CAN I TELL YOU, MY STORY? UNDERSTANDING AND EXPLAINING THE ADVERSE EXPERIENCES OF UGANDAN CHILDREN WITHIN TRANSITION TO AN ORPHANAGE IN KAMPALA; A CRITICAL HERMENEUTIC INQUIRY

ELLE BUNYAN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2022

QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Situated at the interface between Psychology and Sociology, this thesis and related
academic publications (Bunyan, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2022) focus on the
experiences of Ugandan children living within an orphanage, also known as a
childcare institution (CCI), in Kampala. Aiming to develop understandings of the
children's adverse experiences within the context of transition from familial home to
a CCI, to inform responses aimed at alleviating the adversity they face, this work was
multidimensional. Embracing psychology's concern with the individual and
sociology's critical intrigue in the social, this qualitative research assumed a
bricolage approach that surpasses disciplinary and paradigmatic boundaries, to
explore and integrate dimensions such as: the children's life stories (n=30), the
perspectives of adult local community members (n=14) and CCI operatives (n=2),
and autoethnographic critical reflections. In so doing, facilitated by a critical
hermeneutic methodology, the study comprised several strands synthesised in what
follows, including autoethnography (Bunyan, 2021a), exploration of children's
transition from home to a CCI through their narratives (Bunyan, 2021b), a case study
problematising the influence of western actors through the prism of children's
narratives (Bunyan, 2021c), and exploration of the perspectives of the adult
participant sample concerning the issues that shape the lives of children within their
community (Bunyan, 2022). As elaborated upon within the following thesis, whilst
each strand considered subsidiary research questions, the overarching research
question that this thesis aims to address is: How can the adverse experiences of
Ugandan children be understood, within the context of transition from familial home
to a childcare institution? In addressing this overall research question, in what
follows, I illustrate how Bourdieu's (1984, 1986, 2018) theory of Habitus offers a
useful overarching theoretical framework by which to understand the story this
research tells. Acknowledging the critiques and contradictions in applying a Western
conceived theory in a non-western context, I elucidate how maintaining a
postcolonial theoretical lens as a foundation throughout the research process assisted
in mitigating this issue, allowing an understanding of the study population within the

broader sociocultural context. Resulting from this process of theoretical layering, the research findings and important policy recommendations that this approach yielded, I argue that this body of work represents an important theoretical contribution to postcolonial theory and scholarship.

Therefore, within this thesis and throughout my research articles, I explore how children's experiences can be understood in terms of multidimensional and intersectional social injustice. Moreover, I argue that reform is required within existing models of support for this population of Ugandan children. Therefore, in what follows, I argue that a multifaceted approach is required within research to inform change and development in alleviating the adversity the children face and make concrete recommendations for reform. Aiming to draw the research articles together and arguing that an holistic approach is required within strategies to address both the individual and collective issues children face, within this thesis I argue that the research that informs policies and practice within such strategies must resist, and challenge, restrictive academic norms, embracing multiple modes of knowledge production, investigate method, and meaning making. This is important, because as researchers, we have a responsibility to dismantle harmful misrepresentations and stereotypes that contribute to the maintenance of social injustice, and for the children of this study, this necessitates the production of an holistic understanding of their experiences, illuminating how the social context within which their lives take place, shapes their individual and collective experiences, and in turn, their ability to attain, or maintain a state of health.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines Health[1] as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (World Health Organization, 2014), to which every human has a right, regardless of age, race, religion, political beliefs, economic, or social context. Understanding health holistically in this way, that attributes social wellbeing as a requisite to health, means that the influence of all contexts, systems, and environments in which an individual lives must be recognised and understood to promote, ensure, and enhance the health of individuals and communities (Cadigan &

Alberts, 2009; Kok et al., 2015; Napier et al., 2017). As such, scholars, humanitarian actors, and relevant stakeholders within local community, national and international governance, for example, the United Nations (UN), have argued that an holistic approach is required within policy and practice in addressing the deprivation, and reducing or eradicating the adversity faced by children in East Africa, to promote health (Atilola, 2016, 2017; Senefeld & Perrin, 2014; UNICEF, 2016). Moreover, these principles lay at the heart of the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs), including those for children in Uganda, which aim to ensure "*every* child survives and *thrives*" (Neefjes, 2018; UNICEF, 2019, p. 1; United Nations, 2018),

