Not All Girls

Addressing Sexual and Violence-related Stigmatisations Of Former Female Child Soldiers and Children Born of War in Sahelian Crisis Mali

Matthew Anthony Gallo

Division of Human Rights Studies

Department of History

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Supervisor: Martina Koegeler-Abdi

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Abstract

Non-state armed groups in Mali have recruited female child soldiers for the past 12 years in its Central and Northern regions. Some of these now-former female child soldiers (FFCS) have given birth to children of these combatants, so-called "Children Born of War" (CBOW). Both mothers and their children may experience sexual (ex. gender-based violence) and violence-related (ex. fear) stigmas in their communities due to their associations with violent non-state armed groups. However, there exists little research on the needs and kinds of assistance FFCS and CBOW receive in Mali, especially from aid programmes by humanitarian INGOs. Considering Mali's struggle to provide basic social services to much of its general population, and the severe stigmatisation affecting FFCS' and CBOW's rights to school and work, this thesis explores whether and, if so, how humanitarian INGOs provide educational and economic aid to FFCS and CBOW in Mali. Based on the mix-methods approach, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of FFCS and CBOW mentions in humanitarian INGOs' educational and economic programmes, this thesis investigates to which degree these programmes recognise and address sexual and violence-related stigmas FFCS and CBOW experience. The results demonstrate (1) the studied INGOs do not recognise the identities of FFCS or CBOW as distinct groups and (2) programmes addressing gender-based violence and sexual stigmas neglect violence-related stigmas. These findings call for more targeted FFCS and CBOW Inclusion in INGO programming, and the augmentation of community sensitisation activities to heal the traumas experienced by FFCS, CBOW, and their communities.

Keywords: Former Female Child Soldier, Children Born of War, Humanitarian INGO, Mali, Education, Economic, Stigma, Violence, Sexual, GBV.

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English

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Lastly, I dedicate this thesis to the Malian government, local, regional, national, and international NGOs, and other international organisations in Mali. I hope these entities will work together to provide Malian youth the educational and economic resources to create a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Mali.

Français

Je remercie ma conseillère académique, professeur Martina Koegeler-Abdi, pour ses conseils académiques et les textes académiques multiples qu'elle m'a fourni pour cette thèse. Sans elle, cette thèse ne serait pas d'être où elle est aujourd'hui. Plus, je veux remercier mes amis à Lund et New York pour son assistance, particulièrement Rachel, Giulia, Türkü, Amy, Cecilia, Ina, Halldór, et Julie. J'aimerais également remercier l'orchestre Alte Kamereren, il m'a aidé à détendre et jouer de la musique. Je dédie cette thèse à ma famille, particulièrement mes cousins, qui, j'espère se navigueront leurs chemins des institutions académiques plus facilement que moi.

Finalement, je dédie cette thèse au gouvernement malien, aux ONGs locaux, régionaux, nationaux, et internationaux, et aux autres organisations internationales au Mali. J'espère que les entités travailleront ensemble à fournir la jeunesse malienne les ressources éducationnelles et économiques pour créer un stable, paisible, et prospère Mali.

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1.Introduction

"A 15-year-old girl was forced into marriage to Abdul Haqim, a military commander for the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa. Repeatedly raped for months by fighters in the militia base, she was released when she became pregnant" (2012).[1]

While one would hope this girl be welcomed back by her community and obtain the healthcare she needs, this is far from certain. News coverage of the experiences of raped Malian women and girls suggests she and her child would have most likely been rejected by their community completely.[2]

Former Female Child Soldiers (FFCS) experience violence from non-state armed groups, but they and their children, known as Children Born of War (CBOW), also experience sexual[3] and violence-related[4] stigmas by their communities. This is not unique to Mali, as seen in conflicts across West Africa, where FFCS have been rejected by their communities for having "lost" their virginity[5] and feared due to their association with violence.[6] CBOW have also experienced sexual and violence-related stigmas through association with their parents, notably in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), where CBOW symbolised the violation of Bosniak women's purity,[7] and in

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[1] 'Tuareg Insurgents in Mali Raped Hundreds of Women and Girls', *The National*, 31 January 2013, https://www.peacewomen.org/content/mali-tuareg-insurgents-mali-raped-hundreds-women-and-girls-un-says, (accessed 14 February 2023).

[2] B.A. Momini, '5éme Audience Publique de la CVJR : Émouvants témoignages de femmes et enfants, victimes de violences sexuelles et de conflits', *Maliweb.net,* 16 June 2022, https://www.maliweb.net/societe/5eme-audience-publique-de-la-cvjr-emouvants-temoignages-de-femmes-et-enfants-victimes-de-violences-sexuelles-et-de-conflits-2980139.html, (accessed 16 September 2022).

[3] For reference, sexual stigma refers to sexism where women and men are "judged differently for engaging in the same sexual behaviour". P. Farvid, 'Sexual Stigmatization', in T.K. Shackelford and V.A. Weeks-Shackelford (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Evolutionary Psychological Science*, Springer International Publishing, 2021, p. 7502.

[4] Violence-related stigmas in this thesis will be referred to as the discrimination against people who were or are associated with armed groups.

[5] D. Mazurana and S. McKay, 'Child Soldiers: What About the Girls', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 57, iss. 5, 2001, p. 35, (accessed 02 May 2023).

[6] L. Dumas et al., 'Wounded Childhood: The Use of Children in Armed Conflict in Central Africa', Geneva, Switzerland, *International Labour Organisation*, 2003, pp. 53-54, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---ifp_crisis/documents/publication/wcms_116566.pdf, (accessed 05 May 2023).

[7] R.C. Carpenter, *Forgetting Children Born of War*, New York, NY, Columbia University Press, 2010, p. 143.

Central Africa, where CBOW were feared or hated by their families, schools, and communities due to their father's association with violence.[8]

Education and Economic Opportunity are two critical ways to combat these stigmas and prevent child recruitment. Article 28 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (*CRC*) (1989) declares children have the right to primary and secondary education (including general and vocational).[9] Article 6 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights* (*ICESCR*) (1966) states everyone has the right to "gain his living by work which he freely chooses".[10] [11] FFCS and CBOW have gained access to these opportunities in Central Africa by being sent off to schools in large urban areas,[12] and uptaking agricultural opportunities to economically benefit their communities.[13] Considering these, and how non-state armed groups recruit girls who are (1) out of school or (2) poor,[14] access to education and work is critical for FFCS and CBOW in Mali. However, the specific vulnerabilities of these mothers and their children as FFCS and CBOW in Mali have so far been little addressed.

Aug. 2011 to Mar. 2023 in Mali is the case study for this thesis due to (1) its transition from pre-, to during, to post-conflict in the past 12 years, [15] [16] (2) being the

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[8] M. Denov, A.C.V. Vliet and A.A. Lakor, 'Children and youth born of conflict-related sexual violence: the making of the 'other' in Northern Uganda and Rwanda', *Crime, Law and Social Change: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 2022, pp. 7-8.

[9] Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (adopted 20 November 1989, entered into force 2 September 1990), UNTS 1577, art 28, https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child, (accessed 22 March 2023).

[10] International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 03 January 1976), UNTS 993, art 6, https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights, (accessed 22 March 2023).

[11] This thesis does not promote child labour. Rather it promotes two different educational and lawfully economic paths for FFCS and CBOW to take if they experience sexual and/or violence-related stigmas from their communities.

[12] J. Neenan, 'Closing the Protection Gap for Children Born of War', London, UK, *London School of Economics*, June 2018, p. 40, https://www.lse.ac.uk/women-peace-security/assets/documents/2018/LSE-WPS-Children-Born-of-War.pdf, (accessed 25 January 2023).

[13] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say: Improving practices for demobilisation and reintegration of girls associated with armed forces and armed groups in Democratic Republic of Congo', London, UK, *Child Soldiers International*, 2017, p. 54, https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5949032a4.pdf, (accessed 27 December 2022).

[14] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', p. 20.

[15] A.Lins de Albuquerque, 'Explaining the 2012 Tuareg Rebellion in Mali and Lack Thereof in Niger', *Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut*, 2014, pp. 9-10, https://www.foi.se/rapportsammanfattning?reportNo=FOI%20MEMO%205099, (accessed 25 September 2022).

[16] 'Mali 2018 Human Rights Report', *United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018, 2018, p. 1, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Mali-2018.pdf, (accessed 07 May 2023).

origin point of the Sahelian Crisis in West Africa,[17] and (3) documented evidence of FFCS and CBOW being kicked out of homes, harassed in schools, and forced to migrate to larger urban centres (ex. Bamako).[18] Considering Mali's struggle to obtain territorial sovereignty in the Central and East,[19] and recent 2022 developments including 1,509 cases of sexual violence against women between Jul. 2022 - Sept. 2022, and the continued recruitment of children by Al-Qaeda-related groups and the Malian armed forces,[20] humanitarian international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) can play an important role in providing educational and economic aid to FFCS and CBOW.

Due to the far-reaching impact of stigma on FFCS' and CBOW's lives, this thesis argues it is critical for humanitarian INGOs in Mali to not only provide educational and economic assistance to FFCS and CBOW, but also to explicitly address the consequences of sexual and especially violence-related stigmas in their educational and economic programming. In doing this, humanitarian INGOs can help these groups gain recognition for their specific vulnerabilities and better exercise their educational and economic rights. However, as demonstrated through this thesis' mixed-methods analysis of 23 educational and economic programmes of major INGOs operating in the country, they do not sufficiently recognise sexual nor violence-related stigmas, and do not yet effectively promote FFCS' and CBOW's rights to school or work in Mali.

1.1 Research Aims and Questions

1.1.1 Research Aims

The overall research aim is to investigate if/and or how humanitarian INGOs in Mali recognise and address sexual and particularly violence-related stigmas, affecting the lives of FFCS and CBOW, in their educational and economic programmes. Within

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[17] USA for UNHCR, *Sahel Crisis Explained* [website], 2023, https://www.unrefugees.org/news/sahel-crisis-explained/, (accessed 07 May 2023).

[18] B.A. Momini, '5éme Audience Publique de la CVJR'.

[19] Rapport de l'Expert indépendant sur la situation des droits de l'homme au Mali, Alioune Tine, 'Situation des droits de l'homme au Mali' (2023), UN Doc A/HRC/52/81, p. 11, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session52/advance-version/A_HRC_52_81_AdvanceEditedVersion.docx, (accessed 17 May 2023).

[20] Rapport de l'Expert indépendant sur la situation des droits de l'homme au Mali, Alioune Tine, 'Situation des droits de l'homme au Mali', pp. 12-13.

this, this thesis aims to (1) analyse if INGOs recognise and/or address these stigmas in their aforementioned programmes; (2) evaluate how these INGOs address these stigmas in these programmes; and (3) stress the need for further research on recognising and addressing (or lack thereof) sexual and violence-related stigmas by INGO programming, especially those affecting FFCS' and CBOW's rights to school and work.

1.1.2 Research Questions

To fulfil its aims, this thesis answers the following questions:

1. Do humanitarian INGO educational and economic programmes in Mali acknowledge and address sexual and especially violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW?

   a. If yes, how do these humanitarian INGO educational and economic programmes acknowledge and address sexual and violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW in Mali?

2. How can these acknowledgements and responses (or lack thereof) potentially affect FFCS' and CBOW's rights to school and work?

1.2 Outline

This thesis provides a literature review of the state of the field on: (1) Child Soldiers, (2) Children Born of War (CBOW), (3) INGO Assistance to Child Soldiers and CBOW, and (4) a background section on the Sahelian Crisis, Education, and Economic Empowerment in Mali. Then, it explains applied theories, methods, and research ethics. Its theories include (1) a *Micro Rights-Based Approach* (*MRBA*), (2) *Humanitarian Definitions of Childhood*, (3) *Spoiled Identity*, and (4) *Empowerment*. The methods utilised include *Term Frequency* and *Content Analysis*. Following these, the thesis presents its data analysis according to (1) *Identity*, (2) *Conflict Aspects*, and (3) *Stigma*. Lastly, the thesis summarises and explains the significance of its findings, and calls for further research.

1.3 Limitations

This thesis has several limitations. Primarily, it only focuses on programmes run by humanitarian INGOs; not UN, governmental, multilateral institutional, non-humanitarian, national, or sub-national NGO efforts. Moreover, this thesis only focuses on FFCS and CBOW in Mali formerly associated with non-state armed groups; this excludes Malian,[21] UN,[22] and other country militaries[23] involved in the Sahelian Crisis accused of violence and child recruitment. Additionally, limited online access to INGO programme reports and information led to a limited number of programmes eligible to analyse quantitatively and qualitatively. There is also a lack of qualitative accounts and quantitative data regarding female child soldiers, FFCS, and CBOW in Mali, which has made it difficult to find data regarding their recruitment, stigmatisation, and reintegration, as well as perspectives of these women and children themselves.

Despite these limitations, this thesis develops a methodological approach that can make INGO engagement with FFCS and CBOW (or the lack thereof) visible in critical ways. The research integrates available primary sources, including utilising Malian local newspapers when identifying instances of FFCS and CBOW stigmatisations, and using INGO-related reports and newspapers to quantitatively and qualitatively analyse their programme components. Further, I, the researcher, can draw from recent professional and academic experiences with INGOs, child soldiers, and conflict in the Malian and Sahelian contexts, as well as being fluent in French, which allows for access to all public and online Malian government documents and newspaper articles. Taken together, the present analysis contributes new perspectives to various scholarly fields, including the research on humanitarian INGOs, FFCS, and CBOW, as well as on the potential for improved reintegration of FFCS and CBOW in Mali within the context of the Sahelian Crisis.

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[21] 'Mali: UN experts call for independent investigation into possible international crimes committed by Government forces and "Wagner group"', *UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 31 January 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/01/mali-un-experts-call-independent-investigation-possible-international-crimes, (10 May 2023).

[22] 'UN's Minusma troops 'sexually assaulted Mali woman', *BBC*, 23 September 2013, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24272839, (accessed 10 May 2023).

[23] Notably, Chadian Forces are known for child soldier recruitment. L.T.E Sarrouh, 'Where are They? The situation of children and armed forces in Mali', New York, NY, *Watchlist*, June 2013, p. 40, https://watchlist.org/wp-content/uploads/Watchlist_Mali.pdf, (accessed 15 September 2022).

2. Literature Review

This reviews the academic, grey,[24] and news literatures on (1) Child Soldiers, (2) CBOW, (3) INGO Assistance to Child Soldiers and CBOW, and (4) Mali from Aug. 2011 - Mar. 2023.

2.1 Child Soldiers: Who, How, and Why?

As defined by the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) *Cape Town Principles and Best Practices* (1997), a child soldier is any person under 18 years old who is part of a regular or irregular armed group or force in any capacity. This includes messengers, cooks, and "girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage", not just children who carry weapons.[25] Regarding their livelihoods, Brownell and Praetorius (2017) explain child soldiers fight in combat, lay explosives, scout and spy, and act as couriers, decoys, and guards.[26]

Soudière (2017) explains girls are recruited by armed groups via (1) school interruption: girls joined since they could no longer attend school (ex. could not pay school fees); (2) poverty: girls joined when they could not afford food;[27] and (3) abduction: girls were abducted by armed groups while tending fields, fetching water, or at home.[28] Brownell and Praetorius (2017) add family, where girls are influenced by family to join armed groups.[29]

Despite previous beliefs,[30] female child soldiers in armed groups fight, conduct manual labour, are in forced marriages, lead armed groups, and are used for sexual gratification. Carroll (2015) in her analysis of the recruitment and experiences of female

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[24] Literature commissioned by non-academic entities (ex. INGOs and foundations).

