

12-2012

## Combating Forced Labour and Human Trafficking in Africa: The Role of Endogenous and Exogenous Forces

Ambe J. Njoh  
*University of South Florida*, njoh@usf.edu

Elizabeth N.M. Ayuk-Etang  
*University of Buea*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/geo\\_facpub](https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/geo_facpub)



Part of the [Earth Sciences Commons](#)

---

### Scholar Commons Citation

Njoh, Ambe J. and Ayuk-Etang, Elizabeth N.M., "Combating Forced Labour and Human Trafficking in Africa: The Role of Endogenous and Exogenous Forces" (2012). *School of Geosciences Faculty and Staff Publications*. 1975.

[https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/geo\\_facpub/1975](https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/geo_facpub/1975)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Geosciences at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in School of Geosciences Faculty and Staff Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usf.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usf.edu).

## **Combating Forced Labour and Human Trafficking in Africa: The Role of Endogenous and Exogenous Forces**

Ambe J. Njoh<sup>†</sup> and Elizabeth N.M. Ayuk-Etang<sup>‡</sup>

### **Abstract**

It is widely believed that indigenous culture and tradition are at the root of the human trafficking and forced labour problem in Africa. Adherents to this viewpoint also claim that endogenous as opposed to exogenous forces impede efforts to eradicate the problem. This study employed a loglinear regression model to test the tenability of this claim. It hypothesized an inverse association between indigenous culture/tradition and efforts to combat human trafficking. The hypothesis was rejected. It is shown that anti-trafficking initiatives are less successful where indigenous tradition is dominated, or has been usurped, by imported cultural practices.

*Key words:* Africa's triple heritage, Child labour, forced labour, human trafficking.

### **1. Introduction**

National and international agents of human rights have been preoccupied with efforts to combat the rapidly growing problem of human trafficking throughout the world. The most prominent entity in this connection is the United Nations (UN). Under Article 3 (a) of Protocol 2000, the UN committed to specifically fight human trafficking. The Protocol, which was adopted as Resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000, seeks to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons (UN, 2000). Although this resolution is more than a decade old, national and regional efforts to combat trafficking leave much to be desired. Yet, there is a lacuna with respect to knowledge of the factors that impede these efforts. In other words, it is

---

<sup>†</sup>Professor of Urban & Regional Planning, and Director, Urban & Regional Planning Program, Department of Geography, Environment and Planning, University of South Florida. Contact: 4202 E. Fowler Ave. (NES 107), Tampa, FL 33620. Correspondence: njoh@usf.edu

<sup>‡</sup>Lecturer, Dept. of English, University of Buea, Cameroon.

not clear why efforts to prevent, suppress and punish human traffickers have produced minimal positive results.

The study reported in this paper seeks to address this question in the context of Africa. The study employs the human trafficking index developed by human trafficking researchers at the Auguste Goettingen University, Germany to shed light on impediments to these efforts. The focus is on the cultural factors that influence differential outcomes of efforts to combat human trafficking on the continent. The paper progresses as follows. Following this introductory segment, the paper discusses the twin concept of forced labour and human trafficking. The section is also dedicated to interrogating the theory of forced labour and human trafficking as a function of African indigenous tradition. Next, it discusses human trafficking, forced and child labour as problems whose roots are traceable to the European colonial era in Africa. Following this, the paper presents and briefly discusses the data and methodological issues of the study. Then, it presents the study's main findings. The final section discusses the findings and concludes the paper.

## **2. Forced Labour and Human Trafficking: Conceptual Perspectives**

Human trafficking, child and forced labour and the global capitalist enterprise are inextricably connected phenomena in Africa. Victims of human trafficking usually end up as forced labourers on the continent or abroad. Female victims, especially young girls, typically find themselves involuntarily working in the capacity of domestic servants or sex slaves. Boys often wind up in forced labour camps on agricultural plantations and mining areas. The interconnected nature of these phenomena can be best understood by appreciating the following basic facts as elaborated by the International Labour Organization (see ILO, 2010; ILO, Online), and reiterated by Dougnon (2011). The sectors most inclined to employing victims of human trafficking, particularly cash crop agriculture, mining, and 'sex tourism' produce goods and/or services for foreign as opposed to domestic consumption. According to the International Labour Office (ILO, 2010; ILO, Online), there are as many as 660,000 victims of human trafficking serving in these sectors in sub-Saharan Africa alone. One of the negative effects of human trafficking is that it invariably violates the human rights of its victims (Cho et al.,

2011). Characterized as “one of the most serious transnational crimes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (Cho et al., 2011: 2), this problem remains to be adequately understood.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been at the forefront of efforts to draw attention to the twin problems of forced labour and human trafficking. However, it is necessary to underscore the fact that these problems are anything but new. They have been around since time immemorial. The Holy Bible contains accounts of persons enslaved and/or forced to work against their will (Holy Bible, 1978). The 37<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis recounts the tale of Joseph being sold into slavery. Similarly, the 9<sup>th</sup> of chapter of 1 King presents an account of the forced labour that King Solomon summoned to execute various tasks including the construction of a temple, his palace and concomitant terraces. Kingdoms and states throughout the world have followed in the same footpath. They have found it necessary to engage in the mass scale extraction of work from citizens under the threat of severe penalty. European colonial governments in Africa were notorious for forcefully extracting work from Africans. In fact, almost all colonial public works projects, including the construction of roads, railways, seaports, and dams, employed forced labour of some sort. Specific instances of the use of forced labour in colonial public works projects have been recounted by Dickson (1969) (in the case of Ghana), Overton (1987) in that of Kenya, and more recently, by Lee and Schultz (2012) with respect to Cameroon. Other glaring examples of state-imposed forced labour from other parts of the world include the case of Cambodia under Pot Pol, Germany under Adolf Hitler, and the Soviet Union under Stalin (Listverse.com, Online). The notion of forced labour in the foregoing cases constitutes a defining characteristic of totalitarian states.

