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CHILD TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY

Introduction

“Child trafficking” began its career as a core international child protection issue in the late 1990s. It emerged from the union of the anti-child labor and anti-sex trafficking movements, which both underwent a resurgence at that time and paralleled a rise in focus on the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Since around 2005, trafficking has been joined by “child slavery,” which contemporary abolitionists argue is a subset of the “modern-day slavery” that they claim blights the global economy. Child trafficking and child slavery have thus become twin issues, enshrined in—and targeted for eradication by—the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Conceptually, each issue is understood and constructed within mainstream media and political discourse as a matter of innocents being kidnapped and enslaved by criminal exploiters or sold by their poverty-stricken/“culturally backward” parents. The conventional policy approaches with which this discourse is associated thus tend toward the draconian, replicating the aggressive yet depoliticizing efforts of those who wish to outlaw child labor and (adult or child) prostitution. Scholars and critical practitioners from all continents have pushed back, arguing that discourse is as problematic and reductive as policy is misguided and ineffective. Criticism has targeted the unsophisticated, at times racist nature of many mainstream representations, as well as the damaging, unintended consequences of top-down policy and project interventions. Many have focused on documenting children’s agency amidst their structural constraints, including the consent that they offer for their work, even where that work is labeled as trafficking or slavery. Others have sought to situate this work within its sociocultural contexts. A small handful of scholars have gone inside the discursive and policy regime in order to understand and map how policymakers think and act around these issues.

Considerable differences exist between researchers who have conducted empirical research with children labeled as slaves or victims of trafficking and those who examine these issues from a more bird's-eye perspective. Naturally, there is great overlap between those who examine related issues—such as child labor, child sexual exploitation, modern slavery, or adult sex trafficking—with child labor in particular, generating a vast literature that is covered in another bibliography entry; the commercial sexual exploitation of children is covered in a forthcoming entry.

Nevertheless, given the policy, institutional, and discursive overlaps between child trafficking and slavery and child labor, many of the texts cited will be drawn from literature that straddles both topics.

General Overviews

No single text offers a full overview of the many approaches to studying child trafficking and slavery or the construction and governance of these as social problematics. By contrast, the cited texts, taken together, offer a solid general overview of the field. These texts include empirical studies with children, their families, and policymakers. Hilowitz 2003 is a worthwhile annotated text that contains several studies on bonded child labor. Dottridge and Jordan 2012 explicitly addresses the conceptual-legal overlap between child labor and child trafficking/slavery (and criticizes the tendency to categorize cases of “mere” child labor as trafficking or slavery). Craig 2010 is a good example of mainstream discourse around this issue; the other three texts are essential rejoinders.

Bourdillon, M., D. Levison, W. Myers, and B. White. *Rights and Wrongs of Children's Work*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011. [ISBN: 9780813548883] [class:book]

The definitive work for understanding the major debates around child labor, which map directly onto trafficking and slavery. Each of the authors has over four decades of experience

researching these issues, and the book consequently draws on a wealth of empirical examples to argue against the mainstream “abolitionist” standpoint.

Craig, G., ed. *Child Slavery Now: A Contemporary Reader*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2010.

[ISBN: 9781847426093] [class:book]

An edited volume that brings together contributions from researchers and senior practitioners in the field, this collection is representative of prevailing media and policy discourses around trafficking and slavery. Has been widely critiqued by scholars who have conducted empirical work with children labeled as victims of trafficking.

Dottridge, M., and A. Jordan. *Children, Adolescents and Human Trafficking: Making Sense of a Complex Problem*. Issue Paper 5, May 2012. Washington, DC: Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, American University Washington College of Law, 2012. [class:report]

An important critical text that unpacks some of the conceptual and legal knots surrounding this and related issues, published by two of the established critical voices in the field.

Hashim, I., and D. Thorsen. *Child Migration in Africa*. Uppsala, Sweden: Nordic Africa Institute, 2011. [ISBN: 9781848134560] [class:book]

Many scholars have conducted empirical research on child and youth migration, from which they have argued that anti-trafficking discourses simplify complex realities and deny children (and their communities) agency. Bringing together studies from across Africa, this is the primary empirically informed counterweight to mainstream discourses.

Hilowitz, J. *Annotated Bibliography on Child Labour*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO-IPEC, 2003.

[ISBN: 9789221136538] [class:book]

An annotated bibliography put together by the International Labour Organisation's Programme to Eliminate Child Labour, this contains many references (some of questionable quality) to trafficking- or slavery-related work.

Howard, N. *Child Trafficking, Youth Labour Mobility and the Politics of Protection*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. [ISBN: 9781137478177] [class:book]

To date, the only empirical study to have combined research with both apparent victims of child trafficking and anti-traffickers. The book offers a field-wide analysis of anti-child trafficking/slavery, uncovering the ideological and material power relations governing what it does, why this fails, and what could be done differently.

Anthologies

There are several useful anthologies that contain important perspectives on the field. Others are useful collections of policymaker or practitioner perspectives, which may serve as references for those who wish to understand how anti-traffickers and modern abolitionists think and operate.