[25] 'Cape Town Principles and Best Practices', *Symposium On The Prevention Of Recruitment Of Children Into The Armed Forces And On Demobilization And Social Reintegration Of Child Soldiers In Africa*, Cape Town, South Africa, 27-30 April 1997, p. 12, https://nepal.ohchr.org/en/resources/Documents/English/children/Cape_Town_Principles(1).pdf, (accessed 07 May 2023).

[26] G. Brownell and R.T. Praetorius, 'Experiences of former child soldiers in Africa: Qualitative Interpretive Meta-Synthesis', *International Social Work*, vol. 60 iss. 2, 2017, p.454.

[27] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', pp. 18-19.

[28] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', p. 20.

[29] G. Brownell and R.T. Praetorius, 'Experiences of former child soldiers in Africa', p. 454.

[30] This view of Female Child Soldiers will be further discussed in the next paragraph. S. Carroll, 'Catch Them Young: Participation and Roles of Child Soldiers in Armed Conflicts', in S. Shekhawat (eds.), *Female Combatants in Conflict and Peace: Challenging Gender in Violence and Post-Conflict Reintegration*, London, UK, Palgrave Macmillan London, 2015, p. 454.

child soldiers,[31] argues female child soldier experiences are painted as only sexual, particularly being seen as sex slaves or only doing domestic-related tasks.[32] However, she adds female child soldiers serve as combatants, including "fighting, spying, scouting, locating targets, taking part in sabotage, carrying military supplies to the battlefield, working as couriers, looting villages and taking part in abducting other children".[33] Female child soldier combat was notably seen with Boko Haram in 2014 Nigeria, where Human Rights Watch (HRW) highlighted the group's use of women and girls to carry out attacks, including a 10-year-old girl suicide bomber in Katsina who was arrested before detonation.[34] Boko Haram has also used female child soldiers for manual labour, including a 2014 incident where 3 girls in Gwoza were forced to carry stolen goods for hours during the night.[35] Female child soldiers have also been forced into marriage; Neenan (2018) summarises the Lord's Resistance Army's (LRA) "forced marriage system" in Uganda, where CBOW were born from kidnapped girls and women.[36] Female child soldiers can and have also become leaders of armed groups; Denov and MacLure (2006) in 1990s Sierra Leone quote one female child soldier who mobilised and led soldiers into combat.[37] Lastly, female child soldiers have also been used by armed groups for sex, as Soudière (2017) summarises their experiences of repeated drugging and rape in the Kivu regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in the 2000s.[38]

Holistically analysing and explaining the diversity of female child soldier experiences is critical, as by only focusing on their sexual and domestic-related tasks, it glosses over the violence these soldiers have inflicted on local communities, and paints this group as only sex slaves. Fox (2004), linking the insecurity of female child soldiers

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[31] S. Carroll, 'Catch Them Young', p. 36.
[32] S. Carroll, 'Catch Them Young', p. 43.
[33] S. Carroll, 'Catch Them Young', p. 43.
[34] M. Segun, '"Those Terrible Weeks in Their Camp" Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in Northeast Nigeria', New York, NY, *Human Rights Watch*, October 2014, p. 36, http://features.hrw.org/features/HRW_2014_report/Those_Terrible_Weeks_in_Their_Camp/assets/nigeria1014web.pdf, (accessed 02 May 2023).
[35] M. Segun, '"Those Terrible Weeks in Their Camp"', p. 27.
[36] J. Neenan, 'Closing the Protection Gap for Children Born of War', p. 33.
[37] M. Denov and R. MacLure, 'Engaging the Voices of Girls in the Aftermath of Sierra Leone's Conflict: Experiences and Perspectives in a Culture of Violence', *Anthropologica*, vol. 48, no. 1, 2006, p. 78.
[38] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', p. 18.

and human security thinking,[39] agrees with Carroll (2015),[40] adding "not all girls are used for sexual purposes within such armed groups, and some groups in fact have rather strict rules about male and female contact. However, sexual abuses do indeed figure in some cases".[41] While some female child soldiers experience sexual violence, not all do; and not recognising this leads to an incomplete and sexualised visualisation of the female child soldier experience. Despite authors including Soudière (2017)[42] and Worthen et al. (2010)[43] analysing the sexual violence experienced by female child soldiers and FFCS, they fail to emphasis other violence experiences done by FFCS (ex. fighting, transporting military supplies, kidnapping). As a result, this can create an incomplete picture of female child soldier experiences in armed groups. Therefore, child soldier literature needs to include and analyse all female child soldier experiences, including sexual, violent, and labouring.

2.2 Reintegrating FFCS: Challenges, DDR, Victimhood, and Solutions

After female child soldiers demobilise, usually by escaping,[44] some attempt to reintegrate back into their communities,[45] but face different challenges, especially sexual and violence-related stigmas. Regarding sexual stigmas, Mazurana and McKay (2001), stressing the lack of attention on the duties and fates of female child soldiers during and after conflict,[46] explain rape victims can be rejected by their families and communities, as seen in Mozambique, the Balkans, and Sierra Leone, since they have "lost" their virginity and/or experienced pre-marital sex.[47] Sexual stigmas particularly affect FFCS as many have experienced forced marriage and sexual violence in armed groups. Regarding violence-related stigmas, former child soldiers experience fear and

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[39] M. J. Fox, 'Girl Soldiers: Human Security and Gendered Insecurity', *Security Dialogue*, vol. 35, iss. 4, 2004, p. 467.
[40] S. Carroll, 'Catch Them Young', p. 454.
[41] M. J. Fox, 'Girl Soldiers', p. 469.
[42] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', pp. 23-25.
[43] M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman: Empowerment and Human Rights in the Context of Community-Based Reintegration of Girl Mothers Formerly Associated with Fighting Forces and Armed Groups', *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2010, p. 54.
[44] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', p. 11.
[45] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', p. 27.
[46] D. Mazurana and S. McKay, 'Child Soldiers: What About the Girls', p. 31.
[47] D. Mazurana and S. McKay, 'Child Soldiers', p. 35.

hatred from their communities because of their violence-association with their former armed group. This was highlighted by the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) (2003) interviews with people in the DRC, Republic of the Congo (Congo), Rwanda, and Burundi about child soldier reintegration in their communities. One response from a parent in Burundi was "child soldiers are a danger to society because they are afraid of nothing, not even of death"; another response from a child in the Congo was "They kill each other for just a tin of sardines! They are demons and they need to be taught to live like human beings".[48] Therefore, sexual and violence-related stigmas can be an obstacle for FFCS community reintegration.

UN Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programmes while providing reintegration services, face operational, community, gender, and funding issues. Demobilisation refers to the "controlled discharge of child soldiers from the army or from an armed group".[49] Haer and Böhmelt (2016) describe DDR as (1) Disarmament: collecting weapons from armed groups, (2) Demobilisation: downsizing or disbanding armed forces (including providing food, medication, shelter), and (3) Reintegration: re-assimilating former soldiers into communities.[50] However, there have been studies questioning the effectiveness of DDR programmes; prominently, Haer and Böhmelt (2016), who argue DDR programmes from 1998 - 2005[51] unlikely affected peace in post-conflict societies.[52] Furthermore, DDR programmes have a diversity of issues, including (1) Operations: most FFCS in Sierra Leone (1998-2003) DDR programmes were excluded from "cash for weapons" policies;[53] (2) Facilities: DDR interim housing sites globally were designed for former adult male combatants, resulting in girls and women living there being exploited and/or abused;[54] (3) Not Addressing Community-held Stigmas: DRC FFCS stressed the need for family and

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[48] L. Dumas et al., 'Wounded Childhood: The Use of Children in Armed Conflict in Central Africa', pp. 53-54.

[49] 'Cape Town Principles and Best Practices', p. 12.

[50] R. Haer, and T. Böhmelt, 'Child soldiers as time bombs? Adolescents' participating in rebel groups and the recurrence of armed conflict', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 22, iss. 2, 2016, p. 415.

[51] R. Haer, and T. Böhmelt, 'Child soldiers as time bombs?', p. 408.

[52] R. Haer, and T. Böhmelt, 'Child soldiers as time bombs?', p. 421.

[53] M. Denov, 'Girl Soldiers and Human Rights: Lessons from Angola, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and Northern Uganda', *International Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 12, iss. 5, 2008, p. 825.

[54] Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards, 'Children and DDR', *Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration*, 2006, p. 10, https://www.unddr.org/modules/IDDRS-5.30-Children-and-DDR.pdf, (accessed 05 May 2023).

community sensitisation;[55] (4) Non-Gender Sensitive: DRC DDR actors admitted advocacy messages to armed groups were not sufficiently gender-sensitive (did not discourage sexual violence against female child solders);[56] (5) Family Reunification Interruptions: DRC DDR actors detained FFCS after already being reunited with families;[57] and (6) Funding: Funding for DRC DDR actors was so low they stopped in some areas (since 2014) or could only assist limited former child soldiers.[58]

While female child soldiers can be victims, they can, have been, and need to be recognised as victimisers as well.[59] In exploring how international coverage views children in third world emergencies,[60] Erica Burman (1994) explains international aid, sees girls as "quintessential child victims", where femininity and dependency are placed together to evoke sympathy, reinforcing child passivity and patriarchal relations.[61] This view by international aid is incredibly problematic, as it erases the violence female child soldiers and FFCS have done when associated with armed groups. Denov and MacLure (2006), highlight the effects of conflict on children in Sierra Leone,[62] including how it helped children see conflict as acceptable. One FFCS in an interview explained "'By then I felt good, especially when I was with my colleagues… I was an expert in burning houses… The flames form large chunks of fire like those in the movies. They were very exciting'".[63] While child soldiers can be and are victims of conflict, they also can be victimisers, burning houses and terrorising local communities. Although Soudière (2017),[64] Worthen et al. (2010),[65] and Neenan (2018)[66] explain the stigma and rejection FFCS and CBOW have experienced from their own communities, they fail to explore why their communities fear them. This victim-victimiser perspective is also critical in

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[55] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', p. 31.
[56] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', p. 41.
[57] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', p. 45.
[58] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', p. 57.
[59] This thesis recognises female child soldiers and FFCS as both victims and potential victimisers.
[60] E. Burman, 'Innocents Abroad: Western Fantasies of Childhood and the Iconography of Emergencies', *Dept. of Psychology and Speech Pathology, The Manchester Metropolitan University*, vol. 18, iss. 3, 1994, p. 238.
[61] E. Burman, 'Innocents Abroad', p. 242.
[62] M. Denov and R. MacLure, 'Engaging the Voices of Girls in the Aftermath of Sierra Leone's Conflict', p. 73.
[63] M. Denov and R. MacLure, 'Engaging the Voices of Girls in the Aftermath of Sierra Leone's Conflict', p. 78.
[64] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', pp. 27-28.
[65] M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman', p. 57.
[66] J. Neenan, 'Closing the Protection Gap for Children Born of War', pp. 25-28.

child soldier reintegration and community sensitisation programmes. Shepler (2006) interviewed a Sierra Leonean worker at an ICC; when speaking with him, the worker explained former child soldiers did not know their place; "'They have carried guns and terrorised people, they have experiences past their age. They think like older people, they act like older people'".[67] The culture shock FFCS experience in their communities needs to be discussed more by the aforementioned authors, as by continuing to label former child soldiers and FFCS as only victims, they fail to fully recognise the trauma conflict has on former child soldiers and FFCS. Therefore, child soldiers can be and have been victims of conflict, yet child soldier literature needs to recognise them as victimisers also, who have terrorised and challenged their own communities when reintegrating.

However, education, economic, and agricultural opportunities are potential solutions for FFCS and their reintegration. Neenan (2018) explains FFCS and their children in Gulu, Uganda could escape community stigmatisation and discrimination by being sent off to schooling in Kampala, where their background would not be known. Yet this applies only to FFCS from middle to upper class families who could afford to pay for their schooling.[68] Neenan (2018) also explains FFCS could also reintegrate into their families and communities by economically supporting themselves and their families, since they could economically contribute back to their families.[69] Lastly, Soudière (2017) specifically highlights agriculture as a reintegration path for FFCS, since farming "would provide them with sustainable economic opportunities and raise the quality of agricultural and pastoral production… benefiting the entire community".[70] Therefore, education, and economic and agricultural opportunities can provide reintegration pathways for FFCS to re-enter their communities.

2.3 CBOW Origins: Birth, Conception, and Treatment

The War and Children Identity Project (WCIP) (2001) defines war children, otherwise known as CBOW, as a child that has a parent from an army or peacekeeping

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[67] S. Shepler, 'The Rites of the Child: Global Discourses of Youth and Reintegrating Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone', *Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 4, iss. 2, 2005, p. 205.
[68] J. Neenan, 'Closing the Protection Gap for Children Born of War', p. 40.
[69] J. Neenan, 'Closing the Protection Gap for Children Born of War', p. 40.
[70] M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', p. 54.

force, and another parent who is a local citizen; this child can be subject to stigma due to their background.[71] Different categories of CBOW include (1) Child of Enemy Soldiers: child fathered by a foreign soldier clearly defined as the enemy; (2) Child of Soldier from Occupational Forces: child fathered by an enemy or ally, depending on the view of the local citizen; (3) Child from a Child Soldier: child from a child soldier; (4) child from sexual exploitation by UN Peacekeepers.[72]

CBOW generally are born as a result of armed conflict, are being born in ongoing conflict, and are likely to continue being born in the future.[73] Various academic and grey report literature discusses CBOW creation in Africa. Some African non-state armed groups integrated sexual violence into their strategies, purposely creating CBOW. UN Secretary General António Guterres (2022) explains, Al-Shabab and Boko Haram integrate sexual violence into recruitment strategies, using rape and forced marriage to compensate for their members and destroy ethnic or religious communities.[74] Moreover, in BiH, Carpenter (2010) describes women being held in rape camps during the Bosnian War, and were only released when they could no longer safely terminate the pregnancy.[75] Additionally, the Serb perspective of CBOW was "making more babies with a people equals killing that people off".[76] Therefore, CBOW have been used in various armed conflicts for sexual violence, genocide, and more.

CBOW also experience violence-related stigmatisation from their communities. Denov, Vliet, and Lakor (2022) highlight these violence-related stigmas in Northern Uganda and Rwanda, where CBOW were discriminated against by their (1) Families: "When I was young [my mother] used to beat me so much"; (2) Communities: "They have a belief that […] we have violent tendencies"; and (3) Schools: [Teacher at student] "'be careful with that girl […]she may be possessed with evil spirits and she may harm you'".[77] Apio (2016) in her PhD dissertation on CBOW in Uganda, further

[71] K. Grieg, 'The War Children of the World', *War and Children Identity Project*, Bergen, Norway, 2001, p. 6.

[72] I. Mochmann, 'Children born of war', Cologne, Germany, *Revista Obets*, no. 2, 2008, pp. 55-56.

[73] I. Mochmann, 'Children Born of War: A Decade of International and Interdisciplinary Research', *Historical Social Research*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2017, p. 321.

[74] Report of the Secretary-General, 'Women and girls who become pregnant as a result of sexual violence in conflict and children born of sexual violence in conflict', pp. 3-4.

[75] Report of the Secretary-General, 'Women and girls who become pregnant as a result of sexual violence in conflict and children born of sexual violence in conflict' p. 3.

[76] R.C. Carpenter, *Forgetting Children Born of War*, p. 10.

[77] M. Denov, A.C.V. Vliet and A.A. Lakor, 'Children and youth born of conflict-related sexual violence', pp. 7-8.

explains stigma against a family member could "contaminate" those close to them; for example, neighbours in land disputes would accuse each other of having a gun from the LRA.[78] Therefore, CBOW have faced violence-related stigmas and associations with violence in numerous aspects of their lives, afflicting them and their families.

