

CHALLENGES TO COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN GHANA

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THIS PROPOSAL WAS WRITTEN USING THE FOLLOWING GUIDLINES

- a. Identify the role of the theory you would use
- b. Provide a brief literature review to the research question you have chosen
- c. Describe the sampling design and recruitment of participants
- d. Discuss issues of ethics in your research project
- e. Discuss data collection
- f. Discuss appropriate technique of data analysis
- g. Discuss the limitations of your study

I. INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This proposal will investigate the Ghanaian authorities' challenges in preventing and combating the menace of human trafficking. The study will employ Bale's theory on modern-day slavery, considering the cultural and institutional barriers. Working within the purview of the modern-day slavery theory, the study will explore how prevailing Ghanaian cultural practices, governmental corruption, and the external forces of neoliberalism have hindered the enforcement of the laws regarding human trafficking enacted in Ghana.

Human trafficking is the forced recruitment of transported or transferred individuals, employing force, deception, threats, or coercion for exploitation (Campbell & Zimmerman, 2014). Human trafficking is a complex and transnational phenomenon that generates over \$32 billion in revenue annually (Smith, Martin, & Smith, 2014). Human exploitation throughout the world includes sexual abuse, labor violations, criminal involvement, forced marriage arrangements, and forced organ donations (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019).

Sigmon (2008) refers to human trafficking as modern-day slavery. Traffickers use several methods, including force, fraud, and coercion, to exploit and profit from forced human labor. Most of the victims are deployed in mining, fishing, factories, agriculture, and brothels. Human trafficking is globally recognized as a challenge that requires a coordinated response from the world's governments. As a result, campaigns have been mounted to pressure governments to sign on to international instruments formulated to combat human trafficking. Despite these efforts, effective enforcement of laws and attempts to disrupt the lucrative trade has been unsuccessful in many countries.

Modern Day Slavery

Bales' theory of modern slavery offers a comprehensive account of global human trafficking (Bales, 2006). Bales provides an essential step towards understanding the nature of modern slavery. His seminal study shows that several factors in a nation are predictive indicators of slavery around the world. They are the rate of infant mortality, the percent of the population between 0 and 14, the percent of the workforce in agriculture, the level of corruption, and the presence of endangered species (Bales 2016).

The neoliberal theory has been widely applied in developing countries. However, neoliberalism's limits and its significant failure to deliver economic growth and quality governance have become apparent (Piketty, 2015). The ideals of neoliberalism, including individualism, competition, and market efficiency, are at odds with the equitable redistribution of resources and solidarity. Overall, the introduction of austere free-neoliberal market policies in Sub-Saharan Africa has led to the weakening of already stagnant labor markets. Furthermore, various governments' response to these challenges has been inadequate and ineffectual (Ayelazuno, 2014). This research study identifies neoliberalism as a significant factor in exacerbating the human trafficking problem in Ghana.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Sertich and Heemskerk (2011), observe that human trafficking has long taken root in Ghanaian culture. Historically, parents often sent their children to live with wealthy family members due to the extended family system. This process strengthens familial ties and enhances children's education or skills development. Over time, due to exposure to a competitive urban

environment, this practice of sending children to be in the care of other family members has been seriously abused. Children sent to live with relatives are regularly exploited for labor, domestic services, or prevented from attending school (Sertich and Heemskerk, 2011). Moreover, poverty and the search for viable means of livelihood push some Ghanaians from the rural areas to seek job opportunities in urban areas, thereby making them more vulnerable to human trafficking.

Consequently, most trafficked persons originate from Ghana's more impoverished areas, such as Volta, Central and Northern areas (Sertich and Heemskerk 2011). Scholars have identified that domestic trafficking is believed to be more prevalent in Ghana than transnational trafficking, and most reported victims are children (Sertich and Heemskerk 2011). Human trafficking recruiters regularly exploit girls from the northern regions to work as street peddlers or "kayayei" and domestic workers in the major cities. Once these girls arrive in the cities, they are exploited, work without compensation, and are forced to exchange sexual services for shelter (Bales, 2016)

The fishing industry in Volta Region of Ghana is noted for engaging boys' trafficking as young as five years old (Bales, 2016). Most often, the parents of these children do not have accurate information regarding their whereabouts. They often do not recognize the dangerous conditions under which their children labor (Bales, 2016). The labor of young girls is also needed in the Volta Region to sell and smoke fish, work in fishing community households. Girls are also sexually exploited by fishermen and older trafficked boys. Domestically trafficked child work in street hawking, chop bars, begging, mining, stone quarrying, and on cocoa farms (Hamenoo, & Sottie, 2015). More seriously, many young girls are recruited children trokosi system in the Volta Region. This is a highly exploitative system under the guise of a cultural practice where families offer a girl as sacrifice to serve in perpetual bondage in a shrine to atone for their family members' crimes (Sertich and Heemskerk 2011).