Howard and Okyere 2019 is a reference work that contains a number of contemporary critiques of the anti-trafficking paradigm. Another very up-to-date collection is Clark and Poucki 2019, which features a highly interdisciplinary set of essays, as indeed does the collection Piotrowicz, et al. 2018. Dragiewicz 2015 contains a number of child-specific pieces, while Donà and Veale 2014 focuses explicitly on children's mobility and how different (and more complex) this is than is made out in discourses around trafficking. Ennew 2008 is an important and critical text in relation to child sexual exploitation. Finally, Shelley 2012 is a useful example of more mainstream writing on this issue.

Clark, J. P., and S. Poucki, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery*. London: SAGE, 2019. [ISBN: 9781473978553] [class:book]

This work provides a wide-ranging, interdisciplinary take on the many diverse issues relating to trafficking and slavery. Combining respected scholars and civil society actors, it is a useful reference point.

Donà, G., and A. Veale, eds. *Child and Youth Migration: Mobility-in-Migration in an Era of Globalization*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2014. [ISBN: 9781137280664] [class:book]

This edited collection sits at the intersection between migration, mobility, and childhood studies. Contributors explore under-researched child and youth short-term and micro movements within major migration fluxes that occur in response to migration and global change. A solid starting point for those interested in mobility.

Dragiewicz, M., ed. *Global Human Trafficking: Critical Issues and Contexts*. London: Routledge, 2015. [ISBN: 9780415711098] [class:book]

Another recent collection of essays that also includes child-specific perspectives. Certain of the articles are based on sound empirical research with children and their communities.

Ennew, J. *Exploitation of Children in Prostitution*. Thematic Paper for the World Congress III against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 25-28 November 2008. [class:conference-paper]

A reference work produced by one of the towering scholars in this field covering debates and data around child sexual exploitation, including natural overlaps with the themes of this entry.

Howard, N., and S. Okyere, eds. *International Child Protection: Towards Politics and Participation*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2019. [class:book]

Although its remit is broader than simply trafficking or slavery, this edited volume is useful for anyone who wishes to understand the governance of these issues. Contains empirically based chapters on child labor and trafficking, as well as others which speak to wider problems within international child protection. An important reference.

Piotrowicz, R., C. Rijken, and B. H. Uhl, eds. *Routledge Handbook of Human Trafficking*. London: Routledge, 2018. [ISBN: 9781138892064] [class:book]

This edited volume brings together perspectives from law, anthropology, and social and political science. It looks at statistical, data protection, and research methods issues, as well as analyzing the many actors and stakeholders in the field.

Shelley, L. I. *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. [class:book]

The first attempt at a global overview, this work represents the bird's-eye political science take on the issues, with little ground-level research included in it. Useful as an example of mainstream discourse.

Journals

Articles examining issues related to trafficking and slavery appear in a variety of different journals, including those from a legal, political science, migration, or development studies backgrounds. *Childhood* and *Children's Geographies* are two childhood studies-specific journals that have often covered these and related issues, while the *Anti-Trafficking Review* is unquestionably the best place to go for critical scholarly work in the field. *Journal of Human Trafficking* is more the mainstream outlet.

**Anti-Trafficking Review*[<http://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atrjournal>]*. 2012–. [class:periodical]

The *Anti-Trafficking Review* adopts a critical approach to anti-trafficking. It situates all exploitation within its broader contexts, including gender analyses and intersections with labor and migrant rights. The journal offers an outlet and space for dialogue between academics, practitioners, and advocates seeking to communicate new ideas and findings to those working

for and with trafficked persons. It often features the best of contemporary research around child trafficking and slavery.

**Childhood*[<https://journals.sagepub.com/home/chd>]*. 1993–. [class:periodical]

A major international peer-reviewed journal that publishes theoretical and empirical articles, reviews, and scholarly comments on children's social relations and culture, with an emphasis on their rights and generational position in society. The key childhood studies journal.

**Children's Geographies*[<https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cchg20>]*. 2003–. [class:periodical]

An international peer-reviewed journal that publishes contemporary scholarship relating to children, young people, and families. Sometimes features pieces on children's work, child labor, trafficking, and slavery.

**Journal of Human Trafficking*[<https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/uhmt20>]*. 2015–.

[class:periodical]

The *Journal of Human Trafficking* aims to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by publishing applied research, theory, and practice on topics including child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Not a critical journal.

Reference Works

Many key texts exist that should serve as references for students and teachers. Those mentioned in *General Overviews* fit into this category, as do the texts in this section. In addition to the academic works mentioned, a handful of online publications and platforms are also included. The **Beyond Trafficking and Slavery** website is particularly up to date and consistently brings the best of contemporary scholarship into the public domain in accessible formats. Bales 1999 is the single most important case study of modern slavery discourse, encompassing that

related to child trafficking and slavery. Two of Bales's numerous publications are included here for reference.

*Bales, K. *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. [ISBN: 9780520217973] [class:book]

One of the seminal pieces in the modern slavery discourse. The front cover is itself a case study of the fetishizing nature of new abolitionism, a disembodied gaze looking at seemingly poor nonwhite children from the Global South. An important reference for anyone interested in the perspectives of those at the heart of this discourse.