There are different ways CBOW and their families can avoid or reduce stigma. One of the primary ways in doing this is hiding their identities from the public. Apio (2016) explains this strategy in Uganda; in the Ogur sub-county, 9-year-old Aloyo's stepfather has kept her birth history a secret from her and the neighbourhood. When families prevent the public and their children from access to "stigmatising information", they protect their children from stigma.[79] Thus, keeping CBOW's identities from them and the public allows CBOW to live without stigma. However, this method violates their right to preserve their identity, as stated in Article 8 of the *CRC*.[80] Moreover, the WCIP (2001) suggests five ways to helping CBOW, including: (1) providing material resources to mothers and CBOW; (2) conducting information campaigns against discrimination; (3) helping claim compensation from fathers; (4) assisting claims for compensation from governments; and (5) assisting in finding the father (and mother if applicable) of CBOW.[81] Thus, there are diverse methods that can be used by families and organisations to help CBOW avoid discrimination.

2.4 INGO Assistance to Former Child Soldiers and CBOW

INGOs can provide a diversity of programmes and services to former child soldiers and CBOW. When studying the role of INGOs and Local NGOs, particularly their populations, interventions, and operations, Brownell and Basham (2017) found 38 NGOs out of 43 surveyed (88.4%) in 2000s Liberia provided reintegration services to former child soldiers, including job trainings and placements, educational support,

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[78] E.O. Apio, *Children Born of War in northern Uganda: Kinship, Marriage, and the Politics of Post-conflict Reintegration in Lango society*, PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2016, p. 219, https://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/6926/, (accessed 05 May 2023).
[79] E.O. Apio, *Children Born of War in northern Uganda*, p. 222.
[80] Convention on the Rights of the Child, art 8.
[81] K. Grieg, 'The War Children of the World', p. 14.

counselling, scholarships, human rights awareness, recreational activities, and shelter.[82] In regard to CBOW, besides the 5 different WCIP (2001) ways of helping CBOW,[83] INGOs and NGOs can provide services to CBOW through cultural activities and discussions. Regarding cultural activities, Ojok (2022) in his examination of CBOW treatment in northern Uganda found INGOs (ex. *World Vision International*), NGOs, and child rehabilitation agencies place a high emphasis on Music, Dance, and Drama (MDD) in their rehabilitation centres, as it allows CBOW and their mothers to play and reintegrate with their cultures.[84] Thus, INGOs can and do conduct various programmes and services that provide former child soldiers and CBOW educational, economic, and leisure activities.

2.5 Challenges to INGOs Assisting Former Child Soldiers and CBOW

INGOs face a diversity of challenges when providing assistance to former child soldiers and CBOW. Carpenter (2010) when analysing the lack of action by international actors regarding CBOW in BiH, explains aid agencies addressed rape victim stigma and not CBOW stigma, as this would have meant confronting traumatised mothers and criticising a group suffering from genocide (Bosniaks).[85] Instead, these aid agencies left CBOWs to be assisted by local systems.[86] Moreover, Roosendaal (2011) when arguing why NGOs in BiH did not include CBOW in their programmes, explains NGOs did not know how to overcome taboos. In an interview with a BiH local, the woman stated "the people don't talk about it [CBOW] [...] It's just something that also stayed from the past system, like if there was a crime, any kind of crime, or such rapes or murders or incest or stuff like that".[87] NGOs do not know how to address taboos

[82] G. Brownell and R. Basham, 'NGO strategy toward the reintegration of child soldiers in Liberia, Africa: An online survey of services, roles, and activities', *International Social Work*, vol. 60, iss. 5, 2017, p. 1082.

[83] K. Grieg, 'The War Children of the World', p. 14.

[84] B. Ojok, '"Every Child Is Special…": Perspectives on the Integration of Children Born of War and Their War-Affected Peers at a Local School in Northern Uganda', *Frontiers in Political Science*, vol. 4, 2022, p. 10.

[85] R.C. Carpenter, *Forgetting Children Born of War*, p. 90.

[86] R.C. Carpenter, *Forgetting Children Born of War*, p. 92.

[87] M.K.S. Roosendaal, *The Invisible Ones: Why NGOs in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina do not include children born from war rape in their programmes and projects*, MA diss., Utrecht University, 2011, p. 31, https://studenttheses.uu.nl/handle/20.500.12932/8289, (accessed 02 May 2023).

when the local population (ex. BiH) refuses to discuss the topic. One other main challenge INGOs face when providing assistance is the lack of priority by the government and/or public in comparison to other issues. Roosendaal (2011) from his interviews reflected "my interviewees from NGOs stated that the government did not care about their work, as they were only concerned with themselves".[88] Moreover, when arguing BiH is overburdened with many other issues, he find some of his previous interviews stated BiH "was overburdened with problems and that these children born from rape were just one of the categories of people who were traumatised and needed counselling".[89] Therefore, confronting victims, taboos, and a lack of prioritisation can challenge INGOs when providing aid to former child soldiers and CBOW.

2.6 Critiques of INGOs Assistance to Former Child Soldiers and CBOW

INGOs may fail to address complex issues contributing to specifically child soldiers in their advertising. When analysing the images of children used by *Oxfam*, *Save the Children*, and *ActionAid*, Wells (2008) argues their advertising does not allow for space to represent the complex drivers causing conflict in the DRC involving child soldiers, terror, and sexual violence. Wells (2008) specifically critiques the absence of (1) terror child soldiers have inflicted on DRC communities and (2) the recognition some child soldiers voluntarily joined armed forces, or the political or economic developments that might have driven them to do so.[90] By INGOs continuing to only show one side of child soldiers, they may fail to explain the critical contributors to conflict and recruitment of these aforementioned child soldiers in the DRC.

Additionally, INGO community sensitisation communications regarding FFCS and CBOW with communities can be lacking and patronising. When analysing the use of the *CRC* discourse by communities in Sierra Leone, Shepler (2006) noted NGO workers explained to communities the rights of former child soldiers to family reunification as well as non-responsibility for their [child soldiers'] crimes (due to age)

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[88] M.K.S. Roosendaal, *The Invisible Ones*, p. 37.
[89] M.K.S. Roosendaal, *The Invisible Ones*, p. 38.
[90] K. Wells, 'Child Saving or Child Rights: Depictions of children in International NGO campaigns on conflict', *Journal of Children and Media*, vol. 2, iss. 3, 2008, p. 247.

through a top-down approach, assuming communities were ignorant of children's rights and needed more knowledge.[91] By approaching communities in this "know-it-all" approach, INGOs can discourage communities from listening to their rhetoric, thus slowing or preventing the sensitisation process. Moreover, Shepler (2006) also notes one incident where a reintegration centre (ICC) for former child soldiers and unaccompanied children was built in an area without consulting the surrounding communities. These communities further were annoyed these "rebel children" were provided international aid (ex. food, school fee payments) while their own communities were struggling.[92] By failing to communicate and negotiate with communities about the building of an ICC, the INGOs made these communities more hostile towards and thus jeopardised the former child soldier sensitisation process. Therefore, to ensure former child soldiers and CBOW go through effective community sensitisation processes, INGOs need to communicate clearly and appropriately with communities.
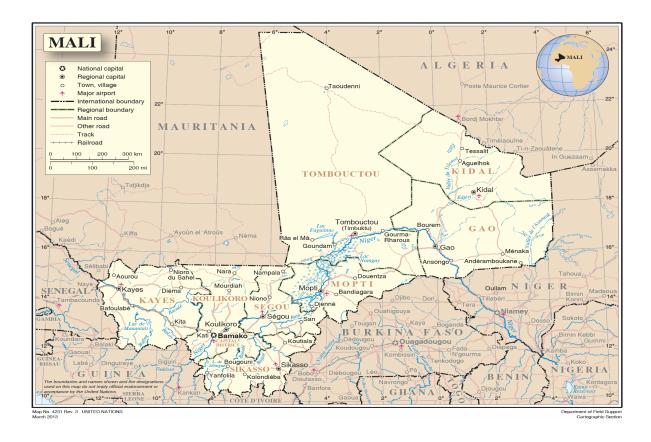
2.7 Background: Mali's History, Education, and Economic Empowerment Sectors

Map of Mali[93]

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[91] S. Shepler, 'The Rites of the Child', pp. 200 - 201.

[92] S. Shepler, 'The Rites of the Child', p. 201.

[93] UN Geospatial Information Section, 'Mali' [map], https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/746576?ln=en, (accessed 10 May 2023).

2.7.1 Mali's History with the Sahelian Crisis

In Aug. 2011, Tuareg (Northern Mali ethnic group) fighters returned from the Libyan war to Northern Mali; after the Malian government failed to reintegrate these fighters, the Tuareg in Oct. 2011 formed the Mouvement national de l'Azawad (MNLA). Utilising heavy weaponry from Libya, the MNLA quickly overtook government forces, prompting the coup of President Amadou Touré in Mar. 2012, and resulting in the non-state armed group capturing Kidal, Gao, and Tombouctou by Apr. 2012. However, by failing to secure minority-Tuareg cities, the MNLA lost control to Al-Qaeda organisations (Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'ouest (MUJAO), Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and Ansar Dine). France, at the request of the Malian government, commenced *Operation Serval* in Jan. 2013, aiming to reclaim lost territory.[94] After the Malian-French (and later MNLA) combined forces[95] retook Tomboctou, Kidal, and Gao in Mar. 2013, the UN installed its Multidimensional

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[94]A.Lins de Albuquerque, 'Explaining the 2012 Tuareg Rebellion in Mali and Lack Thereof in Niger', p. 9-10.

[95] J. Bamat, 'Mali-based Islamists pledge attacks on French soil', *France 24*, 14 January 2013, https://www.france24.com/en/20130114-mali-france-intervention-terrorist-attacks, (accessed 28 September 2022).

Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in Apr. 2013.[96] However, the MNLA ended their truce with the Malian government in Jun. 2013,[97] and retook Kidal in May 2014.[98] From May 2014 – Apr. 2020, Mali experienced a series of deadly Al-Qaeda attacks ranging from shootings to bombings. [99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104] Despite these, Mali retook Kidal from the MNLA in Feb. 2020.[105] In Aug. 2020, the Malian army overthrew President Ibrahim Keïta, and installed a transitional government committee (CNSP), pledging to restore national security until elections,[106] which in 2022, were delayed another 2 years.[107] More recently, due to a Jun. 2022 massacre in Central Mali, and other incidents of Malian forces working with Russian mercenaries, France in Aug.

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[96] United Nations Peacekeeping, 'MINUSMA Fact Sheet', United Nations Peacekeeping, Bamako, Mali, *UN Peacekeeping*, April 2013, https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusma, (accessed 28 September 2022).

[97] 'Mali's Tuareg fighters end ceasefire', *Al Jazeera*, 30 November 2013, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2013/11/30/malis-tuareg-fighters-end-ceasefire/, (accessed 28 September 2022).

[98] 'Mali: L'armée subit une cuisante défaite à Kidal', *Le Point Afrique*, 19 August 2014, https://www.lepoint.fr/afrique/mali-l-armee-subit-une-cuisante-defaite-a-kidal-19-08-2014-1857848_3826.php, (accessed 28 September 2022).

[99] J. Hanna, E. Payne and S. Almasy, 'Deadly Mali hotel attack: "They were shooting anything that moved"', *CNN*, 20 November 2015, http://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/20/africa/mali-shooting, (accessed 28 September 2022).

[100] 'Islamist militants kill 17 soldiers in attack on Mali army base', *Thomas Reuters Foundation News*, 09 July 2016, https://news.trust.org/item/20160719110235-hq7pp, (accessed 28 September 2022).

[101] 'Death toll from suicide blast at Gao army base rises', *Al Jazeera*, 19 January 2017, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/1/19/death-toll-from-suicide-blast-at-gao-army-base-rises, (accessed 28 September 2022).

[102] 'Mali attack: Gunmen kills five at tourist resort', *BBC*, 19 June 2017, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-40322039, (accessed 28 September 2022).

[103] 'Mali: Les corps de militaires disparus retrouvés près de Ménaka', *RFI*, 17 July 2017, https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20170717-mali-corps-militaires-disparus-retrouves-pres-menaka, (accessed 28 September 2022).

[104] 'Dozens of Malian soldiers killed in attack on military base', *Al Jazeera*, 07 April 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/4/7/dozens-of-malian-soldiers-killed-in-attack-on-military-base, (accessed 28 September 2022).

[105] AFP, 'Mali army returns to former rebel bastion Kidal in symbolic move', *France 24*, 13 February 2020, https://www.france24.com/en/20200213-mali-army-returns-to-former-rebel-bastion-kidal-in-symbolic-move, (accessed 28 September 2022).

[106] 'Mali timeline: From military coup to interim leaders removed', *Al Jazeera*, 25 May 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/25/timeline-what-happened-in-mali-since-a-military-coup-in-august, (accessed 28 September 2022).

[107] L. Sy, 'Mali junta decrees two-year delay before democracy', *BBC*, 07 June 2022, https://www.bbc.com/news/world?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=629ecccefc2fb576dc00d3b0%26Mali%20junta%20decrees%20two-year%20delay%20before%20democracy%262022-06-07T04%3A36%3A46.809Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:asset:0e53df1c-cfa8-42eb-8c0e-5872d8deb4cd&pinned_post_asset_id=629ecccefc2fb576dc00d3b0&pinned_post_type=share, (accessed 28 September 2022).

2022 withdrew all French troops from Mali.[108] In reaction to this, the CNSP in Nov. 2022 banned all French-supported NGOs from the country. This announcement has come at a time where INGOs have been accused of aiding terrorists under their neutrality principles, and rhetoric from the CNSP that Mali does not need Western support.[109]

2.7.2 Education in Mali

Since January 2012, many schools in Northern and Central Mali have been looted, burned, and/or destroyed. By Jul. 2012, an estimated 85% of teachers fled and 27% of students could not continue their education in Northern Mali.[110] As reported in a 2022 interview with Mali Education Union Secretary Moustapha Guitteye (2022), more than 1,800 schools closed in 2021-2022 due to attacks from armed groups, resulting in 75,000 children being denied formal educational access. Armed groups conduct these attacks by sending messengers to schools demanding their closure, or they force the school to close by attacking teachers via kidnapping or shooting.[111] Though schools still operate in Mali, they have and continue to face pressing challenges with insecurity in the Central and Northern regions.

2.7.3 Girls' and Women's Economic Empowerment in Mali

Men in Malian society hold primary rights of access and control over land, despite 70% of food production being done by women. Under the *Malian Family Code*, women must obey their husbands, who are heads of the household. However, a 2017 law proposal would have set aside a share of government-managed land for exclusively

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[108] A. Risemberg, 'French Forces Complete Departure From Mali', *VOA*, 05 August 2022, https://www.voanews.com/a/french-forces-complete-departure-from-mali-/6702201.html, (accessed 28 September 2022).
[109] 'French NGOs in Mali concerned for civilians in wake of suspension', *RFI*, 24 November 2022, https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20221124-french-ngos-in-mali-concerned-for-civilians-in-wake-of-suspension, (accessed 07 May 2023).
[110] L. T. E. Sarrouh, 'Where Are They? p. 26-27.
[111] *Mali: Alarming situation in schools under attack from armed groups* [online video interview], Presenter M. Guitteye, Mali, Education International, 09 June 2022, https://www.ei-ie.org/en/item/26731:mali-alarming-situation-in-schools-under-attack-from-armed-groups (accessed 19 November 2022).

women to farm. Yet it is unclear if this law passed the National Assembly.[112] Regarding women- and girl-majority economic activities, Soitel (2019) highlights Tontine; a financial group where each subscriber pays a sum into a fund, and receives a dividend from capital invested.[113] Bevin (2016) highlights Habbanaye, where Fulani pastoralists loan female livestock to a poorer friend or family member, who keeps the offspring to rebuild their own stock.[114] Cissé (2022) highlights the new practice of Collectives, where usually women or displaced people grow agriculture and use the produce to sell or sustain their families.[115] Thus, women in Mali use different economic strategies to access express economic power when their land access is restricted.

