

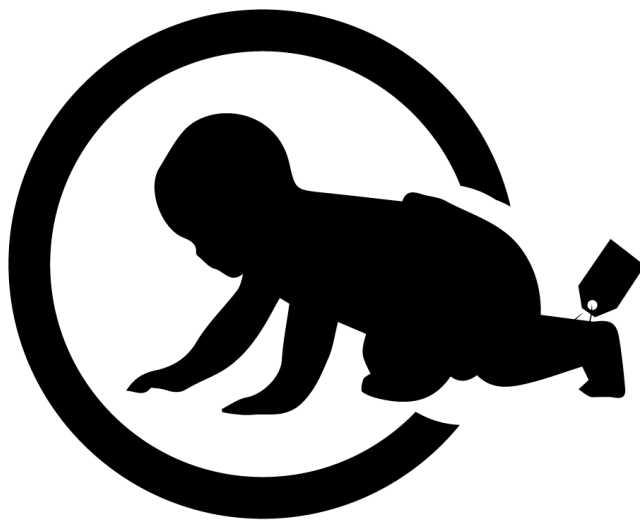
The Global Observatory of Transnational Criminal Networks

Babies Trafficking Networks in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria

No. 7

Estefanía López Guevara
Eduardo Salcedo Albarán
(Authors and Researchers)

Luis Jorge Garay Salamanca
(Scientific Director)



This research was elaborated through protocols and technologies developed by Vortex Foundation
(<http://www.scivortex.org>).



Fusion supported this research as preparation for the series "The Traffickers"
(<http://www.thetraffickers.com>).





The Global Observatory of Transnational Criminal Networks - Research Paper No. 7.
VORTEX Working Papers No. 21.

Babies Trafficking Networks in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria

© Estefanía López Guevara, 2017

© Eduardo Salcedo Albarán, 2017

Scientific Director
Luis Jorge Garay

Text, audio and video included in this publication are protected by copyright laws.
Reproduction is permitted if the author and the editor are referenced and quoted.

Opinions and ideas expressed by the authors do not compromise or reflect the opinions of
Fusion Media Group or Vortex Foundation.

© Vortex Foundation, 2017. Copyright.

First edition, 2017.

Electronic Edition, Bogotá, Colombia

Disclaimer

The facts and the analysis presented herein are sustained in documents and interviews exposed in mass media and judicial records related to the criminal networks analyzed. No primary information uncovering facts has been gathered, which means that only secondary sources were consulted, from legal to media documents. In the case of the names mentioned, quoted or referenced on indictments—with the exception of those specifically mentioned, quoted or referenced in the text as definitively condemned—the presumption of innocence, in observance of individual rights is always preserved.

The judicial truth is the jurisdiction of the courts, which by law will decide whether the defendants are innocent or guilty. It is stated that belonging to, participating in, being connected to, or appearing on a network, as analyzed herein, does not imply having committed a criminal act or being engaged in a criminal enterprise. It is always possible to belong, participate, be connected, or appear on a network as an agent promoting interests that are socially and institutionally beneficial, or as a result of coercion, among other reasons unrelated to criminal acts committed by the agent.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	7
2. Methodology and basic concepts	8
Social Network Analysis.....	8
The Graph	9
Indicators of Direct Centrality and Betweenness	10
3. Child Trafficking in the DRC and Nigeria.....	11
Child trafficking roots	11
Commodification of Illicitly	13
Usual types of actors involved	13
4. The cases	14
The Criminal Network and the Sources	14
5. Characteristics of The Network	16
Nodes/Agents	16
Interactions.....	17
The structural bridge: "Betweenness" indicator and the capacity to intervene	25
"The Hub": Direct centrality indicator and the concentration of direct interactions	25
6. Conclusions	26
References	27
About the Authors.	27

Introduction

In Africa, one of the first records of child trafficking dates back to 1980s following the economic adversity caused by the structural adjustment program imposed by the Nigerian government (Kwagyang and Mahmood, 2015). The change led to broken families, poverty, diseases, mass unemployment, corruption, retrenchment of workers and high living costs, which ultimately caused the mass exodus of Nigerian citizens toward countries where they could survive. Various situations of massive human displacement have happened due to the economic crisis, armed conflicts, political instability and the unconcerned attitude of African governments towards the problems of their citizens, especially in countries such as Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Nigeria. As a result of these social problems, human trafficking and child trafficking continue spreading across various African countries.

In Nigeria, for instance, wealthy men who made their fortunes through illegal businesses began massive recruitment of young boys and girls to send them abroad for prostitution and other forms of exploitation. Parents or guardians of recruited or trafficked boys and girls are usually deceived into the situation through fake job opportunities abroad. As a result, they hand over their sons and daughters to human traffickers, believing that the hard conditions at home would be solved: *“Traffickers who perceived the desperation of parents cajole them to sale off family property such as lands, houses to finance their daughter’s trip overseas. The situation looks attractive, especially where people who embark on such trips become rich and come home, owning expensive cars or lands. Hence most people fall prey not knowing the true nature of their working conditions”* (Kwagyang and Mahmood, 2015).

This document is the Social Network Analysis of criminal structures involved in the market of child trafficking across various African countries. The document consists of six parts. The first is the present introduction. The second part is a description of the methodology applied for modeling the criminal structures. The third part includes an explanation of the child trafficking market and the main actors involved. The fourth part is a description of the sources and cases that were modeled and analyzed. The fifth part is a description of the criminal network’s characteristics. The sixth part includes conclusions and final discussions.

1. Methodology and basic concepts

Social Network Analysis

Social Network Analysis (SNA) is useful for understanding interactions among individuals or social groups. In this paper SNA was used to illustrate how social agents, referred herein as nodes/agents, interacted over a period of time to accomplish criminal objectives related to trafficking.

The social agents participating in this network were classified through categories generated according to the analyzed information. When possible, the interactions established by those social agents were classified under three main categories or dimensions: (i) *Economic interactions*, which groups subcategories related to physical movement of money and financial transactions, (ii) *political interactions*, which groups interactions related *with* and *among* political leaders, candidates and some officials, and (iii) *violent and coercive interactions*. Although interactions can be usually classified under any of these categories, in some cases additional categories must be formulated. Therefore, SNA allows illustrating and analyzing interactions established by various types of social agents, rather than just showing traditional hierarchies. As discussed in the following sections, no political interactions were identified in the present model, which could mean that no political leaders are involved in the structure or that judicial investigations do not pay attention to political dimensions of the criminal structure.

Through algorithms, SNA allows identifying the relevant social agents intervening in the network, as well as the sub-networks, the emerging structures, the types of social agents and the types of interactions. In this analysis, the “relevant” social agents are (i) the “*hub*” of the network, in which direct interactions are concentrated, and (ii) *the structural bridge*, which is the social agent with the highest capacity to arbitrate resources across the flows and indirect paths of the network. Due to the possibilities of analysis and visualization, SNA has been used to analyze the structure and characteristics of illicit networks (Morselli, 2008; Johnson, Reitzel, Norwood, McCoy, Cummings, & Tate, 2013; Radil, Flint, & Tita, 2010).

