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To cite this article: Obed Adonteng-Kissi (2018): Parental evidence of impact of policy on worst forms of child labour in rural and urban Ghana, Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy, DOI: [10.1080/21699763.2018.1535996](https://doi.org/10.1080/21699763.2018.1535996)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21699763.2018.1535996>



Published online: 21 Oct 2018.



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Parental evidence of impact of policy on worst forms of child labour in rural and urban Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to ascertain parental evidence of impact of policy on worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in rural and urban Ghana amongst 460 participants: I utilised 400 survey participants whose children were/were not involved in child labour and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques and applying the Stata Version 13 software. I also utilised 60 government officials; NGO representatives; and both parents whose children were/were not involved in child labour. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents (10), stakeholders (10), focus groups (30); and participant observation techniques (10) were utilised to gather the needed data and purposively sampled across rural areas (Ankaase, Anwiankwanta and Kensere), and urban areas (Jamestown, Korle Gonno and Chorkor) in Ghana. Interviews were recorded, transcribed utilising a framework approach as the main qualitative data analysis method. Parental evidence suggests that new laws, legislative reforms, programmes and activities have helped to reduce WFCL in Ghana.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 20 February 2018

Accepted 10 October 2018

KEYWORDS

Child labour; WFCL; parents; rural; urban; evidence

1. Introduction

Tackling worst forms of child labour (WFCL) has growingly become a critical political priority for many governments around the globe. Many attempts and resources are being committed at the national level to fighting this menace, and there is also extensive consensus in the international community on the necessity for a multilateral reaction. In Ghana, WFCL has damaging effects on the physical and mental development of children, and greater awareness of this issue has led to an influx of domestic and Western NGOs that are working to eliminate the practice of WFCL. The focus of this paper is to investigate parental evidence of impact of legislative reforms, programmes and activities on WFCL in rural and urban Ghana. The significance of this is that most children engaged in artisanal fishing and farm work in rural and urban Ghana are working for family businesses (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018b). Therefore, parents in rural and urban Ghana play a crucial role in the development of the child, and parents largely determine whether a given child will be engaged in work, and what kind of work they will perform (Bowlby, 2008). Additionally, the development of the child is grounded on interactions with others, and is moulded

particularly by the child's parents (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018a). Nonetheless, there are studies that suggest some children make decisions on their own volition to engage in WFCL. For example, Porter et al. (2012) suggest that boys engaged in portering in Ghana and Malawi are truants who want to work on their own volition to earn money without necessarily having parental consent. There appears to be tension between the findings of Adonteng-Kissi (2018a), and Bowlby (2008) on one hand and Porter et al. (2012) on another hand. In search of explanations for these divergent outcomes, I uncovered that contextual factors need to be taken into consideration to be able to clarify the inconsistency. I further clarify the factors underlying this pattern and establish that it is the level to which environmental adjustment of economic wellbeing in the Ghana influences the measurement of deprivation.

Basically, WFCL is inconsistent with children's rights and include such a high level of risk that must be tackled as a serious issue for effective elimination. Thus, the elimination of WFCL is broadly inspired by the doctrine of human rights and specifically invoke Article 3 and 12 of the UNCRC to support the mission. However, the goal of eliminating all forms of child labour in the world is possibly going to need a longer term action plan (ILO & UNESCO, 2011). The demands on children to support family income in both rural and urban Ghana are such that a projected 21.8% of 5–17-year-olds are engaged in economic activities (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018b). Children involved in economic activities comprise 22.7% of boys and 20.8% of girls in rural and urban Ghana and the percentage of urban children in child labour was 12.4% compared to 30.2% of children in rural area (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018b). Broadly speaking, child labour denotes the engagement of children in work or employment that is not consistent with benchmarks established in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions on child labour and national laws/regulations that is in tandem with those laws/regulations.

The definition of 'child labour' by ILO includes all children between 5 and 9 years of age who are engaged in work and older children between 10 and 14 years who are engaged in work for more than 14 h per week (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018b). Furthermore, the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL), 1999 (No. 182) and the Convention on the Minimum Age of Employment, 1973 (No. 138) are the major ILO Conventions on WFCL. Article 3 of ILO No. 182 defines WFCL as the following: all forms of slavery or practices comparable to slavery, sale and trafficking of children, and work which, by its nature or the conditions in which it is carried out, has the likelihood to harm the health, safety or morals of children. Many government agencies, inter-governmental organisations (IGO) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been advocating for the minimisation of human suffering and the promotion of development in poor countries. There has been relatively few independent assessment of counter-WFCL policies and programmes to examine the actual impact and effectiveness of different interventions in rural and urban Ghana (Jones & Chant, 2009). Similarly, there has been limited research focus on the comprehensive examination of the enforcement of law and order and implementation of policies in a variety of environments including rural and urban areas where legal procedures can have a wide variation in routine practice (Entwisle, 2018; Logan, Shannon, & Walker, 2005). Without such research it is difficult to identify best practices and assess which area have been most progressive in their attempts to combat WFCL (Bertrand & de Buhr, 2015). Therefore, it is critical to answer the research question below.

1.1. Have legislative reforms, programmes and activities aimed at reducing WFCL been effective in rural and urban Ghana?

This research question is significant in directing the analysis of the study due to the need to develop a scientific understanding of ‘programmes and activities aimed at reducing WFCL’ and review policies and programmes if necessary to address WFCL in rural and urban Ghana. The justification for comparison between rural and urban communities is underpinned by the fact that both areas offer interesting contexts for assessing the engagement of children in WFCL (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018b). Even though the rural and urban areas vary in size, population, nature of economic activities, infrastructural development and religious composition, they have a young age structure and a high incidence of child labour (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018a). The study reveals the following: Survey participants reported that there is better enforcement of law and order in the rural area than the urban area. Rural participants ($N = 123$) interviewed (30.75% of the sample) and urban participants ($N = 85$) interviewed (21.25% of the sample) reported that legislative reforms, programmes and activities had had a positive impact on the reduction of WFCL. This finding is largely consistent with overall trends in the qualitative section of the study. According to focus group discussions, there are better forms of social control in the rural area than the urban area.

