

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337520474>

The Significance of Malpractice Claims in the Management of Child Adoption Demands in Southwest Nigeria

Article · November 2019

DOI: 10.1080/23311886.2019.1696002

CITATIONS

0

READS

25

2 authors:



Olayinka Onayemi
Landmark University

4 PUBLICATIONS 2 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



Adeyinka Abideen Aderinto
University of Ibadan

30 PUBLICATIONS 127 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Social Relations and Support Concerns of the Involuntarily Never-married "akada" ladies [View project](#)



African migration and refugee flows to Europe [View project](#)



Received: 11 August 2019
Accepted: 10 November 2019
First Published: 25 November 2019

*Corresponding author: Olayinka Modupe Onayemi, Sociology, Landmark University, Omu-Aran, Nigeria
E-mail: yinkona@gmail.com

Reviewing editor:
Heng Choon (Oliver) Chan, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Additional information is available at the end of the article

LAW, CRIMINOLOGY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The significance of malpractice claims in the management of child adoption demands in Southwest Nigeria

Olayinka Modupe Onayemi^{1*} and Adeyinka Abideen Aderinto²

Abstract: The wide gap between the demand for children and the available adoptable children in Nigeria meets with anecdotal claims on the existence of corrupt practices and systemic vulnerabilities within the child adoption domains. This study investigated the exactitude of these claims on the corridor of child adoption in Nigeria. Data were collected through sessions of qualitative interviews with adoption officials, legal practitioners, and intending/prospective adopters and orphanage managers. Findings revealed that the claims of corrupt practices within the system were not only significant but appear in various shades such as hoarding of adoptable children, request for extra-adoption charges, diversion of already identified children, and procedural circumventions. The corrupt practices and observed illegalities are enabled by some institutionalized adoption principles that prevail within the system of adoption. These observed illicit practices have tendencies to threaten the consideration of the best interest of the child which should be the paramount consideration in the placement of children who are to be adopted

Subjects: Family, Child & Social Welfare Law; Sociology & Social Policy; Criminology and Criminal Justice

Keywords: adoption demands; child adoption; child adoption management; malpractices; Nigeria

1. Introduction

The use of child adoption as a strategy for managing infertility (Adewunmi, Etti, & Akinlusi, 2012; Giwa-Osagie, 2004; Onayemi, 2019) suggests a paradigm shift and a deviation from its original essence (Onayemi, 2019). Puzzling, but unsurprising, the deviation and its consequences are likely

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Olayinka Modupe Onayemi holds a doctorate in the study of Deviance and antisocial behaviour. She is an academic with a research interest in childhood study/child advocacy. These two areas of interest influence her choice in studying how deviant acts/antisocial behaviours in different domains affect the lives and chances of children.

Adeyinka Abideen Aderinto is a professor of Criminology. His main areas of teaching and research are Deviance, Social Problems, and Childhood studies.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Contrary to popular belief on the poor acceptability and popularity of child adoption in Nigeria, the demand for child adoption is higher than the supply that the available adoptable children could meet. This situation has not only raised concerns over the management of adoption demands, but it has also created scandals and anecdotal claims on the existence of corrupt practices within the systems of child placement. These presumptions necessitated investigating the operations of the system for the exactitudes of these claims. The study reveals various shades of malpractices within the system. Implications of the findings were also discussed.

to span beyond the ideological, and likely to be highly reflective in the operations of the adoption system, especially in the child placement procedure. This puzzle may be established in a trifold. First, the majority of those who opt for child adoption do so as a last resort (Cudmore, 2005; Muldoon, 2004; Omusun & Kofoworola, 2011). Second, on getting into the system of adoption, against adopters' initial conception of the practice of child adoption as unpopular and unacceptable (Oladokun, Arulogun, Oladokun, Adewole, Ojengbede, 2009), they found that there were many of their counterparts within the system demanding the limited resources (Awoyinfa, 2014; Efrat, Leblang, Liao, & Pandya, 2015; Olufowobi, 2014; Thomas & Ojo, 2019); hence, the demand outweighs the available resources to be supplied. Regardless of the reason for adopting, all prospective adopters face the toilsome process and share a common concern, which is to successfully complete the process and bring the child home (Efrat et al., 2015). Lastly, the Nigerian society is not receptive to child adoption and places a premium on childbearing through fertility; hence, adopters would seek children carefully and clandestinely (Adewunmi et al., 2012; Onayemi & Aderinto, 2017). This later submission negatively impacts on the happenings within the adoption system, even the legalized system of adoption (Onayemi & Aderinto, 2017).

The increasing demand for child adoption, inadequate supply, perceived systemic vulnerabilities, and lack of information and transparency in the institution that manages the child adoption process have created numerous scandals concerning child adoption (Smolin, 2005). Iphey (2007) asserts that ministry officials most times capitalize on the fact that there is a long waiting list of intending adopters to make some quick and easy money. Moreover, infertile persons go through various measures to seek solution and social validation (Omusun & Kofoworola, 2011; Vieguel, 2014), such as buying of babies or engaging in extramarital affairs in search of these babies (Omusun & Kofoworola, 2011). Given this spirited search for validation and reprieve, it is somewhat logical to assume the claim of the existence of some measure of antisocial or strictly illegal acts within the legal system of adoption. This assumption may also be legitimate with anecdotal claims on inherent competition within the system of adoption. This competition reportedly fosters corruption and financial gains (Iphey, 2007), distorting the whole purpose of adoption (Cantwell, 2017), by paving the way for flouting the principles of the best interest of the child through the substitution of a child's interest with that of the adopters.

Several works (such as Fenton-Glynn, 2014; Smolin, 2006) on child adoption that are human rights-based have looked at heinous practices, especially in child adoption. There is a dearth of study on the significance of the corrupt practices claims within the system of adoption in Nigeria. Given the recent growth in the acceptability, popularity and demand for child adoption, it is important to examine the systemic vulnerability that the increasing demand generates.

This study, therefore, investigated the pre-placement stages of child adoption in view of the reported malpractices. Specifically, it examined the exactitude of anecdotal claims on the existence of diverse irregularities and antisocial behaviours within the state system of adoption in southwestern Nigeria. Furthermore, the study unearthed forms and patterns of the observed corrupt practices within the Nigerian systems of child adoption. Generally, this study added to the burgeoning literature on adoption malpractices by revealing how adoptable children are subtly subject of malpractices in response to the demand-supply margin of child adoption.