*Bales, K., Z. Trodd, and A. W. Williamson. *Modern Slavery: A Beginner's Guide*. London: Oneworld, 2009. [class:book]

A further example of the contemporary brand of abolitionist evangelism. Written as a "beginner's guide," it aims at young students and non-specialists.

Beyond Trafficking and Slavery[<https://www.opendemocracy.net/beyondslavery>]. [class:webLink]

Beyond Trafficking and Slavery aims to help those trying to understand forced labor, trafficking, and slavery by combining the rigor of academic scholarship with the clarity of journalism. Its goal is to use evidence-based advocacy to unveil the structural political, economic, and social root causes of global exploitation. Often features scholars researching these issues and publishes children's voices as well.

Child Migration Research Network[<http://www.childmigration.net/index>]. [class:webLink]

The scholarly equivalent of the ****Save the Children Resource Centre****, a large online repository of primarily academic research on child labor migration (and thus by extension child

trafficking). A very full and impressive library is featured here, including lots of recent research.

Child Rights International Network[<https://home.crin.org/>]. [class:webLink]

The Child Rights International Network (CRIN) is a reference resource for people who work in and on children's rights. It has historically published rights-related pieces, including stories of violations and policy interventions. Its *archive[<https://archive.crin.org/>]* is worth consulting.

Fyfe, A. *The Worldwide Movement against Child Labour: Progress and Future Directions*.

Geneva, Switzerland: ILO, 2007. [ISBN: 9789221200178] [class:book]

The “establishment” perspective on global efforts to eradicate child labor and the worldwide movement led by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Produced by the ILO, it examines the intellectual and policy frameworks that the organization pioneers, which encompass anti-trafficking and antislavery.

Hindman, H. D., ed. *The World of Child Labor: An Historical and Regional Survey*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2009. [class:book]

A vast encyclopedic volume with contributions from 222 authors and coauthors and 190 essays. It documents some of the best research around child labor from all manner of perspectives and thus necessarily touches on key issues related to trafficking and slavery.

Howard, N., and S. Okyere. **Childhood and*

Youth[<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2IN4rGTopsaNjJNaDA1MFd3Qlk/view>]*. Beyond Trafficking and Slavery Short Course. Vol. 7. 2015. [class:webLink]

Published by the collective at ****Beyond Trafficking and Slavery****, this is a free, accessibly written collection that brings together some of the leading voices in childhood studies to

critique mainstream policy approaches and hegemonic discourses. Includes a focus on child labor, trafficking, and slavery. The best short introduction for undergraduates.

Morrow, V., and J. Boyden. *Responding to Children's Work: Evidence from the Young Lives Study in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. Summative Report.* Oxford: Young Lives, 2018. [class:report]

Young Lives was an international study of childhood poverty following the lives of 12,000 children in Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam over fifteen years. Its aim was to shed light on the drivers and impacts of child poverty, and to generate evidence to help policymakers design programs that make a real difference to poor children and their families. This document is its summative report in relation to children's work and a major empirical response to contemporary discourse and policymaking around child labor, trafficking, and slavery.

Mosse, D. *Cultivating Development: An Ethnography of Aid and Practice.* London: Pluto Press, 2005. [ISBN: 9780745317984] [class:book]

Not strictly related to either trafficking or slavery, but a reference work for anyone wishing to understand the policy- and project-making process. Seminal within the ethnography of aid and anthropology of policy traditions, a key read for those who see this field as an object of study.

*Save the Children Resource

Centre[<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/keyword/children-move>]*. [class:dataSet-database]

A major repository of child migration-related publications, including many which deal with trafficking and slavery. Collated publications come primarily from international nongovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies. As such, from an academic

perspective, their quality varies. But this is a critical resource for tracking how organizations in this field think and how their thinking evolves.

Bibliographies

There are surprisingly few bibliographies available, and only one that has been systematically produced. There are however bibliographies of related issues such as child labor or human trafficking, which provide worthwhile starting points for students and practitioners, since the conceptual, practical, and political overlaps between the issues are so great. Kenny 2017 should be seen as the companion work to this one, bringing the wide literature on child labor together. Gozdzia and Bump 2011 is an important meta-study of publications in this field, while Hilowitz 2003 is one of the earlier bibliographies and produced by the ILO.

Gozdzia, E., and J. Bump. *Data and Research on Human Trafficking: Bibliography of Research-Based Publications*. Washington, DC: ISIM, 2011. [class:report]

This is the only systematic review-generated bibliography of trafficking-related publications and is a useful reference for the field, even if by now a little dated. Shows how much is written about the topic that has not been peer reviewed.

Hilowitz, J. **Annotated Bibliography on Child*

Labour[<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/annotated-bibliography-child-labour>]*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO, 2003. [ISBN: 9789221136538] [class:report]

Although also somewhat outdated, this bibliography provides a useful reference point for those interested in child labor. The emphasis is on works published by economists and by those sympathetic with the ILO's stance on child labor, but a number of critical, scholarly voices are also included.

Kenny, M. L. *Child Labor[obo-9780199791231-0092]*. In *Oxford Bibliographies in Childhood Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. [class:dataSetItem-database]

A companion to the present work, this is an important reference of historical, economic, anthropological, and sociological work on child labor, children's work, and associated policies. Aims to unite diverse voices and perspectives as well as to disaggregate the meta-category of child labor to show how context shapes the nature, extent, interpretation, and representation of children's work.

