

**CHILDREN'S WORK: EXPERIENCES OF STREET VENDING
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN ENUGU, NIGERIA**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is originally composed by me. It is based on my own work, with acknowledgements of other sources, and has not been submitted in whole or part for any other degree or professional qualification.

.....
Rosemary C. BabyLaw Okoli

February 2009

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the loving memories and guiding spirits of my late father, Mr. Lawrence Nnaemeka Okoli, and brother, Pastor Okwy Cornelius Nnaemeka, whose spirits and positive views of life sustained me throughout my academic sojourn in the UK.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED

- AIDS Acquired Immune deficiency Syndrome
- ANPPCAN African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect
- BASICS/N Basic Support for Institutionalising Child Survival, Nigeria (A USAID funded programme for immunisation against maternal and infant mortality in Nigeria).
- BSA British Sociological Association
- CBOs Community Based Organizations
- CD Community Development
- DFID Department for International Development
- EFA Education for All
- FSLCE First School Leaving Certificate Examination
- GCE General Certificate of Education
- GRA Government Reserved Area - an exclusive low density residential area for socio-economically successful people
- HIV Human Immune deficiency Virus
- IFSW International Federation of Social Workers
- IGWCL International Working Group on Child Labor
- ILO International Labour Organisation
- IMF International Monetary Fund
- IPEC International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
- IWGCL International Working Group on Child Labour
- JAMB Joint Admissions Matriculation Board
- JSCE Junior Secondary Certificate Examination
- LGA Local Government Authority
- MDGS UN Millennium Development Goals
- NAFDAC National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control
- NASW National Association of Social Workers
- NCE National Certificate of Education
- NCE National Council on Education

NDE National Directorate for Employment
NNMCLS. Nigeria National Modular Child Labour Survey
NPC National Population Commission
NURTW National Union of Road Transport Workers
OAU Organisation of African Unity (Now known as African Union)
Organization
PTA Parents Teachers Association
SIMPOC Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour
SPDC Nig. Ltd Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Ltd
SSCE Senior Secondary Certificate Examination
UBE Universal Basic Education
UBEC Universal Basic Education Commission
UN United Nations
UNCRC United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child
UNDHR United Nations Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
UNICEF United Nation Children Fund
UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USAID United States Agency for International Development
WACOL Women's Aid Collective.
WAEC West African Examination Council

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ABSTRACT

Concern for children's safety and protection has become a global issue and has evoked considerable debate since the publication of the United Nations' widely ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989. A dominant theme within this charter and within the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) is the recognition that children are individuals with rights that need to be respected and protected. More specifically, Article 32 of the UNCRC states that children should be protected from 'economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development'. Nigeria has signed and ratified both the UNCRC and the African Charter and has committed itself to ensuring the welfare and protection of its children.

This thesis examines children's work experiences and their interpretations of these against the backdrop of the provisions of the UNCRC and the African charter. The study sets out to explore the meanings of work for itinerant street vending children and young people in Enugu, Nigeria and is based on a combined ethnographic methodology of participant observation and semi-structured interviews with 24 child vendors in marketplaces over a period of six months. It will be argued that contemporary ideas about children's work are framed by Euro-centric, adult perceptions and definitions of what they think working children are doing, and that the imposition of Western constructions of childhood does not reflect the lived realities of children. Discussions with children revealed, among other things, a contradiction and ambivalence in their understandings of work in relation to vending and an interplay of complex environmental, cultural and poverty factors. In children's views, taking responsibilities in activities that add positive values to their personal development and to the continued survival of their families was part of their childhood. Whilst street based observations of the markets revealed some fundamental dangers and problems with street vending, especially the reality of physical, social and emotional abuse, these young children have developed robust coping mechanisms and social networks which reflect a blend of definitional adjustments, rationalisation and social bonding and which reveal inadequacies in the enforcement of child protection policies. The tension between these risks and the importance of vending in the lives of the children is discussed. The role and type of work are further examined against dominant cultural values and socio economic realities in Nigeria in an attempt to fully explain the phenomenon of children's work in this milieu.

This study concludes that children's participation in vending, while at times both 'hazardous' and 'harmful', is a fact of life and a way of life for children growing up in Nigeria, an integral part of their childhood activity, and a realistic preparation for their future lives and careers. It is argued that this raises important challenges not only to the children's rights agenda, but also to social welfare agencies which seek to provide support to children and young people in developing countries such as Nigeria.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the meanings of children's work from the perspectives and experiences of children and young people involved in itinerant trade along major streets and marketplaces in Enugu, Nigeria. The study seeks to examine what child vendors do in various marketplaces, how they became involved in street vending, their network of social relationships and how they experience their current situations. It hopes to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on working children and childhoods and seeks to challenge some assumptions about working children, or what the International Labor Organization (ILO) refers to as "children who are economically involved" (ILO, 1999a) in Nigeria. Discussions on the involvement or exclusion of children and young people in employment, economic activities and/or work have been a recurring global issue (Togunde and Carter, 2006) since the publication of the United Nations' widely ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989, herein referred to as the UNCRC or the CRC for short (Myers, 1999). More specifically, Article 32 of the UNCRC states that children should be protected from "economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development". Nigeria has signed and ratified both the UNCRC and the Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African child, herein referred to as the African Charter, and has further committed itself to ensuring the welfare and protection of her children through passing the Nigerian Child's Right Act (2003).

1.1.GENERAL OVERVIEW

Children's work, or what is generally referred to as child labour, is perceived to be one of the most pressing social problems affecting the developing world (International Labor Organization (ILO), International Program on the Elimination of Child labor (IPEC) and Statistical Information and Monitoring Program on Child Labour (SIMPOC) (ILO, IPEC and SIMPOC, 2002). It has, in recent years, become a major concern to governments and international agencies, child advocates, trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the wider public (Myers and

Boyden, 1998:4). The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a leading children's advocate, affirms that work as an activity is not in itself bad or damaging to children but can diminish or enhance children's development depending on the type, nature and circumstances under which it is carried out (UNICEF, 1997). Manfred Liebel also asserts that children's work can be good or bad, healthy or harmful (Liebel, 2004).

According to ILO global estimations, 250 million children between the ages of five and fourteen are involved in various economic activities; 120 million are working full time and in "exploitative environments" (ILO-IPEC: 1997) and another 130 million work part time. Another estimated 50-60 million children between the ages of five and eleven are engaged in "intolerable forms of labor" and work in "hazardous circumstances" (ILO: 1993). Current estimates have even higher figures (ILO, 2006a, 2008). Asia and Africa produce almost 90% of the total global child employment and rank highest in the overall world rating (61% and 32% respectively) (Muscroft, 1999). Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest numbers of working children (Bass, 2004) with 48 million children (one in every three children) economically and actively engaged (ILO, IPEC and SIMPOC, 2002). Nigeria alone has about 12 million child workers (ILO, 1996a), despite being a signatory to the CRC which prohibits the economic exploitation of children. Most known research on working children is mainly based on Asian and Latin American societies where the majority of children work in industries and the formal sector (Bass, 2004). Little scholarly work has been done on Africa's work population, particularly in Nigeria (Togunde and Carter, 2006), the most populous country in Africa (United Nations, 1989), where the prevalence of child workers is even higher (Canagarajah and Nielsen, 2001).

In past studies, the terms child labour and children's work have been used interchangeably as if they mean the same thing i.e., involving children in harmful activities or in exploitative work conditions and this has created definitional problems. UNICEF (1997) has recently clarified the two concepts by distinguishing between what is beneficial and what is harmful about children's involvement in

work. It uses child labour to mean only negative, exploitative work activities in which children engage and child work or children's work for the beneficial activities which they perform. This distinction clearly raises questions about what is deemed exploitative, negative or beneficial about children's work activities and who defines them. This thesis will use the terms child labour and child work at different points throughout.

Street vending is a common activity for children and young people growing up in Nigeria. They are seen in large numbers in streets and sprawling open market places, motor parks, bus terminals and in gas stations in major cities in Nigeria, retailing various wares from food and household goods to toys, second hand clothing, mobile telephones and accessories. Some carry their wares on their heads inside cartons, woven baskets, plastic or metal basins and others sell from wheel barrows. These children are often seen in the company of other children and sometimes older vendors darting about with their wares soliciting for prospective buyers, beckoning on people and running after moving vehicles in order to make sales. Their presence and *modus operandi* become obvious as soon as you step into any urban city in Nigeria and they have raised public and private concerns. They operate in all types of weather: on weekdays and weekends, during school and after school periods and from morning till late hours of the night. Oftentimes, they operate in very similar circumstances with adult traders, under conditions that can be said to "violate their human dignity and endanger their personal development" (Liebel, 2004: 226).

Views such as Liebel's tend to evoke negative criticisms and public outcries which suggest that work is damaging to children and robs them of their childhood. For instance, a UNICEF programme officer in Nigeria was quoted as saying, "Children don't have a childhood here...they work" (Ayisi 1997:6). Also acknowledging the worrying presence of child street vendors, the threats and dangers inherent in street vending and decrying the plight of street-working children in Nigeria, a former Deputy Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives in Nigeria, remarked,

They should ordinarily be in schools [but] are on the streets...exploited as objects of sex and ...might be sold into slavery.

(Prince Chibudum Nwuche, quoted in the Vanguard, 2003a)

He called on all Nigerian citizens to ensure that working children in Nigeria are accorded greater safeguard and protection because “children constitute Nigeria’s only real hope for a great future” (Vanguard, 2003a). Statements such as this not only tend to undermine the usefulness of work for children and their families but seem to suggest that children’s work is backward and that working children are at great disadvantage. They are marked by a “high moral tone” (Liebel, 2004: 5) and do not seem to give the whole picture especially from the perspectives of those involved. It was these genuine adult concerns which excited my interest and desire to find out from the children themselves what they do and what their opinions are concerning what they do.

1.2.RATIONALE FOR MY STUDY

My interest in this topic stems from my professional experience in community development with SPDC¹, Nig Ltd, BASICS/USAID²– Nigeria and membership of a humanitarian organization, the Rotary International. This entailed working with various NGOs and voluntary community-based welfare organisations (CBOs) that worked with impoverished and vulnerable women and children in various rural, urban and semi-urban communities in Nigeria. As the then programme officer for social mobilization and community development, a greater part of my work focused on human rights, child protection, democracy and governance, and empowering women and young people to participate actively in community development initiatives within their local communities. In addition, my sustained dealings with

¹ Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria.

² BASICS stands for Basic Support for Institutionalising Child Survival, a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded programme for immunisation against maternal and infant mortality in Nigeria.

staff of UNICEF-Nigeria³ gave me privileged access to some of their country programmes and publications about the state of Nigeria's children and as a frontline community development worker at the time, I also came into direct contact with street vending and street working children and always wondered why parents and guardians would allow their precious children to spend long hours on the streets selling wares that did not seem to me to attract reasonable amounts of money. To put it simply, my attitude in hindsight can be summarised thus: sympathy for the children, condemnation of parents (adults) for allowing them to work and curiosity about the circumstances of the children.

My curiosity was also aroused by media debates on the situation. I was particularly struck by the invisibility of the faces and the silent voices of children whose photographs appeared on television screens and on pages of newspapers, pressing the view that street vending was bad, exploitative and not in children's best interests. Such media debates involved adult members of various professional organizations, respected community and religious leaders of different persuasions, and parents, and were often aired on television and radio stations in Nigeria decrying the plight of working children, especially those involved in vending. But I never saw a forum where children were invited to participate in these discussions or child vendors asked to explain what they do and what it means to them. Adult groups and individuals often spoke on children's behalf and used their photos to obtain funding from international development agencies which propagate the rights and welfare of children. Such debates were hotly contested and often ended in divided opinions between parents, professionals, academics, child welfare practitioners and NGO representatives. The latter tended to argue that street vending was exploitative while parents saw children's involvement in work as integral to their growth and development process and to their cultural integration. These contentious debates always portrayed a conflict between modern and traditional beliefs and customs about children and child rearing practices in Nigeria.

³ United Nations Children's Fund

On a personal level, having been raised in a Nigerian environment where children are expected to work and help their parents and families in whatever way they can as part of their childhood, I was torn between modern discourses and traditional beliefs and practices back home. My professional dealings brought me into contact with individuals, groups and agencies which believe in promoting the values enunciated by the UNCRC, while my personal experience of growing up in the Nigerian culture differed slightly with some of those values. My academic experience as a student of social work in the UK evoked many more questions and aroused my interest all the more. From my personal and professional experiences, I know that children have voices and are capable of articulating their concerns.

What encouraged me to undertake this study was the need to understand the perceptions and experiences of child vendors who are very visible on the streets but often made invisible in these discourses. I wanted to know more about their lives and childhoods; their thoughts and feelings about what they did, who they sold them for and why, how they sold wares and their expectations from vending. Initially I thought that street vending children had no homes where they returned to at the end of the day and that they slept rough on the streets. I also thought that they were all house-helps⁴ or orphans and did not attend school but a closer look proved otherwise. What do Nigeria's street vending children think about their lives? How did they become involved in vending in the first place and why? How do they cope? Who benefits from them selling wares? Do they attend school? Does vending affect their education? Do they regard themselves as exploited? Do they see themselves as contributing to household and family income? Is vending part of their transition to adulthood? Is their work necessarily harmful as generally assumed or could it have benefits? Is there anything that can be done? Should children be stopped completely from vending? These questions are at the heart of this thesis. It is my hope that this study will contribute in providing the much needed information on Africa's working children, particularly from the children's perspectives and to policy development for street vending and street working children in Nigeria and beyond.

⁴ Children fostered out to live with non relatives

1.3.AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aims of my study were:

- To explore the meanings of work from the perspectives of children and young people who are involved in street vending, examining their lives, activities and networks of social relationships.
- To contribute towards filling a significant gap in existing information about children and childhoods in Nigeria and to generate from that knowledge more information about working children and child labour in West Africa and Africa.
- To contribute to discussions on the African-centred (Afro-centric) paradigm and use this to investigate certain cultural beliefs and practices which are deemed exploitative but seen as part of children's socialization in Nigeria and in Africa.
- To make practical suggestions about developing appropriate social welfare and social work policies and practice for working children, particularly with regards to educational programs targeted at street children.
- To identify the implications for support for other groups of children who are faced with a similar situation of having to work.

The specific objectives were:

1. To carry out participant observation of children and adult vendors and to interview a sample of children and young street vendors in various marketplaces in Enugu, Nigeria, exploring their perspectives and its impact on their lives including schooling, friends and play, and relationships with family members and the wider society.
2. To interview some adults who have regular sustained interactions with children in those marketplaces.

It is my hope that this study will help to clarify some notions emanating from the writings of scholars and practitioners from developed western economies about Africa's working children and their socialization. It is also hoped that examining the childhoods and experiences of itinerant street vending children will help to highlight how the children themselves experience this aspect of the culture into which they are born and socialized.

My chosen methodology draws on an approach which has been variously called "child-centred" (Myers and Boyden, 1998) and "subject-oriented" (Liebel, 2004). Both perspectives posit that children are competent individuals with rights and should be respected for who they are and for their contributions and capacity to shape their lives and those of their families and communities. An in-depth review of relevant literature and key messages from existing research on working children and childhoods and on legislative and policy frameworks (The UNCRC and the African Charter) was undertaken. This was followed by systematic ethnographic observation and face-to-face semi-structured interviews of children and adults in various marketplaces. In analyzing the findings, particular attention is paid to the children's views and the study seeks to identify and discuss emerging themes from the children's stories.

The study also looks at different views about children and childhoods and draws on the social constructionist theory of childhoods which sees children as "products of different world views" (Rogers, 2003). This worldview suggests that there is no one universal definition of childhood because children and child-rearing practices differ across cultures (Bourdillon, 2000) and various societies have different expectations of the roles and responsibilities that children and young people can and are expected to perform at various stages in their lives (Woodhead and Montgomery, 2003). Children's rights to participate in decisions and activities that affect them is a fundamental promulgation of the UNCRC (see Article 12) and researchers and commentators have sought various ways and means of making this right valid and

accessible to children in different societies of the world, in such a way that their voices and opinions are sought and taken into account.

1.4. THE RESEARCH CONTEX

1.4.1 NIGERIA



Fig. 1a: Sketch map of Nigeria highlighting Enugu State in red. Image taken online from www.mapsofworld.com/nigeria/ accessed on May 30th 2003



Fig.1b: Map of Nigeria listing the 36 states including Enugu. Image taken online from www.mapsofworld.com/nigeria/ accessed on May 30th 2003

Nigeria is a leading country in Africa in terms of human and natural resources and the most populous in the African continent. The country is made up of over 500 ethno-linguistic groups, with distinct dialects and languages, arts and culture, but brought together under one political entity by Britain at the beginning of the 20th century. The largest ethnic groups and languages which have dominated national politics are the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Igbo in the South East and the Yoruba in the South West. Apart from the abundant natural deposits of oil and other rich minerals which have placed the country among the top oil producing countries in the world, the ethnic richness and cultural diversity of Nigeria is another of its greatest assets, though this has often become a source of conflict. Nigerian people are deeply religious, but religion and ethnicity are two major issues that tended to polarize the

country. National unity and political alignment have generally been on ethnic and religious lines.⁵ The country has 36 states plus Abuja which is the federal capital. The states are grouped into six geopolitical zones and the latest census figures put the population at 150 million (NPC, 2007)⁶

English is the official language of communication and instruction and the only common language that is spoken and understood but only by the literate members of the population. A local version of the English language called Pidgin English⁷ (or Pidgin, for short) also exists. It is spoken across West Africa but varies from place to place. The Nigerian-style Pidgin combines English language and variations of other ethnic dialects and languages. It is a “comical language and spoken with spirit, emotion and a lot of gesticulations” (Nigeria Exchange, 2008). Pidgin is not officially taught in schools but has become the commonest medium of communication spoken and understood in wider circles, particularly for trade and on the streets. For one to be able to speak and understand Pidgin, such a person would have possibly attended at least a basic primary education institution up to a certain level and would have acquired a working knowledge of English language.

Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has undergone tremendous physical, political, social, economic and cultural changes. These changes have affected the lifestyles and traditional values of the people and created some kind of confusion or an uncomfortable fusion between tradition and modernity. The implications of these are marked by increased urbanization which is sustained by rural-urban migration, failing family ties and relationships which have led to increasing rates of divorce and

⁵ The following geographical and socio-political information is drawn from written sources (Ayisi, 1997, NPC, 2007) and also from personal contact with Professor J. Okoro Ijoma (a prominent professor of History at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka). He read this chapter and gave useful insights.

⁶ NPC stands for National Population Commission which has responsibilities for national census and other demographic activities.

⁷ Popularly referred to as broken English or broken for short. It is an English-based language, spoken across West Africa but with ethnic variations. It has similarities with Creole language spoken in different West African countries and the Caribbean.

remarriage and a tendency towards individualism, what Obinyan (1998) referred to as “reduced communal considerations for people” (p.64).

There is an undocumented belief among Nigerians that life begins in January and ends in December, essentially for Christians (and non Christians), except Moslems, who have their own celebrations and holidays. The implication of this is that many people live, work and save for December and the months of September to December, popularly referred to as *mber* months in Nigeria, are often the busiest times of the year for many Nigerians. Trading activities rise to their peak at this time in preparation for Christmas and New Year festivities, which are the biggest yearly social events that draw people from the cities to their ancestral homes especially in the southern parts of the country. Urban dwellers return to their quiet rural towns and villages to celebrate Christmas and New Year with their kinspeople, participate in community development efforts and show off any newly acquired wealth and status. It is during these festive times that most rural/community development (CD) activities⁸ and programs are planned and existing ones completed and commissioned. Such events usually draw home a large number of well-meaning people from within and outside the country as they are expected to contribute towards various CD activities in their respective home communities. It is also at such events that honorary chieftaincy titles are conferred on individuals who have made outstanding philanthropic contributions to their communities in appreciation for their contributions and many urban dwellers and rural people look forward to those occasions.

Nigeria is often described as a complex society because of its diverse ethnic groups, cultures, arts and languages. Ayisi describes it as “a land of contrasts...modern and well rooted in 20th century, yet steeped in the traditions of the old” (Ayisi, 1997: 4). Nigerian people are proud of their rich cultural heritage and have great respect for tradition which often “translates itself into a reverence for elders and traditional leaders who strictly adhere to cultural customs” (Ayisi, 1997: 4). Ironically, this

⁸ Self help community based welfare oriented development programmes usually championed by well meaning philanthropic groups and individual members of a community.

cultural attitude places high premium on children and yet seems to accord them lowly status in societal ranking (Akhilomen, 2006). Children's low ranking, which is essentially an age-based social stratification, places them in a secondary and disadvantaged position and reinforces their vulnerability. The implication of this societal perception of children as Akhilomen states:

...Explains the disposition of people towards children which makes them regard children as less valuable stakeholders in the society, who can be seen but certainly not to be heard and whose interests can be considered only after those of their elders in the society.

(Akhilomen, 2006:8)

1.4.2 IGBOLAND

This study is not about Igbo people and culture; it includes people from other ethnic groups but the study area is situated in Igboland. As noted already, the Igbo are one of the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria that make up the South East geopolitical zone with an estimated population of 10.7 million people (Agbasiere, 2000). Current estimates of the Igbo population who reside in the core Igbo states are between 14 and 15 million people (NPC, 2007). The Igbo ethnic group embraces the present Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States with large Igbo speaking populations spread across Delta State and Rivers States in the South-South geopolitical zone. The Igbo are found in every part of Nigeria and beyond, in various professions and they are generally known for their successful enterprise in trade and commerce. Although the Igbo are said to be one ethnic group, Igboland is wide and diverse. The people speak a common language, which is Igbo, and broadly share similar cultural values and norms, but each state has its distinct local dialect and sub-culture.

1.4.3 The City of Enugu

The study area, Enugu, is in Enugu State and is situated in Igboland. It is an old colonial city from the early 20th century, the oldest urban centre east of the river

Niger and the capital of the former Eastern Region (Eastern Nigeria). Historically, Enugu became the headquarters of the Eastern Provinces in 1939 and in 1946 the capital of the Eastern Region, sharing in importance with two other popular towns in Nigeria, namely, Ibadan (in the Western Region) and Kaduna in the Northern Region. In 1967, it became the capital of the East Central State (comprising the five states in the current Southeast geo political zone) and later the capital of the old Anambra State until 1991 when again it became the capital of present Enugu State. Enugu is generally regarded as 'the spiritual home of all Igbo-speaking people' (Jones, 1984) and the city, which is popularly referred to as the coal city because of large coal deposits and mining activities, has successively continued to enjoy capital status and play a prominent role in the lives of Igbo people.

The city of Enugu covers an area of 1000 sq kilometres and has a population size of 465, 072 (NPC, 1992). It is the 15th largest urban centre in Nigeria and the 4th largest city in south eastern Nigeria (Ikoku, 2008). Being the only area in the West African sub-region with abundant coal deposits, Enugu provided coal to neighbouring West African countries, fuelled the West African railways and facilitated the growth of commerce – making the town a collecting centre for agricultural products from neighbouring communities and a distribution centre for foreign goods as well. Coal mining activities in those early years attracted both local and expatriate traders. Foreign trading firms were established, commercial activities expanded and this attracted more immigrants from all over Nigeria and beyond. The colonial administration designed the city in a way that created two distinct areas – one inhabited by natives and the other by Europeans (Ikoku, 2008). During the colonial administration, the city had a large workforce drawn from the colliery, railways, public works departments, the police, prisons and regional government agencies. This large working class also attracted other service providers such as transporters, tailors and goldsmiths.

Being the central home for the Igbo people, Enugu naturally has a very large number of people of Igbo origin and descent, who live, work and do business in the city. It also has a sizeable population of non-Igbo speaking peoples drawn largely from many federal establishments including the Army, Navy and the Police, who have

large offices and residences in different parts of the city. The city hosts the administrative headquarters of one of the nation's largest military bases (The 82 Division) and other federal, regional and state institutions. Enugu is a cosmopolitan city with all the trappings of a fast developing urban centre and has a dual characteristic of being both a civil service town and a commercial city because of sprawling business activities in every part of the city. It has a good road network and is well linked to most parts of the country. Enugu has developed numerous public and private educational institutions at all levels. The city boasts of four large universities, three major theological institutes, four polytechnics, several post-secondary educational institutions, teacher training colleges and many primary and secondary schools. It also has many reputable health facilities and research institutes including two university teaching hospitals, modern telecommunications facilities, an airport and many public spaces (such as parks for civic, recreational and religious activities), botanical and zoological parks and gardens, transport terminals and more recently an array of banks, all of which have made it a relatively attractive city for people of every class and socio-economic status.

The city has two local government authorities (LGAs) - Enugu North and Enugu South – and the motor parks and marketplaces which are the focus of my research are situated in these two localities.

1.4.4 Enugu North LGA

This local authority is situated in the most strategic part of the city and is generally considered the busiest and most popular of all the local authorities in the state. It is easily accessible by road and rail, has a high concentration of businesses and offices and is the hub of activities because of its business potential. The LGA is host to the largest daily market (the Ogbete Main Market) in the state, many regional offices of various banks and financial institutions as well as the State Secretariat complex which has the State Ministries of Education, Information, Health, Women Affairs and Child Welfare, Lands, Museums and Monuments and Archives. Other prominent establishments within the LGA are the headquarters of the State Police Command and various civil service head offices; the University of Nigeria Teaching

Hospital⁹, a large number of big pharmaceutical companies, regional offices of multi-million marketing companies, the state prison headquarters and the Immigration Department. Also located in this area are big fast food outlets and departmental chain stores, the State postal and telecommunications complexes, big and popular bookshops, the State Library complex, the Zoo, big motor companies and pockets of small and medium scale enterprises. Added to these is the presence of two major commercial streets, Ogui Road and Okpara Avenue which both hold a daily mini market for electrical and electronic equipment. Also located there are petrol filling stations, telecommunications shops, photo developing laboratories and a variety of commercial ventures. The biggest sports stadium in the south east geo-political zone is also located in the middle of Ogui Road. This stadium houses many shops selling sports items, music and video shops, big eateries and fast food centres. Towards the end of this street is a medium scale marketplace for the sale of livestock and miscellaneous wares such as food stuff and second hand clothes. In addition to these facilities are the magnificent Catholic Cathedral, many public and privately owned motor parks, bus stations, taxi bays and garages for local and inter-state transportation. All of these add to the importance and popularity of this local authority and make it the major commercial hub of the city and the state. Every part of this LGA has been turned into a business arena and has become a major attraction for tourism and commerce drawing thousands of people from all over the country. Traffic congestion is a characteristic feature of this part of the city which and has earned it the reputation as a ‘go-slow’ zone. The dynamism and vibrancy of itinerant vendors, who are often seen scurrying around with their wares chasing after customers in moving vehicles along the streets, at traffic junctions, gas stations and motorways, also make this part of the city a bustling commercial centre.

1.4.5 Enugu South LGA

This LGA also has many small and medium scale businesses, schools, churches, markets and one of the biggest, busiest and most prominent bus terminals in the region. It also has two of the city’s longest streets, Zik Avenue and Agbani Road,

⁹ One of Nigeria’s foremost university teaching hospitals

which have also become another busy shopping arena with supermarkets of various sizes and busy roadside street markets. One of the country's high density military residential barracks and the biggest livestock markets in the region are all situated in this LGA. It is in these two localities that my fieldwork was conducted, but before proceeding with accounts of my fieldwork, I shall explain the role of local government Areas (LGAs) to the children and to this study.

1.5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS IN NIGERIA

The local government authority is the third-tier of the administrative structure in Nigeria. It is administered by a Local Government Council which comprises an elected or appointed chairperson, the Chief Executive, and other elected members (Councillors) and committees that assist the Councils in decision-making. The LGAs have clearly defined roles in the federal constitution. They work in concert with the state government but their major remit is to provide and enhance socio-economic planning and development of their local communities. They perform other roles which include the

- Establishment, maintenance and regulation of markets, motor parks and public conveniences;
- Collection of rates, licensing of bicycles, trucks ... wheel barrows and carts;
- Construction and maintenance of roads, streets, drains and other public highways, parks, open spaces, or such public facilities ...;
- Control and regulation of out-door advertising and hoarding, shops and kiosks, restaurants and other places for sale of food to the public.

Together with the state government, the LGA provides and maintains primary education and health services and develops agriculture and natural resources except for the exploitation of minerals, which is the responsibility of the federal government.

(Constitution of Nigeria, 1999).

The management of public motor parks in Nigeria is statutorily vested in the local government councils. LGAs have oversight functions over markets and marketing operations. They own and control motor parks and market operations within their jurisdiction. They generate revenue from market operations; they build, lease and sell shopping spaces to individuals and groups and their revenue staff move around daily, collecting fees from traders, both stationary and mobile. Within the motor parks and marketplaces are various associations of transport providers, such as the association of bus drivers, taxi drivers and lorry drivers, who all came together to form the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW)¹⁰.

Also within each marketplace are different associations of traders and service providers such as the association of wheel barrow pushers and wheel barrow owners, hair dressers' association, various food sellers, operators of restaurants and bars, palm wine sellers, yam sellers etc. Most of these associations are organized according to the services they provide but each body caters for the welfare of its members and helps to regulate prices of products and services. Some of these associations formed multi-purpose cooperatives through which they generate incomes and make small-scale revolving loans available to their members, as part of their welfare, sustainability and poverty reduction strategies. These associations work together to form a formidable pressure group within the local jurisdictions and states where they operate. They are very useful and successful in regulating the behaviour of their members and customers especially in times of crises. They play representative roles for their members, supporting them in good times such as weddings/marriage ceremonies and also in times of adversity and bereavement. These welfare-oriented social networks of traders and transport operators have also been known to play important roles in national development and are a very strong political pressure group, especially during electioneering campaigns.

The LGAs work in concert with all the various associations within the marketplaces and these groups have direct and sustained dealings with the children and adult vendors involved in this study. The relationship between the LGAs, child vendors

¹⁰ This includes drivers of various types of vehicles and their assistants

and the vending places is so close and intense that it dominated children's vending experiences. One unexpected finding (discussed in chapter seven - Education and Career aspirations) is that the LGAs have no school enforcement mechanism: many school-aged children carry on selling wares even during school hours, right under the direct view of the local authorities who are charged with providing and maintaining children's education.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

In chapter two, I review some relevant literature about some of the diverse controversies surrounding children's work, the child labour- child work debates, and the legislative and policy frameworks (the UNCRC, the African Charter and the Nigerian Children's Act) that provide the platform for my thesis. I also discuss the changing discourses on childhood and the major theoretical and policy frameworks that have shaped discussions about working children in this study.

In chapter three I analyse the methodological, ethical and practical issues involved in my ethnographic fieldwork and my personal reflections upon the entire process.

In chapter four I set the scene for the study by discussing the research context and market operations and by providing a brief profile of the 24 child vendors whose voices form a major part of the analysed data.

Chapter five focuses on the views and perceptions of the children and young people in this study, their early involvement in vending, and their understanding of work in relation to selling wares on the streets. It explores children's stories, reveals mixed feelings and ambivalent understandings of their involvement in vending and tries to find "answers to the question of what work means to the children and in what way it is experienced and judged by the children" (Liebel, 2004: 9). The majority of these children live with and sell wares for family members, who provide nurture, supervision, accommodation, education and other needs. I show that the fulfilment of societal expectations, and kinship, are both part of their justifications for their ambivalent and contradictory understandings of street vending and work.

Chapter six shows the complex relationships and challenges which children and young street vendors face and the coping strategies they employ in order to survive and remain effective in the marketplaces. It assesses the threats and dangers - the push and pull factors-involved in the itinerant sale of wares.

Chapter seven explores children's educational careers and aspirations beyond vending. The majority of these child vendors are in formal education and attend schools though many lag behind for reasons of mobility, migration and parental interference. The chapter also focuses on the implications of gender in the children's career choices and aspirations.

In chapter eight I discuss the policy and practice implications from this study and conclude that work is a fact of life and way of life for street vending children who are expected to work as part of their childhood. I conclude with some practical recommendations and suggestions for social work research, practice and policy both locally in Nigeria and globally.

1.7 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided an overview of street vending and my research aims and objectives. It has also given demographic information about Nigeria and the specific city where the study was conducted. These details are given in order to introduce the research environment and to enable readers to enter into the world of child street vendors in order to appreciate their stories and experiences in the ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is subdivided into four sections. The first section explores discourses on children's rights based on the UNCRC, the African Charter and the Nigerian Child's Right Act 2003, all of which provided the major legislative and policy framework for my study. The second section highlights the definitional debates on the concepts of child labour and child work. The third section explores the various conceptions of childhood. In the final section, key research studies on working children are explored in detail with an emphasis on studies of working children in different parts of the developing world where a high percentage of children are involved in various labour and economic activities (Hope, 2005; Bourdillon, 2000).

Since the establishment of the UNCRC in 1989 and ILO's adoption of Convention 182 (The Worst Forms of Child Labour) in June 1999, children's work or children's employment, often referred to as child labour, has become an important item on the agenda of the international community (Muscroft, 1999). The terms have been used interchangeably with child labour and have generated much contentious debate on whether children should work and the justifications, if any, for such work (Myers 1999:21-23; Invernizzi 2003). Discussions about children's work (Liebel, 2003; Miljeteig, 1999; ILO, UNICEF and Save the Children Alliance), indicate that the child labour - children's work debate is a global complex discourse, involving social and emotive cultural ramifications (Togunde and Carter, 2006; Bass, 2004; Cangarajah and Nielsen, 2001, Alaraudanjoki, 2000). Key considerations animating these discourses include the appropriateness of children working, children's welfare, the protection of children from certain work activities and work environments, as well as the hazards posed to their growth and development (UNICEF, 1999; ILO, 1999a and b; Muscroft, 1999; Hope, 2005).

2.2. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS: CHILDREN'S RIGHTS, ISSUES AND DEBATES

The UNCRC, which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20th November, 1989, is rooted in the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR). This was the first internationally documented human rights code (Burr and Montgomery, 2003) and children's rights are part of this larger human rights discourse (Ennew, 1998). The UNCRC, which is primarily concerned with the protection and promotion of children's rights and welfare, has to date been ratified by all the countries of the world except the United States and Somalia, making it the most widely ratified international treaty in modern times. The central message of the UNCRC is that children have the same rights as adults irrespective of their age, emotional development and vulnerabilities, and that these rights apply to every child in every part of the world (Burr and Montgomery, 2003).

Since 1989, several supplementary international, regional and local charters for children in special circumstances have been developed. Notable among these is the African Charter which was drawn up and adopted in 1990 by the governments of the member states of the then Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (OAU, 1990). These policy documents recognise that children in different cultures and societies are and can be involved in different kinds of work for various reasons (Myers, 1999). Nigeria has signed and ratified both the UNCRC and the African Charter and has further committed to ensuring the welfare and protection of its children by passing the Child's Right Act in 2003.

The significance of these treaties for children growing up in Nigeria is at the heart of this thesis and this significance is explored in relation to the role of work in childhood. Of particular relevance to this study is article 32 of the UNCRC (1989) which states that

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to

the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

2. States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular:

(a) Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;

(b) Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;

(c) Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.

(UNCRC, 1989)

Article 32 notes that a child has a right to work and a right “not to be exploited” but to be protected from exploitative situations and activities (Alaraudanjoki, 2000: 162). The UNCRC acknowledges that working children face hazards which can endanger their health, education and development and that the type of work which children do may also vary from society to society, from culture to culture and even from family to family because of cultural differences in child rearing practices and expectations from children (Togunde and Carter, 2006; Hope, 2005). This acknowledgement therefore confirms claims that not all work is harmful to children (Nieuwenhuys, 2005; Bourdillon, 2000; Togunde and Carter, 2006). The key concern of the UNCRC is children’s safety and protection and minimising the risks which they face, irrespective of their locations, whether in or out of school. Despite its almost universal endorsement, the UNCRC continues to inspire debates about its necessity, the meaning of its components as well as its universality and enforceability (Burr and Montgomery, 2003). Many have queried the rationale for having specific laws for children and some say that children do not need any special laws because, as humans, they are already covered by the 1948 United Nations Human Rights Act (article 2). Others argue that children are vulnerable, often neglected and too immature to understand the concept of rights. They have special needs and interests which are different from those of adults, and therefore deserve to have special provisions in order to safeguard their interests (Woodhead and Montgomery,

2003:142-143). An important outcome of these debates has been the distinction between children's work which includes work activities and working conditions that are deemed beneficial to children's growth and development and child labour which connotes work activities and conditions that impede children's well-being and expose them to abuse and exploitation.

Debates over the universality and enforceability of the UNCRC are well documented, but critics have warned that a notion of universal applicability can be problematic despite well meaning intentions and underlying philosophies (Burr and Montgomery, 2003; Montgomery 2001; Ncube, 1998; Goodman, 1996). They argue that due to cultural differences, some aspects of the UNCRC are at variance with certain belief systems and values and that those variations conflict with the idea of universalism. For example, in a discussion about its universality, Ncube (1998) suggests that

The difficulty with children's right is that while they are expressed in abstract formulations embodying universally accepted general norms and ideals, there remains a yawning gap in the understanding of the specific practices, laws, traditions and customs ... Thus there is often significant disagreement from one culture to another...on whether or not a particular account or practice is in the best interests of the child.

(P.2)

Goodman (1996) and Ncube (1998) further argue that the basic assumptions behind most international legislations emanate from western ideologies which do not take cognizance of non-western societies and that this creates a huge gap between the demands of local practice and those of international legislations. The UNCRC's near universal ratification demonstrates a general consensus that children should be provided for and protected against any form of abuse and their welfare and best interests promoted at all times. However, the challenge is how to implement this legislation and make it relevant within the various signatory countries. Scholars have cautioned that the near universal acceptance of the UNCRC should not make us

forget the social, economic and cultural diversities that exist in the participating societies. Applying the provisions of international conventions should be done with the utmost sensitivity, giving due regard to these diversities (Ncube 1998:1).

Similarly, Hill and Tisdall (1997) and Burr and Montgomery (2003) have criticized the UNCRC as being too western and too broad, thus making application and enforcement to local situations difficult. Ncube argues forcefully that the lack of enforcement mechanisms is even more pronounced in the African region because firstly, African children, within the context of the African family, are completely helpless when it comes to asserting and enforcing their rights even though they have been recognized technically on paper as having rights and local legislations and secondly, because judicial processes are

expensive, unresponsive and protracted, elitist and highly inaccessible for the greater majority of adult persons let alone children.

(Ncube, 1998: 5).

A major factor which has influenced discourses on children and children's rights is the differences between western and non-western notions of childhood and of children having rights each of which "varies from place to place ... and depends on a child's immediate community and family setting (Burr and Montgomery, 2003: 157). Boyden (1990) argues that the CRC mainly transmits popular western Euro-American values and notions of childhood which fail to address cultural specificities and children's opinions. Stephens also states that the CRC was aimed at

protecting and nurturing childhood, as defined by adults within the framework of western modernity...giving children rights to be remade in the image of adults and non- western children ...to be remade in western forms.

(Stephens, 1995: 36).

A good example of this controversy is explained by Heinonen who notes that: the typical African view of children and family places high emphasis on punishing and

disciplining children and on communal identity (children belong to their families), whereas the western view perceives punishment and discipline as abusive and sees African family relationships as being too hierarchical (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003). The African perception of the child differs from the autonomy, individuality and seclusion that the UNCRC accords the western child (Ncube, 1998).

Another contested issue with the UNCRC is the lack of consensus over what constitutes abuse, what kind of work is hazardous to a child, what practices are contrary to or in keeping with a child's best interests and who defines what is detrimental or discriminatory to a child? Ncube notes that the CRC has not made enough room for local interpretations but acknowledges that the CRC does recognize that all children are not the same everywhere in the world and that as noted in the UNCRC preamble 11, some live in exceptional circumstances and need special consideration (Ncube, 1998). Further, the UNCRC preamble 12 notes that differences exist in the traditions and cultural values of member states. Ncube admits that the CRC's repeated reference to "state parties ...in accordance with their national laws" suggests that the national laws of each member state should shape and guide the ways of securing children's. Nevertheless, Ncube, argues that even though the CRC recognises that these rights should be adapted within the local laws of each state, it does however show that the international provisions should prevail over customary and cultural practices, especially those that are deemed discriminatory, prejudicial and out of tune with the universal treaty. (African Charter (1990) article 21 (1a and b). Ncube concludes that the convention's recognition of local contexts seems ineffectual because it uses western standards and definitions to judge and assess other cultures' children (Ncube, 1998: 14-15).

Despite these criticisms, scholars say that the CRC still remains the "most comprehensive, global, binding human rights instrument" for the protection of the world's children (Ncube, 1998:7). Indeed, it was the attempt to address these shortcomings and make the CRC more relevant and best suited to local circumstances which led to the drafting of regional laws such as the African Charter (Burr and Montgomery 2003).

2.2.1 The UNCRC and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

The African Charter draws heavily on the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UNCRC of 1989 and attempts to make those universal ideals more relevant and meaningful to the African region. In 1991, the African heads of state proclaimed the 1990s as the “Decade of the African Child” and set aside June 16 as the Day of the African Child” (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Abuja, Nigeria, 1999). This date is still marked in Nigeria with fanfare and reflections over the state of Nigeria’s children. Simply put, the UNCRC looks at children’s rights globally while the African Charter looks at children’s rights from the African perspective. It pays attention to the specific needs of African children and addresses issues concerning refugees, apartheid, armed conflict and other social, economic and cultural difficulties which children in Africa face (Burr and Montgomery, 2003: 160). The African charter recognizes the importance of the African childhood, which is distinct from the western childhood that the CRC portrays, and spells out the rights and responsibilities of the African child towards the community and those of the community towards the child, thus confirming that rights go with responsibilities (Hill and Tisdall, 1997). For instance, Article 31 of the African Charter specifically addresses the rights and responsibilities of the child. It reads:

Every child shall have responsibilities towards his family and society, and the state and other legally recognized communities and the international community. The child shall, subject to his age and ability, and such limitations as may be contained in the present charter, have the duty:

- (a) to work for the cohesion of the family, to respect his parents, superiors and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need;
- (b) to serve his national community by placing his physical and intellectual abilities at its service;
- (c) to preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity;

- (d) to preserve and strengthen African cultural values in his relations with other members of the society, in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation and to contribute to the moral well-being of society;
- (e) to preserve and strengthen the independence and the integrity of his country;
- (f) to contribute to the best of his abilities, at all times and at all levels, to the promotion and achievement of African unity.

(UNICEF Nigeria Country Office, 1991)

However, both the UNCRC and the African Charter share a number of similar concerns.

- Both recognise the primary role of the family in children's lives (See the preamble to the CRC, paragraph 5 and 6; Article 18 (1) of the African Charter) and the centrality of the family in the socialization of children, irrespective of the varying cultural contexts of each society.
- Both documents address the provision of children's basic needs for their growth and development, protection of children from any form of harm and exploitation and giving them opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them.
- Both documents also recognise that children are immature and still growing, and that childhood places the child in need of special protection and care by adults. This perception of children has been criticised as paternalistic and disempowering because it leaves children open to abuse and manipulation by adults and debars them from pressing for their rights (Ncube, 1998).
- Both share the same overarching objectives, that is, to uphold the best interests of the child and to ensure that children are born and raised in a safe and nurturing environment so that they will grow to become responsible adults in society.

Burr and Montgomery (2003) claim that the main dissimilarity between the CRC and the African Charter is the designation of responsibilities to children in the African Charter which is non-existent in the CRC. They assert that the CRC portrays the child as having rights which should be provided by parents and the state but without corresponding responsibilities from the child as is contained in the African Charter. While recognizing the child's rights to protection, participation and provision, the African Charter clearly states that the child has duties to his or her parents, family and community. It recognizes the communality and interdependence of the child and the parents, the family and community. As Burr and Montgomery (2003) also describe

The African charter views families as much more interdependent - parents must rely on children as much as children on parents.

(P. 162)

Ncube (1998) also states that the African culture values the integrity and dignity of children and promotes the same values enshrined in the CRC but that the difference lies in the methods and processes of attaining these rights, which vary from one society to another. Nevertheless, it is the UNCRC which has provided the main guiding policy framework for addressing children's issues, particularly about working children. Its position, which is neither condemnatory nor totally complimentary (Myers, 1999), emphasises that children should be protected from harmful activities and work situations that would hamper their well-being and development (Article 32 of the UNCRC).

2.2.2 The Nigerian Child Rights Act

The Federal Government of Nigeria passed into law the Child's Right Act in 2003 to demonstrate further commitment towards ensuring the welfare and protection of Nigerian children, and to bring the UNCRC and the African Charter home to the Nigerian society. The Act deals with all issues pertaining to the rights and responsibilities of a child in Nigeria and provides a child justice system for the care

and supervision of Nigerian children. For example, section 19 details the responsibilities of a child towards his or her family, community and wider society. Subsection 2 states ...that

a child shall, subject to his (her) age and ability and such other limitations as may be contained in this Act and any other law, to- (b)respect his (her) parents, superiors and elders at all times and assist them in case of need...

Of particular importance to this study are sections 28 and 30 which specifically address issues relating to children and work. According to Section 28 (1), entitled 'child labour', sub-sections A, B, C and D

- A. No child shall be subjected to any forced or exploitative labour; or
- B. employed to work in any capacity except where he (she) is employed by a member of the family on light work of an agricultural, horticultural or domestic character; or
- C. Required, in any case, to lift, carry or move anything so heavy as to be likely to adversely affect his (her) physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development; or
- D. Employed as a domestic help outside his (her) own home or family environment.

The difficulty here is on how "light work" in the family should be interpreted. The assumption is that children would not be exploited by family members or within their home environment. This creates the impression that work outside the family or for non relatives is exploitative and as I shall show in chapter five, the majority of the children in this study echo this belief. They claim that vending and performing domestic chores for a relative was not work but consider it as work and exploitative when performed for a non relative. This underscores the importance of family links in their perceptions and judgments.