In the first section, the aim and research question driving the paper have been introduced. Section two discusses efforts to tackle WFCL. Section three examines the legal framework governing WFCL. Section four presents the methods and research design of the study detailing what was done, how it was done, and why it was done. Section five presents the main findings that emerged from the study. Section six discusses the findings of the study. This article is concluded in section seven. Here, the research is assessed for what it has revealed about parental perceptions of gender differences and norms in rural and urban Ghana.

2. Efforts to tackle worst forms of child labour

Ghana is an active member of an ILO/IPEC (2007) Time-Bound Programme and regularly participates in its activities which attempted to connect action against WFCL with national development strategies, especially poverty reduction and employment promotion. The Time-Bound Programme was the Ghana country project that created a major partnership between government ministries, departments and agencies, employers’ organisations, trades unions, NGOs and donor organisations that have continued to work together and expand with time and supported by ILO/IPEC for eliminating WFCL from all sectors of the economy including agriculture. The ILO/IPEC (2007) provided material and technical support to the National Child Labour Elimination Programme (NCLEP) which focused on several thematic strategic areas. The thematic areas of the programme are law enforcement; mobilisation of the public through awareness creation; reinforcement of the apprenticeship and skills training systems; expansion of the knowledge base by conducting studies and surveys; and support of district and community-level structures for the monitoring of WFCL (ILO/IPEC, 2007).

3. The legal framework regulating WFCL

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted in 1989 and ratified in 1990 with additional provisions to guarantee the rights of children

(UNCRC, 1989). The adoption and ratification of the UNCRC was in reaction to human rights violations such as WFCL perpetuated against children on a global scale. The UNCRC recognised the right of children to be protected from WFCL and deprivation, and practices that were considered harmful to their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, social development or health and interfere with their education (Article 32, UNCRC). The Convention was supposed to apply to every society, irrespective of race, religion, abilities and socialisation, and ratifying countries were expected to take 'immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of WFCL as a matter of urgency' (Dennis, 1999). In February 1990, Ghana was the first country to ratify the UNCRC, just three months after its adoption.

A child was considered by the UNCRC to be any person under the age of 18 years (UN). ILO Convention No. 138 provided that countries must establish a minimum working age and this threshold must be above compulsory school completion age, usually 15 years (ILO & UNESCO, 2011). Nevertheless, this Convention comprised varied flexibility clauses to allow countries to establish whether specific tasks were suitable for a child, considering the age and the context of national or local socio-economic development. For example, a country from the developing world can initially opt for 14 years as the minimum age. Work that is likely to endanger the health, development or morals of a child had 18 years as the minimum age. A minimum age of 13 years was set for light work, 15 years for employment and apprenticeship, and 18 years for hazardous work. However, governments could permit children to undertake light work from age 13. If the general minimum age was set at age 14 then children could undertake light work from age 12. The list of hazardous work included going to sea, mining and quarrying, carrying heavy loads, working in manufacturing industries where chemicals were produced or used, and working in places such as bars, hotels and places of entertainment where children might be exposed to immoral behaviour (UN).

Ghana had also ratified several other regional and international conventions that were relevant to the rights of children and their protection from WFCL. For instance, Ghana was a party to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990). Article 15 of the Charter stated that 'every child should be protected from all forms of economic exploitation and from performing any work that was likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development'. The Charter further considered that the promotion and safeguarding of the rights and welfare of the child-imposed duties on all members of the community to adhere to the principles of the rights and welfare of the child.

In 2007, the ILO adopted the Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188) which stated that the minimum age for employment on board a fishing vessel was 16 years, although an exception was made for 15-year-olds who had completed compulsory education (ILO, 2007). Children who were engaged in vocational training might also be permitted to work on board fishing vessels. In addition, children might be permitted to carry out light work during school holidays. Night work was prohibited for all persons below the age of 18 years (ILO, 2007, Convention No. 188). To date, only a few countries had ratified this Convention.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana introduced special provisions geared towards guaranteeing the rights of children as a unique group. This included an expansive set of rights

designed to foster children's welfare and development. Article 28 charged Parliament to pass laws to ensure that: (a) every child below the age of 18 years shall have the right to the same measure of care, assistance and maintenance as is necessary for its development from its natural parents; (b) every child, whether or not born in wedlock, shall be entitled to reasonable provision out of the estate of its parents; (c) parents undertake their natural right and obligation of care, maintenance and upbringing of their children in co-operation with such institutions as Parliament may, by law, prescribe in such manner that in all cases the interests of the children are paramount; (d) children and young persons receive special protection against exposure to physical and moral hazards; and (e) the protection and advancement of the family as the unit of society are safeguarded in order to promote the interests of children. After this, in 1995, the Government introduced a wide-range law reform process to guarantee complete consistency between national laws and the UNCRC. The founding of the Child Law Reform Advisory Committee by the Ghana National Commission on Children to review the status of, and law on, children in the country was essential to this process (Twum-Danso, 2009). Under Section 24 of the Constitution, it was the right of every person 'to work under satisfactory, safe and healthy conditions' and Section 28 guarantees children, in particular, 'the right to be protected from engaging in work that constitutes a threat to health, education or development'. The constitutional acknowledgement of the rights of the child signified a firm national commitment to the protection of the interests of children. These constitutional provisions placed obligations on Parliament to legislate to ensure and safeguard the welfare and development of children in Ghana.

The legal regime on the protection of children was consolidated in 1998 in Ghana through the passage of the Children's Act (Act 560) 1998 (Twum-Danso, 2009). The Act drew together previous child-related laws and made necessary amendments which were tailored to meet UN and ILO benchmarks. The definition given to child labour by the Children's Act was labour that deprived children of health, education and development (Twum-Danso, 2009). Exploitative and harmful child labour was also prohibited. Although Ghana had not ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention (1973), national laws were in conformity with the principles of the Convention.