The Graph

The criminal situation analyzed in this paper requires interactions of collaboration or confrontation that can be analyzed as a social networks: “*Social networks can be defined as ‘a group of collaborating (and/or competing) entities that are related to each other’*” (den Bossche & Segers, 2013, p. 39). Social networks are analyzed through *nodes* that represent individuals and *lines* or *arcs* that represent the interactions or ties. Therefore, “*(...) a network is defined as a set of nodes connected by ties*” (Worrell, Wasko, & Johnstn, 2013, p. 128).

The case analyzed herein was modeled through a technology developed by Vortex Foundation, which consisted of protocols for processing, categorizing and analyzing information, to generate a database of nodes/agents and interactions. This database allows subsequently analyzing information and characteristics related to specific nodes/agents or interactions.

The first protocol for analyzing the sources of information consists of identifying “relationships” or “interactions” between two nodes/agents, according to the following syntactic structure:

[[Name Actor 1[Description Actor 1]][interaction[verb word \wedge action word]] [[Name Actor 2[Description Actor 2]]]

Through specific protocols, each section of this syntactic structure is processed in the Vortex platform to consolidate the mentioned database. The database is then analyzed through additional protocols to generate SNA graphs like the ones presented in the following sections, and to calculate and identify the indicators of centrality that characterize each node/agent.

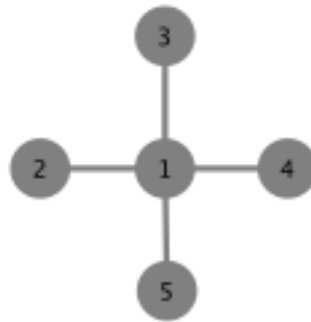
In the present analysis, each node represents a social agent; therefore, the concept of “node/agent” is used to identify each individual or group of individuals participating in the network. As previously stated, each line connecting two nodes represents a social interaction (Garay Salamanca, Salcedo-Albarán et al., 2010). Also, the arrow in the line represents the specific direction of each interaction: “*For instance, if the node/agent X interacts with/to node/agent Z, then there is an arrow from a node representing X to a node representing Z.*” (Salcedo-Albarán, Goga, & Goredema, 2014).

Indicators of Direct Centrality and Betweenness

It is important to differentiate two meanings of centrality according to the two types of social agents mentioned above: (i) The most connected node/agent and (ii) the node/agent with the highest capacity to intervene in the geodesic routes of the network.

On one hand, the direct centrality indicator allows identifying the amount of direct interactions established by each node/agent. For instance, in the figure 0, the node/agent 1 has 4 direct interactions, while nodes 2, 3, 4 and 5 only have one direct interaction with the node 1. Since there are 8 bidirectional interactions, the node/agent 1 concentrates 50% (4) out of the total direct interactions, while each of the nodes/agents 2, 3, 4 and 5 concentrate 12,5%. In this situation, the node/agent 1 is the hub of graph 1 since it registers the highest direct centrality indicator.

Figure 0. Example of a graph with 5 interacting nodes/agents and 8 bidirectional interactions.



The second meaning of “centrality” allows identifying the node/agent with the highest capacity to arbitrate or intervene across the geodesic routes of the network, known as “the structural bridge”. While in graph 0 there are only 4 direct interactions (or 8 bidirectional interactions), there is a higher amount of geodesic routes, which are the indirect paths connecting all the nodes/agents. For instance, there is a geodesic route connecting the nodes 2 and 3 through the node 1, there is another geodesic route connecting nodes 2 and 4 also through node 1, etc. Those geodesic routes represent the paths of resources flowing across the network.

After calculating the total amount of geodesic routes connecting the nodes/agents of the network it is possible to identify the node/agent with the highest capacity to intervene in those geodesic routes through the betweenness indicator. As it can be observed in

graph 1, the node 1 intervenes in every indirect route of the network because there is not a single path that doesn't go through the node/agent 1; therefore, node/agent 1 registers a betweenness indicator of 100%.

2. Child Trafficking in the DRC and Nigeria

Child trafficking roots

Traffickers usually operate in proxy rather than negotiating directly with their victims. Consequently, smugglers are deployed to villages to recruit victims, convincing parents and relatives through adverts and persuasion, and sometimes through kidnapping. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that adopted children are sometimes demanded by nationals of African countries. For instance, in countries such as Nigeria where citizens lack social security provision for elderly and unemployed population, child adoption serves as an “insurance policy” since the adopted children “*will hopefully take care of their parents*” (Omeire, 2015). In fact, in Igbo land, southeastern Nigeria, traditional land titles are the exclusive right of well-heeled men who have children. Therefore, affluent men trying to have those titles but without a biological son are willing to adopt a child to accede to the title (Nwaoga, 2013).

A child can be “adopted” through direct purchase, a trend known as “*Usines à bébés*” or “Baby factories”, which has emerged in the African continent¹. In this case, unmarried pregnant teenagers are confined in a particular place until they give birth.”²

Baby factories involve three essential nodes/agents: “*First, the factory owners who provide location and logistics, they are responsible for the maintenance of the girls for the pendency of the transaction. Second, the girls who serve as “breeders” of the babies who are then sold (...). And third, the buyers who help to sustain the business through their patronage. In some of the factories, there could be a fourth actor, a man who*

¹ “Women faking pregnancies prefer to purchase babies from baby factories and claim such as their biological babies rather than formally adopting children from orphanages. The reasons for this fraudulent practice are to create the impression that the woman is capable of becoming pregnant, and that she is not barren after all. The second reason is to secure for the new baby cultural acceptability, and remove from the child the stigma associated with adopted children” (Omeire, 2015).

² “[...] the teenage mothers are paid token [away] amounts and discharged while their babies are taken away from them and sold at exorbitant prices by the proprietor(s) who engaged them. The phenomenon is now referred to as “baby factory” business and has become a social menace [...]. It is also proliferating at an alarming rate” (Mba, 2014).

functions as a géniteur³, a sex machine with the mandate to regularly “service” the “breeders” until they produce the babies they cannot cuddle, cherish, nurture, possess and treasure” (Omeire, 2015).

Typically, some of the places used for this illegal business are registered as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), although these establishments are used as subterfuges for perpetrating illicit business. The aforementioned ‘NGOs’ and ‘FBOs’ sell babies for minimum USD \$ 2,500, depending on the gender of the baby, with males usually having a higher price (Kupoliyi, 2014).

Enforcement and legal instruments proposed to tackle children trafficking do not address the socio-economic causes of the problem: “Since child trafficking is perceived as an act of violence, most responses focus predominantly on prosecuting traffickers and protecting trafficked children, neglecting the root causes of child trafficking” (Kwagyang and Mahmood, 2015).⁴

During the last decade, human trafficking in Africa has changed into a more advanced and complex trafficking strategy, known as “baby harvesting”. According to Kwagyang and Mahmood (2015), “sale or buy” are generic words that cannot cover a complex phenomenon such as “baby harvesting”, which is currently more complicated than a simple transaction: “Young women are deceived by traffickers to the so called usine à bébés or baby factory with empty assurances for job, while those who got pregnant through extra marital means come voluntarily to the factory for either safe abortions or delivery. Likewise, young girls who either because of their state of poverty or vulnerability, submit themselves to the factory voluntarily, are later impregnated by men

³ Géniteur: genitor, progenitor, begetter.