2.7.4 Lack of Mali Child Soldier Literature

Despite 12 years passing since the beginning of the Sahelian Crisis in Mali, academic literature continues to inadequately cover the use of child soldiers in the country. In contrast, grey reports and news and media sources provide critical information regarding this population in Mali. Sarrouh (2013) in analysing the recruitment of and violations against Malian children, estimates child soldiers in 2012 made up 15-30% and 30-40% of non-state armed groups in Tombouctou and Gao; and non-state armed groups used recruitment methods including offering money, tv, bikes, and education.[116] Lackenbauer, Lindell, and Ingerstad (2015) in their analysis of conflict drivers in Mali (particularly discrimination and marginalisation), explain the MUJAO, Ansar Dine, and the AQIM recruit young Malians by exploiting existing tensions, social alienations, and inequalities in and between ethnic groups.[117] Lastly, HRW (2012) when

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[112] S. Diarra, 'New law a glimmer of hope for women's land rights in Mali', *Thomas Reuters Foundation*, 30 January 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/mali-women-landrights-idAFL5N1FF5CW, (accessed 07 February 2023).

[113] A. Soitel, 'La tontine, un vecteur économique de solidarité et d'entrepreneuriat', *Institut Afrique Monde*, 25 January 2019, http://www.institutafriquemonde.org/index.php/2019/01/25/la-tontine-un-vecteur-economique-de-solidarite-et-dentrepreneuriat/, (accessed 20 September 2022).

[114] W. Bevins, 'Habbanaye: Applying a Traditional Practice for a More Resilient Future in the Sahel', *Lutheran World Relief*, 2016, p. 4, https://lwr.org/ai_file_subscribe/file/2469, (accessed 09 September 2022).

[115] C.B. Cissé, 'Prévention des violences communautaires dans la région de Mopti : Des coopératives maraîchères soutenues par ENGIM, *Le Wagadu*, 26 August 2022, https://www.maliweb.net/societe/prevention-des-violences-communautaires-dans-la-region-de-mopti-des-cooperatives-maraicheres-soutenues-par-engim-2988980.html, (accessed 15 September 2022).

[116] L. T. E. Sarrouh, 'Where Are They?', p. 18-19.

[117] H. Lackenbauer, M. T. Lindell, and G. Ingerstad, '''If our men won't fight, we will': A Gendered Analysis of the Armed Conflict in Northern Mali', Stockholm, Sweden, *Swedish Ministry of Foreign*

covering the war crimes by rebels in Northern Mali Apr. 2012, highlights the kidnapping and raping of 17 women and girls (8 cases involving 15-year-olds) by rebels in Gao; these women and girls were kidnapped at gunpoint, sexually violated by MNLA rebels, then returned between 24 hours to various days later.[118] Despite academic literature lacks on the subject of child soldiers in Mali, grey reports provide in-depth research and various dimensions about these child soldiers, including numbers, recruitment methods, and sexual violence.

2.8 Thesis Contributions

This thesis aims to contribute to: (1) the Female Child Soldier and FFCS literatures, (2) CBOW literature, and (3) Humanitarian INGO literature.

This thesis aims to contribute to the female child soldier and FFCS literature, especially in regard to reintegration, stigmatisation, and the Malian context. Specifically, it will address the sexual and particularly violence-related stigmas FFCS face from Malian communities. By analysing if and how INGO educational and economic programmes address these FFCS stigmas, as well as comparing them to the sexual and violence-related stigmas Malian FFCS experience, this thesis highlights the need for particularly violence-related stigma components from these INGO programmes, underscores how these needs are not met, and how these affect their educational and economic rights. Furthermore, this thesis addresses the lack of female child soldiers and FFCS literature on Mali by identifying the sexual and especially violence-related stigmas FFCS experience, including rejection, humiliation, and harassment in educational and economic settings, by drawing from Malian newspapers and UN reports.

Secondly, this thesis aims to contribute to CBOW literature, with a focus on the reintegration, stigmatisation, and Malian contexts, as seen with the female child soldier and FFCS literature. This thesis contributes to CBOW literature by analysing how humanitarian INGO educational and economic programmes address the sexual and

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Affairs and Defence, (FOI-R-4121-SE), 2015, p. 50, https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--4121--SE, (accessed 05 February 2023).
[118] 'Mali: War Crimes by Northern Rebels: Armed Groups Commit Rape, Use Child Soldiers', *Human Rights Watch*, 30 April 2012, https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/04/30/mali-war-crimes-northern-rebels, (accessed 06 February 2023).

especially violence-related stigmas CBOW experience from their communities. In doing this INGO programme analysis, and comparing this with CBOW stigma incidents reported from Malian newspapers and UN reports, this thesis demonstrates the vitality for INGOs to address these stigmas in their programmes, to help CBOW fully express their rights to school and work. Moreover, this thesis aims to contribute to CBOW literature within the Malian context, as there is little to no information outside of limited Malian news articles and UN reports about their existence in the country during and post-conflict.

Lastly, this thesis aims to contribute to humanitarian INGO literature, with a focus on (1) reintegration, stigmatisation, (2) FFCS and CBOW assistance, and (3) in the Malian context. This thesis contributes to areas 1 and 2 above by analysing how humanitarian INGOs recognise and address sexual and particularly violence-related stigmas affecting the educational and economic rights of FFCS and CBOW. In doing this analysis, this thesis encourages further research into how humanitarian INGOs can more effectively integrate stigma assistance into their educational and economic programmes. Moreover, this thesis contributes to humanitarian INGO literature in the Malian context, as there is a complete lack of academic literature in the area. By analysing how humanitarian INGOs address stigma in their educational and economic programmes within Mali, this thesis encourages further research into humanitarian INGO literature in the Malian context.

3. Theory

This section discusses the theories utilised in this thesis, including (1) the *Micro Rights-Based Approach* (*MRBA*), and its focus on promoting children's participation in society; (2) the *Humanitarian Definitions of Childhood,* specifically how INGOs define children within the humanitarian context; and (3) the *Spoiled Identity* and *Empowerment* theories, and how both relate to negative constructions of children's identities.

3.1 Micro Rights-Based Approach

The *Micro Rights-Based Approach (MRBA)* aims to promote citizens' empowerment, free and active participation, and ownership in society.[119] This theory serves as both an approach and lens which organisations (ex. *CARE International*) have applied in their work.[120]

The *Rights-Based Approach* (RBA) is a framework for processing human development based on international HR standards, and aims to promote and protect human rights.[121] *RBA* can be divided into macro and micro levels; the macro level aims to influence and change institutions to improve the rights of citizens. *Macro-RBA* in development aims to promote people's human rights through policy and legal reform that creates conditions for them to enjoy their rights.[122] [123] However, its main critique by scholars is it fails to account for the implementation (or lack thereof) of these reforms. *MRBA* in contrast focuses on the local level, aiming to help people obtain the minimum conditions necessary to live in dignity, achieving human rights.[124]

MRBA relates to this thesis' data analysis, as some NGOs have included *MRBA* elements in their programming to assist FFCS and CBOW. In 2006, a research cohort created a partnership programme providing FFCS and their CBOW in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Uganda resources they needed.[125] This cohort used a Participatory Action Research approach, where participants designed, planned, and analysed the programme,[126] and worked together in groups to support each other.[127] This programme resulted in participants using various mechanisms to exercise their human rights, as well

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[119] M. Robinson, *What Rights Can Add to Good Development Practice*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, cited in M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman' p. 53.

[120] CARE International UK, 'The CARE International Advocacy Handbook', London, UK, *CARE International UK*, 2014, p. 2, https://www.care-international.org/files/files/Care%20International%20Advocacy%20Handbook.pdf, (accessed 01 May 2023).

[121] UN OHCHR, 'Frequently Asked Questions on a Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation, New York, NY, *UN OHCHR*, 2006, p. 15, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/FAQen.pdf, (accessed 01 May 2023).

[122] M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman', p. 53.

[123] P. Uvin, *Human Rights and Development*, Bloomingfield, Kumarian Press, 2004, cited in M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman', p. 53.

[124] CARE International UK, *Principles into Practice: Learning from Innovative Rights-Based Programmes*, London, CARE International, 2005, cited in M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman', p. 53.

[125] M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman', p. 55.

[126] M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman', p. 56.

[127] M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman', p. 58.

as be protected from violations and enforce accountability for these violations.[128] This theory is implemented in the data analysis by focusing on how INGO educational and economic programming address stigmas limiting FFCS' and CBOW's rights to school and work. This is done in the quantitative analysis by analysing the term frequency of FFCS and CBOW identity-, conflict-, and stigma-related terms in 23 INGO programming sources. The quantitative analysis is combined with the qualitative analysis, where quotes, phrases, and other qualitative content from INGO sources are analysed to see how these educational and economic programmes including FFCS/CBOW identity-, conflict-, and stigma-related elements address their stigmas. The explanation of these elements is further explained below within their corresponding theories.

3.2 Humanitarian Definitions of Childhood

Humanitarian NGOs define *childhood* as an "ideal state of development where a child is free from the repercussions associated with the adult world".[129] In fact, a humanitarian NGO ad hoc group who helped shape the *CRC* (1989), declared children as "neutral free zones" that should "be secured from all kinds of physical and psychological violation".[130] Thus, humanitarian NGOs see childhood as free from violence, conflict, and politics.

These views tie into the humanitarian principles followed by NGOs, especially neutrality and impartiality. Neutrality is a "focus on humanitarian action to relieve suffering, not taking sides in the conflict".[131] This ties to the *Humanitarian Definitions of Childhood*, as children are seen as neutral parties who should not suffer from violence. Impartiality is divided into non-discrimination and life-saving assistance. Non-discrimination is helping all victims, irrespective of non-need factors (ex. ethnicity, sex, religion). Life-saving assistance is where aid is provided to people according to

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[128] M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman', p. 59.

[129] D. Seto, *No Place for a War Baby: The Global Politics of Children born of Wartime Sexual Violence*, New York, NY, Routledge, 2013, p. 151.

[130] Defense for Children International, 'NGO Ad hoc group: Reports, Proposals, etc, 'NGO Informal Consultation on the Draft Convention on the Rights of the Child', Geneva, Switzerland, DCI, 07 July 1983, cited in L. Lindkvist, 'Rights for the World's Children: Rädda Barnen and the Making of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child', *Nordic Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2018, p. 297.

[131] T. Weiss, *Humanitarian principles and politics*, Ethics and International Affairs, 1999, cited in R.C. Carpenter, *Forgetting Children Born of War*, p. 85.

their need.[132] These relate to *humanitarian definitions of childhood*, as humanitarian NGOs through these values have a duty to provide aid to all suffering children regardless of their background, especially those that are most in need.

However, CBOW do not fit easily within traditional *Humanitarian Definitions of Childhood* of being (1) free from conflict and politics, or (2) worthy of protection, as they inherently hold the enemy status of their parents.[133] This can lead to CBOW being invisible in INGO programming. Seto (2010) argues humanitarian organisations are dependent on the gendered dichotomy of the masculine-political vs. feminine non-political.[134] When reflecting on a 2009 *Save the Children Australia* exhibit, Seto explains refugee children and child soldiers fit within this humanitarian definition, since INGOs can portray themselves as the masculine protector that can restore their view of childhood innocence (non-political).[135] However, CBOW cannot fit within this childhood restoration scenario, as their lack of "perceived" innocence places them outside humanitarian conceptions of childhood.[136] Carpenter (2010) further argues CBOW in BiH play a political role in post-war nationalist narratives. Specifically, CBOW in BiH have been seen as symbols of Serbian aggression, a violation of women's bodies and Bosnian purity, and as part of the genocide.[137] With CBOW representing genocide, violation, and aggression, they cannot fit within these *Humanitarian Definitions of Childhood*.

This *Humanitarian Definitions of Childhood* theory is applied in the data in two separate sections, particularly (1) *Identity* and (2) *Conflict Aspects*. This theory is split in two, considering FFCS and CBOW are debatably the products of conflict and violence, and the *humanitarian definitions of childhood* does not account for children associated with conflict. The *Identity* section focuses on the various identities of FFCS and CBOW. This includes analysing the term frequency of "Children Born of War/CBOW", "Child Soldier", "Girl/Girls", "Young Woman/Women", and overall

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[132] S. Wolfson and N. Wright, 'A UNHCR handbook for the military on humanitarian operation', Geneva, Switzerland, *UNHCR*, 1994, p. 7, https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3ccea5694.pdf, (accessed 01 May 2023).
[133] Mother of CBOW sees her son as a "son of the enemy" due to his father's militia status. S. Powell, 'East Timor's children of the Enemy', *The Weekend Australian*, 10 March 2001, https://etan.org/et2001b/april/01-7/00etchild.htm, (accessed 17 May 2023).
[134] D. Seto, *No Place for a War Baby*, p. 148.
[135] D. Seto, *No Place for a War Baby*, p. 158.
[136] D. Seto, *No Place for a War Baby*, pp. 165-166.
[137] R.C. Carpenter, *Forgetting Children Born of War*, p. 143.

terms that can describe FFCS and CBOW. This is then compared with qualitative data from INGO programming sources to see if FFCS and CBOW acknowledge the existence of FFCS and CBOW. The *Conflict Aspects* section focuses on the conflict-related experiences and aspects of FFCS and CBOW. This includes analysing the term frequency of "Armed Group", "Social Inclusion", "Violence" and more conflict-related terms that can be used to describe the conflict-related experiences of FFCS and CBOW. Similar to *Identity*, this quantitative data analysis is compared with the qualitative data from INGO programming sources to see if sexual and particularly violence-related stigmas are recognised and/or addressed by humanitarian INGO educational and economic programmes.

3.3 Spoiled Identity Theory and Empowerment Theory

Erwin Goffman's *Spoiled Identity Theory* states stigmatisation is a social response to someone who has a *Spoiled Identity*.[138] Solanke's interpretation of Goffman's theory is the following: An identity is "spoiled" when the stigma overwhelms all other attributes of the person holding the stigma, resulting in society turning away from the stigma holder.[139] In contrast, *Empowerment Theory* is the process where a person gains self-respect and sees themselves as worthy of respect and dignity by other people. The person experiencing this process will increase their sense of agency and ability to influence their life. This change is personal and social, since it produces a shift of power within a family, community or other group.[140] In my theoretical approach, I connect these two theories, as while *Spoiled Identity* recognises the stigma and its effects on its holder, *Empowerment* focuses on undoing these negative social constructions.[141]

The traditional definition of stigma refers to a "permanent visible mark made by a painful process", involving branding or pointed instruments.[142] The original

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[138] E. Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity,* New York, NY, Simon & Schuster, 1986, p. 27.

[139] I. Solanke, 'Stigma' in I. Solanke, *Discrimination as Stigma: A Theory of Anti-Discrimination Law*, Oxford, UK, Bloomsbury Hart Publishing, 2016, p. 25.

[140] M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman', p. 52.

[141] M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman', p. 51.

[142] G. M. Herek, 'Thinking About AIDS and Stigma: A Psychologist's Perspective', *The Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 2002, p. 594.

stigmatised were social outcasts, including runaway slaves, who due to their stigma, were discredited by society.[143] Goffman offers three different models of stigma; the first is the *attribute-as-sufficient-cause* model, where the possession of the attribute is enough to be stigmatised (ex. physical disability, skin colour). The second is *labelling*, where the attribute is needed, but its influence depends on how society views it (ex. sexuality, religion). Lastly, there is the *scapegoat* model, where hostility singles out attributes, usually due to moral discomfort (ex. immigrants being seen as criminal to defend the social system[144]).[145] When discussing stigmas affecting women and children, stigmatisation can be a motivation for sexual and gender-based violence; aggressors who want to break community bonds will sexually violate women to humiliate their enemies and/or have women give birth to their children.[146] Thus, stigma is a powerful attribute that can detrimentally influence people's livelihoods and social experiences.