On 5 December 2005, Ghana reached another major milestone in the protection of children's rights when the Human Trafficking Act 694 was passed to outlaw human trafficking within, to, from, and through Ghana (Parliament of Ghana, 2005). The Act's provisions were mainly motivated by the United Nations Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, particularly women and children (Palermo Protocol), which was the main international legal framework to fight trafficking (Sertich & Heemskerk, 2011). The passage of this Act was also relevant to the protection of children from exploitative work. The Act prohibits activities such as prostitution, forced labour, slavery or slavery-like practices, and the placement of children where the motive for trafficking was exploitation by another party. Section 1(1) of the Act broadly defined human trafficking as:

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, trading or receipt of persons within and across national borders by the use of threats, force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or exploitation of vulnerability, or giving or receiving payments and benefits to achieve consent.

In relation to children, the Act provided that ‘where children are trafficked, the consent of the child, parents or guardian of the child cannot be used as a defence in prosecution’. The existence of special provisions to guarantee the rights of the child in the 1992 Constitution, as well as Ghana being a signatory to a host of international conventions and treaties that sought to protect the rights of the child, were indeed important achievements.

4. Methods

4.1. Research design

The research utilised a mixed method approach to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of the study. Mixed methods are important for building validity and reliability (Creswell & Apoth, 2017). In this mixed method approach, the qualitative and quantitative data gathering happened concurrently in Phases 1 and 2 of the research study at the research sites. The study utilised a survey, focus groups, in-depth parent and stakeholder interviews, and participant observation techniques for data collection involving 460 participants. The participants recruited were from rural and urban areas of Ghana and included parents whose children were involved in child labour and parents whose children were not involved. This stage of the research was carried out between 1 April 2015 and 30 June 2015. The survey data were analysed using Stata (Version 13) software.

4.2. Contextualisation

The rural farming area under study are the following: Ankaase, Anwiankwanta and Kensere, which are all in the Asante Bekwai Municipality. The cocoa farming sector remains one of the major intervention areas under the auspices of the NCLEP. The priority given to combating WFCL in this sector occurred against the backdrop of media reports in 2000 and 2001, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States, that drew attention to the plight of trafficked children who were working under slave-like conditions on West African Cocoa farms (Johansen, 2006). On the other hand, the urban fishing area under investigation include three communities: Jamestown, Korle Gonno and Chorkor which are all under the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, their population are Jamestown (16,221), Korle Gonno (27,826) and Chorkor (23,853) (GSS, 2012). Some of the WFCL that may be identified in Ghanaian fisheries are, forms of slavery and similar practices including sale and trafficking of children; debt bondage; work that is likely to endanger the health, safety, or morals of children; work, which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse; children working under water, or engaged in carrying heavy loads; work in an unhealthy environment; work under particularly difficult conditions, such as work for long hours, or during the night, or where the child is unreasonably confined to the employer’s premises (Afenyadu, 2008).

4.3. Survey participants

I applied stratified sampling in selecting the 400 participants in the quantitative survey. All participants were parents with children under 18 years of age, some of whom were involved in child labour, and some of whom were not. 200 parents were drawn from

Table 1. Age profile of respondents in rural and urban Ghana.

Area	Age of respondents						Total
	18–27	28–37	38–47	48–57	58–67	68+	
Rural	7 (1.75)	25 (6.25)	55 (13.75)	54 (13.50)	35 (8.75)	24 (6)	200 (50)
Urban	40 (10)	70 (17.50)	51 (12.75)	22 (5.50)	15 (3.75)	2 (0.50)	200 (50)
Total	47 (11.75)	95 (23.75)	106 (26.50)	76 (19)	50 (12.50)	26 (6.50)	400 (100)

Note: All figures in all the brackets in the tables are in percentages (Fieldwork, 2015).

the urban communities under study and 200 from the rural communities. I went to the landing beaches in Jamestown, Korle Gonno and Chorkor in the urban area to identify parents with children who were willing to be surveyed. Many families were located at the landing beaches with the father, mother and the children all involved in different parts of the fishing industry. I also knocked on doors in Ankaase, Anwiankwanta and Kensere in the rural area to identify parents with and without children involved in economic activities who were willing to be surveyed. In this study, statistical determinants of parental evidence of impact of policy on WFCL in rural and urban Ghana were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistical techniques using the Stata Version 13 software.

4.3.1. Age profile of respondents

Table 1 shows the age of participants surveyed in the rural and urban areas. Ages 28–37 are in the majority in the urban area, while ages 48–57 are in the majority in the rural area. Participants ($N=70$) surveyed in the urban area were between the ages of 28–37, representing 17.50% of the study sample. This age bracket constitutes the greater majority of the participants from the urban area because of rural-urban migration in Ghana. There are many young adults migrating from the rural to the urban area for a better life. There is a perception that many economic opportunities exist in the city that attract people including young adults. The highest number of participants ($N=106$) surveyed from combined rural and urban areas representing 26.50% of the study sample were from the age bracket of 38–47. Table 1 provides details of the age profile of the study respondents from the data analysed and their interpretations.

4.3.2. Sex Profile of Respondents

Table 2 shows the sex of participants surveyed in both rural and urban areas. Males are in the majority because both cocoa farming and fishing in Ghana are male-dominated occupations. Male participants ($N=133$) surveyed in the rural area represent 33.25% of the study sample, while male participants ($N=105$) surveyed in the urban area represent

Table 2. Sex profile of respondents in rural and urban Ghana.

Area	Sex of respondents		
	Female	Male	Total
Rural	67 (16.75)	133 (33.75)	200 (50)
Urban	95 (23.75)	105 (26.25)	200 (50)
Total	162 (40.50)	238 (59.50)	400 (100)

Note: All figures in all the brackets in the tables are in percentages (Fieldwork, 2015).

Table 3. Educational levels of respondents in rural and urban Ghana.

Area	Educational level of respondents				
	No education	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Total
Rural	40 (10)	138 (34.50)	13 (3.25)	9 (2.25)	200 (50)
Urban	41 (10.25)	135 (33.75)	22 (5.50)	2 (0.50)	200 (50)
Total	81 (20.25)	273 (68.25)	35 (8.75)	11 (2.75)	400 (100)

Note: All figures in all the brackets in the tables are in percentages (Fieldwork, 2015).

26.25% of the study sample. On the other hand, female participants ($N = 67$) surveyed in the rural area represent 16.75% of the study sample, while female participants ($N = 95$) surveyed in the urban area represent 23.75% of the study sample.