⁴ Specifically, two types of factors have been proposed as facilitating child trafficking: (i) push factors, when people leave their region seeking a better life, and (ii) pull factors, which are those circumstances that encourage people to leave their home country. Both factors include but are not restricted to poverty, unemployment, broken homes, family size, weak legal framework and restrictive immigration policies: “(i) Poverty is the central point in charge of child trafficking in Africa, the economic situation is such that most parents subject their kids to different types of work, including trafficking for monetary increases. (ii) Illiteracy is susceptible to increase individual vulnerability to child trafficking as it makes one not to benefit from any practical step taken to address the menace. (iii) Lack of employment forced individuals to seek after unreliable work in different spots. (iv) The level of corruption makes it feasible for deceitful persons to utilize official channels to get counterfeit travel documents for newborns or harvested children (v) The available market for customers of a trade in humans for sexual purposes: traffickers are kept in the business of child trafficking because there is high demand for it, and demand in supply of every product is associated with profit. (vi) The divorce of the child’s parents and the broken home environment are factors influencing child trafficking. (vii) High profits arising from human trafficking, especially trafficking of children and women also pulls them into it. (viii) [...] Another pull factor is the low risk that is involved in the process, especially when compared with other cross-border crimes which contain high level of risk.” (Kwagyang and Mahmood, 2015).

who are specially employed for that purpose. The newly born babies are then either sold out to public or sometimes disappeared through mysterious means or even dash out to childless couples or religion orphanages” (Olaide, 2006).

Commodification of Illicitly

In African societies with capitalist settlements, commodification and commercialization happen in every sphere (Polanyi, 1977). Commodification, which refers to the process of treating something as a mere object of trade, is a dominant trend especially in southeastern countries where people tend to do business with almost everything, as far as it guarantees incomes: “In this context, both licit and illicit business are explored in an attempt to ensure material accumulation. It is in this circumstance that untoward ventures such as human trafficking, kidnapping, and child harvesting readily become ‘a business’” (Okoli, 2014).

Like any other market, buying or selling babies is largely driven by the logic of demand and supply (Albers, 1999). However, in this particular case, some elements generate special economic interest and demand for children, such as those mentioned in the first section, as well as desperation for sentimental purposes, and the trend of childless couples (Albers, 1999).

Usual types of actors involved

Babies harvesting has become a thriving enterprise in which various actors participate with differentiated roles, as explained by Okoli (2014):

The proprietor of the usine à b  b  s or ‘baby factory’ whose role is to harbor and nurture unmarried pregnant young women with the objective of “producing” babies.

The broker or middleman appointed by the proprietor of a ‘baby factory’, enlists single pregnant young women for his representative, the proprietor. This actor is also in charge of searching possible baby buyers to patronize their venture. For his role, the middleman gets a monetary prize as a commission for every successful “business”.

The pregnant girl, who is unmarried and frequently confronting dismissal and belittling from family and society. Pregnant girls are often held against their will under prison-like conditions after they have been recruited through material inducement. Some of them

are forcibly retained after the first delivery in order to continue reproducing for the proprietor. To this end, mature males are hired by the host organization to impregnate the girls for onward procreation, therefore it is important for the “proprietor” to ensure a regular supply of ‘commercial babies’ to satisfy the rising demand in the black market (Okoli, 2014).

The buyer who is ready to acquire a baby. This transaction typically bears out core elements of market exchange. The financial capability influences the price, though in the cases analyzed by Okoli (2014) the price of girls oscillated between N250,000 and N400,000⁵ while boys were sold for prices between N500,000 and N1million, depending on the financial strength and bargaining power of the buyer (Street Journal, 2012).

1. The cases

The Criminal Network and the Sources

Given the institutional obstacles for accessing public judicial records and proceedings related to child trafficking cases across the Western and Central African region, the present model is based on qualitative data extracted from African, American and European media. As discussed below, various cases were consulted and modeled into elaborate a single complex model.

According to the French Newspaper Le Monde, three individuals who were in charge of the *usine à bébés* in Enugu, Nigeria, were arrested in 2013, in the baby factory. According to the consulted media sources, the individuals cooperated with the police but there are not judicial proceedings. However, circumstances regarding the case of the Belgian Laurence Sénéchal expose different characteristics. She was sentenced on appeal to six months in prison and to pay a fine of 300,000 Congolese francs (about 325 euros) for attempting child abduction, while the prosecutor demanded five years in jail. In the same case, two officers of the Directorate of Migration were sentenced to three months of imprisonment for complicity (KongoTimes, 2014).

Various media sources informed about the case of the Burkinabe Safia Coulibaly, Director of the equipment of the National Assembly, who was arrested by Interpol in

⁵ Between \$1.255,97 and \$2.009,54 USD

possession of two babies, one who was five days and the other nine days old. Coulibaly was detained in a prison in Cotonou, the largest city and economic center of Benin. Although the case is still on trial, the Burkinabe authorities negotiated her extradition to Burkina (NetAfrique.Net, 2014). On another case, Samuel Jessy, an American citizen living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was involved in a child trafficking network. Jessy worked with Gauthier Mukoko, a Congolese living in the United States. According to the General Directorate of Migration (DGM) of the DRC, the children were entrusted to Ntshuvi Dodi and his niece Muembo Chatty who made false parental authorizations to facilitate the travel of those children to Lubumbashi (RadioOkapi,2014).

Regarding Nigeria, the police intervened facilities of the Cross Foundation located in Abia, southeastern of the country, identifying 32 young pregnant women who were compelled by the owner of this foundation to give birth (RFI, 2011). Judicial investigators have pointed out that Happiness Ogundeji, a Burkinabe businesswoman residing in Benin, could be one of the masterminds of the babies trafficking in Nigeria. She managed one *usine à bébés* in Ilutitun, Ondo State, where she was arrested, although she denied being part of the criminal network.

