating '[t]he Government of Benin [for its] solid efforts to combat trafficking through law enforcement efforts' (USDS 2007:65). Similarly, on its website, UNICEF 'hailed the adoption of a new law to combat child trafficking in the Republic of Benin', claiming that it 'will strengthen the legal framework surrounding the efforts to combat child trafficking and will facilitate the implementation of activities led in this field by the government and various partners'<sup>69</sup>. In internal documentation, UNICEF also cite the law as a(n output) triumph for the 'advocacy component' of its Beninese anti-trafficking work, while the Beninese government

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<sup>69</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_30926.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_30926.html)

mentions the law in both its National Study and POA as a central plank of its committed fight against trafficking.

While the law is therefore represented as a critical component of anti-trafficking policy, in practice its reach has been much more limited and its implementation slapdash. As such, village committee members I interviewed in both Za-Kpota and Zogbodomey were unaware even of its existence, while one local police official had never seen its text. Similarly, Cecile, a local government officer in one of my *communes*, explained that though he had heard of the law, he had not read it, concluding our meeting by asking me whether I could email him a copy (Interview with Cecile, 22/3/10).

The story is similar with the village committees. These are widely referenced as fundamental to Beninese anti-trafficking policy and as a resounding success. Various interviewees cited in the last chapter highlighted their importance. UNICEF internal documentation again record their establishment as key policy/project outputs, while one ILO publication even focuses on them as an example of ‘good practice’. In it, we read:

‘Local vigilance committees (LVCs) are composed of community volunteers. Their chief role is to mobilize the community to take action against trafficking, monitor the well-being of children and migrant behaviour, identify and intercept children at risk of becoming victims of trafficking and coordinate the offering of direct assistance services to children in need. LVCs are an effective and appropriate structure to curb

trafficking by working with the children most at risk of being trafficked and their families' (ILO-IPEC 2010:1).

This is strongly refuted by my research with both village committee members and members of the communities for which they are nominally responsible. Many villagers are unaware that they even exist; for others, they are merely a nuisance to be ignored or challenged. In Zelele village, I interviewed Charley, who is both village chief and head of his committee. This was our exchange:

**Neil:** Can you describe to me the work that the village committee does?

**Charley:** Each village *quartier* has a representative to watch over child departures. From time to time, we all get together to give each other an update. In the beginning, it worked well, but because it's voluntary work, and we haven't heard a thing from the state since it was set up, our level of activity has significantly diminished...

**Neil:** Does the state support your work?

**Charley:** No. They give us nothing. It's all voluntary so we don't have any means. Now, because kids are struggling, and [a local NGO] doesn't have the means to look after all of them, there is a risk of departure.

**Neil:** What does the community think of you guys?

**Charley:** [He smiled knowingly here, almost as if to indicate their dislike]. Our role is not repression. We're just here to tell the authorities what's happening. Sometimes we're seen in a bad light though because of our relationship with the authorities. The problem is that sometimes we call the police and those guys do nothing. There is no enforcement, so kids still leave.

**Neil:** Why don't the police react?

**Charley:** Because they have loads of other stuff to do and sometimes they don't even have a vehicle, since their one car may be in action elsewhere, meaning that they can't come to the village. When that happens, the *quartier* representative will say "don't let your child leave" and the family will tell him to mind his own business. They say "this is our child, we can do what we want with him, he is here doing nothing and we have no money".

(Interview with Charley, 19/4/10)

This picture was confirmed by the only other independent analysis I know of that examines the workings of these committees. In an internal UNICEF consultant's report that well-placed sources told me was 'actively suppressed', Roger Botte examines village committees in four West African countries, including Benin. Though depicted as a central plank of the fight against trafficking, Botte concludes that committees are top-down impositions which remain under-funded, overly-

focussed on migrant policing, insensitive to structural issues and largely ignored by target populations (2005:4-9).

One final example will serve to illustrate the gap between practice and reality: the writing and publishing of reports. The last chapter indicated how the gathering and dissemination of information represents an important component of anti-trafficking work in Benin. The discussion highlighted how, at times, one single document can be reported as an output by all of the various organisations linked in the disbursement chain that leads to its publication (the National Study being a good example, constituting an output for the commissioned consulting firm, the state, UNICEF and the US TIP Office). In considering this, Helen, who is both a former donor government minister and a former IO anti-trafficking head, as well as a globally-recognised critic of dominant anti-trafficking paradigms, had the following reflection to share:

‘I had much less freedom than I would have liked at my agency because I spoke out. We depended on funding, state government support and the OK of the Secretary General, who is always a political parachute appointee. Most of the time these guys just tow the line to ensure that the gravy train keeps rolling. *So not much happens; people just produce papers – cut and paste, cut and paste, cut and paste. There’s a reproduction of discursive activity without any practical action*’.

(Interview with Helen, 23/9/9)

Helen's words are crucial, for they reflect what many anti-trafficking actors privately bemoaned. In this field, there is great pressure to produce representable outputs and to be able to demonstrate that anti-trafficking money has been spent in 'fighting trafficking'. The agencies concerned must therefore be able to report that they have *done* 'x' or 'y', with the implication that 'x' or 'y' tangibly contributes to the fight against trafficking. In reality, however, since time-pressures are heavy and in light of the practical constraints on what can or cannot really be done, this often translates into agencies simply doing the easiest and least problematic thing – producing reports or having conferences. In discussing this, Rodrigo, who had global responsibility for his IO's anti-trafficking work, explained that the last project he had supervised 'was basically just seminar, seminar, seminar, conference. A waste of time. No results, an excuse to get together and eventually produce a report, after which people are happy, the money gets spent' (Interview with Rodrigo, 2/6/9). Likewise Martin, who complained of his former donor employers:

'The problem is that [we] have to demonstrate results and this creates issues for project work. The results-driven framework is one of the reasons why there are so many conferences and workshops – *people have to do something to justify their money and to show some form of tangible outcome*'.

(Interview with Martin, 8/6/9)

*The Symbolic-Economic Capital Trade-Off*

How can we make sense of what has been suggested above? In doing so, we must first note that running through and uniting each of the dynamics documented here there are two fundamental trends: 1) a degree of top-down control at least over representation, if not practice, secured principally through the exercise of economic power, largely in the form of conditional disbursement or the threat of its withdrawal; and 2) a degree of bottom-up representational (self-)discipline, irrespective of practice, explained as a result of the (assumed) threat of a loss of this representationally-conditional disbursement. How might this be interpreted?

As I suggested in Chapter 2, it would appear that within the anti-trafficking field, as is the case within many discourse and policy realms, there exists a kind of symbolic-economic capital trade-off (see Figure 2). This trade-off sees institutions possessing greater economic power (such as donor agencies) bestow economic capital on institutions with less economic power (such as host governments or NGOs), thereby guaranteeing reproduction for the latter. These latter, in return, ‘successfully’ use that capital (for instance on projects or policies), which consequently (translates into and) furnishes the provider of economic capital with the symbolic capital that they are able to then cash for their own reproduction. The consequences of this are significant.

First, as authors such as David Mosse (2004, 2005) have argued, in a prudence-inflected neoliberal world where ‘efficiency’ is the major criteria for the spending of public money, it is crucial for actors to be able to represent what they do as a well-planned and well-executed success. This leads to a reluctance on the part of

institutions to publicly question their pre-existing narratives and results in staff-members having to mould their representations of reality in order to have them conform to the contours of those narratives. It also results in bodies lower down the disbursement chain having to contort their representations so as to have them fit the terms dictated by those above, since economic capital bestows more immediate reproductive power than symbolic capital. Second, precisely what constitutes, defines (or delimits the definitions of) this success becomes enormously important to institutional survival.

Arguably, as the discussion in previous sections seems to imply, in a world in which the Neoliberal, Westphalian and Apollonian OOD are hegemonic (and in which that hegemony materially benefits certain powerful interests actively vested in its stability), ‘success’ is defined exactly along the lines of these very orders. Indeed, the discursive policing analysed above would appear to suggest that economic capital is disbursed within this field, just as symbolic capital is accrued, precisely by acting out (and thus recursively reproducing) the contours of these OOD themselves. As such, it might be assumed that the Neoliberal, Westphalian and Apollonian OOD (as well as the trafficking discourse and policy that they frame) can be understood as being sustained in relative stability by virtue of the dynamics operating within these kinds of symbolic-economic capital trade-offs (themselves of course symptomatic of the very OOD that shape them).

In reflecting on and providing further evidence to support this suggestion, it is worth remembering, with Erica Burman, that the notion of the (Apollonian) child has become ‘a signifier of “civilisation” and modernity’ in the contemporary world (in

Heissler 2009:19), such that ‘protecting’ children (according to the child’s Apollonian contours of constitution) has become the measure by which ‘the political and social condition of whole societies is gauged’ (UNICEF in Boyden 1997:218). Myriad data from my own research offer explicit support to this claim. Two examples will suffice.

The first is the Etireno affair, which sparked the explosion of interest in trafficking in Benin in the first place. Abidi, an IO employee working in Cotonou at the time, explained that ‘when the Etireno happened, it was a huge thing for us and *was amazing in terms of the mobilisation of resources*’ (Interview with Abidi, 12/1/10). Ayala, the former Beninese government minister responsible for children at the time of the crisis, concurred: ‘Some bodies used this for their own ends, to attract funding and attention’ (Interview with Ayala, 13/3/10), while employees of the very bodies she cited admitted as much. As Alexia, an INGO operative working in Benin, explained: ‘in child protection, you have to be fashionable to attract funding’. Or, in the words of Nina, ‘it’s all about being “sexy”, trafficking is sexy, so trafficking is the way we had to go. Plus, you must remember that suffering sells in Africa’ (Interview with Nina, 28/5/9). What does this mean? It means that those working in this field must (along narrow, neoliberal, Westphalian lines) eschew the international political economy of poverty or the messy reality that sometimes the young must take sub-optimal jobs for want of better alternatives, in order to instead promote the narrative of ‘innocent’ and enslaved children in need of rescue through individualized, country-based policy responses, since this is what fits within the framework of the narrative according to the lines of which funding will be secured.