Empowerment has been defined in various ways, with Bystydzienski (1992) describing it as a process where an oppressed person gains control of their life, and the World Bank (2005) defining it as increasing the capacity of individuals and groups to transform their choices into wanted outcomes.[147] This thesis will follow Rowlands' definition: "a process that lead[s] people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions… including undoing negative social constructions".[148] This definition recognises the role that communities have in empowering and/or influencing the lives of individuals in their communities.

Both *Spoiled Identity* and *Empowerment* theories are used together in this thesis since FFCS and CBOW experience stigmas from their communities, but also receive empowering resources from NGOs. FFCS in the DRC have experienced sexual stigmatisation, being shunned by their communities because of sexual stigmas, (ex. having "known men").[149] Also, CBOW in Uganda have experienced violence-related

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143 I. Solanke, 'Stigma', p. 19.
144 I. Solanke, 'Stigma', p. 29.
145 I. Katz, 'Some Thoughts About Stigma Notion' *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 1979, Sufficient Cause is p. 449, Labelling is p. 451, and Scapegoating is p. 452.
146 J. Neenan, 'Closing the Protection Gap for Children Born of War', p. 23.
147 R. Alsop and A. Norton, 'Power, Rights, and Poverty Reduction', Washington, DC, *World Bank Group*, 2005, p. 5, http://hdl.handle.net/10986/7349, (accessed 03 May 2023).
148 M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman', p. 51.
149 M. Soudière, 'What the Girls Say', p. 28.

stigmas, with communities fearing their "violent tendencies".[150] However, as aforementioned by Brownell and Basham (2017), there are cases, such as in Liberia, where NGOs have provided reintegration services such as job placements, educational support, counselling, shelter, and human rights awareness.[151] Therefore, while FFCS and CBOW face stigmas from their communities, NGOs have capabilities to address the effects of these stigmas. These theories are applied to the data analysis to see if INGO educational and/or economic programmes acknowledge and/or address sexual and especially violence-related stigmas related to FFCS and CBOW in Mali. This is done by analysing the *Term Frequency* of "Gender-based Violence/GBV", "Rebel", Rape", "Stigma" and other stigma-related terms in INGO programming sources. This quantitative research is then compared to the qualitative research, where quotes, phrases, and other qualitative data from these reports and Malian newspapers are analysed, specifically those related to sexual and especially violence-related stigmas, as well as content demonstrating INGOs' responses (or lack thereof) to these issues.

4.Methods

This section explains the research methods utilised when collecting and analysing the data; including (1) *Term Frequency* to evaluate INGO programming elements, and (2) *Content Analysis (CTA)* to analyse if/how FFCS and CBOW are included in INGO programming.

4.1 Term Frequency

Term Frequency analyses "the importance of words in a text or set of texts by measuring how often words appear". This includes counting and comparing the number of times certain words have been mentioned in texts in numbers and percentages.[152]

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[150] M. Denov, A.C.V. Vliet and A.A. Lakor, 'Children and youth born of conflict-related sexual violence', p. 8.
[151] G. Brownell and R. Basham, 'NGO strategy toward the reintegration of child soldiers in Liberia, Africa', p. 1082.
[152] K. Chaar-Perez, 'Introduction' *University of Pittsburgh Library System*, Pittsburgh, PA, University of Pittsburgh, 2023, https://pitt.libguides.com/textmining, (accessed 06 March 2023).

Term Frequency falls under *Text Analysis/Mining*, which is a process of analysing texts to answer research questions or find new information that can be visualised.[153]

   The first step of *Term Frequency* is to identify core concepts. Since this thesis evaluates identity, conflict, and stigma elements of FFCS and CBOW in Mali, the following terms were identified according to identity, conflict, and stigma. These search terms were chosen based off of common words used in the FFCS and CBOW literature sources, notably Soudière (2017), Sarrouh (2013), Brownell and Praetorius (2017), Denov et al. (2022), Report of the Secretary General (2022), Carpenter (2010), and Omari (2013).

- Identity-related terms (*Identity*)

Children Born of War/CBOW	Female Child Soldier	Jihad	Mother/Mom	Survivor
Child Soldier	Girl/Girls	Kidnap/Kidnapping/ Kidnapped	Rebel	Young Woman/Women

- Conflict-related terms (*Conflict Aspects*)

Armed Group	Conflict/Crisis	Raid/Loot	Rebel	Trauma	Violence/Violent
Attack	Peace	Rape	Social Inclusion	Violate/Violation/Violations/Violating/Violated	War

- Stigma-related terms (*Stigma*, General, Sexual and Violence)

Empower/Empowered/Empowering/Empowerment	Stereotype	Gender-based Violence (GBV)	Sex/Sexual/Sexualised/Sexuality	Virgin/Virginity/Purity	Jihad/Rebel	Violence/Violent
Prejudice	Stigma	Rape	Sexual	Fear	Violate/Violatio	

[153] K. Chaar-Perez, 'Term Frequency' *University of Pittsburgh Library System*, Pittsburgh, PA, University of Pittsburgh, 2023, https://pitt.libguides.com/textmining/termfrequency, (accessed 06 March 2023).

			Assault		n/Violations/Violating/Violated	

Secondly, this thesis tracks the number of times these terms are mentioned in humanitarian INGO educational and economic programming sources to identify any potential connections between certain concepts and their frequencies in the text. This thesis uses the software, *NVivo*, to calculate the number of times these terms are mentioned in an INGO source for a specific educational or economic programme, then use *Google Sheets* to calculate the number of times these terms were mentioned in total, and create charts to reflect these totals. This thesis implements *Term Frequency* in 13 educational and 10 economic programmes in Mali that include girls. For reference, these 23 programmes were chosen from the following process: (1A) This thesis used a list of INGOs from a Malian newspaper that condemned economic sanctions by the European Union (EU) and the Economic Commission of Western African States (ECOWAS) on Mali to identify INGOs working in Mali; (1B) used the Google Search Engine (ex. "INGO Mali") to find large INGOs operating programmes in Mali;[154] (2) determined which INGOs were humanitarian, primarily by seeing if they mentioned "humanitarian" in their vision, mission, values, or programmes; (3) reviewed their educational or economic programme brochures, briefs, reports, or other sources; lastly, (4) only included programmes which included girls and young women. If INGOs were not (A) humanitarian (ex. "development"), (B) did not have educational or economic programmes, or (C) did not provide more than one paragraph (50 words) about a specific educational or economic programme on their webpage or publication, they were discarded from and not included in the data analysis. Lastly, this thesis will summarise these frequencies into visual tables and written paragraphs.[155]

This quantitative method has two main strengths, including (1) summarising and comparing large amounts of information, and (2) including diverse resources. Firstly, using *Term Frequency* and quantitative methods in general can synthesise huge amounts

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[154] B. Daou, 'Sanctions contre le Mali : Des ONG tirent la sonnette d'alarme', *Le Republicain*, 19 Janaury 2022, https://www.maliweb.net/cedeao/sanctions-contre-le-mali-des-ong-tirent-la-sonnette-dalarme-2960987.html, (accessed 10 April 2023).
[155] L. Prior, 'Content Analysis' in P. Leavy (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, edn. 2, 2020, p. 552.

of information and compare them for analysis.[156] Secondly, *Term Frequency* allows one to draw from a variety of source types, which will further enhance the results and data analysis.[157]

Term Frequency analyses if stigmas are acknowledged or recognised in INGO educational and economic opportunity programming in Mali. The higher frequencies of certain words mentioned in the INGO programming resources could indicate stigma or subjects related to it (ex. Social inclusion, GBV) acknowledged in INGO programmes. Therefore, using term frequency determines if there are any elements in INGO educational and economic programmes in Mali acknowledging the sexual or violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW.

4.2 Content Analysis

While there are differing definitions, the qualitative data method *Content Analysis* (*CTA*) is defined here by Prior's (2020) interpretation: "the study of inscription contained in published reports, newspapers, adverts, books, web pages, journals, and other forms of documentation".[158] Like *Term Frequency*, *CTA* helps researchers highlight emerging themes from data, giving them the ability to include data from numerous sources, instead of just a few.[159]

CTA is conducted on a diversity of resources, including INGO grey reports, Malian newspapers, and international newspapers. Regarding INGO grey reports, briefs, evaluations, annual reports, news and any other resources INGOs publish about the specific educational or economic programme in Mali are utilised. Malian (especially from Maliweb.net) and international newspapers are compared with INGO educational and economic programmes, highlighting the effects and experiences of sexual and violence-related stigmas on FFCS and CBOW.

CTA's main strength as a qualitative method is it can provide a holistic view of a subject that cannot be fully viewed by quantitative data alone. Specifically, *CTA* can analyse motivations, behaviours, attitudes,[160] and other data that cannot be "experienced

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[156] R. V. Labaree, 'Quantitative Methods', *USC Libraries*, Los Angeles, CA, University of Southern California, 2023, https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/quantitative, (accessed 06 March 2023).
[157] R. V. Labaree, 'Quantitative Methods'.
[158] L. Prior, 'Content Analysis', p. 548.
[159] L. Prior, 'Content Analysis', p. 548.
[160] R. V. Labaree, 'Quantitative Methods'.

in numerical data and statistical analysis".[161] In other words, while quantitative data methods such as *Term Frequency* can track the mentions of these words in documents, they cannot speak to how these INGOs are addressing sexual and violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW in Mali.

Thus, *CTA* specifically analyses how INGO programmes address sexual and violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW in Mali. *CTA* evaluates interviews, quotes, and other phrases from INGO sources to see if/how INGO programmes address stigmas. For example, if INGO reports mention through quotes that an economic programme also provides community sensitisation or conflict resolution services, then one could come to the conclusion this specific programme addresses violence-related stigmas. Moreover, *CTA* complements *Term Frequency*; in that, while *Term Frequency* analyses the recognition (or lack thereof) of stigma in INGO programmes, *CTA* sees if/how INGOs address these stigmas. Therefore, *CTA* and *Term Frequency* are used together in this thesis to determine the recognition and addressing of sexual and violence-related stigmas in INGO educational and economic programmes in Mali.

5.Research Ethics

When collecting, analysing, and summarising data, I, the researcher, did my best to (1) follow the *do not harm principle*, (2) ensure all data is accurate and reliable, and (3) be aware of my personal biases.

I abided by the *do no harm principle* when working with data, especially when critiquing NGO practices and quoting victims of violence and stigma. Since researchers can conduct various projects on topics that have negative, neutral, or positive effects,[162] I did my best to ensure the research contributes to a public good.[163] More specifically, when providing critiques of INGO programmes, I made sure to do so in professional ways that are scholarly-supported, and serve as areas of improvement. In doing this, I

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[161] R. V. Labaree, 'Qualitative Methods', *USC Libraries*, Los Angeles, CA, University of Southern California, 2023, https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/qualitative, (accessed 06 March 2023).

[162] P. Leavy, 'Introduction' in P. Leavy (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, edn. 2, 2020, p. 7.

[163] G. Ulrich, 'Research ethics for human rights researchers' in B. Andreassen, H. O. Sano, and S. McInerney-Lankford (eds.), *Research methods in human rights: a handbook*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, UK, 2017, p. 209.

aimed to avoid damaging a project or organisation which people engage with.[164] Moreover, when discussing sexual and violence-related stigmas faced by FFCS and CBOW, I did not blame communities for these stigmas, as while some may believe in these stigmas, they may do so out of fear and anger from the past conflicts. Lastly, when quoting stories of women and girls, I only used publicly available data to respect and avoid ethical issues regarding online privacy.[165] In these ways, I did my best to ensure my work does not cause harm to any persons or entities.

Moreover, I ensured the data collected, analysed, and summarised was accurate and reliable. Transparency is critical for reliability, such as when explaining one's methodologies and their implementations in the data analysis.[166] Moreover, a core value of research for the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2017) is to "ensure equitable and open access to scientific literature, data and contents".[167] When reflecting on this, I clearly explain my theories, methodologies, and data analyses clearly, allowing my readers to understand his findings. Also, I double-checked my data analysis when calculating term frequencies, ensuring I used complete data from trustworthy sources such as INGO reports, academic articles, and international and local news. In these ways, this thesis upholds data accuracy and reliability.

Lastly, throughout all of this research process, I did my best to be objective and check my personal biases. When researching, analysing, and summarising the experiences of FFCS and CBOW, especially those of their parents and communities in Mali, I respected their cultural and social customs and beliefs,[168] even if I disagreed with their treatment[169] of FFCS and CBOW. Moreover, as a person who has interned for various INGOs, I reminded myself to be objective when evaluating and providing critiques of INGO programming. Moreover, as I am positioned in the Global North, I

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[164] A. Traianou, 'The Centrality of Ethics in Qualitative Research' in P. Leavy (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, edn. 2, 2020, p. 87.

[165] A. Traianou, 'The Centrality of Ethics in Qualitative Research', p. 90.

[166] S. Walker, 'Challenges of human rights measurement' in B. Andreassen, H. O. Sano, & S. Mclnerney-Lankford (eds.), *Research methods in human rights: a handbook*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, UK, 2017, p. 329.

[167] 'UNESCO '39C/Resolution 15', 14 October - 14 November 2017, p. 120, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260889, (accessed 20 February 2022).

[168] All European Academies (ALLEA), 'The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity', *ALLEA*, Berlin, Germany, 2017, p. 4, https://www.allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ALLEA-European-Code-of-Conduct-for-Research-Integrity-2017.pdf, (accessed 22 February 2022).

[169] A. Traianou, 'The Centrality of Ethics in Qualitative Research', p. 100.

was aware of my place when quoting and paraphrasing the experiences of FFCS and CBOW in Mali. I did not tell their stories or attempt to speak for them, but rather attempted to highlight their experiences to complement or critique INGO programming. Through the aforementioned practices, I promoted my objectivity and checked my biases.

6. Data Analysis

This section describes the data analysis results from implementing *Term Frequency* and *CTA* on 23 educational and economic programmes in Mali.[170] The data analysis results are grouped into categories, which include (1) *Identity*: analysing if/how INGOs recognise the identities of FFCS and CBOW, (2) *Conflict Aspects*: investigating if/how INGOs address the conflict-related aspects of FFCS' and CBOW's lives, and (3) *Stigma*: determining if/how INGOs recognise and address sexual and violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW. Each of these categories includes a mixed-methods analysis of educational and economic programmes, to effectively analyse if they mention terms in these FFCS/CBOW-related categories (quantitative), and if they address them through their programme components (qualitative). Lastly, these data analysis categories are viewed through these theories lenses: (1) *Humanitarian Definitions of Childhood* and (2) *Spoiled Identity Theory/Empowerment*. Specifically, the *Humanitarian Definitions of Childhood* theory is applied to (1) *Identity* and (2) *Conflict Aspects*, as the theory focuses on defining what is "childhood", and how this directly contrasts with Conflict. Also, the *Spoiled Identity Theory/Empowerment* theories are implemented together in the (3) *Stigma* category, since these theories explain stigmatisation and its restoration.