Yet, the concept of forced labour encompasses a lot more than what takes place under totalitarian regimes. To be sure, the concept of forced labour is nebulous. For instance, international labour standards as regurgitated by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) includes as forced labour work done in exchange for wages that are below what is allowed under minimum wage legislation or those established under free market conditions (USDOL, 2007). At the global level, forced labour has sometimes been taken to include work with economic value undertaken by minors (cf., ILO, 2005). The problem with the foregoing definition is that it is oblivious to cultural peculiarities. In some cultures, particularly those of Africa, children are required to participate alongside their

parents in labour activities as part of the socialization process, a practice that is commonplace on cocoa farms in West Africa (Ryan, 2011). It is quite possible that the 200 million children worldwide that the ILO (2010) estimates to be in child labour include African children participating in this process. If nothing else, this highlights the difficulties inherent in crafting a universal definition of the concept of forced labour. However, it is worth noting that the ILO, under the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), has attempted to place within a clear definitional context, what child labour portends. According to this Convention, Child labour qualifies as forced labour when children are compelled to work under the menace of penalty. Additionally, children's labour is considered forced when their work constitutes part of the forced labour of their families. The ILO has proffered what approximates a universal definition of the concept of forced labour in general. Article 2 (1) of the Forced Labour Convention of 1930 (No. 29) defines forced labour as follows (ILO, 2005: 6):

All work or service, which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself [sic] voluntarily.

This definition imbibes within it two basic elements: one, that the labour input of the victim is enlisted by force or the threat of force; and two, that the victim's involvement in the process is involuntary (ILO, 2005).

To understand forced labour in its inter-regional and international contexts, it is important to appreciate the mobility dimension of labour. Maximizing the utility of labour depends on the extent to which it can be moved from one point (where it may be of little or no economic use), to another (where it is economically valuable). In practice, such movement may be voluntary or involuntary. The former includes instances in which labourers voluntarily migrate from areas that lack suitable employment opportunities to look for work in places with such opportunities. The latter characterises situations involving people being forced against their will to relocate from one place to work under the menace of penalty in another. Such forced relocation or migration constitutes part of what the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights defines as human trafficking. Article 3 (a) of Protocol 2000, that is, the Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons (adopted by the UN General Assembly as Resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000) defines human trafficking as follows:

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 (UNHCR, Online).

The ILO has developed a typology of forced labour that includes three main categories as follows (ILO, 2005): forced labour imposed by the state; forced labour imposed by private agents for commercial sexual exploitation; and forced labour by private agents for economic exploitation. Forced labour imposed by the state, in turn, includes labour exacted by the military, compulsory participation in public works, and forced prison labour. Forced labour imposed by private agents for commercial sexual exploitation typically includes women and men who have been forced to work in the commercial sex industry. Forced labour imposed by private agents for economic exploitation includes bonded labour, forced domestic work, or forced labour in agriculture and remote rural areas. A further distinction can be made between forced labourers who have been trafficked and those who have not (Ibid). It is estimated that worldwide, more than 10 million adults and children participate in forced labour activities, including bonded labour or commercial sexual servitude, and that 1.2 million children are trafficked each year (Dougou, 2011: 286).

### **3. Forced Labour and Human Trafficking in Africa**

Conventional wisdom considers human trafficking and forced labour as a function of endogenous forces, including indigenous tradition and cultural practices in Africa. The study reported here has a different viewpoint. It views human trafficking on the continent as externally-driven. In other words, the problem is a function not of endogenous or internal factors, but of exogenous forces. Accordingly, the study posited that the tendency to indulge in human trafficking and concomitant activities is likely to increase as external influences intensify. It follows that with an increase in exogenous factors there will be a corresponding decrease in efforts to discourage human trafficking. This is essentially the study's central hypothesis. A recent study lends credence to this

hypothesis by characterizing human trafficking as “one of the dark sides of globalization” (Cho et al., 2011: 2). Table 1 shows the record of African countries with respect to national efforts to combat human trafficking.