4.3.3. Educational profile of respondents

Table 3 shows the educational levels of participants surveyed in the rural and urban areas. Participants with primary education are in the majority in both areas under study. Participants with primary education ($N = 138$) surveyed in the rural area represent 34.50% of the study sample, while participants with primary education ($N = 135$) surveyed in the urban area represent 33.75% of the study sample. Both areas under study are indigenous areas and therefore people attached more importance to their indigenous occupations. In view of this, many participants dropped out of school after primary education to concentrate on indigenous farming and fishing.

4.4. Qualitative data

Considering my focus on parental accounts of impact of policy on WFCL in rural and urban Ghana, I recruited 60 participants in this study and they included government officials, representatives from NGOs, and both parents whose children were/were not involved in child labour. The inclusion criterion for selecting participants for this study was being a parent or stakeholder in child welfare with expert knowledge. I conducted a total of 10 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from government agencies, departments and nongovernmental organisations (Department of Social Welfare; the Labour Department; the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice; school officers; and the Child Resource Institute). The stakeholder interviews generated supplementary, explanatory data to augment the findings from the survey. (5 stakeholders in each of the two areas under study). I moderated 1 focus group discussion with 15 participants in each area under study. Additionally, a total of 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants whose children were/were not involved in child labour. Finally, participant observations were also conducted to investigate children's natural working environment and to contextualise the empirical findings, helping to illuminate parental perceptions of human rights and child labour. A total of 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants in the participant observations (5 parents in each of the two areas under study). The inclusion criterion for selecting participants for the participant observation was being a parent who was a farm/canoe owner with child labourers in the two areas under study. Purposive sampling was utilised for the selection of all the participants purposely identified to offer specific information about the study population. Purposive sampling methods include selecting participants based on a particular purpose rather than randomly (Mason, 2017).

4.5. Qualitative data generation activities

I conducted interviews after undergoing training in qualitative research methods and qualitative interview techniques. No relationship was established between me and participants prior to the study. The interviews were conducted in different settings including the offices of the professionals and parents' own homes. Most of these interview settings were selected at each participant's convenience. The focus groups' interview schedule contained 13 questions. Additionally, the parental interview schedule comprised of 14 questions; stakeholders' interview schedule was made up of 20 questions; participants' observation interview schedule comprised of 12 questions and each interview lasted between 30 and 90 min.

4.6. Qualitative data analysis

I utilised a framework approach as the main qualitative data analysis method in this study. A framework approach is usually utilised in applied policy research and it is a qualitative data analysis technique (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). The framework technique clearly states the research objectives upfront, based on the research (Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000). It therefore begins with deduction but ends with the generation of inductive data as it attempts to correctly reflect original accounts and observations. In view of this, framework analysis is greatly structured, comprised of the construction of themes that methodically analyse data with a view to higher levels of abstraction being reached. Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis, and Dillon (2003) submitted the five stages of framework analysis as identified in the literature. I applied the stages of the framework in the conduct of this research. I began the analysis with the verbatim transcripts, and a process of familiarisation. Through a close reading of the original accounts and listing the knowledge and themes that repeated themselves, I became immersed in the data. The identification of a thematic framework was the second stage of the data analysis. This included drawing on a priori knowledge about parental perceptions of human rights and child labour and the emergent themes, to list general analytical classifications that could be used to label the data. The analytical classifications recognised in the themes were then utilised in the data through a process of indexing. This included coding the transcripts statistically for each theme and identifying the data that were confirmation for a specific theme or sub-theme. During the fourth stage of the analysis, the indexed framework was then charted in a spreadsheet, which involved separating the data that act as confirmation for each theme. Mapping and interpretation of the data is the final stage. Comparing the charted data, searching out the patterns and connections that offered explanation are done at this stage. The themes identified a priori and to emerge from the original accounts during the framework analysis resulted in the substantive theme: 'relationship between parental perceptions of child labour and human rights' being identified in the data and accounted for it.

4.7. Trustworthiness

The background, qualifications, experience and credibility of the researcher is particularly crucial in qualitative section of the study as it is the investigator who is the main instrument of data gathering and analysis (Eisner, 2017). Therefore, I became the data collection

instrument to help deal with the question of validity and reliability. Therefore, my competence and interviewing skills and capability became the basis of reliability of the data collected. Truthfully, my interview techniques were improved, and the quality of data enhanced as the research progressed. Further, I enhanced interviewer reliability by executing two pre-pilot interviews to gain experience and the important skills. Additionally, I dealt with the subject of reliability in the context of equipment used in the interview. I utilised a tape recorder to record all interviews, subsequently, enhancing reliability. Therefore, I reported the findings in a manner that aimed at expressing their tentative nature. Further, I have clearly applied auditability in this paper unfolding each phase of the research process, amplifying and justifying what was done. I made effort to overcome research bias by taking a neutral position and refusing to offer my own views during the data gathering process. Thus, I made checks and referred the data and the tentative interpretations to the study participants to confirm its credibility and accuracy at the end of the data analysis. I triangulated my data by using varied sources to confirm the developing findings. I considered relevant literature which made me confident that child labour and human rights in rural and urban areas of Ghana as perceived by the participants in this study was accurately conveyed as possible.

4.8. Ethics

I obtained ethics approval from the La Trobe University Human Ethics Committee to undertake the survey, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and to observe and interact with participants whilst they worked with their children in the farming and fishing communities. In adhering to the principles of the University Ethics Committee, I adhered to cultural differences and guaranteed the rights of children before, during and after the research. I asked participants to sign consent forms and gave them participant information statements before engaging in work with their children. All steps taken by me before, during and after the research conformed to the highest ethical standards.

5. Results

Many respondents in rural and urban areas reported that new laws, legislative reforms, programmes and activities had helped to reduce WFCL. The survey further reported that there is better enforcement of law and order in the rural than the urban areas. Many reasons may account for the better enforcement of laws in rural areas than urban areas. Prominent among them is the fact that law enforcement agencies can visit employers and parents in their farms where child labour takes place. In contrast, the riskiest forms of child labour in urban areas tend to occur on artisanal fishing canoes in the high seas, which are not easily accessible to law enforcement agencies. Participants in parental interviews and focus groups indicated that the prosecution of parents in rural communities has served as a deterrent to other parents. Participants in urban areas also observed that the media brings many cases of abuse to light in urban areas. Overall, the data suggest that parental participants and focus groups have a reasonable level of knowledge of the law in the two settings.