A. Humanitarian Definitions of Childhood

Despite providing educational and economic resources to Malian children generally, humanitarian INGOs' lack of acknowledgement of FFCS' and CBOW's overall and conflict-related identities, in combination with the sexual and violence-

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[170] All 23 humanitarian INGO educational and economic programmes are listed in the References and Appendix sections.

related stigmas they experience, contribute to their lack of access to educational and work opportunities in Mali. The following section has been split into (1) *Identity* and (2) *Conflict Aspects*; one part focuses on the overall identity of FFCS and CBOW, while the other focuses on the conflict-related aspects of their lives. The *Humanitarian Definitions of Childhood* theory is applied here, as it is (1) utilised in the *Identity*-related Terms section to portray how it cannot encompass the identities of FFCS or CBOW, and (2) challenged in the *Conflict Aspect*-related Terms section for viewing children and childhood as "neutral free zones",[171] as this in effect excludes the identities of FFCS and CBOW, who are arguably products of violence.

6.1 Identity-related Terms

While humanitarian INGOs in Mali provide educational and economic resources to children in general, they do not acknowledge the existence of FFCS or CBOW in educational or economic spaces. This in effect prevents them from addressing sexual or violence-related stigmas limiting their rights to an education[172] and work.[173] While some FFCS and CBOW do not identify themselves due to fears of ostracism,[174] there is definitive evidence they exist and have experienced violence in Mali. From 2012-2013, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported 2,785 cases of GBV and sexual violence in the country; yet this could be higher, since "rape is something people don't talk about" in Northern Mali.[175] Moreover, a 2013 *Plan International* report revealed from 2011 - 2012, "'girls [had] been sexually abused or forced to marry people. Those who became pregnant have been stigmatised by their own communities and have had to hide or run away'".[176] Thus, despite these and more reported cases and

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[171] Defense for Children International, 'NGO Ad hoc group: Reports, Proposals, etc, 'NGO Informal Consultation on the Draft Convention on the Rights of the Child', cited in L. Lindkvist, 'Rights for the World's Children', p. 297.
[172] CRC, art 28.
[173] ICESCR, art 6.
[174] S. Omari, 'Their untold stories eat away at them: Rape and the women of Mali', *Women's Media Center*, 17 October 2013, https://womensmediacenter.com/women-under-siege/their-untold-stories-eat-away-at-them-rape-and-the-women-of-mali, (accessed 07 February 2023).
[175] S. Omari, 'Their untold stories eat away at them'.
[176] N. van der Gaag, 'In Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Girls and Disasters', Italy, *Plan International*, 2013, in Plan International (eds.) 'Because I am a Girl: The State of the World's Girls 2013', Italy, Plan International, 2013, Cited in, S. Omari, 'Their untold stories eat away at them'.

accounts demonstrating the existence of and violence experienced by FFCS and CBOW, they are not mentioned at all in educational or economic programming.

Table 1: *Identity*-related Terms

The table below compares how often specific words related to the identities of FFCS and CBOW are mentioned in Malian educational and economic programmes.

Identity Terms (2,050 total mentions)			
Educational Programmes		Economic Programmes	
Terms	Frequency	Terms	Frequency
Children Born of War/CBOW	0	Children Born of War/CBOW	0
Child Soldier	0	Child Soldier	2
Female Child Soldier	0	Female Child Soldier	0
Girl/Girls	641	Girl/Girls	193
Jihad	0	Jihad	0
Kidnap, Kidnapping, Kidnapped	0	Kidnap, Kidnapping, Kidnapped	2
Mother/Mom	54	Mother/Mom	19
Rebel	4	Rebel	1
Survivor	5	Survivor	1
Young Woman/Women	3	Young Woman/Women	1,111
TOTAL	718	TOTAL	1,332

6.1.1 Educational Programming

While humanitarian INGOs provide educational resources to Malian children, their educational programmes do not recognise the overall identity of FFCS or CBOW. As a result, these particular children continue experiencing challenges fully expressing their right to an education.

Quantitative Data (*Term Frequency*)

Regarding Table 1, despite terms related to the identities of FFCS and CBOW being mentioned 718 times, the lack of diverse terms mentioned indicates educational programmes most likely do not acknowledge the existence of Malian FFCS or CBOW. The term "Girl/Girls" can be used to describe FFCS and CBOW; and it was mentioned 641 times in 13 educational programmes. However, other terms more specifically related to FFCS and CBOW, including "Child Soldier", "Female Child Soldier", and "CBOW", were mentioned zero times. Moreover, while "Mother/Mom", "Rebel", and "Young Woman/Women" can also be used to describe FFCS and CBOW, they were only mentioned 61 times all together out of 718 total mentions. Thus, while terms related to the identities of FFCS and CBOW were mentioned 718 times, the lack of variety among these terms indicate these educational programmes most likely do not recognise the existence of FFCS or CBOW in Mali.

Qualitative Data (*CTA*)

Regarding programme content, while educational programmes provide diverse educational resources to Malian children, they do not recognise the existence of FFCS or CBOW in their programming, preventing them from addressing the sexual and violence-related stigmas these populations face in educational spaces. This lack of recognition can continue to limit their right to an education. Swedish INGO *Barnfonden* from 2017-2018 built a new school in Mopti, and provided 20 nearby schools: (1) educational and health resources, (2) conflict resolution training to 100 teachers, and (3) advocacy for children's rights to education.[177] While this programme strengthens children's right to an education, it does not name FFCS or CBOW, or address the social challenges or stigmas they particularly face in school. By not acknowledging FFCS, CBOW, or any closely-related identities, the programme fails to address any local hostilities or sexual stigmas towards these groups. This lack of recognition subjugates FFCS and CBOW to continued harassment and other educational hindrances in schools.

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[177] 'Vi ser hur nya attityder tar form', *Barnfonden*, 26 February 2018, https://barnfonden.se/nyheter/vi-ser-hur-nya-attityder-tar-form/, (accessed 02 April 2023).

World Vision Mali from 2014[178] to at least 2019 has operated various initiatives increasing literacy in Malian schools. This can be seen with the "Literacy Boost" 2016 pilot, which provided 33 schools in the Koro cercle with 69 literacy kits and various technical capacity trainings to school staff;[179] as well as its 2019 "Education in Emergencies" initiative which provided numerous literacy materials, staff training, and school facility improvements in Central and Northern Mali.[180] While these initiatives address literacy among Malian children, they fail to acknowledge FFCS or CBOW in educational spaces, and thus, cannot address the social challenges they face in school. This again, allows FFCS and CBOW to continue experiencing stigmas in school, and limit their right to an education. Thus, while some humanitarian INGOs promote the right to education for Malian children through their educational programmes, they cannot do so for all children, since they fail to acknowledge all of them.

6.1.2 Economic Programmes

While economic programmes can and do provide economic resources to Malian children, they fail to specifically address the identities and therefore sexual and violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW. This in turn continues to limit their right to work.

Quantitative Data (*Term Frequency*)

Regarding Table 1, while humanitarian INGOs mention *identity*-related terms in their economic programmes 1,332 times, the lack of diversity among these terms does not fully acknowledge the existence of FFCS or CBOW. The terms "Young Woman/Women" were mentioned 1,111 times in 10 economic programmes. Other widely used terms including "Girl/Girls" and "Mother/Mom" were mentioned 193 and

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[178] World Vision Mali, 'Mali: 2015 Annual Report', Bamako, Mali, *World Vision Mali*, 2015, p. 8, https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/WV%20Mali%20Rapport%20Annuel%202015%20Fr-Eng.pdf, (accessed 02 April 2023).

[179] World Vision Mali, 'Mali: 2016 Annual Report', Bamako, Mali, *World Vision Mali*, 2016, p. 13 (English side) https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/WV%20Mali%20Annual%20Report%202016_Fr_En_0.pdf, (accessed 02 April 2023).

[180] World Vision Mali, 'Mali: Annual Report 2019', Bamako, Mali, *World Vision Mali*, 2020, pp. 24-25, https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/WV%20Mali%20%20Annual%20%20Report%20FY%2019%20English_2.pdf, (accessed 02 April 2023).

19 times. These terms can relate to the identities of FFCS and CBOW, yet they do not fully encapsulate them. In that, these aforementioned terms can be used to describe any girls, young women, and mothers in Mali who participate in these programmes. More specific terms such as "Child Soldier", "Rebel", and "Jihad" more specifically acknowledge FFCS and CBOW; yet these were only mentioned 2, 1, and 0 times in these economic programmes. Thus, more general terms were mentioned many times, but the lack of more specific FFCS and CBOW-related terms demonstrates these economic programmes probably do not acknowledge their existence.

Qualitative Data (*CTA*)

   While economic programmes are more inclusive of FFCS and CBOW by explicitly including returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in their programmes, this inclusivity still does not address the sexual or violence-related stigmas these populations face from their communities. As a result, FFCS and CBOW can continue to experience these stigmas when exercising their right to work. While not the primary focus, FFCS can be categorised as returnees, since they usually return to their community after their experience with an armed group.[181] [182] Dutch INGO *ICCO* (now *Cordaid*) from 2018 - present operates their "Youth Employment in Mali" programme, which aims to train 8,620 young people (including 2,586 women and 1,293 returnees) in the Koulikoro, Kayes, Gao, and Bamako regions to run their own businesses. They do this by training selected youth in their desired employment field (waste management, horticulture, food processing, handicrafts), take business management and life skills courses, and in the end receive a small resource stipend.[183] While implementing women and returnee quotas might allow some FFCS and CBOW to start their own businesses, this programme does not address the sexual nor violence-related stigmas these groups face. While these populations could start their own businesses through this programme, it would not help them be socially accepted by or safe in their own communities.

   INGOs *Plan International Italy* and *ActionAid Italy*, along with the Italian Ministry of the Interior, and Malian national and local NGOs since 2020 run the

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[181] N. van der Gaag, 'In Double Jeopardy', *Plan International*, 2013, cited in, S. Omari, 'Their untold stories eat away at them'.
[182] 'Tuareg Insurgents in Mali Raped Hundreds of Women and Girls'.
[183] ICCO, 'Youth Employment in Mali', The Hague, Netherlands, *ICCO*, 2018, https://www.icco-cooperation.org/en/project/youth-employment-in-mali/#intro, (accessed 02 April 2023).

"Avenir Brillant" (Brilliant Future) programme, with the aim to reduce the migration of young people in the Kayes and Bamako regions by providing vocational training and support in horticulture, handicrafts, agro-ecology, and renewable energy. These trainings include hairdressing, tailoring, market gardening, seed production, soil restoration, mechanics, and food processing.[184] While this programme specifically targets youth at-risk of migration, it does not address the stigmas causing FFCS and CBOW to migrate. Thus, FFCS and CBOW could enter and start their business from this programme, yet sexual and violence-related stigmas could still prevent their economic success in their community. Therefore, as seen with "Youth Employment in Mali" and "Avenir Brillant", including migrational populations in economic programming could help some FFCS and CBOW access economic opportunities, but it still does not respond to sexual and violence-related stigmas that could interfere with their economic opportunities from these programmes.

6.2 Conflict Aspects-related Terms

While humanitarian INGOs in Mali recognise and respond to conflict generally in their educational and economic programmes, they fail to see and address sexual and especially violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW. In turn, FFCS and CBOW continue to have limited access to their rights to an education and work. Including conflict-related elements, particularly those related to violence-related stigmas in Malian educational and economic programmes is critical, since FFCS and CBOW have experienced sexual and violent trauma during the Sahelian Crisis. In 2013, an 18-year old girl was kidnapped and held captive by an armed group for six months, where she was forced to do sexual acts, cooking, and laundry. After she was released, she continued to live with shame and "hostile reactions I [she] from youths in the neighbourhood".[185] In another case, rebels tried to pay $14 USD for a 13-year-old girl, which her family refused. After then kidnapping this girl, the rebels repeatedly raped

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[184] 'Project Avenir Brillant: Vocational training activities continue in Bamako and Kayes in horticulture, agro-ecology, fashion, and crafts, with joint funding from the Italian Ministry of the Interior, ActionAid International (Italy), and PLAN International (Italy)', *Malian Association for Deportees*, 15 June 2022, https://www.expulsesmaliens.info/Project-Avenir-Brillant-Vocational-training-activities-continue-in-Bamako-and.html, (accessed 02 April 2023).

[185] N. van der Gaag, 'In Double Jeopardy', *Plan International*, 2013, cited in, S. Omari, 'Their untold stories eat away at them'.

her, and she died in their captivity one week later.[186] These and other cases illustrate the importance of addressing conflict, especially violence-related stigmas, in educational and economic programming, as they can provide FFCS and CBOW needed support to access educational and economic opportunities.

Table 2: *Conflict Aspect*-related Terms

        Table 2 compares how often conflict-related words, or words related to the conflict-experiences of FFCS and CBOW, are said in Malian educational and economic programmes.

Conflict Terms (862 total mentions)			
Educational Programmes		Economic Programmes	
Terms	Frequency	Terms	Frequency
Armed Group	30	Armed Group	60
Attack	1	Attack	3
Conflict/Crisis	73	Conflict/Crisis	53
Peace	20	Peace	38
Raid and Loot	0	Raid and Loot	0
Rape	1	Rape	3
Rebel	4	Rebel	1
Social Inclusion	125	Social Inclusion	230
Trauma	1	Trauma	1
Violation/Violations/Violating/Violated	4	Violation/Violations/Violating/Violated	0
Violence/Violent	153	Violence/Violent	59
War	1	War	1
TOTAL	413	TOTAL	449

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[186] 'Tuareg Insurgents in Mali Raped Hundreds of Women and Girls'.

6.2.1 Educational Programmes

While educational programmes in Mali see and incorporate conflict-related elements in their programmes, they do not address sexual or particularly violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS or CBOW specifically. This in turn can further prevent these groups from obtaining an education.

Quantitative Data (*Term Frequency*)

The quantitative data indicates conflict-related subjects and aspects are recognised in educational programmes, especially considering the high number of mentions. But the data cannot specifically indicate whether these educational programmes respond to the conflict-related issues experienced by the general population, or by FFCS and CBOW specifically. Conflict-related words were mentioned 413 times in total, with the most repeated being "Violence/Violent", "Social Inclusion", and "Conflict/Crisis" (153, 125, and 73 times). These terms generally relate to the FFCS, due to them experiencing sexual violence from armed groups (violence/violent),[187] having issues being accepted back into their communities (Social Inclusion),[188] and being products of conflict (Conflict/Crisis).[189] These terms also relate to the lives of CBOW, as some can be the result of violence (Violence/Violent),[190] have issues living in their mother's community (Social Inclusion),[191] and are born from a conflict (Conflict/Crisis).[192] By educational programmes mentioning these terms and others including "Armed Group" and "Peace" (30 and 20 times), INGOs probably acknowledge the conflict-experiences of the general population in Mali; but this cannot explicitly answer if they address the specific conflict-experiences of FFCS or CBOW.

Qualitative Data (*CTA*)

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[187] G. Brownell and R.T. Praetorius, 'Experiences of former child soldiers in Africa', p. 462.
[188] R. Haer and T. Böhmelt, 'Child soldiers as time bombs?', p. 411.
[189] L. T. E. Sarrouh, 'Where Are They?', p. 18-19.
[190] I.C. Mochmann, 'Children Born of War - A Decade of International and Interdisciplinary Research', p. 321.
[191] M. Denov, A. C. V. Vliet, and A. A. Lakor, 'Children and youth born of conflict-related sexual violence', pp. 7-8.
[192] I.C. Mochmann, 'Children Born of War- A Decade of International and Interdisciplinary Research', p. 321.