Section 30 (1) C and D of the Act also state that:

A child shall not be used for hawking of goods or services on main city streets, brothels or highways; or for any purpose that deprives the child of the opportunity to attend and remain in school as provided for under the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act.

Interestingly, although this Act prohibits street vending or “hawking of goods” by children, I shall describe in chapters five, six and seven how the practice still goes on openly in marketplaces in Nigeria. The contents of the Act derive from Nigerian laws and address the circumstances of Nigerian children but they reflect the common needs of children as enunciated in the UNCRC. Concerns have been raised among policy makers that the Act is too close to the UNCRC and that it propagates western values which are in conflict with “our religious beliefs, culture and tradition” (Vanguard, 2003b: 27).

Concerns have also been raised particularly on provisions against hawking of goods and child labour (sections 28 and 30). Scholars argue that it would be futile to prohibit children’s participation in hawking and other work activities since the causative factor (poverty) still prevails and that work is an

important part of a child’s basic education and a means of handing over necessary skills from parent to children.

(Ezeilo, 2002:2)

2.3 UNDERSTANDINGS OF CHILDREN’S WORK

This section discusses the child labour-child work controversies and the varying definitions of childhoods but first let me discuss the meanings of work.

2.3.1 Meanings of Work

Work means different things to different people in different situations (Morse and Weiss, 1955). Many have defined work based on the economic or non-economic function of an activity. The economic definition simply sees work as a means of

earning a livelihood while the non-economic sees work as “the means through which self-expression and status needs are met” (Kaplan and Tausky, 1974: 185). It is an activity that enables connection with the wider society, keeps people occupied, gives them a sense of purpose and “boosts the feeling of contribution and self-respect” (Morse and Weiss, 1955: 192). Morse and Weiss also argue that social class and the type of work one does both affect the meaning of work for an individual.

Invernizzi (2003) argues that work encompasses a variety of activities and should be viewed broadly encompassing not only the material benefits but also the socio-cultural gains (social identity and relationships with others) and socio-psychological benefits that work brings to the individual. She defines work as a “social activity” that embraces many interactions and meanings (Invernizzi, 2003: 321) and argues, like Morse and Weiss, that several factors influence people’s decisions and preferences for certain types of work and thus affect the meanings they give to work. However, popular adult definitions of work often do not correspond fully with what children themselves call work, neither do they apply to children all over the world (Bourdillon, 2000). One pertinent question which may help to clarify the meaning of children’s work is: What are the perceptions of working children, in this case, street vending children, concerning their vending activities in the marketplace? How do they consider those activities?

In less developed societies children are expected to work and are assigned responsibilities as part of their growing up (Boyden et al., 1998). Such societies place a high premium on children’s participation in work as an integral part of their childhoods and socialization into responsible adulthood (Togunde and Carter, 2006; Hope, 2005). Like other studies of working children in developing societies, (Punch, 2001a; and Woodhead, 1998, 1999), Invernizzi demonstrates that children and adults seek and value work as a source of learning, social acceptance and independence. Work is one of the most important ways through which children become integrated into their families and communities. Findings from her study challenge stereotypical notions of work as harmful to children’s development and question western ideas

about the sacredness of childhood as a time of protection from work and a time which should be exclusively spent in play and education.

2.3.2 Child labour and children's work: Definitions

Despite widespread debates and research on child labour and child work (Myers, 1999), there does not seem to be a consensus on the meaning of the concepts (Miljeteig, 1999). Both are often used interchangeably to refer to children's participation in economic activities, that is, children in paid work activities or in unpaid informal employment either for self, a relative or non relative within or outside the home (Woodhead, 1999; Myers, 1999; Bourdillon, 2000). The term 'child labour' has often been used generically to define the work that children do, whether harmful or beneficial, and at other times to refer only to those harmful work activities or working conditions that can be said to endanger children's dignity and personal development (Liebel, 2003:226). This generic definition gives a confusing and negative connotation to children's work (James et al., 1998; Maybin and Woodhead, 2003).

Pre 1989 studies defined child labour as synonymous with children's work. However, later studies have made a distinction between the two, characterising child work as something that adds positive value to children's welfare and development (Myers, 1999, Boyden et al., 1998) and child labour as something that causes injury to children and their best interests. Bourdillon further differentiates, suggesting that children's work is work which "does not detract from other essential activities of children, such as leisure, play and education" and child labour is "work that impairs the health and development of children and interferes with a child's schooling" (Bourdillon 2000:8).

Canagarajah and Nielsen (2001) define child labour as the involvement of children in economic activities for cash, kind or non wage incentives. An economic activity in their view includes "working in the household enterprise, farming, street vending or wage work" (P: 73). They argue that even if work and unpaid informal activities of

children at home are not physical or harmful they could interfere with children's education and may therefore have damaging consequences. Boyden et al., (1998) criticises the definition of children's work strictly in economic terms as being too narrow and exclusive of unpaid jobs undertaken at home within the family which take up a considerable amount of children's time and space. They offer a more inclusive definition of working children as "those in paid employment or active in money-making tasks inside or outside the home, or involved in unpaid home maintenance, for at least 10 hours per week" (Boyden et al.,1998:22). Similarly, Muscroft (1999) gives a more encompassing generic definition of child labour to mean any form of work that children are involved in, whether in the formal or informal sectors¹¹, paid or unpaid, full time or part time, hazardous, harmful or beneficial.

The concept, 'child labour', evokes emotional and varied reactions among child welfare practitioners and agencies, making it a problematic social discourse (Muscroft, 1999). For instance, politicians and ILO organizations favour a total ban, representatives of NGOs and working children's organisations accept that children need to work in order to survive and improve their position in society, while some deny that children have a right to work at all (Bourdillon, 2000). Contentious issues include potential for harm, appropriateness, location of work, economic benefits and time taken (Boyden et al., 1998; Muscroft, 1999).

This lack of agreement in definition finds expression in arguments over children's economic and labour involvement and has created opposing camps among child welfare activists and development workers. Some believe that children should be allowed to work whilst others claim that work is injurious to children's wellbeing. The former perceive work as a necessary evil that has positive and negative effects (Miljeteig, 1999; Woodhead, 1998, Connolly and Ennew, 1996) and are more concerned with protecting children from harmful workplaces, while the latter

¹¹ Formal refers to children who are legally and duly employed and paid to work in industries and factories, in the military, for entertainment or sports. Informal sectors refer to work at home and in families with parents, with related or unrelated guardians as helpers, carers or child domestics.

advocate that children be kept out of work and that children's work should be eliminated, particularly for children under a certain age¹². Proponents of this view see childhood as a very special time, an "idyllic, carefree and happy" stage (Jones, 2000: 34), often characterized by play and schooling. For them, work is a part of adult responsibilities and should be outside the realm of children because it does not allow time for leisure and play (Boyden, 1990; White, 1996). The ILO and others who hold this view strongly advocate that children should be placed in school in order to stay out of work (UNICEF 1995; Muscroft 1999: 65). They often recommend that compulsory education will solve the problems associated with children's labour involvement (Myers, 1999; UNICEF, 1999, 2000, 2003a) but others have argued that schooling does not guarantee absolute safety and protection to children (Woodhead, 1999; Punch, 2003; Bourdillon, 2000). Woodhead (1999) and Myers (1999) argue that many children around the globe are involved in various paid and unpaid activities in various situations and for various reasons. In fact the latest national survey of working children in Nigeria show that a high percentage of working children attended school and were engaged in various economic activities for up to 15 hours and saved part of their income to go to school.¹³ This report published by ILO/SIMPOC also distinguishes between child labour and child work and defines child labour as:

paid or unpaid work that occurs in any sector, including domestic, informal and agricultural sectors, that is harmful to children's mental, physical, social or moral development of the child in the modern society; any work that deprives children the opportunity to attend school, obliges them to leave school permanently or requires them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work is categorized as child labour.

(Country Report, 2000/2001: 23 NNMCLS)

It conceptualizes child work as forming a continuum which includes:

¹² 14 years of age as proposed by the ILO (1999a, 1996b).

¹³ Country Report (2000/2001). Nigeria National Modular Child Labour Survey, Federal Office of Statistics, ILO/SIMPOC

Children's participation in work in any sector that does not involve risks and danger, which does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with schooling.

(Country Report, 2000/2001: 23 NNMCLS)

According to the report, examples of child work include such activities as assisting with home care chores and in family business outside school hours or during school holidays. The understanding here is that these chores are not detrimental but are contributory to children's development, self esteem, welfare and integration into their families and society and they provide children with skills and experience and help to prepare children for a useful and productive adult life. In spite of these divergent positions, the ILO and UNICEF agree in principle that work can be beneficial for children but only under the right circumstances (Myers, 1999; Miljeteig, 1999).

Bourdillon (2000) and Punch (2003) have noted that neither work nor play belongs exclusively to adults or children. Both children and adults can and do engage in various types of work at different times for various reasons (James et al. 1998:91). Children can combine work and school with leisure and therefore work does not and should not necessarily stop children from school or play (Punch 2003:277, Last 2000:369, Woodhead 1999: 27-49). Proponents of this view focus not on the negative effects of work on children, but on children's social relations and networks and their ability to participate in matters that shape their lives and influence decisions that affect them (Woodhead 1999) and on the prevailing circumstances (poverty and disadvantage) that force children and young people into work (Muscroft, 1999:65). However, one thing that is common to all these arguments is that children have a right to survive and a right to be protected as they engage in survival activities (Muscroft, 1999; Bourdillon, 2000).

Woodhead (1999) avers that the underlying issues are not so much what is harmful and beneficial, or children's ability to combine work, school and play, but are based on differences in society's understanding and expectations of children, differences in

the analysis of the various reasons and circumstances as why children in certain societies work, and the effects of work on children (Muscroft, 1999). None of these positions is completely right or wrong. The main issue is to identify when work is beneficial and or harmful to children and to ascertain whether the problem is the work or the working conditions (Miljeteig, 1999:9). Alongside Mckechnie and Hobbs (1998), Bourdillon calls on all interested parties in children's welfare to show more concern with the way in which children's work activities are performed and their impact on the children and the society within which they live, not on whether it is paid or unpaid or performed within or outside the family or for a relative or a non-relative. Like Nieuwenhuys (1994), Bourdillon further points out that even certain activities that are perceived as beneficial can be problematic for children and that certain work activities within the home or the informal sector are not morally neutral and can pose even more problems than formal employment outside the home (UNICEF 1999: 43-44).

Both Ennew (UNICEF, 1999) and Bourdillon (2000) acknowledge that there is no one formula for resolving these debates neither is there any agreement on what activity is harmful or beneficial with regards to working children. However, Bequele and Boyden (1995) suggest that the issues can be resolved by considering the realities and cultural values of different people in different societies. The UNCRC postulates that the main objective and best approach should focus on children's best interests and should be aimed at protecting them from harmful activities and situations that jeopardize their best interests (Woodhead, 1999), not on keeping them completely out of work or imposing compulsory measures, as those may be counter productive in certain circumstances (Myers, 1999, Bourdillon, 2000). Studies have shown that abolition measures may be damaging not only to the working children but also to their families and larger society (James et al., 1998; Boyden and Myers, 1995)¹⁴. These concerns are valid but the unresolved challenge to scholars, researchers, policy makers and child welfare practitioners is how to achieve children's protection from harmful work and to guarantee the safety and survival of those that must work (Muscroft, 1999).

¹⁴ Also see Zalami (1998), White (1996), Lolichen and Ratna (1997)

2.3.3 African-centred approaches to children's work

The African-centred (Afro-centric) paradigm presents a model for viewing children's work. This concept describes

The ethos and cultural values of traditional Africans, African Americans and the entire people of African descent.

(Swigonski, 1996: 153)

It seeks to contextualize sociological phenomena, such as street vending, children's work or child labour, within the cultural milieu of people of African origin (Asante, 1988)¹⁵. It challenges the Western, rights-based dominant perspective on childhood and children's work and questions the appropriateness of the application of Euro-centric theories of human behaviour in explaining the behaviours and ethos of people of African descent and cultures (Akbar, 1984)¹⁶. The concept enables an exploration of some basic assumptions in relation to certain child-rearing practices and to adults' expectations of children (in relation to work), which may be deemed exploitative in some contexts but accepted as part of children's socialization in others. This paradigm takes as its starting point that reality can best be seen and understood from the point of view of the people who are involved. It contrasts with the universalistic concept that has often been used in appraising Africans and people from non Euro-American/Western cultures and provides a framework and theoretical base in the development of new practice models in social science scholarship outside the euro-centric domain (Abramovitz, 1988; Chau, 1992; Hill-Collins, 1989; Schiele 1994).

The African-centred view sees a child as an active and integral part of society who, along with peers, parents, family members and others makes a contribution to society with his or her daily actions (James et al., 1998:121-123; Invernizzi, 2003). Children and child-rearing are a collective responsibility of the community rather than the sole responsibility of the individual nuclear family members (Graham, 1999:262; African

¹⁵ See also, Abramovitz (1988), Chau, (1992), Hill-Collins (1989), and Schiele (1994, 1996).

¹⁶ Baldwin and Hopkins, 1990; Bell et al., 1990; Kambon, 1992

Charter, 1990). In the African centred view, work is part of the everyday life of children and a means of developing skills and competencies (Punch, 2001a), offering children confidence and experience for future adult work (Last, 2000). It also encourages their active participation in a social network of relationships (Liebel 2003; Bey, 2003), inculcates citizenship and encourages children's contributions to family, community and society (Graham, 2006; Bourdillon, 2000; Ncube, 1998).

One major assumption of this paradigm, argue scholars such as Asante (1988) and Schiele (1994), which sounds contradictory is that social science theories are, and should derive, from the specific life experiences, historical times, cultural perspectives and knowledge base of the theorists. Firstly, this view supports the arguments that generic principles and interventions cannot be made and may not necessarily have the same effect on children or society due to varying situations and cultures (Boyden et al., 1998) and secondly, that child labour policies and programs should be based on the "accurate appraisal of the situation and needs of the children they affect" (Myers, 1999: 17). In other words, it does not accept the idea of universalism, where one theory or paradigm can be used to explain social phenomena among all people in all cultures (Schiele, 1996). However, its approach to child labour has been criticised for placing greater emphasis on the sociological and economic values of children's work and discounting the exploitative and detrimental possibilities that work poses to children (James et al. 1998; Nieuwenhuys, 1994).

2.3.4 Summary

In reviewing the evidence of the literature on definitions of child work and labour, it is clear that is not possible to make strict distinctions between the two. For the purposes of this study, I have accepted that child labour and work may be both positive and negative for children since they performed money-making and non money-making chores at home and in the marketplaces for even longer periods and worked under situations that were both beneficial and harmful. I will use the phrases: child labour, child employment, child work or children's work at different points in the thesis to refer to the involvement of children in paid and unpaid labour and economic activities.

2.4 UNDERSTANDINGS OF CHILDHOOD

This section will explore two literatures on childhood: sociological studies which have emerged in the developed world and perceptions of childhood from a developing world perspective.

2.4.1 Sociological Understandings

Until recently, sociological studies paid little attention to children and their everyday lives (Leonard, 2005; Ambert, 1986). The emergence of the new sociology of childhood, which has begun to explore the various ways through which children interact, inform and shape their lives and their world, has transformed discourses on the nature of childhood and society and has increased efforts to study children and their social worlds (Myers and Boyden, 1998). Of special importance to this study is the social construction of childhood, which is widely believed to have originated from the works of the French historian, Philippe Aries¹⁷ (Pole et al. 1999) while the study of children as a distinct social group became popular in the 1980s with studies by Pollock (1983) and Allanen (1992). Recent studies by Woodhead, (1999) suggest that children are agents and social actors, that childhood is a distinct phase in the human life cycle and that children and their experiences of childhoods are important enough to be studied in their own right (Bourdillon, 2000; Mayall, 1994).

Leonard, (2005) and Myers and Boyden (1998) argue that definitions of a child differ over time and place and that parameters such as chronological age, physical size and development, gender and class all have an impact on this (Rogers, 2003). The ILO convention 138 defines a child as anyone below the age of 16 while convention 182 defines a child as anyone below the age of 18 (ILO, 1999a). Different societies have different age-based definitions but critics warn that defining children based on physical age is unsuitable and cannot be applied in all societies and in all contexts (Woodhead and Montgomery, 2003). They may serve legal purposes but should be

¹⁷ See Aries (1962) for details of his work

taken as a “rough guide” which “cannot dictate” people’s behaviour and relationships in society (Bourdillon 2000: 18).

Correspondingly, the concept of childhood means different things to different people in different social, cultural and historical settings (Cree, 2000) and the experience differs among children in different parts of the world (Boyden, 1990) and even among children within the same cultural milieu (Morrow, 2003). Certain factors such as class, ethnicity, gender, ability and age (James and Prout, 1990), family background, position in family, educational status, religious practices and traditional customs affect experiences and perceptions of childhoods (Morrow, 2003; Bourdillon, 2000).

Childhood is generally viewed as a period between birth and the age when a child becomes fully matured and able to fend for him or herself (Liebel, 2004). Bourdillon, (2000) contrasts childhood with adult life and responsibilities and sees childhood as

A time of ignorance and innocence, a time of passive
learning from adults...a time of freedom and play.

(p.19).

Proponents of this view see work as an adult activity and children as incompetent, different from adults and “peripheral to the adult world of economics and politics” (Bourdillon 2000: 19). A modern concept of childhood, which is heavily influenced by Euro-American (western) ideologies, sees childhood as a separate stage in the human life cycle when children should be “...detached completely” from work (Stephens, 1995: 7) and allowed to live a happy, safe and protected life; indulging in play, fantasy and innocence (Boyden 1990:185). Cree (2000) argues against this idea of childhood as it does not translate into the realities of children’s lives and experiences.

A wide array of empirical research shows that children have a variety of abilities and competencies and are not merely passive receivers of life and culture (Hill and Tisdall 1997; Punch, 2003; Woodhead, 1999), as this viewpoint seems to suggest. As active agents, children belong to the same world of economics and politics as adults; they can negotiate relationships, make decisions and can influence situations in which they live and grow (Woodhead, 1998, 1999). Bourdillon (2000) defines childhood as a “transitory stage of development in the human life cycle” that ranges from a state of total disability and dependence of infants to the level of independence at adulthood (p. 20) and notes that children gradually acquire competencies as they grow and interact with others. For example, street vending children, like most working children, are sometimes trusted with the responsibility of not only selling wares but caring for themselves, their families and younger siblings. They develop further competencies and survival skills in the course of their work and interactions. Examples abound of child-headed households who are forced by circumstances beyond their control to take on the serious responsibility of fending for their families.

But at what stage does a child cease to be a child and become an adult? Are children the same as adults? (Punch, 2002a). Opinions about the beginning and end of childhood vary across cultures and societies (Morrow, 2003; Bourdillon, 2000) and each society defines childhood in terms of its own set of norms, values, meanings and practices (Stephens, 1995: 8). In many societies, childhood begins when boys and girls gain the rights to participate in certain religious or cultural rites of passage such as circumcision, Christian confirmation or the Jewish Barmitvah. In these societies, rites may be performed to mark the transition from childhood to adulthood (Morrow, 2003). In some societies, childhood ends legally at 18, some at 21, depending on when and where one was born, and in others childhood ends when children begin to develop certain physical characteristics, such as a deep voice for boys, breasts or menstruation for girls, or when children develop certain “secondary sexual characteristics” (Rogers, 2003: 10). Some societies associate adulthood with the time when children attain legal status and are bestowed with certain rights such as the right to vote, drive or own a driving license, drink, smoke, marry or when they are entitled to receive certain welfare benefits, as in the UK and many western

societies (Morrow, 2003). However, these change over time and across cultures and make an imposition of a universal model of childhood inappropriate (Cree, 2000).

Another approach is taken by Rogers (2003) who suggests that there are broadly three ways of studying children and childhood: the scientific approach which uses devised theories and tests them by experimentation and observation, the social constructionist approach which sees childhood as a product of different worldviews and the applied approach which is used by organizations, institutions and child welfare practitioners and is concerned with how children should be treated and what are their needs, rights and obligations. Each of these has a wide range of perspectives and focuses on different issues about children and childhoods but they three are inter-related and not mutually exclusive. The social constructionist approach is most pertinent to this study, since it states that perceptions and understandings of phenomena vary between cultures and across nations (Bourdillon, 2000; Woodhead, 1999); that experiences of childhood are fluid and diverse and that they change over time and space (Morrow, 2003) and according to differences in people's social and economic contexts (Punch 2002b). It depends on who is defining the issues, where and at what point in history, not a matter of one generation or society being right or wrong or some societies bringing up children better than others.

Similarly, Montgomery presents three popular yet contradictory images of childhood: Hobbes' 'evil child' or the puritan discourse which sees childhood as a time of evil and wildness; Locke's 'blank child' which sees childhood as a time of becoming; and Rousseau's 'romantic child' which sees childhood as a time of innocence (Woodhead and Montgomery, 2003:62-67). In Rousseau's romantic discourse, children are inherently innocent, good and wholesome and childhood is a happy care-free period when children should be allowed to play, and protected from sex, violence and exploitation, and from engaging in adult responsibilities. This perspective assumes that work is inappropriate for children and that full time schooling is the proper developmental norm. Proponents of this approach believe that the appropriate places for children are in the home, school and specially

designated places for play and recreation and in some public spaces only at restricted times under adult supervision. Rousseau's idealized childhood supports the view of children as 'social becoming' and still developing (Prout, 2005). Critics say that this approach portrays children as "compliant passive vehicles for the transmission of stable social worlds" (Stephens, 1995: 12-13) and fails to recognize that children, as social actors, can and do make contributions to their development in various ways, even through work (Invernizzi, 2003; Hungerland et al., 2007; Leonard, 2004).

2.4.2 Childhoods in the developing world

Rapid socio-economic changes such as urbanization, capitalism and westernization among the developing countries have created contradictions in the conceptions of childhood (Oloko, 1994; Alaraudanjoki, 2000). Childhood has also been affected by religious and social changes, modernization, and HIV/AIDS with its attendant increase in child-headed households (Bourdillon, 2000; Morrow, 2003). For instance, in her study of working children in Nigeria, Oloko claims that these social and economic changes have made it difficult to ensure the availability of good quality schooling which yields tangible benefits to all, but Alaraudanjoki's (2000) study of Nepalese children claims on the contrary that modernization and socio-economic development have given rise to wider access to schooling and increased urbanization.

Ncube (1998) argues that the concept of childhood varies because the relationship between children, their parents and other adults change over time and place. According to him, the UNCRC's renewed emphases on modern children as distinct individuals with rights has brought about changes in the way and manner in which parents, adults and society treat and relate to children and has also affected the way in which children view themselves in regard to adults. Punch, (2002b) also points out that the way in which society perceives children affects society's treatment of them. Some perceive children as vulnerable, incompetent, "at risk and as the risk" (Stephens, 1995: 13) and others portray them as capable, active agents (Hill and Tisdall, 1997; James, et al, 1998, Woodhead, 1999). The latter claim that children are social actors who can interpret and re-interpret their world, construct their own childhoods and take an active part in what they see around them (Punch, 2001a;

Bourdillon, 2000). Adults create their own meanings and so do children (Qvortrup, 1994; James and Prout, 1990).

Research evidence shows that in many societies, the movement from childhood to adulthood is not a distinct single event, but rather, a gradual process that happens over a period of time (Morrow, 2003:269), and at different rates (Bourdillon, 2000). Morrow and Bourdillon explain this change as a transition from one state and experience to another which is not fixed or determined by chronological age, as the CRC and the ILO suggest. In Nigeria, the national criteria for defining childhood follows the legal age-based definition, as in most industrialized societies, but this varies within rural communities. Morrow (2003) supports having some sort of a benchmark or agreement over a time limit to childhood (as the ILO and CRC have given upper limits of 16 and 18 years respectively but also cautions that this cannot be applied uniformly in all societies and cultures because children's and young people's' experiences, abilities, roles, activities, developmental progress and expectations differ very widely from place to place and from time to time (ILO, 2004a, b). In another study, Heather Montgomery (2003) agrees that experiences of childhoods change in the same way as societies and cultures and is dependent on individual experiences and beliefs and the culture into which a child is born. In her words, childhood is a "product of particular times, places and culture" (p. 46).

In two separate studies of African children in Zimbabwe and Tanzania, Bourdillon (2000) and Morrow (2003) demonstrate that childhood is not fixed, but a transition which is marked in certain cultures and associated with certain rituals and rites, particularly in traditional societies. Citing Ahmed et al's 1999 study of Tanzanian children and their experiences of childhoods, Morrow (2003) suggests that chronological age is not and should not be the key marker of identity, particularly in those rural societies where most people do not know their exact age. She suggests that in traditional societies such as Tanzania, children's experiences of childhood are rather defined by a "gradual assumption of responsibilities" (Morrow, 2003: 272). Morrow further contends that as children's maturity, age and capacities differ, so do society's perceptions of their roles and expectations. In some societies, the end of

childhood is marked by the performance of certain rites of passage but Bourdillon (2000) argues that though such ritual transitions may determine the way in which people in that society are perceived and expected to behave, they do not necessarily affect people's actual level of maturity, responsibility and behaviour towards others. These rites change as the socio-economic and political situations of societies change and they have become less common in industrialized societies (Morrow, 2003).

My personal observations and experience with children growing up in many rural agrarian Igbo communities in the South east geo-political zone of Nigeria corroborates Morrow's claim that assumption of responsibilities, not chronological age, is the key marker. In some of these communities, teenage boys and girls automatically cease to be regarded as children when they become married. Their marital status automatically admits them into the community village meetings and town associations as full-fledged adult members. They attend and vote at community meetings, express their opinions and make financial contributions as other respectable adult members. They are seen as responsible, valuable members of the community and accorded all the benefits and communal support extended to older members, whereas their unmarried peers of the same age, or even older, do not enjoy such respect and treatment; they do not belong to the town union, have no voting rights at village meetings and are not expected to contribute financially towards community projects. In such communities, the end of childhood, which is purely based on marital status (responsibility), ushers in full community membership and eligibility for communal assistance. If such a person experiences hardship or bereavement, the community offers support and solidarity in various ways, i.e., sends a group delegation with cash and kind donations, performs community dances, and displays the community's masquerades (for males).

In my community for instance, it is marital status (not age) that determines when childhood ends and when adulthood sets in. Unmarried young women and women are still perceived as children irrespective of their age. They do not belong or participate in village and community meetings neither are they expected to make financial contributions towards community development projects because of their

unmarried status whereas their married relatives who may even be younger are automatically granted membership and expected to participate fully and to enjoy all the benefits that accrue to adult members of the community. What this means is that in this community, a married 15 year old girl ceases to be looked upon as a child, she is accorded adult status, assigned responsibilities, and expected to play roles as an adult whereas an unmarried 25-year old is still seen and regarded as a child with fewer expectations and responsibilities. In this community, children are not regarded as full members and may not be given a share in communal lands and investments. They are seen as dependent, immature and less competent. These traditional perceptions, practices and beliefs about children and childhoods do not appear to be generally applicable in all Igbo communities within the region and vary from one community to another.

2.4.3 Summary

The literature demonstrates that there is no single definition of childhood, just as there is no single childhood. Instead, it depends on factors such as gender, age, ethnicity and cultural and social context, to name but a few. A huge difference exists between the modern, idealized western constructions of children and childhood and that of the African childhood. Commentators suggest that the Western child is brought up in a secluded and over-protected environment, (Burr and Montgomery, 2003:166) and portrayed as ‘economically worthless’ but ‘priceless’ in terms of their emotional worth to their parents whereas the working African child has been portrayed as “economically valuable” (Montgomery, 2003:66). In the same vein, the childhoods of many hardworking non-western children have been portrayed as unloved (Stephens, 1995: 13-14), endangered (Gabarino et al., 1992)¹⁸ and disappearing (Postman, 1982). Others portray the African child as being robbed of his or her childhood (Vittachi, 1989). However, Invernizzi (2003) and Woodhead (1999) also suggest that the lives and childhoods of other societies’ children will be better understood when viewed from the cultural values and local contexts within which they are raised rather than from super-imposed western notions. By so doing, solutions to their needs will be met in a more practical way that will make a

¹⁸ See also Allesbrook and Swift (1989)

difference and contribute value to their lives and societies (Baker and Hinton, 2001). All this reminds me that in undertaking a study of this nature, I need to keep a very open mind and seek to understand the children's stories in their own terms, not imposing an artificial, external construct on their experiences.

2.5 KEY RESEARCH STUDIES ON WORKING CHILDREN

There has been extensive interest in recent years on working children's experiences. I will examine five such studies here, before going on to consider more generally the evidence from research on child labour.

Woodhead's (1998) study of more than 300 working children (girls and boys) from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, the Philippines and Central American countries (Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua) who were involved in a wide range of occupations found that:

- Work is an activity into which children have been socialized and initiated by parents and guardians or peers.
- Work is an inevitable part of their childhood and socialization into responsible adulthood, a cultural expectation and norm, a contribution to family sustenance and to their future lives
- Despite their vulnerability to exploitation and the dangers posed by work, children were able to make judgments and comparisons of their work and other work performed by other children.
- Children recognize the potential value of education as a 'mixed blessing' given their present circumstances and a larger number were in support of combining work and school
- Children did not see anything bad or wrong with work as an activity: rather they claim that adult attitudes and treatments make work undesirable.
- Instead of abolishing work or removing them from work situations child workers seek support and respect not harassment and condemnation from society so that they can grow into responsible adults and be able to contribute to their families, communities and wider society.

- Many were happy and proud of what they do and the contributions they each make towards their families and livelihoods.

Woodhead concludes that working children are “active participants not passive victims” in the relationships and activities that shape their well-being and development (Woodhead 1999: 47).

Punch’s ethnographic study of the everyday lives of 8-14 year-old children in a rural Bolivian agricultural farming community discovered that they combined schooling, work and play. She argues that by combining school, work and play, the majority world’s children are able to create their own autonomous childhood culture, though this is constrained by their work, available time for play, lack of financial resources and their isolated rural environment. Punch sought the views of both children and adults, though children’s views were her central concern, and she applied James et al’s (1998) four concepts of contemporary childhoods: (the socially constructed child, the social structural child, the minority group child and the tribal child) all of which focus on the ‘beingness’ rather than the ‘becomingness’ of the child. Focusing on children’s agency as active participants in their lives, Punch’s study supports both the socially constructed approach and the social structural conceptualizations, which see children as a

Universal category, a part of all social worlds...whose ‘manifestations may vary from society to society but within each particular society they are uniform.

(Punch 2003:280).

She observed that:

- Children’s work within the household can be similar to but different from adults’ due to children’s limited physical size, strength and competence.
- Children can do adult jobs but to the degree that their ability, gender and age allows.
- The quantity and complexity of children’s work increases as they get older (Punch 2001a; 2001b, 2003).

Both Punch's and Woodhead's studies challenge western conceptions that childhood is a protected time and that work is an adult responsibility from which children should be shielded. Although these studies are set in different contexts and with different methodologies, their findings have relevance to my study.

Another recent study of working children which is of importance to my research, by Togunde and Carter (2006), involved a survey of 1,535 urban Nigerian working children aged 8-14 years and their parents in a western region of Nigeria. The main focus of the study was on the impact of parental socio-economic status (SES)¹⁹ on children's work. Employing two popular theories (poverty hypothesis, and socialization or social learning hypotheses) that have often been used to examine the high incidence of children's labour and economic participation in developing countries, the study revealed that most working children in Nigeria assist their parents in their businesses; that poverty was the main reason children engaged in work and that work is preparation for children's future lives. While the research confirmed the poverty and socialization theories, it also discovered a relationship between children's work and parental income and education. Children in their study also complained of problems similar to those that I studied such as tiredness from long walks, rape and sexual molestation, road traffic accidents and keeping undesirable company as some of the common disadvantages of street work. Other findings of this study which are important for my thesis are that:

- The majority of the children (90%) were involved in trading and a large number (4/5) of them brought money home to parents
- Most of the children worked for an average of about four hours a day while 20% worked five to six hours a day.
- The average age of the children was 12 but many started work at age seven. The average starting age was nine.
- Three out of four children lived in nuclear families with their parents most of whom were involved in trading and services.

¹⁹ Parental SES was measured in terms of income, education and low occupational statuses

(Togunde and Carter, 2006:80)

Supporting the notion that child labour is a learned behaviour in the family (Bass, 2004) the study shows that experiences and perceptions of childhoods differ even among people of the same society and culture. It also supports other findings that socio-economic factors such as class, family composition, age, ethnicity and gender affect childhoods (Morrow, 2003)

While some existing literature on working children focus on poverty and social learning hypotheses (Togunde and Carter, 2006; Bourdillon, 2000) and on rapid socio-economic changes (Hope, 2005; Alaraudanjoki, 2000, Oloko, 1994) as the main causes of children's labour participation, Canagarajah and Nielsen (2001) considered school costs and school quality as part of the main reasons why children in developing countries worked. Using the human capital framework to explain the high incidence of child labour in developing countries, especially in Africa, they support Togunde and Carter's (2006) claim that poverty at both micro and macro levels is responsible for the demand and supply chains of children's labour and that high costs of schooling and low school quality impact on children's school attendance and educational achievement. They conclude that child labour prevails in Africa because the current educational system has failed in many ways to yield the expected outcomes. Parents and guardians are disillusioned and dissatisfied over this failure and consequently have turned to give their children an informal means of education through work experience. Their study also concludes that the informal education gained from work boosts children's formal educational achievements and prepares them for their future lives and development.

The study also found that household issues such as the number of children in a household and division of work based on age and gender considerations are equally responsible for the prevalence of working children. They discovered that older children tend to work more than younger children and concluded that the presence of older children in the labour market decreases the chances of younger siblings' involvement in work activities. Like Togunde and Carter (2006), this study also considered parental socio-economic status (parental employment and parental

education), and concluded that the education of parents or the head of a household decreases the likelihood of children working and increases the likelihood of children's school attendance (Togunde and Carter, 2006; Bass, 2004). The research also discovered that the gender of the head of the household impacts significantly on the extent of children's work and school attendance and the authors claim that the rate of child labour is higher and rate of school attendance lower in female headed households in some rural West African communities.²⁰ They conclude that a relationship exists between poverty and capital market but suggest that abolishing children's work or enforcing compulsory education, would be counterproductive for poorer households in the short term (Bourdillon, 2000).

Similarly, Huggins and Rodrigues (2004) ethnographic study of 14 young street children involved in cleaning and washing car windshields and selling sweets and candies and gum at traffic lights in one of Brazil's most opulent cities shared similar characteristics and findings with the afore mentioned studies and with the street vending children in my study. The majority of the children in this study combined schooling and work. Employing ethnographic methodologies, their study focused primarily on the children's social relationships between and among themselves and the socio-structural conditions that enhance and inhibit the children's ability to influence their daily worlds. Their 'integrationist human action perspective' sees children and young people as agents within their socially constructed worlds (Punch, 2001a, Woodhead, 1999). Corroborating Prout and James (1997) and Bourdillon's (2000) findings, they conclude that childhood is

An actively negotiated set of social relationships within
which the early years of human life are constituted.

(Huggins and Rodrigues, 2004: 497).

²⁰ See studies of working children in Cote d'Ivoire by Grootaert, (1998); Coulombe, 1998 and in Ghana by Bhalotra and Heady, 1998.

Bourdillon's (2000) compilation of various studies on working children in different contexts in Zimbabwe also focused on the place of work in children's lives and on the problems which working children try to resolve by their work. While some research on working children in Africa suggest that enhancing the working conditions of parents would make children want to work less (Togunde and Carter, 2006; Hope, 2005), Bourdillon and his colleagues argue that better income for adults will not and does not automatically translate into or guarantee better lives for children. They cite examples of situations where adult guardians were not able and willing to cater for children under their care. They also warn that the cultural or socialization theory of work as good preparation for children's future and business skills for later life (Oloko, 1991), could be used by employers as justification for hiring and exploiting children's cheap labour.

Research into poverty also provides insight into child labour. For example, a UN study describes Africa as a continent where poverty increasingly thrives and deepens and replicates itself in various ways (Hope, 2005; 2004; UN, 2004). Supporting the United Nations Industrial Development Organization's (UNIDO) (2004), explanation of the inter-generational transmission of poverty²¹ and its effects on children, Hope (2005) comments,

Poor households produce and raise poor children resulting in the loss of childhood opportunities, such as schooling, that cannot always be regained...Poverty is therefore passed on from generation to generation [and this affects] the long-term health, well-being, and productivity of families and of society as a whole.

(Hope, 2005:22)

The result of this is that more children and young people engage in work activities at much younger ages and combine both school and work as a way of breaking the vicious cycle of poverty. Harper and Marcus (1999), Bass (2004), Hope (2005), and

²¹ See also Wahba, 2001 for details about intergenerational transmission of poverty

Togunde and Carter (2006) all argue that poverty is mainly experienced in the household. According to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2004) a large proportion of the population of sub Saharan Africa lives on less than US\$1 a day. Other reports from the UN state that sub Saharan Africa has the highest incidence of child labour in the world with a higher percentage engaged in various economic activities²² (ILO, 2002a). Hope (2005) notes that street working children are the

Most visible face of and immediate point of contact with,
child labour ... [and have become] a permanent landscape
of African's cities.

(P. 32).

Other literature suggests that child labour in Africa dates back to pre-colonial times and has its roots in the belief that work prepares children for the future (Bass, 2004; Togunde and Carter 2006). Colonization, which introduced certain western ideals such as urbanization, capitalism, industrialization and nationhood, reinforced this belief. Hope (2005) suggests that things have become even worse at the international level due to economic globalization, decreases in Gross National Products (GNP), increased rural-urban migration and the introduction of structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Also at the regional and local levels, ethnic warfare, massive government corruption, political instability and HIV/AIDS among other factors (Ebigbo, 2003; Bourdillon, 2000; Bass, 2004) have contributed to increasing poverty and have had a tremendous impact on the family and are responsible for the household causes of child labour (Hope, 2005)²³.

Corroborating the poverty hypothesis of children's work, Muzvidziwa (2000) avers that

²² These include unpaid, casual and illegal work and also work in the informal sector

²³ See also Lopez-Calva, (2001); Grimsrud (1999); Grootaert and Kanbur (1995);

Urban child vendors, like street children, are both a creation of and a reaction to poverty.

(Muzvidziwa, 2000:59).

According to the World Bank/IMF (2004), most households in sub Sahara Africa are poor and survive on meagre incomes which cannot provide for its younger members. As a result, the younger members become involved in various work activities either voluntarily or with support from guardians in order to augment the low incomes of their parents and guardians. Other factors such as large family size, high population growth, parental unemployment, high illiteracy rates and death of people in the productive age group from AIDS leave many children as heads of households and family breadwinners at a young age, and all of these have contributed to increasing poverty and children's participation in work activities (Hope 2005; Bourdillon, 2000).

However, the consensus from these studies is that many children in the developing world work. The livelihoods, educational needs and survival of many families depend on children's labour and economic contributions. While acknowledging the important contributions from the new sociology of childhood towards our understanding of children's agency, researchers have also noted the dearth of research on working children (Togunde and Carter, 2006) and the marginalisation of the childhood experiences of African children in mainstream research agendas (Graham, 2006). This study will contribute in filling this gap by bringing the voices of street vending children to the fore.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted the wide-ranging controversies over children and young people's involvement in work and economic activities. Recent discourses have suggested that a distinction should be made between child labour and child work. However, my own reading of the literature would suggest that such a demarcation may be unrealistic in the real context of children's lives in the developing world.

The literature has demonstrated that childhood is a contested social and historical phenomenon, the experience of which differs for children in different parts of the world due to certain socio-cultural considerations such as ethnicity, gender, class, ability, age, poverty, wealth and parental socio-economic status as well as social and political changes. Discourses on children's rights confirm that the social, economic, political, religious, traditional and cultural dynamics of the society within which a child is born and bred affects to a very large extent how much rights and responsibilities a child has and how the child exercises them. Conceptions of what is good or what is in the best interests of children also vary across cultures, but the general view seem to focus on the same philosophies and values that are enshrined in the UNCRC, which provided the springboard for other supplementary and regional treaties such as the African Charter and the Nigerian Children's Act. They re-affirm that the welfare and best interests of society's future generation (children) should be promoted, protected and fostered to the highest possible standards.

Empirical studies of working children that were reviewed in this study also show that children's involvement in work is a social and cultural phenomenon and not a single situation or experience that presents a uniform problem. It therefore defies a universal solution. Most children in developing countries work and are expected to work in various capacities and for various reasons. Their labour and economic contributions are a survival strategy which keep them and their families out of poverty and endow them with useful skills and competencies for a better quality life in the future. Most working children combine school and work, and their involvement in economic activities shows their creativity and resilience and confirms that they are active, competent social actors, who are able to influence their lives and societies.

The review of literature has established a way forward for the study, not just in theoretical terms, but also in terms of practical insights into carrying out a study of this nature. The next chapter will discuss the methodological approaches that were employed and the rationale for them.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on my research design and methods, and the rationale for both. I begin with an exploration of qualitative and ethnographic research, examining the methodologies, and then considering the rationale for their use in this study. The substantive discussion in the chapter is about fieldwork: how I went about this and why. The chapter concludes with a personal reflection on my research experiences and on the limitations of the study.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND ETHNOGRAPHY

Qualitative research is concerned with day-to-day relationships, perspectives and interpretations of people based on their lived experiences (Flick, 1998). It seeks to gain insight into the “thinking and behaviours” of people (Arksey and Knight, 1999:10) and the meanings they give to their activities and experiences. Ethnography, which means “learning from people” (Spradley, 1980:3), is one of the qualitative research methods (McQuenn and Knussen, 2002) that I used. It seeks to explore the everyday behaviours and cultures of research subjects (Esterberg, 2002:35) and allows a researcher to study people in their natural contexts (Hammersley, 1998) from an ‘insider’ perspective, either through participant observation, interviews or through the use of other ethnographic methods ((McQuenn and Knussen, 2002). The term ‘multi-sited ethnography’ has been used to describe an ethnographic approach which uses various methods in various sites, or which researches a cultural phenomenon in different settings (Marcus, 1995; 1998).

Several reasons informed my choice of qualitative methodology for this study. Firstly, Gillham (2000) asserts that in order to understand any phenomenon from the participants’ perspectives, the qualitative methodology is most efficacious. Social science researchers such as Shaw and Gould (2001) aver that using qualitative research methods such as interviews and participant observation, adds positive value to social work research and practice (Scott, 2000). Studies by Hill and Tisdall

(1997), Christensen and James (2000) and Heptinstall (2000) have also shown that qualitative research methods are more appropriate and more effective than quantitative methods when researching children's active participation in a social phenomenon, and in allowing their voices to be heard in research.

3.3 THE RESEARCH METHODS

Darlington and Scott (2002) have argued that it is important to see things as they happen in ethnographic research; to see people in their natural settings as they go about their lives. I used participant observation and face-to-face individual interviews in the vending environments, making it possible for me to see things first-hand and to gain a deeper insight into verbal and non verbal, observable and non-observable events. Doing so, I focused primarily on the children's experiences and perspectives, following a child-centred approach to research, in order that their voices and stories could be heard directly from their lips. In doing so, drawing particularly on the work of James et al., (1998), Woodhead (1999), my assumption was that children, though similar to adults but with different competencies, are social actors in their own right: they know what they do, what happens to them and how they feel about their situation and can tell their stories better than any observers or commentators. Participant observation provided me with the opportunity to observe child vendors in the exact locations where vending took place. Semi-guided interviews gave research participants the added advantage of expressing their views freely and allowed me the opportunity to explore their views in greater depth (Esterberg, 2002).

3.3.1 Participant Observation

I adopted this method because I needed a first-hand view of the situation in order to understand the children's perceptions and to be able to interpret the meanings they gave to their everyday experiences of street vending. Observing the children in their 'real world' and natural setting (Hammersley, 1998), and communicating directly with them in their own language, provided me with the much needed opportunity to make them feel at ease and confident to relay their experiences and understandings of their daily lives. This method also allowed me to see things through their eyes rather

than the eyes of their guardians and from adults' perspectives. My assumption was that the individual who goes through an experience is well placed to give a comprehensive and accurate account of his or her actions and is able to construct meanings based on those experiences (Flick, 2002). Participant observation placed me in a strong position to construct children's social situation based on their various accounts, rather than on an imaginary or artificial situation (Burgess, 1991:79). Being aware that my presence and direct dealing could have impacted on the quality and quantity of information they gave (Burgess 1991:79 – 81) I set out on this ethnographic path to negotiate access to the various research sites as well as the strategies and relationships that were required to conduct research with children in various busy marketplaces. It was my belief that direct observation was the best method of learning what they did, what they thought and how they felt about their experiences (Mauthner, 1997). I would set out in the early hours of the day, observing traders and market operations in various marketplaces in Enugu between 7 am in the morning and 10 pm in the evenings. At various times during fieldwork, I played different roles, sometimes as a complete observer and at other times, as a participant observer, a native and a female, depending on the situation in which I found myself. This reflects the various "selves" which we inevitably bring to research (Reinharz, 1997)

3.3.2 Interviews

Interviews are not mere conversations but purposeful "social encounters" which create avenues for people to talk about, explore and reflect over their past and present actions, experiences, feelings and thoughts (Rapley, 2004:16). Interviews give researchers room to explore the experiences and perceptions of participants in depth (Cassell and Symon, 2004; Arksey and Knight, 1999) and may provide participants with the opportunity to raise issues which the researcher may not have originally thought about. Christensen and James (2000) claim that interviews are well suited for gathering information from children.

In my own research, I chose to use an open-ended, semi-structured or guided interview schedule in order to achieve consistency, depending on individual

responses. Using a flexible approach like this (O’Leary, 2004) suited the hectic context of the marketplace and the itinerant nature of the children. The open-ended interview guide (Shaw and Gould, 2001) helped to ensure that major topics were covered depending on the time that each child had to give to the interview. It also gave me and the participants the flexibility and freedom to talk about other issues that were important to them (Brewerton and Millward, 2001). The interview schedule was also helpful in the analysis and writing-up stage, because it reminded me of the major topics which were discussed.