5.1. Rural area

Child labour in Ghana is driven, at least in part, by economic and cultural factors. However, the passage of new laws (discussed in more detail earlier in sections 2 and 3) have been designed to prohibit WFCL. The matter of child labour is captured by three international conventions: the ILO Convention No. 138 regarding minimum age for admission to employment; Recommendation No. 146 (1973); ILO Convention No. 182 about the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of WFCL; Recommendation No. 190 (1999); and the UNCRC. These conventions frame the concept of child labour and constitute the basis for child labour legislation enacted by countries that are signatories. In Ghana, IGOs and NGOs have taken an active and catalytic role in lobbying for new policies and laws and made serious impact in influencing the enforcement and clarification of such policies on WFCL. Global conventions have also been useful instruments for many government agencies, IGOs and NGOs to campaign for new laws and policies to combat WFCL. According to stakeholders, the passage of these new laws has helped to reduce WFCL, even though the government needs to do more to promote and implement them. A Labour Officer said:

I think new laws have helped reduce WFCL. The cultural way of thinking has also subsided because of the promulgation of new laws. I however, believe there should be grassroots participation in the promulgation of new laws and policies.

A Registrar of the CHRAJ expressed a similar view:

I believe these laws have helped to minimise WFCL and other abuses of children but parents at the grassroot should be involved in making future laws and policies. I still believe if these laws were not available, the abuses in our community would have been alarming.

Other professionals suggested that even though engaging children in WFCL has reduced because of the promulgation of new laws, some cultural beliefs still have some influence on the people's way of thinking. For example, a Director of the CHRAJ said:

I think culture has some influence on law enforcement in the communities. I know some prosecutions have been withdrawn, while others have not been successful or still pending before the courts because of the culture of the people. The culture doesn't allow a child to report his/her parent to the law enforcement agencies.

In other cases, these cultural beliefs are shared by children who would prefer to be working instead of attending school. As one parent said:

Children who work in this community do that on their own volition and not because they're forced to do so.

Nonetheless, the various educational programmes in the electronic media and traditional forms of social control have also helped to minimise WFCL by making the local population aware of issues of WFCL. A participant of focus group said:

Parents don't want to be summoned before the traditional authority or elders of the community for such violations. This is because parents risk being asked to pay a penalty if found guilty of WFCL.

Some participants also said that parents are scared that the law enforcement agencies will arrest them for children's rights violations. One focus group participant said:

There are traditional forms of social control in this community since we're a homogenous society. In addition, I have seen officials of the Labour Department going around with police to arrest parents whose children don't go to school. Society regard parents who treat their children horribly as deviants. The teachers also collaborate with law enforcement agencies to arrest such parents.

An overwhelming number of focus group participants believed that there are more children in school in recent times. This is backed up by the available statistical data. Generally, at the basic level in Ghana, an increase in enrolment was recorded between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 for all levels of education from kindergarten (KG), to primary to Junior High School (JHS). This was reflected in marginal increases in the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) for primary and JHS levels (MOE, 2016). With economic growth and rising affluence, Ghana has witnessed a general reduction of 6.4% and 8.8% in child labour, including in WFCL, respectively between 2008/2009 and 2013/2014 (Kapoor, 2017). However, although the new laws seem to have had an impact, resource constraints have impeded their effectiveness by making them harder to enforce. The Labour Department is not able to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively because of inadequate resources. A Labour Officer said:

Inadequate resource is part of the problem of WFCL.

This Officer also suggested that child labour NGOs, which have a role in reporting human rights abuses to authorities, have an incentive to ignore WFCL, as the NGO would no longer have a purpose if it were completely eliminated. A Principal Labour Officer explained:

I don't think workers of NGO involved in the elimination of WFCL sincerely want the practice to be eliminated because total elimination will mean they'll be out of job.

A similar view was also expressed by a number of participants in the focus groups. A focus group participant said:

Do you think if these NGOs can eliminate WFCL totally, they would get some work to do? Workers will be asked to go home if WFCL is eliminated.

Adequate resources would enable state officials to enforce laws for the protection of the rights of the child efficiently.

5.2. Urban Area

Some parents in urban area observed that there has been a small decrease in the levels of WFCL practice because of new laws, legislative reforms and programmes. However, the level of change has not been large because of resource constraints and logistical difficulties which have made the laws difficult to enforce. In many cases, the Labour Department agrees to out-of-court settlements when dealing with cases of WFCL and do not refer culprits to the police for prosecution. A Principal Labour Officer explained:

Our Department is not well resourced to be able to keep children in shelters. If the state punishes a parent, there will be nobody to take care for the child. We the technocrats in the districts and parents should be engaged when promulgating new laws in the future.

Often, state agencies do not follow up on cases of WFCL unless they are reported in the media, and, the Department of Social Welfare has prosecuted relatively few cases of WFCL in urban areas. Another Director of the Social Welfare Department said:

As you are aware, child labour may have to do with cultural issues. Usually, family members come to us to ask for out-of-court settlements.

Many parents echoed the concerns of stakeholders, suggesting that the area under study is, as one interviewee put it, '*no man's land*' in view of these difficulties implementing the law. Many parents engage their children in WFCL with impunity and one focus group participant said:

If we're not ready to enforce the laws in our localities, then we should not expect to see any changes in our communities. The police are supposed to go to work places to arrest employers and remove children. I know the police have removed children from places in the Yeji area. I don't think new laws have brought any major change in this community.

Parental participants in the focus group suggested that presently there are enough laws to deal with crimes in these urban communities, yet law enforcement is weak. A significant number of parents in both the parental interviews and the focus group discussion emphasised that the communities under study are not a good environment to raise children because all the major crimes like prostitution, armed robbery, petty stealing, gambling and rape are widespread in these communities. A parent explained:

Sometimes, early in the morning you'll see children who're about 17 years openly smoking marijuana and sharing their booty gotten from robbery operations and you dare not say a word. We don't see the police patrolling in these communities, so children commit crimes with boldness. Many of these children are also not in school so I ask the question who're their parents?