Our second example concerns government behaviour. Jeremia, an IO employee with an intricate knowledge of the various political figures working in Benin, explained that the heavily anti-movement emphasis of the anti-trafficking law adopted by Benin's government was in large part the result of major pressure from one Minority World Embassy determined to see laws on the books as a representational signifier of success in its push on the anti-terror and security agenda. Though many civil society representatives privately opposed the extent to which the law adopted a draconian anti-movement tone, arguing that it would be un-enforceable given the mobility of the populace, embassy representatives were unmoved, and the Beninese government accepted that it needed to pass the law in order to ensure that the donor would continue offering its bilateral assistance (Interview with Jeremia, 2/9/7). Beyond securing this particular flow of resources by contorting its behaviour to provide the donor with the symbolic capital it required (through its being able to represent itself as having 'successfully' got Benin to adopt its legal framework<sup>70</sup>), the Beninese government also derived symbolic capital of its own from the move, which it was then able to translate into further funding. As Benin's senior civil servant working on trafficking explained:

'The law allowed us to move from Tier 3 to Tier 2 in the US's ranking of countries and it gave us a good image in Geneva, with the Commission on the Rights of the Child, and thus also with the donors'.

(Interview with Dibi, 10/3/10).

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<sup>70</sup> In Charles' terms, the donor needed to be able 'to stick a flag on something' (Interview with Charles, 10/6/9).

What this discussion makes clear, then, is that, although in practice there may be a huge divorce between representation and reality, and although representational (and thereby formal discursive and political) stability may hide a great deal of practical hybridity, the material and symbolic dynamics operative in this field ensure (relative) stability both for the hegemonic OOD structuring it and the anti-trafficking discourse and policy which forms a part of it. The theoretical implications of this are easy to imagine, and point to the nuanced explanation that this thesis has sought to offer for the persistence of anti-trafficking discourse and policy, in spite of empirical challenges to their accuracy and effectiveness. Indeed, rather than attribute that persistence mainly to the malevolence or ignorance of particular (collective) actors, we must in fact understand it predominantly as an instrument-effect consequence of the very structure of the field comprised by (the institutions forming and embodying) that discourse and policy. This is not to suggest that persistence is un-agentively pre-determined, or that it exists free from the expression of particular power relations. Far from it. As this chapter has documented, exercises of power are fundamental to the field, the situated agents I have researched make continual decisions to exercise their agency and thus recursively recreate those power relations, while agents beyond the scope of my study inevitably act to stabilise their form. Crucially, however, these exercises themselves exist within and are dialectical expressions of the wider structure of the social field and the social relations it embodies.

### **Part Three: Implications and Conclusions**

*'Nothing succeeds like failure'.*

*David Mosse*

What implications does the foregoing analysis have? What conclusions can be drawn? And where, if anywhere, can we go from here? In this, the thesis' final section, I will point to what I believe is suggested by the study presented, will touch on the contributions I believe it has made, and will indicate the future directions I think this research should take.

With regards to analytical conclusions, it is important first to underline that, as the critical literature suggests is the case more widely within the anti-trafficking field, Beninese trafficking discourse and policy are and remain problematic, they fail to understand, accurately represent or adequately tackle the realities they are supposed to engage. The anti-trafficking discourse rests on a narrow and reductive set of binaries which simply do not reflect the complexities of life lived on the margins of global capitalism. It flattens the terrain of the real to the fit the shape of a textual narrative which has itself emerged out of a social, cultural, political and economic context that bears little relation to life in Southern Benin. As a result, it pathologises the labour migration which, for many young males on the path to social adulthood and with responsibilities to their collectives, represents the best of a narrow set of options. It also consequently fails to get to grips with either the socio-cultural or political-economic backdrop to that labour migration, leading to the creation of

policy which in practice represents little more than an obstacle in the lives of young migrants and their communities.

Second, as a result of this, despite what is claimed, young people in Benin – as is the case elsewhere – still migrate to engage in the kinds of challenging labour which anti-trafficking policy is ostensibly designed to prevent. As Chapter 4 argued, young males in the Zou region *need* to migrate if they wish to access the money that is central to any individual or collective life-project. This has arguably been made all the more unavoidable by the persistence of US cotton subsidies and the collapse of international cotton prices to which they have been related. As such, not only is anti-trafficking policy apparently failing in its own terms; but its persistence in its current format forecloses the development of the kinds of alternatives – such as the amelioration of working conditions or reforms in the structure of the global political economy – which would perhaps be possible if discursive and material resources were otherwise targeted.

Third, whilst the thesis has argued that this problematic state of affairs cannot be attributed to the collective malevolence of corrupted anti-trafficking actors, there is no doubt that the instrument-effect consequences of the aggregated individual choices made *by* those actors are problematic, in particular for the people whose well-being (or lack thereof) represents the very justification for their employment in the first place. Indubitably, therefore, those actors face a very real choice between the salaries on which they and their families depend, and the production of accurate discourse and appropriate policy in the context of personal honesty and integrity. As Daisy complained, ‘the wages we are paid are a kind of corruption, the price for our

silence' (Interview with Daisy, 28/5/0). It seems likely that only when a critical mass of voices emerges prepared to break that silence that change will be forthcoming.

Fourth, if this change is indeed to arise, and if at its core it will involve a genuine effort to protect the kinds of vulnerable labour migrants with whom I have conducted my research, it will need to be both participatory and political. Pathologising and consequently attempting to outlaw certain behaviour without understanding or engaging either its nature or its context is and will continue to be highly problematic. Understanding lived realities means beginning from the level of those realities, while policies designed to ameliorate them must be developed collaboratively and with an eye to the very real political-economic factors that shape them.

Fifth, and in the absence of these changes, one can only conclude that the prime achievement of the currently hegemonic anti-trafficking paradigm is and will continue to be to a-politically draw attention *away* from the unjust and hypocritical political-economic conditions underpinning the very factors that it blames for the emergence of that which it defines as trafficking in the first place, and to reproduce both the institutions existing within it and the problematic OOD (and power relations) that structure it. In light of this, one might conclude that the material reproduction of these institutions, their OOD and the individual livelihoods existing within them is bought at the price of the very target communities they are ostensibly intended to help. As David Mosse states, 'nothing succeeds like failure'. The question, of course, is 'failure for whom?', since in this instance, failure has been spectacularly successful in ensuring that the system is able to reproduce itself without any significant alterations to its form.

### Contributions and Future Directions

This thesis has, I believe, made a number of unique contributions to the field. At its outset, I explained that I intended for it to fill a number of key gaps within the literature. First was to document more fully and in greater detail than had previously been the case the nature and extent of the child trafficking discourse, as a distinct sub-element of the wider discourse on human trafficking. Chapter 5 has gone some way to achieving this aim, and in its deconstruction I believe I have shown that many of the problems plaguing the reductive discourse on trafficking around women are paralleled with regards to children.

A second goal sought by this thesis was to attempt to begin redressing the existing gender bias within both the hegemonic trafficking paradigm and the critical literature working to challenge it. Though one study among hundreds can never fully overturn this bias, by documenting in the depth that I have the social, cultural and economic experience of the male adolescent labour migration understood as trafficking in Southern Benin, I hope I have gone some way to achieving my goal.

My third signal intention in undertaking this research was to go beyond the surface-level critiques of (the effects of) dominant anti-trafficking paradigms and to offer what, to my knowledge, is the most in-depth, empirically-based critical analysis of the inner-workings of the anti-trafficking field itself. Dissatisfied as I was with existing explanations for the nature and operation of that field, this thesis attempted to offer a more rigorous account of it than those which currently exist. While what is presented here cannot claim to be the final word in a discussion as complex as this,

there is no doubt that the analysis I have offered provides fertile ground for further and better-informed debate.

At a more basic level, this thesis has also provided what is, to my understanding, the first overarching and field-wide documentation of anti-trafficking discourse and policy in Benin. Other studies have hinted in this direction (see Alber 2011 and Morganti 2011), but none have engaged the anti-trafficking world with the depth and breadth that characterises this study. It is hoped, therefore, that the inroads made here will be of use to those who choose to take their investigations further, which is of unquestioned importance in a case as emblematic as that of the Beninese.

There are, of course, more questions raised by an investigation such as this one than there are answers provided. Primary among those is whether what I have concluded in the case of Benin could be applicable elsewhere. As has been stated, to my knowledge, no study has delved so deeply into the inner-workings and power relations structuring the anti-trafficking field. Are the same OOD as important in other countries and in the case of adult men and women? Do all anti-trafficking institutions find themselves constrained by, and contributing to the reproduction of, hegemonic OOD in quite the same fashion as those documented here? What comparative studies could be conceived of to build an answer to this question?

Another question worth posing is the extent to which the hegemonic trafficking paradigm represents an inherent component of the (neo)liberal state-citizen dialectic. What do I mean by this? If, as has been argued, the OOD structuring the anti-trafficking field contribute to the reproduction of the (neo)liberal homo economics,

as well as the nuclear and market-oriented family best able to provide him; and if, as we saw, those OOD also contribute to the (re)production of the kind of state able both to subjectivise the homo economicus and to adopt the *de jure* frameworks necessary to guarantee at once the market economy and the false binaries underpinning the contractualism at the basis of liberal capitalism (adult/child, free choice/force); might it not be fair to wonder whether the dominant line of force within the anti-trafficking field is to interpret phenomena which fall *outside* this liberal paradigm as somehow pathological and thus to discipline them back *inside* the contours of that paradigm, thereby reproducing it and the structures that frame it?