3.3.3 Other Methods

Other methods of data collection such as drawing, games, questionnaires, surveys and diary methods were considered, but I found them unsuitable for this study because of the high mobility of the children involved. Child vendors were always in a hurry to achieve their daily targets of selling off all their wares on each vending day. Moreover, the majority of the participants had never taken part in any research before and it was more straightforward simply to have a conversation with them than to use any other research tools. Findings from Heinonen’s research on street working children show that children who live and work in the streets often manipulate their audiences, be they researchers or development workers (Aptekar and Heinonen 2003), and consequently, Aptekar and Heinonen (2003) advise against using the questionnaire, which is considered the most common method for data collection, and also warned that researchers should not “trust any answers children give in ethnographic conversations...that ask them about themselves” (Aptekar and Heinonen (2003: 5). They suggest that answers be cross-checked for validity and reliability through triangulation. Bearing this in mind, I set out to observe, interrogate and record procedures with children and their marketing activities in various marketplaces, and to ask them to tell me about themselves, their families and relationships, their schooling and other matters that were of importance to them in relation to their involvement in street vending. As will be seen in a later section of this chapter where I discuss the details of how I conducted the interviews, children and young street vendors were not stationed in a particular place. They wandered about freely traversing many streets and markets as they searched for favourable

vending spots and customers. Children were interviewed on more than one occasion and at various times of the day. Though this has implications for time and financial compensation, it also helped to test the truth and cross validate their responses.

3.4 THE FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

This is presented in three phases: phase one, getting started; phase two, observations in the marketplaces and phase three, interviews with children in the market places.

3.4.1 Phase One: Getting Started

It was my original plan to do fieldwork in two prominent commercial cities in Igboland (Enugu and Aba), both of which are within the south east geo-political zone of Nigeria. However, I could not work in Aba because of the charged political atmosphere at the time, which was occasioned by the activities of members of the Movement for the State of Biafra²⁴ (MASOB) and reprisals by the law enforcement agencies. The events generated a considerable public controversy at the national level, and people's movements were curtailed and monitored. This left me with Enugu as the focus of my study. Enugu is one of the safest places to live and work in Nigeria with little or no politically and/or religiously motivated problems. Since the end of the 30-month old civil war that engulfed the entire country in 1967, Enugu has enjoyed a relatively peaceful social, economic and political climate. Being central to the Igbo people and culture, Enugu not only represents the entire Igbo culture, but its cosmopolitan outlook and dual characteristic as an old colonial and long standing capital base of one of the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria convinced me that the city would provide a fair and equitable representation of other ethnic groups and provide rich and valuable data to be compared, generalized and extrapolated to other parts of the country and beyond. Moreover, the calm and tolerant political climate made research access easier and afforded me the opportunity to go to different parts of the city without the threat of interference based on religious, gender or ethnic differences. Finally, my personal interests and familiarity with Enugu as a native, and

²⁴ Biafra is the now defunct state that was declared during the three year civil war in Nigeria between 1967 and 1970

having lived and worked in the city, gave me the home advantage as an ‘insider’ researcher, although it is acknowledged that ‘insider’ status also carries its own challenges (Ritchie et al, 2009).

Since I could only do fieldwork in Enugu, I concentrated on the entire city, rather than on a limited number of marketplaces which might not have given sufficiently wide experience and data. Moreover, because many children traded outside motor parks and marketplaces and wandered off on their own, along streets and to gas stations, it was not possible to stay at a particular venue. I therefore followed children around their usual vending hubs within and outside of designated marketplaces; along major streets and motorways, bus terminals, traffic lights and gas stations, all over the city and ended up walking the entire length and breadth of the city and doing more marketplaces than I had planned. Each of the markets has a string of adjoining but autonomous motor parks, taxi parks and street markets which were not far from one another. This proximity gave the major marketplaces the look of one massive shopping complex from the outside until I went in to do my research. Additionally, due to rapid expansion of commercial activities in Enugu, the entire city has become like a market place with shops dotted all over the place. I carried out multi-sited, ethnographic observation and interviews in Ogbete main market, the largest and most popular in the State, and Gariki Market, the second largest market and their surrounding streets and various motor parks. (See Appendix 6 for a list of all fieldwork locations.)

In summary, my familiarity with this part of Nigeria, being of Igbo descent and having grown up and worked in that part of the country, informed my choice of the city for fieldwork. My professional experience of community development had already brought me into close touch with the trading community, particularly women and children, and had made me aware of the scale of the phenomenon of child street vending. This home advantage, as one may call it, also made me aware of the inherent political, social, economic, cultural and religious opportunities, sensibilities and instabilities within the fieldwork site. However, concerns about safety,

accessibility, time and costs for travels and accommodation remained issues as the fieldwork progressed.

Despite the positive value given to conducting a pilot study for a research project (Allan and Skinner, 1991), I was not able to consider this because of time and cost implications (Sampson, 2004). Instead I undertook a preliminary city-wide tour of various marketplaces, to acquaint myself with the research environment and to identify and arrange meetings with various stakeholders and gatekeepers within the market environment. During this initial period, while negotiating access and consent, I met informally with different gate-keepers within various market locations, and explained the aims and objectives of my research with the intention of enlisting their cooperation during the later stages of the fieldwork. The first and major stakeholders were the staff and officials of the two local authorities (LGA) with whom I met in order to negotiate access and consent for research into the marketplaces within their jurisdiction, without which I could not meet even with traders and child vendors. The second group were the various market unions within the marketplaces and the third group were the children's guardians before meeting finally with individual child vendors at various locations. At each of these meetings, I was expected and requested to provide traditional kola nuts, drinks and snacks according to local custom, and I bought most of those locally from traders and child vendors. This gesture helped to establish rapport and confidence between me and members of the vending community to the extent that many who knew me then felt much more at ease about participating in the interviews later. In a snowballing effect (Atkinson and Flint, 2001), some people on their own volition, encouraged and invited their friends to participate. The executive members of the various market associations consented to my conducting research in the markets and advised that children could only be approached individually if they were willing and available to participate.

During this preliminary stage, I also visited four major child welfare agencies in the state to discuss their activities and enlist their support. The first was the UNICEF zonal office which coordinates children's welfare programmes in all the states within and beyond the geopolitical zone, another was the Ministry of Women Affairs and

Child Development, the agency with responsibility for children's welfare in the state, and finally two NGOs namely that African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN – Nigerian/Enugu State chapter), and the Women's Aid Collective (WACOL). ANPPCAN had worked (and still does) extensively on the rights and welfare of Nigerian and African children in situations of abuse and neglect and WACOL deals with children's rights and provides legal support to abused children. UNICEF staff supported me with extensive literature about their programmes and policies and referred me to the two NGOs and the state ministry for children's welfare who are their collaborators and implementing partners. They also provided me with office space for short breaks. The state ministry gave media support by sending one of their staff to make a video of the marketplaces on my behalf since the market operators did not allow me to do that. I interviewed one senior staff member from each of the two NGOs, who not only provided information about their activities but advised on some practical issues about obtaining consent and access to children and the marketplaces.

It has to be acknowledged here that the visits to the LGA offices were far from straightforward, and raised critical issues for me in conducting the study. From the outset, I experienced difficulties trying to obtain consent from the various gatekeepers and groups within the LGAs. They demanded money and gifts as pre-condition for approval. After my meeting with two prominent groups in the first LGA rumours quickly went round that there was a lady from overseas "London woman", as I was labelled) who wanted to tape record children and market operations for use abroad. This fuelled both interest and suspicion among other groups and individuals who pressed further to know what I was doing and what I would eventually do with the data collected. I noticed that more groups sprang up over night after each meeting. They regrouped, demanded money, drinks and gifts and would not allow me access into the motor parks or markets in their locality. The more I explained, the more rumours went round, the more the groups made demands and there was no way of finding out which group was official as they were all working within the LGA. It seemed that their interests were not genuinely based on goodwill for my fieldwork or the safety of children but for personal enrichment. At

various meetings in both LGAs, I observed obvious disagreements between the staff and officials of the LGAs and the administrators of the various marketplaces and traders' associations. At the time of fieldwork, the LGA elections had been nullified for political reasons and caretaker committees were put in place pending another official election. Moreover, the workers of local authorities were owed three months salary in arrears, and this created the avenue for impersonation and extortion which many individuals capitalized on. The more I tried to find out which group was genuine, the harder it became as more groups and individuals became involved.

I decided that it was necessary to speak directly with the executive chairmen of the local authorities instead of going back and forth between different groups of individuals. I visited one of the LGAs on seven different occasions to meet with the chairman but was told on each occasion that he was either out of the office or too busy to see anybody. The officials referred me back to the various groups of people with whom I had earlier met. Three LGA officials actually told me that I had made a mistake by telling the whole truth about my research mission and objective, the more so by telling them that I needed the data for my studies abroad. One of them said,

Just saying that you came from overseas is enough to make everybody want to get something out of you. Do you not know that they think that you are fully loaded with hard currency?

Other officials said it was because Christmas was approaching and people were looking out for opportunities to make quick and extra money. I received several verbal warnings and threats of harassment from some LGA staff should I enter their area without "clearance" and was sternly warned at various points by some good-spirited individuals to stay away from the motor parks and markets in order not to be robbed by unidentified touts posing as LGA officials and motor park representatives. From personal reflections and hindsight, I think that poverty, ignorance and greed were responsible for most of that.

After these threatening experiences and realizing that I had spent four weeks without making any meaningful headway, I changed my strategy and decided to follow the children around the entire city rather than concentrate on particular marketplaces. I went to the second LGA but with a different plan and resolved not to disclose my full identity. My 'insider' status and previous experience of social mobilisation as a community development worker were meaningfully employed. This strategy paid off but with some ethical implications, risks and no guarantee of personal safety and protection.

Experiences from those informal preliminary meetings made me change my initial strategies for carrying out the fieldwork. I subsequently hired four personal assistants, two males and two females. The two women were unemployed graduates whom I engaged to help me with the counting of numbers of children in the markets and they also ran small errands for me. The two men were recommended to me by family members. They accompanied me to various locations, providing personal safety for me, and helping with the 'head count' of children.

3.4.2 Phase Two: Observations in the marketplaces

I began my fieldwork observations in July 2004, before school broke up for the summer holidays. I spent long days in both markets and in the surrounding streets, because I wanted to find out how many school-aged children came into the market to buy or sell things on weekdays and over the weekends. I also wanted to know if there was a trend in timing, to find out what time of the day children started and finished vending, the length of time they spent trading, and what days of the week had more or less children in attendance. Over the first two weeks, with the help of my four assistants, I undertook a 'head count' between 7am and 9am of the children who were carrying wares on their heads or wheeling them in their barrows into the markets in the early hours of the morning before school. In reality, it was difficult to keep an accurate record of the movement and exit of children in and out of the marketplaces because there were many unofficial entrances, exits and short-cut routes. In these early days, I jotted down everything that I saw, everything that was said to me and everything that I did in a small notebook. I must admit that because I

was being watched and monitored, it was sometimes difficult for me to take notes and so I resorted to making some 'head notes' of certain things and writing 'scratch notes' (Ottenberg, 1990), which I later transferred into the larger notebook as soon as I returned to my accommodation for the day. I found this method very stressful, especially on days when I stayed out longer observing evening or night market operations and motor parks. My scribbling drew attention and every so often, children and adults came around to get a look at my notes. This slowed down my note-taking and inevitably, raised my anxiety levels. In spite of this, the observations gave me great insight into the workings of the markets and children's place within this, and I was able to put this to good use in my subsequent interviews with the children.

3.4.3 Phase Three: Interviewing Children in the marketplaces

The purpose of the interviews with children and young street vendors was to gather information about their personal lives and their experiences of itinerant street trading. In total, 64 children and 12 adults talked to me as part of the research process. These were not research interviews in the traditional, formal sense. Instead, the children's interviews were more conversations which could be interrupted at any time, as a child moved off to sell wares. Some children were interviewed at length, and on more than one occasion; others could spare only a few minutes from their busy lives. Twenty-four children completed the interview schedule to a reasonable extent, and it is these children's voices that make up the main findings of the study. The discussions with adults were designed to understand better their relationship with the children, and also, at times, to get another view of what the children were saying. These were not research interviews as such, and have not been analysed for this study, since its focus is on children's understandings.

Although the conversations with children were not formal interviews, they were not necessarily unplanned or casual. A great deal of preparation was put into the choice of questions, and into ensuring that children knew what the research was about. Questions were short and simple and devoid of technical jargon (Kvale, 1996) and I used my knowledge of the local language to further clarify issues when necessary.

Based on availability and willingness, participants were randomly approached and interviewed on an ad-hoc (first-come, first-served) basis, but I deliberately tried to draw children from the six geo-political zones of the country to ensure equal opportunity and representativeness in terms of gender and national spread. My assumption was that their divergent narratives and experiences would not only enrich the data but would also make it possible to explore the issues around street vending, children's work and the childhoods of child street vendors from different socio-cultural perspectives (Rapley, 2004; Flick, 2002). It was easy for me to identify the ethnic origins and religious affiliations of most of the participants from their names.²⁵

The first few days were hectic and frustrating as many of the children that I approached were shy and suspicious and not prepared to spare a minute to answer questions from a stranger. They refused to speak and participate in interviews but as days passed and many got to know what I was doing, their trust grew and many participated willingly and even brought their friends to participate. Interviews and participant observations were conducted in major streets and motor parks, privately and publicly owned mass transit terminals, taxi bays, major markets, roadside or street corner markets and gas stations, all in the Enugu metropolis. This was done in English, Igbo and Pidgin, depending on each child's preference and the three languages were occasionally intermixed.

Given my earlier encounters with the staff of the local authority, the fact that the marketplace was a closely knit community (everybody knows everyone else) and that every new person was easily spotted and considered suspicious, I was aware that my movements and dealings in and out of the vending areas were under surveillance. I tried as much as I could to maintain an open and transparent agenda, and I always began each interview session by introducing myself and explaining the purpose of my research. This was always followed by a deliberate emphasis that I was a native

²⁵ In Nigeria, traditional names quickly tell a person's ethnic and geo-political origins while English names often suggest one's Christian affiliation. For instance, apart from their traditional names, Igbo people often bear English (generally Christian) names because of their predominant adherence to Christianity, the Hausa and people from the Northern parts often bear names that reflect their Islamic ties while the Yoruba people, who have very distinctive traditional names, often maintain those. This name identification also resonates within other ethnic groups.

researcher from a nearby town in the state in order to make participants feel relaxed, win their confidence and allay their fears of me being a child kidnapper or someone working for a secret agency. The loose interview guide was a useful tool as it helped me to stay focused in such a noisy environment and to ask the same questions for the purpose of validity and reliability.

Interviews took place sporadically in different venues because of the rowdy marketplaces and itinerant nature of street vending. I had originally made arrangements to hire quiet stalls within the markets for interviews but financial limitations and the prevailing climate of suspicion and hostility that I experienced earlier, made me change my mind. Besides, the majority of the participants declined to be interviewed in an enclosed space, and chose to be interviewed on the spot in full view of others. I was left with no choice than to interview people at any point of contact that was convenient for them, stooping or standing in full view of passers-by under the scorching heat and sun.

Apart from biographical information about age, gender, name, number of siblings and position in the family, children were particularly asked to speak about themselves, describe their daily routines, their families, when they started hawking, why they did it, how long they have been doing it, who they lived with and sold for, problems they encountered, their likes and dislikes about vending, what they hoped to get out of it, how others related to them, their schooling, as well as their hopes and aspirations about life. Though participation was based on availability and willingness, (Brewerton and Millward, 2001; Sarantakos 1998) children were encouraged to spread the word and bring along some of their vending peers (Arksey and Knight 1999).

The duration of interviews varied between three minutes and an hour or more. The majority of the children were anxious and overly excited and did not concentrate fully on the interview. Some were more interested in their sales and broke off interview sessions midway without warning. They quickly dashed off to make sales as soon as they sighted or heard the call of a prospective customer and returned at a

later time or another day. Some children were called out to sell in the middle of an interview and they had to stop immediately in order to attend to their caller. Some wandered off from there and never came back to conclude the interviews while some met me in the middle of another interview in a different part of the marketplace and wanted to continue. Others were discouraged and pulled away by their friends and guardians. Occasionally people cut into the interviews uninvited and that disrupted the flow of the session. Moreover, because the majority of the children moved along with their friends and colleagues in small groups of two or three, some asked to be interviewed together and some interjected midway when their friend or lead speaker felt overwhelmed or signalled for assistance. This made some interviews inconclusive and incoherent. Essentially, many children were interviewed more than once and in various locations and this has implications for time, money, quality and reliability of information given by the participants. Depending on participants' preferences, interview proceedings were either recorded in long hand (note taking) or tape recorded. Some children requested that the tapes be played back, and I gave them the opportunity to decide on what they wanted me to keep or delete.

Conducting research in a rowdy and not-so well researched place among a highly mobile population was complicated. It was challenging, time consuming and required patience and perseverance. Simultaneously, paying attention to details, minimising disruptions from passers-by and keeping the children focused, was not easy. It was full of mixed feelings for the participants, some of whom were overly excited that they were doing something novel, while others were apprehensive and unsure of what they were getting themselves involved in and how far their responses would go. On many occasions, some passers-by walked in and took over the interview without being invited and in the process some of the interviewees became jittery, while in some cases some children stopped and refused to continue. The implications of this are discussed in my reflections in a later part of this chapter. Getting these children to participate in the interviews or to decline not only gave them voice and choice but encouraged them to express their personal feelings and understandings about their activities, status, working conditions and relationships, and these are matters which were very close to their hearts. Their first-time

participation in a research project also gave them the opportunity to be heard directly instead of being spoken for or being represented by adults (International Working Group on Child Labor (IWGCL) 1997; 1998:4) and it is only fair that their opinions are given pre-eminence above those of adults.

Proceedings of my visits, meetings, observations and interviews were recorded in audio-tapes and field notes, and I took photographs of the markets, with the consent of the LGA officials and the permission of those whom I photographed. In addition, LGA officials in the second market, at my request, made a short video film of the market which I made into a DVD (see attachment - Appendix 5). Some people declined to be recorded on tape for fear of identification. The recorded interview tapes were manually transcribed word-for-word and later translated into English. The transcription experience was difficult and took a long time to complete, because I had to translate the tapes first into standard English, without losing the children's original responses and expressions. I also tried to represent the children's views as closely and as thoroughly as I could without bias. Some of the original vernacular expressions were incorporated into the analysis in the findings chapters.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis was focused on understanding the children's stories and experiences from their perspective in order to appreciate their views on the meanings of work as well as their childhoods. As outlined above, my analysis was based on data from observation and from the 24 children whose interviews were either completed or considered as of special interest even though not all interview questions were answered.

Van Maanen (1988) asserts that there is no one way of analyzing qualitative data and advises that a qualitative researcher or researchers should approach their study with an unbiased mind and use whatever method they consider suitable for their data and purpose. I had always endeavoured to approach every stage of my research study with an open mind, no preconceived theories (McQueen and Knussen, 2002) and no

pre-existing hypotheses to be tested (Martin and Turner, 1986). I have applied the same criteria in presenting each child's story.

Based on my research questions and the use of interpretive analysis, findings were structured into three broad themes: children and young people's understandings of street vending and work, relationships in the vending arena with traders and significant others, and issues about education, gender and extra vending activities which they engaged in. This allowed me to form and explain concepts and to collate different and similar pieces of information from the children's narratives (Travers, 2001). The emergent themes were used to explain the phenomena of children's work from the perspectives of street vending children.

I am aware of the usefulness of some computer assisted qualitative data analysis software packages (Kelle, 1995), particularly NVIVO. I spent time learning how to use it to collate, store and codify my transcribed data but decided on reflection that using this package made me feel too distanced from my data (Bazeley, 2007; Morrison and Moir, 1998). I eventually settled for the traditional, manual, 'cut and paste' method which I felt more comfortable with, despite the constant back and forth movement in and out of the data. Unexpectedly, this took much more time and energy, given the large amount of data from interviews, observations and field notes but I was able to analyze and use most of the relevant data in discussing the emerging themes and to draw conclusions from them.

3.6 ETHICAL ISSUES INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY

I found the 'Code of Practice for Research Involving Children' from the University of Glasgow's Centre for Child and Society a useful starting-point in considering ethical issues in this study. It was helpful in designing the study and during fieldwork, though not all parts could be applied in the particular research environment because of practical considerations and cultural practices and traditional belief systems. For instance, having to get an enhanced disclosure before dealing with children and vulnerable people, which is a major requirement here in the UK and other western societies, was never an issue during my fieldwork. I had direct

access to the children even before access, and consent was obtained from the major stakeholders in the marketplaces. However, ethical considerations such as access, consent, confidentiality, anonymity, financial compensation, safety, protection and power were kept constantly in mind as the study progressed. (BSA, 2002; NASW 1996). I now discuss these ethical considerations.

3.6.1 Access and Consent

Permission to carry out an investigation was sought from all stakeholders, particularly the research participants who are seen to be doing the researcher a favour (Bell, 1999:42). Access and consent were negotiated and obtained at many levels throughout this study. Two major groups of gatekeepers were identified and three levels of consent obtained.

Firstly, consent was directly negotiated with the local government authorities who owned the marketplaces. Permission was first obtained from the chairmen of the two LGAs, who issued me with an identity card after I paid money and bought expensive drinks and traditional kola nuts for them. A second level of consent was sought from the various trade associations within each vending arena. At this level I met with the executive members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and various trade associations in the marketplaces since they were directly in charge of the daily administration of the vending scenes. The third and final level of negotiation for consent and access was with individual participants (children and adults) themselves. Access and consent were renegotiated even down to the level of shop owners on the various occasions that I needed their approval and services for my purpose. Approvals from these groups helped to dispel fears and suspicions but were very difficult to negotiate initially. People were sceptical of my intentions. They wanted to know what I was going to do with my findings and why I chose to do an academic study in motor parks and marketplaces rather than in school settings which they believed was the best place to do academic research with children. Approval helped to provide some level of protection and safety given that market environments are volatile and generally not considered a safe place for a research

study. Approval also gave encouragement to the children whose openness and willingness to participate provided rich data for this study.

Several meetings were held with various stakeholders throughout the duration of my fieldwork. At each meeting I discussed details of my research objectives and methods in a trusting and respectful manner (Lofland and Lofland, 1995) and explained what use the information they provided would be put to. Despite their suspicion and initial problems, I was able to establish good rapport at all levels with all relevant gatekeepers. My familiarity with the people and the environment also helped in this process. The suspicion was so great and (so frustrating) that I constantly spoke my in local dialect to allay their fears about my stranger status. For instance, during negotiations for access and consent in one of the marketplaces, I was requested to provide references to ascertain my identity and claims of being an indigene of a neighbouring town. They further invited two male drivers and a female trader from my area to identify me.

Secondly, consent was sought from children themselves. Initially, I gave out a one-page consent form to willing children for their guardians' approval for participation but many did not return them. Some returned theirs unsigned claiming that their guardians were not literate enough while others refused to take the forms out of fear that they might be reprimanded or withdrawn from vending. However, three children who returned their signed consent forms asked how I could tell if it was their guardians that truly signed the forms since I had no way of verifying their signatures. They told me that their parents had little control over what they did as long as they met their daily targets and rendered accurate accounts. This actually confirms the widely held opinion that child vendors and other street working children or motor park children, as they were popularly called, were wiser and smarter than their non vending counterparts. On separate occasions, however, I met some of the children's guardians who were trading in nearby markets and they consented to their children's participation if the children themselves were willing to take part. Since obtaining written consent from participants and gatekeepers was not practicable, I resorted to direct meetings on a one to one basis and this took a lot of time and energy to negotiate. I approached most of the children

directly but some came up to me and voluntarily requested to be interviewed. Most importantly, participation was completely voluntary and it was clearly explained to participants from the outset that they were free to opt out at any point.

3.6.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

I invited participants to give me fictitious names instead of their real names. Many said they were concerned that I might play the tapes or discuss them with people who might be able to identify their voices or laugh at their responses but I reassured them that I would not 'report', discuss or disclose their responses to people who know them and that this was guaranteed by their use of pseudonyms. I also assured them that their interviews would be used strictly for academic purposes and would not be shared with people or in places where they could be identified. In my analysis, all forms of identification were expunged and pseudonyms used throughout. All data collected and stored in the University computer system are protected by my personal password and will be destroyed on completion of my study. Nevertheless, despite my assurances, some participants still felt uncomfortable and sceptical. Their apprehension and concerns were legitimate and can be attributed to a lack of trust and confidence as they had never been involved in a research project where they had to talk about their personal lives and relationships. On personal reflection, I think that some of their fears were cultural as people in Nigeria do not generally discuss matters concerning families and relationships with 'strangers' and when they do, it is always about something positive or on issues related to material success and wealth but certainly not about sensitive issues about the need for children to work.

The nature of the markets and lack of a proper venue for interviews also have implications for privacy and confidentiality, participation and quality of data collected. It was neither safe nor conducive to conduct interviews in rowdy marketplaces and during peak trading hours. It is ethically ideal to hold interviews and conversations in quieter places for reasons of deeper engagement and privacy, but this was not possible given the mobile nature of the study. Besides, doing this was viewed with suspicion and participants' wishes had to be respected. Moreover, the itinerant nature of vending, interruptions by curious passers-by and disruptions of interview sessions as

children were called out from time to time, sometimes by their guardians and at other times by prospective buyers, all have implications for the duration, completeness and quality of information. Many wandered off from there and never came back to continue or conclude the interviews, some came back after I had moved on to a different part of the marketplace or met me in the middle of another interview and wanted to continue. All of these demanded flexibility and have clear implications for time, costs and participation. I was also aware that the marketplace was an adult dominated space and children had little or no control (Punch, 2002a).

3.6.3 Financial Compensation

This concerns the ethical issues of appreciation and reciprocity which encourage a researcher to give something in return to research subjects, to add positive value into the lives of participants and never to leave them in a poorer or more vulnerable situation than they were originally. This issue becomes more compelling when one deals with vulnerable people like these child vendors who toiled along with their guardians and peers to make a living and even sacrificed their time in order to take part in my study. There was no fixed arrangement for financial compensation; I left this open and dependent on participants' preferences. Some specifically demanded certain amounts in compensation for their time and this caused anxiety for me due to my tight budget and led me into negotiations over how much to pay for participation while others left it entirely to my discretion. I eventually gave out N500²⁶ (equivalent to £2) as compensation for their time and participation, and I bought up the wares of those who did not want money. I kept some of the wares and distributed the remainder to children who were milling around me. In some instances, I paid for the entire cost of a child's wares and gave them back to sell and make extra money. Many were very pleased with this option because it gave them more money and

²⁶ Naira (N) is the Nigerian currency. The exchange rate at the time of fieldwork was N250 to £1. This was the average amount that most children said they made from daily sales on good market days, apart from the girl who sold old newspapers and those who alternated vending with pushing wheel barrow.

dispelled their fear of ‘blood money’²⁷. These arrangements worked out well depending on each participant’s situation and preferences. Cash and kind incentives (drinks, snacks and traditional kola nuts) were also given to adult traders and various representatives of the transport and traders’ associations during my familiarization meetings.

There was a general belief and impression in Enugu that people from overseas return home with foreign currencies which translate into a huge amount of money when converted into local currency. This raised expectations for financial compensation. While refusal to give money may have negative consequences for participation and information gathering, paying for it also posed its own problems. Here we were dealing with children in a state of absolute poverty, who lived in conditions of “severe deprivation of basic human needs” (UN 1995:57). In this case, giving financial incentive or otherwise, no matter how one looks at it and the possible impacts it may have had on participation and the quality and quantity of information obtained (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003), is not and should not be seen as using money to induce or buy participation. I had to apply great caution while I considered the ethical implications and cultural expectations, practices and norms. My decision to buy off children’s wares or give money to those who preferred that option served a dual purpose: 1) it enhanced their daily sales and turnover and 2) as a token of appreciation for participation and cooperation.²⁸ This by itself enriched the children’s purse, sustained their livelihoods and facilitated my purpose.

Most of these child vendors came from very poor backgrounds and worked daily to earn some living wage for themselves and their families. Some said that they were instructed to sell off everything or risk not having their evening meal or not attending school the following day, if they did not meet their target. The level of poverty was so much that one could not help paying out money in appreciation for their time.

²⁷ A term generally used to describe ill gotten money. People believed that child kidnapers and evil – minded individuals smeared some magic concoctions on money in order to charm or hypnotize their victims and turn them into animals.

²⁸ See Ward (1997)

Apart from poverty, another reason for participants' uninhibited request for money was because prior to my arrival, some Nigerian movie producers had moved into Enugu to cast some of their home videos and were always seen around the city with video cameras and crew members shooting films. They occasionally recruited women and children to play minor roles and gave out generous amounts of money. Many vendors had suddenly woken up to the realization that they could make easy money aside from trading and this sharpened their appetite and expectations for financial compensation. Some believed that I was a journalist working for a radio or television station because they were used to seeing such media workers as they made video recordings for news on media stations. But many refused to even take part let alone accept anything from me because of suspicion and superstition that accepting gifts from strangers could lead to seduction and abduction.

One major problem that I encountered with financial incentives was that some who wanted more money brought their friends and encouraged them to participate and then came round to request extra pay for introducing more participants. It is likely that some children participated because of financial gains and this raises concerns about the genuineness and truthfulness of their stories. It also reminds me of Borg's (1981:87) "response effect" and left me wondering if they told me what they thought I would like to hear because they wanted money.

3.6.4 Safety and Protection

It is important for the researcher and the researched to stay safe to do her work and tell the story thereafter. As I stated earlier, the hostility and volatility of the marketplace were issues that needed to be addressed as they affected my ability to move around freely with the children. It was a common sight for me to observe serious fatal fights and hot verbal exchanges between traders, motorists, touts and many different users of the marketplaces. I had been warned during my familiarisation visits by the different interest groups and the children that the marketplace was a "war zone" where survival-of-the-fittest and abduction of people were the order of the day. Furthermore, the unpredictable political tension at this time which prevented my fieldwork in Aba also affected movements in and out of the Igbo speaking states and Enugu, being the

traditional nerve centre of the Igbo, was in the spotlight at the time of fieldwork. Suspicion was rife, movement was restricted and a ban was placed on rallies and group meetings of any sort. Besides, security in the marketplaces was weak and often directed at guarding shops against vandalism. There was nothing there for me and I had to make my own arrangements for protection. Issues about safety not only restricted my movement and changes to my research design but affected my decision to conduct my fieldwork safely and peacefully. As noted already, as part of my safety and protection measures, I hired two non-uniformed unarmed men who went out with me at different times to the streets and marketplaces for four weeks. They also assisted me with the initial headcounts during observation and ran errands during the time. They served as personal guards and took me to all the spots where child street vendors operated outside the marketplaces. They operated under cover but watched from a distance, having been warned not to disclose their mission. I did not want to send wrong signals that might scare children away and create further suspicion that might hamper my research efforts. This strategy worked out well, and I was able to conduct some interviews after spending five weeks observing various marketplaces. There were occasions when I had to stay up late (till 10pm) in the motor parks to observe and interview children who traded late into the night, particularly in the night markets and bus terminals that operated inter regional night transportation services. Doing this and going out to the markets in the early hours of the day to do a head count involved many risks and posed safety challenges.

3.6.5 Power

In explaining the unequal power relations between children and adults, Punch points out that the controlling 'adultist' attitudes of adults marginalises children even in research (Punch, 2002a: 324). No matter how child friendly I tried to be and how much I tried to conceal my identity, I was always aware of this power imbalance and always struggled not to impose my views and assumptions. It is possible that some felt intimidated seeing this 'well dressed and well fed woman' in jeans and hat. This might be the reason they often doubted my identity and referred to me as the 'woman in hat', 'Aunty London' or 'the London woman'. My experience shows that no matter how interactive or participant-driven one tries to make the research process, a

researcher cannot avoid being in control of his or her research agenda in order to meet the research aims and objectives. A researcher knows what he or she is looking for and is driving the process of getting that. Admittedly, “children... are experts in their own lives and know a great deal about their life and experiences...” (Cree et al., 2002: 52) but they always looked up to the researcher to enable the process of making this interaction work. Mayall, (2000) and Punch, (2002 a) rightly assert that we cannot deny the fact that adults have power and influence over children and that adults are often believed to have superior knowledge and wisdom to decide what is best for children. This is even more pronounced in countries like Nigeria where children defer to adults and rely on them for almost everything, a society where “dependency, compliance and total deference to parents are associated with the ideal child and childhood” (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003:9) and anything to the contrary is seen as disrespect, defiance and dissidence on the part of the child. Coming from this society where children’s opinion and involvement are generally not sought even on matters that affect them, where children are never invited to meetings with adults and are generally seen and believed to be immature, dependent and powerless, yet being part of a research culture that believes in children’s agency and carrying out a child-centred research that sought to understand children’s points of view, my greatest challenge was on how to “maximise children’s ability to express themselves at the point of data-gathering; [and] enhance their willingness to communicate” their views and feelings (Hill, 1997: 180). However, the fact that I spoke the same language, bought, ate, shared jokes, associated freely and maintained a good rapport with everybody helped to ameliorate this power imbalance just as it dispelled children’s initial fears and suspicions.

3.7 PRACTICAL ISSUES

Conducting fieldwork in a difficult situation requires foresight, careful planning and alternative strategies to adjust to fresh challenges and unpredictable situations. It also raises many practical, ethical and methodological challenges as well as those of safety and security. Many practical issues arose in the course of my fieldwork. For instance, much time and energy was spent negotiating consent and access with children and various stakeholders, and on recruiting, explaining and encouraging participation. This

can be attributed not only to the low literacy levels of participants but also to the fact that none of them had ever participated in a research project. As explained earlier, the un-cooperative attitudes of officials at the local authorities created problems and delays. They did not keep to appointments and meetings were cancelled without prior notice. Different groups of people showed up at meetings, many did not want notes to be taken and nothing was handed over from those who attended previously. This created the problem of having to start each meeting with new people in attendance and making fresh explanations of my research aims all over again. The issue of 'African time' created more frustrations as people turned up for meetings an hour or two later and this was taken for granted and happened on each meeting day with no apologies. Suspicion was rife and people appeared unwilling to share information or follow up on agreed plans. This apparent lack of commitment created frustrations and anxiety for me. Each day presented new challenges which I approached with an open mind and flexibility but relationships improved later as people began to show interest.

The timing of the study and weather changes gave some lead into my observations about the number of vending children and the type of wares they sold. Nigeria has two predictable, distinct and stable kinds of weather, namely the wet and the dry seasons. The wet or rainy season, which lasts from April to late October, is characterized by regular heavy tropical rain. The dry season, which is characterized by the harmattan wind, heavy sunshine, cold and dryness, lasts from November until the end of March and there is very little or no rainfall during this time. I conducted my fieldwork over these two seasons, from July (rainy season) to January (dry season). The implication of this is that I was able to see an increased number of child vendors and trading activities in the marketplaces in November and December, when the rains had decreased and Christmas was approaching. This was in sharp contrast to my observations during the early stages of my fieldwork in the wet season which left me wondering if there is a relationship between weather changes and street vending. Most children had finished their end of term examinations at this time and were less busy at school. Many chose to or were asked to assist in selling wares to raise extra money for Christmas and New Year festivities. Heavy rains disrupt businesses and curtail outdoor activities, and many guardians would not

allow their children to move about in the cold for health and safety reasons. Understandably, the markets become busier and livelier and more people engage in outdoor businesses when there is no rain. This seasonal factor also explains the reason for the demand and supply of certain types of wares and food items at different times of the year. The timing of my fieldwork has an added benefit as findings from observations showed a corresponding relationship between the number of child vendors and the sale of certain wares at certain times of the year.

Moreover, the *modus operandi* of revenue collectors made concentration even more difficult as participants were always watching out in order to evade them. In addition, the market environment was highly competitive and children worked to strict deadlines in order to achieve their daily targets and all of these made concentration all the more difficult despite attempts to remain focused. Many were not ready to spare their vending time on an activity that they considered irrelevant and of little value to their livelihoods and some saw my presence and efforts as an intrusion. Most of the children moved along with their vending friends in small groups of two or more, they felt more comfortable to be interviewed individually but in the full presence of their peers, who would occasionally interrupt and intrude into the conversations. Many younger children showed signs of nervousness and could not conclude their interviews while older children exuded more confidence, spent longer time in conversation and were more articulate.

As mentioned earlier, participants were interviewed in the language of their choice. Most of the children and young people spoke more than one language and because they attended school, they were able to speak English or Pidgin English with considerable clarity and fluency. However, some elected to be interviewed in Igbo, but ended up mixing it with Pidgin and English. My ability to speak Igbo, Pidgin and English, which were the main languages spoken and used for the interviews, facilitated matters and helped me to appreciate and understand certain idiomatic details, expressions and non-verbal signals and meanings which were brought to bear in my analysis. I am however aware that being Igbo and a native of the state under study raises some issues but it gave me the added advantage of having an intimate

knowledge of the research sites and contexts, the language and culture and the micro political underpinnings of the various peoples and subcultures within the study area.

3.8 REFLECTIONS ON MY METHODOLOGY

My fieldwork experience shows that researching novice participants in a not-so-well researched rowdy marketplace has implications for the researcher and researched, the methodology and the research community. My fieldwork involved much travelling, walking about, talking and interacting with people and standing around due to the mobility of participants, the apparently chaotic yet organised vending environment and the children's competencies (Punch, 2002b). The field is volatile and unsafe and some of the traditional research methods do not always work. All of these issues leave the researcher with new ethical and methodological challenges and call for flexibility and adaptability. While my home advantage or native identity reassured me of relative security, my gender and people's perception of me as an educated rich woman from abroad also created some problems, leaving me in a complex situation. It put me in a vulnerable situation but also made me look special and powerful and in control of my agenda before the participants who saw me as coming from a very privileged background. This also has implications for the data collected and relationships in the field.

As noted, obtaining an accurate survey of the number of child vendors was difficult due to the wandering nature of vending and the different entrances to and exit routes from the marketplaces. Knowing that other attempts by UNICEF and researchers on street working children had failed to give an accurate account of the number of street working children in Nigeria due to their varying circumstances (Country Report, 2000/2001 National Modular Child Labour Survey) I undertook a two-week physical head counting exercise of the number of children seen around the two biggest marketplaces in order to get a rough idea of the numbers of children involved in this situation. Though the data did not give an accurate number (Aptekar, 1988) the exercise reinforced the fact that children started vending in the early hours of the day before school.

Rather than use a sampling technique to recruit participants, I left it open to children's volition, willingness and availability, thus giving an equal opportunity to both male and female child vendors. Participants were opportunistically recruited and observed through a process called "random time sampling" (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003: 13), which means researching people at various times of the day and night, on weekdays and weekends and in all kinds of weather. This technique not only helps to reduce bias, as Aptekar and Heinonen claim, but it also gave me deeper insights into children's mode of operation and corroborated their stories about their relationships within the vending community. The snowball method, which on one hand was positive in that it increased participation had a potentially negative effect in that people talked about me to one another even before they met me. However, this worked for me right from the outset of my research and even during familiarisation visits and meetings with various groups of people in the different marketplaces and in the two local authorities. People that I had approached made further contacts and introduced more participants through word of mouth in a chain-like manner (Atkinson and Flint, 2001).

Reflecting further on some methodological and ethical issues that came into play during my fieldwork experiences, particularly those of access and consent, I suggest that the LGA officials acted not like gatekeepers or go-betweens but more like brokers. Calling them gatekeepers or go-betweens (middle men) implies support and mediation, which they did not do much of. A broker, as defined by Murphy (1981) describes a person "presenting an image of transactions with one side that cannot be easily identified by the other" (p.680). The officials were there not necessarily for the traders or the children or for me but for themselves. Their role as brokers was evident in the non-committal attitude of seeking personal gains rather than representing the local authority or the people who use their facilities. It was also evident in their complete disregard whether children were in school or not knowing fully well that it is their duty to provide schooling and safe marketplaces for children and traders respectively. The actual gatekeepers or link persons were the union executives (NURTW) and the various traders' associations in the marketplaces who not only allowed me access to the marketplaces but also linked me up with potential

participants and offered other forms of support throughout the course of my fieldwork.

Furthermore, given the intense atmosphere of suspicion at the time of fieldwork and the realisation that gaining prospective participants' trust was the most important ingredient for a successful sustained fieldwork (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003), particularly with novice participants, I decided not only to familiarise myself with the vending community but also to wine and dine and to mix and mingle with everybody in the vending community, but more importantly the children whose voices and opinions were needed most for the study. This I achieved by walking around with them, sharing food and jokes but most importantly buying their wares which gave them additional income, made them reach their daily targets and put big smiles on their faces. The familiarisation visits and observations helped to establish my presence and to win and retain their confidence throughout the duration of my fieldwork.

Though children moved in small groups and many felt more comfortable to be interviewed with their peers, I noticed during interviews that some were uncomfortable and unwilling to discuss personal matters in the presence of their peers. For this reason, I encouraged a one-to-one conversation in the full view of everybody but maintained a reasonable distance for privacy and confidentiality. I also observed that some children, especially the much younger ones, were physically nervous and as such tended to give short, monosyllabic responses. Some also tried to rush through the interview sessions quickly but many of the older ones were more confident, more fluent and more articulate, and this serves as a pointer to children's "intellectual and cognitive capabilities" (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003: 14). Many were more interested in participating because they saw the whole exercise as another exciting learning experience which some said they would report to their non-vending friends and school mates. It is not unlikely that some participated simply because of the financial gains and some may have lied or exaggerated their situation hoping for sympathy and possibly for more money (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003) but, on the whole, many participated actively with enthusiasm and took the exercise seriously.

Looking back, I could say that I experienced more hostility, suspicion, distrust and uncooperativeness from adult women than men. The men looked in, asked questions or made comments and went their way but most women physically and openly dissuaded children from participating, though many eventually became friendlier and more kindly disposed toward the end of my interviews after they had convinced themselves that I was genuine. Despite the initial threats and obstacles, one would generally say that the experience was exciting and worthwhile as it gave me a first hand experience, as a native researcher, of doing ethnographic research with children in a not-so-well researched environment. It also provided the opportunity to test some of the theoretical frameworks and ethical issues involved with researching children, particularly in a non-western society where cultural taboos, superstitions and traditional beliefs and practices abound. It may be worthy to point out here that superstition and suspicion have increasingly become a part and parcel of everyday living in Nigeria, especially in the cities, where western individual lifestyles have increasingly become the order of the day with a corresponding lower emphasis on the traditional African communal lifestyles. The heightened suspicion at the time of fieldwork was fuelled by massive media reports on the abduction and trafficking of children for clandestine purposes. These reports, which coincide with prevailing beliefs that human parts are used for money making purposes, informed the prevailing climate and heightened awareness for children's safety and protection during this time. Children were sternly warned not to deal with strangers and I was seen as one.

Having overcome my initial fears and anxieties and established rapport and confidence with many people I concluded my fieldwork with rich first hand data. The familiarization visits and meetings and the non-obtrusive observations around the city and marketplaces also yielded positive results and provided more useful data about the researched communities and about vending operations and relationships between adults and child vendors. It is my belief that interviewing children in the open view of adults may have, in some cases, deterred or even encouraged them

from talking openly about their daily encounters and relationships with uncooperative traders and adults.

I also think that despite my previous professional experience and limited knowledge and experience of doing research with children on sensitive issues played a role during the early stages of the interviews. Most participants were not forthcoming and expressive in their responses, I asked questions repeatedly, explaining and probing and going back and forth in an attempt to ascertain the meanings of their responses. This obviously added to the duration of some of the interview sessions and transcripts and possibly to their feelings of frustration and disinterest in the study.

As Hill (2006) rightly points out, there is no consensus on children's preferences for the research methods, level of participation and venue for interview. In my research, their views and likes differed: some wanted to be recorded on video and radio; others declined any form of recording while some were not drawn to the idea of participation, of being listened to and being asked questions about personal matters. There were children who considered the research a serious event while some took it as an exciting new experience for whatever it was worth. People stood there watching, listening and encouraging their peers, some even chipped in occasionally but did not like to be the focus of the interview which many considered an intrusion into their leisure and private lives. Hill's ideas about preferences supports the principle of researcher's openness and willingness to allow children to have their say rather than feeling controlled and coerced or manipulated into doing what the researcher wants. Children are social actors and can negotiate their level of participation quietly in ways that do not give a warning signal but in ways that suit them.

As Punch (2002b) rightly pointed out, personal face-to-face interviews afforded children the opportunity for privacy and confidentiality without fear of being overheard or being quoted or reported, even though many still appeared sceptical about participation. Some children were concerned that their participation and responses would be made known to their guardians and so declined outright, thus exercising

“choice or agency” (Hill, 2006:84). Others were confident in the fact that I was a stranger and did not know them well enough and so were happy to take part. There were a few occasions when I suspected that some children were not telling the truth, that they just told me what they felt I wanted to hear in order to get money off me or for me to buy off their wares as I did for others, but that was part of the pains of doing research with children. On the whole, I think that my fieldwork experiences have empowered me and challenged some of my assumptions and understandings about research, about myself and about my community. It gave me the opportunity for a first hand learning of certain traditional child rearing practices and child protection issues that were common concern to my people while at the same time it offered an opportunity to give vulnerable people a way to voice their concerns in a way that might bring positive changes.