Key Strands in the Literature

A large literature exists directly addressing child trafficking and slavery, and an even larger body of relevant work addresses related issues. That literature can be broken down into various categories, ranging from the foundational legal texts structuring much action in this field, to institutional documents espousing the mainstream position within it, to the variety of scholarly critiques of it. Scholarly critiques take different forms and have different foci. Here, texts are ordered by theme and by geographic focus.

International Law

The key international conventions governing child trafficking and slavery are featured in this section. These texts are international law and are binding upon all signatory states. Most of their definitions are incorporated into national legislation when countries sign them. Differing legal interpretations exist as to which has primacy and what such primacy may mean for approaches to policymaking.

ILO. *Convention Concerning Minimum Age for Admission to

Employment[https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C138]*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO, 1973. [legal-citation]

Known as the “Minimum Age Convention,” this 1973 text is the subject of much contention in the child labor/child trafficking field. Seen as a pillar of the “abolitionist” position by researchers and movements of working children, it is staunchly defended by the ILO and labor unions. Sets out parameters governing when and how under-18s may work legally. Full text available in many languages.

ILO. *Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child

Labour[https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C182]*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO, 1999. [legal-citation]

An update on the 1973 convention (ILO 1973), this convention seeks to focus attention on eradicating the worst forms of child work, including that which is most hazardous or damaging. Broadly endorsed across the spectrum of actors working on these issues, though considerable problems exist in relation to its application. Full text available in many languages.

United Nations. *Slavery

Convention[https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1926/09/19260925%2003-12%20AM/Ch_XVIII_3p.pdf]*. Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, 1926. [legal-citation]

The full text is available along with links to related conventions, interpretations, and human rights bodies. The original convention banning unfree work, including for children.

United Nations. *Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery[<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/SupplementaryConventionAbolitionOfSlavery.aspx>]*. 1956. [legal-citation]

Ancestor to the Optional Protocol (United Nations 2001b), an important moment in the legal history of trafficking and slavery.

United Nations. *Convention on the Rights of the Child[<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>]*. Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, 1989. [legal-citation]

The most widely ratified international convention in history, this seminal text is comprised of fifty-four legally binding articles. One of its most important is Article 3, which states that “[i]n all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities, or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.” This article is used by many critics of anti-child labor and anti-trafficking policy to raise awareness of the non-participatory and damaging nature of many interventions.

United Nations. *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime[<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/protocoltraffickinginpersons.aspx>]*. Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, 2000a. [legal-citation]

Known worldwide as the “Palermo Protocol,” the key recent text in the explosion of trafficking (and “modern” slavery) as a global issue. Famously the subject of great and acrimonious debate during drafting, the text contains no working definition of “exploitation.”

United Nations. *Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography[<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPSCCRC.aspx>]*. 2000b. [legal-citation]

A Protocol of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that requires parties to prohibit the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. Particularly concerns child trafficking.

Institutional Documents

Many examples exist of institutional discourse and of the policy approaches advocated by the big agencies in this field. The websites of each organization are excellent sources, as are the interviews their staff give to the media. This section includes three seminal publications which can be seen as textbook examples. **ILO-IPEC** also introduces the International Programme to Eliminate Child Labour, which is the major actor in worldwide efforts against trafficking and child labor. Additionally, there are institutions which have been consistently critical of the mainstream discourse and approach to policymaking and have pushed back against it. Terre des Hommes is perhaps the most important, though Save the Children has also contributed.

Feneyrol, O., and Terre des Hommes Lausanne. *Quelle protection pour les enfants concernés par la mobilité en Afrique de l’Ouest? Nos positions et recommandations[https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/french/Rapport_FR-web.pdf]*. Rapport Régional de Synthèse—Projet «Mobilités», 2011. [class:report]

A landmark publication that crystallized the civil society pushback against mainstream trafficking discourse to reframe it into “Children on the Move.” Although nominally issued by eight separate organizations (African Movement of Working Children and Youth [AMWYC],

ILO, International Organization for Migration [IOM], Plan International, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes International Foundation, and UNICEF), including three UN agencies (ILO, IOM, and UNICEF) and one working children's organization (MAEJT/AMWYC), it was primarily the work of Terre des Hommes. Versions exist also in English.

ILO, UNICEF, and UN.GIFT. "Training Manual to Fight Trafficking in Children for Labour, Sexual and Other Forms of Exploitation: Understanding Child Trafficking." Geneva, Switzerland: ILO, 2009. [class:report]

This document sets the international agency agenda regarding child trafficking. Contains legal and conceptual explanations as well as suggestions for action. Produced collaboratively by a number of United Nations agencies engaged in these questions, a classic example of contemporary institutional discourses.

ILO-IPEC. "Unbearable to the Human Heart: Child Trafficking and Action to Eliminate It." Geneva, Switzerland: ILO, 2002. [class:report]

Perhaps the seminal early publication at the very start of the tidal wave of popular and institutional discourse around child trafficking and slavery. Sensational. Freely available online.

ILO-IPEC. "Child Trafficking: The ILO's Response through IPEC." Geneva, Switzerland: ILO, 2007. [class:report]

Outlines IPEC's response and gives an overview of its work. IPEC has been one of the major pillars of the ILO over recent decades.