Id no.	Country	Percent literate [1]	Religious affiliation as percent of total population [1]			Anti-human Trafficking score [2]			
			Muslim	Christian	African	Overall	Prosecute	Protect	Prevent
01.	Algeria	69.7	99.0	0.5	0.5	5	2	1	2
02.	Angola**	67.4	0.0	100	0.0	8	2	2	4
03.	Benin	34.7	24.4	42.0	32.8	11	3	4	4
04.	Botswana	81.2	0.0	71.0	29.0	7	2	2	3
05.	Burkina Faso	21.8	50.0	10.0	40.0	12	4	4	4
06.	Burundi	59.3	10.0	67.0	23.0	10	4	3	3
07.	Cameroon	67.9	20.0	40.0	40.0	7	2	2	3
09.	Cape Verde**	76.6	N/A	N/A	N/A				
10.	Cent African Rep	48.6	15.0	50.0	35.0	7	2	2	3
11.	Chad	25.7	53.0	34.3	12.2	7	2	2	3
12.	Comoros	56.5	98.0	2.0	0.0				
13.	Congo (DR)	67.2	10.0	70.0	20.0	8	2	3	3
14.	Congo (PR)	83.8	2.0	50.0	48.0	7	2	2	3
15.	Côte d’Ivoire	48.7	38.6	32.0	29.4	7	2	2	3
16.	Djibouti	67.9	94.0	6.0	0.0	7	2	2	3
17.	Egypt	71.4	90.0	1.0	9.0	7	4	1	2
18.	Equatorial Guinea**	87.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	2	1	3
19.	Eritrea**	58.6	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	2	1	1
20.	Ethiopia	42.7	33.9	21.2	2.6	11	4	3	4
21.	Gabon	63.2	1.0	75.0	24.0	12	4	4	4
22.	Gambia	40.1	90.0	8.0	2.0	9	4	2	3
23.	Ghana	57.9	15.9	68.8	8.5	11	4	3	4
24.	Guinea	29.5	85.0	8.0	7.0	7	4	1	2
25.	Guinea Bissau	42.4	50.0	10.0	40.0	7	2	3	2
26.	Kenya	85.1	10.0	78.0	12.0	9	4	2	3
27.	Lesotho	84.8	0.0	80.0	20.0	7	2	1	4
28.	Liberia	57.5	12.0	85.6	0.6	10	4	3	3
29.	Libya	82.6	97.0	0.0	0.0	4	1	1	2
30.	Madagascar	68.9	7.0	41.0	52.0	8	2	3	3
31.	Malawi	62.7	12.8	79.0	7.0	11	4	3	4
32.	Mali	46.4	90.0	1.0	9.0	8	2	3	3

Id no.	Country	Percent literate [1]	Religious affiliation as percent of total population [1]			Anti-human Trafficking score [2]			
			Muslim	Christian	African	Overall	Prosecute	Protect	Prevent
33.	Mauritius	84.4	16.0	32.2	2.8	12	5	3	4
34.	Mauritania	51.2	100	0.0	0.0	6	2	2	2
35.	Mayote		98.0	3.0	0.0				
36.	Morocco	52.3	98.7	1.1	0.0	8	4	1	3
37.	Mozambique	47.8	17.8	41.3	23.1	9	4	3	2
38.	Namibia	85.0	0.0	85.0	15.0	7	2	2	3
39.	Niger	42.9	80.0	10.0	10.0	8	2	3	3
40.	Nigeria	68.0	50.0	40.0	10.0	14	5	4	5
41.	Rwanda	70.4	4.6	82.0	1.8	11	4	3	4
42.	Sao Tome & Principe		0.0	79.6	19.4				
43.	Senegal	39.3	94.0	5.0	1.0	11	4	4	3
44.	Seychelles	91.8	1.1	89.8	2.0				
45.	Sierra Leone	35.1	60.0	10.0	30.0	8	4	2	2
46.	Somalia**	37.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	1	1	2
47.	South Africa	86.4	1.5	83.0	15.0	8	2	2	4
48.	Sudan	61.1	70.0	5.0	25.0	5	2	1	2
49.	Swaziland	81.6	10.0	90.0	0.0	7	2	2	3
50.	Tanzania	69.4	35.0	30.0	35.0	9	4	2	3
51.	Togo	60.9	20.0	29.0	51.0	11	5	3	3
52.	Tunisia	74.3	98.0	1.0	0.0	5	2	2	1
53.	Uganda	66.8	12.1	84.0	3.9	10	4	2	4
54.	Zambia	80.6	38.0	62.0	0.0	11	4	3	4
55.	Zimbabwe	90.7	1.0	75.0	24.0	8	2	3	3

**Table 1: Exogenous Influences & Anti-Human Trafficking in Africa.**

**Source:** [1] Based on data from the CIA Factbook (see CIA, Online). [2] Cho et al. (2011). \*Values may not add up to 100% of the presence of other religious groups not included in the study. For instance, Mauritius has Hindus that account for as much as 48% of its total population. \*\*Countries not included in the analysis.

Human trafficking as a product of external forces has a long history in Africa. Its origin in modern African history can be traced to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade (Inikori, 1992). The introduction of new ideologies, including Islam and Christianity, colonialism and imperialism, as well as the imposition of the capitalist mode of production conspired to breathe new life into human trafficking and concomitant activities on the continent since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The deeply-entrenched nature of these new ideologies and modes of production is indicative of the influence of forces rooted in the Arabia and Western Europe on Africa. Understanding Africa within the context of its triple heritage, comprising



indigenous African tradition, Islam and European colonialism/Christianity, is crucial to appreciating the continent's situation (Njoh and Akiwumi, 2012; Khapoya, 1988; Mazrui, 1983).

The forced labour and human trafficking problem in Africa is complicated and multi-faceted. The scant literature on this phenomenon contains evidence of efforts to identify and understand the factors at the root of the problem (see e.g., Dougnon, 2011; Grier, 1994; UNESCO, 2006). The conclusion arrived at by these efforts can be grouped into two main but overlapping camps. The one includes works that view the problem as rooted in endogenous factors, that is, factors internal to the African continent. The other comprises studies attributing the problem to exogenous factors or factors that originate outside of the continent. The study reported in this paper was motivated by, and is intended to provide evidence bolstering, the view that forced labour in Africa is driven more by exogenous, than by endogenous forces. The study's viewpoint notwithstanding, it is necessary to acknowledge the existence of endogenous factors that can also be found at the root of the problem.