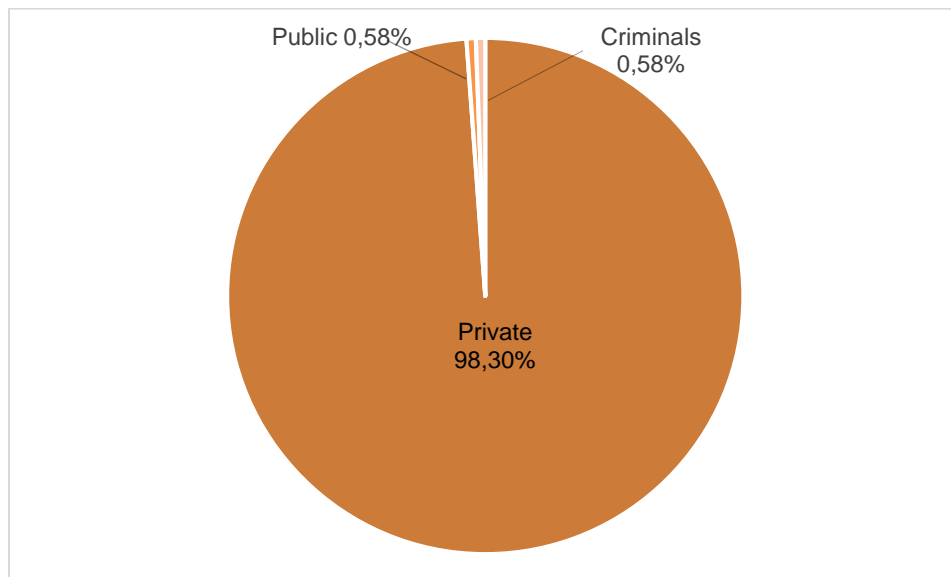
Authorities also found another *usine à bébés* in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. The factory was set up by a couple who clandestinely recruited young girls and sold their newborns to childless households (Diasporaenligne, 2013). The police still seek the owners of the baby factories, including a woman known as “Madam One Thousand” who sold babies through an “*orphelinat-écran*” (false orphanage) called “Ahamefula Motherless Babies Home”, in Umuaka, in the district of Njaba. Also, in 2008, police raids revealed another network of “baby factories” and according to the local director of the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons, NAPTIP, Ijeoma Okoronkwo, many of these cases are currently under prosecution in Nigerian courts. Nevertheless, the prosecution rate of offenders is low. In fact, in the analyzed African countries, prosecutors brought only a fraction of child-trafficking cases to courts, which resulted in a low amount of convictions (Unesco 2006).

2. Characteristics of The Network

Nodes/Agents

After processing media sources, a total of 171 nodes/agents were identified. The customers and women who sell their children were not identified in detail since there is only information about their ages and backgrounds. The nodes/agents were mainly categorized as private (98,30%), public (0,58%) and criminals (0,58%), revealing a highly interesting participation of non traditional “criminals”.

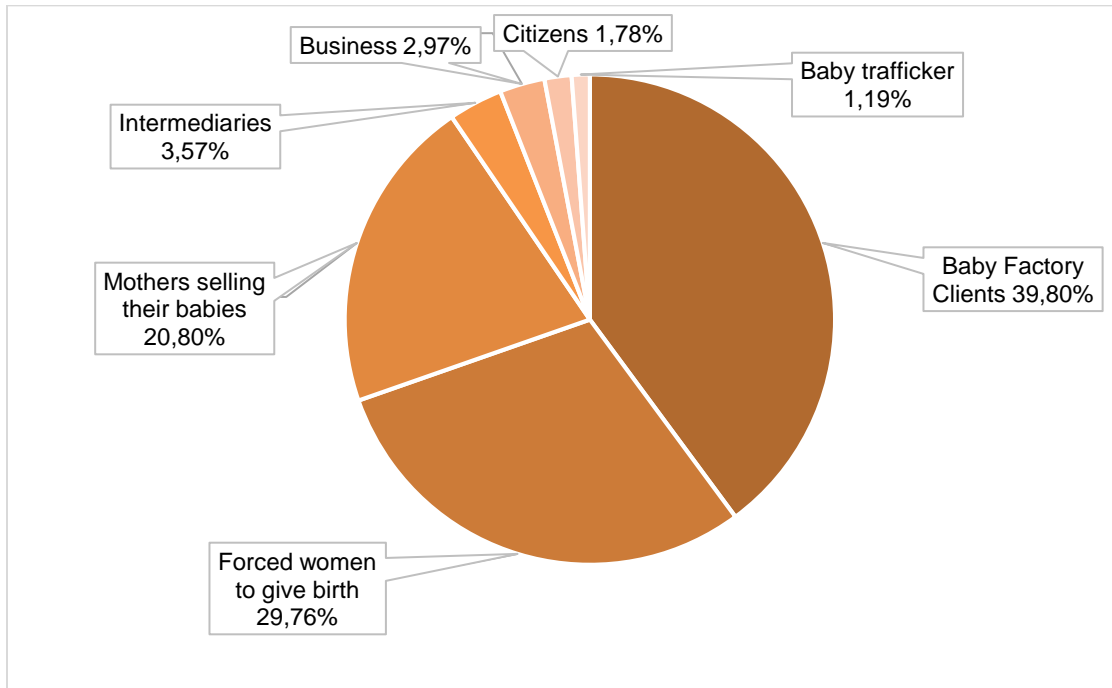
Figure 1. Nodes/Agents of the Child Trafficking Network.



The most relevant type of nodes/agents identified in this case groups the members of the private sector: the category “Private” constitutes 98,30% out of the total amount of nodes/agents. Most of the individuals grouped under this category are baby factory clients, kidnapped and deceived women forced to give birth in the *usines à b  b  s* and women selling their babies. In fact, 50 kidnapped and deceived women forced to give birth and hand out their babies are the main victims of the criminal network. Maternities, clinics, NGOs and FBOs operating as front organizations, their owners, middlemen and citizens from different countries are also part of the private nodes/agents participating in the network. In fact, 66 baby factory clients and 35 women commodifying their babies

are the main participants of the traffic, which illustrates the gray nature of the criminal structures.

Figure 2. Private Category



Other types of nodes/agents group the members of the “public” and “criminal” sector: both categories constitute 1,16% out of the total amount of nodes/agents. The members grouped under these categories, “Public” and “Criminals”, are embassies (1% out of the total amount of nodes/agents) and criminals (1% out of the total amount of nodes/agents), respectively.