1.1. Relevant national and international instruments supporting child adoption in Nigeria

The Child's Right Act (CRA) 2003 is a national legal instrument that sets out, amongst other things, to provide a unified system of care and supervision of a child. Specifically, Part XII makes provisions for the regulation of adoption in Nigeria. The Child's Right Act (Child's Right Act [CRA], 2003) is an offshoot of the United Nations Convention on the Rights and Welfare of Children (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights of the Child (ACRWC), to which Nigeria is a signatory. In recognition of this objective of the CRA, 24 of the 36 states (including all the southwestern states) have signed the domestication of this law in order to ensure care and protection of the children within their jurisdictions. This law has many provisions both at the national and state levels, including the establishment of adoption services, categories of children who may be adopted, persons who may

adopt, residency and nationality required for adoption, procedures for adoption and jurisdiction of the court, consent required for adoption.

The Section 274 of the Child's Right Act specifically declares the provisions of the Child's Right Act as superseding those of any other enactment on any matter relating to children in Nigeria. However, despite the coming into force of the Act since 2003, the adoption laws enacted by respective states of the federation remain extant (Chukwu, 2012). The return to state laws is consequent upon the position of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which states that matters relating to the rights and welfare of children should be placed within the legislative capability of the state. Hence, to date, the state laws on child adoption prevail as the main instrument in force on matters affecting children in Nigeria. For instance, the northern states of Nigeria do not support the practice of child adoption; they rather have an alternative child placement arrangement, "*kafalah*," which is rooted in the Islamic religious beliefs. However, for other states, the state laws, like the Child's Right Act, contain a wide range of provisions appertaining to who may adopt, who may be adopted, residence of adopters, consents on adoption, and many other matters relating to the welfare of children that are being placed for adoption.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child is a regional instrument that emerged from the recognition of the need to take appropriate measures to promote the rights and welfare of the African child. Article 24 of this Charter deals with the adoption of children, and emphasizes consideration of the best interest of the child as paramount in all matters affecting children. It admonishes state parties to establish a system of competent authorities who would ensure that adoption of children is conducted in conformity to the dictates of the law, that in the case of inter-country adoption, the state parties provide a mechanism to safeguard children against trafficking or any form of improper gains during the process of adoption. The Charter, although it recognizes inter-country adoption, positions it as a measure of last resort which could only be deployed where all efforts to place the child within his/her country of origin have failed. This view, which aligns with the principles of subsidiarity of the Hague Convention on the protection of children and cooperation in respect of inter-country adoption (Hague, 1993), also views inter-country adoption as a measure of last resort given the need to safeguard the child's welfare and identity.

1.2. The concept of corruption

Despite the difficulty in agreeing on a precise definition of corruption, there exists broad unanimity that corruption could mean an act in which the power of the public office is used for personal gain in a manner that "contravenes the rule of the game" (Jain, 2001). Corruption describes a situation in which a position of authority is actively deployed for self-interest (Obuah, 2010). It is an act of soliciting, accepting, or extorting a bribe for a service (Ijewereme, 2015).

The consequences of corruption have been mostly considered in relation to its economic implications. Jain (2011) broadly categorizes corruption as either benign or malignant, a categorization that can be explained in terms of the severity of the economic implications of corruption. The bother on corruption, however, hugely rests on its moral component (Dimant & Schulte, 2016). Morality, being society-determined, is subject to the goals and values of a society. Hence, when these moral components are distressed, injury is inflicted on the common good, shared ideals, shared goals and values of the social system (Nooman, 1987). Hope (2016) portrays corruption as "an evil, shameful, and despicable phenomenon which impairs administrative capability and impedes social stability" (p.6).

In this study, corruption is considered as an act in which an adoption official or any party involved capitalizes on his or her position within the corridor of child adoption to determine the chances of an intending adopter for the purpose of self-gratification.

2. Method

2.1. The research location

The study was conducted in Southwest Nigeria, which is composed of six states: Ekiti, Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo and Osun. Three of these states (Lagos, Ogun, and Oyo) were purposively chosen as the study areas. The choice of these three states rests on their unique characteristics. They were among the first twelve states and were selected for their long history of a state system adoption practice.

At the outset of this study, all the three selected states were faced with difficulties in meeting the needs of intending adopters, owing to high demand (Awoyinfa, 2014; Olufowobi, 2014). They were all experiencing a remarkable wide gap between the demand for and the available adoptable children.

2.2. The research participants

The population for this study comprised significant actors in child placement within the ministries in which adoption matters are domiciled. There were four sets of respondents: social welfare officers, prospective/successful adopters, orphanage managers, and legal practitioners (magistrates of Magistrate/Family Courts handling adoption matters within the states). In total, the study involved nine (9) social welfare officers, five (5) orphanage managers, five (5) legal practitioners, and thirteen (13) successful and intending adopters.

2.3. Research/data collection protocols

Thirty-two sessions of in-depth interviews were conducted among the respondents. A naturalistic and narrative method of interview was utilized. The semi-structured interview guide focused on the operations of the system of child adoption. The interview guide was prepared with specific items probing into the operations of the system. Interview was conducted face-to-face with the respondents and lasted between 40 minutes and one hour. The data were collected by the first author.

The first set of interviews was conducted among social welfare officers and orphanage managers. Questions pertaining to how the child adoption system is administered were asked. Some of the questions included: "How do you screen prospective child adopters? Are children adopted beyond the shores of Nigeria? If so, how do you conduct necessary checks on the prospective adopters' home? Under what conditions are applicants allowed to adopt another child? How is your orphanage funded? Is there a stipulated period that a single adoption application is expected to lapse? And if yes, what factors make application extend beyond the stipulated period? Also, the magistrates handling the adoptions were asked questions on perceived corrupt practices in the child adoption system. Questions were posed at this category of respondents because they were more or less key informants, as they did not play an active part in the real placement of children, but were active observers performing some oversight functions in the child adoption system.

The last category of respondents was the prospective and the intending adopters. This category of respondents was interviewed last, as it was necessary to have a good grasp of how the system works before engaging them. Information from the earlier interviews provided a good point of departure for the interviews conducted with the prospective and the intending adopters.