Speculative though it may be, a further question arising from this is how far can the very *concept* of trafficking, relying as it does on what are empirically questionable binaries, actually be understood as a *necessity* within the overarching dominance of the conceptual framework at the basis of (neo)liberal capitalism? If the contract is always and everywhere supposedly between putatively ‘freely’ consenting and fully agentive adult individuals who choose to engage their labour as a factor of production, how do we account for those whose choice has been so narrowed by structure as to be almost meaningless? Are the poor, young, international labour migrants I have documented not in fact a threat to the entire conceptual-systemic edifice? And, if they are, might we not understand the image of the anomalous trafficker and the extreme trafficking experience which have emerged to account for them as precisely the Derridean ‘outside’ on which that entire systemic edifice rests? I would contend that we can, and it shall be to what follows this thesis that I leave space for proving or disproving that contention.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### EXTRACT FROM A 2005 PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

*When I began working on child trafficking in Benin, I was entirely embedded within the dominant discursive framework that this thesis has sought to expose and deconstruct. I am therefore deeply sympathetic to the many actors who exist within it and whose performance perpetuates it. As an indication of just how far I had internalised precisely that which I now critique, I include here an extract from a presentation I wrote for a colleague to be given at the CRC in Geneva.*

#### 1) Principle Examples of the Violation of Children's Rights

##### i) Child Trafficking

Child Trafficking is one of the most serious problems facing Benin today. Despite the recent surge in media attention and NGO interest, the practice seems to be increasingly frequent and affects almost every family in rural Benin. The trends observed can be divided into two distinct groups: domestic trafficking, from one region of Benin to another, and cross-border trafficking, where Beninese children are taken abroad to work.

The most common form of domestic trafficking is very difficult to identify and is linked to the traditional practice of *Vidomègon*, or “Placement of Children.” A *vidomègon* is a child entrusted to another family in the hope of ensuring for him or her an education and a better future. What was once a mark of solidarity between members of the same family or community has now mutated into a veritable form of trafficking, with children often placed via an intermediary in families with no link to their own. The child can be placed in exchange for a small sum, reducing him or her to the status of an object to be traded, or given to a family as a domestic servant in exchange for food and board. In either case the result is often the same: unless the child is lucky enough to be placed in a caring, honest family, he or she will be exploited like a slave, will remain unpaid for his/her labour and will often suffer extremely degrading treatment including physical and sexual abuse.

International trafficking follows similarly worrying patterns. In July 2004, 27 children aged between 6 and 12 were intercepted at the border on their way to Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire. According to the children, they had left home with the consent of their parents and were on their way to become labourers in foreign plantations and mines. Similarly, 8 Togolese girls were intercepted at the Benin-Togo border on their way to Cotonou to become domestic servants.

Benin therefore appears to be a real hub of trafficking in the West African sub-region, serving as a country of origin, destination and transit. If it is girls that find themselves most frequently trafficked internally from rural to urban centres where

they act as domestic servants, boys are the most likely victims of cross-border trafficking, as their labour is exploited in the region's large plantations and mines.

The main causes of this phenomenon are reported to be respectively the failure of the education system, parental ignorance, unemployment and poverty, the disintegration of traditional social structures, the increased need for cheap labour, the non-prosecution of perpetrators and inefficient border control.

## ii) Child Sexual Exploitation

Intrinsically linked to child trafficking in Benin is the sexual exploitation of children. Mike Dottridge, the former Director of Anti Slavery International, writes that this is the phenomenon "that most clearly makes child trafficking a gender issue." Some female child domestic workers are subject to continual sexual abuse at the hands of their guardians whilst a worrying number of young girls are promised an education, a job and a better future only to find themselves forced into prostitution for the commercial gain of their 'owners'.

Other than these more 'obvious' forms of abuse, we must also highlight the widespread traditional practices in Benin which, although less well documented, still constitute serious forms of sexual exploitation. The practice of dowry, though thoroughly condemned, is still prevalent. Marriage of girls represents, therefore, a non-negligible source of income for the family, reducing the female child to the status of an object. In some areas, girls as young as 12 to 15 are given in marriage to older men, putting them at greater risk of physical and sexual violence.

Similarly, although illegal, forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation are also pervasive in Northern Beninese societies. Not only do both practices violate the basic freedoms to which all children are entitled, but they have damaging physical and psychological health consequences that can stay with a woman throughout her life.

### iii) Infanticide

Some of Northern Benin's most traditional groups still consider certain children as 'evil sorcerers'. According to customary beliefs, these 'cursed' children include:

- those whose mothers die in childbirth
- those born 'upside down'
- those whose first teeth appear in the upper palate

Any of these criteria can effectively condemn a child to certain death, as can being born with a noticeable handicap. These 'abnormal' children are said to bring bad luck to the community, ruining its spiritual harmony and, as such, are given by the local chief to a man whose responsibility it is to dispose of the child. The procedures for killing these children are extraordinarily brutal and include the smashing of the baby against a tree or the cutting of its throat. Those children who manage to avoid their tragic fate are entrusted to anyone who will take them, often families reputed for being able to 'cure' their evils and who benefit from these children by keeping them as virtual slaves.

If infanticide is not criminalized in Benin, homicide certainly is and can be used to prosecute these offences. The problem is that such cases are seldom denounced as witnesses are rarely forthcoming. Despite the Committee on the Rights of the Child's 1999 Recommendations, it seems that Benin has made little progress in tackling this particular and tragic problem.

#### iv) Child Labour

With article 166, the 1998 Beninese Labour Code prohibits the employment of children under 14 in any enterprise. However, in a country where people fight a daily battle for survival, children constitute a labour resource that simply cannot remain untapped. Child labour and child exploitation therefore naturally constitute daily realities in Benin and affect children both older and younger than 14 years of age. According to one study by UNICEF, around 500,000 children are currently working throughout the country.

Many children work in the agricultural sector (in fields or plantations), on construction sites, as domestic servants and as street vendors. Children are a cheap and easily malleable source of labour and in a region struggling to develop economically, they represent an integral if illegal part of almost every sector.

Unfortunately however, their young age and small size leaves them in a position of acute vulnerability. Ill-treatment of working children, including physical, sexual and psychological abuse, is reported to be frequent, whilst the negative effects on their education and development are self-evident.

v) State Failure to Guarantee Education for Children

Benin's Constitution guarantees equal access to education to all its citizens and recognises governmental responsibility to ensure that this principle is applied. The Constitution further states that primary education is mandatory and that, as the country develops economically, this will progressively become free to all.

Although the government recently moved to make primary education free to all children in rural areas, in practice many children of poor families do not attend school or drop out due to the informal costs still involved. For instance, the UN Independent Expert on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty highlights that parents in rural areas have to contribute to the construction of the school, not to mention the buying of the equipment their children will need. Moreover, in many rural areas school attendance is seen as a luxury that few can afford as families bear an indirect cost of educating their children in losing an extra pair of hands in the field.

Economic factors aside, we must also highlight the geographical, environmental and cultural barriers preventing all Beninese children from enjoying their right to an education. Many rural communities live too far away from schools to be able to attend whilst rural schools are often so flimsily constructed that the rainy season sees them effectively closed. On the cultural level, it must be noted that traditional views with regards women and the girl child significantly contribute to the low level of female attendance at school. Educating daughters is often seen as a waste of time and

money since they will just leave the family when they marry and have children of their own to look after.

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

*Below are the outline interview schedules I used to guide me during my research. These are divided according to the 'type' and positionality of the various interviewees I accessed and in line with the kinds of information I was seeking. Questions are not ordered sequentially. Although always mindful of this guide, the actual phrasing of questions and the content of each discussion evolved relatively organically.*

#### **Interviewees In Benin**

##### ***Migrant Sending Communities:***

##### ***- Village Children***

- What do you think of the prospect of going away to work?
- Have you ever migrated, done *djoko*? What was your experience?
- Do you know anyone who has?
- Why do people migrate? Why not? What do you think of going away?
- Who goes?
- Who decides?
- What would you like to do when you are older?
- What is it to be a successful migrant? A successful villager?

- How does one become a man/woman in your community?
- Who makes decisions in your household?
- What do you think of the village committees?
- What about the NGOs, the state, or the other foreigners who come to your village?  
What do you tell them when they come?
- Tell me about the national anti-trafficking law.
- Why do you think people say you shouldn't go away? What do they say at school?
- What do you think of elsewhere, Cotonou, Nigeria or *yovotomè*?
- What does 'trafficking' or 'exploitation' mean to you? Is the work that people do in Nigeria 'kanoumon'?
- What do you know about work in Nigeria? What are the conditions and arrangements?
- What do you want to be when you grow up?
- How could life improve here for you?
- What does your ideal world look like?

*With those young people I interviewed who were current or former migrants and who worked in the gravel pits in Nigeria, questions were of course more focussed, including much of the above and also questions such as those below.*

- Can you tell me your about your life? What is your history?
- Tell me about your migration.
- When did you leave? How? Who with? Who decided? Why?
- How is the work? Can you describe it? What are the conditions?
- What do you earn?

- Would you go back? What would you advise others?
- What are your plans now?

**- *Village Adults***

- Have you ever migrated, done *djoko*? What was your experience?
- What do you think of children going away to work?
- Do you know anyone who has?
- Why do they? Why don't they? Who goes?
- Who decides?
- What is it to be a successful migrant? A successful villager? What is failure?
- Who makes decisions in your household?
- What do you think of the village committees?
- What about the NGOs, the state, or the other foreigners who come to your village?  
What do you tell them when they come? Do you engage in performance?
- What do you think about being encouraged not to let children migrate?
- What do you think of the government? What are your dealings with them? Do they come to the village?
- How do people get round the authorities?
- Tell me about the national anti-trafficking law.
- How could life improve here for you?
- What does 'trafficking' or 'exploitation' mean to you? Is the work that people do in Nigeria 'kanoumon'?
- What do you know about work in Nigeria? What are the conditions and arrangements?

- What policies would you like to see to protect your children?
- What does your ideal world look like?

*With those adults I interviewed who were current or former migrants and who worked in the gravel pits in Nigeria, questions were of course more focussed, including much of the above and also questions such as those below.*

- Can you tell me your about your life? What is your history?
- Tell me about your migration.
- When did you leave? How? Who with? Who decided?
- How is the work? Can you describe it? What are the conditions?
- What do you earn?
- Would you go back? What would you advise others?