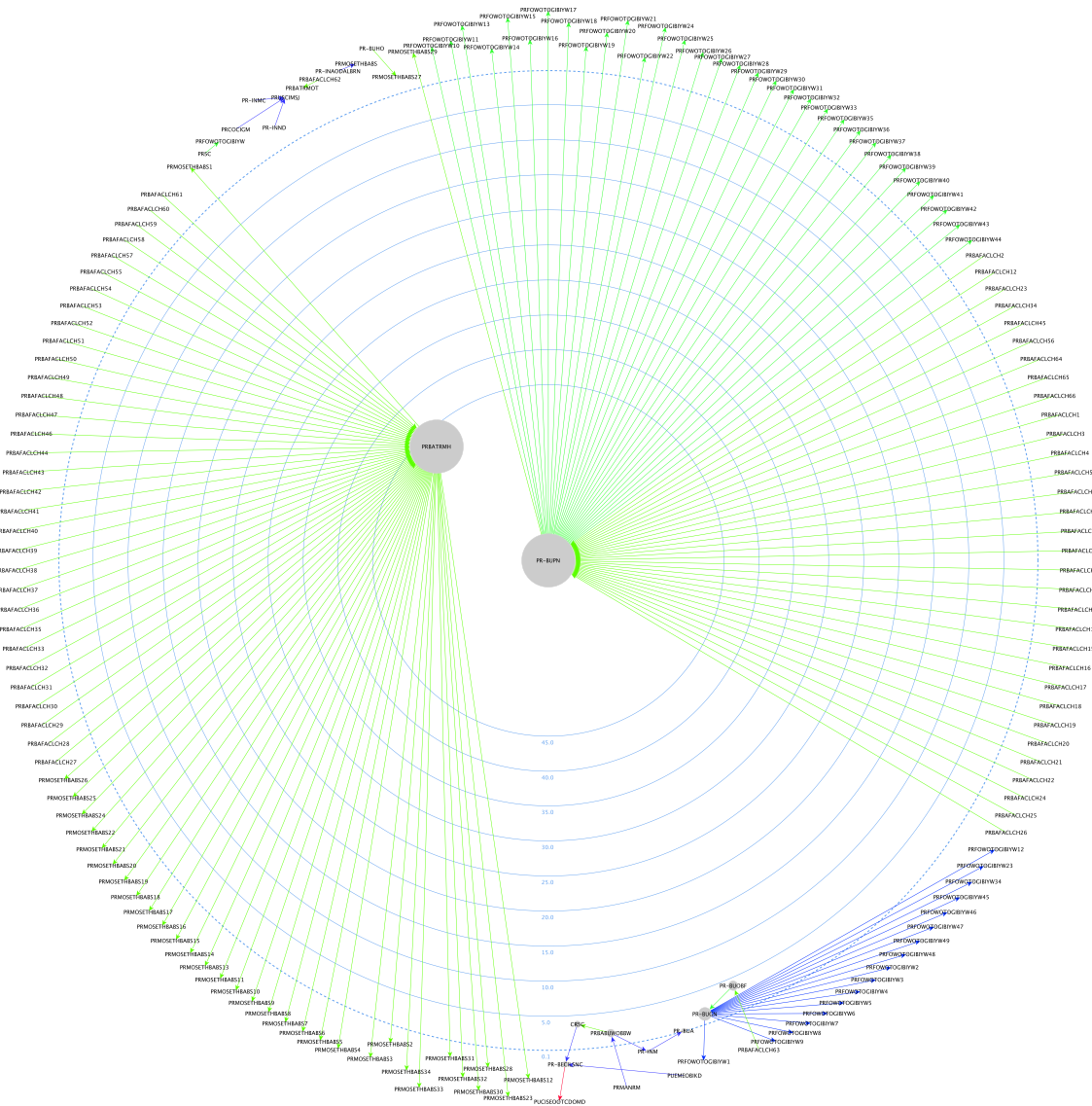
Interactions

A total of 165 interactions distributed under the following 2 categories were modeled: Economic (83,63%) and logistics (16,36%). The category consisting of “Economic interactions” registered 138 relationships in which some of the main participating nodes/agents are childless households and women forced to give birth. For instance, the subcategory “Purchasing babies” registered 101 interactions, with 32 of those interactions being established between childless couples identified with codes from PRBAFACLCH2 to PRBAFACLCH26, and a presumed NGO located in Abia, southeastern Nigeria, identified with the code PR-BUPN.

The interactions grouped under the “Economic” category illustrate a low level of sophistication in the types of trades, which is also reflected in the fact that the vast majority of interactions are concentrated in two nodes/agents: PR-BUPN, a presumed NGO, and PRBATRMH, a maternity hospital. Therefore, there is not substantial evidence of a criminal structure with complex economic interactions since the economic exchanges basically occur among five agents: (i) the trafficker, (ii) the go-between, (iii) the women commodifying their babies, (iv) the *géniteur* and (v) the clients.

In general, children trafficking through baby harvesting and children laundering seems to be in charge of small-scale criminals: “*The recruitment and trafficking of children and adults is dominated by people who do not belong to a large organized crime syndicate (such as the Mafia), but to a smaller network with a few representatives in different countries. They have spotted opportunities to make easy money by taking children and adults from the places where they exist in ready supply to places where there is a demand for them*” (Dottridge, 2004). On the other hand, there are 35 interactions that represent how abductions and scams are the operative bases for harvesting and laundering babies.

Figure 3. Size and location of the nodes represent the indicator of betweenness (percentage of intervention in the geodesic routes). Orange lines represent logistic interactions. Green lines represent economic interactions. Red lines represent “bribing” interactions.



The following are the specific and detailed interactions categorized as “Economic”:

Table 1. Economic Interactions

Purchasing babies	101
Compelling to give birth	32
Bribing	2
Taking children illegally	1

Figure 4. Economic Sub-Categories

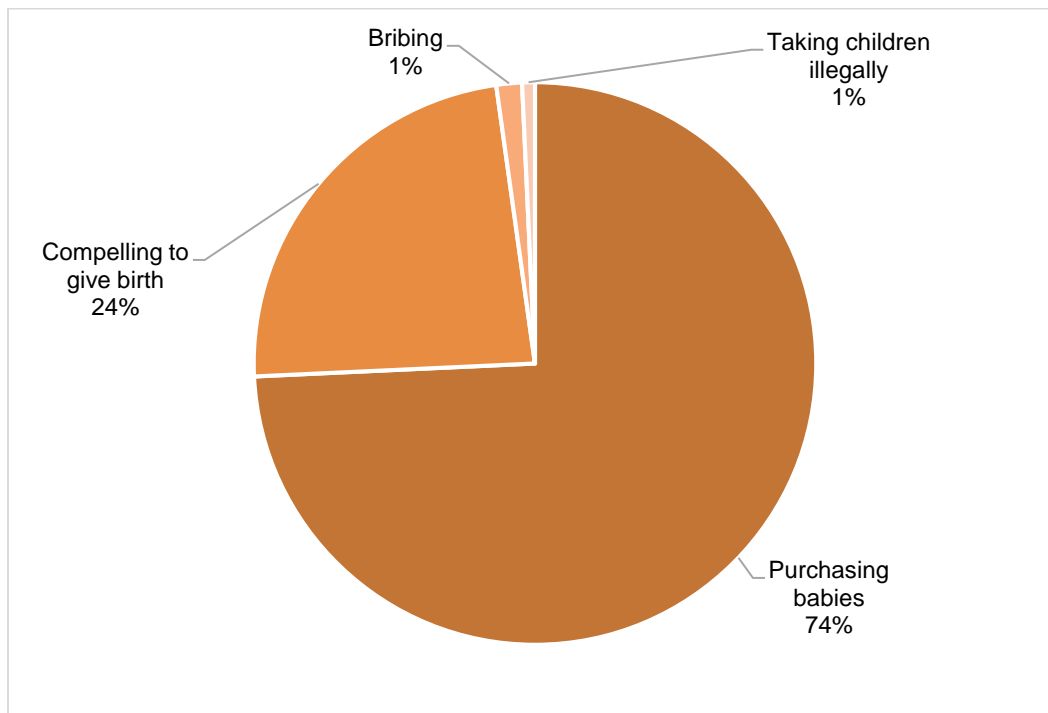
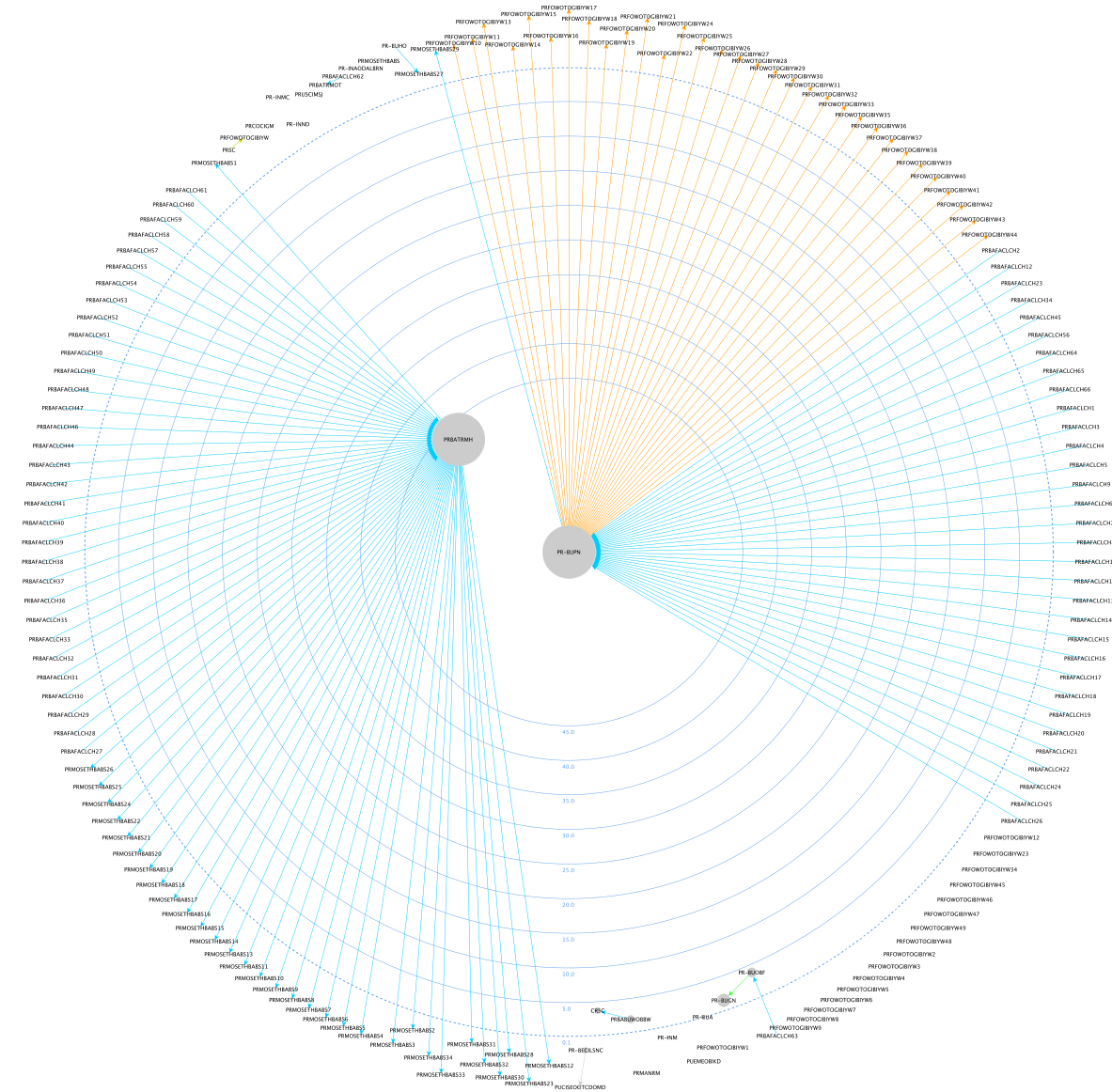