Historical Studies

One strand of the childhood studies literature that has pushed back against essentialist understandings of childhood and its relationship to labor and exploitation has been the historical.

Historical studies of children's work and exploitation (which may now go under the name of trafficking or slavery) have sought to contextualize both within the socio-cultural-historical moment. Hugh Cunningham's work has been especially important in this regard.

Campbell, G., J. Miller, and S. Miers, eds. *Child Slaves in the Modern World*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011. [ISBN: 9780821419588] [class:book]

A volume that examines children in slavery in the 19th and 20th centuries. An important text bringing the distinctiveness of child experiences to the fore in the crowded transatlantic slavery literature.

Cunningham, H., and P. P. Viazzo, eds. *Child Labour in Historical Perspective, 1800–1985: Case Studies from Europe, Japan and Colombia*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti, 1996. [ISBN: 9788885401273] [class:book]

Comprised of five papers that focus primarily on the 19th and early 20th centuries and an essay that summarizes some of the principal issues and questions in this field from a historical perspective.

Political Economy Perspectives

Within academic work on child labor and the associated issues of trafficking and slavery, political economy perspectives have been notably lacking. Few of the researchers that conduct empirical work with working children also conduct political economy analyses of their circumstances. Likewise, almost no political economists conduct empirical research with children when writing about their labor or exploitation. This absence is paralleled also in the work of international organizations and civil society actors, who typically ignore questions of structural causality. The two texts in this section are therefore welcome exceptions.

Hart, J., and J. Boyden. "Childhood (Re)materialized: Bringing Political-Economy into the Field." In *Reimagining Childhood Studies*. Edited by S. Spyrou, R. Rosen, and D. Cook, 75-89.

London: Bloomsbury, 2019. [ISBN: 9781350019218] [class:bookChapter]

Not strictly related to child trafficking and slavery but rather a call to arms for childhood studies as a whole, including those who work on these issues. The paper examines the field's emergence and its primary interest in the sociocultural domain. It argues that scholars have neglected to analyze the political-economic conditions in which children's lives unfold, which in turn normalizes the status quo. The paper pushes for a rethink in the dominant methodological and disciplinary bent of childhood studies to integrate a political-economic perspective.

Seabrook, J. *Children of Other Worlds: Exploitation in the Global Market*. London: Pluto Press, 2001. [ISBN: 9780745313962] [class:book]

A fierce, eloquent critique of globalization, neo-imperialism, and the impact of Western political economic decision-making on the lives of poor children and child laborers in the Global South. With a focus on Bangladesh, Seabrook makes a case here that is international.

Contemporary Empirical Studies by Geography

Frustrated by the misrepresentation of children's complex realities, academics across a number of disciplines have for many years pushed back against mainstream discourse around trafficking and slavery. Where that discourse tends to sensationalize migration as trafficking and work as slavery, researchers have presented alternative stories based on in-depth, often anthropological study conducted with children and their communities. These studies often emphasize the agency that young people exercise when moving and working and the contexts in which their movement and work takes place.

Africa

Much of the best critical literature relating to child trafficking and child trafficking discourse/anti-child trafficking policy is based on empirical work in Africa. Bourdillon and Mutambwa 2014 is an important contextual piece that makes the case for work being normal and constructive in African children's lives. Okyere 2018 has excellent empirical data from Ghana which blows apart many of the standard tropes in the child trafficking and slavery literature, which is also true for Machonachie and Hilson 2016. Howard 2014 and Castle and Diarra 2003 make important, data-backed cases against seeing child mobility as trafficking.

Bourdillon, M., and G. M. Mutambwa, eds. *The Place of Work in African Childhoods*. Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 2014. [ISBN: 9782869785977] [class:book]

Contains fourteen empirical chapters, in English and in French, edited by two of Africa's most prominent thinkers around children's work. The volume outlines what "work" means socioculturally in a variety of African societies, contrasting this with the normative, Western-derived assumptions around childhood as a time to be "work free."

Castle, S., and A. Diarra. *The International Migration of Young Malians: Tradition, Necessity or Rite of Passage?* Research Report. London: School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2003.

[class:report]

One of the earliest scholarly responses to claims of widespread West African child trafficking, Castle and Diarra report the findings of interviews with a number of adolescent labor migrants in Mali, exploring their varying motivations for departure.

Howard, N. "Teenage Labor Migration and Antitrafficking Policy In West Africa." In *Special Issue. ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 653.1 (2014): 124–140. [class:journalArticle]

Like Okyere's work, this article uses the voices of West African adolescent labor migrants (from Benin to Nigeria) to critique prevailing discourse and policy for being misrepresentative and problematic. The article goes into some depth around children and young people's motivations for labor migration.

Machonachie, R., and G. Hilson. "Re-thinking the Child Labor 'Problem' in Rural Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Sierra Leone's 'Half Shovels.'" *World Development* 78.16 (2016): 136–147. [class:journalArticle]

Another empirically derived challenge to child labor norms and their relationship with anti-trafficking interventions, this piece uses a case study of artisanal miners in Sierra Leone.