Adopters' recruitment was achieved with the assistance of two legal practitioners and a social worker who served as contact persons. These persons met earlier with the intending adopters to inform them about the research purpose and secured the consent of those who were willing to participate in the study. Subsequently, the adopters who had been interviewed introduced a few others after they had explained the purpose of the research and had successfully secured their consent. The questions asked this category included: What is your view of child adoption service, in terms of accessibility? How would you describe the child adoption system, in terms of

transparency? Do you perceive any corrupt practices within the child adoption system? If yes, in what forms? Would you pay extra charges to the officials, if it is requested? Did any official ever request any money apart from the statutory payments/fees? And how did your expectations on the system of adoption before your contact with it differ from your experiences within the system? Some general questions on the perceived corrupt practices were asked the four categories of respondents.

2.4. Method of data analysis

Data transcription ran concurrently with data collection to allow for reflexivity. Salient ideas that were not earlier listed in the interview guide were incorporated and raised during subsequent interview sessions. Interview recordings were transcribed within 48 hours after data collection. This promptness in transcribing the data was to ensure a vivid recollection of some non-verbal reactions to questions which were also a significant part of the data collection process. Thematic analysis was adopted through a computer-assisted device. This was carried out using a constant comparison approach. The interview transcript was read many times in order to allow for the researchers' immersion in the data. This helped in the development of themes that emerged inductively.

In the first stage of analysis, the interview responses were categorized into sub-themes via intra-textual coding. With this method, the researchers coded the data into different emerging and recurrent themes arrived at through analytical coding. The analytical approach allowed for themes and ideas to be generated via reflection on the meaning of a selected content. The data were rerun to check for the accuracy of the items placed within the categories. The basic themes that emerged included evidence of the existence of corrupt practices; the stage in the adoption process notable for adoption malpractices, forms of the corrupt practices, and other forms of illegalities perpetrated within the system of adoption.

Gesticulations, facial expressions, and other useful side comments were noted. They were triangulated with verbal submissions.

3. Results

This section presents the field reports and analyses of narratives of the research participants on the existence of perceived corrupt practices within the system of child adoption.

3.1. Perceived corruption in the adoption system

In Nigeria, given the huge number of applicants and limited adoptable children, the process of adoption requires that even the applicants whose adoptability status has been validated would have to keep waiting until they are called upon by adoption officials for children who have been certified adoptable. During this waiting period, there is little or no interaction between this individual who has been certified suitable-to-adopt and the system of adoption. This window was described by a few intending adopters as one of such periods when intending adopters could decide his or her fate. The waiting period is usually prolonged, giving room to agitations of the prospective adopters on what would be the end result. This, according to some respondents, sets the stage for diverse illicit practices within the system. A prospective adopter asserted thus:

There are too many people that have been certified as eligible to adopt. In fact, we are close to one thousand, yet adoptable children may be less than ten; ... that is where the problem emanates from. So, you may have to give something to the officials to hasten the process.

The adopters reported a number of activities of the officials that violate public trust, belief, and rules in the allocation of babies. A prospective adopter who finally identified a baby said:

If you keep waiting to be called from a ministry that they have a child for you, you may spend ten years without anybody calling you. I exchanged numbers with one of the prospective

adopters I met. The truth is, she told me plainly that if I should wait for any of the homes to call me, I may wait indefinitely, without being called. She told me that she was able to get a child because she paid some amount to some person who hastened the process.

The above responses establish the fact that, even when prospective adopters share the same characteristics in the form of requirements, time of application and preferences, their access to a child may be informed by some other extraneous factors, such as whom they know or how much money they are ready to spend to secure a child. This view was corroborated by another adopter who stated that “you must have money and know people at all the stages.” Another adopter opined that:

I did not know it would be so strenuous. It was with the intervention of my brother-in-law, who is a politician, that we were connected to the person [office withheld] who later helped. Before meeting this person, I went countless times: they were just dribbling me. It is very possible that one goes through the process without result. Many were actually so.

The interactions with some adoption officials revealed that some child adopters get letters from politicians and senior men in the state ministry to displace others who have been in the queue for many years, as corroborated by one of the social workers: “placement of children is supposed to be first come, first served; but most of the time, we give preference to some special people in the state.” Another adoption official acknowledged that such corrupt practices were inherent in the adoption system: “sometimes due to the close relationship between the social worker and the intending adopter, the protocol can be broken.”

3.2. Corruption—prominent stage in the process of adoption

Since the placement of children is procedural and systemic, it might be wrong to conclude that the evidence provided on perceived corruption exists in all the stages of adoption. Some respondents stated that these observations were more notable at a stage than others. An adopter stated thus:

If something like corruption is in place, it is in the orphanages. At times, the orphanage would check you. They would not even control themselves, they would be asking: “did you bring your car?” They would give you forms to fill about yourself. Someone like me, who is a teacher, they would say I’m a teacher. They wouldn’t know that someone who has billions of naira in his account may not have attention for that child; but the person you call common teacher because you feel you cannot get money from her. The common teacher would give that child all the best required.

Affirming this position, another adopter opined that:

The orphanage homes are the problem. For instance, I later got to know that the woman who came from London to pick the child I had already identified gave money to the officials at the orphanage. We should not lie or hide things here; the orphanages are not trust-worthy. Should they see somebody willing to give them money, they would give a child as fast as possible.

Lending a voice to this and further explaining why this may be found mostly among the orphanages, a legal practitioner posited that: ‘

An area one has to really focus upon is how the orphanages are administered. If they are administered properly, I think the adoption system will be better for it; most of these orphanages go into it not for social interest but for making a profit.

Some adopters perceived corruption in the adoption system as systemic or institutional. Such conception was based on the views that encouraging a lot of applications which adoption officials already knew would not be certified within a reasonable time is offensive and highly unjust. The respondents described this situation as unjust because all applications attract some charges:

money paid during the application or for revalidating the application. Hence, some adopters construed this as administrative gimmicks to source money from as many applicants as possible.

3.3. Forms of perceived corrupt practices in the system of adoption

One of the major findings of this study is that the perceived corrupt practices take various forms and dimensions. This was observed by adopters who had had contact with the system of adoption. The forms of adoption malpractices included hoarding children, deception, demanding extra adoption charge and circumvention of the procedure. These are discussed in detail below:

3.3.1. Extra adoption charge

Intending adopters are made to pay charges not recognized by the adoption law. The reasons for these vary, including the urge to speed up the adoption process or to get their preferred kind of children, usually days' old ones. The adopters were asked if there was a need to pay any extra adoption charges. One of the respondents who had adopted a child said:

Ha! Yes! Because someone who had collected a baby much earlier than me said that if I am able to get like a million naira and I go to somewhere around Island ... so, I said, "Where am I going to get that kind of money?" Without any waste of time, she got a two-week baby boy.