Figure 5. Size and location of the nodes represent the indicator of betweenness (percentage of intervention in the geodesic routes). Same colors of the graph above.



The subcategory “Compelling to give birth” registered 32 interactions established between 32 young women (from PRFOWOTOGIBIW10 to PRFOWOTOGIBIW44) and PR-BUPN, a presumed NGO located in Abia, southeastern Nigeria. The NGO purchased their newborns for derisory prices (130 euros for each newborn) while the children were resold for about 4,500 euros (RFI, 2011). Additionally, interactions classified under the sub-categories “Bribing” and “Taking children illegally” illustrate the basic and non-sophisticated operation of the analyzed criminal structures that mainly use bribery to get false documentation for completing the economic transactions.

The category consisting of “Logistic interactions” registered 27 relationships in which some of the main participating nodes/agents are various young women and PR-BUGN, *the géniteur*, who is the young man with the role of impregnating the women at the *usines à bébés*. For instance, the subcategory “Getting pregnant” registered 17 interactions that were established between 17 women and PR-BUGN, *the géniteur*.

The interactions classified under the sub-categories “Arranging fake documents”, “Mediating between” and “Getting in touch with” also expose the procedures that allow completing “traditional adoptions” in which it is required to illegally take children outside the countries. For instance, PUEMEObIKD, an embassy located in DR Congo, delivered an emergency travel document to PR-BECILSNC, a Belgian citizen, to help him taking out of the DRC a five years old girl.

The following are the specific and detailed interactions categorized as “Logistics”:

Table 2. Logistic Interactions

Getting pregnant	17
Arranging fake documents	4
Mediating between	2
Getting in touch with	2
Transporting babies	1
Fixing meetings	1