***- Village Vigilance Committees Members***

- Tell me the history of the committee? How was it formed? How did you become involved? What work does it do? How often do you meet? Who is part of it?
- How do people perceive the committee? Are you respected? Do they listen to you?
- Have you ever migrated, done *djoko*? What was your experience?
- What do you think of children going away to work? How did you form this opinion?
- Do you know anyone who has?
- Why do they? Why don't they?
- Do you try to stop them? Why? What do people say? What if they want to leave?

- What is it to be a successful migrant? A successful villager? What is failure?
- What about the NGOs, the state, or the other foreigners who come to your village?
- What do you think of the government? What are your dealings with them?
- Tell me about the national anti-trafficking law.
- What does 'trafficking' or 'exploitation' mean to you? Is the work that people do in Nigeria 'kanoumon'?
- How could life improve here for you?
- What does your ideal world look like?

***Those Involved with Cotton:***

***- Cotton Farmers***

- Can you tell me about cotton farming here? What is the process? Who is involved?
- When were prices high? What was life like then?
- How has life changed since prices fell?
- Why did prices fall?
- What happened to the quality of inputs like fertiliser?
- What work do people do now cotton isn't working?
- Did *afoutame* increase after the price fall?
- What about migration?

***- Employees in the Cotton Sector***

- Can you tell me about cotton farming here? What is the process? Who is involved?

- How is the network and market organised?
- What changed with liberalisation?
- How are prices set?
- When were prices high? What was life like then?
- Does a price increase at the national level translate down to the farm-gate?
- How has life changed since prices fell?
- Why did prices fall?
- What do you know/think about international subsidies?
- What happened to the quality of inputs like fertiliser?
- What work do people do now cotton isn't working? What crops/agricultural market can replace cotton?
- Did *afoutame* increase after the price fall?

***Discourse, Policy and Project Actors:***

***- NGO Employees***

- How did you become involved in this field?
- What are your projects? Who decides on them?
- How have they changed?
- Do you do 'sensitisation'?
- Who funds you? What are your relations with donors?
- What do you think about government anti-trafficking efforts?
- What about the IOs?
- How could your work and experience in the field be improved?

- What do you think of children going away to work?
- How could life improve here for the people you work with?
- What does 'trafficking' or 'exploitation' mean to you?
- How, in your ideal world, would you eradicate trafficking?

**- *Local Government Officials, Including Police***

- What are your efforts against trafficking? How have these changed?
- Tell me about the government's work more generally in this field. What is your relationship with your hierarchy?
- What would you need to make governance and your role more effective?
- Why do people migrate here? Who migrates?
- Would you prefer less mobility amongst the people?
- Tell me about the national anti-trafficking law.
- What are your relations with donors? What do you think of them?
- What about NGOs, IOs and foreign visitors?
- How could life improve here for the communities you represent? What is needed?
- What does 'trafficking' or 'exploitation' mean to you?
- How, in your ideal world, would you eradicate trafficking?

**- *IO and INGO Employees***

- What do you think of the government's efforts?
- What are your projects? How have they changed?
- How are your funding priorities aligned?

- What is your relationship with your superiors/inferiors?
- Can you tell me about report writing? Are you free to say what you want?
- How much do you coordinate with the donor community?
- Tell me about the national anti-trafficking law.
- Why are people trafficked here? What causes trafficking?
- What about cotton and subsidies?
- How, in your ideal world, would you eradicate trafficking? What constraints do you face?
- What if children have no choice but to migrate or work or if they say they want to? Agency?

***- Beninese Central Government Officials***

- What are your efforts against trafficking? How have these changed?
- Why did trafficking explode on the scene in the early 200s? Why is Benin a 'hub'?
- What are your relations with donors?
- What about US pressure?
- What are the problems you face in carrying out your work?
- Can you tell me about report writing? Are you free to say what you want?
- What would you need to make governance more efficient?
- Would you prefer less mobility amongst the people?
- What if children have no choice but to migrate or work or if they say they want to? Agency?
- Tell me about the national anti-trafficking law. What do you say to those who say it is anti-movement?

- Why are people trafficked here? What causes trafficking?
- What role does research play in what you do?
- What about cotton and subsidies? 'Poverty'?
- How, in your ideal world, would you eradicate trafficking? What constraints do you face?

***- The Donor Community***

- What do you think of the government's efforts?
- What are your projects? How have they changed? Why?
- How are they established? What role does research play?
- How are your funding priorities aligned?
- What is your relationship with your superiors/inferiors?
- Can you tell me about report writing? Are you free to say what you want?
- What, for you, is success?
- What would you do in the ideal world to fight against trafficking?
- Why is trafficking such a major issue? Or is this changing?
- What are your relations with those elsewhere on your institutional chain?
- Tell me about the national anti-trafficking law. What was your role in this?
- Why are people trafficked here? What causes trafficking?
- What about cotton and subsidies? 'Poverty'?
- How, in your ideal world, would you eradicate trafficking? What constraints do you face?
- How should children and families be living?

- What if children have no choice but to migrate or work or if they say they want to? Agency?

**Interviewees in (or related to) Abeokuta, Nigeria**

*This was my migrant destination site and so most questions pertained to the nature of the work, migration and wider economy of the area.*

- Can you describe to me the process of people moving to Abeokuta for work?
- Why did you come here/go there for work?
- What is the apprenticeship like? What are the working conditions?
- How much does one earn?
- What is the role of the 'boss'/can you tell me your role as a boss?
- Who looks after the workers?
- How do you go about getting around the authorities? What is the relationship with them?
- What are the relations between the different classes involved in the gravel trade?
- How are prices and wages decided and negotiated?
- How do people at 'home' view what you do/did?
- How did this all start? What is the history?

**'International' Interviewees**

*This body of interviewees included people who had previously worked in Benin but had subsequently left the country, those working in Organisational Headquarters, in*

*Regional Offices or in other Country Offices, donor politicians and their staff, and other individuals with an important perspective on anti-trafficking discourse, policy and practice more generally.*

**- IO and INGO Employees**

- Why is trafficking such a major issue? Or is this changing?
  - What are your projects? How have they changed? Why?
  - How are they established? What role does research play?
  - How often are young people consulted in what you do?
  - How are your funding priorities aligned?
  - What are your relations with those elsewhere on your institutional chain?
  - What are your relations with donor/government/NGOs?
  - Can you tell me about report writing? Are you free to say what you want?
  - What room to manoeuvre do you have? Have you ever changed discourse?
  - What, for you, is success?
  - Why is migration so targeted? What about forced labour?
  - What would you do in the ideal world to fight against trafficking? What constraints do you face?
  - Why are people trafficked? What causes trafficking?
  - What about cotton and subsidies? 'Poverty'?
  - How should children and families be living?
  - What if children have no choice but to migrate or work or if they say they want to?
- Agency?

**- *The Donor Community***

- Why is trafficking such a major issue? Or is this changing?
- What are your projects? How have they changed? Why?
- How are they established? What role does research play?
- How often are young people consulted in what you do?
- How are your funding priorities aligned?
- What are your relations with those elsewhere on your institutional chain?
- Can you tell me about report writing? Are you free to say what you want?
- What, for you, is success?
- Why is migration so targeted? What about forced labour?
- What would you do in the ideal world to fight against trafficking? What constraints do you face?
- Why are people trafficked? What causes trafficking?
- What about cotton and subsidies? 'Poverty'?
- How should children and families be living?

## APPENDIX C

### TABLE OF INTERVIEWEES

*This table contains information on all of the formal interviews/focus groups I conducted for my research. Some of those featured here were interviewed more than once. Many inhabited multiple different positionalities. Most were spoken to informally in a manner that would class as participant observation but not an interview.*

#### **Interviews from Masters Fieldwork**

##### **- Interviews With Children**

<b>Codename</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Positionality</b>
Henry	24/07/2007	M	14	Scratch-card-Seller
Henrietta	24/07/2007	F	13	Street-hawker
Elisabeth	25/07/2007	F	13	At School/Former Domestic Servant/Market-Seller
Regan	25/07/2007	F	16	At School/Former Domestic Servant/Market-Seller

Yasmine	25/07/2007	F	15	At School/Former Domestic Servant/Market-Seller
Yolanda	26/07/2007	F	10/11	Former Domestic Worker
Joss	06/08/2007	F	16	Former Domestic Worker
Bridget	06/07/2007	F	15	Former Domestic Worker
Clemence	06/07/2007	F	16	Former Domestic Worker
Jen	06/07/2007	F	9	Street-hawker
Lilian	07/08/2007	F	13	Lived with Uncle
Fernanda	07/08/2007	F	10	Former Hairdressing Apprentices
Jess	09/08/2007	F	10ish	Former Domestic Servant/Market-Seller
Nicola	09/08/2007	F	16	Former Domestic Worker
Pip	08/08/07,04/09/07,05/09/07	F	8	Summertime Pineapple-Sellers/ Schoolchildren
Nape	08/08/07,04/09/07,05/09/07	M	10	Summertime Pineapple-Sellers/

				Schoolchildren
Celia	08/08/07,04/09/07,05/09/07	F	16	Summertime Pineapple-Sellers/ Schoolchildren
Ethan	12/08/2007	M	17	Street Scratch-card-Seller
Gabby	14/08/2007	F	16	Former Domestic Worker
Ewan	16/08/2007	M	13	Summertime Pineapple-Seller/Schoolboy
Pierre	22/08/2007	M	14	Apprentice Blacksmith
Frank	22/08/2007	M	16	Apprentice Blacksmith
Didier	22/08/2007	M	13ish	Apprentice Blacksmith
Milton	22/08/2007	M	10	Apprentice Blacksmith
Darren	22/08/2007	M	13	Apprentice Blacksmith
John	24/08/2007	M	12	Apprentice Blacksmith
Jules	24/08/2007	M	14	Apprentice

				Blacksmith
Erick	24/08/2007	M	10	Apprentice Blacksmith
Christophe	24/08/2007	M	16	Apprentice Blacksmith
Euan	24/08/2007	M	15	Street Scratch-card- Seller