The modality for extra adoption charges requests varies. A few respondents submitted that such requests were not made straightforwardly. They sometimes were made under the guise of the need to conduct investigation toward the adoptability status of the child or for home checking. A social worker explained that "when it comes to home investigation, the clients/adopters sponsor the process. This is because we do not have anything in the ministry:" ... money allocated is very poor and almost never forthcoming."

Government's failure to perform their functions as required, in most cases, creates loopholes and opportunity for the perpetration of malpractices within the system of adoption. Usually, these extra adoption charges are made informally and are not recorded. Under these conditions, officials profiting through the allocation of children may be inevitable. An adopter submitted thus:

At the orphanage, the funny thing is that they would never open their mouths requesting for such money; but at times, they tell you that some of the children in the house are unadoptable as their statuses are not yet determined. In other words, they may need some amount of money to conduct the necessary investigation. You that you are desperately in need of a child, and at the time, considering your toil, you may be left with no choice than to sponsor such investigation.

Corroborating this, an adopter reported how some charges made are unofficial: "The one of investigation is confidential; nobody is asking you to pay for that officially"

Another variant of this form of charges is one that is actually demanded to perform extra services, such as hastening the process or getting an extra value, like some specific kinds of children that are notably scarce. A respondent asserted that:

I met a lady in one home, who told me that she paid some amount of money and they gave her what she wanted. I was excited, I said, "So with that, I could take a loan"; that made me go and obtain a loan

There is also some sort of money competition, as the fate of the intending adopter is not just tied to mere giving, since a number of intending adopters who may be willing to influence officials' decisions also give. A woman remarked thus:

I gave her the loan, worth the same amount. She promised that the moment I get my letter of validation from the ministry, they would give me what I wanted. Even with the letter, she

told me that the children she had were just for care and protection and not for adoption; so I was not given. Some of the officials in these orphanages wait for an adopter that has money. There was one I visited in this same state. They did not know that I understand their language. They were speaking and said, “This one, she doesn’t even have a car. Can she take care of our son?” They were speaking it in the Hausa language; they did not know that I understand Hausa. See, what I spent in that orphanage—I was packing things to the place, you know. So, one day, the owner of the orphanage asked, “Where is your car?” I replied, “No, I do not have a car.” she then continued to speak in Hausa (in another tribal language she presumed the intending adopter does not understand) that, “This one is poor. Let us discard her; let her go.” This was after all they had collected from me. And they were still telling me, “We need this, we need that, and we don’t have money.” That was how I said goodbye to the place.

The above narrative shows that prospective adopters may have to pay all kinds of extra adoption charges to be able to secure a child. The acceptance of a bribe, soliciting bribe and extortion of intending adopters by the public officer give a vivid description of bureaucratic corruption (Ijewereme, 2015). The prospective adopters’ success may be based on how they continue in giving or the quality of their giving. Also, while adopters give a form of bribe, their prospect of being awarded a child may be weighed with respect to what others offer for that same child. The argument that the payment of such incentive does not guarantee the award of a child is reasonable considering that nothing should be able to stop the award of a focal child after such huge investment has been made towards securing the child. Yet, some still do not get a child to adopt after such payments. Moreover the extra-adoption charges that are demanded on account of the need to conduct investigation raise some questions on the function of adoption charges. The adoption charge was designed to be for the processing of the adoption, all of which include transportation and every other claim, such as conducting an investigation.

3.4. Deceit: a form, and an instrument of adoption corruption

Officials do not just perpetrate these corrupt practices; they usually employ one strategy or the other to carry people along. One of such strategies highlighted as an instrument used by these corrupt officials is deceit. Adopters are very eager to procure adoption order (Doughty, Meakings, & Shelton, 2017; Efrat et al., 2015), and would do anything within their power to pay a premium for a child, especially when it matches their desire (Krawiec, 2009).

Many of the adopters were disappointed at how they hastened them up to pay for a service that the officials knew was not readily available. In a related study (Doughty et al., 2017), some adoptive parents interviewed described the range of difficulties that led to their anxiety and delay on the corridor of child adoption to mere poor communication and avoidable administrative errors. The respondents in this study did not view it as an error, but rather as an administrative gimmick. A prospective adopter asserted thus:

Eeh! What I want to say is this—the government accepts applications that are more than what they can supply. When we received our approval letters, we were given a very big hope that, in no time, we would be awarded the children ... Even the director of the ministry was telling us that “we are looking forward to three months’ time for you to come for your legalization”. So, he was giving us hope. Behold, up to 20 addresses of orphanage homes they gave us, I visited all the homes. To my greatest surprise, no home ever said: “Yes, we have a child for you”.

Some also experienced this deception after they had been referred by the ministry to the orphanages to identify a child. A respondent buttressed this:

Those I’m not happy with are the people in the orphanages. There was one orphanage we visited. They even collected registration fees -N5, 000 (\$15 approx.). They said that, with that registration fees, they’re sure they would give you a child; lie! After collecting the money, sometimes they say, “I beg, you people should stop disturbing us for children. Can you see

any child here? It was so disturbing that I started to ask why the government directed us to the orphanage homes after payment While we were in training, you would think that immediately you collect your approval letter, before two weeks, you are with your baby. Because they would say “you people should hurry up! These children need somebody to give them hope, this and that”. Ah! In your heart, you’ll say ... but at the end, it is great ... you know, you would feel the pain more than when you first saw yourself childless.

Many of the adopters reported how adoption officials did not reveal the difficulties inherent in the system but they were inveigled to believe that, after the payment and the completion of the processes involved, the child would be given to them. This was conceived by many of them as deceit to prompt them to take steps. Apart from the deceit, some other acts, such as circumvention of the adoption procedures, were recorded.