3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although the findings provide an insight into the childhoods of street vending children, they cannot be generalised because they do not represent the experiences and views of most vending children in Nigeria and so should be treated with utmost caution as they only represent the perceptions of a small number of street vending children in one city in Nigeria. Another limitation is in the methodology that I used. The qualitative and exploratory nature of the study does not allow for a testing of hypothesis rather my ethnographic approach allowed themes and ideas to emerge rather than me going in to test, refute or corroborate prior theories. I went straight into the study sites without any preconceived notions or hypothesis and analysed issues based on children’s stories. The results could be different if things were done differently.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has described the decisions that were made in the design and conduct of my study of the work experiences of child street vendors most of whom had never taken part in any research before. My aim was to carry out a qualitative ethnographic study that would highlight the childhood experiences of these highly

mobile children and young street vendors who sold wares in open but crowded, adult dominated and highly competitive marketplaces. I have described the step by step efforts that were made to actively engage with participants in this process. Some of the theoretical and methodological frameworks that underpinned the entire study as well as the ethical, theoretical and practical issues and challenges that formed part of my fieldwork experience have also been explored and discussed. Negotiating access into the marketplaces and getting the consent of the major gatekeepers were uphill tasks which involved familiarization visits and meetings before it was even possible to start research with the children whose opinions mattered most in this study.

Involving these children in the research, seeking their consent and allowing them the choice to participate or decline, encouraged them to express their opinions about their work and working conditions and relationships, and gave them the chance to be heard rather than being spoken for or represented by adults (International Working Group on Child Labor (IWGCL) 1997 and 1998:4}. These measures were generally in keeping not only with the ethics of conducting social research but also with children's rights to participation, which are a fundamental principle of the UNCRC.

In the next chapter, I discuss the research sites and contexts such as market operations, give brief profiles of the 24 children and young vendors who took part in this study, and introduce some of the themes that will be explored more fully in the findings chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR: SETTING THE SCENE: THE RESEARCH CONTEXT.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information regarding the physical environment, the way business is done and the major participants in the various marketplaces where this study was conducted. The details come from my own observations gathered over my six months fieldwork in the marketplaces. For reasons of clarity, unless specified otherwise, I refer to all the private and public, major and minor vending hubs such as motor parks and bus terminals, designated markets, taxi bays, traffic junctions, gas stations, busy street markets and motorways in this study as marketplaces.

DISCLAIMER: The children and adults whose faces appear in the photographs (as contained in Figs. 2, 3, 4, 5 and on the DVD) are not necessarily those who participated in the interviews. However, permission for filming and photography was granted by the local authorities and executives of the marketplaces and where possible, I sought verbal agreement from the children themselves.

4.2 SIGHTS AND SOUNDS: THE MARKETPLACES

The city of Enugu has several motor parks for all types of road transportation services. Motor parks were originally created as convenient arrival and departure points for motorists and passengers. In these motor parks, vehicles arrive at and depart to cities, towns, rural villages and various locations in the country at every moment of the day. Some parks operate only daytime services between 8.00 and 18.00 hours while others operate day and night transportation services, thus creating a 24-hour business environment. Apart from providing safe working and parking spaces for motorists and commuters and for the embarking and disembarking of passengers, commercial activities eventually sprang up within and around the vicinity. Local authorities and individuals began to build stalls around these parks and this led to the development of flourishing business opportunities for various

types of small and medium scale ventures and motor parks increasingly grew in size to accommodate them. Motor parks have become a one stop mini shopping arena for both travellers and non-travellers.

These marketplaces operate free and open door policies, allowing access to anybody who wishes to buy, sell, travel or visit, as long as such persons or groups abide by their rules and regulations. All sorts of people use the parks. Politicians use them for outreach during electioneering campaigns and religious preachers regularly use them to propagate their beliefs. Marketplaces also provide shelter for homeless people who are often seen sleeping in front of shops and in quieter corners and for miscreants as well. It is common to see large numbers of people in certain out-of-the-way parts, known locally as ‘smoking joints’, using illegal drugs, and /or consuming large quantities of alcoholic beverages and other harmful substances. These substances are sometimes sold and consumed under cover and the sellers are mostly patronized by drivers and their assistants (conductors), commercial motorcycle operators and wheel barrow pushers, who are mostly teenagers and young male adults. Describing how notoriously busy these joints are, a journalist once commented,

Commercial bus drivers normally throng to the joints as early as 5am to drink and smoke before they even start the day's work.

(Daily Trust, Abuja 2005)

These smoking joints, often called ‘Beware of dog’ or ‘Danger zones’ by locals, are popular and attract attention as their patrons are often embroiled in fighting each other. Sometimes they can be seen swearing, singing, entertaining themselves, making sounds to attract the attention of passers-by and occasionally exhibiting behaviours that could have them arrested for alleged breach of peace. Motor parks have often been referred to as a “haven for criminals, drugs and alcoholism”

(Olumide, 2005)²⁹ due to the presence and activities of touts and miscreants. This may be the reason why people, particularly children, who have had sustained contact with marketplaces are generally believed to be wild and anti-social. Many of the children and young vendors in this study have had long contact within such environments and were often seen crying, fighting and arguing with patrons of the smoking joints.

Motor parks may look rowdy and chaotic but are organized and physically divided into sections. Traders display their wares in various open spaces between the loading bays while itinerant traders flit around searching for customers. The NURTW or the 'union' exercises complete control of the transport section and its workers are often seen manning the entrance and exit points of motor parks. The entrance and exit points are usually closed with very big ropes or a big iron bar and lifted from one end to allow vehicles in and out of the park. The NURTWs collect money (gate fees) from every incoming vehicle and issue drivers with receipts. The fees, which are agreed between the NURTWs and the LGA, vary and depend on each vehicle type. The union is very useful in helping to maintain peace and order within the frenzied and conflict-prone motor parks and marketplaces.

4.3 GENERAL OUTLOOK OF OGBETE MAIN MARKET

Structurally, the Main Market is unique among other markets in the city. It is the largest market in the state with up to 10,000 lock-up shops and many square metres of open spaces for car parks and open-space retail trading. It is a lively central market with four adjoining but autonomous motor parks. Due to expanding business activities around the market, some of the motor parks have extended beyond the immediate confines and many smaller parks and privately owned bus terminals have sprung up, but they are all within walking distance of each other.

The uniqueness of the Main Market lies in the fact that it is well laid-out with many strong purpose-built stalls and warehouses for retail and wholesale businesses. The

²⁹ Olumide Bajulaye, Daily Trust Newspaper, Abuja, Nigeria, 11th February 2005

shops are aligned in north-south and east-west rows, and each commodity has designated rows of stalls where prospective buyers call to make their purchases. The market is organized in sections called lines which have names and are alphabetically arranged for easy identification. People selling similar wares stay together within a line. For instance, there are sections for foodstuff, provisions, medical equipment, books and stationery, clothing, hair and beauty products and for every other imaginable commodity. The abattoir and livestock section of the market is slightly different and far removed from the other sections at the far end of the market. It is an open-space with shanty wooden sheds where live animals are sold and slaughtered. It is the dirtiest part of the market and is characterized by the stomach-churning smells from the mountainous heap of decomposing fresh household and trade wastes that have piled up for several months, and from the oozing smell of animal dung and the burning of animal hides and skins. One larger open-space area of this market is the section where rural farmers sell fresh foodstuffs to “early bird” city traders straight from their farms. It starts earlier than the usual opening hours of 8 a.m and is later converted into a loading bay for motor cycle and wheel barrow pushers. The electronic section of the market serves as a cinema place, providing music and movie services especially to children and young street vendors who often gather to watch and dance while doing their businesses.

The main shopping arena is locked up after business and opened in the mornings with various wares displayed on the threshold of the stalls which sometimes hamper easy access and mobility. Not all traders sell in lock-up shops; wholesale traders and restaurateurs sell in lock-up shops and small-scale vendors sell in make-shift wooden structures erected in various parts of the market. There are large open shopping spaces for smaller retailing and itinerant trading and open-space trading which are common features in this market, as in most Nigerian markets. These open spaces are usually enlivened with noisy exchanges between traders and shoppers haggling over prices while the sound of very loud ear piercing music from music shops and loud amplifiers supply more background music, keeping the entire marketplace lively and noisy.

The market has a good transportation network with various entrance and exit points for different types of vehicles. The lanes are built in such a way as to allow free flow of carts and wheel barrows for conveying goods, but the huge number of vehicles and human traffic makes the place congested. The use of carts and wheel barrows to move goods in and around the market area is a common practice in Nigerian marketplaces. Sometimes the congestion leads to a traffic standstill which can take upwards of one hour or more to clear up through the combined efforts of the police and traffic wardens who stand in designated spots controlling traffic in and out of the marketplace during daytime market operations. Walking and driving through the place after the police have left is a horrid experience as traders colonise the roads and use up every available space to display their wares in basins, wheel barrows and various food containers awaiting the arrival of prospective buyers. Various associations of traders and service providers exist within this marketplace and the majority of them are organised on the basis of wares and services provided. This means that traders who sell similar wares and people who provide similar services belong to the same association and each group has a constitution that governs the operations of its members.

4.4 THE GARIKI MARKETPLACE

This marketplace is made up of the Gariki Motor Park and Gariki market and is situated in Enugu South LGA. Two distinct motor parks, a big market and four small adjoining street markets fused into one to form what is here referred to as the Gariki motor park and marketplace. The motor park was built and officially commissioned in 1980 but the Gariki market itself has long been in existence since before 1960³¹. It has a modern abattoir with an adjoining cattle market, the biggest in the state, where live cattle and livestock from the Northern part of the country are sold and slaughtered.

Approaching the market from the northern side of the city centre is the first motor park (MP 1) which is meant for mini-buses and bigger commuter buses (like the Stage Coach or City Link buses in the UK) that ply through various cities. A much

³¹ Information provided by Ichie Ogbodo, a former Chairman of the Gariki Market Association

bigger section of the park is used for intra city bus shuttles that travel along the city's major roads and streets in what is commonly called 'town service' or 'merry go round'. The second adjoining motor park (MP 2) is bigger, serves a broader purpose and is mainly used for inter-city transportation by small and medium sized vehicles that cover farther destinations to various states and regions in the country. The two parks have separate entrances and exits with inconspicuous physical demarcations but the entrance and exit procedures are well known and strictly adhered to by participating motorists. Located closely to this marketplace is the army barracks, the biggest residential quarters for low and mid- ranking military personnel. This barracks is a microcosm of Nigerian society because it accommodates military personnel and their families from every part of the country.

This marketplace has many shops and warehouses of various sizes, some located right inside the enclosed section of the market and others along the major street. Those are mainly multi-purpose lock-up shops built by the LGA and allocated to traders (on a tenancy basis) to generate income for the local authority. There are open spaces, open-plan shops and make-shift stalls (not meant for permanent storage) for traders who bring in their goods daily from home. Here, traders display and sell their wares and at the end of each day clear them up leaving the stalls empty. Also within the immediate surroundings of this marketplace are privately owned shops and warehouses in nearby streets outside the main shopping arena. Traders in this section of the marketplace stayed longer than those within the precincts of the motor park who had to abide by the official opening and closing times from Monday to Saturday. This means that trading goes on into the late hours of the night after markets and motor parks officially close at 18.00 hours. Slightly beyond the second motor park is another large flourishing market arena. The features are much the same as in the main market but this is relatively smaller in size.

As is often the case, the vehicle section of this marketplace is manned by the NURTW who load vehicles on a first-come-first-served basis. The NURTW has different units and each unit has a separate office, staff and executive members who are in turn accountable to the state chairman. Every vehicle that operates within this

section must be registered with the union which makes it impossible for unregistered vehicles and non-members to operate there. Occasionally, drivers from another unit are allowed to load to a destination outside their normal route but only with the consent of the executive members of that unit. This is usually done if and when units run short of vehicles, in order to avoid passenger congestion. This section is divided into zones according to the towns, cities and routes which they serve. Names of cities are written on tripod stands and placed on top of each vehicle whose turn it is to load. One could hear union people loading vehicles as they shout out loudly the names of drivers, numbers of their vehicles, the inscriptions on vehicles and the names of the towns and cities that the vehicles are heading to. They do this in a musical rhythm in order to draw the attention of passengers to the appropriate vehicles that are being loaded. Some go around beckoning on passengers to the appropriate loading sites. The level of noise in this section of the marketplace is higher than in other sections because many vehicles are loaded simultaneously. One has to really strain his or her ears in order to ascertain where vehicles to his or her destination are being loaded.

Most of the union workers are men and can easily be identified by their white and green coloured uniforms as they let vehicles in and out of the park, load vehicles, collect money and hand out registration tickets to incoming and outgoing vehicles. Local chapters of the NURTW and various traders' unions worked closely with the police to safeguard life and property and to maintain peace and order in the marketplace.



Fig. 2 A Busy marketplace

4.5 OTHER USERS OF THE MOTOR PARKS

4.5.1 BUS DRIVERS AND DRIVERS' ASSISTANTS (AGBORO PEOPLE)

Apart from vehicle drivers and their assistants, another group of people that operate within the motor parks are touts or 'agboro'³². This term in the motor park usage

³² A sinister word used to describe miscreants and layabouts, people of questionable character or motor park touts: mostly idle, unemployed males with no credible sources of livelihood. They hang out in marketplaces and are believed to exhibit anti-social behaviours, take drugs and alcohol and

widely refers to drivers and their assistants and unofficial workers (touts) who assist members of the union to load vehicles in motor parks. Though many touts do not belong to the union, they work on a commission-only basis and collude with some drivers and union members to load vehicles and collect money from passengers on behalf of the drivers. Their *modus operandi* can be irritating and that makes them loathed as miscreants by passengers and traders and thus the nickname. It is generally believed that their activities can make the marketplace unsafe, particularly for children and young people who become easy prey to their criminal machinations.

4.5.2 Motor Cycle Riders

Commercial motorcycle operators or '*Okada drivers*', as they are popularly called, also have their place of operation within the market environment. Like wheel barrow pushers, they queue at the entrances of motor parks and markets waiting for customers and disembarked passengers who do not want to use shuttle buses or taxis. Using motor cycles is a much faster way to move around the city and to avoid traffic jams but their driving habits raise serious concerns, particularly for children and young vendors.

4.5.3 Professional wheel barrow pushers

These are seen in different marketplaces hauling people's wares and shopping bags in their wheel barrows for a fee. This professional group is mostly dominated by school-aged boys and younger males but no females. I was told that girls are generally not involved in professional barrow pushing services. In places with a functional barrow union, members queue up at designated places, visibly wearing uniform fluorescent coloured shirts with their numbers boldly written on them or on a wooden plank hanging on their wheel barrows, waiting for customers while in places without a union, they move around scavenging for patronage. Barrow pushing unions do not exist in every marketplace but members co-operate well

harass unsuspecting victims. It can also be used in a derogatory way to describe someone who exhibits certain violent or ill-mannered behaviours as is commonly seen among motor park workers.

among themselves and always intervene whenever any member of their group runs into trouble with a motorist or a customer.

Revenue collectors, often referred to as ticket or tax people³³, are part of the marketplace operating workforce. Mobile medicine vendors are regular sights in marketplaces and sometimes inside big buses. They are usually dressed up in an unusual but eye catching fashion and are often seen singing, dancing and entertaining people as they advertise and demonstrate how to use their products. They play loud music and use various forms of entertainment and advertising gimmicks to attract customers and to market their medicines and local concoctions. It is common sight to see a large crowd of people gather round them to watch, buy and be entertained.

4.5.4 Itinerant Vendors

As can be inferred, many trading activities take place outside allocated shops within and outside designated marketplaces. Mobile vendors move around balancing their wares on their heads or selling in wheel barrows and carts. Others, mostly children and young people, are seen darting around in different directions chasing after customers in moving vehicles, running towards people who call for their wares and bargaining at the top of their voices to convince customers to buy their wares. It is a common sight to see children and young people walking around in small groups of two and three, brandishing various wares and making all manner of sounds to attract the attention of passers-by and make sales. They sell assorted wares in varying sizes and shapes ranging from sachet water, cold juices and soft drinks, popularly called 'minerals', cooked foods, fries, sweets and all sorts of edibles; fresh fruits and vegetables as well as various food stuffs. Some sell inedible wares like batteries and electrical equipment, play-stations and all kinds of toys.

³³They are LGA employees who move around marketplaces collecting daily dues from traders and people who use their facilities. They issue receipts or tickets to confirm payment, hence the name. They are inconspicuous, operate daily in different guises and cannot easily be evaded. There were complaints that some of them did not always issue receipts and this gives room for double payments, arguments, favouritism of their friends and relatives, possible evasion of payment by some 'smart' vendors and corruption which is why many traders disliked and classified them as irresponsible touts.

While traders in lock-up stalls and shop owners would usually open their shops, display their wares and sit in front of their shops seeking and beckoning to customers, itinerant vendors move around with their wares. They are found everywhere with their goods scavenging for buyers, and quickly rush to any buyer who indicates interest. In an attempt to draw attention to their wares and make sales, itinerant vendors are often heard shouting out loudly the names of their wares and beckoning on customers, saying things like; ‘buy orange’, ‘pure water’, ‘groundnuts’, ‘ice water this way’ as they move along the streets and marketplaces. Buyers may indicate their interests by calling out to vendors and shouting out what they want. Itinerant vendors push one another, run into people and fall on people’s wares as they scurry around to make sales. They are often seen pushing, fighting and cursing, running and falling, joking, entertaining and being entertained by the different events that happen simultaneously within the vending arena. The dynamism and vibrancy exuded by itinerant vendors provide exciting and interesting views and make the marketplace lively and entertaining. This explains why market environments are tumultuous besides the boisterous exchanges between competing vendors and their customers.

Apart from the sight of hundreds of thousands of traders, shoppers and commuters constantly milling around and trooping in and out of motor parks and markets, the most striking feature of the marketplace is the loud sound of music from music shops and amplifiers used by sales people and religious preachers to draw attention. The first observation as one approaches a motor park or a market environment is the large crowd and the noise emanating from exchanges between traders and customers, drivers’ assistants and passengers, religious preachers and sometimes politicians (during political campaigns) as they loudly beckon to customers with their microphones and amplifiers. Noises also emanate from welding shops, flour and grinding mills and from furniture makers as they cut logs of wood and planks in various parts of the market. The simultaneous exchanges and activities, large crowds of people and constant movement in and around the marketplaces, plus the shouts and noises create an atmosphere of chaos and confusion but a closer look reveals orderliness.

As can be seen in Fig. 2 and the DVD (Appendix 5), the overall atmosphere in the market is charged with thousands of traders and shoppers moving in and out of the vending places. The market is also a carnival of noise and colour and a negotiating platform where buyers and sellers from around the region and beyond haggle, joke, argue and exchange goods and services for money. At times, the pushing and shoving become intense and people often get into serious fights that may require the intervention of security operatives and trade union members, who are often called in to mediate and to restore peace. One needs to be extremely careful not to be knocked over by wheel barrow pushers and itinerant traders as they scurry round to make sales and to evade the tax man.

Before providing a short profile of the 24 children and young vendors in this study I shall describe a typical day in the market.

4.6 TYPICAL DAYTIME MARKET OPERATIONS IN ENUGU

The market opens officially at 8 am but trading activities start as early as 6.30 am around the peripheries and in adjoining motor parks. At this time farmers from nearby rural communities come in to sell their wares to city traders who then re-package and re-sell them later when the market opens officially. Both farmers and traders are usually seen standing and stooping as they haggle for prices in a somewhat husky manner, and business is usually done quickly in order give way for the arrival of regular traders at 8 a.m. Business also starts early at certain designated sections of the market, for instance, in the livestock, butchery and abattoir sections. In the lorry section, traders, lorry drivers and wheel barrow pushers also start early, by off-loading wares from big lorries and trucks that arrived overnight and arranging them for dispatch to the various shops when the market opens officially. About an hour later, adult traders and children begin to arrive from home with wares on their heads or in wheel barrows into the markets. The children are usually accompanied by one or more adults, who I presume are their parents or guardians. Then at 8 am, more traders both male and female, resplendent in brightly coloured outfits, begin to arrive with their wares chatting to one another. One can hear them speaking

animatedly in loud voices - exchanging pleasantries with their friends and neighbours, enquiring after their neighbour's family members and asking if they slept well as is usual practice in Nigeria - as they open their stores, sweep the immediate surroundings of their shops and display their wares in front of their shops. Soon after this, people begin to gather in small groups of seven or more, standing, singing, clapping and praying openly. Such open prayer sessions have almost become a tradition in Nigeria, particularly for Christians and people of all faith and none. Prayers are usually said at the start of any activity in marketplaces, on commuter vehicles and even in public and private offices. In the markets, people gather in front of their shops to commend their businesses into God's hands, praying for good luck in sales and for other needs. These prayer sessions usually last between 20 – 30 minutes and then people disperse to display their wares in readiness for shoppers. At 12 noon, bells ring in different parts of the market as a call for another prayer session. Prayers are repeated in the same manner as before. Participation is optional but I observed that visitors and shoppers immediately join in with any group within their reach as soon as the bells go off for the Angelus³⁴. Sales are usually suspended during these prayer sessions, and customers either join in or wait quietly for prayers to end. Those who do not want to join in continue with their sales but in low tones. Many people participate because they believe in the efficacy of prayers even if they are not Christians. This is due to the strong influence of Christianity in south east Nigeria. Besides, Nigerians are generally known to be deeply religious and God-fearing.

Between 8 am and 2 pm, the market remains more organized but as soon as schools and offices close (between 2pm and 4 pm) the atmosphere changes and the markets fills with the arrival of many school children in various school uniforms, some passing through their parents/guardians' shops on their way home and others staying back to assist with sales straight from school (see details in chapter seven). The tempo of business increases further between 4 and 6 pm when government offices and private sector businesses close and more people arrive to buy and sell. Many

³⁴ The Angelus is originally a Catholic daily ritual of short prayers at 6 am, 12 noon and 6pm, but has now been transformed into a bigger praying session in Nigeria by people of all faiths and none.

people are involved in part-time trading after work as a way of supplementing their meagre wages. With the influx of more shoppers at this time, the entire marketplace becomes agog, the surrounding roads and streets fill up and trading rises to new heights.

At this time in the afternoon, part-time traders are usually seen erecting make-shift shops all over the adjoining streets, motor parks and in every available open space within the vicinity. Many have no officially allotted shops and therefore sell their wares in self-provided wooden carts, barrows, basins and cartons, and in make-shift containers, while others engage in itinerant vending. It is at this time that revenue collectors are on 'red alert' collecting daily dues, chasing and harassing people who are trying to evade payment. The market gets busier and traders are often seen and heard making loud jokes among themselves and with customers.

While mobile vendors walk about beckoning on people to buy their wares by shouting out the items they are selling, static traders employ various tactics to woo customers into their shops. Their commonest strategy is physically pulling people's hands and gently leading them into their shops with the hope that the customer might see something to buy. This strategy seems acceptable and common as I observed. Some make hissing sounds and others would approach you politely to ask what you want, promising to sell at cheaper prices than other vendors. Many shop owners sit inside their shops while their apprentices wander about the market in search of customers. These apprentices position themselves at various strategic places along the major routes in the market and on sighting a prospective buyer, some would rush to carry the shopper's bags and gently walk him or her into their shops offering low prices, just to get the person into their shops. Many scout around their neighbour's shops to find the particular brand of items the customer wants, if they do not have it in their own store, while others may refer the customer or physically take him or her to the exact sections of the market, usually to their friends' shops or people they know, where such items are sold. Many vendors have been in the market long enough and seem to know one another and who sells what. A kind of struggle and resistance between traders and shoppers is noticeable, as some traders pull gently and jocularly while others do so with some degree of impoliteness that often sparks off

arguments and physical fights. It is always interesting to watch the dramas that erupt between traders and shoppers as well as the many uncomplimentary exchanges between apprentices.

Sales within the controlled sections of the market begin to wind down about 5.45 pm as traders gather their displayed wares into their shops and lock up quickly in order not to be penalized for lateness. As markets close at 6 pm, movement into the shopping areas become curtailed and everybody heads towards the exit points. The large crowd and the haste to leave often create a situation of stampede and delay within the market vicinity. Security men and members of various traders' associations are seen at this time, going round to ensure that no one is lurking behind, that all shops are closed and that people have left. As soon as this is established, they blow their whistles from various parts of the market as a sign that everything is in order and in a matter of minutes, the main entrances are locked with heavy iron bars. Security operatives patrol the markets and various routes inside and outside the markets from then until the following morning, when another business day begins.

4.7 EVENING/NIGHT MARKET OPERATIONS

The market officially closes at 6pm for business from Monday to Saturday but, trading continues until about midnight, in the surrounding streets and in the adjoining privately owned bus terminals and motor parks that operate night travel services. As full-time traders in the main shopping place begin to wind down, one notices some quick movement of people, particularly children, as they rush to get choice spots for themselves and their guardians for the evening market. Traders gradually move their wares from the main marketplace towards the surrounding streets to continue sales. These are the night or evening street markets³⁵, *ahia mgbede* as they are popularly called. It is in this segment of the market that many workers do their shopping, especially for food stuffs and vegetables. This section of the market usually starts building up slowly from 5 pm with the arrival of part-time traders as they erect their shopping stands and display their wares. The evening markets take place in an open, free-for-all arena.

³⁵ Night time sets in from 6 p.m

Full-time traders who do not make enough sales during the day stay on to make more money, while children who are at school during the day use the opportunity to help their parents to sell off any remaining items, especially perishables, as they cannot preserve them due to the poor supply of electricity for refrigeration. Most perishables expire at the end of the day and are often sold at cheaper prices in the evening market. Moreover, part-time traders and farmers from nearby rural communities also bring in fresh farm produce and foodstuff to the evening/night market and this makes the evening market attractive. The evening market therefore provides cheaper and more convenient shopping opportunities for workers, school children, and poorer people who want cheaper deals, hence the popular saying that only poor people patronise evening markets.

Evening markets seem to be busier and more chaotic with fewer security controls and more exciting scenarios than in daytime. There are no unions at this time to enforce any regulations, survival-of-the-fittest becomes the order of the day and everybody struggles hard to get their business done and to get back home to their families. Movement in and around this market area is usually slow as shoppers and traders take up every available spaces, cars are parked carelessly and wares are displayed even on railway tracks and on streets. Darkness descends too quickly and the electricity supply is so erratic that people have to carry torch lights and bush lamps while shopping. The low level lighting of bush lamps creates a special atmosphere that is simultaneously awe inspiring and cosy. People talk and haggle at the top of their voices but without amplifiers and loud music, the noise levels are lower than as the daytime. Street urchins and miscreants equally scurry round to perfect their sharp practices: stealing, wreaking havoc and luring unsuspecting victims to their den. The wildness and arguments that characterize the evening market operations seem to create a very suspicious and tense atmosphere, to the extent that if one mistakenly touches another's bag while passing through the mammoth crowd, such a person is very likely to be called a thief and may be lynched to death. One often heard people shouting 'thief', 'thief', '*catch am, catch am*', '*holam, holam*³⁶', on suspicion of

³⁶ Pidgin English expression meaning catch him, catch him or hold him, hold him.

robbery. In such a situation, the alarm is often raised, followed by a stampede and a chase to get at the fleeing suspect. The consternation is such that people lose their wares and sustain injuries when this happens. I lost my wallet and valuables on one occasion that I went to witness an incident. Mob justice is dispensed instantly and no one spends time to find out what has really happened. Without recourse to law enforcement agents, the suspect is often booed and beaten to a state of unconsciousness if caught, and if there is any slight suspicion in the person's look or manner. Arguably, it is possible to mistake a genuine person for a suspect, but people seemed to know who the miscreants were. I recall hearing such alarms on few occasions during daytime market operations and the suspects were caught, interrogated and handed over to security operatives after they were paraded openly in the market. Children and adults gathered around to view the suspect, booing and making fun out of the whole scenario. This was a very common scenario in the evening markets during my fieldwork and the frequency of these incidents leaves one jittery and fearful as though everyone in the evening market was a miscreant.

Saturday is the busiest day in the market when most people (essentially workers, house wives and children) do their weekly shopping while Sunday is a no vending day (see details in chapter five).



Fig.3: Street vending children carrying their wares on their heads

4.8 PROFILES OF THE CHILD VENDORS

In order to understand fully the concerns, experiences, childhoods and perceptions of the child vendors in this study, I give a synopsis of their biographies and family history as far as it was presented to me by the children themselves. As noted in chapter three, their names have been changed for ethical reasons. I conclude the chapter with a brief summary of the common issues and concerns that informed the themes and discussions in the later chapters.

1. Chinenye

Chinenye was a -10- year old Igbo girl who lived with her maternal aunt in the city. She sold sachet water, popularly called ‘pure water’, and performed various domestic and child minding chores according to her aunt’s wishes. Her aunt was married with five young children and lived with her husband. Her aunt was a trader with a shop in the adjoining market beside the motor park. Chinenye traded regularly on weekdays after school between 2pm and 6pm, but started earlier on weekends and holiday periods. Her (Chinenye’s) parents lived in a nearby rural town and her mother occasionally visited her aunt and that created the opportunity for meetings between them. Chinenye had six siblings (two brothers and four sisters) and was the third daughter of her parents and the fourth child in birth order.

2. Nkiru

Nkiru was a nine year-old Igbo girl from a nearby town within the city. She lived with and sold ‘pure water’ for her maternal aunt. Her aunt was married with two children, lived with her husband who was a mason, and had a shop within the neighbourhood where she sold fresh fruits and vegetables. Nkiru said that she was brought to her aunt by her mother. Nkiru’s parents lived in her rural town with some of her siblings. She had two brothers and three sisters and was the fourth child in her family. Her mother, a subsistence farmer, always came to sell fruits and vegetables in the same marketplace where Nkiru and her aunt traded and that provided opportunity for regular meetings. Nkiru assisted with domestic chores and took care of her aunt’s younger children.

3. Josephat.

Josephat was a 14-year old boy from a nearby rural village. He came from a family of five; two brothers and two sisters and was second in birth order. He and his siblings all lived with both parents in the city with two extended relations who were in higher education. His father was a brick-layer and mother had a shop at home where she sold fresh fruits and vegetables and assorted food stuff. He spoke to me in a very open and very detailed manner and had been vending wares since he was nine

4. Useni

Useni was an 11-year-old boy from the Northern part of Nigeria. He sold ‘pure water’; assorted cold drinks or anything his mother provided for sale but was selling zobo³⁷ on the day of interview. His father was a soldier and his mother traded at a nearby marketplace. He had two brothers and two sisters and they all lived in the Army barracks together with a female maternal cousin who often prepared the wares they sold.

5. Grace.

Grace was 14. She sold crayfish³⁸ and lived with both parents who themselves were petty traders. Her parents owned a shop inside the park where they jointly sold fish and sea food products. She had been hawking for many years and was introduced into vending as a toddler. During the interview, Grace constantly paused and pushed back tears from her eyes as she spoke about ticket people and *agboro* people who she said would sometimes “collect our money and by force people to sleep (have sex) with them.”. She did not offer further explanation about forced sex but I was later led to understand that she had once been sexually assaulted by *agboro* people.

6. Kola

Kola was a nine-year-old Yoruba boy from the South West. He lived with his parents and siblings in the military barracks. His father was a soldier and his mother owned a shop within the market vicinity where she sold food stuff and assorted cold drinks. Kola is number three in birth order and had been selling for his mother since he was aged six. Kola, who sold cold soft drinks for his mother, said he always performed double vending shifts especially on days when school was not in session and when pupils had finished school exams. He spoke nervously fearing that his mother would reprimand him for speaking to “someone I don’t know...who is not of any benefit to me”.

7. Blessing

³⁷ A specially prepared home made non alcoholic drink made from flowers and plants, grown mainly in the Northern part of the country. It has the same colour as Ribena or drinks made from blackcurrants.

³⁸ These would be called smoked prawns in the UK

Blessing was a 12-year-old girl from a non-Igbo speaking part of the country. She lived with her parents in the army Barracks. Her father was a soldier and her mother owned a shop in a nearby taxi park where she sold fresh vegetables. She had one brother and two sisters and was number three in birth order. Blessing, who was selling 'pure water' on the day of interview, had been selling wares for her mother for more than two years. Blessing was very articulate, outspoken and showed great enthusiasm as she narrated her vending experiences for a good length of time. She was one of those who encouraged more children to participate in the interviews.

8. Christiana

Christiana was a 12 year old girl from the middle belt area of the country. She was selling roasted peanuts and biscuits on the day of interview and had been vending for more than three years. Christiana was number two in a family of four with one brother and two sisters. They all lived in the city with their mother while her father lived somewhere else with his other wife and children. Her mother, a seamstress, owned a hair braiding salon in an adjoining market which she also used for clothes alterations and the sale of second-hand clothes. Christiana was articulate and enthusiastic as she narrated her vending experiences. She spoke with a sense of pride and contentment about her vending skills and the problems involved in vending such as market fluctuations, noisy and filthy trading environments, frequent harassment from 'ticket people' and how *agboro* boys called names at female vendors and would sometimes touch them and make sexual overtures towards them.

9. Adamu

Adamu was a 12-year old boy from one of the Northern states of Nigeria. He came from a family of four, had two brothers and one sister and lived with his parents in the army barracks. He had been an itinerant vendor for more than two years and had sold various seasonal wares but he was selling 'pure water' on the day of interview.

10. Godspower

Godspower was an eleven-year-old boy from one of the oil rich states in the South - South geo-political zone of the country. He sold peeled oranges, bananas and

assorted seasonal fruits. He lived with his parents in the army barracks. His father was a soldier and his mother occasionally sold wares at home. Godspower had two brothers and four sisters and was number three in the family. He had been a vendor for a long time but sold mainly at weekends, holiday periods and occasionally after school when he had no examinations or school assignments. Godspower narrated how he was once knocked down and almost run over by a fleeing motor cyclist as he ran after a moving vehicle to “sell market and collect my money”. He showed me his bandaged face and deep cuts on legs and arms, the injuries he had sustained in that incident. He was very active and excited about taking part in the interview which ended abruptly as he dashed off to sell his bananas. The interview continued at another venue two and half hours later.

11. Justin.

Justin was a nine-year old boy from another North central area of the country. He lived in the city with his father and step mother for whom he sold pure water. He spoke about his step mother’s small baby boy whom his father always referred to as his junior brother³⁹. Looking so frail and fragile with his basin of pure water on his head, Justin spoke fearfully and burst out crying in the middle of the interview. He specifically asked me to buy him a drink of coke and some biscuits because he was hungry and tired but could not go home because he still had so much to sell. He repeatedly mentioned that he would like to go back to live with his biological mother.

12. Paul

Paul was a fourteen-year-old boy from another middle belt region of the country who sold pure water for his mother on the day of interview. He lived with his parents, had six siblings and was number three in birth order. He spoke disparagingly about his experience as a house-help with an unrelated guardian and how he had run away because of maltreatment by his guardian’s wife. Paul had then returned to his parents.

³⁹ Justin’s father is also the father of this baby

13. Eka

Eka was a sixteen-year-old girl from the South- South geo-political zone of the country. Her father was a police officer and her mother was a petty trader. She came from a family of eight and was number three in birth order and lived in the Police barracks with her parents and siblings except for her older sister who was already married and living elsewhere. Eka sold groundnuts for her mother and had been a vendor for many years.

14. Nkechi

NK, as she preferred to be called, spoke enthusiastically with great ideas and expectations. She was a 15-year-old Igbo girl from a neighbouring state in the South-east geo-political zone. Nkechi lived with her parents and was the only female child and number five in a family of seven. Her father was a retired soldier while her mother was a petty trader. Nkechi spoke profusely and positively about her vending experiences as she showed me the money she made from selling boiled eggs on the day of interview. She had been vending for up to three years.

15. Ud

Ud was a 12-year-old boy who occasionally combined wheel barrow pushing with vending wares. He lived with his mother and five siblings (two sisters and three brothers) and was the fourth child of his mother. His father had another wife with whom he lived together with their children in a nearby part of the city. Ud exuded a strong sense of determination as he spoke about being successful and being able to make plenty of money for himself and his mother. Ud said that he neither drank alcohol nor smoked cigarette and was not into any drug taking habits but added that he was aware that many barrow boys in the park engaged in such habits. He spoke about people who made the motor park their home and happily showed me the money that he made from wheel barrow pushing on the day of interview and said it was a good day for him because he had made about N300⁴⁰.

16. Justina

⁴⁰ Equivalent of £1-15sterling

Justina was a six-year-old girl who sold fresh spinach for her mother. She looked frail and dirty as she walked about sluggishly as though her basket of vegetables was weighing her down. Her mother also sold vegetables and food stuff in the same market. Justina was in the company of two other girls of the same age who sold cashew nuts and bananas respectively. At first, Justina was full of smiles and showed keen interest to be interviewed but no sooner had she mentioned her name than her mother suddenly appeared and whisked her away, scolding and hitting her head as she pulled her away and warned me to stay away from her children. Justina looked back at me and cried as she was being taken away and her two friends also walked away without saying a word.

17. Chinemerem

Chinemerem was a 17-year-old girl who sold old and used newspapers for her maternal aunt with whom she had lived since her father died many years ago. Her mother lived in the village with some of her siblings. She sold newspapers everyday except on Sundays and made up to N500 (£2) on a good market day. She recounted an ugly incident with revenue collectors who had beaten her and confiscated her newspapers.

18. Sandra

A 16-year-old girl from the South - South geo-political zone, lived with her parents and siblings in the army barracks. She did not vend wares on the day of interview, but had been involved in street vending till lately when her parents asked her to discontinue. Sandra drew attention and applause from children and passers-by as she spoke strongly against female street vending and the commercial fostering of children.

19. Masiri

Masiri was a 15-year-old Igbo girl who sold kerosene for her older sister. She came from a family of nine and was number seven. She lived with her parents, and her mother was a retired school teacher. Masiri spoke proudly about her 'privileged status' and about her older siblings who were in higher institutions of learning. She

had a novel by her side and said she enjoys reading novels. Masiri's ambition was to become a lawyer so that she could "represent children who suffered maltreatment."

20. Emeka

Emeka was a 14- year-old boy from one of the South Eastern states who was selling pastries and cakes on the day of interview. Although his parents were alive and lived in his home village, Emeka lived with his elder brother in the city. Emeka came from a family of nine and was the sixth in birth order. He sold wares in one of the big gas stations along the motorway, where I interviewed him, as his strategy is to evade constant harassment from motor park touts, drivers and revenue collectors.

21. Damian

Damian was a 13- year-old boy who was pushing wheel barrow in the motor park on the day of interview. He lived with his father, a plumber, and mother, who sold foodstuff in a nearby market. Damian was second in birth order and from a family of five with two sisters and two brothers. Damian spoke extensively about his initial experiences of vending and barrow pushing, recalling how he and his colleagues were received into the union and given membership numbers and identity cards with the assurance that "the union will help us if we have problem with anybody". He also talked about his enrolment in the barrow union's daily and weekly money saving schemes and how he had saved up a lot of money.

22. Godwin

Godwin was a 13- year-old vendor and barrow pusher. He lived in the army barracks with his elder brother who was in military service. He started pushing wheel barrow out of his own volition but said that his brother encouraged him a lot. He proudly showed off his brand new wheel barrow that his brother had bought for him in recognition of his efforts, and he spoke excitedly about his brother's support.

23. David

David was a seven- year-old boy from one of the states in the North central geo-political zone who sold yam tubers for his mother. On the day of interview, David

was still wearing his school uniform and was carrying three small yam tubers in his woven basket in the company of two male friends, who sold yam tubers as well. His mother also sold yams in her shop within the market vicinity. David was number four in a family of five and had three brothers and one younger sister, all of whom were involved in selling yams for their mother.

24. Chizoba.

She was a 16- year old girl from a nearby local community. She lived with her parents and siblings in the city and was the third child in a family of six with two older siblings and three younger ones. She was from a closely knit Christian family and her father, a furniture-maker, had only one wife (her mother) and they all lived happily together. Her two older siblings lived in two different cities outside Enugu, but maintained regular contact. One was a student at university and the other was apprenticed to a patent medicine dealer. Chizoba spoke with pride about her family's popularity from selling cooked breakfast meals around their neighbourhood for well over 10 years. She gave a detailed account of her daily routine (reported in the next section: A typical day in the life of a child street vendor) and spoke with ease about her over four years twice-a-day vending experience, the competition between child vendors and older traders, and how they hustled for customers.

As these profiles show, all 24 children lived with and sold wares for parents or related guardians to whom they gave daily accounts of their vending activities and income for safe keeping. 18 have four or more biological siblings and lived across a number of households, i.e., they lived apart and were being raised in different homes by different guardians in what I call 'scattered families' and this may have impacted on their perceptions of vending and work, a matter which I explore in chapter five. (See appendix 7 for a quick overview of the children: who they lived with and their educational levels.)



Fig 4: A child vendor selling wares in wheel barrow

4.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has given a full description of the research context and the participants, setting the scene for the ensuing discussion of the data collected. In moving into this, three themes can be highlighted. Firstly, marketplaces play a central role in the social and economic structure of Nigeria. Secondly, the markets are organised even though they are noisy and give the appearance of chaos and lawlessness and thirdly, children are present in the markets at all times of the day and in the night time market operations. The marketplace is alive and vibrant with sights and sounds from traders displaying their wares, laughing, joking, pushing and pulling one another, speaking on top of their voices, ringing bells, shouting and screaming and making all sorts of sounds to attract prospective buyers while itinerant vendors scurry around chasing after people on the streets and in moving vehicles to make sales. All of this is accompanied by the sound of loud music from music shops and mobile vending vans in the background. While genuine vendors and customers move around exchanging

pleasantries and haggling prices, market miscreants are seen playing snooker, drinking and smoking and laughing boisterously while pick pockets moved around looking for unsuspecting victims to make their day.

The next chapter will present children's perceptions and stories about vending and work in such an environment.

CHAPTER FIVE: CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF STREET VENDING AND WORK

5.1.INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the different ways in which children think about what they are doing in the marketplaces, and discusses what they said to me about “selling market” and work. These conversations suggest that there is a difference between how they perceive vending and how they perceive work. I have referred to these as their stories. The term, stories, is used here to highlight the fact that these accounts were gathered at various places over a period of time during several meetings and the chapter seeks to report these conversations in the children’s words. I start first by examining how they originally became involved in the itinerant sale of wares, how they learned to sell in the market, who they sold for, what they sold, how they decided what to sell and their reasons for selling in the market, a practice which the children call “selling market”.

5.2.LEARNING TO “SELL MARKET”

Data from interviews reveal that all 24 children in this study lived with and sold wares for a related guardian that is a parent or an adult relative, the majority of who were also involved in trading, either in the same market environment or at home or in nearby marketplaces. When asked what they were doing, their responses were almost uniform. Nkiru (9) said, “I dey sell market”. Some mentioned who they sold for, e.g.Useni (11) who sold wares for his mother responded, “I dey sell for my mama”, and Emeka (14), who lived with and sold wares for his older brother replied, “Na my relative I dey sell for”. Chinenye (10) who sold sachet water for her aunt also said, “I dey sell for my aunty⁴¹”.

⁴¹ Aunty (aunt) in this instance means her maternal female relative with whom she lived but this is different from the general use of the term as a mark of respect and politeness by younger persons when referring to an older unrelated female guardian, teacher, customer or anybody with whom they may or may not have any biological or kinship ties. They also referred to me as ‘aunty’ when they wanted my attention.

Though they vended wares for their relations, they personally identified with what they sold as belonging to them. For instance, when I enquired again about who owned what they sold, many said, “It is ours” and three said, “It is mine”. Nk’s (15) reply captures their unanimous response:

I am not selling it for anybody, it is mine, it is for my mother.

All but two children (22 out of 24) said that they were accountable to the matriarchs (mothers, step mother and aunts) of the house. At various times in the market, I observed some children go back and forth to their guardians’ shops to either replenish their stock or for short breaks or to keep their earnings safely, and when trouble broke out either between children and their peers or with others in the marketplace, the children ran back to their guardians’ shops for protection. This implies adult (maternal) involvement, but also suggests that the children did not have full control of their trading activities and income. Discussions about the gender implications of maternal supervision and support are in chapter seven.

5.2.1 Beginnings: Introduction to “Selling Market”

Children gave varied accounts of their introduction into street trading. Some said that they learned from other vendors in the market to whom they were introduced by their guardians, and others said they learned gradually and indirectly from their guardians as toddlers. Two children said that they embarked on selling wares out of their own volition but were prompted by their friends and school mates. Though they decided by themselves, they obtained approval from their guardians who provided initial capital and wares, regular supervision and replenished their stock whenever necessary.

The majority of the children (16 of them) were prompted and informally introduced to vending at a very early age by their mothers. Because most of the mothers were

traders, they took their younger children along to their shops and markets and in the process, the children gradually learned the basics of trading by observation and assistance inside their parents' shops. Eventually they began vending itinerantly when they were considered mature, independent and strong enough to move into the streets either on their own or in the company of other child vendors within the marketplace. This was Josephat's (14) experience as he described:

I started when I was very small ...when I started schooling newly ...I used to follow my mama to the market.

Similarly, Christiana (12) said,

When we were tiny, me and my smaller siblings used to stay in our mother's shade to sell. It was in 2002 that I started selling on my own.

This was the same experience for Useni (11), Godspower (11) Josephat (14) Paul (14) Nk (15), Eka (16) and Chizoba (16). Their stories were almost the same with little variation, and the common strand in their accounts was that each started selling wares for and with their parents as toddlers.

Adamu (12) recounted how he and his siblings were drawn into selling chilled soft drinks, sweets, chewing gums and biscuits because some of their neighbourhood friends who sold such wares always had "small money for hand" and helped themselves to some extra biscuits and sweets whenever they wanted. Like Christiana, Adamu and his siblings initially sold from their mother's shop until they were considered fit and able enough to venture into the wider marketplace, having made friends and acquaintances and demonstrated enough confidence. He spoke about his mother's initial promptings and encouragement:

My mama buy the first crate. I finished selling that one and gave her the money...she buy another one ..., na so we do am till my money big.

His mother no longer replenished his wares because he had already assumed responsibility for making his purchases by himself but he still kept his spare wares and bigger cold box (for chilling his drinks) in her shop and always returned to restock. Speaking with a sense of pride and responsibility, Adamu spoke of how he assisted his younger siblings with sales and purchases but always under his mother's guidance and support. These narratives suggest that the children were informally apprenticed and tutored by their mothers and that each of them has since been trading and helping to coach their younger siblings and peers.