*Endogenous causes of forced labour and human trafficking.* Africa's unique experience makes the task of analyzing it very complex. Most studies of forced labour and human trafficking in Africa attribute the problem to endogenous factors (see e.g., ILO, 2005; UNESCO, 2006). In its "global alliance against forced labour" the ILO (2005: 42) drew attention to five of these factors. The first is the continent's situation as the most impoverished region in the world. For this reason, it is not unusual to find individuals who willingly agree—i.e., not under the threat of any force—to work in return for little more than food, lodging and other in-kind compensation. Additionally, such irregularities as delayed, and sometimes, non-payment for work done is commonplace. These and other irregularities complicate the task of establishing with exactitude the occurrence of a breach of contract. Second, there has been a prevalence of civil wars and other forms of violence throughout most of the continent in the recent past. Concomitant with this have been the collapse of governance and the rule of law. Both developments create a conducive environment for forced labour, human abuses and human trafficking, which go unchecked. A third peculiarity of Africa is the widespread participation of children in the economic production process. This phenomenon is at once a function of the continent's tradition and to some degree its impoverished status. It

is therefore little wonder that the continent constitutes the region with the highest incidence of child labour in the world (ILO, Online). The continent also ranks high among regions with the highest incidence of child trafficking (Ibid). This may be a function of one of the continent's traditional practices. The practice allows especially children from impoverished families to move away from home and live with socio-economically better-off consanguine relatives.

Current tools for gauging child trafficking are not sensitive enough to capture the implicit nuances here. A cursory examination of the international statistics on child labour typically identify the Sahelian countries of West Africa, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger as leading culprits (Dougnon, 2011). These countries also turn out to be those in which kinship bonds are the strongest in Africa. This demonstrates, as Dougnon (2011) has noted, the difficulty associated with separating cultural practices that have been adapted to current economic circumstances from outright forced child labour and/or trafficking.

Fourth and closely related to the foregoing, is the importance of kinship in African indigenous ethos. It is not unusual for kinship ties to be invoked for the purpose of enlisting *pro bono* work from members of one's extended family. Occasionally, similar ties are invoked by privileged individuals to demand unpaid services from the socio-economically worse-off members of their communities. More worthy of note are the pivotal roles which everyone, including children played in the pre-colonial economy in Africa. While men and boys were typically responsible for clearing the land and preparing it for planting, women and girls were in charge of planting, weeding and processing of agricultural products (Grier, 1994). Finally, there are the legacies of slave trade and colonization. Forcing people to work or render other services against their will was a defining characteristic of these two experiences in Africa's history (Ikoniro, 1992; Khapoya, 1998). These experiences partially account for the difficulty on the part of ordinary citizens and government authorities in Africa to appreciate the concept of forced labour. In fact, recent studies under the auspices of the ILO have unveiled information attesting to this difficulty (ILO, 2005). In particular, the studies noted that

“national researchers as well as their respondents, had great difficulty in understanding the concept, and in distinguishing forced labour situations from extremely exploitative, but nonetheless ‘freely chosen’ work” (Ibid, p. 42).

However, the question of what constitutes forced labour cannot be left to perception alone. At the same time, it must be noted that the international legal materials that define what constitutes forced labour appear inadequate for the task. Yet, failure to establish with certainty what constitutes forced labour and/or human trafficking further complicates the task of locating the problem’s source. The tendency to identify endogenous factors, particularly indigenous African ethos, as the sole source of the problem is, in the context of the study reported here, inaccurate. The study posits exogenous factors as accounting for a greater proportion of this problem.

*Exogenous factors.* The United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) best summarizes the essence of exogenous factors in Africa’s forced labour and human trafficking problematic. According to UNESCO (2006), this problematic has “acquired shocking new dimensions” in this era of globalization. The problem now involves multiple, and often disparate stakeholders, each motivated by the need to make a gain in financial or other terms. One of its major characteristics in this era is that it is demand-driven. In addition, it is highly profitable especially because there is a huge appetite in Africa’s growing tourist sex industry for commercial sex. Furthermore, Africa’s externally-propelled plantation economies have a constant need for cheap labour.

This need has always been in Africa especially since the European conquest, the concomitant commodification of labour as well as the introduction of plantation agriculture and commercial mines. Here, it is worth noting that human trafficking in Africa was driven first by the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, and later by the imperatives of colonial economic development (Ikoni. 1992). The plantations, mines, transportation and other infrastructure that was necessary for the success of the European colonial project in Africa required a steady and dependable labour force (cf., GLI, Online). This labour force, in some cases (e.g., plantations) was necessary on a seasonal basis. In other instances (e.g., public works projects), it was required year-round. Initially in both cases, voluntary labour was sought. However, with the passage of time, the pool of voluntary labour force dried up and colonial authorities resorted to compelling Africans to work

against their will. Consequently, colonial public works projects, including “roads, railways, and harbors were built with forced labor” throughout Africa (GLI, Online, para. 13). It is important to underscore the fact that there was always a need to move workers from one place to another depending on where the projects were located. This effectively marked the onset of migrant labour in modern Africa. In West Africa, the ongoing migration of people from landlocked countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger to work in cocoa and coffee plantations in coastal countries such as Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire and Benin dates back to the colonial era. In southern Africa, the migrant worker population has always traveled from neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana to work in mines located in South Africa. In East Africa, the trend that was started during the colonial era facilitated the movement of migrant workers from Uganda, Burundi, and Rwanda, to Kenya and Tanzania. Most, but not all the labour migration has been voluntary. In some cases, the workers have been recruited and transferred to destination countries against their will through deceit, trickery or other forms of manipulation. As Dougnon (2011: 96) noted, “the practice of [human] ‘traffic’ as it appears clearly in the tales of migrants was a widespread system of exploitation during the colonial era.” Here, it is necessary to acknowledge efforts to discourage illegal labour recruitment involving human trafficking on the part of British colonial authorities in West Africa (Ibid). However, it must be noted that such efforts were not necessarily borne of some interest in the welfare of Africans. Rather, it was borne out of the desire on the part of these authorities to monopolize the labour power of migrant workers. In making this observation in the case of the British in colonial Ghana, Dougnon (2011: 97) stated that,

[efforts] to combat the recruitment of Africans by Africans was not inspired by some kind of philanthropy but by its desire to monopolize the supply of workers coming from the Northern Territories and from neighboring French colonies.”