3.4.1. *Procedural circumvention*

Every functional system must have a rule of behaviour which should guide the action of its members in order to be able to control its actors towards maintaining order within the system. Another form of corrupt practice reported is procedural circumvention. The fact that an intending adopter is made to pay for the investigation of the adoptability of a child that he or she is already bonding with reveals some sort of procedural hitches. Bonding is supposed to start when the adoptability status of the child has been determined. Bonding serves some purposes, part of which is to be familiar with the child, to create some ground of relationship between the intending adopters and the prospective adoptees. Here, prospective adopters are able to make up their minds on the focal child; they examine whether the child is suitable to them. Also, the suitability of the prospective adopter is carefully determined by adoption officials during the period of bonding. This suggests that, before the bonding of a prospective adopter to a child commences, all necessary investigations about this child must have been conducted. But this was not the case with this adopter who expressed some feelings of uncertainty despite the social, financial and psychological investment he had made into securing a child he had started bonding with:

.... The investigation may come out, and I would not still be able to adopt the baby, despite that I was the one who sponsored the investigation. So, if someone comes out to say “he is my baby”, what would I do? We are just going for the bonding for going sake, for my wife’s mind to calm down. We are not sure that we are taking the baby until the officer helping us concludes the investigation. So, I cannot say now that I have started bonding with the childShe (officer in charge) said to me that we have to start bonding, for us not to think that we are spending our money for nothing. But as a man, I know that anything can come out of it.

Furthermore on the circumvention in the system of adoption, an orphanage manager provided a different dimension. The processes of reporting an abandoned child, (which is the major source of adoptable children) and ascertaining the adoptability status of a child are part of the process of adoption. This stage is very vital, as this is where children are rescued from potential abuses. An experienced social worker noted that, although such cases are not common, it does happen that some unscrupulous officials cut corners to give out children for adoption rather than taking the abandoned children to welfare centres where they may be properly processed for either reunification or adoption. She noted that:

... the issue of the highest bidder. There are still some of them who play hanky-panky when a child is found. They would not report to the Juvenile Welfare Centre (JWC). But you know that all of those remote places they can play smart; they try to cover it up because there is somebody somewhere who can buy the child for a huge amount of money without following due process

Supporting the above opinions as well as touching on its implication for the system of adoption, a social worker averred that ‘The inflow of babies, I think, has reduced because of people going through shady means to get children.’

3.4.2. *Diversion of identified children*

Lastly, on the perceived corrupt practices identified within the system of adoption, the submissions made revealed that, at times, children are diverted between prospective adopters. Here, adoption officials favour persons who may have “rubbed their palms”. Such actions are undertaken at the expense of some others who got in the queue before the preferred intending adopter. The act of diverting children fits into bureaucratic corruption. Such are enabled by lack of adherence to system regulatory policy (Araniyar & Chizea, 2015). Several cases were reported. A prospective adopter noted that:

We were promised a baby at a place (name withheld). The woman started behaving funny. When we got there, the women said the officials from the State headquarters came and took the baby they wanted to give us. I started walking up and down again, going to orphanages from one home to the other. There is no home in this state that I did not go to; All they say is, “come tomorrow, we will call you, come tomorrow, we will call you.”

The view of this adopter summarizes the various responses.

... at a time, the social worker whose jurisdiction covers the orphanage confided in me that the child has been identified by a foreigner. So, I was told to pick another child, but I disagreed because I was already used to this child (she had started bonding), and I have even bought a lot for the child. So, she fought for me, and I was eventually given the child. So it's not an easy task; many left the system with nothing.

One way this is excused when later found out is to claim that the child allocated to another adopter who came after them did not meet their specifications. With the consideration of prospective adopters' preferences, a market may be created, given the fact that adoption officials could claim that the allocated child does not fit into the specification of the long-waiting prospective adopter. This creates an opportunity to justify the allocation of a child to the just-arriving applicant.

More importantly, the reported cases of adoption of children to foreigners cast a serious doubt on the force of inter-country adoption regulatory frameworks. Interviews with a number of adoption officials provided no admissible basis for adopting a child beyond the shores of Nigeria other than the fact that “requests are also made by Nigerian who are resident abroad”. In the contradictory views of some adopters, this act is motivated by adoption officials' craving for financial gratification, considering the fact that these foreigners to whom the children are diverted are from a better economy: “ ... they (adoption officials) always look for who can give them money.” Regardless of the reasons provided, inter-country adoption is expected to be a measure of last resort (Hague, 1993; CRC 1989; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2004).

At the heart of CRC and all other related frameworks is the concern for the welfare and protection of children placed for inter-country adoption. All actions and decisions or practices must be built on positive outcomes for children (Stephen, 2017). The principle of subsidiarity, among other things, prescribes that inter-country adoption should only be considered where all alternative child care efforts within a child's native country have failed.

3.4.3. *Illegalities and deviations in the system of adoption*

There is some evidence of deviation from the established adoption procedures. One of such has to do with the residence and nationality of the adopters. The Child's Right Act (CRA) S. 131(1) (b) (c) states that, for an adoption order to be made, both the child and the applicant must be resident in the state for at least five years. Such prescription cuts across all the states in Nigeria. One of the respondents stated that “there is a standing order that you cannot come and adopt from another state; you must be resident in the state where you want to adopt”. Another respondent supported this claim:

One of the requirements for child adoption is that you must be domiciled here in the state; even neighbouring states cannot come to apply for adoption here in our state. Our own is to ensure that. That is why the intending adopter's address is very important.

Obviously, these laws and prescriptions are found not translating into praxis. In an interview with a legal practitioner, she reports: "The truth of the matter is that most of the adoptions we have here are not from this state".

Also, during the data collection stage, the researcher sought help from an adoption official for a referral to some adopters who had come for legalization. His response attested to the fact that some of the adopters who come to adopt in the state are not residents and have not lived in the state prior to the time of adoption, as stipulated by the law. The respondent said: "see, I think there is going to be a lot of problems locating these people because many of them don't stay around here; some are in Port Harcourt, some in Abuja and so on."

The above instance revealed that, against the laid-down regulations to place children with prospective adoptive parents who live within the state of allocation, many of these parents are not residents of the states where the children are awarded to them. One of the excuses that may be provided is that some of them had lived in the state for a period of 5 years though they were not staying there at the time of the placement. It was found that this may be a pretext. During an interview session with an adoption official, a phone conversation between an adoption official and an intending adopter who never lived in a state also pointed to the deviation:

In this state, what the law says is that you must be an indigene or you have been resident there for five years, notwithstanding, you can still come to the state headquarters (name of state withheld), it is not a matter to be discussed on phone.