**- Interviews with Adults**

<b>Codename</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Positionality</b>
Nourredine	24/07/2007	M	50s	Child NGO Director
"	18/08/2007	"	"	"
Elisabeth's Father	25/07/2007	M	45	Farmer/Father of Elisabeth, Sehere Village
Teddy	25/07/2007	M	35	Farmer/Former 'Trafficker'
Sam	08/08/2007	M	45	NGO Worker
Steve	09/08/2007	M	30	Placement Intermediary
Red	18/08/2007	M	45	Bureaucrat
Freddy	18/08/2007	M	60S	Village Elder/Carpenter
Giles	18/08/2007	M	30s/40s	Village Elder
Gary	18/08/2007	M	30	Unknown
Winston	21/08/2007	M	35ish	Fisherman

Wilis	21/08/2007	M	35ish	Fisherman
Adri	21/08/2007	M	21	Fisherman
Adam	21/08/2007	M	40	Fisherman
Olaf	24/08/2007	M	42	NGO Child Policy Specialist
"	28/08/2007	"	"	"
Cory	28/08/2007	M	40s	NGO Child Policy Specialist
Mary	30/08/2007	F	29	Child NGO Employee
Cynthia	30/08/2007	F	50	State Social Worker
Trevor	30/08/2007	M	40s	Former 'Trafficker', now Photographer
Tim	30/08/2007	M	35	Former 'Trafficker', now Labourer in Abeokuta
PJ	30/08/2007	M	40	Farmer/Father of Girl in Care, Sehere Village
Group1	30/08/2007	M	Elderly	Farmer/Grandfather of Boy in Care, Sehere Village
"	30/08/2007	M	Elderly	Farmer/Villager, Sehere
"	30/08/2007	M	Elderly	Farmer/Villager, Sehere
Yomana	01/09/2007	M	22	School-goer/Odd Jobs
Frederic	01/09/2007	M	27	School-goer/Farmer
Bernard	01/09/2007	M	22	School-goer
Paul	01/09/2007	M	22	Apprentice Mechanic

Sandra	01/09/2007	F	45	Senior Child NGO Staff Member
Alexia	02/09/2007	F	35	Senior Religious NGO Staff Member
Jeremia	0209/2007	M	35	Major International Organisation Representative

### **Interviews from Doctoral Fieldwork**

#### ***Migrant Sending Communities:***

#### ***Za-Kpota Commune***

#### ***- Sehere Village***

<b>Codename</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Positionality/ Relevant Information</b>
Cliff	7/4/10	Village chief and head of village committee.
Shia	7/4/10	School-goer, working to climb the literacy and employment tree, in his 20s.
David	12/4/10	Member of VC.
Tom	12/4/10	Member of VC.
Artur	12/4/10	Village adult; advisor to the chief.
CS	12/4/10	Village adult; chief's son and a former child labour migrant

		to Cote d'Ivoire.
Group 14	14/5/10	15 boys, all of whom had previously done <i>djoko</i> . Also three adult former teenage migrants who go still go off for <i>djoko</i> in their summers to pay for school fees.
Group 10	10/5/10	A group of seven women traders.

**- Zelele Village**

<b>Codename</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Positionality/ Relevant Information</b>
Group 4	19/4/10	Six adult women, plus Filili, an adolescent migrant worker.
Charley	19/4/10	Village chief, head of VC.
Group 5	26/4/10	10 adults. One was a former teenage labour migrant, two were VC members.
Group 7	3/5/10	Five young adult male former adolescent labour migrants. Their codenames are: Jay, John, Jay-Jay, Jojo, Jeg.
Rory	10/5/10	
Pietro	10/5/10	A former adolescent labour migrant.
Placido	10/5/10	A teenage former migrant labourer.
Petrov	10/5/10	A former migrant worker in Abeokuta.
Group 13	14/5/10	A group of seven teenage boys, most of whom had migrated previously for work.

*Zogbodomey Commune**- Tenga Village*

<b>Codename</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Positionality/ Relevant Information</b>
Group 3	16/4/10	A focus group discussion with 20 people, including seven men, seven women and six teenage boys.
Group 8	9/5/10	Another focus group with 10 people, including the village chief.
Group 11	14/5/10	Nine boys, 6 girls, all teenagers.

*- Atomè Village*

<b>Codename</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Positionality/ Relevant Information</b>
Group 12	14/5/10	15 boys, 4 girls, mainly schoolchildren but some former migrant as well.
Group 6	28/4/10	A large group interview/focus group with 25 people present. Five adult men, including the village head, seven adult women, 14 adolescents, of whom five had previously migrated for work and later recounted their migration history.
Group 9	9/5/10	Three women traders

*Those in Abeokuta or with a Relationship to the Mine Economy:*

<b>Codename</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Positionality/ Relevant Information</b>
Group 2	12/4/10	A collection of seven adult males, all of whom were either current or former ‘bosses’ in the gravel pits, some of whom had been identified as ‘traffickers’.
Eddie	22/1/12	INGO worker who has played a key role in the gravel pits for the past number of years, working as the link between the sending communities in Benin, those working in Abeokuta and the authorities.
Group 15	23/1/12	Eddie’s colleagues.
Trevor	24/1/12	Trevor, the ‘former trafficker’ I first met in 2007, explaining everything to do with the gravel pit economy.
Group 16	24/1/12	10 adult males, all current or former ‘bosses’, all therefore former teenage migrant mine workers, all officially ‘traffickers’ or ‘employers of the worst forms of child labour.
Group 17	25/1/12	Three former teenage migrant mine workers, now back at home on the Beninese side of the border, in a village adjacent to Sehere.
JR	25/1/12	Key, senior INGO figure serving much the same role as Eddie. Many years of experience working with the gravel

		pit economy. JR is also a pivotal INGO figure working on trafficking in Benin, having previously also worked for his organisations HQ with responsibility for Benin.
Adie	25/1/12	A senior figure in the same organisation, formerly one of the state's most important anti-trafficking Child and Family Ministry employees.
Group 18	30/1/12	This group interview was actually a collection of interviews with current teenage migrant quarry workers from my sending community villages in Benin.
GL	30/1/12	This woman was a gravel dealer, one of the chief figures in the local economy.
PB et al.	3/2/12	PB and his associates are the leaders of the Beninese community in Ogun State, Nigeria. They are local power-brokers and expatriate representatives
Jack	4/2/2	Jack is a teenage migrant worker currently work in Abeokuta's quarries.
Zeze	4/2/2	Zeze is also a teenage migrant worker currently work in Abeokuta's quarries.
Julian	4/2/2	Julian is also a teenage migrant worker currently work in Abeokuta's quarries..
Zack	7/2/2	Zack is also a teenage migrant worker currently work in Abeokuta's quarries.

*Those Involved with Cotton:*

<b>Codename</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Positionality/ Relevant Information</b>
Numerous		A very large number of those I interviewed in my sending community villages were or had been cotton farmers.
Camilo	9/4/10	Former Agricultural Extension Agent
Donald	26/4/10	Senior figure within the state's regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture.
Dravid	26/4/10	Senior figure within the state's regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture.
Vakiri	29/4/10	Senior figure within the state's regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture, specialist on cotton.
Marcello	29/4/10	Senior figure within the state's regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture; input expert.
Alasatair	28/4/10	Head of regional office of a national agricultural research body. Global cotton expert.
Yegbi	28/4/10	Senior figure within state's cotton firm.
Fadiga	28/4/19	Senior figure within state's cotton firm.
Octavio	29/4/10	Representative of the cotton producer's union.

***Discourse, Policy and Project Actors in Benin (or Formerly Based in Benin):***

<b>Codename</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Positionality/ Relevant Information</b>
Cecilie	17/12/9	Donor government representative in Cotonou.
Sandra	Feb-10	Donor government representative in Cotonou.
Idyl	Mar-10	Donor government representative in Cotonou.
Banda	2/3/10	Donor government representative in Cotonou.
Antienne	4/3/10	Donor government representative in Cotonou.
Jayjay	2/4/10	Donor government representative in Cotonou.
Toto	3/3/10	Major national law enforcement figure with responsibility for the fight against trafficking.
Moussa	9/3/10	Senior figure within the Child and Family Ministry.
Deg	10/3/10	Senior figure within the Child and Family Ministry.
Dibi	10/3/10	Senior figure within the Child and Family Ministry.
Salama	11/3/10	Senior figure within the Child and Family Ministry.
Gigi	11/3/10	Senior figure within the Child and Family Ministry.
Ayala	13/3/10	Former Beninese Child and Family Minister; currently a major NGO figure involved with the fight against trafficking.
Didi	2/4/10	Senior Ministry of Justice official with national responsibility for children's issues and anti-trafficking policy.

Veronica	16/3/10	Senior local/regional government official heavily involved in anti-trafficking work and with responsibility for my sending communities. Child and Family Ministry representative.
Jemima	17/3/10	Local/regional government official heavily involved in anti-trafficking work and with responsibility for my sending communities.
Marti	23/3/10	Senior local/regional government official heavily involved in anti-trafficking work and with responsibility for my sending communities. Child and Family Ministry representative.
Cecile	22/3/10	Local/regional government official heavily involved in anti-trafficking work and with responsibility for my sending communities.
Cynthia	31/3/10	Senior local/regional government official heavily involved in anti-trafficking work and with responsibility for my sending communities. Child and Family Ministry representative.
Cyril	6/4/10	Local/regional government official heavily involved in anti-trafficking work and with responsibility for my sending communities. Ministry of Justice (police) representative.
Celestin	7/4/10	Local/regional government official heavily involved in anti-trafficking work and with responsibility for my sending

		communities. Ministry of Justice (police) representative.
Phil	9/11/09	Former Representative of an IO country office in Benin.
Abidi	12/1/10	Former Senior Figure with responsibility for anti-trafficking strategy for an IO in Benin.
Donald	12/1/10	Former Senior Figure with responsibility for anti-trafficking strategy for an IO in Benin.
Alec	23/2/10	Major IO employee overseeing work on trafficking.
Lokkie	25/2/12	Alec's successor.
Olaf	15/1/10	Key INGO figure in the community designing anti-trafficking policy in Benin. Was based in Benin, became a regional representative.
Adebe	25/2/10	INGO representative in Cotonou.
AB	27/10/09	Beninese NGO figure working on trafficking.
Tata	7/4/10	Beninese NGO figure working on trafficking.
Walter	Often	Beninese NGO figure working on trafficking.
Faure	3/5/10	Beninese NGO figure working on trafficking.