According to Bales (2016), even though child labor in Ghana is illegal, the law is rarely enforced. The government institutional framework established for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor is weak and poorly resourced. Investigations for child labor violations are not systematic and are mostly performed by the police. Unfortunately, the Ghana police is subject to receiving bribes. Therefore, policing tends to favor persons who have the ability to pay off the police, including wealthy criminals. Bales documents interventions from Ghanaian government officials, including members of parliament, who actively discourage investigations and prosecution of child trafficking offenses (Bales, 2016).

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research examines the challenges posed by neoliberal policies, legislative frameworks, and socio-cultural institutions in combating human trafficking in Ghana. For this research, modern-day slavery is entrenched due to cultural and institutional barriers that serve as impediments to enforcing the provisions of the laws on prevention. The main objectives of this research are to (i) assess the rigid bureaucratic procedures that stifle the enforcement of human trafficking laws; (ii) investigate the cultural, societal attitudes and obligations that hinder enforcement of the provisions on the prevention of human trafficking; and (iii) provide specific policy recommendations and institutional measures towards better enforcement of the human trafficking laws in Ghana.

To meet these objectives, the research will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What policies and legal instruments exist in Ghana for managing human trafficking in Ghana?
2. Which institutions are responsible for the implementation of these policies?
3. What challenges do these institutions face in their attempt to implement these policies?

4. What are the shortcomings of the law enforcement agencies that hinder enforcement?
5. What cultural traditions and practices inhibit the combatting of human trafficking?

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of Modern Slavery: Ghanaian Context

Kevin Bales defines slavery as 'the total control of one person by another for economic exploitation' (LeBaron & Ayers, 2013, p. 6). Bales (2006) observes in "Testing a Theory of Modern Slavery: Free the Slaves," that slavery harms the economy and development. According to Bales (2006), predictors of a country serving as a supplier in human trafficking includes governmental corruption, the country's infant mortality rate, the proportion of the population below the age of 14, the country's food production index, the country's population density, and the degree of internal conflict and social unrest. Bales argues that the existence of slavery is dependent upon societal pre-conditions, such as corrupt officials who created legal loopholes in combination with population growth and domestic events that produced displacements (LeBaron & Ayers, 2013; Williamson, 2017).

Bales (2016) believes that human trafficking is a combination of social, political, and psychological influences in the contemporary form of slavery. Bales' theory is based on his observations and supported by case studies recorded from the use of slave-labor in five countries (Bales, 2006). Bales' theory of modern slavery has a thematic assumption based on desperate economic situations and social breakdown. This is so because many young women and girls have been pushed into desperate situations looking for new ways to survive and reach a better life condition. The essential characteristics and typology of victims that the global human traffic industry preys on have poverty as a major factor (Bales, 2016).

Bales (2016) used the Ghanaian situation to explain how people are forced into slavery. According to Bales, several strategies are used in Ghana to recruit people into slavery. The primary tactics include deception, the promise of jobs, giving victims cash advances, charging exorbitant interest rates on loan advances, creating debt bondage, provision of tools that need to be paid for, payment of meager wages, the use of violence such as beatings, hunger tactics, and psychological coercion.

According to Bales (2016), one of the major coercive ploys used by human traffickers is debt levying. The recruiters unlawfully exploit the initial debt to force victims into an agreement for employment. The Ghana case study provides a narrative of forced labor activities, including in the small-scale gold mining sector. The conditions of enslaved individuals are quite severe. Enslaved persons are forced in the illegal mines to remove rocks, dig in deep pits, crush rocks by hand, carry heavy loads, use mercury, and operate machinery. Other hazardous activities in the mines include pulling the gold ore out of shafts, carrying heavy ore, and crushing it, washing the ore, and panning the ore. According to Bales (2016), many young children work with mercury, a highly toxic metal, amalgamating it with gold, and then burning the amalgam to separate the gold.