The above assertion indicates that law enforcement is lacking and that is why many children engage in criminal acts with impunity. It is therefore not surprising to see many children breaking the law by working as fishermen rather than being in school. However, these claims must also be weighed against the statistical data which suggest that the number of children who go to sea has slightly reduced since the introduction of the new laws (Kapoor, 2017). Although many parents still take their children fishing in the high seas, another focus group participant said:

Legislative reforms, programmes and activities have been publicised in the media through local languages, so parents fear the penalties for child abuse even though the laws are not enforced effectively. Nowadays, parents who take their children to fishing rather than schooling have become a laughing stock.

Stakeholders also indicated that some successful prosecutions had occurred, and that they are likely to serve as a deterrent to other parents in the community.

Table 4. Impact of legislation on reduction of WFCL in the rural and urban areas.

Area	New laws have reduced WFCL	New laws have not reduced WFCL	Don't know	Total
Rural	123 (30.75)	68 (17)	9 (2.25)	200 (50)
Urban	85 (21.75)	81 (20.25)	34 (8.50)	200 (50)
Total	208 (52)	149 (37.25)	43 (10.75)	400 (100)

Note: All figures in all the brackets in the tables are in percentages (Fieldwork, 2015).

Table 5. Nature of tasks of working children in rural and urban Ghana.

Area	Nature of work					Total
	Farm work	Fishing	Hawking	House chores	Others	
Rural	161 (40.25)	0 (0)	1 (0.25)	34 (8.50)	4 (1)	200 (50)
Urban	0 (0)	80 (20)	8 (2)	110 (27.50)	2 (0.50)	200 (50)
Total	161 (40.25)	80 (20)	9 (2.25)	144 (36)	6 (1.50)	400 (100)

Note: All figures in all the brackets in the tables are in percentages (Fieldwork, 2015).

5.2.1. Survey Data on Impact of Government Policy in Rural and Urban Areas

Table 4 presents the survey data on parental evidence of the impact of legislative reforms, programmes and activities on the reduction of WFCL in rural and urban Ghana. 123 participants surveyed in the rural areas (30.75% of the sample) reported that legislative reforms, programmes and activities had reduced WFCL, while 68 participants disagreed (17% of the sample). On the other hand, 85 participants interviewed in the urban area, representing 21.25% of the study sample, reported that legislative reforms, programmes and activities had had a positive impact on the reduction of WFCL, while 81 participants interviewed in urban area, representing 20.25% of the study sample, reported otherwise.

5.2.2. Survey Data on Nature of Tasks of Working Children

Table 5 shows the distribution of children's work in the two areas. Participants with children engaged in farm work ($N = 161$) surveyed in the rural area represent 40.25% of the study sample, while participants with children engaged in fishing work ($N = 80$) surveyed in the urban area represent 20% of the sample. This is because the rural community is a predominantly cocoa growing area while the urban community is predominantly a fishing area. In view of the social pressures of urbanisation, many children support their parents with household chores. Participants with children who support them with household chores ($N = 110$) interviewed in the urban area represent 27.50% of the study sample.

6. Discussions

Characteristics of rural and urban social structure associate with variations in law enforcement even though there is application of the same laws on WFCL. Thus, rural and urban areas vary in social structural dimensions which impact on both rate of WFCL and the efficacy of informal social controls. The existing scholarship suggests that new laws, legislative reforms, programmes and activities have helped to reduce WFCL in Ghana. For example, Kapoor (2017) finds that Ghana witnessed a general reduction of between 6.4% and 8.8% in child labour and WFCL respectively between 2008/2009 and 2013/2014 owing to legislative reforms and new intervention programmes. This conclusion is supported by the evidence that emerges from this mixed method study. The results show clear and consistent evidence that parents believe that recent reforms have helped to reduce WFCL, although participants in rural area reported a more positive impact than participants in urban area. One possible explanation for this is that WFCL occurring in high risk places like the high seas is not readily visible to labour inspectors, media reporters and independent advocates interested in issues of WFCL. It is typically 'out of sight, out of mind'. Most studies of WFCL in Ghana also tend to focus on the mainland rather

than what happens to children on the high seas. The combination of geographical and social distance is therefore hindering the law enforcement on WFCL.

Logan et al. (2005) point out that law enforcement in rural and urban areas probably differs across studies for multiple factors including methodological reasons as well as contextual or environmental factors. Focus groups explained that there is better enforcement of law and order in rural areas than urban areas because there are better forms of social control in rural areas. The reason for the better forms of social control is because rural area is a form of social group, organised according to historically determined norms, of families tied to the land (Lefebvre, 1970). Rural area is bonded, by shared rules and assign specific number of their people to monitor the achievement of shared goals. In the rural area, the society is more homogeneous and stable with a legal system which is procedurally less formal and more leniently in sentencing parents. Harmony in norms and values, cohesiveness and social consensus, and a sense of belonging within an area are promoted by an integrated social system (Crutchfield, Geerken, & Gove, 1982). The greater stability and homogeneity in the rural area suggest it would depend less on formal means of social control which is in contrast with the diversity found in the urban area (Hart, 1967). Although greater percentage of the population in rural area is deprived, it is more homogeneous and residentially stable (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018a; Cooke, Hague, & McKay, 2016). The legal system in the rural area registers the smallest proportion of WFCL referral cases, screened cases more selectively and concentrate more on parents who are serious WFCL offenders and less on status offenders (Feld, 1991). Participants in parental interviews and focus groups indicated that the prosecution of some parents in the rural area had served as a deterrent to other parents. Parental affluence and stability in the rural area, probably enable parents and the rural legal system to develop informal, alternative dispositions in lieu of formal court intervention for less serious WFCL offenders.