Some children said that they were specifically asked by their guardians. For instance, Chinemerem (17), who sold used newspapers for her aunt, said, "My aunty say make I follow her sell". Some children were introduced by their guardians to other child vendors who gave them an informal orientation to the market and facilitated a smooth induction into vending. This was the experience of Chinenye (10), who lived with and sold pure water for her aunt, a trader. Pointing at her two companions who sold pure water as well, she recalled,

The first time me and my aunty came [to the park]...she gave me pure water... and told me to follow them to sell.

Chinenye was introduced by her aunt to her two associates whom she later discovered lived in the same neighbourhood. She did not know them initially but said that they got on well together, moved and sold wares together and subsequently became friends and vending companions. Chinenye said that she did not have any prior experience of vending before coming to live with her aunt in the city but was quick to catch up through the help of her vending associates and support from her aunt, who encouraged her and provided constant supervision. She always went back to her aunt's shop for short breaks and to replenish her stock.

Unlike Chinenye, Nkiru (9), another female vendor who also sold pure water in the company of her three female companions, had experienced vending much earlier before coming to live with her aunt in the city. She told how she and her siblings occasionally sold wares for her mother in front of their house and sometimes in their

local market. Because of her previous experience in her rural village, her aunt allowed her to join other child vendors in the motor park without further induction. Those three girls were her initial contacts and mentors and they have since remained friends.

Children always moved in groups of two and three and provided friendship, mutual support, mentoring and solidarity to one another. Speaking further about her initial experiences with her sales associates and how they shared jokes and helped one another, Nkiru remarked,

They are my friends, [pointing to the three girls with her]
me and them sell our market together ...they are nice.

Though Nkiru had previously experienced vending in her rural home area, her orientation into “selling market” in the city was given by her three friends, who showed her round the adjoining streets and surrounding marketplaces. She narrated how they assisted her to sell off her water on her first day and on subsequent days.

Grace (14) also recounted that the prompting originally came from her mother but her induction was by her two female sales associates to whom she owed her initial trading successes. They not only showed her round but shared their snacks and ensured that she sold off all her wares on her first day. According to her, they

Helped me to sell all my water even before theirs finished.
Me and dem follow waka...They bought something and
gave me to eat.

They had remained friends since then and always shared their stories and experiences with one another.

Some children ventured into vending on their own initiative but with their parents’ consent and support. This was the experience of Ud (12), as he recounted.

I asked people...no, someone showed me Uche. I followed him and he showed me what to do; ...The two of us [points to another male companion of his] followed Uche... he carry us go everywhere in the market to see how other people are doing... All of us dey move together.

Ud, who said that he did not want to “kill time” (stay idle) at home during one of his school vacations, also said that his mother supported his plan to “do anything that will be useful to me”. He met another boy from his neighbourhood who was equally interested in vending. While consulting with other vendors who provided information and guidance, they both met Uche, an older vendor, who gave them a quick tour of the market and an informal orientation into vending and barrow pushing and introduced them to other vendors. Recounting his first day in the market and how they learned the skills, Ud further said,

We followed him and just learned it at once, e no hard. E dey easy to follow somebody, like someone who knows the market...if not, things go hard for you.

Explaining how they learned by observation, Ud points to some younger children, who were pushing alongside some bigger boys and said,

Look those smaller children! They are new, they are still learning... Nothing dey there! You just look and follow...e no hard! If you follow a good person, he will show you the way and explain everything to you well, well.

Comparing vending and wheel barrow pushing with carpentry, Ud said that vending was no big deal (“Nothing dey!”). Even though he and his vending associate did not have prior experience or requisite skills, they learned very quickly by watching and pushing along with an experienced vendor who explained everything to them. Their introduction to street vending was brisk and instantaneous and they did not undergo any formal training or apprenticeship⁴² prior to their start. It was not difficult (“E no

⁴² From personal observation and informal conversations with people in the markets, informal apprenticeship is usually a period of tutelage into a trade or craftwork whereby a novice worker spends a specified length of time, between 1 – 6 or more years, depending on the nature of the

hard”) but was based on their determination and observational ability, Ud further explained, and Uche’s assistance facilitated their acceptance and admission into the barrow union⁴³.

Another boy, Damian (13), who occasionally combined vending and barrow pushing, like Ud, recounted a similar experience. His father was a plumber and his mother sold fruits and vegetables in a nearby market. Having obtained approval and financial support from their parents, Damian and his school friends also decided to embark on a money making venture out of their own volition. This was during a protracted school teachers’ strike which led to the closure of all primary and secondary schools in the state for almost four months. Narrating how he learned, Damian said,

E get some barrow boys wey dey live near our yard... we ask dem where they get their barrow. They carry us go there. ...they told the barrow man that they know us very well... before the man come gree release his barrows to us. ...after we and them follow to push.

Damian’s entry was voluntary but prompted by his school friends, and like Ud, his first experience was facilitated by older vendors in his neighbourhood who knew the market fairly well. Initially, he and his colleagues did not own a wheel barrow and needed to hire one for the day. The older vendors took them to a barrow leasing shop and stood in for them before they could rent the barrows they used for the day. The process of renting a barrow, explained Damian, requires that they undergo an

business, under an established trader to acquaint him or herself with the rubrics of the business until such a time when he/she is considered to have learned and gained enough skills and knowledge to establish his own trade. The conditions and terms of reference are usually agreed between the trader, the novice (apprentice) and his guardian(s) or family either in a written or verbal manner.

⁴³ The barrow union is an association of all wheel barrow pushers [children and adult], who operate within certain marketplaces, whether on a part time or full time basis. New entrants are required to register with the association before being allowed to operate. They are required to buy drinks and pay a small amount of money as customary requirements for official registration and membership. Union members contribute money regularly in the form of dues and levies and the union oversees the welfare of its members. Each member has a registration number that is boldly written on his wheel barrow or on a wooden board hanging on the barrow and members are often identified by this number. In the case of any problem with or complaint against any barrow member, one only needs to mention the number on the barrow and the executive can easily identify who the person is.

identification check by presenting a credible guarantor, usually a parent or close relative that is known to the barrow lender and depositing an agreed amount of money as a surety. They did not go through that rigorous process because their mentors were well known customers to the barrow owner. The mentors guaranteed them and the barrow owner waived off the requirement for a surety.

Ud, Damian and Chinenye's accounts underscore the importance of peer support and peer orientation by more experienced vendors who tutored and mentored novice vendors. Their peer mentors⁴⁴ knew the market and the trade well enough and willingly showed them round at no cost.

5.2.2 What they sold and why.

There did not seem to be any form of specialization in the wares which children sold. My observation revealed that they sold a wide variety of wares including seasonal goods and frozen foodstuff, cooked foods and snacks, sachet water and soft drinks, second hand clothes, toys, paper, pen and pencils, eraser and sharpeners, old newspapers for wrapping foods, and an assortment of carrier bags of various shapes, colours and sizes.

Children displayed considerable flexibility in what they sold and in where and how they conducted sales. Apart from Chinemerem (17) who regularly sold only used newspapers, others sold various wares at different times of the day. For instance, many sold breakfast foods in the morning, pure water and cold soft drinks, ice cream and yoghurt, fresh fruits (peeled oranges, paw-paw, pineapples etc) in the afternoon and later in the evening I saw the same child sell fresh vegetables, cooking condiments or some other wares. When I asked how they decided on what to sell and why, many said it depended on what their guardians had in stock and what they could afford. Chizoba (16) said, "It depends on what our mother bought...whatever is in season".

⁴⁴ Another young vendors they can trust to learn from, someone who is willing and kind enough to show them round the market



Fig. 5 Street vending children selling different wares

Some, particularly the older ones, said it depended on weather conditions such as seasonal and temperature changes and on demand and supply. For example,

referring to selling in the dry season when people would want chilled drinks, Paul (14) said,

Like now, market moves well for people who are selling something like ice cream or yoghurt or mineral or pure water that is dead [very chilled].

Corroborating this, Eka (16) said,

Iced water and cold mineral sell well in the afternoons when the sun is high...people want something very cold to cool their bodies.

Also explaining why she sold different wares at different times of the day, Nk (15) said,

Fresh vegetables and soup ingredients sell well in the evening...that is when people buy what they will use to cook night food.

Like Eka, most children knew at what times of the day and week the market would operate to full capacity. Sandra, (16), said that Saturday was her best and busiest day because she made more sales then:

If you come here on Saturday, you no go see road for market. Everywhere dey full from morning till we go and market dey move well, well.

Though many sold what their parents provided, some alternated between professional wheel barrow pushing on certain days and selling wares on other days of the week. Explaining his involvement in wheel barrow pushing and “selling market”, Paul (14) said that he pushes wheel barrow only “on days when market is not good”.

Emeka (14) said that he alternates between vending and wheel barrow pushing only on Thursday evenings when long distance traders return from their weeklong business trips.

Traders from Hausaland⁴⁵ come back from Northern markets⁴⁶ ...and all the big lorries bring in plenty market

He also explained that wheel barrow pushing services are usually in higher demand on Thursday evenings and they make more money from off-loading vehicles and carrying wares to various nearby warehouses and food depots till late into the night. Many children stayed as late as 10 pm and I observed them do this on several occasions. For Emeka and his cohort, Thursday evening is their best day.

Children's mastery of the times and tide of the market is demonstrated in their being able to tell what days of the week and times of the day their trade would flourish, knowing what items sold more quickly, and the appropriate times and seasons when demand for certain wares and services are higher. By being flexible and responsive to the demands of their trade, children avail themselves of opportunities as they arise. This suggests that children had an in-depth knowledge of vending and a sound judgment about market conditions.

5.2.3 Reasons for “selling market”

Children became involved in vending for various reasons. Some said that they wanted to make a contribution to enhance their family incomes (poverty) and others said they wanted free money to spend at school as they wished without requesting from parents (financial independence). Sandra (16) said that she did not want to be left out. She wanted to be like her vending schoolmates and friends who told positive stories of their experiences and always seemed to know “all the happenings in town” (peer pressure). But a reason that seemed unanimous in many accounts is the fulfilment of family expectation and family pressure. Fourteen children said that

⁴⁵ A general name used to refer to the states in the Northern region of the country where the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group reside. The region grows fresh fruits and vegetables such as carrots, cabbage, sweet peppers, beetroot, tomatoes, onions, peas, green beans and salad items in large quantities for sale and distribution to other parts of the country.

⁴⁶ Children make more money from carrying loads for big time traders when they returned from trans-regional business trips in the North and this happens mostly on Thursday evenings.

their guardians specifically requested their assistance and that they could not refuse. Nk (15) captured this point beautifully as she rhetorically asked:

How can you say 'no' if your mother asks you to help her
in what she is doing?

The general impression that I gathered from their accounts is that assisting their guardians in whatever they do was part of their responsibility and normal expectation as good and responsible children. Those were Christiana's (12) feelings when she said,

Everybody has something to do! Male or female... Good children should help their parents do whatever they tell dem, even if na to carry gravel.

Reiterating this opinion, Sandra (16) remarked,

How you no go help! Are they not your parents? Why are you their child? Anybody who calls herself a good child must help the people who born them.

What children seem to be saying here is that they have a responsibility to their parents; they are expected to perform certain roles as part of this responsibility and assist their parents and family whenever, wherever and in whatever capacity or circumstance they are required to do so.

In contrast, for Paul (14), Useni (11) and Damian (13), their reason was because they wanted to get away from the strict supervision of guardians or older siblings and relations, and enjoy some street freedom and excitement with their friends and schoolmates. Explaining his position, Useni said,

It is better for me to go out and sell something than stay for house. If you dey for house, our aunty must find you something to do, her message no dey finish!

And Paul concurred,

To sell market better pass! ... Nobody go worry you to wash plate or say make you sweep house.

A combination of choices and reasons led many into street trading. For instance, apart from his desire to be financially independent and to engage in something productive and useful during their forced holiday, another compelling reason why Damian (13) embarked on vending and barrow pushing was because:

One of my small sisters passed common entrance⁴⁷, I want them [his parents] to use my money to buy her school uniforms or sandal ...They are suffering too much for us.

Being the oldest child and pushed by a sense of responsibility, Damian genuinely felt the urge to assist his parents by contributing financially towards his younger sister's education. His reasons are mainly due to poverty, family pressure and a genuine desire to assist his already impoverished and heavily burdened parents. These are very adult rationalisations that spurred him on to undertake street vending. He and his friends were registered in the wheel barrow pushers' daily money savings scheme (*isusu*)⁴⁸ and had saved a substantial amount since becoming members. They proudly showed me their daily savings card but would not disclose how much money they make in a day and how much they had saved up.

Another reason for vending was to raise money for personal spending on an immediate personal need or, as Emeka (14) puts it, "buy for myself clothes and shoes for Christmas". Paul likes to "have money in my hand for school"; while Chizoba (16) wanted to contribute to alleviate her mother's financial burden so she could "pay our lesson fees [and] my WAEC fees⁴⁹". For seven others including Masiri (15), they wanted to keep busy and ward off boredom, and "selling market"

⁴⁷ Qualifying entrance examination into junior secondary school.

⁴⁸ Traditional savings scheme also known as '*isusu or akawo*'. Various traders' unions within the marketplace have an informal daily or weekly rotational money contributions and savings schemes. Many such schemes exist and participation is optional – members reserve the right to choose which to join, the amount of money they can comfortably contribute and when to opt out. There is no official law guiding this arrangement. The practice is common but does not in any way stop members from making formal personal banking arrangements.

⁴⁹ WAEC means West African Examination Council – This body coordinates the final GSCE ordinary level examinations for graduation from secondary schools. Candidates are required to register for this examination for a fee at the end of their third year in senior secondary school.

provided a very good opportunity to be gainfully engaged because “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop”, Masiri concluded.

5.3 WHAT CHILDREN SAID ABOUT VENDING AND WORK.

This section illustrates what children say about the multifaceted way in which vending weaves into their lives and how they talk about helping and working as two separate things.

5.3.1 “Selling market” as helping relatives.

When I went round asking children to tell me what they were doing in the marketplace, why they were there and their understanding of what they were doing, most of them looked at me in astonishment. Some asked if I could not see what they were doing. Christiana (12), Damian (13) and Nkiru (9) gave the same answer, “Nothing, just selling market”, and they said this in a rather dismissive manner, as though selling market was nothing serious or important to think about. When I asked if they considered selling market in the motor park as work, they gave me some more curious looks and reactions which seemed to suggest that they were thinking seriously about my question. Three children considered vending as work, two were undecided, one did not reply and 18 said it was not work but “help”. Among those who did not consider vending as work was Masiri (15), who said, “Selling market for my own person is not work”. Their responses varied but the most important and unanimous reason why many did not consider vending as work was because they did it for a parent, an older brother or a close relative who they lived with and who provided for them. This is best illustrated by Emeka (14) and Paul’s (14) responses:

Helping my relation, my relation that is feeding me and paying my school fees, is not work.

(Emeka, 14)

Looking startled and shrugging his shoulders, Paul (14) rhetorically queried,

How can you say that selling market is work? I am doing it for myself, it is not for someone else.

Chinenye (10), who sold pure water for her aunt, remarked,

Selling pure water is nothing, it doesn't mean that I am working, I am just helping.

She acknowledged that the money from vending was useful for the family but did not consider selling pure water or doing any other chores for her aunt as work.

She does not pay me. She is my aunty, my real relation. I live with her...she owns what I am selling.

Chinenye did not consider herself as working because she was not specifically employed nor remunerated financially as one would expect from an employer or "someone who is not my relative". She said that she sold wares for her relative, her aunt who she lived with, who treated her well and provided her food, accommodation and schooling. By her reckoning, selling wares and doing other chores were her ways of helping in her aunt's family but she did not consider those as a significant contribution nor as work.

Also basing her argument on the kinship relationship which she shared with her aunt, Nkiru (9), reiterated that vending is not work but help because,

I am selling it for my aunty whom I live with...She is my real aunty...she does not maltreat me.

Her reason was not only because her guardian was a blood relation, but that she appreciated her aunt's efforts and being treated with kindness by her.

5.3.2 "Selling market" as a likeable activity

Children's understanding and explanations were not only based on ideas about kinship and kindness from their guardian, but also because they liked vending. Paul's (14) response demonstrates this better. He said,

I like what I am doing! Nobody by-forced me to do it! I came here with my hands and legs. It is what we do for ourselves...I have no problem, my market is moving well

For Paul, who once lived and sold wares for an unrelated guardian as a house-boy, selling market for his parents was not only a personal choice but a pleasurable experience. Paul said that he never liked vending when he lived as a servant and sold wares for his unrelated guardians because

There was nothing between me and dem, they did not regard me as anything. I was their *nwa boyi*⁵⁰

Selling market for him then was “real work” and meant punishment and maltreatment but as at the time of interview, Paul was no longer a house boy. He lived with his parents and selling wares for them was not work because he liked it, more so, because he chose to do it by himself. Like most children, Paul did not consider himself as working because he lived with his parents and it was his duty (not a contractual obligation) to help them. He further explained that the income from vending added value to his impoverished family and they showed him kindness and appreciated his efforts.

5.3.3 “Selling market” as informal education

Some children said that vending afforded them opportunities for informal learning; they acquired basic vocational and educational skills and for this reason, they did not perceive vending as work. For instance, Kola, (9) who sold cold soft drinks for his mother, did not regard selling market as work because “I am learning how to sell and give change to people”. And for Christiana, (12):

To sell market is not work; it is like school...we are learning something useful, we are learning how to do business.

⁵⁰ □ A servant, house-help or a house boy

Chizoba (16), Eka (16) and Nk (15) stated that vending helped them to learn how to negotiate prices and that giving change to customers sharpened their arithmetical ability and enhanced their school performance in subjects such as mathematics, accounting and book keeping and for this reason they did not regard vending as work. According to Eka,

Wetin dey for maths? No be to collect money and give change, that's what we do here, abi?

(Translation: *what does maths involve? Is it not to sell and collect money and give out change in return? That's what we do here, isn't it?*).

Nk (15) equates vending to mathematics and explained that anyone who knows how to sell will certainly do well in maths. She argued her point confidently with a simple demonstration which won her loud applause from other vendors. She holds up some Naira notes in her hands and turning to her two vending colleagues, said,

You sell N5 market, you collect N10 and you give N5 change? Ehe now! Is this not Maths? It is the same thing.

This simple but apt demonstration was to support her claim that experiences from vending helps children to add and subtract figures at school with considerable ease. They argued that vending exposes them to many learning opportunities and that any activity that bestows such positive values as acquisition of knowledge, development of business skills and competencies for their future life, in addition to the benefits such an activity brings their families, could not be viewed as work despite the difficulties and risks involved. Moreover, many said that they enjoyed “selling market for road” and the benefits from it.

5.3.4 “Selling market” as being a good child

There was a unanimous agreement that unquestioning loyalty and submission to parental demands and societal expectations were an essential part of being a good child. This was aptly expressed by Godspower (11) when he said:

Good children should always obey their parents and help them to sell market

And Masiri (15) comments,

A child who calls himself a good child cannot say no when he is told to do something.

Josephat (14) also remarked:

Helping to sell things for my mother or my relative shows that I am a good child.

Josephat did not see anything “wrong or difficult” about “children helping their mother”, which is what street trading means for him. As far as he was concerned, selling wares for a guardian was not work but help and a responsibility which he was expected to fulfil as a child. As noted earlier, traditionally, as part of their upbringing, children are expected to assist their parents in various activities depending on their capacity. For the children in this study, vending was one of those activities and many saw their active participation in vending as their legitimate right and opportunity to demonstrate that they are loyal, well behaved and well trained children.

Useni, an 11 year old boy who sold ‘zobo’ for his mother, expressed shock at being asked how he feels about selling market and whether he considers that as work. He queried,

How can somebody say that I am working because I dey sell market for my mama wey born me? It is not true, Na wa o o!

Shaking his head vehemently and gesticulating with his hands, Useni emphatically disagreed with implication of my question. He also described how his mother and aunt showed appreciation and encouragement whenever he came back from the market and would always say that he is a good child. For that reason he strove

harder each day to meet his target⁵¹ after which he obtained positive rewards in the form of compliments, encouragement and cash. By his reckoning, appreciation and compliments from his mother and aunt reinforced his feelings of being a “sensible child and well trained” and informed his opinion that selling market for a related guardian is not work.

Many said they were aware that their livelihoods and continued personal development depended enormously on their parents and guardians, and that tradition demands and expects that they assist and comply with parental instructions. Since the majority of their parents and guardians were also traders, they could not refuse to assist. Besides, their guardians appreciated their efforts and assistance in different ways and that also boosted the children’s positive self image and views about selling market.

5.3.5 “Selling market” as enjoying a social meeting place

Apart from the financial benefits and learning opportunities from vending, the social opportunities of meeting people, making friends and being part of the attraction in the marketplace was another reason why many said that they enjoyed vending and did not consider it as work. This was Blessing’s opinion:

Video people, people who preach, those who sell medicine, magicians, money doublers ... all of them come here... we see many things for here. ...is it the daily fights between traders or between bus drivers and their conductors?

Blessing’s face beamed with enthusiasm as she spoke about these exciting social opportunities. Her enthusiasm and positive views about vending stem from meeting and watching various people and events in the vending arena, meeting friends and establishing new relationships, participating in movies (as passers-by or as members

⁵¹ Children said their guardians set them daily targets of selling off all their wares and bringing back a certain amount of money on each given day

of the crowd) and being paid for that, and more importantly, learning about events ahead of others. For her, the marketplace was a “happening place” that provided a non-stop entertainment and sight seeing. Godwin (13) likes it because “There is always something to watch every day”. He alluded to the fights and hot exchanges between traders and motor park workers as entertaining but, like many, Godwin did not consider those as problems.

Sandra and Chinemerem also spoke about the fights but discounted them as an integral part of the fun. They both said that they enjoyed vending around the motor parks and market environment because “it is like a cinema” (Sandra, 16); “that’s why I like coming here”, concurred Chinemerem (17). In summary, their views are that the marketplace provides social and learning opportunities, the goings-on provide them with things to discuss and laugh about in their small sales groups and at home, and all of these things make vending exciting and worthwhile.

Despite the exciting opportunities and positive outcomes, some children acknowledged that vending can be tough and dangerous. They told stories about thieves and child kidnappers but Blessing (12) concluded that the exciting incidents outweigh the negatives and make all the difference. Eka (16) said,

We see all those things but nothing spoil In short, Gariki is a place where light shines on top... Truly, this place cures hypertension...everybody goes home feeling good; even if your market did not sell well ...you want to come back another day.

For her, the market place was a panacea that made street trading less burdensome and exciting. It was a meeting point and a melting point, always bustling with activities and providing opportunities for fun and play. She admitted the unpleasant incidents and problems children encounter regularly, but maintained that the stimulating environment and “side attractions”, as Grace, (14) puts it, lightened up the drudgery of vending in a therapeutic way “cure for hypertension” and made them look forward to another visit.

For some children, street vending means being responsible and having control over ones trading activities. Speaking with a sense of pride and achievement as the owner of her business, Christiana, (12), claimed that vending was not work because

I am not selling for anybody; the money I make is mine. I sell my market the way I like.

She also said that vending was a leisure activity which she undertook at her own convenience. According to her, the decision over what to sell, what days to sell and for how long was entirely hers because she owned her wares and the money she made belonged to her, though under her mother's supervision and guidance. Christiana's sense of ownership and control of her trading activity made her feel good and confident about herself, and influenced her positive view that vending for oneself or a relative is not work.

5.3.6 "Selling Market as Punishment, Maltreatment and Hard Work

A few children perceived vending as punishment. Justin (9) lamented that vending wares for his step mother meant "*ahuhu*" (suffering) and "*mmegbu*" (maltreatment) and further stated: "my mother will not treat me like that". He spoke about being beaten and scolded for not meeting his daily target. Justin's perception of maltreatment (injustice) and of vending was based on the fact that he is not the biological child of his step mother. His views seem to confirm the feelings of most of the children in this study about the status of househelps and their unrelated guardians. However, Justin's stories of maltreatment are debatable. Chinenye and Nkiru also spoke about being beaten and scolded by their aunts, but accepted those positively as necessary chastisements for their future development. Whether Justin's claims were genuine, false or exaggerated, what is significant are his feelings in the situation and how he himself interprets them. Whether the wider society thinks that step mothers are 'outside' or 'inside' the family nexus in relation to their step children, Justin obviously believed that his step mother was not close enough. He did not see himself as having that natural bond, like he has with his biological mother, and so perceived his step mother as a non-relative, an outsider and oppressor

and that informed his negative understanding of selling market as “*ahuhu*” and as “*mmegbu*”.

However, Ud and Adamu argued that mobile trading qualifies as work because they felt bodily aches and pains after walking long distances around various marketplaces. According to Ud (12),

I carry my market everywhere on my head ...the sun is too much... my whole body pains me, my legs and neck, everywhere.

This was evident from his weary looks and sweaty body on the day of this conversation. I noticed that many children showed signs of exhaustion towards the end of the day and there were instances when I saw some children limping and walking sluggishly back home in the company of their vending peers. At other times I saw some sitting down in a quiet corner to rest after chasing customers in moving vehicles.

Emeka (14), who lived with his brother, also complained of bodily aches and pains, saying,

My leg dey pain me everyday, the sun is too much... If na another person wey no be my relation..., I for don run go back to my mama. To sell for this hot sun no dey easy, but nothing spoil.

Emeka considered any activity that involved such amount of body aches and pains as work but still maintained that assisting his brother or a relation, who treats you with kindness and care, was not work and can never be compared with working for someone who “treats you like another person or his servant”. Emeka spoke about the kindly disposition of his brother, the rapport they shared and how well appreciated his efforts are by his brother. Many children said they related well with their guardians and enjoyed “selling market for road”.

Damian, (13) said that he felt good about his mother's appreciation of his contributions but his frequent allusions to the plight of house-helpers and their guardians suggest mistreatment, discrimination and exploitation and seem to support Justin's story.

Other children alluded to vending as suffering, punishment or maltreatment in connection with those who live with and sell for unrelated guardians, like Justin and Paul. This is best illustrated with Chizoba's (16) exclamation,

Thank God that I am not living with anybody. I am not
selling for another person!

These testimonies portray not only the thinking of Justin and Paul but those of many children in this study and their perceptions about the nature of relationships between them and adult guardians (kin or not kin). Even though most of the children in this study lived with and sold wares for their relatives and were treated kindly, some spoke about the experiences of some commercially fostered children whom they knew and that informed their allusions. Their perceptions about street trading were varied and many were articulate in conveying their stories, feelings and understandings. Some were very clear in distinguishing between vending and work while others were unsure. Their stories about vending have elements of fun, preparation for the future as well as pain. but to many, vending is help not work. What helped to distinguish between their ideas of helping or working is kinship. This is explained in the discussion section (5.6) of this chapter.

5.4 MEANINGS OF WORK.

This section describes children's perceptions of work. In contrast to what they said about vending, work means something different. Some children admitted that "selling market for road" can be challenging sometimes, but many still did not consider it as work, rather, they distinguished work as a separate activity from vending. I then sought to know what they understood as work and what activities

they regarded as work. Their understanding of work was different from that of street trading and their varied responses seemed ambivalent and contradictory. The same children who considered vending as not work also viewed vending as work.

5.4.1 Work means earning money and a source of livelihood

In their attempt to explain what work means to them, children emphasised that work means earning money. While some defined work as an activity by which one is known and identified (a profession)) others said that work denotes a practiced activity which gives meaning to someone's life. It is a full-time activity from which one makes a living and a regular source of livelihood. Josephat (14) aptly captures this view in his definition of work as

Anything someone does that will make that person to become somebody in life,...like something that gives you money.

Josephat was one of those who made ambivalent claims that vending was work because income from vending helped to sustain his family and kept him and his siblings in school. Like most children, he said that he enjoyed vending because it gave him independence and afforded him opportunities of meeting important personalities, gathering information and learning about events ahead of others. However, selling wares for his mother or a related guardian is not the same as "teaching or working in a bank, or working for government" [civil service] which Josephat considered as "real work" because the workers are "well trained... they are paid wages". For him and for others, those jobs require professional training and expertise and form the basis for a regular source of income for those who are engaged in them.

5.4.2. Work as hard, physical labour

For children like Nkiru (9) work means a regular activity, often hard and difficult, which is performed for the purpose of making money. She described it as

Something you suffer to do ... something you do all the time.

Expanding on this view, Nkiru defined work as based on the frequency and level of pain and the difficulties involved in performing certain chores. For her, “farm work, pushing wheel barrow and carrying heavy loads on the head” are examples of activities she considered as work. She sold pure water which meant carrying sachets of water on her head and trekking long distances to various marketplaces in severe weather conditions. However, she claimed, like many others, that “selling market” for her relative, who treated her with kindness and provided for her daily upkeep, was not work.

5.4.3 Work as an all consuming activity which takes time and energy

Some children defined work according to the amount of time and energy spent on tasks, whether or not the beneficiary is a relation. Masiri (15) argues that adult vendors regard themselves as working because they

Come here everyday, sit in one place and sell their market from morning till night,

And therefore child vendors are equally working because

We come here everyday after school and stay till night falls.

Also agreeing with this definition, Josephat (14) remarked,

Coming here daily no be joke, it is not a small matter... do you know the time it takes to sell market in this place? It takes something out of one's body.

He compared the amount of time and energy which he spends on street trading with the amount of time and energy which people in public service invest on their regular jobs, and further remarked,

We come here everyday and stay for long ... like those who work in the ministry.

Like Masiri, Josephat argues that children and young street vendors invest as much time and energy as adults who work in formal establishments and for that reason, he considered vending as work.

Adamu (12) also defines work in terms of this criterion:

I spend all my time ...If I am not in school, then I dey for inside market selling. ...The only time you find me at home is in the morning... or in the night after market don close.

Adamu, who hopes to set up his own business later, further argues that any activity that takes such time and energy qualifies as work.

Chinemerem (17) also agrees that spending long hours and vigour on the streets makes “selling for road” work.

What other time do you have? ...My handwork is to sell market. This place is my own office ...we come here everyday and go home when night falls.

Her claim that the motor park is her workplace, where she regularly spent a greater part of her time and life when not in school, suggests that she spent most of her time and energy selling wares in marketplaces. Her life and social contacts revolved around the marketplace and it is for this reason that she considered street trading as work. By admitting that the park is her workplace (*uno olu m*) and street trading (*aka olu m*) my occupation Chinemerem supports Josephat’s and Masiri’s argument that aggregating the amount of time and energy which children spend on the streets selling market is comparable with that which employees spend at their workplace. This makes street vending work in its own right, irrespective of whether it is done for a fee or not, or for a related or unrelated guardian.

5.4.4 Work as doing chores for an unrelated guardian

Some children perceived street trading as work if it was performed for an unrelated guardian. For example, Blessing (12), who lived with her parents and sold wares for her mother, defines work as:

Selling market for someone else, someone who is not your papa or your mama or your relative ...as I am selling things for my mama, it is not work...but those girls selling for their aunties..., that is work, they are suffering ... their own is even worse...

Blessing based her definition on the nature of relationship between a child vendor and his or her guardian. Selling wares for someone with no blood tie to oneself, a non-relative, a stranger or a distant employer is, in her view and for many others, work. This was why she considered house-helpers as working and “suffering”, whereas children who sold wares for a relative were not working. Blessing said that she prefers to toil and “even do harder chores, like farm work for my mother” to living with someone else as a “maid”⁵². She accepted being scolded and beaten by her mother or older siblings as a normal part of her upbringing but not if done by a social aunt or an unrelated guardian.

Also referring to this issue and his personal experience with unrelated guardians as a house-boy, Paul remarked,

My madam will send me to sell [but] her children did not do anything at home. All they did was to sleep, wake up, eat and go to school.... It is me who will go to sell...do everything...because I am not her child ...She no send them to do the type of errands that she asked me to do... Mine was different.

⁵² There is a popular perception among children and adults in Nigeria that house-helpers are treated with cruelty and discriminated against in comparison with the biological children of their employers.

Paul ran away from his guardian's home because he was made to sell wares on the streets and perform domestic chores. He felt treated differently from his guardian's children and complained of being punished, verbally reprimanded and occasionally beaten and discriminated against because of this difference. At the time of my fieldwork, Paul lived with his parents and performed almost the same chores and perhaps even more than he did when he was a house-boy. He alternated vending and wheel barrow pushing, and still performed house chores at his parents' home, before and after vending, but did not regard those as work or maltreatment because

Na me get am [it is mine]. I'm doing it to help my mother... Selling things or pushing barrow for my own person is different from doing it for another person.

Paul did not consider himself as working or maltreated now even though he performed the same chores and much more for his parents. To him, vending, pushing barrow and doing much harder chores for "my own person" (a relative) was acceptable as help and not work. His feelings of discrimination and maltreatment came from the fact that he was a house-boy living with a non-relative. It was not the chores but the relationship and his houseboy status that defined his perception of vending and work.

Some children also perceived work as a forced or compulsory activity. This was Sandra's (16) view as she stated:

If you came out on your own to sell something, or do anything, there is no problem ...but if another person pushes [forces] me, you understand? That is the difference? That one is work.

Generally speaking, children who performed chores and sold wares for a parent, a close family member or for themselves, seemed to take pride in what they did and tended not to consider those activities as work. They saw them from the perspective of the 'good child's as a mark of responsibility because they were contributing to the family. However, if they lived with and sold wares for an unrelated guardian, who might not treat them as well as their biological children, as in Paul's and Justin's

stories, then the perception tended to be negative. What this suggests is that children's understanding of work was subjective and circumstantial: it depended on the activity done and who it was done for. It depended on the relationship or kinship ties between a child and his or her guardian and how well or badly that guardian treats the child.

5.4.5 Work and Religious Practice

Besides kinship and other reasons, some children's perception of work and vending was also informed by their religious beliefs and on what day of the week an activity is performed. Josephat, Nkiru, Chinenye, Nk and four others considered vending on Sunday as work, but said it was not work if done on weekdays. Chizoba's (16) comment captures this nicely:

To sell market or push barrow on Sunday no good...that is proper work.

She said that her entire family observed Sunday as a day of worship and rest. This view was also expressed by many, including adults.

Josephat (14) also shares this view. Coming from a devout Christian family and being a server at mass services, Josephat and his siblings spent Sunday pursuing their personal interests such as playing, relaxing, socializing with friends and family, and getting ready for the week ahead as well as for religious activities, but not for vending. According to him

Our mother does not allow us to work on Sunday, which is why she told us not to sell market on Sunday.

By his reckoning, vending on Sunday is work but doing so on a weekday was not work. In other words, his religious beliefs and practices influenced his and his family's definitions of work.

Similarly, Nkechi (15), a very enthusiastic, fluent and clever girl explained:

There is no market on Sundays. It is a holy day... If you go out to sell you will not see customers to buy your market...people don't work on Sundays, they go to church.

Like most children within her neighbourhood, Nkechi and her siblings spent their Sunday at home doing housework and school assignments, and visiting friends and neighbours. And Useni also considered vending on Sunday as work and in fact “a sin” but not work if done on weekdays.

It may be necessary at this point to explain why religious observances informed children's perceptions of work and the thinking behind their belief and why Sunday is considered a no vending/no working day.

My observations around the buzzing marketplaces show that vending was largely done between Monday and Saturday but my experience on Sunday mornings showed a near absence of people in those marketplaces. Three major religions (The African traditional religion (ATR), Christianity and Islam) or what Bass (2004) refers to as the “triple heritage” (p: 16). concept have had an overwhelming influence in shaping contemporary African societies Like most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria's peoples and cultures are equally influenced by these three religions. Due to the strong influence of Christianity⁵³, particularly in Enugu where this study was done, Sunday is meant to be observed as a day for religious worship and rest⁵⁴. This means that on Sundays, unlike weekdays, offices, businesses and marketplaces remain closed with the exception of few private businesses that provide essential but skeletal services. Businesses are generally on a slower pace in comparison with week days and people do not engage in buying and selling as on other days, rather they attend religious events and spend the rest of the day resting, socializing and pursuing their personal interests.

⁵³ This is due to the influence of early Christian missionaries who first landed there, established churches and brought western education during the colonial era

⁵⁴ Rest for the children means not paid employment

As a matter of fact, my observation on Sunday mornings in those marketplaces seems to confirm children's stories. Going around the city on Sunday mornings I did not find any single vendor or shoppers in the morning hours between 8:00 and 14:00 hours. Market stalls were closed and the streets and motor parks that were usually the hub of activities remained quiet. All I saw was different groups of gorgeously dressed people in their special colourful Sunday clothes walking or driving to church and back. Later in the day, around 2 pm, a handful of people and vehicles began to trickle in and the numbers increased slowly as the day progressed but the market areas were not as full and busy as on weekdays. I saw very few people shopping and vending, but the markets, streets, shops and motor parks that were almost lifeless in the morning hours became slightly busy as the day progressed, particularly in the afternoons and evenings when people attended social and religious events and returned from their weekend trips. I noticed more people standing on the streets waiting to board vehicles and fewer vehicles in operation, while the open spaces and streets that were usually full of traders and shoppers during the weekdays were rather filled with people playing, cheering and watching live football matches.

Judging by their stories, children variously see vending and work as two different issues. They see vending as "nothing" significant, something done for a relative, as an ordinary day to day activity which they did with members of their family or a part of their responsibility in the family while work is seen as something of great value done for an outsider; an external activity performed for someone else or as a contractual obligation between an employer and an employee or as a mercenary activity (doing something because one is hired to do so).

5.5 OTHER CHORES THAT CHILDREN PERFORMED

Performing various domestic chores at home, before and after vending, is part of children's daily repertoire. All but one admitted that they busied themselves before and after vending from morning till dawn with a wide range of full and part time

chores⁵⁵ such as fetching water from nearby running taps or boreholes, sweeping and cleaning their homes/compounds and immediate surroundings, washing dishes and cooking pots, laundering, preparing and cooking food, child minding and disposing of domestic waste. Many said their typical day comprises housework, schooling, more housework, vending and more house work. Nevertheless, their vending and schooling hours are irregular and interlaced with play and social activities.

About domestic chores Chinemerem (17) said,

I help my aunty in the kitchen when we come back from the market ... wash plates and pots and tidy up after cooking and eating. I fetch water from the pump or buy from the borehole if our water is not running. ...we pack pure water in the fridge for tomorrow's market.

Useni, (11) also did domestic chores but spoke about them in a taken-for-granted manner. He said,

Nothing...When we eat finish after market, I follow others go for dirty, come back, others wash all the plates we used for eating, after prayer we go to sleep.

Like many others, Useni did not attach much importance to these activities. His response, "nothing", and the manner he responded shows his attitude that "go for dirty" meaning disposing domestic wastes in an approved dump was not work but regular activity expected of him. He spoke about his mother's daily rota and their assigned responsibilities. They perform them very frequently and they have become just normal, he further explained. However, the amount of time and energy spent on these chores, when put together, add up significantly and may qualify as work in the adult sense if they were to be paid for it, he further claimed.

⁵⁵ Activities performed repeatedly in any given day are hereby referred to as full time while those performed irregularly, say once or twice in a week, are here regarded as part time.

As noted by the children, vending was done everyday except on Sunday. Some said they spent the whole of Saturday “selling market for road” while others spent a greater part of their Saturday at home, cooking, laundering and spring cleaning of their homes and surroundings. Nkechi (15) said that her parents always travelled to their rural home at weekends and she spent her Saturday at their city home

To clean up our yard; wash all our clothes, cook and do anything my mother wants...like to make sure that my brothers are okay and our house arranged properly

Being female, she referred to herself as the “small mother” and said it was her responsibility to mind the household while her parents are away. Nkechi took charge of her siblings as well as cooking and minding her home but said those activities were not work but normal duties that

all growing up female children must do in order to be useful to their parents and to themselves

She considers those as a vital part of her development into adulthood.

On her part, Chinenye (10) performed other chores in the mornings before attending school which she dismissively regarded as “small, small things everybody does in the morning”. Those were not work in her view because they are not “serious or difficult”. She also minded her aunt’s children and assisted with food preparation and refuse disposal. Like Josephat and Nk, she regarded them as simple and normal duties that children are often expected to do in their homes but said that the most difficult of them was “throwing away refuse in the night”. Most children performed this activity and I shall explain what this activity entails.

Waste disposal management in Nigerian cities is a significant environmental issue and causes health problems to urban dwellers. Domestic wastes are usually disposed of at night when people have gone to sleep. Facilities for refuse disposal are either inadequate or lacking completely, and the duty of providing such facilities has been totally ignored by the local authorities whose responsibility it is to keep the city

clean, safe and habitable. It is common in Enugu and other Nigerian cities to see heaps of decomposing refuse dumps that have been left un-evacuated for many months, even years. I was told that the state government and local authorities had in the past few years closed down the department for environmental sanitation (Enugu State Environmental Sanitation Authority – ENSEPA), originally charged with waste disposal management and had contracted out the work to private agencies. They closed down some of the major collection points and used these portions of land to build shops for lease as part of income generation. The few remaining refuse dumps are sparsely spread out in far away locations, requiring people to travel long distances in order to dispose of wastes.

Some people carry waste in their vehicles and dispose of it in nearby bushes outside the city. Others dump theirs indiscriminately during the night along street roads and in nearby streams and canals for want of a better disposal option. Some actually do this in protest against the government's laxity and insensitivity. However, they may be harassed and fined if caught by the locally organised neighbourhood security watch groups, (popularly known as 'vigilante groups') that patrol their neighbourhoods at night in order to maintain peace and for security reasons. From their stories, refuse disposal is one of the major chores that children performed frequently. They travel long distances from their homes and in the dark, in search of somewhere to dump their domestic wastes. This is laborious because they carry waste bins which are usually heavy and smelly on their heads and on streets with poor or no lighting. As a safety measure, neighbourhood children do this collectively in small groups at agreed times in the night, trekking to approved refuse dumps outside their neighbourhood.

This activity clearly impacts directly on a young child's physical development and time but Chinenye, who enjoyed a good rapport with her aunt, and some other children did not consider vending and performing such heavy domestic chores as work, detrimental or "anything special", simply because they did them for a relative with whom they lived and who took care of their needs. Also because they see such activity as their contribution and as a normal duty expected of children, and being the

“good children” that they are and want to be seen as, they cannot and would not refuse to do them for their parents.

5.6 DISCUSSION

Work means different things to different children (Kaplan and Tausky (1974). It has variously been defined as something unpleasant, difficult, risky, burdensome, forced and not good for children’s development (Liebel 2004:46) and the views of children in this study about work seem to corroborate this. Many defined work as a contractual duty or obligation towards another person, a regular and professional paid activity which takes time and energy and involves hardship and risks. Some children had a clear knowledge of what chores they performed and why and what activities they regarded as work, but their varied narratives suggest no agreement on whether or not itinerant street trading is work. While the majority did not consider selling wares for a relation as work but rather as help, the definitions of those who thought otherwise coincide with conventional attributes of work (Mackinnon, 2003). Acknowledging children’s various definitions of vending and work, the most common reason and the defining factor for their perceptions of vending as help not work is the existence of a biological relationship between children and their current guardian. Their understanding was based on ideas about kinship and reciprocity in that vending was performed for a relative with whom they lived and shared kinship ties, for someone who treated them well (Boyden et al., 1998), appreciated their efforts and provided their daily needs of accommodation, education and general welfare. Some children acknowledged that work can be unpleasant and strenuous but were happy to participate in activities which enhanced their personal development, self esteem and confidence, activities which endowed them with relevant skills and competencies for their future (Punch 2001a; Last 2000) and afforded them the opportunity to contribute to the welfare of their families and development of their wider communities (Overwien, 2001; Liebel 2004).

Data from observation and interviews suggest that children spend long hours, up to five or more hours daily, walking the streets and selling wares. Yet to them, selling market is not work in the adult sense. Conventional understandings frequently

conclude that allowing children to spend such long hours regularly on work-like activities is arduous, unacceptable and exploitative (Reynolds, 1991). Therefore it may be difficult to understand why children spend such long times in the market selling wares and still claim that it is not work. Yet, as I have shown, for many, selling market for road was a pleasurable, taken-for-granted activity and for this reason they disregarded it as anything consequential and did not make a serious issue about it (Reynolds, 1991). Children acknowledged that vending in the market has many aspects, a mixed experience which is neither one thing nor the other. It is both fun and hard, it provides pleasure, money for school and personal needs, love and positive rewards. It is arduous but cannot be reduced to one single concept such as abuse or exploitation. In spite of their varied stories and reasons for vending, their opinions of vending as not work seems unanimous: it feels different doing something for one of your own, a relative, than doing it for a stranger, an outsider with whom one had no family or kinship ties.

Early anthropological studies assert that kinship ties and family linkages are the bedrock of West African societies (Aldous, (1962). The African kinship system emphasises mutual support and reciprocity amongst kinspeople, and members, including children, have expected roles and responsibilities in the provision of material and emotional support to one another in a mutually rewarding relationship. The extended family continues to play an important role in maintaining family linkages, even in modern times, despite the weakening effect of increasing individualism due to urbanisation and westernisation (Okigbo, 1956). In Nigeria, within the extended family network, kinsmen and women provide material and emotional assistance in the absence of a public social welfare system. Wealthier relatives and older family members take it as a personal obligation to assist poorer kinsmen and women in good and bad times. This kin network explains why some of the children lived with and were being brought up by their older brothers and aunts. A high degree of loyalty and obedience is expected from children towards their kin members, and this is why many children find it difficult to decline to assist their guardians in vending when they were asked to do so.

In a complex multicultural society like Nigeria, children's participation in trading and domestic chores is not considered abusive but rather as a positive experience of learning, living and growing up (Bass, 2004). Children are expected to play roles and are actually assigned responsibilities as part of their contributions within their families (Miller, 2001; African Charter, 1990). Many in this study acknowledged that their guardians requested their assistance with vending and domestic chores and they could not decline. They saw it as a duty they owed to their families to fulfil those expectations. Being able to discharge the duty responsibly conferred a feeling of fulfilment to the children who not only reciprocated their guardians' love and care but saw themselves as good and well behaved.