Neoliberalism and Human Trafficking

According to Ritzer & Stepnisky (2013), neoliberalism "involves a combination of the political commitment to individual liberty and neoclassical economics, which is devoted to the free market and opposed to state intervention" (p. 616). Under this system, businesses are unfettered, free trade is encouraged, and minimal government intervention. Tax cuts for corporations are usual with the idea the tax savings will be reinvested.

The belief is that higher profits would "trickle-down" and benefit most people in society.

The neoliberal framework requires a low expenditure on welfare and a reduced safety net to assist poor persons. This neoliberal strategy structurally reduces government expenditures, thereby allowing for ever more tax cuts. Obviously, with little or no safety net, the poor people will be forced to find work, often at minimum wage. Reducing the safety net also creates a more extensive 'reserve army' that businesses can draw on in a tight labor market to expand their workforce.

Observers seem to conclude that one reason for the prevalence of internal conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa is the reality of the post-cold war neoliberal globalization. Basiru (2014) argues that the post-cold war global politico-economic architecture and trans-nationalization forces have continued to cripple the economies of already poor countries. Neo-globalization has increased national and local inequalities within countries and weakened the legitimacy of governments. Neo-liberal globalization has effectively diminished the strength of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Countries like Ghana have privatized many state-owned enterprises and laid-off a large number of public sector employees on the insistence of the World Bank and the IMF as a condition for loans. Consequently, human insecurity has been exacerbated, leading to many territorial disputes. There is a theoretical linkage between neoliberalism, the nature of the states, and intra-country conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa.

Further, globalization has created an environment conducive to corruption and human trafficking. Globalization fosters bribery as a tool to eliminate rivals, politicians are corrupted by foreign investment firms, and there is a lack of international enforcement of anticorruption. Corruption and organized crime groups work to perpetuate the human trafficking industry, as traffickers have been able to gain immunity from the law. Furthermore, they can continue their

trade through corrupt government officials such as police officers, customs officials, or immigration officers. Additionally, the legal framework favors traffickers because many countries do not have strict laws against trafficking or lack enforcement capacity. Corruption, along with the lack of adequate legal implementation against trafficking, works to make the trafficking industry a formidable adversary (Williamson, 2017).

Africa's much-heralded, commodity-driven economic growth has been virtually jobless throughout the last decade. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) as a whole experienced reduced unemployment. Labor market reform, together with privatization, have also increased inequality and systematically decreased household incomes. In common with other regions of the global political economy, Africa has witnessed a dramatic increase in unfree labor conditions over the past several decades (LeBaron & Ayers, 2013). Examples include unfree conditions of work for rubber plantation workers in Liberia, cocoa producers in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, tea and coffee plantation workers across East Africa and domestic workers in South Africa, as well as forced and child labor practiced by mining companies in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia (LeBaron & Ayers, 2013). This has led to increased child labor and other survival strategies, including a dramatic escalation in unfree labor.

Many of the global supply chains linking Africa do feature prominently in accounts of the 'new slavery,' as evidenced in the production of commodities, such as rubber, cocoa, tea, coffee, mining, tourism, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation. Declines in formal employment have led to huge rises in self-employment, leading to intense competition and a general decline in conditions in the informal economy, as well as how the dismantling of the public sector has pushed millions of people out of formal employment and into more precarious livelihoods centered in the informal economy.

These trends pose crucial and immediate questions about the condition of 'surplus' labor in Africa, as neoliberalism has intensified the continent-wide social provisioning crisis, with the marketization of social reproduction and destruction of rural livelihoods. Scholars have described overall labor conditions as either a 'reserve army of labor' or a 'surplus' population. The liberalization of labor laws and regulations is intended to depress wages. As a result, many have experienced declining bargaining power as trade unions have been severely weakened. Furthermore, real wages have deteriorated, particularly among the lowest income groups.