*Discourse, Policy and Project Actors based internationally:*

<b>Codename</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Positionality/ Relevant Information</b>
Matt	16/9/09	Senior Donor Government Representative working on trafficking at the central governmental level.
Rosa	23/10/09	Senior Donor Government Representative working on trafficking at the central governmental level. Chief of staff for one of the world's most important politicians in regards to anti-trafficking and anti- child labour work.
Linda	22/10/09	Senior Donor Government Representative working on trafficking at the central governmental level.
Charlene	22/10/09	Senior Donor Government Representative working on trafficking at the central governmental level.
Martin	8/6/09	Senior Donor Government Representative working on trafficking at the central governmental level.
Cheng	29/10/09	Senior Donor Government Representative working on trafficking at the central governmental level.
Handel	21/5/09	His IO's global head of anti-trafficking strategy.
Mitch	3/6/09	Statistical researcher on child labour and trafficking, HQ, with experience at HQ and country level.
Yaya	3/6/09	Statistical researcher on child labour and trafficking, HQ, with experience at HQ and country level.

Bibi	4/6/09	Chief education strategist, big figure in his IOs global efforts against child labour.
Jeffrey	8/6/09	His IO's legal chief, massive experience of anti-trafficking work at HQ and in country offices.
Franz	9/6/09	Global head of his IO's research division.
Cat	21/5/09	Important figure in her IOs global work against forced labour, also working on trafficking, norm promotion and discourse creation.
Gigi	3/6/09	As above.
Ronald	8/6/09	Chief of one of his IOs global programmes. Important figure in the international definition of and work against forced labour and trafficking.
Iggy	9/6/09	Head of one of his IOs global programmes, migration specialist and academic. Deeply critical of the organisation in which he works.
Carl	9/6/09	His IO's fundraising chief, has major responsibility for donor relations. Has worked at country level on trafficking.
Nathan	11/6/09	Important figure in his IOs work on norm promotion.
Andrea	20/5/09	Current donor government agent, has formerly worked on the trafficking brief for a major IO.
Liz	28/7/09	Pivotal figure in the debates around the definition of trafficking during the 2000s. Deeply critical of hegemonic position. Experienced major pressure, publicly and privately, when in the employ of one major IO.

Lulu	28/7/09	Former IO employee; academic who has conducted similar research to my own and who shared key participant observation perspectives regarding institutional operations.
Ellen	6/9/09	Former IO employee, currently senior figure in a major INGO.
Rodrigo	2/6/09	Head of Counter Trafficking Department for a major IO.
Susan	2/6/09	Trafficking specialist and researcher working with Rodrigo.
Daisy	28/5/09	Global head of her IOs anti-trafficking work. One of the international anti-trafficking establishment's central figures.
Nina	28/5/09	Daisy's deputy, a widely experienced UN official.
Leila	28/5/09	As with Nina.
Alice	28/5/09	Researcher at the same organisation. Important player in the maintenance of the discursive framework around trafficking.
Fulani	28/5/09	Researcher at the same organisation. Important player in the maintenance of the discursive framework around trafficking.
Keiko	12/6/09	Senior UN Employee, organisational head, formerly of another IO with a pivotal role in the anti-trafficking architecture. Deeply critical.
Gail	9/9/09	IO Head office employee with international experience of working at country level on trafficking.
Sheila	9/9/09	Her IOs joint global chief on anti-trafficking strategy.
Calypso	9/9/09	Her IOs joint global chief on anti-trafficking strategy.

Lola	25/5/09	Major figure in her IOs research division, key player in the international attempt to shift the trafficking discourse forwards.
Sosa	25/5/09	Child Protection Specialist with her IO.
Dana	24/7/09	Child Protection Specialist with her IO.
Karla	9/9/09	Child Protection Specialist with her IO.
Darlene	4/9/09	Child Protection Specialist with her IO.
Neil	4/6/09	One of the CRC's architects, former IO employee, INGO chief.
Helen	23/9/09	Former donor government minister, former trafficking special rapporteur, anti-trafficking activist.
Charles	10/6/09	Former donor government representative at ambassadorial and governmental level, now chief of his IOs anti-trafficking operations.
Ariel	3/10/09	Head of an IO's field office with experience working on trafficking.
Sara	28/9/09	West African country representative for her IO.
Sharon	28/9/09	Senior IO figure with responsibility for the country office anti-trafficking strategy.
Tatiana	21/9/09	Senior IO figure with responsibility for the country office anti-trafficking strategy.
Delia	5/9/09	Senior IO figure with responsibility for the country office anti-trafficking strategy.

Oswald	23/9/09	Former IO employee at country and HQ level. Had spent many years working in the trafficking field. Was centrally placed when trafficking exploded in Europe during the latter years of the Balkan wars.
Pin	19/9/09	One of the discursive architects of her IO's position on trafficking and the global child trafficking narrative. Still in the employ of her IO.
Angela	24/9/09	Senior IO figure with responsibility for the regional office anti-trafficking strategy.
Piper	25/9/09	Senior IO figure with responsibility for the regional office anti-trafficking strategy.
Larry	5/10/09	Senior IO figure with responsibility for the regional office anti-trafficking strategy. Both of these have been big players in West Africa.
Rose	29/9/09	Former IO employee at country and HQ level. Had spent many years working in the trafficking field. Was centrally placed when trafficking exploded in Europe during the latter years of the Balkan wars.
AJ	7/9/09	Global anti-trafficking expert, advocate and consultant.
Miguel	31/4/9	Global anti-trafficking expert, advocate and consultant. Has been an INGO global head.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **TEXT OF BENIN'S ANTI-TRAFFICKING LAW**

*This is the original text of the anti-trafficking law analysed in detail in Chapter 7. It is followed by the first decree of application, including its annexes, which contain relevant exemplaire administrative documentation.*

**LOI n° 2006-04 DU 05 AVRIL 2006**

**PORTANT CONDITIONS DE DEPLACEMENT  
DES MINEURS ET REPRESSION DE LA TRAITE  
D'ENFANTS EN REPUBLIQUE DU BENIN**

L'Assemblée Nationale a délibéré et adopté,

Suite à la décision de conformité à la Constitution DCC 06-040 du 04 avril 2006 de  
la

Cour Constitutionnelle,

Le Président de la République promulgue la loi dont la teneur suit :

### **CHAPITRE PREMIER:**

## DES DISPOSITIONS GENERALES ET DES DEFINITIONS

**Article 1er:** La présente loi a pour objet, la détermination des conditions de déplacement des mineurs et la répression de la traite d'enfants en République du Bénin.

**Article 2:** Le terme « enfant » désigne toute personne âgée de moins de dix-huit (18) ans.

**Article 3:** Sont qualifiées traite d'enfants, toutes conventions ayant pour objet d'aliéner, soit à titre gratuit, soit à titre onéreux, la liberté ou la personne d'un enfant. On entend également par traite d'enfants, le recrutement, le transport, le transfert, le placement, l'accueil ou l'hébergement d'un enfant aux fins d'exploitation quel que soit le moyen utilisé.

**Article 4:** L'exploitation comprend, sans que cette énumération soit limitative:

- toutes les formes d'esclavage ou de pratiques analogues, la servitude pour dette et le servage ainsi que le travail forcé ou obligatoire, l'utilisation des enfants dans des conflits armés ou pour des prélèvements d'organes ;
- l'utilisation ou l'offre d'enfant aux fins de prostitution, de production d'oeuvres pornographiques ou de spectacles pornographiques ;
- l'utilisation ou l'offre d'enfant aux fins d'activités illicites ;

- les travaux qui, par leur nature et/ou les conditions dans lesquelles ils s'exercent, sont susceptibles de nuire à la santé, à la sécurité, à la moralité de l'enfant ou de le livrer à lui-même.

**Article 5:** L'utilisation de la main-d'oeuvre infantine est interdite en République du Bénin, sauf dans les cas prévus par la loi et les conventions internationales.

**Article 6 :** La traite d'enfant est interdite en République du Bénin.

## **CHAPITRE II:**

### **DES CONDITIONS DE DEPLACEMENT DES ENFANTS A L'INTERIEUR ET A L'EXTERIEUR DE LA REPUBLIQUE DU BENIN**

#### **SECTION PREMIERE:**

#### **DU DEPLACEMENT DES ENFANTS A L'INTERIEUR DE LA REPUBLIQUE DU BENIN**

**Article 7:** Aucun enfant ne peut être déplacé à l'intérieur du pays, séparé de ses parents biologiques ou de la personne ayant autorité sur lui sans une autorisation spéciale délivrée par l'autorité administrative compétente du lieu de sa résidence, sauf décision judiciaire ou les cas spécialement recommandés par les services sociaux et les services sanitaires. Les modalités de délivrance de cette autorisation sont fixées par décret pris en conseil des ministres.

**Article 8:** Nul ne peut recevoir un enfant sans s'être assuré de l'accomplissement de la formalité administrative prévue à l'article 7 de la présente loi. Tout enfant accueilli par une personne en un lieu autre que celui de la résidence de ses parents biologiques ou de la personne ayant autorité sur lui, doit faire l'objet d'une déclaration à l'autorité administrative territorialement compétente du lieu d'accueil dans les soixante douze (72) heures de son arrivée sous peine des sanctions prévues à l'article 18 de la présente loi.