Figure 6. Logistic Sub-Categories

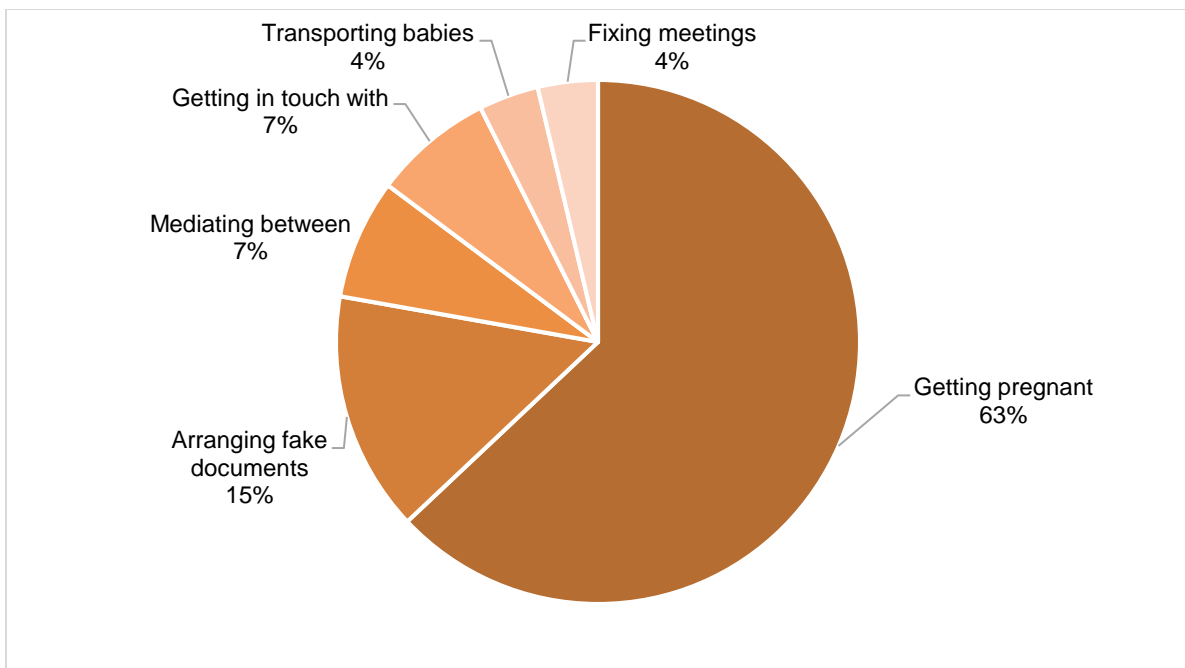
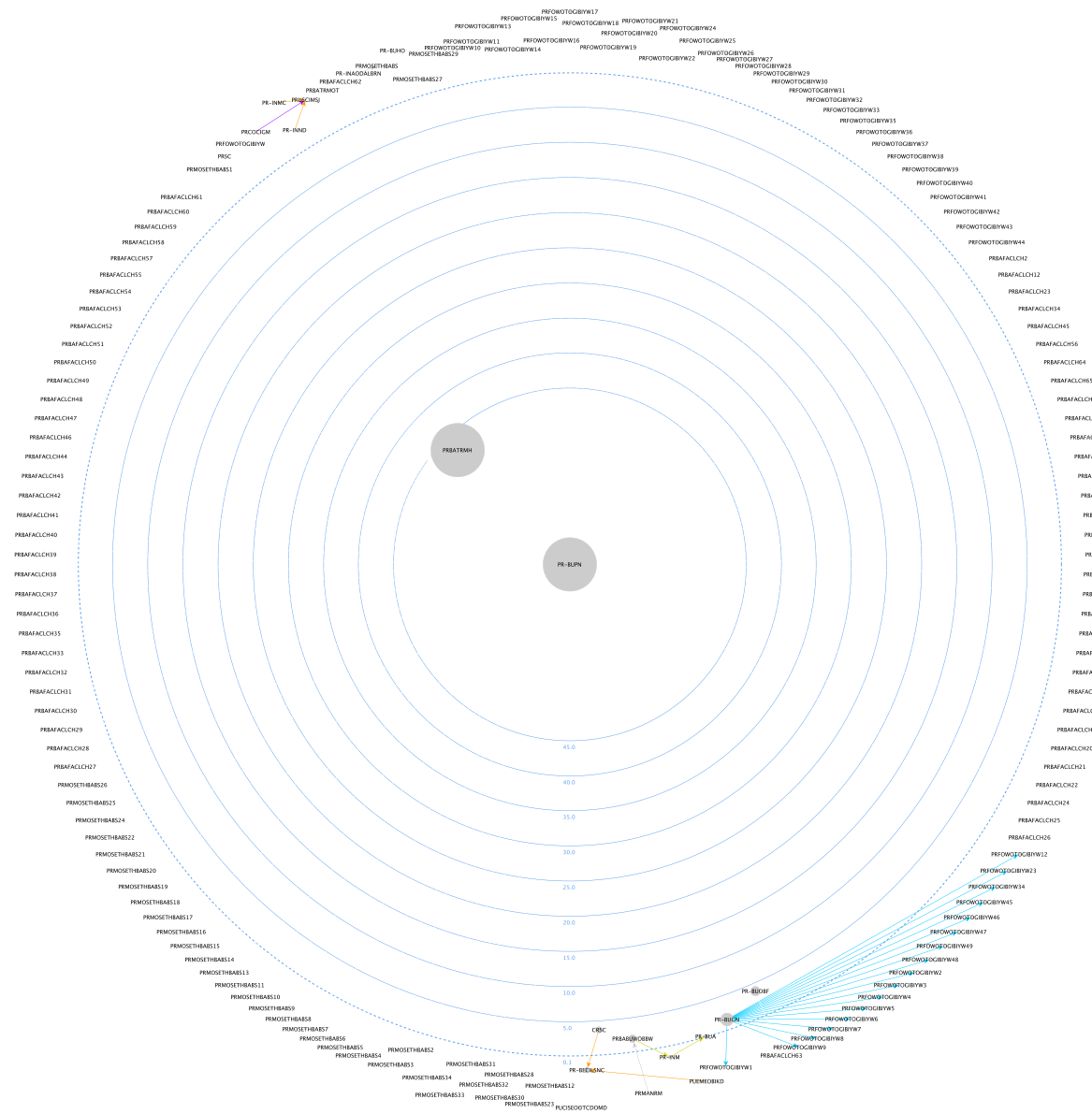


Figure 7. Logistic Sub-Categories. Size and location of the nodes represent betweenness indicator (percentage of intervention in the geodesic routes). Lines of colors as in the figure above: (i) "Getting in touch represented with yellow lines, (ii) "Getting Pregnant" represented with blue lines, (iii) "Arranging" represented with orange lines, (iv) "Mediating" represented with gray lines and (v) "Transporting" represented with purple lines.



The structural bridge: “Betweenness” indicator and the capacity to intervene

The node/agent with the highest “betweenness” indicator is PR-BUPN (48,8%), which corresponds to the Cross Foundation, categorized as an NGO that apparently helps teenagers dealing with unwanted pregnancy. His owner, Hyacinth Ndudim Orikara, was arrested in 2011 by the Nigerian police, which had a file proving his crimes. Nevertheless, Hyacinth Ndudim Orikara was released and authorities did not pursue a judicial process (TF1, 2013). The second node/agent with the highest “betweenness” indicator (47,3%) is PRBATRMH, categorized as a maternity hospital in the city of Umuzuo, state of Abia, whose proprietress, Nnenna Mba, was arrested along with two men, Mba Agbai and Chinwoke Mba, who were also accused of aiding and abetting the illegal baby trade (Premium Times, 2013). The high level of concentration of the betweenness indicator in two main nodes/agents reveals the fact that most of the nodes/agents lack any power to intervene in the geodesic routes, in turns reflects a criminal structure with a low level of resilience since affecting two nodes/agents would modify most of the geodesic routes.

“The Hub”: Direct centrality indicator and the concentration of direct interactions

The two nodes/agents with the highest degree of “direct individual centrality” are also PR-BUPN (19,9%) and PRBATRMH (19,6%). The node/agent identified with the code BUPN represents the presumed NGO located in Abia, southeastern Nigeria, whose owner offered 32 teenage girls to purchase their unborn babies for about 130 euros, and then resold those babies for about 4,500 euros (RFI, 2011). The node/agent identified with the code PRBATRMH is the maternity hospital in the city of Umuzuo in the state of Abia as well. In general, 32 pregnant teenagers have sold their male babies for 100,000 naira (about USD \$631) and their female babies for N80,000 nairas (USD \$505) to the owner of the maternity who resold boys for N450,000 nairas (USD \$2,900) and girls for N400,000 nairas (around USD \$2,521 USD dollars) (Diasporaenligne, 2013). These 2 nodes/agents concentrate 39,5% of the total direct interactions of the network and are the basis of the baby harvesting activity of the network, which also reflects a criminal structure with a low level of resilience due to the high level of concentration.

Conclusion

Child trafficking is a serious trafficking market that affects human rights of children across various African countries. The prevalence of the *usines à bébés* in Nigeria and the DRC reflect the enduring commodification of pregnancies and babies in the black market. Therefore, it is critical to understand the structures involved in this specific criminal market. However, due to the low amount of convictions and institutional obstacles for accessing public judicial records related to child trafficking cases across the Western and Central African region (Unesco 2006), the criminal networks discussed in this document was modeled through media information. The information presented in this document is, therefore, a first attempt to understand the actual structure and operation of the African criminal networks involved in harvesting, trafficking, and laundering of children.