This arrangement where children are placed outside the state of award marks a very significant deviation from the prescription of the law and has the potential to place the child's life at risk of abuse and social vices. This is because such placement would have implications for the frequency of the necessary post-adoption checks. The earlier mentioned case of a social worker who could not promise the researcher a link to any of the successful adopters because they were all widely dispersed across the country confirms the issues with conducting the necessary post-adoption check under such deviation. Doughty, Meakings, and Shelton (2018) study also reported this situation: A number of children were adopted in England, yet the adoptive parents, though resident in the UK, were citizens of countries in Europe. Fenton-Glynn (2014) observes this practice as a breach of Article 30 CRC, noting that, apart from the challenge it poses when unification is being contemplated, such also disrupt the possibilities of conducting a reliable post-adoption check. These practices constitute illicit adoption practices, as they are "acts that violate the rights of the child and contravene recognized international safeguards" (HCCH, 2012).

Also, deviations were noticed around the status of the adopted child. The CRA (2003) provides for two categories of children who may be adopted. The first category deals with children whose parents, or guardians willingly gave up for adoption in the face of economic, social and psychological inability. In the second category, the child must have been found abandoned/neglected. The adoption of these two categories of children hinges on thoroughly conducted scrutiny and adequate investigation to determine that the child is suitable for adoption. This was noted in many of the interviews. One of the key informants said, "Any child that must be put up for adoption must first be found suitable". In the words of another key informant, "A child must not be placed on adoption while still under investigation".

In other words, there is a need to ensure that children who are to be given up for adoption are in an irreversible state of abandonment, that is all efforts to reunite them with their families have failed. This can be made certain through proper social investigation. However, it was found that,

sometimes, social workers or the orphanages give up a child or leave a child to be identified by the prospective adopters when the adoptability status of the child is yet to be determined. An adopter said, “Once you identify a child, you have to ‘work with the home’ to be sure the child is adoptable”. “Working with the home” usually means sponsoring the necessary investigation.

A woman who adopted a child attested to the claim that children are at times placed when their adoptability status is yet to be determined. She mentioned how, after being awarded a child, there was no certainty on the status of the adoption:

They (adoption officials) said it was adoption/fostering; that if there was nobody that asked of her (the supposed adopted child), it would become adoption. The investigation is not yet concluded on her.

This means that, at the point of placement, neither is there certainty on the adoptability status of the child nor is there an assurance that the prospective adopter would end up being awarded the focal child

4. Discussion of findings

This study investigated the system of child adoption in Southwest Nigeria, owing to anecdotal claims of perceived corrupt practices and systemic irregularities. The existence of malpractices within the system of adoption was notable. Adopters expressed breached of trust and profound doubt in the legitimacy of the child adoption system regulation. The views of the adopters were marked by the uncertainties that characterize the child adoption system and how access to child adoption may be informed by factors extraneous to the arm’s length principle that should guide the adoption of children.

The findings revealed that, even when prospective adopters share the same characteristics in the form of requirements, time of application, perceived parental quality, and their preferences, their access to a child may be informed by some other external factors, such as whom they know and how well they could “rob officials’ palms”. The allusion of many to the non-observance of and no regard for “first come, first served” principle, points to some sort of disorderliness within the system of child adoption. This consideration of adopters’ preferences has also prevailed as a pretext for non-observance of the “first come, first served” principle and has provided an opportunity for bureaucratic corruption. According to Begovic (2005), one of the basic dimensions of corruption is the one directed towards the acceleration of processes. Generally, corruption, in most cases, can be attributed to individuals being interested in maximizing their own personal welfare.

Government-induced austerity and financial deprivation in the child care system create the opportunity for adoption officials’ requests for undue charges under the claims of deploying these charges for adoption investigation. Reports from some countries, such as Cambodia and Kazakhstan, indicated that poor remuneration and poor logistic conditions of adoption officials heighten the risk of corruption (Cantwell, 2017). This request for extra adoption charges likely shifts the consideration from that of the best interest of the child—a fundamental principle that is to guide all decisions relating to a child (CRC, 2003)—to that of the intending adoptive parents, whereas adoption should be uniquely child-centred (Cantwell, 2014). Pemberton (2013) asserts that a direct implication of such undersupply is an increased risk of abuse of children and a lack of resources to prevent children from experiencing harm.

Inferences from this study indicated that extra adoption charges serve two basic purposes: to facilitate processes and to induce the award of a preferred child, which creates pressure on the demand for these categories of children. Bureaucratic corruption models, according to Jain (2001), have relied on equilibrium in markets for supply and demand for services. This leads to the analysis of competition and costs associated with the service. This pressure creates a situation in which some kinds of children are competed for. Also, such competitions provide an opportunity for an

intentional non-compliance with the arm's length principle in many ways. These take forms such as procedural circumvention in order to hasten adoption processes for some who are able to meet the extra adoption financial demands. As noted by Cantwell (2017), the financial interests of adoption officials represent a dark side of adoption processes. It logically creates grounds for biases. These biases lead to an informal but sometimes binding obligation to return or repay the favour to the benefactors without regard to requisite child adoption principles and process. Such kinds of payments produce anomie, disregard for the order that "often results in improper influence on decisions regarding a child's adoption (HCCH, 2014, p. 2).

Some adopters conceived the corruption as institutional, given the deliberate and continuous acceptance of applications by adoption ministry (applications involving payment of some amount of money), while being aware of their incapability to meet the demands due to the short supply of adoptable children. Such economic rent associated with these powers of officials (Jain, 2001) over the adopters is a fundamental marker of corruption.

On matters of inter-country adoption, the placement of these children outside the national boundaries ultimately challenges achieving quality post-adoption child safeguard (Onayemi & Aderinto, 2017) and places questions on the rationale for this act, given the reality of the shortage experienced in satisfying local demands. For instance, "Lagos State Ministry receives an over-bloated number of applications on a weekly basis without a (sic) corresponding availability of adoptable children" (Thomas & Ojo, 2019). The inability to meet the local demands for the adoption of children in Nigeria should necessarily suppress the idea of inter-country adoption, in view of the reported relative benefits of domestic adoption for children. However, Cantwell (2017) opines that the fees and costs of placing a child domestically, which is a fraction of that of the international adoption is what promotes the reservation of some children for a "lucrative inter-country path".

Generally, the growth and development of diverse adoption malpractices may be difficult to explain outside the poor economic situation of societies where such prevail (Agbo, 2015; Cardarello, 2009; Charles, Akwara, & Andeshi, 2014). As a rule, a functional system must adapt to its environment (Parsons, 1951). For the system of adoption to function effectively, it must adapt to its environment, and be well regulated to cope with external situational exigencies, such as poor economic conditions that characterize the mainstream society, as well as the coexisting problem of the wide margin between the demand and supply of children, that is capable of stimulating a market for adoptable children.