Also, as the volume of colonial infrastructure building projects grew and proliferated, the adult labour force grew increasingly insufficient for the task. The problem of labour shortage had grown to alarming levels and became dire at some point during the European colonial era in Africa. Such a shortage had rendered difficult the task of finding workers not only for colonial government projects but

also private mining companies in West Africa (Dougnon, 2011). In southern Africa, the problem of labour shortage was compounded by,

“the seasonal and annual fluctuations in the number of adult African males who turned out to work, the short periods for which men were willing to work, and widespread desertion” (Grier, 1994: 34).

This led colonial governments to resort to recruiting children to participate in colonial infrastructure development projects. In this regard, colonial authorities were quick to take advantage of the indigenous African ethos that viewed children not as a liability but an asset in the societal development process. Here, “capital and the state gained access to children’s labour through the continued existence of pre-capitalist ties and forms of labour control” (Grier, 1994: 28). Accounts of children working from dawn to dusk on such projects abound in colonial West Africa (see e.g., Dougnon, 2011), and colonial East/Southern Africa (see e.g., Grier, 1994). Children were employed by colonial governments, Christian and other religious organizations, and private companies in colonial Africa. Colonial authorities in the southern African region are on record for contending as follows (Grier, 1994: 46). “Children were so integral to the labour force of the colony . . . that their prohibition would cause considerable dislocation and resentment among employers.” Children served as workers in many areas, including mines, farms, and in domestic capacities throughout the continent (Ibid).

A cursory examination of the political economy of labour migration, child labour and human trafficking in contemporary Africa reveals that not much has changed since the colonial era. The hinterland countries continue to serve in their ‘labour sending’ capacities, while the coastal ones remain the destination countries. In fact, it is safe to say that their roles in different capacities have intensified, rather than declined in this era of globalization. As already implied, there seems to be a growing consensus that factors internal to Africa, such as poverty, cultural values and indigenous ethos are at the root of the problem. However, those who point the accusatory finger at these factors as causes of forced labour and human trafficking have not presented any persuasive evidence to bolster their case.

Thus, a vast lacuna remains in knowledge of the factors accounting for this problem. The study reported here was designed to bridge this gap. It would appear that exogenous factors constitute the main driving force behind human trafficking throughout Africa. To the extent that this is true, it is counter-intuitive to expect

exogenous factors to be positively associated with efforts to fight or discourage human trafficking and concomitant activities.

### *Hypotheses*

Accordingly, it is expected that with the intensification of exogenous forces, there will be a corresponding increase in aversion to efforts to combat human trafficking. In other words, efforts to discourage or actively fight human trafficking are likely to grow weaker as external influences increase. This is because concomitant with these influences is invariably a rise in the need to attain the capitalist objective of maximizing profits and minimizing cost. In this regard, human traffic, hence the commensurate promise for free or cheap labour presents itself as the most certain means of guaranteeing attainment of this objective. One analyst makes this point more succinctly with respect to white farmers in colonial South Africa in the following words (Rennie, 1978, quoted in Grier, 1994: 35). “Many such white farmers were unable or unwilling to pay for wage labour if they could avoid it.” In fact, their preference was to avoid paying for the labour input that was necessary for completing public works projects (e.g., roads and irrigation channels), farming, and herding inter alia. Not only is forced and unpaid labour convenient, it is enormously profitable. To the extent that this is true, we advance the following specific hypothesis.

**Hypothesis I:** As external influences increase, efforts to prevent trafficking are likely to correspondingly decrease;

**Hypothesis II:** A decrease in efforts to prosecute perpetrators of human trafficking is expected as external influences intensify;

**Hypothesis III:** Efforts to protect real or potential victims of human trafficking are likely to wane with the growth of external influences;

**Hypothesis IV:** A decline in overall efforts to combat human trafficking is expected with increases in external influences.

Some clarification of the notion of external influence is in order here. By external influence is meant the extent to which a country has imbibed non-indigenous values, particularly values of Western and Arabic origins. Recall that together with indigenous African tradition, Western and Arabic influences



constitute Africa's triple heritage. The next section describes the data and methodological issues of the study.

#### **4. Data and Methodology**

The study relied on secondary data of the quantitative genre from two main sources. The first is the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Factbook (see CIA, Online). Data on Africa's triple heritage for 2008 were obtained from this source. The second source of data is the 'the Anti-Trafficking Policy Index' for 2009 developed by human trafficking researchers at the August-University of Goettingen, Germany (see Cho et al., 2011). Further details on these two sources of data are in order.

The CIA World Factbook is available in electronic and hard forms. It contains reliable and up-to-date data on the geography, people, government, economy, communications, transportation, the military and international affairs of all sovereign nations in the world. Since 1981, the publication, which used to be released semi-annually, has been published every year. It was first made available online in June 1997 (Njoh and Akiwumi, 2012). The anti-trafficking index is the result of interdisciplinary efforts to index trafficking in human beings. The index was constructed from raw data originating in two reports on human trafficking, particularly, the Annual Reports of Trafficking in Persons (US State Department, 2001 – 2010), and the Reports on Trafficking in Persons: Global Patterns (UN Office of Drugs and Prevention), as well as an overall policy index for up to 177 countries over the 2000 – 2009 period.