Providing informal educational learning environments can help children affected by conflict access an education, yet these educational programmes do not address the stigmas, particularly violence-related, that detrimentally affect the educational lives of FFCS and CBOW. INGO *Plan International Mali* from 2012 until at least 2017 has established eight child-friendly spaces in Northern Mali in response to the Sahelian Crisis; although these were originally placed in schools, they were then moved to community centres to include children who dropped out of school.[193] In these spaces, they provide non-formal education programmes (to reintegrate out-of-school children), and support services to survivors of GBV and girls and young women at-risk of or in forced marriages.[194] Despite these informal educational spaces increasing out-of-school children's access to education and sexual and health-related support, they fail to address violence-related stigmas and fears of FFCS and CBOW. In that, sexual stigmas such as "virgin purity" can be addressed by GBV and forced marriage support services, yet violence-related stigmas (ex. associating CBOW as "jihadists'" or "rebels' children")[195] are not at all addressed. This in turn continues to subject FFCS and CBOW to local fears and hostilities in educational spaces.

World Vision Mali from 2018 until at least 2021 has implemented Children's Clubs, which allows vulnerable children ages 5-18 to obtain an education suited to their needs, and meets the quality of education given in formal schools. As of 2018, 104 of these children's clubs have been implemented, with 9,721 children and 338 club mentors attending.[196] Though this provides vulnerable children in Mali increased access to education, it does not address the sexual nor violence fears or hostilities communities have of FFCS or CBOW. Thus, this allows for these populations to continue facing sexual and violence-related stigmas and stereotypes from their communities in educational spaces. Therefore, while these informal educational spaces have integrated

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[193] R. Ejdervik and L. Claessens, 'Child Friendly Spaces Providing child protection and education in conflict settings: a case study from Timbuktu, Mali', United Kingdom, *Plan International*, 2017, p. 7, https://plan-international.org/uploads/sites/21/2022/01/child_friendly_spaces_provding_protection_and_education_in_mali.pdf, (accessed 05 February 2023).

[194] R. Ejdervik and L. Claessens, 'Child Friendly Spaces', p. 10.

[195] Report of the Secretary-General, 'Women and girls who become pregnant as a result of sexual violence in conflict and children born of sexual violence in conflict', p. 6.

[196] World Vision Mali, 'Mali: Annual Report 2018', Bamako, Mali, *World Vision Mali*, 2018, p. 18, https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/2018%20Annual%20Report%20-%20English%20Version_compressed.pdf, (accessed 02 April 2023).

conflict-related elements into their programming, the lack of addressing sexual and especially violence-related stigmas in their programmes allows for the continual harassment of FFCS and CBOW in their education. This in turn continues to support existing barriers for them when attempting to exercise their right to an education.

6.2.2 Economic Programmes

Whilst economic programmes in Mali incorporate conflict-related aspects and elements into their programmes, they do not address the sexual and particularly violence-related stigmas afflicting the lives of FFCS and CBOW. In turn, this lack of help from these economic programmes continues to limit these groups' right to work.

Quantitative Data (*Term Frequency*)

As seen with educational programmes, the quantitative data indicates conflict is recognised in economic programmes, especially with the high number of mentions. However, the data alone cannot particularly indicate whether these economic programmes respond to the conflict-related issues experienced by the general population, or by FFCS and CBOW specifically. The total number of conflict-related words mentioned was 449, with "Social Inclusion" being mentioned the most (230 times), followed by "Armed Group" (60), and "Violence/Violent" (59). As explained previously, all three of these terms relate to the experiences of FFCS and CBOW, since both groups have had most likely issues being accepted by their communities (Social Inclusion), interacted with or are a result of an interaction with an armed group (Armed Group), and experienced and/or are a result of violence (Violence/Violent). Considering these economic programmes mention the aforementioned terms and others including "Conflict/Crisis" (53 times) and "Peace" (38), INGOs probably recognise the conflict-experiences of the general population in Mali; but this cannot specifically answer if they address the specific conflict-experiences of FFCS or CBOW.

Qualitative Data (*CTA*)

Despite integrating peace and social inclusion components into their economic programmes, humanitarian INGOs need to directly address the sexual and especially violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW. For if they do not do so, then

these populations will continue to experience these stigmas from their communities. Italian INGO *ENGIM Internazionale* in 2016-2017 worked closely with Malian local NGO *CREATEAM* on "PROTEJA", which aimed to "reduce the social and economic exclusion of young women and men through the promotion of employment and entrepreneurship".[197] They provided financial, material, and knowledge support to young entrepreneurs to help them kick-start small businesses.[198] Though the inclusion of excluded youth may help FFCS and CBOW start their own businesses, it does not at all resolve or even address current sexual or violence-related stigmas local communities hold against these populations. In effect, this programme could help FFCS or CBOW become entrepreneurs, yet it would not help them thrive in a community that does not accept them.

Moreover, German INGO *RET* from 2022 - 2025 is conducting their project "Improve Livelihoods and Food Security through Training Climate-Adaptive Agriculture, Handicrafts, and Peaceful Relations and Economic Interdependence Among Communities". They aim to (1) improve the employability and incomes for at-risk youth and vulnerable women by providing vocational training, helping them enter the labour market, and start a small business; (2) improve food security by providing courses in climate-sensitive agriculture and business management; and (3) improve peaceful community relations and economic integration of youth-at-risk (especially those at-risk of being recruited into armed groups) and vulnerable women, by providing conflict prevention and gender-specific life skills courses and organising 25 peace projects with various municipalities.[199] Although this programme certainly addresses the gender, conflict and economic experiences of at-risk youth and vulnerable women in Mali, it does not mention any reintegration efforts or related components that could address the specific violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS or CBOW. In other words, this programme may decrease conflict and recruitment efforts in communities, and

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[197] M.D, 'Promotion de l'entrepreneuriat jeune : L'ONG ENGIM Internationale appuie 35 jeunes des régions de Mopti et Kayes', *Tjikan,* 30 June 2017, https://www.maliweb.net/echos-de-nos-regions/promotion-de-lentrepreneuriat-jeune-long-engim-internationale-appuie-35-jeunes-regions-de-mopti-kayes-2355522.html, (accessed 02 April 2023).

[198] M.D, 'Promotion de l'entrepreneuriat jeune'.

[199] RET, 'Improve Livelihoods and Food Security through Training Climate-Adaptive Agriculture, Handicrafts, and Peaceful Relations and Economic Interdependence Among Communities', *RET*, 23 March 2023, https://retgermany.de/2023/03/23/empowering-vulnerable-women-youth-in-mali/, (accessed 02 April 2023).

increase economic opportunity for vulnerable youth and women, however, it mentions nothing about addressing particularly existing violence-related hostility and fears communities hold against FFCS and CBOW. Conflict-related components including peace and social inclusion may be integrated into economic programmes, however, they still need to address sexual and especially violence-related stigmas to increase FFCS' and CBOW's right to work.

B. Spoiled Identity and Empowerment

While humanitarian INGOs address sexual stigmas (ex. GBV) in their educational and economic programmes, they fail to address violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW. In effect, these INGOs allow them to continue being harassed by their communities for their perceived actions of and associations to violence in Mali, limiting their rights to school and work. The following section focuses on *Stigma*-related terms, specifically if and/or how humanitarian INGOs recognise and respond to sexual and violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW. The *Spoiled Identity* and *Empowerment* theories are jointly applied to the *Stigma* section, as they provide insight into how sexual and violence-related stigmas can overtake the whole identities of FFCS and CBOW, [200] and how educational and economic programmes can help restore their identities (and in effect better express their rights rights) in the eyes of their communities.[201]

6.3 Stigma-related Terms

Some humanitarian INGOs integrate gender and GBV components into their educational and economic programmes, however, the continued lack of acknowledging and addressing violence-related stigmas particularly leaves FFCS and CBOW continually stigmatised due to their connections to violence. It is critical these programmes recognise and disarm these stigmas, as FFCW and CBOW in Mali have experienced severe violence-related stigmas from their communities due to their

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[200] I. Solanke, 'Stigma', p. 25.
[201] M. Worthen et al., 'I Stand Like a Woman', p. 51.

"associations" with armed groups. During the 5th Public Hearing of the CVJR in June 2022, one woman testified:

> During the occupation of Timbuktu by jihadists, I was forcibly married to a jihadist leader. [...] My forced marriage lasted six months and I had a child with him who is 9 years old today. My child experiences stigma at school. [...] Every time he went out, I was guarded by two armed men. I was so stigmatized that when I gave birth no one came to greet me.[202]

Moreover, UN Women (2013) reported during the 2012 rebel occupation of Gao, rape victims' "untold stories eat away at them. They are rejected by their families and are left with limited protection. [...] They carry the burden of both their oppressors and that of the community which failed to protect them".[203] These cases of sexual violence and stigmas have severely affected FFCS' and CBOW's access to educational and economic opportunities. For these reasons, INGOs need to address sexual and especially violence-related stigmas in their educational and economic programmes to uphold their educational and work rights.

Table 3: Stigma-related Terms

The table displays how often stigma (general, sexual, and violence) experienced by FFCS and CBOW are mentioned in educational and economic programmes in Mali.

Stigma Terms (1,690 total mentions)			
Educational Programmes		Economic Programmes	
Terms	Frequency	Terms	Frequency
Empower/Empowered/Empowering/Empowerment (G)	200	Empower/Empowered/Empowering/Empowerment (G)	182
Fear (V)	4	Fear (V)	0
Gender-Based Violence (GBV) (S)	652	Gender-Based Violence (GBV) (S)	263
Jihad and Rebel (V)	4	Jihad and Rebel (V)	1
Prejudice (G)	0	Prejudice (G)	0

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[202] B.A. Momini, '5éme Audience Publique de la CVJR'.
[203] 'Helping rape survivors in Mali speak up', *UN Women*, 09 Janaury 2013, https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/1/helping-rape-survivors-in-mali-to-speak-up, (accessed 10 April 2023).

Rape (S)	1	Rape (S)	3
Sex/Sexual/Sexualised/Sexuality (S)	92	Sex/Sexual/Sexualised/Sexuality (S)	56
Sexual Assault (S)	0	Sexual Assault (S)	0
Stereotype (G)	12	Stereotype (G)	1
Stigma (G)	2	Stigma (G)	0
Virgin/Virginity and Purity (S)	0	Virgin/Virginity and Purity (S)	1
Violation/Violations/Violating/Violated (V)	4	Violation/Violations/Violating/Violated (V)	0
Violence/Violent (V)	153	Violence/Violent (V)	59
TOTAL (G) General (S) Sexual (V) Violence	1,124 306 653 165	TOTAL (G) General (S) Sexual (V) Violence	566 183 323 60

6.3.1 Educational Programmes

While some educational programmes integrate GBV and empowerment components in their programming, the lack of violence-addressing aspects integrated allows for FFCS and CBOW to continue feeling unsafe or rejected in schools.

Quantitative Data (*Term Frequency*)

The quantitative data further highlights the differences between the stigmas, with words related to sexual stigmas being mentioned the most, and words related to violence-related stigmas being mentioned the least. In total, there were 1,124 mentions of stigma terms, with 653 related to sexual stigma, 306 general, and 165 violence. Of the 653 related to sexual stigma, "Gender-Based Violence (GBV)" was mentioned the most (652 times), followed by "Sex" (92), then "Rape" (4). Regarding general stigma, "Empower" was said the most (200 times), followed by "Stereotype" (12), then "Stigma" (2). For violence-related stigmas, "Violence/Violent" was mentioned the most (153 times), followed by "Violation", "Fear", and "Jihad/Rebel" (4 each). With sexual

stigmas mentioned the most and violence-related stigmas the least, it is highly probable educational programmes in Mali acknowledge sexual stigmas more than violence-related stigmas regarding FFCS and CBOW.

Qualitative Data (*CTA*)

Despite humanitarian INGOs integrating GBV, empowerment, and women's rights components into their educational programming, these programmes still do not address the violence hostilities and stigmas that communities hold against FFCS and CBOW. This allows for continued violence-related harassment of FFCS and CBOW in educational spaces. From 2011 - 2015, British INGO *Oxfam GB* ran the "Girls CAN" programme in the Kati cercle with the aim of helping 3,752 girls transition from primary to secondary school. This programme (1) set up mothers' associations to improve parents' recognition about the role of education and reduce child marriage; (2) set up girls' clubs to have sensitisation and training activities improving their knowledge and willingness to denounce GBV, especially in schools; and (3) conduct sensitisation activities and trainings with school staff to create a positive school environment for girls, including reducing stigmatisation.[204] In their 2019 impact evaluation, 84% of girls (out of 324 girls in the sample) considered themselves willing to denounce violence, and 98% considered violence against women non-acceptable.[205] "Girls CAN" definitely addresses sexual stigmas experienced by FFCS and CBOW in educational spaces, particularly those related to GBV and early marriage, yet it completely avoids addressing violence stigmas. In that, by only addressing sexual-related and GBV stereotypes, this programme allows communities to continue shaming, stigmatising, and harassing FFCS and CBOW as long as it is related to violence and not gender. This then continues to limit FFCS' and CBOW's abilities to fully express their rights to an education in educational spaces.

Moreover, American INGO *CARE USA* operated the "Education for Change" (E4C) programme from 2015-2021, which aimed to help marginalised girls have greater

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[204] S. Lombardini and M. Vigneri, 'Women's Empowerment in Mali: Impact evaluation of the educational project: 'Girls CAN - Promoting Secondary Education in West Africa''', London, UK, *Oxfam GB*, 2017, pp. 11-12, https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620252/er-womens-empowerment-mali-effectiveness-review-100417-en.pdf;jsessionid=8D49CA96E6B157088CC21CAA04C63978?sequence=1, (accessed 02 April 2023).
[205] S. Lombardini and M. Vigneri, 'Women's Empowerment in Mali', pp. 30-31.

access to quality education.[206] Specifically, the project implemented the following in 50 schools in the Mopti and Bamako regions:[207] (1) trainings to secondary school investigators and staff on how to discuss GBV, Adolescent Sexual Reproductive and Health Rights (ASRHR), and gender with students; (2) student SMS and group exchanges on ASRHR and GBV topics;[208] and (3) community actors training and support (ex. Women leaders,[209] influential and religious male leaders) to engage and promote ASRHR, GBV prevention, and girls' rights.[210] E4C addresses important aspects of sexual stigma affecting FFCS and CBOW, including GBV, ASRHR, and gender, yet it fails to acknowledge and respond to violence stigmas that also affect these groups in educational spaces. Yes, it is critical FFCS and CBOW not experience any GBV or issues with ASRHR or gender; but it is equally important they are not further condemned or harassed for their associations to armed groups or related violence. Therefore, the integration of GBV, gender, and related elements in educational programmes addresses sexual stigmas experienced by FFCS and CBOW, but they do not address violence stereotypes and hostilities communities hold against these same groups.

6.3.2 Economic Programmes

Similar to educational, the integration of GBV and women's rights economic programmes acknowledges and addresses sexual stigmas affected by FFCS and CBOW, yet they do not address the violence-related stigmas and hostilities affecting these groups.

Quantitative Data (*Term Frequency*)

The quantitative data further highlights the differences between the stigmas, with words related to sexual stigmas being mentioned the most, and words related to violence-related stigmas being mentioned the least. Out of 566 stigma-related mentions

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[206] CARE USA, 'Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative: Gender Integration, Gender-based Violence (GBV) Prevention, and Social Norms Change', Atlanta, GA, *CARE USA*, 2022, p. 3, https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Patsy-Collins-Trust-Fund-Initiative-Gender-Integration-Gender-based-Violence-GBV-Prevention-and-Social-Norms-Change.pdf, (accessed 02 April 2022).
[207] CARE USA, 'Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative', p. 6.
[208] CARE USA, 'Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative', pp. 10-11.
[209] CARE USA, 'Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative', p. 12.
[210] CARE USA, 'Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative', pp. 15-16.

in total, 323 were related to sexual, 183 related to general, and 60 to violence-related stigmas. Of the 323 sexual stigma mentions, "GBV" was stated the most (263 times), followed by "Sex" (56), then "Rape" (4). Regarding general stigmas, "Empower" was mentioned the most (182 times), followed by "Stereotype" (1), and "Prejudice" and "Sigma" not at all being mentioned. For violence stigmas, "Violence/Violent" was said the most (59 times), followed by both "Jihad/Rebel" (1), and "Fear" and "Violation" not being mentioned at all. Thus, as seen above, with terms related to sexual stigma being stated the most, and those related to violence stated the least, it is likely economic programmes indirectly recognise sexual stigmas the most and violence-related stigmas the least in Mali regarding FFCS and CBOW.