The effective functioning of a system could be achieved through a cultural system that provides actors with norms and values that shape their actions (Bali, 2018; Ritzer, 2008) as well as a functional and capable guardianship that compels conformity to these norms (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Nanou (2011), in a study on domestic adoption in Greece, asserts that the prevalence of financial transactions can be traced to weak legal frameworks on adoption. The deployment of the institutional framework, norm and rules would have a significant influence on the outcome of any organization. Lounsbury (2005) and Araniyar and Chizea (2015) also note that institutional environment wields greater influence than market forces. Hence, adhering to a strong and viable regulation within the system of adoption would ensure order, regardless of the demand pressure. Specifically, issues relating to illegalities and procedural circumvention reveal lack of proper monitoring. Rotabi and Bunker (2011) point to the need for rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the adoption of children in a way that would guarantee the welfare of adoption parties.

Also, identified standardized practices, such as opportunity given to intending adopters to visit orphanages in order to identify a child produce dysfunctional consequences. With this practice, intending adopters are brought in close contact with some unscrupulous orphanage officials who hold custody of these children and may wish to create a market for the children. Such opportunity thrives by creating a suitable target out of intending adopters who search desperately and

spiritedly (Efrat et al., 2015); adoption officials who are motivated by financial gains; and observed lack of capable guardianship. This intending adopters' direct contact with orphanages is presumed to aid the deceit and extortion of intending adopters, and diverse cases of diversion of identified children. Kaufmann (1997) provides an interesting description of corruption in India, where officials could not speed up bureaucratic processes but could promise to slow down the approval process for a rival company. Ultimately, this deviation may lead to shifting the focus from the children who are to be adopted as the paramount concern in the adoption decision to the intending adopters, as against the adoptable child.

5. Conclusion

This study revealed the existence of malpractices within the domains of child adoption in the studied area. These perceived malpractices take various forms and dimensions, such as payment of extra adoption charges, deceit, circumvention of the procedure, and diversion of babies between adopters.

The perceived corruption was enabled by two major forces. The first is cultural factors, such as poor acceptability of the practice of child adoption and the paradoxical response to this—a high demand for adoption to satisfy cultural values of parenting, which place pressure on the system of adoption. This pressure creates an opportunity for deviations that are evident in disregard for order, procedural circumvention and illegality within the system. The second force is the neglect of the different components of the adoption system. This neglect manifests in lack of oversight on the activities of the system as well as financial deprivation of the system of adoption. This provides the ground for hoarding and diversion of children. Furthermore, institutional practice in which intending adopters are made to visit the orphanages to identify children creates an opportunity for extortion of intending adopters.

The study recommends that some child-placement principles, such as the consideration of adopters' preferences, which avails the adoption system an opportunity for bureaucratic corruption be eradicated. In the same vein, the idea of identifying children from the orphanage should be abolished owing to the way it encourages hoarding and diversion of children within the orphanage, extortion of intending adopters, and unnecessary rivalry among intending adopters. The state governments in whose custody lies matters affecting children are advised to pay due financial attention to this department to prevent the exploitation that may be created on account of requesting money to conduct necessary investigations on the adoptability status of the child. Also, there is the need to enhance strict adherence to the rules of behaviour through the establishment of an overseeing body and a deterrent mechanism, particularly through legal means.

Funding

The authors received no direct funding for this research.

Author details

Olayinka Modupe Onayemi¹
E-mail: yinkona@gmail.com
Adeyinka Abideen Aderinto²
E-mail: aderinto@yahoo.com

¹ Department of Sociology, Landmark University, Omu-Aran, Nigeria.

² Department of Sociology, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Correction

This article has been republished with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

Citation information

Cite this article as: The significance of malpractice claims in the management of child adoption demands in Southwest Nigeria, Olayinka Modupe Onayemi & Adeyinka

Abideen Aderinto, *Cogent Social Sciences* (2019), 5: 1696002.

References

- Adewunmi, A. A., Etti, A. E., & Akinlusi, F. M. (2012). Factors associated with acceptability of child adoption as management option for infertility among women in developing countries. *International Journal of Women's Health*, 4, 365–372. doi:10.2147/IJWH.S31598
- Agbo, M. C. (2015). Socio-cultural challenges of child adoption in eastern Nigeria in West Africa. *Humanities and Social Sciences Review*, 2, 86–93.
- Araniyar, C. I., & Chizea, J. (2015). Environmental factors influencing corporate governance: The Nigerian reality. *SAGE Open*. doi:10.1177/2158244015581380.
- Awoyinfa, S. (2014). Ogun: 3000 couples apply for adoption. Retrieved from <http://www.punchng.com>
- Bali, A. O. (2018). Communication tools to fight bureaucratic corruption in Iraqi Kurdistan: A case study. *SAGE Open*. doi:10.1177/2158244018811185.