The study includes 47 African countries, in other words, 88 percent of the continent's 54 countries. In fact, all countries for which data are available were examined. Table 1 shows the sampled countries and the proportion of the population within each of these countries that is literate, as well as the proportion that is mainly affiliated with the three religious groups that define Africa's triple heritage. After Njoh and Akiwumi (2012), African religion, Islam, and Christianity/literacy are considered indicators of the influence on Africa of African indigenous tradition/culture, Islam and Western civilization respectively.

The study examined four dependent, and four independent variables. The Dependent variables (DVs) included the following: three sub-indices of three

human trafficking policy dimensions, namely Prosecution, Prevention and Protection (i.e., the 3P Anti-Trafficking Index), and the Overall Anti-Trafficking Index. The sub-indices, Prevention (PREVENT), Prosecution (PROSECUT), and Protection (PROTECT) as culled from Cho and colleagues (2011) were attributed values ranging from 1 (for worst) to 5 (for best) on efforts to fight human trafficking. The overall index (ANTITRAFFIC) is composite index of the 3P. As formulated by Cho and colleagues (2011) it was scored between 3 (for worst) and 15 (for best) efforts to combat human trafficking and concomitant problems.

The independent variables comprised Africa's triple heritage including indigenous African tradition (AFRICAN), Arabic influences (ISLAM), and Western influences (CHURCH)/literacy (LITERATE). The variables, AFRICAN, ISLAM, and CHURCH are operationalized in terms of the proportion of a country's population indicating African traditional religion, Muslim and Christianity respectively as its main religion. The variable, LITERATE is the formal literacy level within any given country. It is considered a measure of external influence based on the assumption that formal education was introduced in modern Africa by external forces, particularly Arabs and Europeans.

The data are analyzed with the aid of SPSS using the Predictive Analytic SoftWare (PASW) Version 19. The analytic techniques employed include simple correlations and the relevant Fisher's T-statistic in the bivariate context. For the multivariate analyses, the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) technique is employed. [The link between the dependent and predictor variables in an OLS model can be summarized in the following mathematical terms.

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 x + e$$

Where,

$\alpha$  = the intercept;

$\beta_1$  = the slope;

$x$  = the predictor variables;

$Y$  = the dependent variable;

$e$  = the error term.



The associated R-square value—a value that lies between 0 and 1—is used to establish the model’s “goodness of fit.”

The data comprised widely spread and exclusively positive values. A visual inspection of the raw data revealed ample disparities in the values on all the variables in the study [A brief analysis of the descriptive statistics would be in order]. These disparities were also reflected in the residual plot. Consequently as suggested by Keene (1995), a logarithmic transformation of the values was necessary to offset possible problems of ‘skewness,’ ‘outliers,’ and ‘unequal variations’ in the data. This resulted in a regression equation of the following order:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \ln(X) + e \quad (1)$$

Where,

A 1% change in  $X$  is said to be associated with a change in  $Y$  of  $0.01 * \beta_1$ ; and

$$\ln(Y) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * X + e \quad (2)$$

can be interpreted as a change in  $X$  by one unit is associated with a 100% change in  $Y$ .

Equation (2) above, i.e.,  $\ln(Y) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * X + e$

is taken to mean that a 1% change in  $X$  is associated with a  $\beta_1$  % change in  $Y$ , so that  $\beta_1$  is the elasticity of  $Y$  with respect to  $X$ .

## 5. Main Findings

Table 2 contains a summary of the multiple regression model linking efforts to prevent (PREVENT) human trafficking as a function of the four predictor variables, Islam, Christianity, Literacy and African indigenous religion. This model was designed to test Hypothesis I, which posited that increases in external influences are likely to be associated with a decrease in efforts to prevent human trafficking. With an F-statistic of 3.845, which is statistically significant at the 95 percent level, it is clear that the model is sound. It has a coefficient of multiple determination (or adjusted R-square value) of 0.275. This suggests that the predictor variables account for almost 28 percent of the variability in efforts to prevent human trafficking. More importantly, the results borne of this model support the hypothesized relationship of an inverse relationship between external influence and efforts to prevent human trafficking. This is illustrated by the

negative B-value (-0.658) associated with literacy (LOGLITERACY). Note that the relevant t-statistic of minus 2.749 is statistically significant at better than the 0.01 level. This suggests that the value is unlikely the result of chance.

PREDICTOR	B	BETA	T-STAT
LOGMUSLIM	-0.163	-0.539	-1.768
LOGCHRIST	0.066	0.220	0.883*
LOGAFRICAN	-0.037	-0.112	-0.691
LOGLITERACY	-0.658	-0.576	-2.749**

**Table 2: Multiple Regression Model with LOGPREVENT as Dependent Variable.**

\*\*Sig. at  $p < 0.01$ ; \*Sig at 0.10; Adj.  $R^2$ : 0.275; F: 3.845, sig. at  $p < 0.014$ .

A model having PROSECUTE or efforts to prosecute perpetrators of human trafficking as the dependent variable, and the four predictor variables turned out not to be statistically sound. Accordingly, it was excluded from further analysis. Therefore, there was no sound basis for testing Hypothesis II.