In urban area, the ethnic make-up is more heterogeneous and diverse. Migration to the urban area dislocates social integration (Feld, 1991). Variations in ethnic composition are associated with differences in the rate of WFCL (Hindelang, 1978). Besides, population heterogeneity reduces shared traits and shared experiences, associate adversely with social integration and informal means of social control (Angell, 1974). Urbanisation is connected with greater bureaucratisation, formal social control and higher rates of WFCL (Myers & Talarico, 2012). Ethnic diversity is virtually an urban phenomenon. A greater percentage of urban families are headed by single female parents. Affluence or deprivation impacts on the rate of WFCL and community reactions. While deprivation can intensify the possibility of engaging children in WFCL, a low tax-base can decrease expenses on formal social controls. Additionally, the interaction between WFCL and deprivation is multifaceted and can be an outcome of relative poverty and not just low income (Bailey, 1984). There is an existence of an inverse interaction between rates of WFCL and residential stability (Harries, 1976). Further, Weber (2009) relates the formal rationalisation of social life with urbanisation and bureaucratisation and contends that abstract legislations could displace more traditional approaches to dispute resolution as legislation becomes growingly rational and functionally specialised. Furthermore, legislation intervention in the urban area is more formal and accompanied by more severity in sentencing practices. Additionally, the law operates in the urban area in milieu that offer less options for informal social control than does rural area. For instance, the existence of

legal aid/service is an indication of formality of the legal system in the urban area. Again, law enforcement in the urban area is more pronounced in communities with more dysfunctional families, more ethnically heterogeneous populations with less stable dwelling, all of which offer less measures for informal social control (Feld, 1991). The urban area express less well-integrated and organised community with less 'mechanical solidarity' than do the rural area (Robison & Crenshaw, 2002). The deployment of security services and degree of law enforcement is an expression of this arrangement. The structural-geographic difference impacts on law enforcement in the urban area. The legal system in the urban area registers a bigger percentage of parents who engage their children in WFCL. Additionally, there is diversity of WFCL referral sources which expresses a larger dependence on a more comprehensive network of formal social control, which includes more recalcitrant parents in the urban area.

In traditional rural area, homogeneity and uniformity of beliefs promote informal social control, while population density, anonymity, and heterogeneity weaken social cohesion and intensifies dependence on formal social control in the urban setting (Searles, 2018). Social ecology associates with urban structural characteristics like income disparity, household structure, or ethnic composition to differences in rates in WFCL (Shaw & McKay, 1942). The legal system in the urban area covers a wider, more comprehensive net and comprises comparably more parental offenders than does legal system in the rural area. The social structure and procedural formality in the urban area are also connected with more severe penalties. The heterogenous background of parents in the urban area impacts on how WFCL cases are processed and the severity of the sentences (Feld, 1991). Criminology applies social structural characteristics to explicate differences in WFCL distribution. For instance, classical sociological theory attributes the more widespread rate of WFCL in the city to urban anomie (Clinard & Abbott, 1973).

Law enforcement in the rural area take into account elements of social background while law enforcement in the urban area stick to a greater legalistic model of sentencing (Austin, 1981). Urbanisation and social context impact on WFCL decisions and sentencing of parents (Myers & Talarico, 2012). Therefore, this paper supports Weberian suggestion that equally placed WFCL offenders can be handled in different ways grounded on their location and that disparity in processing (Myers & Talarico, 1986). Organisations relate with and are impacted by their own external environments (Eisenstein & Jacob, 1977). The expectations of security services, legislators, law courts, news media, and the public impact on how the legal system works. Law enforcement agencies function in different socio-political environments and contingent on their environment for legitimisation, resources, and clients. Therefore, external social, economic, and political factors constrain even apparently comparable organisations. In his study of urban police practices, Wilson (1968) suggested that the differences in police behaviour is due to differences in community social structure. In comparing criminal sentencing in two different areas, Levin (1977) suggests that variations in sentencing practices is due to variations in the areas' political cultures. Additionally, there are essential roles of work groups in courtroom on judicial sentencing verdicts in diverse jurisdictions (Eisenstein & Jacob, 1977). Ethnic diversity is significant to both the rate of WFCL and law enforcement.

Parental participants and focus groups suggested that parents have a reasonable level of knowledge about the law in the two settings. Nevertheless, it is contentious whether the level of knowledge has contributed to general reduction in the level of WFCL in all

sectors of rural and urban economies. Chapman and Fisher (2000) suggest that the task of eliminating WFCL is nowhere close to completion. There has been a backlash from sections of the fishing and farming communities. Many children still engage in fishing in the high seas where there is no inspection. Elsewhere in India, a great deal has been achieved since 1983 with NGOs working with the judiciary and government officials to ensure enforcement of existing legal regime on WFCL (Chapman & Fisher, 2000). Stakeholders have been able to threaten export markets adequately which has resulted in some changes in industry and short of executing an embargo. Stakeholders have set up the labelling system (Rugmark) as a positive consequence for the consumer campaign; and they have also had a substantial impact at the grassroots leading to the springing up of many civil society organisations. Eventually, evidence of a reduction in child labour in the industries and areas targeted in India is visible (Chapman & Fisher, 2000).

Participants also observed that the media brings many cases of abuse to light in urban areas. Collins (2006) confirms that the media usually report on specific types of cases where prosecution was pursued. Additionally, legislative reforms, programmes and activities have helped to elevate the discussion on WFCL in the media (Freeman, 2017). Therefore, they suggested that the positive impact of legislative reforms, programmes and activities on the reduction of WFCL is because of the proliferation of electronic and print media in Ghana, which has helped to educate the general populace about the laws governing WFCL. In their book, Thompson and Bynum (2016) echoes this view regarding the role of the media. The various methods together produced largely consistent and convergent results. Key informant interview data provided varied explanations of the impact of legislative reforms, programmes and activities on WFCL while survey data showed that many parents believed that there was a strong relation between legislative reforms, programmes and activities, and a reduction in WFCL.

Ensuring actual and sustained parental attitudinal change demands critical grassroots participation. Some parents are probably going to continue to engage their children in WFCL in Ghana if there is the absence of grassroots participation. This paper thus emphasises the crucial connections between policy and project work. The findings of this paper close this loop, acknowledging that not only the close connections between advocacy and project work are required, but there is also the necessity for long-term participation at the grassroots even after policy changes have been achieved. This will possibly be called policy-to-practice (Chapman & Fisher, 2000). Although the impact of community education and advocacy work on WFCL is inadequate, it is very valuable. Parental role at the grassroots is complex and, they are considered in some situations only as recipients of information.