The recurring allegation that house-helpers were generally maltreated and discriminated against because they have no biological attachments with their guardians also point to kinship ties (Miller, 2007). Accounts of punishments by two children who lived with their aunts show that to a certain extent, these are culturally acceptable as normal and corrective, rather than abusive (Korbin, 1982). The culture expects from children complete obedience and absolute respect for elders (Ncube, 1998) and children themselves viewed it as necessary for instilling discipline and transmitting moral, cultural and religious values and as a part of their socialization into responsible adulthood (Verhoef, 2005). These views also reinforce Bledsoe and Isiugo-Abanihe (1989) and Goody (1970)'s arguments that punishments are necessary chastisements and disciplinary measures for children's welfare and future development. They also invalidate suggestions that punitive measures were abusive and not always in the best interests of children (Akhilomen, 2006, Oloko, 1999). This is a very complicated issue because opinions differ as to what is acceptable or unacceptable and to what extent punishments should be applied (Mbakogu, 2004) but this is not the remit of this study.

However, in this study, there seemed to be differences in children's understanding and interpretations of what constitutes maltreatment and punishment and the differences were always based on kinship i.e., on the nature of relationship a child vendor has with his or her guardian. Their stories showed that many who have

biological or kinship relationships with their guardians interpreted selling market as having positive value, were happy and prepared to continue vending for their guardians, and were more inclined to tolerate beating, scolding or punishments from a related guardian as normal. In contrast it was deemed unacceptable and abusive in relationships between step parents and step children or between unrelated guardians and house-helpers. Justin's stories about his step mother support Akhilomen's claim that step parents have little or no commitments towards their step children and are therefore more likely than biological parents to abuse them because they have no blood or genetic ties (Akhilomen, 2006:237).

However one perceives and analyzes these guardian-child relationships, children's stories seemed to claim that step mothers or step parents like 'social aunts', are outsiders because they do not share family bonds with their step children and so are thought to be less acceptable as foster parents and less capable of protecting their step children (Goody, 1982). Related guardians are generally thought to have the best interests of children under their care whilst step/foster parents do not (Verhoef, 2005:370), and the accounts of Justin, Christiana, Paul and Blessing all seemed to confirm such claims. These insinuations are highly contentious and outside the scope of this study but worthy to be investigated further.

In less developed poorer societies where income per capita is low (World Bank, 2000/01) and access to resources and opportunities are limited, children are expected to contribute either labour and/or income to the survival of their families, depending on their age, gender and ability (Hope, 2005; Bass, 2004:33). In such societies, children's involvement in work is perceived as a normal part of their childhood and those who fulfil these expectations are adjudged as good and responsible (Bourdillon, 2000). Children could not decline because of family and societal pressure and their livelihoods and societal rating as good children depended to a large extent on their labour and financial contributions in their families. These expectations are passed on from an early age and children absorb them as they grow up. This is one of the reasons why many children considered selling wares for a related guardian as help, not work, and why many did not see themselves as working.

Street vending was one of the many chores they performed and one of the ways in which they contributed to the family economy and self development (Bourdillon, 2000) while responding to their situations of poverty and deprivation (Togunde and Carter, 2006).

Selling market is part of family life for all the children in this study. They did not come to the market alone as separate individuals, but as part of a family network of traders. All of them lived with and sold wares for a related guardian most of who were also trading in the same or nearby marketplaces. This means that none of them lived on the streets nor slept rough contrary to widespread beliefs that child street vendors in developing countries live and make the streets their permanent abode (Ebigbo, 2003; Schurink, 1993; Richter, 1988). The children were integrally connected and involved with their respective families to whom they rendered accounts and went back after each day's sales. They maintained close relationships with their guardians, who not only introduced them to trading but gave approval for them to engage in vending and provided constant supervision as well as emotional and financial support (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003).

Though children's responses and understanding of street vending were somewhat varied, and at times vague and confusing, many were able to offer clear justifiable arguments that 'selling market for road' was not work because they were not specifically employed to sell. Their definition of work was sometimes clear and sometimes ambivalent. Many defined work as an economic activity that is strenuous, difficult, time and energy consuming but which also provides opportunities for learning and personal development as vending provided. Even though many did not consider vending as 'real work' because they did it for a relative and did not earn incomes directly like people in civil service or in banking jobs, some argued that the amount of time and energy invested and the level of hardship and pains involved was comparable with that experienced by people in contractual, full-time paid employment and should not be taken for granted. They reasoned that street vending is not work based on the advantages that vending brought (Maybin and Woodhead: 2003: 191 – 203). In addition, their participation in

vending showed that they are not merely passive recipients of societal expectations and culture, but active agents involved in shaping their lives and contributing to their families and to the society in which they live (Punch, 2001a; Hill and Tisdall, 1997). Many were aware of the scale of the contributions which they make to their families, the wider society and towards their personal development, hence their argument that vending exposes them to many positive outcomes, acquiring business skills and competencies for now and for later life and so cannot be viewed negatively and as detrimental, despite the difficulties involved.

Work is a survival strategy and an integral part of the childhoods of children growing up in Nigeria (Bass, 2004:20). Children take part in work and are expected to work in order to assist their guardians and contribute to the survival of their families whilst learning and acquiring personal vocational skills for future life (Invernizzi, 2003). They are generally given tasks, under adult supervision, according to their age, size and ability. The tasks increase as they grow while the supervision becomes less until they are considered fully mature and independent enough to take responsibility and ownership of such activities (Bass, 2004: 21). By participating in street trading, children not only bring in money but learn adult roles. They are actively socialized to take on duties which help to instil responsibility and knowledge. This substantiates their belief that vending equips them with useful trading skills of negotiation, as well as providing informal educational and vocational opportunities, and imbues them with a sense of confidence and self esteem which work also does (Kaplan and Tausky, 1974; Morse and Weiss, 1955).

Children's ability and positive disposition to assist and learn their parents' profession at a young age confirms the socialization and cultural theory that child labour or children's work is a learned behaviour acquired in the family (Togunde and Carter, 2006). Their reasons for becoming involved in itinerant vending also show that the majority of them were compelled by poverty and economic necessity (Togunde and Carter, 2006) not necessarily out of choice, though some children became involved on their own volition. In relation to choosing what they sold and why, children who sold the same wares as their parents had little or no say in deciding what to sell but

the majority exercised flexibility and freedom in their choices and took responsibility for what they sold, though with parental approval, supervision and sponsorship.

Some young vendors went through an initial gradual induction and informal tutelage from their mothers over a period of time, while some learned quickly by observation and with assistance from older vendors and friends who acted as mentors, guarantors and referees. Though the duration of this informal orientation and mentoring varied according to age, gender and ability, type of trade and prior experience, peer mentoring contributed greatly in facilitating children's early vending experiences.

The narratives of children and young street traders highlight aspects of childhoods as experienced by them. Children's positive accounts of vending show that vending does not always translate into exploitation. The children were aware of the expected and imagined risks but the overall benefits far outweigh the hazards. By recognizing what they can do or what they have learned from hawking, for example, negotiating prices or doing well in certain school subjects, children were making a statement that they trust their abilities and can take on responsibilities (Liebel, 2004:8) Considering that street vending children regularly spend long hours on the streets and motor parks, one wonders why many did not regard that as work. This finding differs from a similar study of street working children which concluded that street children regarded any form of obtaining money, whether for self or for a family member, as work (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003). One reason for this discrepancy is the different socio - economic and cultural contexts which the studies and subjects were located.

The children's divergent accounts and experiences of child street vendors reinforce the conventional, economic but narrow adult definitions of work as a paid activity performed for another (Boyden et al: 1998; Mackinnon, 2003). Work is an external activity, a mercenary activity, something done for an outsider, a non relative. Children's definition of vending for a relative as help and their personal claims that what they sold was "ours", "mine", and not for "another person" shows a distinction between working for oneself or a relative and working for another person as an employee. Furthermore, their idea of the "good child" and positive perceptions of

street vending stem from a positive attitude and recognition of children's work by the family and the wider society (Invernizzi, 2003).

5.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter illustrates what children say about the multifaceted way in which vending weaves into their lives. Their varied definitions and narratives about vending and work demonstrate that there cannot be a uniform view of what work and vending mean to these children. Their opinions and understanding of street trading were varied, and sometimes contradictory but one thing which clearly emerged from their stories and definitions was that they were expected to contribute labour and income towards their family's sustenance, and many saw their involvement in street trading as fulfilling that obligation and as part of their personal development. They sometimes talked positively about vending as helping, and negatively about working, but kinship helped to distinguish between the two.

'Selling market for road' is one of the many activities street vending children performed regularly with and for their parents and relatives. Most of them were initially introduced into street trading at an early age by their guardians who were themselves traders. Their reasons for embarking on street trading as well as their understandings of the meaning of work and vending differed. Their reasoning was because they were not employed specifically to sell wares and they did not receive any wages or payments; but most importantly because it was done for a family member. However, some defined work based on the amount of time, energy, risks and difficulties involved irrespective of the beneficiary. They distinguished between vending and other activities like farm work which they said was 'real work' but this distinction too was often based on kinship ties.

What emerges in this chapter, moreover, is a notion that whether or not work is viewed by children as labour is dependent, in large part, on who they work for, that is, whether the child is a biological relative of that family and whether he or she is treated well and appreciated. Though none of the children in this study was a house help, many described experiences of other children of maltreatment and

discrimination in the way house helps and non- house helps were treated. There was an implied assumption that children who lived with non related guardians were abused and maltreated by such employers and so children who lived with and sold for non relatives often saw themselves as maltreated and as working. By implication, children perceived vending in this context as work.

To conclude, there was no agreement on the meaning of work amongst the children who took part in this study. Children perceived the positive values and experiential learning from street trading as of great importance for later life. Besides, they found vending enjoyable and the vending environment exciting as well, and all of these combined to influence their positive perceptions of vending as something pleasant and for this reason many did not consider it as work. However, this did not suggest that they could not see the negative aspects of their work either. All the children were aware that work was, in a sense, part of their lives, for good and for ill.

CHAPTER SIX: CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR SOCIAL CONTACTS AND RELATIONSHIPS IN THE MARKET

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter four discussed the meanings of street vending and work and the impact of family and kinship relationships on children's varied perceptions and experiences of street vending. This chapter deals with external relationships which influence children's economic and labour participation. I discuss the nature of such contacts and how they interact to enhance or impinge upon children's perceptions and vending activities.

Children's social contacts within the trading community involved a wide range of individuals and groups. They related very closely with motor park operators who have an oversight function of all transportation activities within the motor parks, and with other vendors, numerous customers, taxi, bus and lorry drivers and their assistants, motor cycle operators, local authority staff (mainly revenue collectors), motor park touts and *agboro* people, security operatives and a myriad of other users of the marketplaces. These people form children's major clientele and significant others, and seem to wield a considerable amount of influence on their activities and worldviews.

At first sight, watching children in various marketplaces, some in groups of two or three, carrying baskets of various wares on their heads and in wheel barrows, walking about, chasing after customers and making sales, the impression conveyed is of a happy bunch of young people with little or no worries. They were often seen joking and laughing, pushing and arguing among themselves and with adults, but at other times, they were seen crying and hurling verbal abuse at one another. Children revealed tensions and difficulties that arose in the course of these interactions. Combining data from observation and from conversations with children, this chapter explores the different ways in which children perceive those relationships which are

in one sense friendly and supportive but which also show deeper layers of unresolved conflicts and tensions.

The chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, I discuss how children interacted with their vending peers and in the second I discuss the relationships with adult members of the vending community. This is followed by discussion and conclusion.

6.2 RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CHILDREN

From observation, I saw that the majority of children always moved in clusters of three or more with other children of the same gender and age. Girls moved along with girls and boys with boys, and children who sold identical and corresponding wares also tended to move together. Only very rarely were children seen alone or in the company of adults. Explaining why their peer group movements tended towards a gendered pattern, Sandra (16) noted that it was part of their upbringing,

We and boys don't sell together, they move on their own.
Even at school, boys and girls don't play together. That is
how it is everywhere.

Similarly, the clusters and group movements tended to be age-based; older children tended to move together and younger children tended to move with children of their own age. Confirming this and giving the example of his two younger brothers who moved in different groups, Josephat (14) remarked:

Dem [his siblings] get their age mates that they move and
sell with.

Nevertheless, older siblings watched over their younger ones irrespective of gender and age, and group members assisted and protected each other's interests. Josephat told me how closely he watched his brothers, and how readily he intervened whenever they had a problem or were endangered, saying,

But my eyes are always on their side...if someone finds their trouble or tries to cheat them, I run to see what is happening ...

Though his younger brothers moved with their peers in different groups, Josephat saw it as his responsibility as an older brother to protect and monitor them especially in the face of a threatening situation.

Children valued their informal small friendship groups which many said provided support, enhanced team work, promoted friendship and facilitated the achievement of their daily targets. Commenting about her group, Christiana (12) said, “Everyone helps the other to sell her market finish”.

Some said they were happy to move along with their peers because group members provided protection in times of danger. This is best illustrated by Ud’s (12) comments, “If you get wahala [problem] your mates will help you”. Reiterating this Useni (11) referred to an incident where he was attacked and dispossessed of his money by an adult male tout. He said his assailant took advantage of the fact that he was not in the company of his vending mates, who he believed, would have forestalled the situation either by fighting back or by raising an alarm to draw the attention of passers by. He said,

If me and others follow waka, he for no fit. He for no collect my money like that, lai lai.

Useni admitted that he had been helpless and unable to fight back because he was alone. He reported the incident to older traders and union people who came to his rescue, but they were unable to identify his assailant or retrieve his money.

Also reaffirming the importance of peer support and protection networks, children expressed concerns over the increase in cases of child abduction in the marketplace and described how group members support one another. Sandra (16) told of a recent incident of attempted kidnap in a nearby marketplace. She claimed that the kidnapper

was intercepted because other children raised the alarm and alerted the general public and a quick search was mounted.

As soon as anything happens, your friends will see what is happening and come to help. ... They will start screaming [raise alarm] and people will run to find out what is happening.

In addition to providing security, children also enjoyed emotional support from group members. Nk (15) told how they often shared food and compared experiences as they walked back home after vending:

Each person says what she saw that day...If one of us buys something, she gives everybody, another person buys another day ...another person another day, we do it like that....

Eka (16) also revealed that they always compared notes and shared exclusive personal stories of their escapades and dates:

Anything that concerns us... like, if anyone chased us [made sexual overtures] or bought me something... If we hear that somebody we know is pregnant ...things like that, but we don't tell others

Their stories ranged from simple gossip to serious safety issues such as unwanted sexual overtures from males and the abduction of children, to the daily fights between bus drivers and their conductors⁵⁶, disagreements between union members, information about thieves and about any notable incident they had seen or heard.

Group members also helped to fight each other's causes. Emeka (14), Paul (14) and Damian (13) spoke about inter-group squabbles and narrated how they fought people

⁵⁶ Drivers' assistants, mainly young male children who are apprenticed to drivers. They assist with picking up and dropping off passengers, collecting fares from passengers, ensuring that passengers are well seated and with other practical errands as directed by the drivers.

from other groups if they offended or attacked any member of their group. Emeka (14) said:

If someone from another group finds our trouble or says something bad to spoil our market, we follow that person when market closes.

As exemplified in these narratives, children were exposed to many people and events within the marketplaces, both pleasant and unpleasant. They observe, internalize and try to make sense of them individually and as groups. It is difficult however to establish how much impact these experiences make on the minds and lives of these youngsters, but their narratives imply that group movement and membership helped to cushion the effects of the harsher incidents. What remains clear is that they were highly aware of their environment, and that as social agents and members of that community, they shape and are also being shaped by those events. They actively learn from such incidents and negotiate ways to resolve them amongst themselves.

Group activities were not only limited to sharing jokes and secrets but included taking decisions and devising strategies together to ward off competition and meet daily targets. Children display much tact and ingenuity as they manoeuvre their way out of difficult and threatening circumstances and negotiate with customers and the wider community. They face considerable competition between and amongst other vendors and harassment from adults in the vending arena. Their daily experiences challenge their thinking processes and help to sharpen their ability to make quick decisions on whether or not to sell. Children talked about their individual and collective coping strategies to meet their targets, cope with competition and avoid harassment from revenue collectors and touts. Some narrated how they escape from situations of harassment from motor park touts, drivers and revenue collectors to safer and friendlier places outside the immediate confines of the motor park where they faced less interruptions and competition and where they could enjoy more patronage and high turnover. For instance, Nkechi (15) said she and her group

members would confer quickly and move somewhere else as soon as they noticed danger or fierce rivalry:

We can go to the Polo Field⁵⁷ when there is a big thing happening there If market is not moving well where we are, if that place is not good ...we just leave there and find somewhere else to sell.

Speaking further about group dynamics, making quick and informed decisions and choices, Blessing (12) also said:

We just carry our things to another place. ...If people in that place disturb us like they do in Gariki Market, we move to another place where there is no wahala [problem].

These stories show that children and young street vendors engaged in healthy negotiations, like adults, seeking better and more efficient ways and means to resolve their concerns and to meet their targets. Nkechi and Blessing said that what they enjoyed most about street vending was because there were no strict regulations about what to sell and where to go; much depends on where one considers safe and thinks he or she would find customers and make quick and more profitable sales.

Relationships within children's informal groupings were not always positive. Squabbles within and between groups occasionally soured relationships and individual groups often fell apart as members strove to meet their daily targets. In the course of vending, things became heated at times with spells of arguments and name calling even among friends and close associates. I saw different groups of children and young people fighting, shouting and swearing at each other on a daily basis.

Explaining the reason for such frequent outbursts, Chizoba (16) said,

⁵⁷ A very large purpose built amusement park within the city centre where social, cultural and political events often take place. It is strategically located near the State Chamber of Commerce Pavilion, another large venue for business exhibitions, and around a very busy university campus, a large state owned teaching hospital and some secondary schools. It is a very strategic place for vending.

Some children want to show that they are baba [bigger] they are stronger ...before you know where you are a big fight begins...just for nothing serious...

Younger children talked about the overbearing influence of older children and girls talked about boys always trying to establish that they are stronger and smarter. Emeka (14) admitted that as older children helped younger ones in times of trouble, so they bullied younger ones in order to establish their strength. About the hostility and inequality in the marketplace, especially between younger children and adults, Emeka said,

We have to huzzle (meaning hustle) like that; everybody tries to sell his things. The people that I pity are those small, small children ...They are too small.

Josephat (14) described how an older boy bullied his younger brother:

...he pushed down my brother's basin, all his market was on the dusty ground. ...my brother held his clothes and was crying.... People told him to say sorry ...and pick up what he spilled ... but he leave am commot (walked away).

Josephat said he was alerted to the incident by other children, and he and his friends quickly ran to rescue his brother. They fought the older boy instead of reporting him to adults or the motor park operators. While his action may be interpreted as a show of protection and solidarity for his younger sibling, it also raises issues about indiscipline, lack of adult controls and the pugnacious life style of street vendors that I observed first hand on a daily basis.

Sandra (16) believed that "jealousy" and rivalry were responsible for such fights, Paul (14) attributed it to "lack of good home training" and Eka (16) said it was because of frustrations at not meeting individual targets. I did not need to look far to see children fighting and swearing and hurling abuses at one another. It happened very often as they scrambled for customers and pushed through crowds of people and

vehicles. Such quarrels and exchanges often led to more serious consequences, especially when children tried to resolve issues by themselves and they could lead to unhealthy alliances and gang formation.

From observation, the pushing was always fierce and there was swarming as children and adult vendors ran after prospective buyers. This can be daunting for both buyers and sellers, and children jostled regularly in order to meet their daily targets. These observations raise issues about health, safety and protection and about gender and age for admission into vending.

Children expressed deep concerns about the inequity and competition involved in vending, particularly for much younger vendors who had to struggle against older ones in order to meet their targets as well. Masiri (15) likened it to her school's "sack race" contest, saying it is a race for survival.

Explaining how she meets her target Sandra (15) remarked that selling market involves a lot of negotiations and gentle persuasion to convince customers. She said:

When we hear somebody call out to buy something, something like pure water, you run to that direction, everybody runs towards the caller, even if that is not what you are selling ... You have to hustle before you sell. You begin to price [haggle and bargain for prices].

Interviewer: And how do you do that? Please tell me how you bargain and negotiate prices.

Sandra: There is no stamp on our market. You sell the price your mother told you...

Interviewer: So, how do you convince a customer to buy from you?

Sandra: It depends on how the market is that day, if you are strong and know what you are doing, you will sell finish.

Interviewer: So what happens when you get to the customer? Tell me how you convince people to buy from you.

Sandra: You will talk and talk, show them what you are selling and tell the person the price you want to sell. She will be telling you to bring your price down. Others are there telling how much they are selling theirs, she will examine the ones she likes.

Interviewer: And what happens then?

Sandra: She may tell you to untie it for her to see what is inside...or she will untie it herself to check if it is good or spoilt... after she buys from whoever she likes.

Explaining her own sales strategies, Chizoba (16) remarked:

When others see that you are winning a customer, some will start putting your market down saying that what you are selling is not original, or that they are rotten... Those selling pure water will say that your own is not cold enough and theirs is colder. Some will just say whatever they like in order to spoil your market. ...

Children were not only concerned about the fierce competition among vendors, but also about the hard negotiations to woo buyers, most of whom are hard to convince and who would always insist on inspecting wares thoroughly before payment. Some children described how their wares were damaged in the process of chasing after buyers and negotiating with sceptical customers.

Others spoke about making quick decisions whether or not to sell, about “bad market” when sales are low or “a heavy rain falls and water fills everywhere” (Chizoba, 16) and the difficulties they encounter with vending perishable wares:

...all your bananas get ripe and you don't want to take them back home. You will not leave them to get spoilt; you just sell them at any price that customers are offering.

(Eka, 16)

Children's accounts and my observations confirm that shopping and price negotiations are tough for both buyers and vendors. Many children said they had daily targets set by their guardians which they regularly aimed to achieve. This target was to sell off their entire wares and bring home a certain amount of money on each vending day. This means that the success or failure to meet this target depended not only on the market forces of demand and supply but largely on a child's ability and marketing prowess. Unlike supermarkets, there are no fixed prices, no labels and no expiry dates, and buyers and sellers have to haggle hard for better deals. Children have to contend with customers' probing touches, continuous haggling, and damages to their wares but in spite of everything, many found the vending process exciting and did not regard the occasional fights and fierce competition or intimidation by older male vendors as horrible. Others acknowledged that the vending experience could be difficult and frustrating but that their group members helped one another in many different ways. Paul's (14) remarks nicely sums this up:

But here everybody behaves like one. If you have a problem with any customer others would come around. If you spill a customer's goods they will help you pick them up and beg the customer that it was an accident. I like the way they cooperate here. Nobody kills another person.

And Chizoba (16) concludes,

Selling market here makes you tough. They push you, you push them back...everybody knows her (his) level... there is nothing bad in it, everybody wants to sell their market

and everybody will sell their market, that is the way it is done.

6.3 RELATIONSHIPS WITH OFFICIALS

As well as managing their relationships with other young vendors, children in the market had to deal with officialdom, in this case, the revenue collectors or tax men, whose job it was to collect money from every trader who operated within the environment, including child vendors, and the executives and staff of the National Union of Road Transport Workers.

6.3.1 With Revenue Collectors

Revenue collectors or ‘ticket people’ were another group that had a sustained influence on, and relationship, with children. This relationship with child vendors was not positive. Children alleged that ticket people confiscated their wares, and often bullied and caused them pains and anxiety by the disrespectful manner in which they collected daily dues from them. About them, Paul (14) said,

If they don’t beat your head, they will seize your tray or
make you shed tears

Emeka (14) said that he “hates” them and evades them by vending along motorways and petrol stations.

While some children are not happy with the imposition of daily dues or “tax” according to Emeka (14), many also said that they want a marketplace where they can move about freely and happily like adult traders, without additional harassment from revenue collectors. Josephat (14) captures this complaint with his rhetorical question, “Is it because we are children?”

While children admitted that revenue collectors were doing their legitimate duties, they were deeply concerned about the collectors’ manner of approach. This was Paul’s (14) observation:

I know they are doing their work but... what I don't like is the way they command you to bring your money ...they will shout and put fear into you... [And] give you a hard knock on the head before you even say anything.

While not denying the fact that the actions of revenue collectors can sometimes be abusive and traumatic for children, Eka (16) blames children for this unsavoury relationship, saying

Some think they are clever....They have the money but will not pay up, they continue playing and dodging until they are caught...that time their eyes go clear.

Here, Eka is saying that children become fully aware of the implications of evading payment after their wares have been confiscated.

Some children coped with the revenue collectors by seeking out safer and friendlier vending spots outside mainstream vending areas where they enjoyed high turnover and some peace. They sold along major roads and petrol stations. Their favourite spot, which was the venue for Emeka's interview, is a 24-hour mega petrol station that is slightly far removed from town. Selling at that venue brought more customers and children always met their daily targets, with less competition and harassment, because the station always had steady supplies of petroleum products which were sold at cheaper prices than elsewhere and so enjoyed more patronage than other stations in the city. According to Emeka (14),

We sell all our market because many people come here to buy fuel and kerosene. Market moves well here...ticket people are not here, *agboro* people are not working here.

6.3.2 With Union People (NURTWs)

By the nature of their work as the main operators of activities in motor parks, the NURTW have a significant impact on the experiences of children and young

vendors. In addition to other functions, the NURTW and various traders' associations provided support and protection not only to their members but also to children and other users of the motor parks. They provided opportunities for people to lodge complaints and seek redress when aggrieved. Children's relationships with union people were not always bad and gloomy like with other adult groups. For Christiana (12)

Union people are nice...they help to settle problems...they always help if you report anything to them.

Chizoba (16) said that union people always intervened with compassion, whenever they were called upon:

If someone took your wares without payment or someone threatens to beat you and you report to them, they will try to find out ...and will try to help you get back your money.

She spoke positively and apparently with a deep sense of relief, and her opinion was almost unanimously shared by a majority of the children. Union people can be trusted when things go wrong as they always readily lent a helping hand in times of distress and mediate over disputes and fights. Josephat (14) also confirmed this as he recollected his brother's experience and how the union intervened, saying,

They [union people] asked us to state the cause of the fight. They whipped us and said they will stop us from selling in the park if we fought again. ...We said sorry and they let us continue.

Children said that union people settled disputes and disciplined them when they fought or became disorderly. This could be in the form of whipping, verbal reprisal or other disciplinary measures. This might sound overly punitive or even abusive but it was for public good and order, many children claimed. As noted earlier in chapter five, physical punishments are culturally accepted in Nigeria as corrective disciplinary measures for socializing children (Last, 2000: 360-387), as long as they

are not excessive⁵⁸. Punitive measures are usually dependent on the degree and seriousness of the offence and on the age and gender of the parties involved. The NURTW actually have rules that forbid fighting in the marketplace and for the protection of children, especially females, who report any form of sexual molestation.

Children's stories suggest that there was order and control in marketplaces with functioning wheel barrow unions. These unions enforced strict discipline and provided security to both members and customers and made vending in a harsh and competitive environment a bit more tolerable. In places with no unions, the competition was fiercer. Children may not have considered the full implications of becoming members of traders' associations but what was important to them was the protection and solidarity which membership would bestow on them. However, some children thought that belonging to traders' unions would offer a way out of trouble, or at least, protect them from the bullying of older vendors. Paul (14) and Damian (13) would like an association that will specifically address children's safety concerns but Sandra (16) thought otherwise. She argued that children are not "real traders"⁵⁹ and not established enough nor have a sustainable means of livelihood to warrant their active membership in trade associations.

Godwin (13), who alternated vending with wheel barrow pushing in various marketplaces, also favours having an association. He acknowledged that children's informal friendship groups offer physical and emotional support but was of the opinion that belonging to an association would be more helpful in resolving squabbles and maintaining order and discipline among vendors. Describing his experience at a marketplace with a functional union, he said,

The union has rules... Nobody struggles for customers
...when a vehicle stops we go turn by turn, and if anybody

⁵⁸ UNICEF, 2001a:192-193.

⁵⁹ Real traders are full time shop owners and vendors whose sources of livelihood come from vending. Children were thought to be part time and not independent yet to belong to traders unions. They are selling for their guardian not for themselves.

jumps in front they push you back to the end of the line...and if you fight, they fine you.

Godwin also vended in places without unions and wherever he felt that he could make more money. Comparing his experience in another marketplace that had no union, he recounted: “Everyone pushes the way he knows.”

Also speaking about his experience in a different market with no union, Paul (14) said,

When you see customers everybody runs to carry their loads... and when you are still bargaining the price another person might come and tell the customer that he could carry for a small fee, the customer follows him immediately. You and him might start quarrelling about that... people were telling customers not to allow me carry for them because I was a JJC⁶⁰ [novice].... Some even said that I would run away with people’s goods just to spoil my market.

6.4 RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ADULTS

As noted already, child vendors had to deal with a range of other adults as they went about their work, including adult traders, bus drivers and their assistants, motor park touts, motorists and customers. Each of these will be considered in turn.

6.4.1 With Adult Traders

In contrast to what they had to say about their relationships with other children, a majority of children (17) expressed disappointment at what they saw as the unsupportive attitudes and behaviours of adult traders, particularly female traders, from whom they expected more guidance and understanding. Godspower (11) explained:

⁶⁰ JJC literally translates- Johnny Just Come which means a new comer. This expression is often used in motor parks, markets and streets for new entrants who have just arrived and do not know their way about.

Many of them are wicked...they don't agree when you ask them to give you change or beg them for help ... They say that we run into their eyes and take market from them [prevent them from making sales]... [And] they gossip about us.

Even Chizoba (16) Sandra (16) and Christiana (12), who proclaimed unflinching allegiance to women because of their mothers' kind-heartedness, were unimpressed about the attitudes of female vendors. Sandra (16) revealed her displeasure in the following words;

A a a! They don't allow us to sell our market. They say that we are standing and blocking the front of their shades and not allowing customers to buy their market. They always shout at us, and say all sorts of bad things to us.

Expressing deep disgust at the unfriendly attitude of some adult female traders, and upholding Sandra's observations, Chizoba (16) shook her head and snapped her fingers in a spiteful manner saying,

You see those people who call themselves mothers...some of them are horrible...their trouble is too much.

About adult traders, Grace simply concluded, "They are hard hearted". Adamu (12) himself said:

Those people, na wa o o! I run for dem...some call us Satan's small children ...Only God knows how dey treat their own pikin [children] for house.

Adamu said that he felt utterly sickened by their [adult traders] uncomplimentary remarks and name calling, and he wondered if they treated their own children in the same manner.

Throughout the duration of the fieldwork, I observed hostility between children and adult vendors. Even though children moved 'freely' in groups and seemed to enjoy peer support and protection provided by their guardians and motor park operators,

their relationship with adult traders was never congenial. They were always at loggerheads, blaming and passing unkind remarks about one another.

“But not all of them are like that, some are good”, Christiana (12) remarks as she explains the reasons for the strained relationship saying,

Because we and them always huzzle for customers ... they say we have no good home training ...that we are spoilt.

Being ‘spoilt’, means that adults considered the children as insufficiently disciplined and disrespectful. She discountenanced the allegation that street vending children were unruly and explained that they are simply responding to the situation they find themselves in. She further pleaded that more understanding and cooperation from adults would help them to cope better and achieve their targets rather than being castigated as “spoilt” and “lacking good manners”.

6.4.2 With Bus Drivers and their Assistants

As with adult traders, the relationship between child vendors, bus drivers and their assistants⁶¹ was far from cordial. Bus drivers and their assistants make a significant impact on the lives and activities of street vending children because of their encounters in the motor parks and on the streets. Nearly all of the children in this study (22 out of 24) complained bitterly about bus drivers and their assistants as one of the major challenges they faced in the vending arena. Speaking in a resentful manner about them, Emeka (14) remarked,

⁶¹ These are young children, mostly boys, who have either completed primary or secondary school level education or dropped out of school and have chosen to train as vehicle drivers. They have to become apprenticed first as assistants - helping drivers with little, daily, practical hands-on activities such as washing vehicles, collecting transport fares from passengers, loading and setting off passengers - before one qualifies as a driver. Their training period could last between one to five years or even longer depending on the age and previous experience of the assistant. They are literally drivers’ handy men or post boys. Drivers’ assistants are popularly known as conductors and often times referred to as ‘agboro (because of the uncouth mannerisms they display, but the real agboro people are the touts and lay-abouts who hang around motor park areas with no tangible source of livelihood).

The only thing they do here is to sit down and talk rubbish
... they disturb us and take our market without payment.
They have no head

By this, Emeka is suggesting that they are unhelpful towards the realisation of children's targets.

The market environment was a no-holds-barred environment where people came and went freely in pursuit of their personal legitimate interests. There were no restrictions on what to sell and to whom, but children complained that bus drivers and their assistants sometimes created physical barriers to prevent children from coming close to their loading bays even when passengers were calling out to buy their wares. According to Godwin (13),

They say that we block those that want to enter their vehicles, but that is not true. It is just 'bad belle' [wickedness]. We don't block anything.

Children said that drivers and their assistants constantly bullied them and used different tactics to cheat them. Commenting about their relationship, disrespectful jokes, and choice of language, Christiana (12) complained:

They tell us bad words and laugh at us saying that you are too big to be carrying things about. ... Sometimes they take your market without paying. They tell you to come back later and when you go back they will say they have no money, come tomorrow. They push you out

Some female child vendors reported sexual overtures and extraordinary shows of kindness by bus drivers and their assistants, many of whom pose as genuine patrons. About their sexual innuendoes Chizoba (16) said, "Sometimes they touch you where you do not like". Speaking about their ploys and how easily female vendors fall for them, Masiri (15) commented;

Their eyes are always on small girls... They buy all their market and sometimes dash them money and buy them presents but you do not understand what they have in

mind... till one day he corners you and begins to touch you... If you refuse, he will go out and start talking about you...he will tell you to pay back what he dashed you.

It is known that children are under intense pressure to meet their daily targets and many are often not aware of the disguised intentions of some male patrons, who may resort to blackmail and stalking when they refuse to yield to their overtures. Eka (16) finds those innuendos and name-calling offensive as she remarked:

They call you nwa groundnut⁶² [groundnut girl] or nwa Bendel [Bendel child] or whatever they like and when you reply them, or refuse to sell to them you enter their book...they will always look out for you and talk about you among themselves saying that you are a bad child or a small prostitute.

It may not be possible for anyone to know the real names of all the vendors in such a busy open marketplace, no matter how popular or how long children think they have been in the motor park. I do not particularly see any issues with calling children by the wares they sell, or calling them “nke nwanyi” [Masiri’s words, meaning the girl], if one genuinely does not know a child’s name. From my observations, customers would usually bellow out the names of what they want to buy and vendors would run towards the direction of the caller. The major issue here is the disrespectful manner in which those remarks are made, and because the relationship is already sour and suspicious, children always feel undermined and threatened. What I think these children mean and want is a show of respect.

6.4.3 With motor park touts

The visible presence and antics of motor park touts (also known colloquially as ‘*agboro people*’) in the marketing arena have always posed a threat and been of great concern to children and adults vendors. Children complained that motor park touts bullied them and stole their daily earnings. Such was the experience of many, such as Useni, as he pathetically recounted an ugly experience with a tout. With a

⁶² Derogatory names and references made at street vending children. Drivers and their assistants call children by the names of commodities they sell or names of towns/communities they think they come from, instead of inviting them politely as they do with adults for business transactions.

deep sense of loss and bitterness Useni (11) captured his experience in the following excerpts,

Those people are bad. They no dey see us with good eyes.
...They are thieves! Na so one collect all my money the
other day; He took the N300⁶³ that I suffered to make.

Continuing with the details of this ugly experience which happened around 17.00 hours on the fateful evening, Useni admitted he was alone when this happened and could only recall how the tout called out to him as a genuine buyer.

He told me to show him what I was holding in my hand, I know say he wan take style collect my money but I no gree. ...he took my hands with force, and opened it; he took all the money in my hand and the one in my pocket. I beg am to give me my money but he refused.

Useni raised an alarm and reported the incident to some adults and union members; they followed him immediately to the scene but the tout had disappeared. He went back home with a heavy heart and reported the matter again to his parents but they could not get back his money or identify the culprit.

Many female children talked about sexual overtures from touts and how they lure them into sexual relationships. Grace (14) narrated how they “by-force girls to sleep with them” while Sandra (16) said,

They will call girls as if they want to buy something and if you go near they will just catch you on your dress and force you.

Chizoba (16) admitted she had never fallen victim to their machinations but recounted her friend’s experience:

⁶³ N300 is equivalent of £1.10 at the current exchange rate of N250 to a British Pound

Sometimes they ask you to buy something for them inside the market. They tell you to keep your basin with them and go quickly.... you believe them. But when you come back, you will then discover that your market is no longer complete. ...and if you ask who took it they will command you to get out of their office.

Children were not alone in their observations about and encounters with touts. Even adult traders had a negative dossier about them based either on direct encounters or on regular reports from children. They were said to employ all sorts of tactics in order to get at their unsuspecting victims, particularly girls. People see them as a nuisance and a huge security risk. I also observed the way that some touts bullied children and related to young female vendors, called them names, touched them and exchanged ‘pleasantries’ in ways that suggest intimacy. Everyday, I would see children and touts exchanging jokes and arguments in the marketplace.

6.4.4 With motorists

Commuters, taxi drivers and motor cyclists were another group whose activities impacted on street vending children. Children complained about their driving habits and unsavoury relationships, their reckless disregard for traffic lights and regulations, and how they caused road traffic accidents. About commuters, Damian (13) said;

There own is even worse, taxi and okada riders...They drive as if they are the only road users... sometimes they don't watch the lights ...they don't even obey the yellow fever⁶⁴.

Chinemerem (17) described their driving habits as not only intimidating but horrendous.

They blow their horns so loud and put fear into someone.
...they don't even care whether people are crossing or not.

⁶⁴ Road traffic wardens who conduct humans and vehicular movements along major busy roads in the city. The colour of their uniform – bright yellow shirt on black trousers- earned them the name.

Godspower (11) said they were “hard hearted” because of their uncaring attitude of hitting people and running away. This was the general opinion of most of the children. I also observed the deafening effect of the constant hooting of their horns, their recklessness and utter disregard for traffic rules. I witnessed several near misses and ‘hit and run’ incidents involving vendors, pedestrians and cyclists, but there were no deaths on the spot. Exposure to the risk of road traffic accidents is a constant source of worry for children and indeed for everybody, and traffic wardens seem unable to control the situation.

6.4.5 With customers

Other significant people that children engaged with and spoke critically about were the customers who patronized them regularly. Children’s success at vending depended very much on patronage from customers, but many children perceived customers as unfriendly and even as hindrances towards their achievement of their daily targets. Customers, many said, waste their time as they spend long periods of time going round the market haggling prices with different vendors, scrutinizing and damaging their wares and asking them to bring their prices down. Speaking about them Sandra (16) said,

They are trickish. They will go round pricing things....They will price and price down your market ...and in the end they will walk away and buy from another person after wasting your time. That is what annoys me.

Damian (13), who alternated barrow pushing and vending, found female customers particularly difficult. He remarked;

...they command you and shout at you when you are carrying their loads. ...They tell you to go faster; and when you go fast they shout that you are moving too fast. And when you go slowly they say again that you are wasting their time.

One can imagine children's confusion dealing with such hard-to-please customers as they shouted and gave contradictory instructions. Also commenting about his frustrations with the uncaring attitudes of customers and explaining some of the difficulties in pushing a barrow full of wares through a large crowd in such a busy market place, Paul (14) said,

If the tip of your barrow touches somebody or their displayed wares, you don't enter trouble... That person will hold you and your barrow until people gather round.

Paul's and Damian's experiences coincide with my observations of wheel barrow vendors, particularly children. There was never a day without a fracas between vendors and their customers. The marketplace is so crowded with people and vehicles moving randomly in different directions and one always heard barrow boys shouting "*uzo, uzo*", (meaning road, road), to alert passers-by and asking people to make space for them to push through their barrows, according to Damian. It is always a pathetic sight watching children and young vendors as they contend with difficult customers in such a chaotic environment. These customers are mainly adults from whom children expect more care and understanding.

Some children said that they found customers scary and terrible as they referred to stories of child kidnappers who prey on innocent and unsuspecting children while posing as genuine shoppers. There was a general belief that kidnappers cast magic spells on their victims and dislodge their orientation before driving off with them to undisclosed destinations where they might be killed for ritualistic purposes. Narrating how they employ "*nsi na aja*" [devilish] and "*otumokpo style*" [diabolical means] to get at their victims, mostly children, and turning them into animals for money and ritual purposes, Blessing (12) remarked;

They pretend they are visitors and call you to buy your market or ask you to show them road ... If you answer them or follow them to show them the place, they will touch you with their *juju* [magical spell] you cannot speak or run. And carry you to the place where they turn people into animals.

To outsiders, these stories may appear irrational and superstitious but they were the stories and impressions that were making their rounds in those marketplaces at the time.

Children also described their encounters with customers in moving vehicles, and how these customers made them lose their wares and money and exposed them to road traffic accidents as they tried to make quick sales at traffic lights and on busy street roads. They told how some customers collected their wares, deliberately delayed payment knowing that the green light would come in a matter of seconds, and then quickly drove off without paying. Godspower (11) had experience of this:

They will collect your market and continue to price...wasting your time. They will not pay until the light shines and they drive off.

Damian (13) described such customers as callous as he narrated how some children injured themselves and lost their wares and money chasing after customers in moving vehicles.

You chase them with your market on your head ...if you drop your basin to chase them, you no go see your market again...

The majority of the perceived customers as wicked and devious, and believed that it was the manipulative tendencies and unsupportive attitudes of customers that made selling market tedious and not the actual sale of wares which gave them money for themselves and their families and enhanced their educational and vocational opportunities. Arguments between children and customers were a daily occurrence and this often led to serious altercations between a child's group members and the customer. This often involved children's guardians as they are usually alerted to the scene whenever their wards are involved. Their timely intervention often quelled the

tension but on several occasions I saw scenarios of actual physical exchanges between a child's guardian and the customer.

6.5 DISCUSSION

The picture that emerges from these stories is complex and contradictory. Relationships between children, amongst them and with adults in the marketplaces were mixed. Children experienced support and conflict from both peers and adults in the marketplace.

The tensions included bullying by older vendors, actual and threatened physical and sexual assault, rivalry and competition. Together with the pressure of meeting targets they engendered constant fights and arguments. Children did not like the manipulative tendencies of certain adult members of the community who beat them, stole their wares, and branded them wild and unruly; they did not like the image of themselves as 'spoilt' but wanted to be appreciated for who they are and the contributions they make like everyone else. Despite their financial contribution to the household and to the state, many felt unappreciated by adult members of society. Inadequate support network (no unions) and inadequate cooperation from adults raised issues about safety and protection, and these increased the prevalent climate of suspicion and fear. Actual and alleged incidents of child abductions fuelled the belief that children were kidnapped for money making and ritual purposes. Trusting adults proved a complicated matter. Children sometimes trusted and expected adults to help but at other times they could not trust them because many adults did not treat them fairly. Children hoped for some recognition of their childhood status and relied on adults for protection and support but were often disappointed at adults' interference in their activities. They felt let down, particularly by female customers on whose maternal instincts they relied for nurture and support. This contradicts earlier assertions that women are more caring and closer to children than men. Though their parents and relatives treated them well, unrelated adults in the marketplace treated them badly. The devious lifestyles of customers, bus drivers and their assistants, revenue collectors and *agboro* people as well as the recklessness of drivers brought undue pressure on children, exposed them to road traffic accidents

and escalated their vulnerability. But in spite of all these, children pulled together and supported one another at various times and many were happy to continue to sell market for their relations.

Togunde and Carter (2006) suggest that child labour is a learned behaviour both within and outside the household. This is borne out by my study. Children revealed that peer groups and team work were vital resources for reaching their daily targets and getting along smoothly and successfully in the marketplace, but the relationships were not always cordial. Children did not belong to trade associations and their small groups could not guarantee them adequate protection. Though market associations and local authorities offer some form of protection and though children's small friendship groups provided some level of support and protection as well, these were not sufficient. Various traders' associations existed in many marketplaces promoting their members' welfare but none was set up to meet children's specific needs. Even the wheel barrow association to which a few children belonged was dominated by adults, and that left children open to manipulation by the adults who controlled those associations.

It is often believed that children are the product of the society in which they live and are raised. Street vending children faced a wide range of complex and conflicting challenges in their daily encounters as they tried to negotiate with various groups and individuals in the vending environment. Relationships between children and adults in the marketplaces often created friction and feelings of unhappiness. Children's vending experiences exposed them to a wide range of good and not-so-good influences which could shape their future and affect their lives and well-being either positively or negatively (Woodhead,1999: 29). For instance, operating in a fiercely competitive marketplace may enhance children's skilfulness and inventiveness to negotiate and take decisions on how best to meet their daily challenges and expectations but can also have damaging consequences.

Street working children have been represented erroneously as wild, untamed and abandoned (Schurink, 1993), having little or no adult protection and supervision

(Hope, 2005) but this was not the case with the children in this study. They had adult supervision from their parents and from others who intervened and interfered in their affairs. Their small friendship groups and older siblings provided safety, solidarity, and encouragement in good and difficult times - sharing information, food and experiences. Though children bullied and quarrelled with each other individually and within their small friendship groups, their accounts showed that they endured hardship and mistreatment, not necessarily from vending but from adult members of society, "those with greater power and authority" (Woodhead, 1999: 38), who took advantage of their innocence and vulnerability and treated them disrespectfully. Growing up in a society with strong traditional beliefs and cultural practices, a society that places great expectations on children and much emphasis on respect and compliance with adult instructions in an unquestioning manner (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003), leaves children more vulnerable. Adults wield a huge influence over younger ones and any form of resistance from them is viewed as gross disrespect and disobedience and usually met with threats and reprisal (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003) by the same adults whose behaviours and attitudes force them into such reactionary situations. The childhood of these street vending children and young people, like that of children elsewhere in Africa, emphasizes discipline, compliance, dependence, power and authority to a degree that sometimes suggests excessive reverence and fear (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003).