Table 3 contains the information necessary to test Hypothesis III. The model summarized in this table has efforts to protect (PROTECT) victims of human trafficking as the dependent variable. The predictor variables include the four indicators of Africa's triple heritage examined in the study. The model is statistically sound, with an adjusted R-square value of 0.344 (or 34%), an F-statistic of 4.933, which is statistically significant at better than the 0.01 level. As hypothesized, the variables indicative of external influences are inversely related to efforts to protect victims of human trafficking. However, none of the relationships is statistically significant. The only statistically significant relationship is the one involving African indigenous religion. This relationship ( $t = -1.750$ ) is statistically significant at the 0.10 level and contrary to the expectations of the study.

PREDICTOR	B	BETA	T-STAT
LOGMUSLIM	-0.249	-0.465	-1.602
LOGCHRIST	0.191	0.363	1.530
LOGAFRICAN	-0.159	-0.270	-1.750*
LOGLITERACY	-0.678	-0.336	-1.685

**Table 3: Multiple Regression Model with LOGPROTECT as Dependent Variable.**

\*Sig. at  $p < 0.10$ ; Adj.  $R^2$ : 0.344; F: 4.933, sig. at  $p < 0.004$ .

Table 4 summarizes the model linking the overall trafficking index to the four predictor variables defining Africa's triple heritage in the study. The model has an adjusted R-square or coefficient of multiple determination of 0.35 (i.e., 35 %). It has an F-statistic of 5.035, which is statistically significant at better than the 0.01 level. This suggests that the model is sound. As hypothesized, external influences, as measured in terms of literacy and the influence of Islam are negatively tied to efforts to protect victims of human trafficking.

PREDICTOR	B	BETA	T-STAT
LOGMUSLIM	-0.068	-0.397	-1.374
LOGCHRIST	0.065	0.383	1.625
LOGAFRICAN	-0.066	-0.348	-2.268**
LOGLITERACY	-0.331	-0.514	-2.589**

**Table 4: Multiple Regression Model with LOGTRAFFIC as Dependent Variable.**

\*\*Sig. at  $p < 0.05$ ; Adj.  $R^2$ : 0.350; F: 5.035, sig. at  $p < 0.004$ .

In other words, as these influences intensify, such efforts are likely to diminish. However, only one of these relationships, that involving literacy (-0.331) has a t-statistic (-2.589) that is statistically significant at better than the 0.01 level. Also noteworthy is the negative association between African indigenous religion and efforts to protect victims of human trafficking. The relationship has an associated t-value of -2.268, which is statistically significant at better than the 0.05 level. This revelation is contrary to the study's expectations.

The mathematical equation linking the overall score on efforts to combat human trafficking (TRAFFIC) to the four predictor variables in the study can be stated as follows:

$$\text{LOGTRAFFIC} = 3.613 - 0.068\text{LOGMUSLIM} - 0.065\text{LOGCHRIST} - 0.066\text{LOGAFRIC} - 0.331\text{LOGLIT}$$

$$\qquad\qquad\qquad (-1.374) \qquad\qquad (1.625) \qquad\qquad (-2.268)** \qquad (-2.589)**$$

\*\*Sig. at  $p < 0.05$ ;  $R^2 = 0.35$  or 35%; F = 5.035 (sig. at  $p < 0.01$ ).

This suggests, for instance, that a 1 percent increase in level of literacy is associated with a minus 0.33 percent drop in overall score on efforts to combat

human trafficking while controlling for the influence of Islam, Christianity and African indigenous culture and tradition.

## **6. Discussion and Conclusion**

The revelations of the study reported here are telling. The revelations lend credence to the study's central hypothesis that human trafficking and related problems such as forced labour practices in Africa are by nature externally driven. This is best illustrated by the relationship between cocoa plantations in Côte d'Ivoire, the world's leading producer of cocoa, and the demand for cocoa products, particularly chocolate in advanced economies. The source of labour on cocoa plantations are young boys ranging in age from 12 to 16, who are victims of human trafficking and forced to work under unbearable conditions (TED, Online). Some victims of human trafficking as noted earlier wind up involuntarily working in mines. Others wind up as unpaid or underpaid labourers on banana, coffee, and rubber plantations. A common thread running through all of these sectors is the fact that their products are not locally consumed. Rather, they are typically destined for overseas markets. Human trafficking is estimated to be a billion-dollar industry (TED, Online). To the extent that this is true, it is easy to understand why those benefiting from the industry are unlikely to seriously pursue policies designed to stifle its growth.

The study registered some results that are contrary to its expectations. One such result is the inverse relationship between indigenous African religion, a proxy for gauging the influence of African tradition, and a propensity not to actively discourage human trafficking. Although at first glance this revelation appears counter-intuitive, upon close examination it makes sense. As stated earlier, traditional African ethos imbibes within it certain norms and practices that can be easily misconstrued as violations of international labour covenants. However, the findings lend credence to the casual observations of some analysts of the colonial project in Africa. Some of these analysts, such as Joseph Nye (1963), have observed that colonial authorities were always quick to institutionalise aspects of indigenous ethos that had the potential to facilitate attainment of colonial objectives. For instance, the British Colonial Development and Welfare scheme that was enacted by the Westminster Parliament in February 1940 incorporated the

African traditional practice of self-help (Njoh, 2011; Page, 2003). Under the guise of protecting African traditional values, British colonial authorities were able to enlist, free of charge, the labour power of Africans on colonial infrastructure development projects. Thus, the revelations in the study reported suggest that exogenous and endogenous forces do jointly contribute to problems such as human trafficking and forced labour. Whether contributing to such problems is the aim of endogenous forces is a totally different question that falls outside the scope of the study reported here.