Participants in parental interviews and focus groups indicated that the prosecution of some parents in rural communities had served as a deterrent to other parents in the area. Collins (2006) obtained information regarding prosecution decisions for 43 of the 46 incidents for parental negligence serving as a deterrent to other parents. Although stakeholders suggested some prosecutions have been made regarding parental offenders of WFCL, representatives of government agencies such as the Labour Department, Social Welfare Department, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and a private child welfare NGO called Child Resource Institute that I interviewed were not able to provide official statistics on patterns in prosecutions of parental offenders over several years, making it hard to correctly establish the degree to which counter-WFCL policies may be succeeding or failing. Most scholars highlight the lack

of comparable regional data, and the lack of sharing of existing data between government agencies, partly because government agencies are reticent in sharing what is sometimes confidential information (Annim, 2018; Mumin, Gyasi, Segbefia, Forkuor, & Ganle, 2018). The situation is not much better at the national level. Many scholars in this field underscore the current lack of reliable data on WFCL and the number of prosecutions made and argue that the collection of better data is essential to combat WFCL more effectively (Adepoju, 2005). More attempts have been made to estimate the scale of WFCL and to produce more and better official statistics on the number of prosecutions made. It is important to point this out, because critics often point out the lack of reliable data on WFCL in relation to the number of prosecutions made, without acknowledging that there have been some positive developments in this field. Whereas it is factual, as many scholars in this field argue, that existing national statistics and global statistics are usually no more than guesstimates. However, several new initiatives have been launched during the last decade to try to improve our understanding of data on WFCL relative to the number of prosecutions made and to produce more reliable data.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

Legislative reforms, programmes and activities aimed at reducing WFCL is not adequate if additional effective instruments for advancing a change are not promoted. Previously, legislation or conventions were usually considered as the instrument for reducing WFCL. However, other instruments have now been designed. They involve codes of conduct, labelling, and social auditing. These are considered to be suitable if there is non-existent of national legal regime or international conventions, or national legal regime is too weak, general, undefined, or if there is a challenge with enforcement through the legal system or government (Chapman & Fisher, 2000). Nevertheless, each instrument can also trigger conflict, resulting in differences on what types of codes of conduct, labelling, and social auditing should be applied and how they should be administered. Rivals can attempt to utilise similar instruments for their own ends to confuse the public. For instance, in India there are now contending labelling systems for carpets, and the labels which do not bear common standards (Chapman & Fisher, 2000).

There is the need for trust and non-hierarchical organisations and establishment of close personal contact at the grassroots if government agencies, IGOs and NGOs' activities at the grassroots level to change parental attitudes and behaviours and to build capacity and skills are to succeed. These cannot be done swiftly. On the contrary, attitudinal and behavioural change on WFCL at the grassroots is accelerated and facilitated by other activities occurring at the different levels. Usually, grassroots challenges tend to be extremely complicated, originating from culture, deprivation and exclusion. These challenges cannot be addressed swiftly or with a shallow focus on WFCL which have the potential to be isolated from the broader child labour matter. Further, a shallow focus on WFCL practice may imply that grassroots voices are overlooked in the education on WFCL. Grassroots are unlikely to co-operate with government agencies, IGOs and NGOs if they do not have a sense of ownership in the solutions advocated for.

As discussed in section 5, there are a significant number of parents who do not know about children's rights although, there is equally a substantial percentage of parents who

are aware of children's rights. In order to combat this problem, the government agencies responsible for children's rights should be well-resourced to strengthen the Social Welfare Department with facilities and qualified staff. A well-resourced Social Welfare Department would be able to educate parents/guardians about the UNCRC and other national laws. Some of the new laws exist only in name in the statute books but many parents do not know the purpose of those laws.

The Labour Department, Social Welfare Department and the police should be sufficiently resourced to recruit adequate numbers of inspectors, build shelters and keep children there when they are removed from their parents. The Labour Department is mandated to enforce the Labour Act. Therefore, the Labour Department should collaborate closely with like-minded children's rights NGOs on the inspection of farms, fishing harbours and domestic homes. NGOs should be encouraged to design and implement appropriate interventions based on proper and detailed research. Additionally, the approach and the methodology of many of the government agencies and NGOs concerned with children's rights should be directed at attitudinal change relative to some of these practices.

This paper further recommends that officers of state agencies and NGOs should go from house to house to educate parents. This is because education in a large group does not produce encouraging outcomes (Caldwell, 2007). Therefore, one-on-one interactions with parents are likely to produce the right results. This would help provide parents with the opportunity to ask questions. Social workers and other professionals would also take advantage of such a unique forum to provide the necessary advice that will help them to change their attitudes.

The government and interested international donors should support child welfare NGOs with adequate resources to carry out comprehensive child labour research to be able to design and execute appropriate intervention programmes. Many NGOs in the child welfare field are engaged in advocacy work without spending time on programmes of cultural change, sensitisation and awareness creation regarding practices such as child labour. The need for education relative to the cultural change of the people also comes to the fore regarding law enforcement in some communities.

Additionally, I recommend in this paper that the Labour Department, Social Welfare Department and NGOs involved with children's rights should be resourced to embark on sensitisation and awareness creation nationwide on the part of employers. Most of the employers of children involved in WFCL are known people with farms and canoes within the communities so there is a need to ensure that government agencies target them through their educational programmes. Furthermore, this paper recommends an incentive package for Districts in the country that would be able to reduce the incidence of WFCL to the barest minimum. Putting in place new laws and bringing policy change is not the absolute answer to WFCL because government agencies, IGOs and NGOs may back out on or disregard policies. I recommend the strict enforcement of new policies and laws. In Ghana, there is the need to regularly monitor international code to ensure that it is adhered to and expose human rights violations.

Acknowledgements

My most profound gratitude goes to Dr Nicholas Barry, Department of Politics and Philosophy, La Trobe University and Associate Professor Nicola Henry, Centre for Global Research, RMIT

University, Melbourne for their academic support and guidance throughout this research. Completing this paper would not have been possible without the help and support of these great academics.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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