Street vending children enjoyed freedom of movement and peer support. Their linkages and partnerships within their small friendship groups encourage group work and team spirit. Punch's study of children in rural Bolivia demonstrates that just as children have a great sense of attachment, respect and responsibility to their families so they also have to their small groups which provides them security and protection especially when threatened (Punch, 2002a:132). I observed that children actively interacted with both adults and peers within and outside their small friendship groups. There were frequent fights and quarrels over a range of issues but they were often resolved amongst themselves or with the help of adults. Towards evening time, at the end of each hawking day, the same children that had been embroiled in fights and squabbles over customers were seen playing football, rope skipping and local

sports while some stood by watching and cheering their favourite groups. They were often seen laughing, sharing jokes and snacks, playfully pushing one another and making coded remarks that only their group members were able to understand.

Children enjoyed the “excitement and companionship” that vending offered (Myers and Boyden, 1998:6) and for that reason did not consider street trading itself as laborious and abusive. Their stories and acceptance of the scuffles in the marketplace seem to suggest that street vending is not necessarily detrimental as it has positive effects as well as negative ones (Punch 2003: 281; Boyden et al., 1998; Connolly and Ennew, 1996) on them. The constant negotiations with various groups in the marketplaces and their coping strategies demonstrate children’s agency and show that they are neither mere victims prone to abuse and needing protection nor were they passive recipients of socialization. They shape and are shaped by their working experiences as they try to make sense of their physical and social worlds (Woodhead, 1999, Punch, 2001a, 2003); negotiating with guardians, peers and customers and making the best out of the difficult circumstances they find themselves in.

The markets were free and open to anybody who had something to buy or sell and there were no restrictions on what each person could sell, where to sell or who to sell to. Vendors sold similar wares and this engendered rivalry. Competition was even fiercer not only because of uniformity of goods but because there were no quality checks, no price control and no monitoring mechanisms. Each vendor determined his or her prices depending on his or her source of procurement and, of course, on the vagaries of the market. For many children, their livelihoods depended on the quantity of wares they were able to sell and how much money they made from sales. Achieving this demanded hard work and ingenuity. Out of their ingenuity and problem-solving abilities children and their group members devised unique ways and means of reaching their targets in a mutually interdependent manner; negotiating and renegotiating with both social and structural constraints and opportunities (Punch, 2002b: 124) within the vending environment. Child street vendors are not a bunch of naïve, immature and incompetent beings needing protectionist support (Burr and

Montgomery, 2003: 144-151). They understood group dynamics and many were able to make informed decisions and choices. As active agents, they contribute in shaping their lives and those of others around them and are capable of negotiating opportunities and constraints according to their ability and unique circumstances (Woodhead, 2003).

Children want to be respected not only because of the contributions and services they make towards their families and communities in terms of their available labour and finances but because of who they are and their capacity to engage in activities and negotiations that shape their lives and the lives of others (Myers and Boyden, 1998). The contributions which child vendors make towards their personal development and family sustenance, and the financial contributions to the local authorities' revenue also proves that they are not passive recipients of culture and socialization but are actively involved in nation building. By their actions and contributions, they are dynamically helping in the "preservation and further development of human life and society" (Liebel, 2004:9). It may not always be the case but children (and adults) often believe that these vending experiences will imbue them with life skills, "vocational learning and a traditional form of education" (Togunde and Carter 2006: 76) that will prepare them for their future as they progress from childhood to adulthood.

6.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has described the different individuals and groups of people (significant others) in the marketing arena who are closely involved, in varying degrees, in the lives of street vending children - interacting, supervising, mentoring and shaping their experiences and outlook. Accounts of relationships with these significant others were varied, and almost every child that I spoke to had had unpleasant encounters either personally or in their small groups with touts, commuters, revenue collectors and their numerous customers.

The struggle and scramble for customers was not only amongst child vendors but with adult street vendors and established traders also. Children displayed various

coping strategies in their relationships with peers, older vendors and adult members of the public and this meant fiercer competition. The general comments on their relationship with adult traders were varied and sometimes contradictory to the caring, supervisory and safety provisions expected of adults and guardians. Children's stories described the manipulative behaviours and unfriendly attitudes of older traders and shop owners, constant harassment from revenue collectors and incessant verbal abuses and threats from other adult groups, notably bus drivers and their assistants. The reckless driving habits of motorists and enticement by market touts raise safety issues. Their narratives about kidnappers, revenue collectors and the menace of touts confirm the hostilities and uncertainties which children face in their work environment and their varied experiences and verdicts show that they were generally appalled and disappointed.

The market place, though open and large, was a small closely knit community, where people interacted closely and news travelled quickly. The constant verbal exchanges, fights and quarrels between children and other workers in the marketplace were a daily feature. The dubious activities and seductive antics of *agboro* people were a recurring experience that dominated my discussions with the children, so much so that much of their vending experiences seemed to revolve around them. Street vending children demanded more understanding, support and protection particularly from adult traders, who see them as competitors rather than collaborators, and from the wider community who often exploit their vulnerability, call them names and condemn their childhoods as 'spoilt'. Yet, despite the negatives, children said they enjoyed vending primarily because of the good social contacts and relationships.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND PERCEPTIONS OF LIFE BEYOND VENDING

7.1 INTRODUCTION

It has emerged from earlier discussions that children spent time on various domestic chores before and after vending and on school-related activities at home and at school. This chapter is about the educational and career aspirations of street vending children and how they juggled schooling and vending. The chapter is based on my observations and on children's self reports about their school attendance. I explore firstly the matter of children's access to formal education⁶⁵, how regularly they attended school, what levels of education they were at, what type of education was available to them and their perceptions about vending and education, if conflicting or complementary, and their aspirations beyond vending. Secondly, I discuss briefly the impact of gender on children's educational and career aspirations. Appearing in various school uniforms and wearing different inscriptions and badges show that they attended different schools. Their success stories about juggling school and vending seem to indicate that they are doing well in their age appropriate cohorts but I cannot judge how well or how badly children fared at school, since I did not question their teachers, neither did I check the children's academic records. It was not part of my research plan to measure their academic progress, but children's self reports seem to suggest that they are happy to be at school.

Before describing my observations and conversations with the children, I shall discuss briefly Nigeria's educational policies in relation to children and how its educational system is organized and administrated, in order to set the context within which these children were being educated. Doing so will help us to appreciate children's perceptions about education, the efforts which they and their guardians make in order to access educational opportunities, and why the children's stories often revolved around assisting parents to raise money to pay for their schooling.

⁶⁵ Access to formal education here refers to school attendance and participation in school related activities such as after school lessons.

7.2 NIGERIA'S NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Federal Ministry of Education, through the National Council on Education (NCE), which is the country's highest policymaking body in educational affairs, has responsibility for harmonizing all federal, state and local educational policies and procedures in the country. Three tiers of educational administration exist. Primary education is administered by the local government authorities (LGAs); secondary education is administered by the states, with the exception of special science schools⁶⁶ and Unity Schools⁶⁷ which are controlled by the federal government, while tertiary education is controlled by both federal and state governments. There are other agencies responsible for administering non-university higher education and non-degree teacher education qualifications (Federal Ministry of Education: (2001); Federal Republic of Nigeria (August 2001); UNESCO International Bureau of Education – (2003). The private sector is also involved with providing education at all levels but private schools are profit-orientated, expensive and not readily available to everyone. A huge disparity exists between federal and state schools and those owned by private agencies in terms of quality of staff, supervision, teaching materials and infrastructures (Clark and Sedgwick, 2004) but the federal government has overall responsibility for providing education at all levels (Nigerian Child Right Act, 2003: 15).

Section 15 of the 2003 Child's Rights Act states that:

- (1) Every child has the right to free, compulsory and universal basic education ...
- (2) Every parent or guardian shall ensure that his (her) child or ward attends and completes - primary school education and junior secondary education.

⁶⁶ Schools built specifically for teaching and learning of science subjects. This is part of the federal government's effort to encourage Science and Engineering courses in Nigeria.

⁶⁷ Established in each of the states of the federation by the federal government to foster unity and patriotism among the youth.

- (3) The child's parents, guardian or legal custodian should endeavour to send him or her to senior secondary school or where not possible,

The child shall be encouraged to learn an appropriate trade and the employer ... shall provide the necessaries for learning the trade.

Nigeria's complete formal education system runs through a 16-year cycle of 6-3-3-4 model of full time education. This requires six years primary education, a two-tier [3-year junior (JS), 3-year senior (SS)] secondary education and a minimum of four years of university education (a bachelor's degree in most academic disciplines). The system is based on continuous assessment but after six years of primary education children must pass the primary or first school leaving certificate examination (FSLCE). Those who wish to continue to secondary level education must pass the common entrance examination to qualify for admission. Apart from early childhood education, the official primary school enrolment age for Nigerian children into government schools is six. Pre-school education, which is mostly available and usually concentrated in urban areas, is recognized by the national policy on education for children below the age of five prior to entry into primary school (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1998); Nigeria High Commission, Ottawa (2007). Primary education (Grades 1-6), is between six to twelve years, junior secondary (Grades 7-9) is between ages 12- 15 and senior secondary (Grades 10-12) is between ages 15 -18 (Ejeh, 2006).

There have been a series of educational reforms in Nigeria since 1980 (Ayo and Adebisi, 2008) which have had major impacts on the educational calendar and curricula, particularly at the secondary school level, with stronger emphasis placed on science and technology (Clark and Sedgwick: 2004). Originally, secondary school education in Nigeria was closely modelled on the English system of five years at the ordinary level (GCSE O - Level) and a further two years of advanced level

(GCE A - Level) but this has now been replaced with the six-year junior and senior secondary school cycles. At the end of the first three years of junior secondary education, children take a nationwide examination known as the junior school certificate examination (JSCE) before proceeding to the senior secondary level. At the end of this, they also sit another qualifying examination known as the senior school certificate examination (SSCE). The SSCE is administered by the regional West African Examination Council (WAEC), and is a major qualifying examination which replaces the former GCE O- level. The system also provides for people not enrolled into full time educational institutions (private candidates) to sit the GCE O and A levels for entry qualification into universities. On completion of the SSCE, those who wish tertiary level education must sit different qualifying examinations for admission into universities and polytechnics. The SSCE O - level qualifies students for admission into university education depending on the level of pass at the University Matriculation Examination, which is conducted by the Nigerian Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). Successful students then go through another selection examination specifically administered by the particular universities of their choice. The education system is highly competitive and examination orientated.

Nigeria has signed up to a number of international treaties and declarations including the UN Human Rights Act of 1948:26; the UNCRC of 1989:32; UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG: 2) and the Dakar Summit of year 2000 which advocate for the right of every child to a free, available and compulsory primary education irrespective of gender. For instance, the Dakar Framework for Action and the second Millennium Development Goal (MDG 2) of year 2000 specifically state that by 2015, “all children of primary school age would participate in free schooling of acceptable quality...” (UNESCO EFA (2002).

With the onset of democratic rule in 1999 and in keeping with these resolutions, Nigeria launched a Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 1999 aimed at achieving these mandates, particularly Goal 2 of the MDGs. The government committed to making 6 years of primary schooling and the first three years of

secondary education free and compulsory and to ensuring that boys and girls complete a full course of quality education by the year 2015 (UNDP, 2000) in accordance with the UBE scheme (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2000). The UBE replaces the former 6-3-3-4 system with a 9-3-4 system. This scheme, which is monitored by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), means that public schools do not and should not charge fees for the first nine years of a child's education. By introducing the UBE program, Nigeria commits to providing free, compulsory and quality education but my fieldwork revealed that the UBE programme is yet to be implemented in all states of the federation (This Day, 2008). In practice, free public schools and fee paying private educational opportunities for children at the primary and secondary levels are available, but there are hidden costs for which parents are responsible for providing school uniforms, text books and other school-related materials and expenses. The reality is that the costs of educating children are often expensive even in so-called 'free' public schools. Those sundry costs affect the accessibility, availability and quality of educational opportunities for many children and their families.

7.3 SCHOOLING: COMPLUSORY OR NOT?

Returning to the fieldwork setting, children were often seen vending wares even during school times. This suggests that schooling is not compulsory and not all children attended school. When I asked children why they were not at school, David (7) in primary two responded,

We are no longer doing anything. It is only playing and sweeping the compound that we are doing in school.

David, who was selling wares in his full school uniform, had actually attended school that morning but came back earlier because there were no classes.

Eka (16) in SS 2 also did not attend school because they had finished their end of term examinations and

We are not doing anything important at school ...teachers are no longer teaching us.

She said that she enjoyed vending as a useful pastime, and so she decided to use those free days "...to be useful to myself" instead of participating in extra-curricula activities and socializing with her school mates.

It may be argued that Eka and David gave socially acceptable responses in order to justify their truancy but having lived and studied in Nigeria, I know from personal experience that when teaching and examinations are over, children usually spend the remaining days before the end of school term playing and cleaning their school compounds while they await their results which are usually given out on the last school day. At such times, some guardians request that their children and wards do not attend school but spend such free time on what the guardians perceive to be more valuable activities such as assisting with trading or doing chores at home. Many guardians thought that teaching and writing examinations are the only worthwhile events at school, forgetting or not acknowledging that social interactions and participation in extra-curricular activities, such as school sanitation exercises, are also part of schooling.

I did not see any school attendance officers or any form of monitoring of attendance by the local authorities⁶⁸ throughout the duration of my fieldwork and this seems to confirm my observations that schooling was not compulsory. If schooling had been compulsory, the local authorities would have measures to ensure compliance and no school-aged children would be left to vend or loiter about in marketplaces during school times; whether or not examinations and teaching were over. One can also argue that schooling may be compulsory but the LGA has no interest or the resources for dealing with the problem. To the best of my knowledge, nobody seemed to have cared to find out why many school-aged children openly sold wares in their school uniforms during school hours instead of being at school and there did not seem to be any concerted effort by the local authorities to enforce compulsory schooling.

⁶⁸ Provision of primary and secondary education is the constitutional responsibility of local authorities (see chapter one for details of this responsibility).

According to children and adults, schooling is not free. As I described in the chapter five, one of the reasons for children engaging in street vending was to assist their parents to raise money for their school fees and other related expenses. In most Nigerian schools, public and private, the wearing of school uniforms for school is compulsory, and it is the responsibility of parents and guardians to provide them. Some children alleged that they are not allowed in to school if they do not have the correct school uniforms and accessories. Conversations with children and some adults suggested that free primary education is not a reality. They complained of regular financial demands from schools, what Chizoba (16) referred to as “bring this, bring that”. Some adults made cynical remarks suggesting that the UBE program and policies only existed on paper, yet many still had a high regard for quality education. Children and their guardians seemed enthusiastic about education despite the prohibitive costs, and many said that they attended private fee-paying after-school-lessons in order to make extra preparations for examinations.

7.4 CHILDREN’S EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS.

Although all but one of the children (23 out of 24) said that they attended school, a significant number were behind in their education. I did not investigate whether or not they attended pre-schools but calculating their age against the actual and expected levels of education they were at the time of interview shows that only one third (eight out of the 24 children) were at the expected level or one year ahead, and that two thirds were below the expected levels of education (See appendix 7 for a summary of their educational levels). A breakdown of this shows that five children (four males and one female) were at exact educational level, three (two males and one female) were one year ahead of expected level, nine (four males and five females) were one year below expected educational level, five (two males and three females) were two years below expected level, and one male child was three years below the expected educational level. There was no available data on one female child. This is based on self reports and on my calculation that the official primary school entry age is six and that primary schooling is between age six to twelve years, junior secondary is between age 12-15 and senior secondary is between ages 15-18.

Several reasons may be responsible for this disparity: It could be that the five children at the exact educational levels may have started primary school at the correct school age of six and progressed smoothly without any interruptions while the three that were one year above the expected level may have either attended private pre-schools and/or started primary schools at an earlier age, say age five. Considering that the three were in secondary school at the time of interview, it could also be that they had an accelerated schooling (probably skipped a class) and promotion (if they are very bright) and consequently got into secondary school one year earlier. I acknowledge from my previous pre-research employment and information from friends and relatives and with these young children that enrolment into public schools in Nigeria is not done strictly based on age. People enrol their children whenever they are ready. Some start at the right age of six but many start later and most private schools usually accept children into primary one from age five. I also know that some schools promote exceptionally bright pupils by either making them skip a class or allowing them the opportunity to sit examination for entry into secondary school from primary five instead of completing grade six. I was also told that many top private schools operate a five year primary school system, which means that their pupils move into secondary school from primary five, but this was not the case for the three children in my study.

Similarly, it is possible that the nine children who were one year below the expected level of education either had a late start in primary school or missed a school year at some stage. However, one interesting observation from my calculations is that they are likely to complete secondary school at age 18 if everything goes well in their schooling. For instance, Nkiru and Kola, both aged nine years and currently in P3, will be in P6 at age 12 if there is no interruption. Useni (11) in P5 will be in P6 at age 12. Christiana and Adamu, both 12 and in P6 will get into JS1 at age 13 and finish SS at age 18. The same applies to Nkechi, Sandra and Chinemerem as they will be completing their secondary education at age 18, if there are no hitches. This implies that under normal circumstances 17 out of the 24 children will eventually leave school at the right age and educational levels. The fact that 23 children were in

school can be taken as an indicator of the importance of education to the children and their parents despite the costs, precarious circumstances and the low literacy levels and incomes of their guardians, many of who were illiterate or semi literate artisans and low ranking military officers.

Of most concern are the six children who were two or three years below the expected levels of education, particularly Emeka (14) who was three years below and still in primary six at an age when he should be completing his junior secondary education. My calculation shows that he should be rounding off his secondary education at age 20. Assuming that there are no health issues, the reasons for their lagging behind may be due to a number of factors including a late start to schooling, or missing or dropping out of school at some point due to poverty or to poor performance which may have resulted in failure or a repeat year. Failure at school could be attributed to long hours of vending which does not allow adequate time for school work or to guardian interference, which was the case with Chinemerem, Chinenye and Paul.

Chinemerem, (17) who was one year behind her expected level, lived with and sold used newspapers for her aunt. She attended evening school and often complained about not having time for her studies. She was involved in double vending and was always late to school because she spent most of her day in the market selling newspapers and was not always able to catch up with her school assignments. After reading out her daily routine from daybreak till dawn, Chinemerem asked, “When will you have time to look into books”.

Paul (14), who was two years behind, complained of irregular school attendance when he lived as a house boy, “only on days I am allowed to” and he had difficulty coping with his school assignments after spending long hours on vending and domestic chores. Paul complained that he always felt tired and too sleepy to study because

They left everything for me to do ...It is me who will
go to sell...and come back to do everything...

It seems very likely that Paul and Chinemerem lost years because they could not keep up with their school work due to a heavy workload from vending and domestic chores in which case they might have failed a class or even two. Given that the 6-3-3-4 educational system is based on continuous assessments and that children are often expected to do lots of exercises at home and at school for their promotion into the next class, working to such heavy and tight schedule may have hampered their academic progress. It is also likely that Paul lost those years in the process of moving from his parent's home to his employers and back to his parents.

Mobility, instability and change of location may disrupt children's education. Some children lose time as they move home. For example, Nkiru (9) was in primary three and one year below her expected education level. She had attended her village school where she lived with her parents before coming over to the city to live with her aunt. She was not enrolled in school at the time of fieldwork because she missed out on the beginning of the current school year and would have to wait till the beginning of a new school year. Her aunt promised to get her enrolled into a nearby school in the coming year, but in the meantime, Nkiru had to wait, hoping that her aunt's promise would be fulfilled. Feeling enthusiastic about the prospect of starting school in the city in the next school year, Nkiru (9) said

My aunty said she will start for me when school begins again.

Not many schools in Nigeria, if any, would accept new pupils midway through an academic year and even if they do, the reality is that there is no guarantee that Nkiru will be placed at the same level that she was, if and when she eventually starts. At best, she may be made to start from the class level she was at in her village, or placed one or two years below, depending on the ranking and quality of the new school and her performance in the recruitment test. Obviously, Nkiru's schooling was interrupted by her move to the city. She was fostered out to her maternal aunt for whatever intended benefits but that move clearly has consequences for her educational progress. Though Nkiru did not express any regrets about this

movement and its effect, her case points to the likely impact of fostering on children's education in Nigeria.

Clearly, relocation has disrupted Nkiru's educational progress. This was also the case with Emeka (14) who was three years below his expected school level. He lived with his elder brother who worked for a water packaging company but he had also lived with and sold wares for another brother. Narrating how he lost schooling time in the periods between moving from his rural home to his brothers who lived in two different cities, Emeka (14) said:

I no enter immediately...I stay small help my brother
for his shade [shop] before he started school for me.

It was not established whether Emeka started school at the official age of six but even if he did, his schooling had been interrupted as a result of moving from his village to the city of Onitsha with one brother, and then back to his village before moving in with his other brother in Enugu, where I met him. It is also possible that he started school later than age six and/ or may have failed one or more classes or more considering that he came from an impoverished family and from a locality that is widely known in Nigeria to be educationally backward⁶⁹.

Children may lose time in changing from rural to urban schools, particularly if they do not pass the entrance requirements for the new school. Normally, many schools in Nigeria require transferring students to take an oral or written examination to assess their suitability for admission. Depending on the school's policy, the discretion of the school administrator, and their performances, those who do not pass the test may be refused admission or placed in remedial classes, which could be one or two classes behind, irrespective of their age, while successful children are admitted into the correct classes. Through this process, some children, particularly those from rural schools, fall behind the expected level because of differences in standards.

⁶⁹ Literacy level in that part is low, most child domestics are employed from there and the state is notorious for producing house helps, the majority of whom do not attend school.

7.5 SCHOOL QUALITY: URBAN VERSUS RURAL SCHOOLS

Several children alluded to remarkable differences in standards between urban and rural schools. Speaking about this disparity, Godwin (13) who lived with his elder brother, an Army officer, said;

My brother told me to stay and do my secondary school here. He said schools in Enugu are better than the ones at our home.

Godwin had already completed primary school, passed the common entrance examination and was preparing to start secondary school at his rural village. His brother persuaded him to come to the city for his secondary education because of his belief that urban schools are of a higher standard. Godwin had a smooth educational transition and was lucky to have been placed in the correct class and level commensurate with his age. Godwin was able to catch up in his new school, but this is not always the case. Godwin said that he enjoyed living and going to school in the city and noticed the difference between rural and urban schools as he further remarked,

Township children are very intelligent, everybody speaks English.

The quality of teaching and learning in urban schools is higher than at his rural school and urban school children are better spoken and more self assured than rural school children who tend to speak in native dialect. Godwin also said that schooling in an urban secondary school was the best thing that had happened to him.

My brother put me in a good school. ...bought everything for my schooling, why should I complain?
... He has done everything for me.

He was very appreciative of the urban educational opportunity which his brother had provided for him and said that he would not do anything to offend his brother or anything that would jeopardize his education. His eloquence, and his ability to communicate and engage with customers, were some of the benefits of schooling in

the urban area which he believed had increased his competence and self assurance compared to most of his peers in his rural village.

In Nigeria, there is a noticeable and well understood difference in educational resources and teaching standards between city and rural schools. Urban schools are generally believed to be better and of a higher standard than rural schools in terms of quality of teaching, learning and facilities. However, variation exists within and between urban schools. Some of the children in this study attended private schools but not the top notch ones. Many spoke about the disparity between the private schools which they attended and the top schools with their high academic success rates. For instance, Josephat (14) attended a private school but was aware that his educational opportunities and childhood differed from those of “GRA children” from affluent families and neighbourhoods who attended better quality schools and enjoyed luxuries and extra opportunities⁷⁰. He said,

GRA Children have servants and drivers who carry them to school. Their mothers drive big cars. They attend good schools and speak proper English ... wear nice clothes, appear on Tales by Moonlight⁷¹.

Josephat claimed that GRA children did not attend school irregularly neither did they have to sell market like him. He also mentioned that GRA children were chauffeur-driven to school and had an array of servants and domestic assistants who did things on their behalf thus allowing them ample time to attend to their school work, gain good marks and enjoy better educational opportunities and childhood. But Josephat

⁷⁰ Government Reserved Area is an exclusive low density residential area for socio-economically successful people. It was originally created and inhabited by European officials during the colonial era. This area is characterized by colonial style detached houses and modern buildings with beautiful spacious gardens. It is now inhabited by the rich and elites, politicians, high income government workers, company directors and big bank managers. GRA have low crime rates, good roads, big and beautiful palatial homes, with modern facilities such as private swimming pools, satellite dishes and cables with steady supplies of water and electricity. In contrast to the GRA districts are the overcrowded and less developed areas with small bungalows and shanty buildings that have little or no good architectural designs; run – down houses and clustered buildings inhabited mainly by people of lower income, most of which do not have piped water and electricity supply is episodic. These flats and houses are often filled beyond capacity with an official occupier and his family plus many job-seeking relatives and friends.

⁷¹ A children’s special weekly (Sunday) TV program

acknowledged that child vendors had to work extra hard to raise income for their education and daily needs and many had to attend extra lessons in order to improve their grades and beat the competition for top quality schools. Josephat's comparisons suggest that GRA children had a smooth educational progress while child vendors engaged in income generating activities and performed chores that may have derailed their academic progress. His comparison not only points to disparities in the quality of education among private schools but to disparities in childhood opportunities. GRA children may not necessarily be cleverer or any better academically but there is a popular belief among Nigerians that people who speak good English are clever. The ability to communicate fluently in English or any foreign language is generally accepted as a mark of intelligence and a sign that one attended a good school and had a good quality education (Ejeh, 2006).

7.6 IMPACT OF VENDING ON SCHOOLING

Opinions about the impact of vending on children's educational performance varied among children and adults. Many saw both positive and negative consequences. While some children believed that street vending exposed them to positive learning opportunities which enhanced their school performances, others claimed that it impeded their performance. As described earlier, Paul and Chinemerem, who were behind their expected levels of education, believed that vending retarded their academic progress. Sandra also shared this view as she narrated how her parents stopped her from vending when she moved to senior secondary level because they felt that she needed to spend more time on her studies.

They said I should use the time to read my books so I
can pass well in my exam.

Sandra also said that her parents would not allow her and her siblings to sell wares during examination time and would only allow her younger siblings in junior classes to sell market but then only after they had completed their school assignments in order to be prepared adequately and do well in their studies. Sandra acknowledged

the positive impacts of vending but also remarked that it is necessary to set limits on vending times because vending retards children's educational success.

Damian (13) said that his parents agreed that he would discontinue vending when he gets to JS 3 so that he could

Prepare well for my junior WAEC ...and score A, A,
A in all my exams so I can attend Special Science
School⁷².

Damian stated that his parents were happy about the contributions from vending by himself and his siblings but would rather not have them do it for long. He believed that vending retards children's educational progress despite the fact that it helps them to raise money for their school needs. Damian has high academic ambitions and his greatest hope is to pass his JSCE exams with high grades and gain admission into a special science school for children who want to study science and engineering.

However, some children admitted that although vending interfered with their studies, it was instrumental in their success at school. Many said that they coped well and were able to juggle vending, schooling and domestic chores because of support from their guardians who often controlled the times for vending and for attending to school-related activities. This was the verdict of Useni, a vivacious 11-year old boy in P.5, who said,

No, selling market does not do me anything.I pass
all my exams very well.

He was one year below his expected level of education but claimed that he performed well at school and was able to manage vending, domestic chores and academic responsibilities simultaneously. Useni, who wants to be a medical doctor, also spoke about how his parents provided him with his school needs and insisted that he did his homework soon after school, before vending. He attended a private

⁷² Special science schools are specially built and equipped schools located in different parts of the country for children who are science inclined. Special entrance examinations are taken after junior secondary education for admission into the schools. They are very competitive and are intended for candidates with a good flair for pure and applied sciences.

school and after-school lessons despite his parents' low income status, and said that he always attained high marks in his assignments. Useni was articulate and expressive and communicated well and fluently in English.

Chizoba, (16) also believes that vending helped her to achieve high grades in her school subjects and that she owes her success in Mathematics, Accounting and Book keeping to her vending experience of buying and selling, giving change and keeping records of her family business transactions over the years.

The subject that I like most is Mathematics... The reason it is easy for me is because when you sell and give change to people you remove [subtract] ...after you add your profits.

She wants to further her education up to university level and become an accountant.

Josephat (14) was one of those at the exact educational level. He attended evening lessons three times a week, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and believed that his vending experiences had been instrumental to his good performance at school. He referred to an essay that he had written based on his vending experience, which had earned him high marks and admiration from his teachers and school mates.

I wrote about the day Ojukwu⁷³ and his wife came to this place during the election campaigns⁷⁴...I got high marks for that. I saw him with my two eyes.

Josephat was able to incorporate his vending experiences into the classroom situation and this enabled it to have a positive impact on his school performance. Seeing Ojukwu and his wife during a political rally in the motor park made an indelible impression, and obtaining high grades from his essay on that event added more

⁷³ Ojukwu, an Igbo man, is one of the most respected Nigerian leaders. He was commander in charge of the Biafran soldiers during the 30 month old bloody Nigerian/Biafra Civil war which lasted from 1967 – 1970. He is a very respected and influential political stalwart in present day Nigerian politics. He contested the presidential election in year 2003. His wife, Bianca, a former beauty queen, once won the world's most beautiful girl competition – Miss Universe in 1996. Both of them are celebrities in the Nigerian society.

⁷⁴ Motor parks and marketplaces are usual hubs for political rallies and mass mobilisation campaigns

positive value to his school experiences. He enjoyed vending for various reasons and would like to become a politician and a successful businessman. It is likely that his political ambitions may have been fuelled by the positive memory of the political rally that he wrote about in his school essay.

Conversations with the children and their guardians show that they placed an important premium on education. Of the three major activities (vending, schooling and domestic chores) on which children spent most of their time and energy, education is accorded the highest value. Explaining how important schooling is to her, Chizoba (16) remarked, “Everybody knows that education is the best”. This was also the verdict of the enthusiastic and outspoken Blessing, (12) who was in primary five but two years below normal school age.

Schooling is better by far! There is nothing you can compare it with.

Like the majority of the children, Blessing attended school but was involved in daily double vending before and after school. She loves vending and said that she always did her school assignments before vending.

I go home first, remove my school uniform, eat food...do my homework first before I carry my market go sell.

Some children said they did their assignments soon after school, before vending while others did theirs after vending. Doing school work at night after a long and arduous day presents another dimension to the debate on the impact of vending on school performance.

7.7 CAREER ASPIRATIONS, CHOICES AND REALITIES.

Kola (9), in P.3 who lived with her parents and five siblings in the army barracks, aspired to be a policeman. He liked the profession because his uncle, whom he

admired so much, was a highly respected senior police officer and he thought that all police officers had good education, enjoyed respect and earned well.

Police people get plenty money...people fear [respect] them.

Adamu, a 12 year old P6 pupil aspired to study

Computer Science in the university [and] open my own shop where I will sell computers and electronics equipment.

Adamu believed that setting up his business meant greater independence and freedom from hardship and poverty. He aspired to university but wanted to have his business up and running first, in order to fund his university education. Besides, he said that he would not want his time at university to be interrupted due to a lack of funds and would also not like to depend on his family for funding. Adamu's choice for the future was based purely on economic considerations because his parents were poor and unlikely to be able to fund tertiary education for him.

Godspower (11) who sold peeled oranges and was in JS 1, a year ahead of his educational level, also aspired to go to university and to train as a medical doctor. Justin (9) in primary two also wished to be a medical doctor. For Ud in JS1, his long term goal was to become a successful international businessman. He hoped to be able to set up his own business, "travel abroad...and send all my children abroad to study". Being able to travel overseas for business and leisure and training his children abroad were his greatest aspirations and perceived indicators of personal success.

7.8 GENDER, EDUCATION AND CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Even though gender was not an explicit objective, data from my observations and interviews brought gender issues to the fore. My observations show that both boys

and girls were engaged in itinerant sale of wares and children repeatedly made allusions to the fact that boys and girls did not move together. Some also said that their parents would prefer that their male children went out to the markets rather than their females while others mentioned that gender played a dominant role in the type of chores they performed at home and the length of time they spent selling wares in marketplaces. Because of these allusions and how important they were to the children, I decided to discuss the issue of gender but not in great detail. However, it is important to reiterate that most of the children lived with and vended for their relations and their primary loyalty was to the female matriarchs of their families, majority of who were in charge of their vending and schooling. The reason I discussed gender together with education is to see how vending impacts on children's education due to the fact that eight out of the 15 children who were behind their expected educational levels were females. And also to bring to the fore children's claims that some parents would prefer to have their boys attend school while girls could be withdrawn from school. Preference of male children over female children is an issue and practice that goes on in many parts of Nigeria (Oloko, 1991) but is outside the remit of this study.

Some children attended school full time during school periods while attendance for others was irregular. Being female determined to a large degree whether or not a child attended school regularly. For example, Chinenye, (10) had lived with her married aunt since the age of six. She was in full time education and in primary three at the time of interview but her attendance was controlled by and dependent on what plans her aunt, who herself was a young nursing mother and trader, had for her. Chinenye admitted that she often skipped school but was unable to recall the number of times.

I don't go all the time. If my aunty tells me to go, I go, if she tells me to stay and mind the children, I stay.

She was occasionally pulled out of school so that she could assist with child-minding and home care. It seems that her aunt did not send her own children to nursery or day care, and Chinenye minded them at the expense of regular school attendance.

Chinenye's experience is more likely to be the experience of female children and house-helpers living in households where younger children are not placed in nurseries or day care. Besides, there are not many day care facilities in the city, and existing ones are not always accessible to low income households. In addition, guardians may not see the value in placing their children in nurseries when they can conveniently engage relatives as minders.

As with adults, their gender and their experiences, whether positive or negative, impact on children's aspirations. For instance, Chinenye said that she would like to be a nurse because of her belief that nurses are compassionate. "They care for people and know much about peoples' health". She may have developed her maternal caring and compassionate instincts and nursing aspirations from minding her aunt's younger children.

Similarly, Nkiru (9) who like Chinenye was in primary three, and lived with her married aunt and her young children. She recalled her school days in her rural village with nostalgia and told how she and her friends used to run errands for her school teacher who she liked so much because,

She is a very nice person... she liked our class and
always treated us like her children

Like others, Nkiru had great ambitions beyond vending. She said that she enjoyed schooling when she lived with her parents in her rural village and would like to be a teacher. Her choice of teaching was a direct influence of her positive experiences and memories of schooling and her special liking for her school teacher.

Christiana, (12) was in primary six and had been selling wares for more than three years. Her immediate concern was to pass her secondary school entrance examination and attend one of the most prestigious girls' schools in the city.

I want to go to HRC [Holy Rosary College] Enugu⁷⁵.
My mother said she will send me to the boarding house
if I pass their exam.

Quality education is important to her and she was studying hard to score high marks that will enable her to gain entrance into this prestigious girls' school. Christiana would like to obtain a university education, marry, have children and own a clothing and fashion business.

Blessing (12) also enjoyed vending and schooling but she gave priority to her school affairs. She would like to be married with children and train as a nurse after her secondary education. Her preference for nursing may be related to socio-cultural gender stereotyping that women are more inclined towards home care and child minding.

Gender stereotyping seems to be a factor that informed children's educational aspirations. For example, Grace (14) who aspired to become a banker also wants to be a "good wife and mother". She claimed that being able to cook and take responsibility for her younger siblings early on prepared her for motherhood but being two years below expected educational level raises concerns over her academic ability to train as a banker.

The major concern of Chinemerem's (17) was to complete her secondary education successfully, get married and have children, and get a university level education later. She wanted a

Good husband who has money to pay for me to go to
university after having my children.

Success for Chinemerem means a "good education and a happy marriage blessed with children". She was realistic about her ambition and her immediate concern was to complete her secondary education before anything else.

⁷⁵ This is a prestigious private Catholic secondary school for girls with full boarding facilities. It is adjudged one of the best in the state in terms of high academic and moral standards and competition for admission is very fierce and based on high performance.

Sandra (16) in SS1 had great admiration for female professionals especially bankers and hardworking independent women. She believed that educated people have good jobs, enjoy better quality life and are able to afford extra luxuries, dress smartly and live a “posh” lifestyle. She liked the confidence which such women exude and would like to train as an accountant and work in a bank because

They [Bankers] sabi dress well. They have money and correct ride [good cars]...aunty, I dey bow whenever I see them.

Masiri, (15) would like to attend university like her older siblings and become a lawyer so that she could,

Dress in lawyers’ gowns, appear in court and plead the cases of small children who are abused by their aunties.

Many, especially the female child vendors, believed that education will equip them with necessary skills and abilities for a successful life in future, afford them greater independence to enter into partnership marriages and avoid “bad”, forced or early marriages. This was Christiana’s (12) thinking when she said:

I know the kind of husband I want...I will not marry a bus driver or someone who does *agboro* job in the motor park... God forbid!

Christiana would not like to be associated with people of low educational standards, such as bus drivers. She would not want to marry a bus driver or a motor park worker because of their uncouth behaviour and because of her not-so-pleasant vending experiences, she further explained. She hoped to further her education believing that a good education would give her a good paying job which would give her independence and enable her to enter into a good marital relationship that will guarantee her better life opportunities.

As for Eka (16) she believed that high educational attainment empowers people socially and economically. Educated women have

Plenty money to do whatever pleases them; they eat what they like, drive good cars, have good jobs ...and decide who they want to marry.

Eka would like to train as an accountant, work in a bank and earn money before getting married. Speaking about good education and early marriage, and referring to her elder sister who was married off at an early age because “she did not go to school”, Eka further remarked;

I don't want to be like my sister. I wan finish my school. Marrying early will make me to suffer. I will not be able to help my relatives.

Eka saw educated women as role models. She believed that they enjoy considerable freedom and financial independence and are able to afford certain luxuries which enable them to “dress well...and drive correct cars”. Eka was one of those who believed strongly that education is empowering and offers a way out for girls, hence her desire for quality education even up to university level. She would not want to be in the same impoverished situation as her sister who is a full time house wife with many children, no education and unable to help any of her younger siblings. With education, Eka hoped to improve herself, enjoy some level of financial independence, live a better quality life and be in a position to assist her relatives.

Nk (15) believed that education imbues people with leadership qualities and makes them stand out among their peers. She also believed that good quality education would enable her to:

Look after myself, wear good clothes, like have my own car, marry a nice husband, live in a big house and be like the NAFDAC⁷⁶ woman.

⁷⁶ NAFDAC is an acronym for National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control, charged with responsibility for quality assurance controls for production, importation and exportation and administration of foods and medicines in and out of Nigeria.

She admired successful women, especially Nigerian female artistes, and spoke enthusiastically about her role model and heroine, a distinguished female university professor who has received many national and international awards because of her success as the Director General of NAFDAC, Nigeria's food and drug control agency. Nk would like to go to university and train to be a qualified doctor. She also aspired to be a successful politician and wished that a woman would become the next president of Nigeria.

A good education for many children means successfully completing secondary or tertiary level education, acquiring skills and competencies and "getting a good job that pays big money", said Christiana. Children may not always articulate their needs as well as adults but they can often say what they want and what they do not want. Of the 24 children in this study, 19 aspired to further their education and obtain professional training as doctors, lawyers, nurses, bankers, accountant and teachers. Data was not available on the six year old girl, Justina, who was pulled out of research participation midway by her mother. Three boys aspired to go into full time business at the end of their secondary education while four girls wanted university education but would prefer to marry and raise children first. On the whole, most of the children aspired beyond secondary level education, believing that education was the key to economic and social empowerment. Many shared the widespread belief that good quality education would lift them out of poverty and ultimately guarantee them a better life. It is not necessarily true that education will meet all their hopes about marriage and career aspirations, but education will empower them enough to make informed choices and decisions and place them in a position to pursue their personal ambitions for better lives. The children worked hard at their vending and schooling and looked forward to successful professional careers beyond vending, but spending such long hours at vending and doing chores to the detriment of their educational career make it difficult to predict that they will realize their aspirations for professional careers in law, medicine, teaching, nursing, engineering and other professions.

Like education, marriage and family life are two aspects of life which many female children regarded highly. A majority aspired to further their education and ultimately settle down in marriage and raise a family. Many believed that education guarantees a happy marriage and good family which translates into earning high incomes and being able to afford the good things of life and personal comforts such as having a steady job or business, living in upper class neighbourhoods, dressing well, being married into comfortable homes, having children and providing their children with good quality education in return. For some it also meant having an array of domestic assistants and being raised like Josephat's "GRA children". Many said that they enjoyed vending but none of them would want his or her child to become a vendor.

Gender issues arose in various ways throughout this study. For example, some children mentioned role differentiation with regards to the chores which boys and girls performed at home. Some spoke about how females were allowed to do most kitchen-related jobs while boys performed chores outside their homes. Others spoke about their parents' preferences for males to vend on the streets while females sold inside the shops or stayed at home to assist with domestic chores because of safety and security concerns. For instance, Josephat (14), who lived with his parents in a family of nine, said that his mother decided what they sold, when, where and who should go out to sell. She made a rota detailing what each child should do and when, and encouraged the boys to join other child vendors but would not allow his sisters to sell wares on the streets because

She says they are girls and she doesn't like them to be alone in the park where her eyes will not reach them.

Josephat's mother insisted that her girls stayed behind while the boys went out to vend wares on the streets. Her decision raises gender and safety issues but one would be inclined to agree with Josephat that his mother's decision to protect his sisters from undue external influences or abuse was in her daughters' best interests. Boys were allowed to "follow others and sell our market for road" because they are generally believed to be able to cope on their own without needing much supervision, re-echoed Paul (14). This reinforces popular traditional beliefs among

Nigerians that boys are stronger, capable of fending for themselves and more independent than girls, who are generally thought to be weaker, more vulnerable and in need of more protection. Even though these are debatable and dependent on family preferences and circumstances, the belief that girls are more vulnerable to exploitation and that males could fight their way through difficult situations better than girls all have gender connotations. Similarly, boys and girls moved in different friendship groups though they sold similar items in the same marketplace.

From my observations, there were more female vendors than males even though I did not count their numbers exactly. This could be attributed to the increasing number of female-headed households and greater participation of women in income generation activities outside the home. Referring back to earlier discussions on family relationships in chapter five, I described how both male and female street vending children related closely with their female guardians. Close maternal influence has gender implications; women took charge of children's vending activities and together they contributed significantly toward their families' economies. Aside from taking charge of their vending activities, many also said that their mothers were in charge of their education, monitoring their school attendance and performance, supervising their home work after school and making career choices and decisions on their behalf. These roles are gradually passed on to female children who are brought up to assume maternal responsibilities within their homes.

Given the caretaker role and enormous responsibilities undertaken by these mothers, the role of men in households is not clear since it was women who took charge of the children's education, income generation and home administration. Drawing inferences from my interviews with children, it seems that street vending children had stronger ties with their mothers and female guardians than with their male guardians. This may be because the majority of the female guardians were traders and as mothers, natural care givers and child minders, women were more involved in the daily activities and concerns of their children and were more likely than the males, who were mostly engaged in outside paid jobs and careers, to monitor their children's development and well being. This suggests that the mothers of many

street trading children were major forces in the social and economic survival of their homes.

7.9 DISCUSSION.

According to research reports, 62 million Nigerians are illiterate and 20 million school-aged children are not in school (Aderinoye, 2002; Ayo and Adebisi, 2008, Aluede, 2006). Most of the children and young people in my study had access to formal education though many attended school irregularly and some lagged behind their expected educational levels. Education and vending were so important to the children as well as to their guardians that they strove harder to combine those simultaneously.

Children's stories and my fieldwork observations suggest that education was a highly priced commodity for them and their families, but it was neither free nor compulsory despite the fact that Nigeria had laws which were intended to make it so. Commenting on the state of education in Nigeria, Clark and Sedgwick (2004) reported that education may be free but not compulsory. Tuition may be free in public schools, but the charges and contributions for school related activities and accessories all make schooling optional, expensive and not free. This leaves children at the mercy of their parents and guardians who regulate their school attendance. No one searches out children who are not in school and there does not seem to be any deliberate effort to enforce compulsory schooling. However, due to the high premium placed on education and the high costs of schooling, children work extra hard in order to assist their guardians to make money not only for their basic needs but for school fees, extra lessons and other school related expenses. The children in this study faced a double competition to succeed both at school and in the market.

My early morning observations on weekdays during term times at around 7.30 am showed an influx of school - aged children dressed in different school uniforms carrying various sizes of baskets and basins of assorted wares. They brought in wares for sale from home into the market in the company of their guardians on their way to school. Soon afterwards, they went off to school and reappeared into the

market in the afternoon, between 1 and 3 pm, carrying their school bags and chatting animatedly with their school friends.

More children appeared in the marketplaces after school, and they were often seen and heard exchanging pleasantries and school stories with friends and neighbours in the marketplace. They always walked back from school in groups of three or more looking happy and excited to meet their parents and vending colleagues. Some dropped by their parents' shops to collect keys and messages from their parents or guardians before heading home to change clothes and return later for evening sales. On several occasions I overheard some parents instructing their children on what they want them to do at home before coming out to vend. Other children stayed on to assist their parents, changed into their vending clothes, had a meal and a short rest right there inside their parents' shops and started vending straight away. Some were seen vending in their school uniforms. Younger children appeared first around 1 pm because junior schools close before senior schools, while older children appeared later at about 3 pm but the market became busier with more children from 5 pm when those who attended after-school- lessons came back to participate in the evening and night markets. This implies that many children attended school in the morning hours and sold wares after school but also suggests that children do not get enough rest after school as many went off straight to their lessons while others started vending immediately. It also suggests that they may not have enough time for their school home work before the next school day and this may have adverse effect on their performances. As noted, I am unable to confirm these suggestions because I did not examine the children's academic records. However, some children were occasionally seen vending during school hours which shows that not all children attended school.