The real and potential contribution of the study to the extant body of knowledge on human trafficking in Africa can be articulated at two different but overlapping levels. The first is its promise to shed light on the human trafficking and forced/child labour problems in Africa. The second is the fact that it has taken a gigantic step in the direction of determining the outcome of efforts addressed to fighting human trafficking throughout the continent. It is not enough to generate indicators or indices of efforts to combat human trafficking. It is necessary to put such instruments to good use. This is essentially what the study reported here has done. In particular, it has employed the innovative Anti-trafficking Policy Index developed by human trafficking researchers at the Georg-August-University of Goettingen, Germany to determine the impact of Africa's triple heritage on efforts to combat human trafficking on the continent.

## **Acknowledgements**

We sincerely thank three anonymous reviewers, and Dr. Franklin Obeng-Odoom, the Associate Editor, for their valuable comments and suggestions.

## References

- Cho, S-Y., Dreher, A. & Neumayer, E. (2011). The Spread of Anti-Trafficking Policies – Evidence from a New Index. CESifo Working Paper No. 3376, Category 2: Public Choice.
- Dickson, K. (1969). *A Historical Geography of Ghana*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Dougnon, I. (2011). Child Trafficking or Labor Migration? A Historical Perspective from Mali's Dogon Country. *Humanity* 2(1), 85-105.

- GLI (Online). Africa: The Working Class Movement in Tropical Africa – Part I: Africa’s Changing Economic Organization. Retrieved, July 22, 2011 from [http://www.globallabour.info/en/2011/04/the\\_working\\_class\\_movement\\_in.html](http://www.globallabour.info/en/2011/04/the_working_class_movement_in.html)
- Grier, B. (1994). Invisible Hands: The Political Economy of Child Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe: 1890 – 1930. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20 (1), 27 – 52.
- Holy Bible (1978). *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. Carmel, New York: Guideposts.
- ILO (2010). Facts on Child Labour 2010. International Labour Organization, Geneva.
- ILO (2005). A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 2005. Report to the Director-General. International Labour Conference 93<sup>rd</sup> Session 2005. Geneva: International Labour Office. Available online. Retrieved on Nov. 23, 2011 from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc93/pdf/rep-i-b.pdf>
- ILO (2010). “Facts on Child Labour 2010.” Informational Pamphlet, the International Labour Organization. Geneva, Switzerland, April 2010.
- Inikori, J.E. (1992). Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe (92 Ed.). Chapel Hill, NC: Duke University Press.
- Keene, O.N. (1995). The log Transformation is Special. *Statistics in Medicine*, 14(8); 811-9.
- Khapoya, V. B. (1998). *The African Experience: An Introduction*. Upper Saddle, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Lee, A. & Schultz, K.A. (2012). Comparing British and French Colonial Legacies: A Discontinuity Analysis of Cameroon. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 7: 1-46.
- Listverse.com (Online). Top 10 Most Evil Men. Accessed, October 23, 2012 at: <http://listverse.com/2007/09/05/top-10-most-evil-men/>.
- Mazrui, A.: (1983). Francophone nations and English-speaking states: Imperial Ethnicity and African political formation’, in D. Rothchild and Olorunsola

- (eds.), *State Versus Ethnic Claim: African Policy Dilemma* (Westview Press, Boulder, Co).
- Njoh, A.J. (2011). Citizen Participation and Sustainability: Lessons from Cameroon. *Development* 54(3), 376-383.
- Njoh, A.J. & Akiwumi, F.A. (2011). The Impact of Religion on Women Empowerment as a Millennium Development Goal in Africa. *Social Indicators Research*, Available online. Accessed on Nov. 28, 2011 at: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/6382n264236854x3/>
- Njoh, A.J. & Akiwumi, F.A. (2012). The Impact of Religion on Women Empowerment as a Millennium Development Goal in Africa. *Social Indicators Research* 107: 1-18.
- Nye Jr., J. (1963). Tanganyika's Self-Help. *Transition* 11: 35-39.
- Overton, J. (1987). The Colonial State and Spatial Differentiation: Kenya, 1895 – 1920." *Journal of Historical Geography*, 13 (3), 267 – 282.
- Page, B. (2005). Naked Power: Women and the Social Production of Water in Anglophone Cameroon. In A. Coles and T. Wallace (eds.). *Gender, Water and Development*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 57 – 74.
- Rennie, J.K. (1978). White Farmers, Black Tenants and Landlord Legislation: Southern Editor-in-Chief, 1890 – 1930. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 5, 86-98.
- Ryan, O. (2011). *Chocolate Nations: Living and Dying for Cocoa in West Africa*. London: Zed Books.
- TED (Online). Chocolate and Slavery: Child Labor in Cote d'Ivoire.' (Trade and Environment Database). Accessed, Nov. 28, 2011 from: <http://www1.american.edu/ted/chocolate-slave.htm>
- UN (2000). Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. Available online at [http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/Conventions/dcatoc/final\\_documents\\_2/convention\\_%20traff\\_eng.pdf](http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/Conventions/dcatoc/final_documents_2/convention_%20traff_eng.pdf). Accessed, Nov. 28, 2011.
- UNESCO (2006). *Human Trafficking in Mozambique: Root Causes and Recommendations*. Policy Paper Poverty Series No. 14.1 (E).

UNHC (Online). The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children. Accessed, Nov. 24, 2011 from: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/protocoltraffic.htm>

USDL (2007). U.S. Department of Labor, "Notice of Procedural Guidelines for the Development and Maintenance of the List of Goods From Countries Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor," 72, Fed. Reg. 73374 (December 27, 2007); available from <http://www.dol.gov/ILAB/programs/ocft/tvpra.htm>. Accessed, October 23, 2012.