**Article 9:** Aucun enfant de nationalité étrangère ne peut entrer sur le territoire de la République du Bénin, s'il n'est accompagné de son père, de sa mère ou d'une personne ayant autorité sur lui au regard de sa loi nationale et s'il n'est muni de document établissant son identité, sa provenance, sa destination et le motif de son voyage, sauf les cas de guerres, de catastrophes naturelles ou d'autres situations exceptionnelles.

**Article 10:** Dans le cas où un enfant de nationalité étrangère est accompagné d'une personne autre que celles énumérées à l'article 9 de la présente loi, il ne peut entrer, circuler ou résider en République du Bénin que si, outre les pièces établissant son identité, sa provenance, sa destination et le motif de son voyage, celui qui l'accompagne est muni d'une pièce d'identité et d'une autorisation écrite du père et/ou de la mère de l'enfant ou de la personne ayant autorité sur lui. Cette autorisation doit être visée par une autorité administrative territorialement compétente du lieu de résidence du père et/ou de la mère de l'enfant ou de la personne ayant autorité sur lui.

**Article 11:** Dans l'intérêt supérieur de l'enfant, tout agent de la force publique, toute autorité administrative ou judiciaire, peut empêcher l'entrée en République du Bénin d'un enfant de nationalité étrangère, lorsque les conditions prévues aux articles 9 et 10 de la présente loi ne sont pas réunies. Les modalités d'application de l'alinéa précédent sont fixées par décret pris en conseil des ministres.

## **SECTION II:**

### **DU DEPLACEMENT DES ENFANTS A L'EXTERIEUR DE LA REPUBLIQUE DU BENIN**

**Article 12:** Tout enfant béninois non accompagné de son père, de sa mère ou d'une personne ayant autorité sur lui ne peut quitter le territoire national sans une autorisation spéciale délivrée par le maire de son lieu de résidence, sauf décision judiciaire ou les cas spécialement recommandés par les services sociaux et les services sanitaires. L'autorisation de sortie à la demande du père, de la mère ou d'une personne ayant autorité sur lui doit comporter les mentions suivantes:

- son lieu de provenance;
- sa destination;
- le motif de son voyage;
- l'identité de la personne qui l'accueille, de l'établissement ou de l'institution où il se rend.

Les modalités de délivrance de cette autorisation sont fixées par décret pris en conseil des ministres.

**Article 13:** Lorsque l'enfant est accompagné de son père, de sa mère ou de la personne ayant autorité sur lui, cette personne doit présenter un document établissant l'identité de l'enfant et le Lien qui les unit.

### **CHAPITRE III :**

#### **DES DISPOSITIONS ADMINISTRATIVES ET PENALES**

**Article 14:** Tout enfant qui, à l'insu de son père et/ou de sa mère ou de la personne ayant autorité sur lui, viole les dispositions de l'article 7 de la présente loi dans l'intention de se soumettre à l'exploitation telle que définie à l'article 4 de la présente loi, ou qui est trouvé seul à un endroit ou dans les conditions laissant déduire qu'il se déplaçait hors du territoire de la République du Bénin sans être muni de l'autorisation prévue à l'article 7 de la présente loi, est soumis à l'une des mesures suivantes:

- remise au père et/ou à la mère ou à la personne ayant autorité sur lui;
- remise à une institution de protection des droits de l'enfant.

**Article 15:** Tout transporteur d'une enfant non muni des pièces prévues aux articles 9 et 10 de la présente loi est puni, selon sa destination à l'intérieur ou vers l'extérieur de la République du Bénin, des peines prévues aux articles 17 et 18 de la présente loi,

s'il est établi que l'enfant est victime de traite et que le transporteur l'a pris sciemment.

**Article 16:** Le père ou la mère qui, sciemment, a transporté et/ou a remis son enfants en vue de la traite de celui-ci ou qui a aidé d'une façon quelconque le trafiquant, encourt un emprisonnement de six (06) mois à cinq (05) ans.

**Article 17:** Quiconque a déplacé, tenté de déplacer ou accompagné un enfant pour une destination située en République du Bénin hors de la résidence de son père et/ou de sa mère ou de la personne ayant autorité sur lui, sans accomplir les formalités administratives requises est puni d'un emprisonnement d'un (01) an à trois (03) ans et d'une amende de cinquante mille (50.000) francs à cinq cent mille (500.000) francs.

**Article 18:** Quiconque a déplacé, tenté de déplacer ou accompagné hors du territoire de la République du Bénin, un enfant autre que le sien ou un enfant sur lequel il a autorisé sans accomplir les formalités administrative en vigueur, est puni d'un emprisonnement de deux (02) ans à cinq (05) ans et d'une amende de cinq cent mille (500.000) francs à deux millions cinq cent mille (2.500.000) francs.

**Article 19:** Est punie des peines spécifiées à l'article 18 de la présente loi toute personne, quelle que soit sa nationalité qui, accompagnant un ou plusieurs enfants de nationalité étrangère, est trouvée sur le territoire de la République du Bénin, alors qu'elle n'y a pas sa résidence habituelle, sans remplir les conditions prévues à l'article 10 de la présente loi.

**Article 20:** Est punie d'une amende de dix mille (10.000) francs à cinquante mille (50.000) francs, toute personne qui, ayant connaissance du déplacement frauduleux d'un enfant, s'est abstenue d'en informer l'autorité administrative territorialement compétente ou l'officier de police judiciaire le plus proche.

**Article 21:** Quiconque s'est livré à la traite est puni de la réclusion à temps de dix (10) ans à vingt (20) ans. Dans tous les cas où la traite d'enfants a eu lieu avec recours à l'un des moyens énumérés à l'article 23 de la présente loi ou lorsque la victime aura été soumise à l'un des actes prévus à l'article 24 ci-dessous, le ou les coupables sont passibles de la réclusion criminelle à perpétuité. Le coupable est également puni de la réclusion criminelle à perpétuité, si l'enfant n'a pas été retrouvé avant le prononcé de la condamnation ou a été retrouvé mort.

**Article 22:** Quiconque emploie sciemment en République du Bénin, la main d'oeuvre d'un enfant provenant de la traite d'enfants, quelle que soit la nature du travail, est puni d'une amende de cinq cent mille (500.000) francs à cinq millions (5.000.000) de francs et d'un emprisonnement de six (06) mois à vingt quatre (24) mois de l'une de ces deux peines seulement.

**Article 23:** Le recours à la menace, à la force ou à d'autres formes de contraintes, à l'enlèvement, à la fraude, à la tromperie, à l'abus d'autorité ou à la situation de vulnérabilité, à l'offre ou à l'acceptation de paiement ou d'avantages pour obtenir le consentement de l'enfant ou d'une personne ayant autorité sur lui, aux fins de son exploitation, est une circonstance aggravante de la traite d'enfants.

**Article 24:** Les actes de violence et voies de faits, la privation d'aliments et de soins, l'incitation à la débauche ou à la mendicité, l'attentat à la pudeur et le viol, les coups et blessures volontaires exercés ou portés sur la personne d'un enfant constituent également des circonstances aggravantes de la traite d'enfants.

**Article 25:** En cas de récidive, les peines prévues aux articles 16 à 21 alinéa 1er de la présente loi sont portées au double.

**Article 26:** La tentative de toutes les infractions prévues dans la présente loi est punie de la même peine que l'infraction consommée.

**Article 27:** Les complices des infractions visées dans la présente loi sont punis des memes peines que celles prévues pour les auteurs.

#### **CHAPITRE IV:**

##### **DES DISPOSITIONS DIVERSES ET FINALES**

**Article 28:** Les excursions, les sorties pédagogiques et les voyages organisés par les établissements scolaires, les administrations publiques, ainsi que les déplacements rendus nécessaires pour des raisons académiques ne sont pas soumis aux dispositions de la présente loi.

**Article 29:** Sont abrogées toutes dispositions antérieures contraires, notamment celles de la loi n° 61-20 du 05 juillet 1961 relative au déplacement des mineurs de dix-huit (18) ans hors du territoire de la République du Dahomey et de l'ordonnance

n° 73-37 du 13 avril 1973 modifiant les dispositions du code pénal en ce qui concerne la traite des personnes et les enlèvements de mineurs.

**Article 30:** La présente loi sera exécutée comme loi de l'Etat.

Fait à Cotonou, le 05 avril 2006

Par le Président de la République,  
Chef de l'Etat, Chef du Gouvernement,

**Dr Boni Y A Y I**

**APPENDIX E****TEXTUAL EXAMPLES OF THE BENINESE TRAFFICKING  
DISCOURSE**

*Below are a number of examples of the kinds of 'text' I examined to determine and identify the formal Beninese trafficking discourse. These 'texts' are all either publicly available media or institutional instantiations of what child trafficking 'means' in Benin or interview transcripts reflecting on the same.*

'As for trafficking itself, it has two aspects. There is negative abuse and there is the traditional solidarity that comes in the form placement, which most of today's cadres will themselves have lived. The negative though is the key and with the development of schooling and the entrance of women into the workplace, domestic socio-economic changes have led to pressures on homes and thus the emergence of a real desire for child labour in the home. Rather than employ adults, people want cheap labour and so employ kids. This is how trafficking started in Benin.

Another factor worth remembering is the poverty that underlies placement. Statistics have shown that large families are a problem. We also know that families lack education about child rights and still see kids as objects that they can control. Kids are therefore vulnerable, especially to being sent away, because families think anything that ensures their kids will be fed and housed is good. The problem is that

parents don't understand their duty to ensure that children enjoy their rights, especially the right to school.

There is also of course the problem of traffickers who come to the villages and trick people. These intermediaries are a real danger, they take kids for money and parents wash their hands of the children.

Of course this problem is also both national and international, you know, and it is linked to the problem of immigration, the problem of the rural exodus, and the problem of people thinking that leaving will make them rich and allow them to access resources. They don't realise the abuse that they face'.

(Transcript of Interview with Ayala, Former Beninese Government Minister, 13/3/10)

## **Abeokuta: Child Slaves Working Nigeria's Quarries**

Irenee, a skinny Beninese girl of 15, points to three mounds of earth: the graves of her friends who died of exhaustion here in the gravel quarries of Abeokuta, in southwestern Nigeria.