The majority of children in this study attended public schools and these are known to be poorly equipped, inadequately staffed and in deplorable physical condition (Dike, 2002). Several children attended private fee paying schools but not the top class ones that GRA children attended. Because the educational system is competitive and examination orientated, and because of poor quality teaching and learning facilities

in many public schools (Dike 2002), many children had to attend fee paying private tuition after normal school hours in order to augment whatever inadequacies they might have, so as to pass all the qualifying examinations and make progress with their education. Attending private tutorials and after-school-lessons have become fashionable for school children in Nigeria. At these lessons children receive greater guidance and supervision than what they do at school. Ironically, these lessons are usually organised by the same school and class teachers in their own homes. Some adults that I spoke with believed that public school teachers deliberately fail to teach well and complete their school curriculum during official hours, hence the private lesson arrangements where they charge high fees to make up for these inadequacies. Besides, inadequate funding and irregular payment of teachers' salaries have caused incessant strike action and disruptions in public schools, leaving children even more vulnerable and making quality education inaccessible. As a result, more and more teachers organise private lessons in their own homes and children are encouraged to attend these private tutorials.

Given the prevailing poverty affecting a majority of Nigerians (Hope, 2005), many children do not and cannot afford good quality fee paying private education. Many cannot enjoy a smooth academic progression in the course of their educational career due to high mobility, parental interference which results in truancy, and lack of resources and sponsorship (Bourdillon, 2004). The result is that some children may experience failure and discontinuation in the course of their schooling, which has implications for school completion and motivation for education. Research on street working children notes that children who experience gaps in their schooling may take up any form of work at all, with the hope of going back to school when their situations improve, while some may drop out completely or take up vocational or apprenticeship jobs, or indeed anything they are able to obtain themselves (Bourdillon, 2000; Hope, 2005; Togunde and Carter, 2006). Some children may be fostered to related kinfolks or unrelated craftsmen living in urban and semi-urban places in order to learn a trade or obtain some form of livelihood and may end up as house-helpers and domestic servants. Others may be forced to discontinue their education due to circumstances beyond their control. Some may also engage in anti

social behaviour or criminal acts in order to survive. Though this was not the case with any of the children in this study, there is the possibility of this happening, especially for those whose aspirations are not met.

Though schooling and vending may not be mutually exclusive and many children believed that vending did not necessarily pose problems to their schooling, nevertheless, considering the length of time spent on vending and household chores, I wondered how they were able to cope and compete favourably with their school commitments. A closer look at some of the activities many of them performed before and after school and a closer investigation of their academic performances would help to answer this. It is understandable why many children were particularly overjoyed that their guardians paid their school fees and extra fees for private lessons. Such gestures motivated them to work even harder and possibly led to their positive perceptions that selling market for a related guardian was not work neither did it pose any hindrance to their education. It might also be the reason behind their thinking that vending and schooling are complementary. This confirms the claim that good quality schooling can affect the value placed on education, the regularity of attendance and the level of investment and commitment which parents and guardians are prepared to make towards their children's education (UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2005).

Taking these narratives into account, education seems to be of high importance to children and their parents, most of who provided financial and emotional support, encouragement and supervision to ensure that their children coped well at school. Close parental support for children's education suggest that guardians value good quality education for their children despite their low incomes, low literacy levels and the prohibitive costs of education. In spite of the many problems of education in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO EFA Global monitoring Report, 2002; UNICEF, 1999; Dike 2002; DFID website (www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/Africa/Nigeria.asp), most children who took part in this study have access to formal education and attended school albeit irregularly.

Children's confidence and aspirations for higher and good quality education reaffirm widespread beliefs that education

...enables people to transform their own lives and the society in which they live.

(DFID, 2006)

It follows therefore that the value placed on education is higher when people believe and are convinced that education adds value to their lives in terms of better job opportunities and waged employment or that education would eradicate poverty and advance their social status (UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2002). Children believed that the empowerment gained from education, as well as the literacy and numeracy skills and competencies gained, would help both themselves as individual beneficiaries and also the wider community to reduce risks and change their behaviours (Dike, 2002), to survive better and longer and help them to make more positive contributions to their immediate and extended networks (UNICEF, 1999). These beliefs underpinned their doggedness and commitment to forge ahead in spite of structural impediments posed by society's inability to provide free and compulsory education.

Disparity in the quality of educational opportunities available to children from different socio-economic backgrounds suggests a relationship between household incomes, school attendance and the quality of education (Togunde and Carter, 2006). It also supports the claim that household income "stands as a predictor of child labour" (Bass, 2004:100). Arguably, high quality private schools provide better quality education both in terms of teaching and supervision but such schools are not readily within the reach of the families of the children in this study. Even though it is not the remit of this study to compare and contrast the quality of education which street vending children received or to undertake an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic status (SES) of their households⁷⁷, children compared their education and childhoods with those of children from higher SES families ("GRA children") and

⁷⁷ See Togunde and Carter (2006) for in depth research and analysis of the socio economic causes of child labour in urban Nigeria.

this showed a disparity. Based on these comparisons one would conclude that children of low income households are more likely to attend public and low quality private schools while children from high income households would attend better quality private schools.

Because the children in this study came from low income households, attended full time school, though attendance was sporadic, vended after school and performed many domestic chores before and after school, it is unclear how much time and attention they gave to their school work and what impact such a heavy schedule made on their educational achievements. Though many children claimed that vending and domestic chores contributed positive values to their academic success, a few felt otherwise and their stories make me more inclined to suggest that children of low income households are more likely than children from high income households to fare less well in school examinations and have to repeat classes. Because of socio-economic considerations, children from poorer families are more likely to engage in vending, experience high school drop-out rates and attend school irregularly, fare badly in school examinations and have less chances of gaining entry into quality competitive schools (Togunde and Carter, 2006; Bourdillon, 2000). It is also debatable but because street hawking children attended school irregularly many would not always make it to top quality schools or to special science schools as those are highly competitive and only within the reach of brighter children with better life chances from high income earning families whose guardians can afford high quality education.

7.10 CONCLUSION

From children's testimonies and my observations, education was so important that most children and their guardians considered it as the best gift and training one could be offered, and yet, it was neither free nor compulsory. Hidden costs made education expensive, leaving children and their parents vulnerable as they have to strive harder to provide school accessories and extra lesson fees to enable them pass and compete favourably for examinations and top quality schools. The majority of the children had access to formal education but many were below the expected levels of

education commensurate with their ages. Mobility and guardian interruption disrupt children's academic progress and were part of the major causes why some children lagged behind their expected levels of education. Some children found education and vending to be mutually beneficial and several children said they were able to juggle housework, vending and schooling without much conflict. Income from vending made schooling possible and many were able to correlate things learnt at school and in the vending arenas by using their vending experiences in their schooling and vice versa. Even though many children claimed they did well at school, it is not clear how well they performed at school and what quality of education they received.

What emerges from the children's stories is that education and vending were very significant to the lives and survival of street vending children and their families. The vending and school experiences of many children provided learning opportunities for their every day lives and greatly affected their outlook, school attendance, educational achievements and career aspirations. Many desired good quality education which they believed was the key to poverty eradication, personal development, a good life and success. Only a few looked towards career progression from vending to full time business establishments as they wanted to settle for private businesses later and take charge of their affairs rather than trade for someone else. The reason for this was not clear, but may be connected with their experience of living with and vending for a guardian who controlled their lives and activities. At the same time selling market, which is a survival strategy and a form of social reproduction, is equally an important aspect of children's education and vocation. Though the majority of them felt that vending impacted positively and did not interfere with their schooling, some acknowledged the practical pressures of juggling vending and meeting expectations about completing both domestic chores and education. For most of the children, work and education are not alternatives, they are two mutually interdependent and mutually rewarding phenomena, a mixed blessing which cannot be easily separated or avoided. From children's accounts and experiences of vending and schooling, it is obvious that they regularly busied themselves with a wide range of full and part time chores before and after vending.

A child vendor's typical day was filled with housework, schooling, vending and more housework. Some of their aspirations may be unrealistic because they spend most of their productive times in the markets vending rather than on their homework. Private lessons became popular as a step to remedy the poor quality of teaching that children received from public schools and both parents and children paid considerable sums in order to put their children through schools. This confirms that education in Nigeria is not free despite the intention that it should be.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the relationship between vending and education is a complex social phenomenon which must be looked at critically from many perspectives if suitable policies are to be developed that can adequately address the needs and aspirations of street vending children and their families.

CHAPTER EIGHT: REVIEW OF MAIN ISSUES, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

My study explored the childhood and vending experiences of 24 itinerant street vending children and young people in Enugu, Nigeria, aged six to seventeen years, and their understanding of work in relation to street vending. Using a multi-sited ethnographic study, I observed market operations and interviewed street vending children in various marketplaces.

This chapter will review the main issues raised in this study, making connections with relevant literature and policy and drawing conclusions from both. It goes on to explore implications for theory, policy, practice and research, before drawing to a close in final conclusions.

8.2 REVIEW OF MAIN ISSUES

Four main analytical themes emerged from the study. These were concerned with:

- the meanings of work to street-vending children and young people ;
- the ways in which their understandings of work intersected with their views of family and kinship;
- the role played by peer support and friendship as protective factors in the market-place; and finally,
- the impact of work on schooling and education, and street-vending children's views about work, education and their futures.

Each will be discussed in turn.

8.2.1 The meanings of work to street-vending children and young people

As demonstrated in the review of literature, recent research presents contradictory evidence in relation to children, childhood and work. On the one hand, childhood is traditionally presented as a very special time characterised by play and schooling; it is a time when children should be kept away from adult responsibilities, such as work (Boyden, 1990; Jones, 2000). On the other hand, there is increasing awareness that it does not make sense to impose an ‘ideal’ view of childhood on children, because children’s experiences vary hugely from society to society and even within a society, both historically and at a given point in time (Cree, 2000; Morrow, 2003). Research studies and policy documents on children, childhoods and work reflect this debate. Some research and campaigning organisations assert that work should be predominantly viewed as something which is damaging to children (ILO, 1999; Stephens 1995), whereas others stress the potentially positive aspects of children’s participation in the workforce (Invernizzi, 2003; Togunde and Carter, 2006). My own study connects with, and contributes to, this debate.

Fundamentally, the children who took part in my research expressed mixed feelings about work. Many perceived vending and domestic chores positively, viewing them essentially as duty owed in return for their families’ love and support and through which they learn and demonstrate their ‘coming of age’. They claimed that “selling market for road” was fun and afforded them opportunities for play, leisure, education and self improvement; opportunities to socialize and to get information ahead of others. But children were not unaware of the hardships and arduous responsibilities which went along with vending in the streets and open market-places. They knew that their education was affected by their work commitments, and they told stories about how unsafe, yet pleasant, the market could be for them. Children made an interesting distinction between work done for a family member and work done for a non-relative for material reward. This idea will be developed further below.

Overall, the evidence from my study was that work was not as damaging as has been portrayed in some research and non-governmental organisations’ position statements. But this is not to suggest that work is without its risks, or that children inevitably

benefit from participation in it. Instead, work is both hard and fun; both exploitative and rewarding. Street vending children want to be appreciated as people who contribute value to societal development rather than condemned. By engaging in vending and other forms of labour and economic activities, child vendors are helping to seek ways to resolve their problems and they deserve support and protection from everybody, particularly those within their communities. Their stories and experiences of vending and participation in domestic chores give legitimacy to the claim that work is a “form of social participation” that empowers and integrates them into the “world of grown ups” (Liebel, 2004:7). Their positive evaluation and preference for vending over and above other work-like activities can be interpreted as “an indicator of personal and cultural investment in coping with a familiar situation, even when it is hazardous” (Woodhead, 1999: 33). Children want freedom and play, but they also want responsibility and respect for what they do and who they are, and work can bring both. This conclusion brings important implications for theory, policy and practice in relation to children and work.

8.2.2 The intersection between understandings of work and ideas of family and kinship

The review of literature did not set out to explore families and kinship in their own right. Nevertheless, there is widespread evidence that for children in the developing world, work is an expected part of family life (for example, Boyden et al., 1998). There is also some research which suggests that street-working children are abandoned and do not have very much contact with their families (for example, Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003; Richter, 1988). My own study provided further insight into both these claims.

My research confirmed that work and family went very much hand-in-hand. Furthermore, I found that, far from being abandoned, children working in the markets did so for, and with, family members with whom they lived. Most children worked for their mothers; three worked for biological aunts; and two for their brothers. From my observations and discussions with children, it was clear that most became involved at an early age (four years or even earlier), accompanying their

mothers to the market as toddlers. They watched and helped out as shop assistants until they were considered mature and experienced enough to venture out to sell on their own. In this way, through a gradual period of socialisation by family members and peers, they developed the knowledge and skills necessary for their trade. Throughout their selling activities, children maintained close physical contact with their older relatives, going backwards and forwards during the day, always accounting to their elders who supervised their vending activities and took responsibility for financial management and inventory control.

In interview, most of the children did not see street-vending in the market or doing chores at home as burdensome or exploitative; it was simply understood as their contribution to family life. They were content to do this for a relative with whom they lived and shared kinship bonds, someone who provided food, shelter and other forms of support and (significantly) treated them kindly. For these children, work and family life were not separate; they worked at home and worked in the marketplace, just as their seniors and siblings did (fathers also worked but usually outside the market). But the children also made an important distinction between work which was carried out for a relative and work done for a non-family member. They felt that a related guardian would not and could not abuse or mistreat them because of the strong kinship bond they shared. But they felt very differently about work carried out for a 'non relative', with the sole intention of generating income or in exchange for care and provision. This was abusive, or at the very least, had the potential to be so, and children shared stories about (non-kin) house-helpers who were hurt and exploited by their masters.

This finding again offers ways forward for policy and for further research. It could, of course, be pointed out that the children's perception of kinship bringing safety is naive at least. Research has consistently demonstrated that children are more at risk at home and from people they know than from strangers outside the family (Beckett, 2003). Nevertheless, there is a clear indicator of the protective value of family for these children, suggesting that initiatives which aim to support parents in their parenting of children (instead of criticising them for allowing children to work)

should bring benefits for children in the developing world. It is also worth considering that the idea of family life as a place in which work has no part is itself a new one. In the early years of the twentieth century, children in the countryside were expected to work alongside their parents in family businesses such as crofts and farms, just as city children were expected to carry coal or run errands and, as in Nigeria today, sell goods in the street (Jamieson and Toynbee, 1992).

8.2.3 The role played by peer support and friendship as protective factors in the market-place

The literature on children's work demonstrates that children usually work alongside other children. Liebel (2004) has gone so far as to argue that working children need to have their own organisations that will be able to cater for their needs and aspirations and help them to build stronger bonds and voices.

My own study showed that children's relationships with peers provided mixed blessings and were, at times, far from being cordial. Children operated in a fiercely competitive trading environment which was often marked with fighting and squabbles between children (and sometimes adult vendors). But most were able, nonetheless, to form supportive working groups with their peers. The working groups provided safety nets for them in the face of threatening situations. Group members supported one another to sell off their goods and meet their daily targets and by cooperating to achieve their daily targets, children displayed a sense of team work. Older child vendors took care of younger ones and facilitated their entry into the vending community. Children also told stories about how they supported each other when they were under attack from rival groups or from unfriendly adults in the market. Sometimes, they fought back as a group and at other times, the group was forced to retreat to a safer place. They also told stories about older siblings coming to the aid of their younger siblings in times of difficulty.

My study has therefore confirmed what is known from other research about the importance of peers for children involved in work in the developing world. Just as

work is wholly inter-connected with kinship and family, so peer support and friendship are an integral part of the children's working lives.

8.2.4 The impact of work on schooling and education, and street-vending children's views about work, education and their futures

The UNCRC (1989) and the African Charter (1990) as well as the Millennium Development Goal (2000) and the Nigerian Child Rights Act (2003) all made it clear that child education is a fundamental human right. They advocate for the right of every child to a free, available and compulsory quality education regardless of gender (UNESCO EFA, 2002). But how would children's needs for education be met in a society that does not have welfare provisions: a society where schooling is desirable but not free?

There is a substantial body of research evidence (for example, Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003; Bourdillon, 2000) which shows that working children do not have access to education. My own study has shown that these child vendors did have access to education. 22 out of the 24 actively attended school and were at various stages of primary and secondary schooling despite the high costs of education. They and their parents placed a high premium on good quality education, even to the point of arranging private and expensive out-of-school extra-mural classes for them to be able to pass their examinations. However, many lagged behind in their expected levels of education for several reasons, including truancy, guardian interference, high mobility as a result of frequent movement from one relative to another, and most especially, demands placed on their time in having to balance schooling with street vending and domestic chores. The study found that education was neither compulsory nor free, as parents had to pay for all their children's schooling, from uniforms to writing materials, to chairs and tables. In many ways, it could be argued that children had to work so that they could remain in school. Despite the interruptions and heavy work load, children seemed to enjoy schooling and many said they did not find vending disruptive to their education, but claimed that it rather enhanced their school performance.

Looking to the future, many children desired further education and professional careers. Unexpectedly, gender differences shaped their future career choices, with girls tending towards the caring professions (such as teaching and nursing) and to marriage and family life, while boys looked towards business and enterprise. None of the children, however, wanted to remain in street-vending for life; neither did they want this as a career for their children. But some of the children did value vending as a step on the road to a possible future career in business.

8.2.5 Summary

What comes across most strongly from this discussion is that work is not something which is marginal to street-vending children's lives, or even simply a part of their lives. Instead, it is threaded through the whole of their childhood experiences: through their family and home lives (and their views of what a family is); through their friendships with their peers; and through their schooling and their future career aspirations. In fact, vending and participation in domestic chores are a way of life for all the children who participated in this study. It is part of their childhood, society expects it and the children know this as well. The research has also shown that childhood is a very different experience in a country like Nigeria to the rather idealised picture commonly presented in 'Western' childhood studies' literature. This has implications for policy and research, as will be discussed below.

8.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY, POLICY, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

The main purpose of this section is to discuss and analyse the implications of my research for theory, policy, practice and research. This is followed with concluding remarks about my findings and the entire thesis.

8.3.1 Implications for Theory

This study throws into sharp relief two inter-connecting concepts: childhood and work, and in doing so, makes a contribution to theoretical understanding of both.

Recent research has shown that the ‘Western’ notion of the ideal childhood which excludes work does not always fit the varied childhoods of children in the majority world (Bourdillon, 2004; Punch, 2001a & b). Studies have suggested that street vending children contribute directly to their families and indirectly to national development but their contributions, like those of women, are often unrecognised, under-remunerated, very often relegated to a secondary level, and subordinated to the heads of families (Bass, 2004:33). My own study has confirmed that children did not see their various activities at home and in the marketplaces as problematic or a burden but as a “legitimate right and an opportunity to play a more active and important part in society” (Liebel, 2004: 10). Many stayed focused on the wider picture of shaping a better future for themselves rather than being bogged down by the challenges they faced in the marketplaces which they regarded as transient or as “part of the show”, as Josephat (14) put it. Their views and stories resonate with the social actor model of childhood and sharply contradict the “bourgeois” perception of childhood (Liebel, 2004: 1) as a sacred and idyllic period when children should not be allowed to become involved with adult responsibilities.

Children’s participation in vending and their various coping strategies to achieve their set targets demonstrate that they trust their abilities to take on responsibilities and are capable of informing, shaping, advising and participating in matters that affect them, just like adult members of society. They should therefore be seen as competent, responsible persons in their own right, not appendages of their parents or minors who do not deserve respect. Their contributions to family life and community should be valued, and work is inevitably part of this. Children’s activities and daily manoeuvres to achieve their set targets and their economic contributions to the wider community place them not as vulnerable victims or inferior beings but as “influential participants” (Vandenbroeck and Bouverne-de Bie, 2006: 128) and “protagonists” of their societies (Liebel, 2004:2). Similarly, their career choices and articulation of their aspirations beyond vending show that they have ideas about their lives and future and that they have the will to achieve and persevere (Liebel, 2004).

The study has commented at length on work and meanings of work, and in particular, on children's role within the workplace (here, the street markets of Nigeria). This stands in marked contrast to the dominant conception of work as characterised in sociological texts. These portray work as capitalist, industrial, modern and patriarchal (e.g. Edgell, 2006: 24), and concerned with issues such as alienation, upskilling the workforce, Fordism etc. My own study shows work in a very different light – it is part of family life and part of childhood, and, in fact, part of the local culture in Nigeria. Children in this study saw work as arduous and, at the same time, beneficial and part of their traditional way of life and upbringing. Both children and adults whom I interviewed believe that work instils responsibility and knowledge plus the acquisition of useful trading skills of negotiation and home management necessary for future survival. The majority of the children have been initiated into the trading community and work culture by their parents, relatives and peers and have grown up to perceive work as a highly valuable cultural expectation which gives a sense of identity and worth and enhances their future prospects and the well-being of their families (Woodhead, 1999).

8.3.2 Implications for Policy

As can be seen from the foregoing discussions, work is a crucial part of the everyday lives of street vending children and their families in Enugu. Based on my findings from this study, the most significant implication for policy is that vending is a way of life and a fact of life not only for the 24 children that participated in this study but for many children growing up in Nigeria. Amongst several contributing factors, poverty seems to be the major underlying factor for children's involvement in work and economic activities (Bequele and Boyden, 1995; Hope, 2005). Children must offer their labour and economic activities in various capacities in order to augment their parent's meagre incomes and be able to attend school and to stay alive. Their work should be seen as a "necessity" for survival rather than viewed with negativity as a "social problem". (Bourdillon, 2000: 72). The testimonies of children in my study confirm claims that vending is not necessarily a bad activity, but that the conditions under which they operate and the way in which members of society perceive and relate to them makes vending (work) problematic and exploitative (White, 1999;

Woodhead, 1998). Eliminating children's participation in vending and work activities would be problematic, not least because it would send many families deeper into poverty. However, allowing the practice to continue also has grave implications which may further exacerbate the vulnerability of child street vendors in Enugu. These are complex issues for policy. I believe there is an urgent need to look into the realities of their circumstances and then seek ways to ameliorate their conditions.

The UNCRC, which provided the launch pad for this study, has rightly highlighted the importance of seeing children as people in their own right, with needs, strengths and capabilities. Endorsement of the UNCRC means acknowledging children as persons with rights, not mere appendages or properties belonging to their parents and employers nor toys and gadgets that can be manipulated at will (Bourdillon, 2000). It is obvious from this study that children are "able to see what lies in their best interests and form opinions about the world around them" (Bourdillon, 2004:190); they can do things and can articulate their needs, excitements and their fears, they know what they want and like and what they do not like. Listening to the stories of the street vending children in this study not only fulfils the injunction of the UNCRC and those of children's rights activists and practitioners, but offers an essential perspective on the daily lives and childhoods of child street vendors, the majority of who live in developing societies where work is accepted as an integral and an inevitable part of their everyday lives. By their actions and perceptions, the children in this study are making a profound statement that they trust their abilities and can take on responsibilities like adults (Liebel, 2004:8) and they should be treated and respected as such. Given the UNCRC and the realities of child street vending, the hardships as well as the pleasant experiences that these children endured in marketplaces which affect their childhood, this study suggests possible ways forward to ameliorate their conditions to ensure that, while they are doing something which is central to their survival and future development, they are also safeguarded and protected.

Another key issue for policy is that the study has indicated that schooling is currently neither free nor compulsory. One way forward to achieving universal education for all (MDG 2) would be to eliminate all forms of hidden costs. The requirement for school uniforms should be removed and schools should be equipped with basic teaching and learning accessories, such as chairs and tables, books and writing materials so that guardians would no longer be made to provide those. Other incentives could be to provide school meals so that parents will not have to worry about feeding their children nor interfere with their schooling, ensuring that the school environment is conducive to teaching and learning, and making school curricula more relevant and practically useful in a way that will guarantee employment for those who complete their schooling successfully and provide relevant skills to those that are not able to further their education.

Encouraging regular school attendance should also be part of the policy agenda. This can be achieved in several ways: e.g., by instituting a reward system in schools. Compensation for regular school attendance, which could be in the form of awarding book prizes (tokens) and certificates, financial incentives and open recognition of children and their parents during Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) meetings or at the end of every school term or year, would discourage truancy and guardian interference on children's education. Communities could be rewarded for cooperating with local education authorities and participating actively in children's continuing education and this could be in the form of citing development projects and open commendations for such communities. My own experience and local insider knowledge is that people are happier to do more when they are recognised openly. There are economic issues involved in making this a reality but this could be done on a small scale by local authorities, states and national education boards.

At the grassroots level, social workers and other child welfare workers should pull together with relevant local and state government agencies, community organisations and members of the PTA to embark on regular school visits to monitor and evaluate children's education and ensure compliance with the UBE principles of free and compulsory education. Moreover, it would be beneficial if free and compulsory

education could be extended beyond the first nine years of formal education (to the end of secondary education) to ensure that every Nigerian child, especially those that cannot continue to tertiary level education, completes their schooling with basic educational qualifications required for business. This would, of course, require legislative change.

This study also suggests that vending hours should be regulated in a way that would allow children enough time to attend school and still be able to assist their parents and guardians with vending and domestic chores. For instance, the federal, state and local governments could promulgate a new law which prohibits children from vending during school periods and at certain hours after school, or include this in the already existing Child Rights Act (2003). Legislation on working children can be meaningful and effective if the needs and situations of children in employment are assessed accurately and the contexts of their work reviewed closely (Myers, 1999) and children should be part of this process.

Since not every child has the capacity and resources for secondary and tertiary education, another way forward would be to establish formal and informal apprenticeship schemes. These would have to be backed up by legislation stipulating the terms and conditions, i.e., the age and qualification⁷⁸ for admission into an apprenticeship scheme (Hamilton, 1990; King., et al., 1999; Rogoff, 1990). Graduates of such schemes should be given official recognition in the form of certification which will enable them to seek employment in the informal labour market. Such initiatives already exist in some African countries (ILO, 2006b). To turn such initiatives into practice, multi-agency community-based child welfare organisations and practitioners should engage in meaningful dialogue with state agencies and employment bureaus such as the National Directorate for Employment (NDE) to create job opportunities for child street vendors and other working children who may not be able to make it through higher education. Employment laws in Nigeria would then need to be reviewed and simplified after due consultations with all stakeholders including children or their representatives (associations) to ensure

⁷⁸ Qualification here means completion of secondary level education.

that the rights of children who must work (and are working) are protected and their working conditions made more favourable.

8.3.3 Implications for practice

Broadly speaking, I believe that social work, as a profession that aims to enhance people's coping capacity and empowers them to achieve better quality life and well being (IFSW, 2000), has an important role to play in addressing the concerns of street vending children and in minimising their vulnerabilities. This can be achieved in a number of ways.

Firstly, social work has a role to play in the development of community partnerships⁷⁹: setting up joint working networks of community-based groups and various child welfare organisations. Multi-agency partnerships with other agencies that are involved with street children and other working children will enable agencies to pull resources to identify, empower and work in concert with voluntary, grassroots, community-based associations in monitoring children within their locale. Social work could facilitate this collaborative relationships between children's groups, government, development agencies, and community-based groups and help to evolve ways to promote children's welfare, particularly that of street vending children. By working in partnership with children and various community-based groups in an inclusive manner, social and community development workers can empower children and local communities to think globally while acting locally within their respective domains. They could be identified, mobilised and empowered to take on greater roles in advocating for children's welfare and to challenge negative traditional practices that dis-empower working children, and help to achieve a progressive social change of attitude. Multi-agency partnerships could be linked directly with the police, the judiciary and government social welfare departments to

⁷⁹ Community partnerships is an aspect of both community development and community work (Twelvetrees, 2002) both of which are very important aspects of social work practice that delivers "holistic, collective, preventative and anti-discriminatory approaches to meeting social needs, based on value commitments to participation and empowerment" (Mayo, 1998:160). See also Clark and Cree (2003) for further details about community work and community development, though with particular reference to Scotland

report cases of abuse so that reported cases could be investigated immediately. Drop-in centres with trained child counsellors could be opened in different states and cities to give free advice and counselling and support to abused children in various circumstances. Multi-agency partnerships can also play a crucial role in disseminating information about children's rights and welfare, children's education, formal and informal fostering practices and other issues that affect street working children (Ebigbo, 1999; Ebigbo and Izuora, 1985). Because grassroots community-based groups are on the ground and closer to the children, they can help to monitor children's school attendance and relationships and may be in a position to spot and report cases of abuse and truancy and other related incidents to the larger group.

Secondly, in addition to building community partnerships, social workers and community development workers can use their skills to inform those in positions of authority that have the power to address and advocate for change, (Taylor et al., 2000) and help to build projects that can help to address the underlying problems of poverty and social inequalities that drive parents and their children into the streets and by so doing, individual and communal needs and aspirations can be met satisfactorily. Inclusive community-based social work practice encourages "democratic dialogue" (Powell, 2001:114) and can help to address the power imbalance between children and adults. This can also provide a platform by which street vending children, and possibly all other working children, can be encouraged to express their views and experiences and be listened to, thus become empowered. It can also encourage informal support networking such as peer mentoring, group participation and team work that already exist among the child street vendors in Enugu. Children's stories about peer mentoring open up discussions about supporting older child vendors by training and empowering them to act as peer coaches to new and younger child vendors. This would eliminate the rigorous processes involved in informal apprenticeship, and more children could be reached in this way.

Thirdly, child vendors might be encouraged to organise themselves into recognised children-only trade associations like adult members of the vending community. Their

associations can make representations, contribute to deliberations about the marketplace and ensure that children's specific interests and aspirations are taken on board. Through such organisations, children can liaise with existing traders' associations, children's agencies such as UNICEF, non-governmental organisations, faith groups, and statutory agencies such as the state ministry for women and social development, to promote their agenda. Such peer support networks, which can be likened to Manfred Liebel's working children's movements (Liebel, 2004) will create opportunities for new vendors to familiarise themselves with older vendors, a forum where they can discuss personal, social, cultural and political issues that affect them at home and in the vending places and together with existing associations within the vending community they build a formidable team. Though the context within which Liebel made his recommendations involved full time working children in different professions who may not necessarily combine work and schooling, his idea can be used even with non-professional part time working children, like those in this study. The advantages of having working children's association, particularly in society with no organised child welfare services, are many (Liebel, 2004) and the children in this study, if mobilised and supported, would have the capacity to make more positive and meaningful contributions to their families and themselves, their local communities, the state and in nation building.

Fourthly, this study points to the need for group work as a valuable social work intervention model in Nigeria. Most traders' associations in Enugu are welfare oriented and provide welfare (solely) for their members in good and bad times. For example, within the vending community, many traders' associations organised a daily money saving scheme (*isusu*) for their members but children were excluded from this arrangement. These experiences have relevance for future social work practice in Nigeria and have implications for the ways in which voluntary organisations and NGOs could provide support and services for street vending children. Social work in Nigeria could benefit more from identifying, partnering with and building up such group or communal welfare services rather than focusing on individualised therapies or personal social services. So much can be achieved and more working children could be reached and supported through such arrangement.

Fifthly, the stories of the children in this study raise further issues not only about children's immediate needs, but also about those of their parents and the society they live in. Most children became involved in vending to fulfil familial and cultural expectations. The implication of this for practice is that social workers in Nigeria will have an uphill task of not only dealing with children's concerns and welfare but of working with parents and guardians and government departments in addressing poverty issues and conditions that drive children into street vending, and challenging cultural beliefs and practices. And this not an easy task which can be sorted by legislation alone, it involves fundamental radical socio-cultural changes that are likely to face stiff opposition from adult members of society (Ncube, 1998).

Sixthly, the vending communities themselves have a pivotal role and should be empowered to take responsibility (individually and communally) for the protection and well being of children within their areas of jurisdiction. They should take a leading position in speaking out against any forms of abuse and exploitation of child vendors and other working children within the marketplace and collaborate with members of the motor union and administrators of the motor parks to enforce measures that will protect vending children and other vulnerable people within their community. Like other members of the vending community, child vendors have a right to protection and support and the community has a role in making this a reality. As integral members of their communities, children are contributing value to their families and larger communities and it is only just that adequate safeguards be put in place to protect them wherever they work.

This leads into a final implication for practice. These findings demonstrate the need for public education (also known as 'sensitisation') programmes that would inform, support and empower children and adults to know their rights, to seek help when necessary and avail of resources, policies and programmes that would give them access to better life opportunities. Parents and adults need to understand the risks to which they expose children when they send them out on the streets to sell wares, and how that affects their educational development. One practical way to tackle this

would be to organise public education campaigns in marketplaces, schools and churches to discuss issues and policies relating to children's rights⁸⁰. Policies about children's rights and welfare could be taught at schools as part of their school curriculum. At present, very little is known of the existence of such policies and they are usually discussed in the media and at high level conferences by elite members of society with little or no input from children or grassroots participation. My experience during field work showed that neither the children nor the few adults that I spoke to, including parents and guardians, were aware of the existence of the Nigerian Child's Right Act of 2003, despite its being the first and only national policy document on child protection. All of these can be achieved through public education campaigns and open discussions which will eventually lead to a gradual change of attitude, but it is not going to happen overnight. It is my belief that social work can and should participate in developing inclusive programmes and practices that would raise awareness about excluded and marginalised groups of people such as street vending children

8.3.4 Implications for research

My findings highlight the need to support children to participate in activities and programmes that enhance their rights and wellbeing and encourage them to be able to challenge certain traditional beliefs and practices that exacerbate their vulnerability. Children in Nigeria are at the bottom rung of the ladder, their voices are silenced and their contributions discounted. For social work policies and interventions to be effective, the voices and concerns of the people for whom they are planned, that is, the service users, should be sought and their participation encouraged and enlisted (Doel and Best, 2008; Mayer and Timms, 1970). Service user involvement in social work research, intervention and policies is a strong social work value (IFSW, 2000) and encouraging street vending children to tell their stories and participate in activities that promote their best interests and enhance their well being will also prove useful for researching children elsewhere in Nigeria and those in other cultures where children's voices remain unheard.

⁸⁰ Such as the UNCRC, African Charter and the Nigerian Child Right Act

My study also draws attention to the fact that while ethical considerations for doing research with children are essential requirements in developed societies, they may be difficult to apply in the real world context of research in developing countries. This is all the more so in the context of my study, where children's participation in research is still not fully explored because of certain socio-cultural ideologies and perceptions about children and childhoods. My chosen methodology raised some ethical issues about researching active children in busy market environments. For example, it is common practice in research with children under the age of 16 years to seek their parents' consent (Alderson, 1995). It is also widely understood that those taking part in research need to give informed consent (Homan, 1991), and that children can and should be able to give such informed consent to take part in research (Cree et al, 2002). Although I believe that parental consent remains important, in the context of my research, children themselves saw this not just as irrelevant but also, at times, as threatening to them. They were afraid that their relatives or guardians would prevent them from taking part in the study because they would see this as a distraction from their vending duties. I wanted to ensure the children's participation, and was concerned that parents might refuse to allow children to take part. This can best be understood if one understands that in Nigeria, parents and adults are always trusted to represent children's interests and so children are never given the opportunity to get involved, their opinions are never sought, usually unheard and not considered relevant. As discussed in Chapter Three, I had to find ways of engaging with the children in my study at times without their parents' knowledge or agreement; and I had to talk to them about my study in ways that they could understand while they were selling in the market. This meant that my study did not fit a perfect ideal of a 'Western' approach to conducting research with children.

8.4 CONCLUSIONS

Work provides a route for membership in communities and a direct route to active citizenship for working children as they see themselves as not only contributing value to their immediate families but to the wider society. Children's work is a part of household production and an accepted part of the childhoods of many children

growing up in Enugu, Nigeria. Children take part in work and are expected to work in order to assist their parents/guardians and to contribute to the survival of their families, while at the same time learning and acquiring personal vocational skills for future life. Therefore, work is not only a survival strategy in response to poverty but forms part of children's upbringing. The stories and experiences of children in this study show that their labour and economic contributions are necessary and indispensable. By participating in vending and domestic chores, children are actively socialised and taught adult roles through work and this is viewed as a form of education. As well as providing children with self esteem, enthusiasm, confidence, a sense of responsibility and value as active members of their various communities, vending prepares children for the future. It opens up opportunities for engaging in real life issues, helps to solve social problems and provides them opportunities for meeting up, making friends, negotiations, observing and participating in social, political, economic and leisure activities.

Findings from this study corroborate previous research findings that poverty is the main reason why children vended wares on the streets, but poverty is not the only reason why the children in this study became involved in vending. A number of factors, social, cultural and economic, were also found responsible for the phenomenon of street vending. The study noted the complex inter-play of factors to do with family, kinship, culture as being responsible for bringing children into street vending and work. Gaps in policy provision and compliance monitoring were also contributory. Whilst my observation revealed fundamental dangers and problems in street vending, especially the reality of physical, social and emotional abuse on the one hand and interference with children's education on the other, these children had clearly developed sufficiently robust coping mechanisms and networks to deal with these. Their stories and experiences of "selling market", "helping" and doing "small, small things at home" demonstrate the creative and remarkable ways through which they asserted their power and agency. I have come to the realization that the ideological frameworks that have been put forward, by the UNCRC for instance, are far removed from the lived experiences of children in the developing world. This

makes it unrealistic and of doubtful value to impose a “wish list” from other ‘Western’ cultures on Nigeria and expect that to be successful.

By participating in vending, domestic chores and even in my research, child vendors have shown that they are competent social actors, of equal value as adults and have the capacity to take on responsibilities. They have their own views and can contribute towards nation building in ways that adult members of society may have been unable to imagine. This demonstrates children’s agency and supports the view that working children should not be seen as a social problem, but as helping to provide solutions to social problems. What they are asking for, fundamentally, is a safe and congenial environment to help them to grow into responsible active citizens of their communities; and, at the same time, understanding, respect and appreciation for what they do and protection from abuse. My final assertion is that literature which emanates from ‘Western’ viewpoints about child work and working children cannot, and do not, offer sufficient insight into the lives of working children in Nigeria.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO ADULT PARTICIPANTS.

Good day. My name is Rosemary Chinyere Okoli. I am a native of Agbogugu in Awgu Local Government Area of Enugu State and I studying for a PhD in Social Work. I want to find out some information about the experiences of children who are selling things along the streets, motor parks, evening markets and day markets in Enugu urban and I want to meet with you to discuss some important issues about this. I have some questions which I want to ask you. This will take between 5 to 20 minutes off your market time but I have to find out first if you would like to take part in answering them.

If you agree to take part, please let me know and we will arrange a suitable place and time to meet.

Thank you for your time.

Rosemary

APPENDIX 2: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO CHILD PARTICIPANTS.

Good day. My name is Rosemary Chinyere Okoli. I am a native of Agbogugu in Awgu Local Government Area of Enugu State and I am studying for a PhD in Social Work. I want to find out some information about the experiences of children who are selling things along the streets, motor parks, evening markets and day markets in Enugu urban and I want to meet with you to discuss some important issues about this. I have some questions which I want to ask you. This will take between 5 to 20 minutes off your market time but I have to find out first if you would like to take part in answering them.

If you agree to take part, please take this form (Appendix 3) to your parents or whoever you live with to obtain their approval. We will then arrange a suitable day, place and time to meet as soon as you return it.

Thank you for your time.

Rosemary

APPENDIX 3: PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM.

Good day. My name is Rosemary Chinyere Okoli. I am a native of Agbogugu in Awgu Local Government Area of Enugu State and I am studying for a post graduate degree in Social Work. I want to find out some information about the experiences of children who are selling things along the streets, motor parks, evening markets and day markets in Enugu urban and I want to meet with your child to discuss some important issues about this. I have some questions which I want to ask your child. This will take between 5 to 20 minutes right here in the market as they sell their wares but I have to find out first if you would agree for your child to take part in answering those questions.

If you agree to allow him/her take part, please let me know by signing or ticking (X) in this form and giving it to your child to return to me. Your child and I will then arrange a suitable day, place and time to meet. But if you do not want your child to take part, you can keep the form or return it without any mark.

Thank you for your co-operation.

I approve

I don't approve

Signature and date:

Signature and date:

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE - SCHEDULE FOR INTERVIEWING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE & ADULTS.

BIO DATA

- What is your name?
- Town of origin
- Age
- Gender
- Academic attainment-primary school, secondary, dropped out? If yes, at what stage?

FAMILY

- What is your position in the family?
- How many brothers/sisters do you have?
- Who do you live with? (A) Your parents-which of them? Father, mother or both? OR (B) extended relations/family friends? What is your relationship with b?-uncle, aunty, etc.
- Are you the house-help?
- What is the occupation of your parents/guardian?
- Where do you live? In the city, village or?

OCCUPATION

- What do you do here? – vending or pushing wheel barrow?
- If vending – what wares do you sell?
- Who are you selling them for? Self or for someone else?
- How do you get your wares (stock)?
- What do you understand by work – what does work mean to you?
- Do you consider what you are doing as work, a job, or good pastime?
- How did you get into this? - Personal choice and decision, introduced to it by friends and peers, parents, guardians or who? And why?
- How long have you been doing this job?
- Can you recall your first experiences in the park/market?

- How often do you do this – daily, weekly, weekends only, term time, or holiday times?
- What time do you start? When do you finish?
- Who do you give your money to after sales- daily, weekly?
- Do you account to anybody at the end of the day? Week?

EDUCATION

- Do you attend school at present?
- What class are you in?
- At what time of the day do you go to school – morning or evening time?
- Do you enjoy schooling? If yes, what do you enjoy most about school? What do you not like about school?

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS – peers in marketplaces and with other adults.

- How do you relate with the motor park operators and other adults in the market i.e. the police, revenue collectors, traffic wardens, ‘agboro’ people and motor park operators etc?
- How do you relate to your vending peers and friends – other children and young people in the market?
- Who are your friends? Where are they from? What do they do?
- Do you have any time for play and leisure within or outside this place?
- Where do you retire to at the end of each day?
- Apart from vending, do you do other things at home (sweep and tidy house, wash clothes, cook food etc)? What else do you do in the house where you live – in the morning and at the end of the day, when you get back to your home?

GENERAL

- Do you have/belong to any association or organisation?
- How did you become a member - Freely or compelled to join? What does the association do for you?

- Are there any benefits from becoming a member? What are the benefits? Any disadvantages? Please name them.
- Do you enjoy what you are doing?
- What aspects of it do you enjoy most and why?
- What aspects do you not like?
- What do you hope to become or do with your self after this? - Get into trading, set up your own stall, further your education, learn another trade etc?
- What changes would you like to see in your life and present circumstance?
- What do you think can be done to help you achieve your life ambitions?
- Who can help you achieve them - government, your parents/guardian, trade association to which you belong, town union etc? In what way can they be of help?

ADULTS:

- What do you think of these children who hawk foodstuff and push wheel barrows all day in the park, market, bus stations and major roads and streets?
- What problems and challenges do you think they are faced with/ encounter in this place?
- Do you think that they are safe? Are there any laws or facilities put in place to support and protect them from being harassed and man- handled by bigger persons and adults, revenue collectors, agbero groups and others?
- What are your general perceptions and opinions regarding what the children do?
- Any recommendations/suggestions /comments etc.

Thank You

APPENDIX 5 DVD OF VENDING SCENES

A copy of the DVD of some of the vending scenes and marketplaces that I visited

APPENDIX 6 RESEARCH VENUES

The following venues were used for the study:

- (1). Five major markets:
 - Ogbete main market, the largest and most popular in the State
 - Gariki Market is the second largest
 - Iva Valley Relief Market
 - Kenyatta Market place
 - Artisan market is a much smaller and less busy one of the three which operates to full capacity in the evening hours.
- (2). Six Motor Parks:
 - Jioto Motor Park popularly called the Gariki Park in Enugu South LGA which is situated at the entrance into Enugu city from the south through the Port Harcourt – Enugu expressway,
 - Holy Ghost Motor Park at the Ogui Road entrance to Ogbete Main market,
 - Old Park in Enugu North LGA
 - The Lorry park inside Ogbete market from the Coal Camp entrance of the market
 - Peace Mass Transit bus Park and its adjoining Okpara Avenue Parks which are located very close to the Holy Ghost Park and entrance to the main market.
 - Ekene dili chukwu bus park which is along Zik Avenue, one of the city's major streets
- (3). Four major trading streets:
 - Ogui Road
 - Zik Avenue
 - Agbani Road
 - Okpara Avenue
 - And a couple of minor street shopping places and evening markets.

APPENDIX 7: AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHILDREN: WHO THEY LIVED WITH AND THEIR EDUCATIONAL LEVELS.

TABLE 1: WHO THE CHILDREN LIVED WITH

Number of children	13	5	2	2	1	total
Who they lived with	both parents	Mother only	Elder brother	'Real aunty' but not as house helps	father and step mother	24

TABLE 2: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHILDREN INDICATING AGE, GENDER AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

SN	Name	Gender	Age	Education Level	Expected Level of education	Difference Between current & expected
1	Justina	f	6	NA	NA	NA
2	David	m	7	P2	P2	0
3	Nkiru	f	9	P3	P4	-1
4	Kola	m	9	P3	P4	-1
5	Justin	m	9	P2	P4	-2
6	Chinenye	f	10	P3	P5	-2
7	Useni	m	11	P5	P6	-1
8	Gods power	m	11	JS1	P6	1
9	Blessing	f	12	P5	JS1	-2
10	Christiana	f	12	P6	JS1	-1
11	Adamu	m	12	P6	JS1	-1
12	Ud	m	12	JS1	JS1	0
13	Damian	m	13	JS1	JS2	-1
14	Godwin	m	13	JS2	JS2	0
15	Josephat	m	14	JS3	JS3	0
16	Grace	f	14	JS1	JS3	-2
17	Paul	m	14	JS1	JS3	-2
18	Emeka	m	14	P6	JS3	-3
19	Nkechi	f	15	JS3	SS1	-1
20	Masiri	f	15	SS2	SS1	1
21	Eka	f	16	SS2	SS2	0
22	Sandra	f	16	SS1	SS2	-1
23	Chizoba	f	16	SS3	SS2	1
24	Chinemerem	f	17	SS2	SS3	-1
	No of respondents	24				

P = Primary school
JS = junior secondary
SS = senior secondary