The resulting model, which consisted of 171 nodes/agents and 165 interactions, illustrates the domestic trait of the child trafficking, revealing a low level of sophistication in the trade. In general, the children trafficking through baby harvesting and children laundering seems to be in charge of small-scale criminals. In fact, the high level of concentrations identified in the network also revealed a low level of resilience and operative sophistication. The vast majority of interactions are concentrated in two nodes/agents: PR-BUPN, a presumed NGO, and PRBATRMH, a maternity hospital. Therefore, there is not substantial evidence of a criminal structure with complex economic interactions since the economic exchanges mostly occur among five agents: (i) the trafficker, (ii) the go-between, (iii) the women commodifying their babies, (iv) the *géniteur* and (v) the clients.

The most relevant type of nodes/agents identified in the network groups the members of the private sector, which constitutes 98,30% out of the total amount of nodes/agents. Most of the individuals grouped under this category are baby factory clients, kidnapped and deceived women forced to give birth in the *usines à bébés* and women selling their babies.

The Economic interactions represent the most relevant type of interaction, which includes the illegal purchasing of babies, the payments for harvesting newborns and the kidnap of women compelling to give birth. Two nodes/agents classified under the

category Economic concentrate the vast majority of direct interactions: PR-BUPN, the presumed NGO mentioned above, and PRBATRMH, a maternity hospital.

The node/agent with the highest “betweenness” indicator is PR-BUPN (48,8%), the NGO that apparently helps teenagers dealing with unwanted pregnancy. The second node/agent with the highest “betweenness” indicator (47,3%) is also PRBATRMH, a maternity hospital in the city of Umuzuo, state of Abia. The high level of concentration of the betweenness indicator in two main nodes/agents reveals that most of the nodes/agents lack any power to intervene in the geodesic routes, which reveals a criminal structure with a low level of resilience in which affecting two nodes/agents would affect most of the geodesic routes.

Although there are efforts to put child trafficking to an end, it is still required that governments enact suitable legislation with harsh punishments to deter people from operating baby factories.

References

Albers, C. (Ed.) (1999). *Sociology of Families: Readings*. US: Pine Forge Press 1999.

Diasporaenligne.net. AFRIQUE: Trafic d'êtres Humains: Vente des bébés au Nigeria : une pratique menée à l'échelle industrielle, 2013. Available in: <http://diasporaenligne.net/afrique-traffic-detres-humains-vente-des-bebes-au-nigeria-une-pratique-menee-a-l-echelle-industrielle/>

Dottridge, Mike (2004). *Kids as Commodities? Child trafficking and what to do about it*. International Federation Terre des Hommes, Terre des Hommes Foundation, Lausanne, Switzerland and Terre des Hommes Germany, May 2004.

Garay-Salamanca, Luis Jorge, Salcedo Albarán, Eduardo et al. (2010). *Illicit Networks Reconfiguring States*. Metodo. Bogotá.

Kungu, Kléber (2014). KongoTimes! Trafic des enfants en RDC : Quand la Belgique fait honte..., May 12th 2014. Available in: <http://afrique.kongotimes.info/rdc/justice/7501-traffic-enfants-quand-belgique-honte-accusee-tentative-enlevement-enfant-rdc-belge-laurence-senechal-condamnee-six-mois-ferme.html>

Kupoluyi, A (2014) Ending Baby Factory Menace. *The Nation*, Newspaper, April 15, 2014.

Kwagyang G. Umaru, Mahmood, Nik Ahmad Kamal Nik (2015). An appraisal of the new trend of child trafficking in Nigeria: A need for an effective law. *International Journal of Law* Volume 1; Issue 1; November 2015; Page No. 45-53.

Mba, F. (2013) How Teenagers, Desperate Couples Fuel Baby Factories. *Sunday Vanguard Newspaper*, December 1, 2013.

NetAfrique.Net.Trafic de bébés : une Burkinabé arrêtée à Cotonou, July 21st 2014. Available in: <http://netafrique.net/trafic-de-bebes-une-burkinabe-arretee-a-cotonou/>

Nwaoga, C (2013) Socio-Religious Implications of Child Adoption in Igboland, South Eastern Nigeria *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*.Vol. 4 No 13. November 2013.

Okoli, Al Chukwuma (2014). Commercialism and Commodification of Illicity: A Political Economy of Baby Buying/Selling in South East of Nigeria. *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science* Vol. 2 No. 2 March, 2014.

Olaide A. Gbadamosi (2006) International perspective and Nigeria laws on Human Trafficking (Benin City: Edo State. All nation press, 2006, 10.

Omeire, Charles Obioma (2015). The challenges of child adoption and the emergence of baby factory in South Eastern Nigeria. *International Journal of Education and Research* Vol. 3 No. 8 August 2015.

Polanyi, K. (1977). *The Livelihood of Man*. New York: Academic Press 1977.

Premium Times (2013) Civil Defense smashes 'illegal maternity' in Abia, rescues 32 pregnant teenagers. April 2013. Available in: <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/128142-civil-defence-smashes-illegal-maternity-in-abia-rescues-32-pregnant-teenagers.html>

Radio Okapi. Trafic d'enfants : la DGM démantèle un réseau dirigé par un citoyen américain, Septembre 14th 2014. Available in: <http://www.radiookapi.net/actualite/2014/09/14/trafic-denfants-la-dgm-demantele-un-reseau-dirige-par-un-citoyen-americain>

Soares, Ursula. RFI. Trafic de bébés destinés à la vente découvert au Nigeria, January 2nd 2011. Available in: <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20110602-trafic-bebes-destines-vente-decouvert-nigeria>

TF1 (2013) Nigéria: seize femmes enceintes libérées d'une "usine à bébés". June 2013. Available in : <http://lci.tf1.fr/monde/afrique/nigeria-seize-femmes-enceintes-liberees-d-une-usine-a-bebes-8039376.html>

The Street Journal (2014). Exposed: Nigeria's Factories Where Babies Are Made For Sale!. Available in: <http://thestreetjournal.org/2012/04/inside-nigeria%E2%80%99s-factories-where-babies-are-made-for-sale/>

Unesco (2006). Human Trafficking in Nigeria: Root causes and recommendations. Policy paper poverty series No. 142 (E). Paris 2006.

About the Authors

Eduardo Salcedo-Albarán

Philosopher and MsC in Political Science. Founder and CEO at Vortex Foundation. Eduardo has researched in the areas of organized crime, kidnapping, corruption, drug-trafficking and State Capture. As partner, advisor or consultant, he currently researches on the structure and impact of Transnational Criminal Networks with scholars, institutes and Universities in North, Central and South America, Europe and Africa.

Estefanía López Guevara

Investigative journalist that have assisted projects at Vortex Foundation, especially modeling transnational criminal networks and researching. A former grant holder of Charles University in Prague (in Czech: Univerzita Karlova v Praze), she started her career as a qualified translator in France where she pursues a degree in Translation and Interpreting at the University of Burgundy (in French: Université de Bourgogne) in Dijon, France.