Arguing that child miners make important contributions to familial poverty alleviation and can combine work with school, it urges a rethink on the part of policymakers.

Okyere, S. "Moral Economies and Child Labour in Artisanal Gold Mining in Ghana: Towards a Critical Analysis." In *Revisiting Slavery and Antislavery: Towards a Critical Analysis*. Edited by L. Brace and J. O'Connell Davidson, 231–260. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2018. [ISBN: 9783319906225] [class:bookChapter]

Okyere is one of the strongest researchers currently pushing back against hegemonic abolitionist and anti-trafficking discourses, and has conducted lots of ethnographic work with child workers and migrants in Ghana and Nigeria. This chapter examines neo-abolitionist representations of children's participation in precarious labor as "child slavery" and contrasts it with such children's own self-representations.

Asia

Writing from Asia is less rich than that from Africa. That said, Molland [2012](#) is very important for its analysis of how anti-trafficking "works" in practice, even if it is not specifically about

children. Huijismans is an important scholar in these discussions, and his 2011 piece draws on his early research with migrant children and anti-trafficking actors. Kara [2012](#) is a popular and problematic text that fits into the modern abolitionist paradigm. Frederick and Tamang [2005](#) contains interesting empirics.

Frederick, J., and A. Tamang. *Summary of Findings: A Study of Trafficked Nepalese Girls and Women in Mumbai and Kolkata, India*. Kathmandu: Terre des Hommes Lausanne and Patenschaft Nepal, 2005. [ISBN: 9789994656677] [class:book]

An early empirical study asking girls and young women about their experiences of trafficked movement, work, confinement, and more.

Huijismans, R. “The Theatre of Human Trafficking: A Global Discourse on Lao Stages.”

International Journal of Social Quality 1.2 (2011): 66–84. [class:journalArticle]

Also using empirics drawn from Laos (and Thailand), Huijismans’s study looks at the “performance” of anti-trafficking and the translation of anti-trafficking efforts from global to national levels.

Kara, S. *Bonded Labor: Tackling the System of Slavery in South Asia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. [ISBN: 9780231158480] [class:book]

Written by one of the more prominent modern abolitionists, this book is empirically and theoretically light and has been the subject of much critique. Useful nevertheless as an exemplar of the genre of popular, widely sold titles.

Molland, S. *The Perfect Business? Anti-trafficking and the Sex Trade along the Mekong*.

Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2012. [ISBN: 9780824836535] [class:book]

One of the rare studies of anti-traffickers as well as the “trafficked.” Similar to Howard 2017 (cited under *General Overviews*), it examines the social worlds and linkages between so-called traffickers, “victims,” and anti-trafficking activists in South East Asia.

Latin America

Latin America has a rich tradition of working children’s movements, and much of the trafficking-related literature focuses on them, on their narration of their work experiences and mobility, and on how this differs from the representations of mainstream trafficking discourse. Taft [2017](#) and Liebel [2004](#) are important references in this respect. Bastia 2005 is one of the few studies specifically interrogating claims of trafficking, while Sommerfelt [2015](#) offers a useful perspective on a phenomenon often equated with trafficking in Haiti—that of the “*restaveks*.” Bastia, Tania. “Child Trafficking or Teenage Migration? Bolivian Migrants in Argentina.”

International Migration 43.4 (2005). [class:journalArticle]

One of the earliest articles to contest claims of mass child trafficking and one of the only to do so in English using data from Latin America. The article focuses on Bolivians in Argentina, their work, their mobility, and their goals in each.

Liebel, M. *A Will of Their Own: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Working Children*. London: Zed Books, 2004. [ISBN: 9781842773499] [class:book]

Unquestionably the foremost scholar of working children’s movements, with a particular focus on those in Latin America, Manfred Liebel is essential reading for anybody who wishes to understand the fault-lines that divide anti-child labor abolitionists and organized working children.

Sommerfelt, T., ed. *Child Fosterage and Child Domestic Work in Haiti in 2014: Analytical Report*. Oslo, Norway: Fafo Foundation, 2015. [class:report]

Fafo has a solid record of sponsoring critical empirical work on child work, trafficking, and mobility. This study is no exception.

Taft, J. K. “Continually Redefining *Protagonismo*: The Peruvian Movement of Working Children and Political Change, 1976–2015.” *Latin American Perspectives* (2017).

[doi:10.1177/0094582X17736037] [class:journalArticle]

Jessica Taft’s research with movements of working children emphasizes the agency that child and adolescent workers have, as well as their political subjectivity. Contrasting this sharply with discourses of victimhood that paint children as naïve victims of evil traffickers or desperate poverty, Taft’s paper is an important reference point for those interested in working children’s movements.

Europe

Many sensational media stories paint pictures of trafficked children across Europe being used for begging, the sale of drugs, or sex work. Some well-researched publications also exist. Terre des Hommes Foundation [2003](#) is one of the earlier publications to look at child trafficking in Europe, while Gearon [2015](#) is one of the more recent critical studies.

Gearon, A. ““Child Trafficking’ Moral Panic: Blame, Disrepute and Loss.” *Open Review of Social Sciences* 1.1 (2015): 2–8. [class:journalArticle]

Using data from the United Kingdom, this paper explores the moral panic of “child trafficking” policy and practice. It also examines the underlying constructs of childhood underpinning this moral panic and considers the implications for service-user children.