Qualitative Data (*CTA*)

While GBV and gender-related elements are integrated into their programming, these economic programmes still do not address the violence-related hostilities and stigmas experienced by FFCS and CBOW. These integrations can help alleviate the sexual-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW, however, they continue to ignore the violence-related stigmas and fears of these populations. This in turn continues the limitations FFCS and CBOW have to fully express their right to economic livelihoods. Norwegian INGO *CARE Norway* from 2016-2019 operated "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Programme II" (GEWEP II), which aimed to improve the (1) economic status, (2) access to education, (3) climate resilience, and (4) community engagement regarding the most vulnerable women and girls in the Mopti, Ségou, and Tombouctou regions.[211] These were accomplished through economic empowerment training (focus on nutrition), and entrepreneurship support (promoting women business leaders and establishing local financing groups).[212] At the end of the programme, women's views on their economic security increased, and men's views on women's economic security also increased by 6.6%.[213] Women's favourable attitudes towards GBV decreased by 21.5% and men's by 3.1%.[214] GEWEP II decreased positive

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[211] CARE Norway, 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Programme II 2016-2019: Mali, 2019 Final Evaluation', Bamako, Mali, *CARE Norway*, 2019, p. 5, https://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/English_GEWEP_-FINAL-EVALUATION-REPORT.pdf, (accessed 02 April 2023).
[212] CARE Norway, 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Programme II 2016-2019', pp. 18-19.
[213] CARE Norway, 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Programme II 2016-2019', p. 29.
[214] CARE Norway, 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Programme II 2016-2019', p. 31.

attitudes overall towards GBV, yet did not specifically mention any components addressing sexual or violence-related stigmas afflicting FFCS and CBOW. Moreover, even if the decrease in GBV led to a decrease in sexual stigmas among communities, the programme still did not alleviate or address any violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS or CBOW. Thus, even if FFCS or CBOW participated in and were able to start their own businesses or join a local financing group, they would still face local hostilities from their communities due to their association with conflict and/or violence. Considering this would limit their economic livelihoods, the inclusion of components addressing violence-related stigmas is necessary to help FFCS and CBOW fully express their right to work.

Moreover, American INGO *CARE USA* since 2017 has operated the "Women on the Move" (WoM) programme, which brings together Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) to create a platform for women and girls' rights in West Africa.[215] VSLAs are traditionally women-led savings groups that pool together savings and invest in income-generating activities. However, they have been used more recently to assert women's rights and influence social norms at the local and country-levels.[216] The strategy for WoM includes connecting solidarity groups regionally, facilitating spaces to network them with civil society organisations (CSOs), build their capacities to advance gender justice, and integrate women-led emergency efforts into CARE humanitarian responses.[217] In effect, these women's collectives have (1) advocated for laws regarding women's access to land, child marriage, girls' education, (2) taught 752 groups COVID-adapted income generating activities, and (3) increased movements to end child marriage.[218] While WoM is advancing gender justice and women's rights, which could address sexual stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW, it still does not address stigmas related to conflict and violence. In that, it allows VSLAs to come together to collectively advocate for women's rights, including child marriage, but does not consider FFCS or CBOW might not be able to join these groups due to how they are associated with violence and conflict stigmas. For example, if their local VSLA sees

[215] M. Palmer, 'CARE West Africa: Women's Collective Voice - Global Report FY 2017-21', Atlanta, GA, *CARE USA*, 2021, p. 4, https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CARE-WA_WoM-WCV_Global-Report_Graphic-draft_v3-1.pdf, (accessed 02 April 2023).
[216] Palmer, 'CARE West Africa', p. 6.
[217] Palmer, 'CARE West Africa', p. 8.
[218] Palmer, 'CARE West Africa', p. 17.

FFCS and CBOW as "rebels", then FFCS and CBOW would not have access to these VSLA networks or the economic support they bring. Thus, this highlights the vitality of including components addressing violence-related stigmas, since the lack of these components limits their right to economic livelihoods. Therefore, GBV, gender, and related components in economic programmes address sexual-related stigmas, but not address the violence- and/or conflict-related stigmas experienced by FFCS and CBOW. In only addressing half of the aforementioned stigmas, FFCS and CBOW could face less sexual stereotypes, yet will continue to face violence- and conflict-related stigmas, limiting their right to economic livelihoods.

7. Conclusion

This section briefly summarises the findings, explains their significance for these populations, NGOs, and the academic literature, and presents further calls for research.

7.1 Summary of Findings

In this thesis, I aimed to answer the following questions, (1) do humanitarian INGOs acknowledge and address sexual and violence-related stigmas in their educational and economic programmes, and (2) how can these acknowledgements and responses (or lack thereof) potentially affect FFCS' and CBOW's rights to school and work. The results concluded most educational and economic programmes operated by humanitarian INGOs did not recognise or address stigmas affecting FFCS or CBOW. Those that recognised stigmas affecting those populations, only focused on sexual stigmas, but failed completely in addressing violence-related stigmas. This in turn continues to support existing barriers (stigmatisations) that continue to prevent FFCS and CBOW from fully exercising their rights to school and work.

7.1.1 Humanitarian Definitions of Childhood

While providing educational and economic resources to Malian children and youth in general, humanitarian INGOs' lack of recognition for FFCS' and CBOW's Overall and Conflict-related identities, in combination with the sexual and violence-

related stigmas they experience, contribute to their lack of access to education and work in Mali. Regarding *Identity*, humanitarian INGOs did not recognise the existence of FFCS or CBOW in their educational programmes. This could be seen with the lack of diversity among terms related to the identities among FFCS and CBOW, as well as *Barnfonden*[219] and *World Vision Mali*[220] not mentioning these populations in their programming. Economic programmes also failed to recognise the existence of FFCS and CBOW as well. This could be seen with the lack of diversity among FFCS- and CBOW-related terms in economic programming, as well as programmes *ICCO*[221]and "Avenir Brillant"[222] targeting young people and returnees but not addressing sexual or violence-related stigmas.

Regarding *Conflict Aspects*, humanitarian INGOs while recognising and responding to conflict generally, they did not acknowledge or address sexual and especially violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW. Regarding educational programmes, the quantitative data indicated conflict-related aspects of FFCS and CBOW were mentioned numerous times, however, programmes including *Plan International Mali*[223] and *World Vision Mali*[224] did not address any violence-related stigmas. Economic programmes had a high number of conflict-related terms mentioned, however, *ENGIM Internazionale*'s[225] and *RET*'s[226] programmes did little to address violence-related stigmas in their programming. Therefore, humanitarian INGOs provided educational and economic resources to Malian children and youth generally, yet they did not address sexual and especially violence-related stigmas affecting the lives of FFCS and CBOW. This in effect continues to deny FFCS and CBOW their ability to fully express their rights to school and work.

7.1.2 Spoiled Identity and Empowerment

[219] 'Vi ser hur nya attityder tar form'.
[220] World Vision Mali, 'Mali: Annual Report 2019', p. 24-25.
[221] ICCO, 'Youth Employment in Mali'.
[222] 'Project Avenir Brillant'.
[223] R. Ejdervik and L. Claessens, 'Child Friendly Spaces', p. 10.
[224] World Vision Mali, 'Mali: Annual Report 2018', p. 18.
[225] M.D, 'Promotion de l'entrepreneuriat jeune'.
[226] RET, 'Improve Livelihoods and Food Security through Training Climate-Adaptive Agriculture, Handicrafts, and Peaceful Relations and Economic Interdependence Among Communities'.

While some humanitarian INGOs integrate gender-related components (ex. GBV) into their educational and economic programmes, they continue to not recognise and address violence-related stigmas, leaving FFCS and CBOW continually feared, stigmatised, and rights violated by their communities. This was seen in educational programmes, where words related to sexual stigmas were mentioned the most, and those related to violence the least; and where *Oxfam GB*[227] and *CARE USA*,[228] while addressing gender- and GBV-related stigmas in their programming, do not at all address violence-related stigmas. This was also seen in economic programmes, where words related to sexual stigma were mentioned the most and violence the least; and where *CARE Norway*[229] and *CARE USA*,[230] while acknowledging and addressing sexual stigmas, fail to even recognise violence-related stigmas in their programmes. Similar to the aforementioned findings, the lack of addressing violence-related stigmas by humanitarian INGO in their educational and economic programmes leaves FFCS and CBOW continually vulnerable to local hostilities and harassment from their communities, limiting their educational and economic rights.

7.2 Significance of Findings

The lack of addressing sexual and violence-related stigmatisation by humanitarian INGOs forces FFCS and CBOW to hide their identities or flee to new areas to receive educational and/or economic assistance. Neenan (2018) highlights this strategy of fleeing when analysing the stigmatisation of FFCS and CBOW in Uganda. She specifically describes how FFCS and CBOW from privileged social classes would experience less stigmatisation if they were sent to good schools in Kampala, where their backgrounds would not be known.[231] In regard to CBOW specifically, Apio (2016) explains in Uganda, some families such as Aloyo's, hide their child's birth history to prevent the public from accessing the stigma, thus protecting their child from stigmatisation.[232] Therefore, when humanitarian INGOs do not address stigmas in their

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[227] S. Lombardini and M. Vigneri, 'Women's Empowerment in Mali'', pp. 11-12.
[228] CARE USA, 'Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative', pp. 10-11.
[229] CARE Norway, 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Programme II 2016-2019', pp. 18-19.
[230] Palmer, 'CARE West Africa', p. 6.
[231] J. Neenan, 'Closing the Protection Gap for Children Born of War', p. 40.
[232] Apio, E.O., *Children Born of War in northern Uganda*, p. 222.

programmes, they essentially force FFCS, CBOW, and families to conceal their identities to access their programmes, and in effect, their rights to school and work.

By humanitarian INGOs not addressing stigmas between FFCS, CBOW, and their communities, they will not be able to promote sustainable peace. As aforementioned in the Literature Review, these INGOs need to recognise FFCS can be both victims and victimisers, and CBOW can be associated with their parents' association with armed groups. For FFCS specifically, Denov and Maclure (2006) highlighted female child soldier attacks in Sierra Leone, including a child explaining how they enjoyed burning homes.[233] Regarding CBOW, Denov, Vliet, and Lakor (2022) highlight these violence-related stigmas in Northern Uganda and Rwanda, where CBOW were discriminated against by their families, communities and schools.[234] With humanitarian INGOs not at all addressing or even acknowledging current stigmas and tensions between FFCS, CBOW, and Malian communities, they and their work will not bring about peace in the region, since they will not even address its underlying tensions.

By only recognising and addressing sexual stigmas (ex. GBV), humanitarian INGOs are only addressing half of potential FFCS experiences, which can lead to sexualisation. This can be attributed to CBOW as well, due to them being associated with sexual violence and violating purity (context-dependent). As aforementioned by Carroll (2015) and Fox (2004), while female child are only viewed sexually, and sexual abuse does happen, female child soldiers are fighters, messengers, transports, and more.[235] [236] Regarding CBOW, as previously mentioned, Carpenter (2010) argues CBOW have had a role in BiH nationalist narratives, with them being seen as violations of "women's bodies and Bosnian purity".[237] By only addressing sexual stigmas within Malian communities, humanitarian INGOs sexualise FFCS and CBOW, painting them as sexual violators or violations that can be treated.

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[233] M. Denov and R. MacLure, 'Engaging the Voices of Girls in the Aftermath of Sierra Leone's Conflict', p. 78

[234] M. Denov, A.C.V. Vliet and A.A. Lakor, 'Children and youth born of conflict-related sexual violence', p. 7-8.

[235] S. Carroll, 'Catch Them Young, p. 43.

[236] M. J. Fox, 'Girl Soldiers', p. 469.

[237] R. C. Carpenter, *Forgetting Children Born of War*, p. 143.

7.3 Further Calls for Research

After conducting research on FFCS and CBOW stigmatisation in Mali, there are various areas of research that need to be explored to better understand and assist these groups.

Firstly, there needs to be more research into humanitarian INGO inclusion of FFCS and CBOW in their educational and economic programmes in Mali in general. For example, due to time constraints, this thesis did not include any interviews with INGO professionals in or working with Mali. Thus, interviewing INGO professionals about how their programmes assist these populations would provide further information about how INGOs can provide more direct and effective services to FFCS and CBOW in Mali generally.

Secondly, there is a need for more research into how former child soldiers, especially FFCS, as well as CBOW, are stigmatised and discriminated against in Mali. This thesis could not entirely be dedicated to this stigmatisation since there is a large lack of data in this subject area, even among grey reports and newspaper articles. Therefore, interviews with professionals that work with these vulnerable populations could bring about more light and information about how exactly they are discriminated against and stigmatised in Mali.

Lastly, there is a need for research on DDR programmes in Mali, especially to see if they reach female child soldiers and FFCS, and if they are given adequate educational and economic resources, as well as address stigma. This thesis did not focus on DDR, as the researcher wanted to analyse INGO programmes, and contribute to the lack of data regarding INGO FFCS and CBOW reintegration and stigma-addressation. In doing this DDR can better address stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW, as well as further foster tighter community bonds in Mali.

7.4 Last Words

While humanitarian INGOs currently do not do enough in their programmes to acknowledge and respond to sexual and particularly violence-related stigmas affecting FFCS and CBOW, they could make these changes by hosting community dialogues, operating awareness campaigns, and other community sensitisation events that

recognise and heal the trauma experienced by both these populations and their communities. In doing these and related actions, humanitarian INGOs can take a bigger and more effective role in rebuilding a more unified, stable, and peaceful Mali.

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Appendix 1

Educational and Economic Programmes Analysed in Term Frequency Analysis

All programmes are cited in the references, and are footnoted and linked below.

Footnotes in this appendix are not in counted in the word count, since they are not part of the main body of the text.

Malian INGO Programmes Info	Educational/ Economic?	Linked Documents
"Adolescent Transition in West Africa" **Save the Children International** 2019 - 2023	Educational	Save the Children Programme Brochure [238]
Annual Programmes **World Vision Mali** 2014 - at least 2019	Educational	Annual 2014 report[239] Annual 2015 report[240] Annual 2016 report[241] Annual 2018 report[242] Annual 2019 report[243]
"Better Learning" **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)** 2020 - Present	Educational	HumAngle News Article (2022)[244] NRC 2022 Report[245]
"Child Friendly Spaces" **Plan International Mali**	Educational	Plan International Mali Timbuktu Case Study

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"Break the Cycle of Poverty" **Educate a Child, BuildOn** 2014 - Present	Educational	Educate a Child Project Summary[247] Partnership announcement with BuildOn (2021)[248]
"Food for Education" **Catholic Relief Services Mali** 2007 - Present	Educational	CRS Mali Brief (2017)[249] CRS Mali News Article (2016)[250]
"Gender Integration, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention, and Social Norms Change" AKA "Education for Change 1" **CARE USA** 2015 - 2021	Educational	2022 Thematic Brief[251]
"Girls CAN - Promoting Secondary Education in West Africa" **Oxfam GB** 2011 - 2015	Educational	Oxfam GB Programme Impact Evaluation (2017)[252] Oxfam GB Management Response (2016)[253]
"New School in Mopti"	Educational	Annual Report - Mali page 9 (2018)[254]

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