UNICEF says about 5,000 children from neighboring Benin are laboring here, eight hours a day, six days a week.

In the sweltering heat and in the lashing rain, Irenee crushes chunks of granite rock, naked to the waist, her skin coated in a thick layer of grime. Failure to produce her quota, whatever the weather conditions, brings with it the risk of being beaten up.

School is just a word. Bed is a spot in the bush where she and her young co-workers curl up and sleep as best they can under the stars.

In September 2003, when she was just 11, Irenee and 260 other children were freed by the Nigerian police and sent home, after a dispute between two rival trafficking gangs.

But their parents sold them again to traffickers and they ended up back in Abeokuta, some 100 kilometers (62 miles) north of Lagos.

"I came back in November 2005 with my little brother Paul. Eighteen of us came and three have died," she said.

The idea is that the child is sold into bonded labor for a fixed term - normally two or three years. At the end of the term he gets a bicycle and 100 or 200 dollars (68 to 136 euros). If he completes three terms his master may build a new hut for the child's family.

Sometimes children come home with a decent sum of money in their pockets and become masters themselves, sending small boys to work across the border, either in the quarries or in cocoa or sugarcane plantations.

Many of the families who sell their children into slavery are unapologetic.

"How do you expect me to keep 37 children here when I have no income?" shrugged Luc Gbogbohondada, an octagenarian with eight wives. Gbogbohondada lives in Za-Kpota, a village across the border in Benin about 150 kilometres from Abeokuta. Za-Kpota is notorious as the child-trafficking capital of the region. It accounts for 70 per cent of all cases reported in Benin, a small underdeveloped west African state of only eight million, compared to neighboring Nigeria's 135 million.

"When they brought our children back, the government said we would get financial help. That was four years ago and we haven't seen a cent yet," the old man grumbled.

He takes great pride in his wives and his children, aged, he says, from babies to 55, despite his avowed inability to feed them.

Ironically, it is a local tradition here for the older brother who made good to come back to the village to take his younger siblings or nephews away to educate them that has been distorted into child trafficking, locals say.

In the dusty red streets of the village, which turn into rivers of red mud during the rains, dozens of children run around. Other children, and adults, come back from cultivating maize, groundnuts and cotton.

The land here can no longer support the huge families that have sprung up from generations of polygamous marriages.

In spite of the children who bring home bicycles and money to smarten up huts Za'Kpota looks just as wretched as any other poor village.

Child trafficking in Benin has risen sharply in the past few years. A law cracking down on the practice was voted in January 2006 but has never been promulgated.

"Clearly, as long as this law is not put into practice, some villages carry on with this trafficking without fear," said Philippe Duhamelle, the head of UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, in Benin.

The law would make child-trafficking a crime and courts would be able to sentence offenders to jail terms and fines.

Benin lawyer Joseph Djogbenou attributes the failure to promulgate the law to an absence of "real political will".

UNICEF estimates that some 7,000 children from Benin are currently working in Nigeria after being sold. Of that number, 5,000 are estimated to be in the quarries of Abeokuta.

Parents collect between 10,000 and 20,000 African CFA francs (15 to 30 euros) for each child sold to a trafficker.

Statistics published in June by the Juvenile Protection Police of Cotonou indicate that more than 10,000 children destined to be sold outside the country are intercepted and turned back every year at Benin's borders.

(Media article available at:

[http://www.huhuonline.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article  
&id=356:abeokuta-child-slaves-working-nigerias-  
quarries&catid=67:art&Itemid=369\)](http://www.huhuonline.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=356:abeokuta-child-slaves-working-nigerias-quarries&catid=67:art&Itemid=369)

## **384 Enfants-esclaves Sauvés des Carrières d'Abeokuta au Nigeria !**

*par Binason Avèkes*

La Secrétaire exécutive de l'Agence nigériane pour l'interdiction de la traite des personnes et autres questions connexes (NAPTIP) Mme Beatrice Jedy - Agba, a exprimé sa préoccupation que le Nigeria et la République du Bénin demeurent des sources ainsi que des points de transit et de destination pour les personnes victimes de la traite. Un total de 384 enfants, selon elle, ont été sauvés du travail à Abeokuta, la capitale de l'État d'Ogun.

Jedy - Agba a ajouté que depuis 2007, un total de 5919 enfants victimes de traite ont été sauvés et réhabilités et reçoivent maintenant une éducation formelle ainsi qu'une formation professionnelle à Zakpota au Bénin alors que 60 autres ont été inscrits dans des écoles d'Abeokuta.

Le Secrétaire exécutif de la NAPTIP (Nigeria) qui a parlé hier pendant la signature d'un communiqué au 9ème comité technique mixte Nigeria / Bénin sur la traite des personnes, a déclaré que les enfants touchés ont tous été découverts dans des carrières situées à Abeokuta. Les enfants, a-t-elle ajouté, ont été conduits par la suite à Zakpota en République du Bénin pour leur prise en charge dans la mesure où ils étaient tous des Béninois alors que leurs parents qui les avaient cédés ont été obligés de chercher d'autres moyens de subsistance au lieu d'utiliser leurs enfants comme source de revenus.

« Les 384 enfants ont été retirés d'Abeokuta et conduits à Zakpota, a dit Mme Béatrice Jedy - Agba. Ce programme comporte trois volets que sont : la réhabilitation, le rapatriement et la réinsertion. Parfois, quand nous allons au Bénin, on trouve des enfants nigériens impliqués dans le travail des enfants. Même les parents de ces enfants sont pris en charge pour trouver des moyens alternatifs de subsistance au lieu de chercher à utiliser leurs enfants comme sources de revenus

« Ceux qui font la traite des enfants à partir de la République du Bénin vers le Nigeria sont souvent eux-mêmes des Béninois. Aussi, quand ils sont capturés, nous les remettons aux autorités Béninoises en vue de poursuites. En tant que tel, nous ne disposons pas de statistiques à portée de main pour le nombre de ces arrestations faites », a-t-elle dit.

Dans le communiqué qui a été également signé par la partie béninoise, M. Emile Ekpense (Vice - Secrétaire général, Ministère de la Famille, des Affaires sociales, de la solidarité nationale, des handicapés et personnes âgées, du Bénin), les deux pays se sont engagés à partager les informations et renseignements susceptibles de permettre d'arrêter et de poursuivre les trafiquants d'êtres humains. Les deux parties ont souligné la nécessité de renforcer les activités de groupes de surveillance dans les communautés frontalières comme Seme, Owode, Idiroko, Igolo, Ilara, Alagbe en les dotant d'outils de base.

(Available at: [http://blaisap.typepad.fr/mon\\_weblog/2012/02/384-enfants-esclaves-sauvs-des-carrires-dabeokuta-au-nigeria.html](http://blaisap.typepad.fr/mon_weblog/2012/02/384-enfants-esclaves-sauvs-des-carrires-dabeokuta-au-nigeria.html))

Benin where TOMORROW CHILDREN is based, is a small country in west Africa, bordering Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo. Under its former name DAHOMEY, it was at the corner of atlantic slave trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It has become equally important of the modern slave trade in west Africa for the supply and transit of slaves to work in the plantations of the region and for trafficking to Europe.

The recent publicity of Eritrean affair - in which, approximately 250 trafficked children were left abandoned on a smuggler's ship - has had the beneficial effect of brightening awareness of the problem. However, reality for many child slaves is far worse than for those on the Eritrean and the failure to secure the return of safety of many of the children involved is a typical demonstration of the lack of political will that is required to tackle this problem: the return of slavery to west Africa threatens the liberty of thousands of women and children.

The region consists of 16 countries with combined population of over 160 million. There is a kaleidoscopic socio-cultural diversity in the region, with perhaps the only common factors being the very high population of people who live under the poverty line and the limited budgets granted to the rural areas together with the government's neglecting of rural populations. These two factors are crucial in allowing child slavery to flourish.

Modern child slavery in west Africa takes several forms. It is perhaps easiest to divide it into four types - child soldiers, domestic labourers, plantation workers, and the sex industry. With the exception of child soldiers, the victims of modern slavery are almost always women (estimates suggest the 80% of victims are women and girls). In many West African societies, women are effectively relegated to the status of second-class citizens. They are therefore the primary target of traffickers / traders for domestic and sexual exploitation and are most likely to be forced into marriage contracted without the age of consent and to be the victims of ritual domination and control through Vodoun.

The existence of child soldiers has been brought the wider public attention in recent years by the horrendous civil wars of Liberia and Sierra Leone. They are often press-ganged at an early age to fight for either the government or, more commonly, for rebel groups. They are normally brainwashed, often controlled by drug addiction and abuse, and in those two recent wars have, like members of the civilian population, often been the victims of deliberate ritual mutilation employed as a form of terror. Thousand of children are being held in captivity as domestic workers, throughout west Africa. They work without rest or pay and frequently suffer emotional, psychological, physical and sexual abuse. Normally originating from the rural areas of the region's poorer countries, they are often enticed by offers of education or a good job, or alternatively bought from their parents to work as domestic slaves for wealthier families.

In the cocoa and coffee plantations of the Ivory Coast, the lives of child slaves, scarcely differ from those of centuries past in the Caribbean and elsewhere in the Americas. Often abducted, these children are miles from home, they are separated from their families, dislocated from the language and customs of their countries and as such are easier to control and exploit.

In the cities of west Africa and western Europe child prostitutes, trafficked, held captive, abused and exploited exist out of sight and out of mind. Girls from west Africa are flown to the major cities of Europe (London being probably the most popular because of the frequency of flights). They then destroy their documentation aboard the plane and hence arrive as unaccompanied minors. Traffickers will subsequently take them from care and they will then be put to work in brothels, on the streets, or in paedophile pornography. In parts of west Africa a new form of paedophilia has come into existence to serve men who believe sex with a virgin to be cure for VHI/AIDS. The victims of course face a probable death sentence, preceded only by a life of miserable exploitation.

(Extract from Tomorrow Children Presentation, 2001)