Terre des Hommes Foundation. *The Trafficking of Albanian Children in Greece*. Lausanne, Switzerland: Terre des Hommes, 2003. [class:report]

One of the earliest reports on child trafficking at the Eastern edges of Europe, this piece is typical of institutional reports that attempt to underline how serious the problem is and what is (and is not) being done to prevent it.

Contemporary Empirical Studies by Theme

A handful of key themes regularly recur in critical research on trafficking and slavery. *Child Agency* is one of these key themes; non-Western, non-nuclear family types that involve *Child Placement and Fosterage* comprise another; and *Policy Critique* and discourse is a third. Woodhead 1999 is unique for bringing a psychological perspective to the analysis of child work.

Child Agency

If there has been one central message from the academic and practitioner pushback against mainstream discourse around trafficking and slavery, it has been that children are and must be understood (and treated) as agents, not as passive victims of circumstance. The empirical literature arguing this is therefore extensive. Thorsen 2014 makes the case based on research with youth migrants in Burkina Faso, Kropiwnicki 2012 with young sex workers in South Africa, and Huijsmans 2011 with child migrants in Southeast Asia. O'Connell Davidson 2005 is one of the seminal texts in this genre and is echoed by O'Connell Davidson and Farrow 2007, which deeply interrogates the concept of agency. Berlan 2004 is one of the rare critical studies with children working on cocoa farms (often a stereotyped case of child labor), while Woodhead 1999 is the groundbreaking study making the case for child work and its role in child development from the psychological literature.

Berlan, A. "Child Labour, Education and Child Rights among Cocoa Producers in Ghana." In *The Political Economy of New Slavery*. Edited by C. van den Anker. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2004, 158-178.

[ISBN: 9781403915221] [class:bookChapter]

One of the earliest studies conducted with the apparently classic case study of child trafficking—on West African cocoa farms—to reveal a much more complex reality in which work and schooling often intertwine.

Huijsmans, R. "Child Migration and Questions of Agency." *Development and Change* 42.5 (2011): 1307–1321. [class:journalArticle]

Huijsmans's paper is another in the tradition of those which seek to push back against the victim paradigm within dominant trafficking/slavery discourse by examining children's understandings of why they do what they do.

Kropiwnicki, Z. O. D. S. "The Politics of Child Prostitution in South Africa." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 30.2 (2012): 235–265. [class:journalArticle]

Kropiwnicki has conducted extensive research with child and youth sex workers in South Africa and documents the strategies and tactics they deploy in navigating their challenged, marginalized lives. Her work is itself a challenge to discourses of victimhood.

O'Connell Davidson, J. *Children in the Global Sex Trade*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005. [ISBN: 9780745629278] [class:book]

A seminal work in the tradition of those which complicate comfortable binary narratives about victims and victimhood, this book situates child and youth sex workers within global processes and power structures, all the while emphasizing their situated and constrained exercise of agency.

O’Connell Davidson, J., and C. Farrow. *Child Migration and the Construction of Vulnerability*. Gothenburg: Save the Children Sweden, 2007. [class:book]

An important deconstruction of apparently inherent child “vulnerability” and how the concept of vulnerability plays into the moral panics around trafficking and child migration.

Thorsen, D. “Jeans, Bicycles and Mobile Phones: Adolescent Migrants’ Material Consumption in Burkina Faso.” In *Child and Youth Migration: Mobility-in-Migration in an Era of Globalization*. Edited by A. Veale and G. Donà, 67–90. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. [ISBN: 9781137280664] [class:bookChapter]

Part of a volume that addresses children’s mobility more broadly, this paper examines youth labor mobility in Burkina Faso through the lens of youth aspirations and consumption.

Woodhead, M. *Is There a Place for Work in Child

Development?[<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/there-place-work-child-development-implications-child-development-theory-and-research>]*. Stockholm: Save the Children Sweden, 1999. [class:report]

This paper presents the case for a sociocultural approach to child development as a more globally appropriate basis for conceptualizing the place of work in children’s lives. This puts Western developmental knowledge into context and relativizes issues of harm and benefit.

Child Placement and Fosterage

A common confusion in popular representations of child trafficking or slavery is between these practices and child placement or fosterage. In many parts of the world, children are raised by nonbiological caregivers as a matter of course. Similarly, children are often sent by parents to relatives or nonrelatives for work or work and formal/informal education. Such practices often come under the heading of “placement” in French or “fosterage” in English. Alber 2011 is a

classic anthropological take on the role of such practices among one Northern Beninese group, while Akresh 2005 outlines the economic rationale beneath many. Goody 1982 is the classic study in this tradition, Sommerfelt 2015 a recent addition.

Akresh, R. Risk, Network Quality, and Family Structure: Child Fostering Decisions in Burkina Faso. IZA Discussion Paper 1471. New Haven, CT: Economic Growth Center, Yale University, 2005. [class:report]

An economic discussion of why families foster their children, including as a mechanism for dealing with economic stress. Explains fosterage as economically rational under certain circumstances.