- Begovic, B. (2005). Corruption: Concepts, types, causes, and consequences. *Center for Liberal Democratic Studies, Year III No no. 26*. Brinkerhoff.
- Cantwell, N. (2014). *The best interests of the child in intercountry adoption, innocent insight*. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research.
- Cantwell, N. (2017). *The sales of children and illegal adoption: Defence for children*. Netherland: Terre des Hommes.
- Cardarello, A. (2009). The movement of the mothers of the courthouse square: "Legal child trafficking," adoption and poverty in Brazil. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 14, 140–161. doi:10.1111/jlca.2009.14.issue-1
- Charles, A., Akwara, A. F., & Andeshi, C. A. (2014). Dialectics of the incubation of 'baby factories' in Nigeria. *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2, 82–90.
- Child's Right Act. (2003). *Federal republic of Nigeria*. Nigeria: UNICEF.
- Chukwu, O. C. (2012). Adoption of children in Nigeria under the child right act. Retrieved from www.lqw2.byu.edu/.../chukwu
- Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M. (1979). Social change and crime rate trends: A routine activity approach. *American Sociological Review*, 44, 588–608. doi:10.2307/2094589
- Convention on the Rights of the Child. (1989). G.A. Res. 44/25. *U.N. GAOR, 61st plen. Mtg., Annex at art. 21*.
- Cudmore, L. (2005). Becoming parents in the context of loss. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 3(20), 299–308. doi:10.1080/14681990500141204
- Dimant, E., & Schulte, T. (2016). The nature of corruption-an interdisciplinary perspective. *German Law Review*, 17(1), 53–72. doi:10.1017/S2071832200019684
- Doughty, J., Meakings, S., & Shelton, K. (2017). The legal and administrative processes in adoption: Views and experiences of newly formed adoptive families. *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 39(4), 473–490. doi:10.1080/09649069.2017.1390284
- Doughty, J., Meakings, S., & Shelton, K. (2018). Rights and relationships of children who are adopted from care. *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, 1–23. doi:10.1093/lawfam/ebv016
- Efrat, A., Leblang, D., Liao, S., & Pandya, S. (2015). Babies across borders: The political economy of international child adoption. *International Studies Quarterly*, 59, 615–662. doi:10.1111/isqu.2015.59.issue-3
- Fenton-Glynn, C. (2014). *Children's rights in intercountry adoption: A European perspective*. Portland: Intersentia Antwerp.
- Giwa-Osagie, O. F. (2004). The need for infertility services in developing world. The WHO point of view. *Gynecol Obstet Invest*, 57(1), 58.
- Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption*, (1993, May 29).
- HCCH. (2012). Terminology adopted by the experts' group on the financial aspects of intercountry adoption. Retrieved from <https://assets.hcch.net/upload/terminology33en.Pdf>
- HCCH. (2014). Note on the financial aspects of intercountry adoption. Retrieved from https://assets.hcch.net/upload/wop/note33fa2015_en.Pdf
- Hope, K. R., Sr. (2016). *African political economy: Contemporary issues in development*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ijewereme, O. B. (2015). Anatomy of corruption in the Nigerian public sector: Theoretical perspectives and some empirical explanation. *SAGE Open*. doi:10.1177/2158244015581188
- Iphey. (2007). Adoption laws of lagos state/practice and procedure, Nigerian village square. Retrieved from <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/guest-articles/adoption-laws-of-lagos-state-practice-and-procedure.html>
- Jain, A. (2001). Corruption: A Review. *Journal of Economic Survey*, 15(1), 71–151. doi:10.1111/1467-6419.00133
- Jain, A. (2011). Corruption: Theory, evidence and policy. *CESifo Dice Report*, 9(2), 3–9.
- Kaufmann, D. (1997). Economic corruption: The facts. *Foreign Policy*, 107(summer), 114–131. doi:10.2307/1149337
- Krawiec, D. (2009). *Price and pretense in the baby market. Baby markets: Money, morals and the neopolitics of choice*. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lounsbury, M. (2005). Institutional variation in the evolution of social movement: Competing logic and spread of recycling advocacy groups. In G. F. Davis, D. McAdam, W. R. Scott, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Social movement and organizational theory* (pp. Pp.23–95). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Muldoon, T. P. (2004). A Life-giving Choice. *America*, 191(17), 8–10.
- Nanou, K. (2011). The social acceptance of illegal practices in the greek domestic adoption system. *Adoption & Fostering*, 35(3), 60–67. doi:10.1177/030857591103500307
- Nooman, J. T. (1987). *Bribe: The intellectual history of a moral ideal*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.
- Obuah, E. (2010). Combating corruption in Nigeria. The Nigerian Economy and Financial Crime (EFCC). *African Studies Quarterly*, 12, 17–44.
- Oladokun, A. O., Arulogun, R., Oladokun, R., Adewole, I. F., & O.A.,Ojengbede. (2009). Acceptability of Child Adoption as a Management option for Infertility in Nigeria: Evidence from Focus Group Discussion, *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 13(1): 79–91.
- Olufowobi, S. (2014). Lagos State Government Put up 88 Babies for Adoption. Retrieved from www.punchng.com/news/lasg-put-up-88-babies-for-adoption
- Omusun, A. O., & Kofoworola, O. (2011). Knowledge, attitude, and practice towards child adoption: Women attending infertility clinics in Lagos State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Primary Healthcare and Family Medicine*, 3(1). doi:10.4102/phcfm.v3i1.259
- Onayemi, O. (2019). From humanitarianism to family building: Genres of security implications of child adoption as a management strategy for infertility. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 39, 264–275. doi:10.1108/IJSSP-09-2018-0148
- Onayemi, O., & Aderinto, A. (2017). Child adoption investigation in Nigeria: Challenges and options. *The Nigeria Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 15(2), 87–100.
- Parsons, T. (1951). *The Social System*. New York: The Free Press.
- Pemberton, C. (2013). Community care survey exposes how rising thresholds are leaving children in danger. Retrieved from <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2013/11/19/community-care-survey-exposes-rising-thresholds-leavingchildren-danger/>.
- Ritzer, G. (2008). *Sociological Theory*. NewYork: McGraw Hill.
- Rotabi, K. S., & Bunker, K. M. (2011). In an era of reform: A review of social work literature on intercountry adoption. *SAGE Open*, 1, 215824401142816. doi:10.1177/2158244011428160

- Smolin, D. (2005). Two faces of inter-country adoption: The significance of the Indian adoption. *Seton Hall Law Review*, 35, 403–493.
- Smolin, D. (2006). Child laundering: How inter-country adoption legitimizes and incentivizes the practice of buying, trafficking, kidnapping and stealing children. *The Wayne Law Review*, 52, 113–200.
- Stephen, R. (2017). The future of child protection may not be in local government. *Journal of Children's Services*, 12(2–3), 138–143. doi:10.1108/JCS-09-2017-0041
- Thomas, A., & Ojo, O. (2019). Nigeria and the changing face of child adoption. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/05/nigeria-and-the-changing-face-of-child-adoption/>
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2004). Improving protection for children without parental care: A call for international standards. Retrieved from <http://www.iss.org.au/documents/acallforintlstandards.pdf>.
- Viegiel, V. (2014). *Adoption and child trafficking: Structural violence in the international adoption system*. B.A project (University Honours Theses, Paper 114). Portland State University.



© 2019 The Author(s). This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license.

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format.

Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made.

You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

No additional restrictions

You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.



Cogent Social Sciences (ISSN: 2331-1886) is published by Cogent OA, part of Taylor & Francis Group.

Publishing with Cogent OA ensures:

- Immediate, universal access to your article on publication
- High visibility and discoverability via the Cogent OA website as well as Taylor & Francis Online
- Download and citation statistics for your article
- Rapid online publication
- Input from, and dialog with, expert editors and editorial boards
- Retention of full copyright of your article
- Guaranteed legacy preservation of your article
- Discounts and waivers for authors in developing regions

Submit your manuscript to a Cogent OA journal at www.CogentOA.com