The Ghanaian economy continues to be incorporated into the global economy and international division of labor on a subordinate neocolonial basis. The pursuit of neoliberalism and the implementation of structural adjustment programs in Ghana have directly affected working people's living conditions and labor conditions. Neoliberalism has led to increasing poverty and inequality, reduced social safety nets, and decreased the government's ability to manage the economy (Williamson, 2017). Consequently, these neoliberal policies have contributed to the increased levels of human trafficking in the country (Williamson, 2017). Neoliberalism has a significant impact on the contemporary situation of human trafficking and has caused many people to become vulnerable to trafficking (Williamson, 2017). To cope with high poverty levels, many people, especially from northern Ghana, opt for seasonal and longer-term migration to the south. Unfortunately, many persons migrating for seasonal work to southern Ghana were susceptible to forced labor. Many young men and women end up working in incredibly abusive conditions.

V. METHODOLOGY

Sampling Design

This is qualitative research with a sample size of 20. This study will consist of individuals in Accra who have some responsibility for working on issues related to human trafficking. The first step in recruiting the participants for this study will be to identify governmental and non-governmental organizations that work with human trafficking victims. The principal researcher will utilize personal contacts to gain access to relevant government officials for the recruitment to proceed. Participants will be selected by their ability to shed light on the process of combating and preventing human trafficking (Creswell, 2013).

Twenty participants will be recruited. All participants will have first-hand knowledge regarding issues of human trafficking. To be eligible, participants must be at least 21 years old and directly or indirectly working in organizations or entities that deal with human trafficking. Potential participants will be asked a set of prescreening questions to determine eligibility. All participation will be strictly confidential. Selected participants will be assigned numeric codes, which will be utilized to shield their identities. The participants will share critical similarities related to the research questions regarding familiarity with issues regarding human trafficking.

Procedures

This study would need to be approved by the Morehead State University Human Subjects Review Board. The data will be gathered using the qualitative approach to understand better the utilization of policies that exist to combat human trafficking, organizational operations, cultural beliefs regarding human trafficking, and law enforcement practices. Participants will receive

with informed consent forms before beginning the research. The study will be conducted using in-depth interviews.

Data Collection

Approval of an IRB will be requested from Morehead State University before data collection begins. Emails will be sent to participants to inform them of the beginning of the data collection. Selected participants will be contacted by the principal researcher either by email or phone to schedule an interview. The participants will be given an oral explanation of the research objectives and their role in the study. The participants selected will be informed about the research objectives, the risks, the amount of time involved, and the types of data collection strategies.

Participants will also be told about the procedures on how the data will be gathered and stored. After a mutual agreement between the researcher and the participants, informed consent will be sent to participants by email. Participants will be asked to sign the consent form, and a copy of the signed consent form will be given to the participant. Interviews will take about one hour for each participant. After the interviews, participants will be contacted to cross-check information, validate data, and approve transcripts. Interviews with the participants will be recorded digitally, and notes will be taken to help in the verification process. The recordings will be transcribed later for the data analysis.

Data Analysis

After the interviews are completed, the digital recordings will be transcribed with a transcription software program. The transcriptions will then be validated against the principal

researcher's journals and handwritten notes. The transcripts will be coded manually. Areas of divergence between participants' transcripts and the principal researcher's notes will be identified and addressed. An audit consisting of the transcriptions, the journal entries, the notes will be verified. A software program such as NVivo will analyze the data.

VI. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

An IRB approval will be sought from Morehead State University before proceeding with the data collection. Permission will also be sought from the Ghana Police Service, the Ghana Immigration Service, the Department of Child Protective Services, and other organizations dealing with human trafficking in Ghana. The researcher plans to make sure there will be no conflicts of interest that will impact human participants' rights and welfare during the research process. The proposed research will not interview participants below the age of 18 or any other vulnerable populations.

The researcher will implement safety measures to ensure all communication and correspondence confidentiality. For example, interviews and the reports will be conducted to restrict all personally identifiable information. Respondents will be identified only with code numbers to ensure confidentiality and protect their information. The Morehead State University academic honesty and integrity guidelines will be carefully observed. In this study. The researcher deems the trust between him and the participant to be of paramount importance and a core ethical value. All participants will sign informed consent forms to assure them of privacy and confidentiality and the research process's voluntary nature.

VII. LIMITATIONS

There are some constraints inherent in this study. We are in a pandemic, and many countries, including Ghana, have not fully opened their borders. So, due to COVID-19 regulations, it is likely the timeline for data collection may be delayed. The proposed study may also be limited to Accra, the capital of Ghana. As a result, research participants will be selected only from the population living in Accra and its environs. The research design may also affect the generalization of the findings to other countries.

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