Alber, E. "Child Trafficking in West Africa." In *Frontiers of Globalization: Kinship and Family Structure in Africa*. Edited by A. M. Gonzalez, L. Fields DeRose, and F. Oloo, 71–93. London: Africa World Press, 2011. [ISBN: 9781592217717] [class:bookChapter]

Alber's work with the Batombu in Northern Benin emphasizes the many ways that people worldwide raise their children and construct their families. Challenges the notion that a child's departure from the home of its biological parents increases the risk of or equates to child trafficking.

Goody, E. *Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982. [ISBN: 9780521040174] [class:book]

The seminal study of child circulation and fosterage, a critical reference point for the study of non-Western family structures and their relation to child work and mobility.

Sommerfelt, T., ed. Child Fosterage and Child Domestic Work in Haiti in 2014: Analytical Report. Oslo, Norway: Fafo Foundation, 2015. [class:report]

Fafo has a solid record of sponsoring critical empirical work on child work, trafficking, and mobility; this study is no exception.

Policy Critique

A final theme within the critical literature is that which addresses specifically the failings of hegemonic discourse and policymaking in relation to phenomena labeled as child trafficking and slavery. Howard and Boyden [2013](#) uses the concept of “moral economy” to reframe child movement as something very different from trafficking. Huijsmans and Baker [2012](#) makes a similar case in what has become a reference text summarizing the many policy pitfalls that exist. O’Connell Davidson is one of the more celebrated authors in the canon of critique examined here, and her [2011](#) article is a useful starting point for anyone, while Cheney [2010](#) is excellent in her deconstruction of the concept of “childhood vulnerability.” [Bourdillon, et al. 2009](#) is a useful article-sized version of the authors’ book, cited in [*General Overviews*](#), while Dottridge [2007](#) has become a classic case study of what goes wrong when policymakers act in top-down fashion. Bourdillon, M., W. Myers, and B. White. “Re-assessing Minimum-Age Standards for Children’s Work.” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 29.3–4 (2009).

[class:journalArticle]

Makes a case similar to that made in the book by the same authors listed in [*General Overviews*](#).

Cheney, K. “Deconstructing Childhood Vulnerability: An Introduction.” *Childhood in Africa* 2.1 (December 2010): 4–7. [class:journalArticle]

Reflects on the concept of “vulnerability” and how central it is to contemporary “child saving,” with all its attendant problems. Useful theoretically.

Dottridge, M., ed. *Collateral Damage: The Impact of Anti-trafficking Measures on Human Rights around the World*. Bangkok: GAATW, 2007. [ISBN: 9789748371924] [class:book]

A reference work across the field, important for bringing the term “collateral damage” into common currency to refer to the negative unintended consequences of anti-trafficking interventions worldwide.

Howard, N., and J. Boyden. “Why Does Child Trafficking Policy Need to Be Reformed? The Moral Economy of Children’s Movement in Benin and Ethiopia.” *Children’s Geographies* 11.3 (2013): 354–368. [class:journalArticle]

This article draws on research with young migrant laborers and their communities in Benin and Ethiopia. It uses the concept of “moral economy” to situate their work and mobility and draws out implications for policy.

Huijsmans, R., and S. Baker. “Child Trafficking: ‘Worst Form’ of Child Labour, or Worst Approach to Young Migrants?” *Development & Change* (2012): 1–28. [class:journalArticle]

At the heart of almost all of the critical literature generated in response to the dominant discourse around child trafficking, child slavery, and indeed child labor is policy critique. This article is foundational.

O’Connell Davidson, J. “Moving Children? Child Trafficking, Child Migration, and Child Rights.” *Critical Social Policy* 31 (2011): 454. [class:journalArticle]

This article argues that discourse on “child trafficking” operates to produce and maintain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively a child. An important piece from one of the field’s most influential writers.

Research Methods and Ethics

The final section of the bibliography features two texts that are crucial for anyone planning to conduct research in this field. Morrow [2009](#) draws on decades of experience and the Young Lives study to outline many of the key ethical challenges and responses in research on child work and by extension child trafficking or slavery. Boyden and Ennew [1997](#) is the touchstone manual of participatory research methods with children. Additionally, the UNIAP [2008](#) study is a useful resource from one of the more well-respected anti-trafficking programs.

Boyden, J., and J. Ennew. *Children in Focus: A Manual for Participatory Research with Children*. Stockholm: Radda Barnen, 1997. [class:report]

Freely available online, this text is a comprehensive and accessible guide, full of practical illustrations, for participatory research with children. Should be essential reading for students in this field.

Morrow, V. *The Ethics of Social Research with Children and Families in Young Lives: Practical Experiences*. Young Lives Working Paper 53. Oxford: Department of International Development, Oxford University, 2009. [ISBN: 9781904427599] [class:report]

This paper outlines the approach taken to research ethics within the Young Lives study. It describes some of the practical difficulties that Young Lives had to address and emphasizes the importance of understanding local contexts in research with children and families.

UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP). *Guide to Ethics and Human Rights in Counter-trafficking: Ethical Standards for Counter-trafficking Research and Programming*. Bangkok: UNIAP, 2008. [ISBN: 9789742572334] [class:report]

A well-compiled ethics guide that seeks to help anti-traffickers do what they do well.