At the surface level, the deprivation and adversity faced by children in Uganda is well known, as is the poor health profile of the nation's children (Bunyan, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Bwambale et al., 2021; Chiang et al., 2021; Clarke et al., 2016; Jacob et al., 2004; Kakuru et al., 2019; Kamya & Walakira, 2017; Katana et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2020; Swahn et al., 2012; UNICEF, 2019; Walakira et al., 2014). Increasing significantly among marginalised groups such as those living in slums or on the streets, the types of adversity experienced among children across East Africa includes a high prevalence of rape and sexual violence, exploitation, physical and emotional abuse, substance misuse and addiction. In addition, high incidences of viral illness, disease, sexually transmitted infections and pre- and post-natal mortality are also evident (Bunyan, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Bwambale et al., 2021; Chiang et al., 2021; Clarke et al., 2016; Jacob et al., 2004; Kakuru et al., 2019; Kamya & Walakira, 2017; Katana et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2020; Swahn et al., 2012; UNICEF, 2019; Walakira et al., 2014). An holistic approach to alleviating such problems is based on a strategy that addresses the broad range of influential factors that shape an individual's life, as opposed to targeting individual issues. As such, an holistic approach includes a broader model of support (e.g., rights-based), and appropriate guidance for the policies and practices of the relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation, or reform, of the holistic framework (e.g., CCIs), and tends be a multisectoral endeavour. For example, an holistic approach for addressing child and adolescent mental health focuses on the social determinants of health, as well as the other unique socio-economic and political realities that influence an individual's

experience, understanding, and treatment of mental health (Atilola, 2017). However, as I argue in Bunyan (2022), such holistic strategies rely on a qualitative knowledge base comprised of socioculturally contextualised explanations and understandings of the experiences and perspectives of both the children and adults who comprise the communities for which such strategies are intended.

Recognising this need for a multidimensional, holistic knowledge base, my research therefore explored the experiences of children (n=30) to whom such interventions are, or should be intended, through their narratives, and the perspectives of adults comprising the local community in which the children live and learn (n=14), including CCI operatives (n=2) through semi-structured interviews. Reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of this research in explicating the relationships between social context and individual, and collective experience, the purpose of developing this knowledge base, is to identify, illuminate, and problematise the systems and structures that maintain the conditions that allow children's deprivation and adversity to continue. As I argue throughout my work (Bunyan, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2022), through these social forces, social norms are reproduced, and perpetuated, ultimately impinging upon children's rights, and in so doing, their ability to attain or maintain a state of health, according to WHO's (2014) definition. As I discuss in Bunyan (2022), this holistic approach to addressing issues faced by children globally, including Uganda, forms a key component of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, which – broadly – aim to promote the rights, safety, health and wellbeing of *all* children, leaving no child behind (Bunyan, 2022; Clark et al., 2020; Coll-Seck et al., 2019; UNICEF, 2019; United Nations., 2018). However, thus far, though important insights on the deprivation and adversity faced by Ugandan children have appeared within academic literature to quantify the types of adverse experience, deprivation, and physical health conditions children in some regions endure, a qualitative body of knowledge has not been produced by which to underpin an holistic strategy towards addressing the multidimensional deprivation and adversity children experience. For example, the necessary understandings and explanations of how social factors intersect to maintain the conditions in which

children leave home for the streets of Kampala, or are recruited into a CCI, and their adverse experiences therein.

In order to inform strategies towards addressing the adversity experienced by Ugandan children in Kampala, as well as contribute to the process towards Uganda's SDGs for children, which seeks to ensure "*every* child survives and *thrives*" (Neefjes, 2018; UNICEF, 2019; United Nations Publications., 2018), this study employed a comprehensive approach by which to gain holistic understandings from children (n=30) who have first-hand experiences of separation from family, and adult stakeholders who comprise their wider social context (n=16). Initially propelled by my experiences and observations volunteering alongside the children and those on the streets of Kampala, as elaborated upon below, this research embraced a bricolage approach to accommodate the study's evolution, through a critically reflexive process, allowing the investigation of exposed issues and themes. 'Bricolage' is conceptualised as an approach to interdisciplinary research that surpasses "*both the superficiality of methodological breadth and parochialism of unidisciplinary approaches*", embracing numerous modes of meaning making and knowledge production to enhance the quality and rigour of a study (Bologna et al., 2020; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Kincheloe, 2001, p. 1, 2005). A core principle of bricolage is that of liminality - or the threshold between paradigmatic boundaries where there is unity, emphasising the dialectical nature of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary relationships and paradigmatic positionings, promoting the synergistic interconnection between philosophical and methodological approaches. As such, a bricolage framework facilitates an holistic approach, foregrounding the complexity of human social life, overcoming reductionist mutual exclusivity between paradigms, or binaries such as subjective/objective, conscious/unconscious, and restrictions to the theoretical and methodological investigative tools by which to achieve deeper exploration and understanding in research (Bologna et al., 2020; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Kincheloe, 2001, 2005).

It is within the liminal paradigmatic space between 'purist' interpretive or social constructivist and critical standpoints, that the foundations of this study are

embedded; the foundations that facilitate the critical hermeneutic methodology that bind my published research articles together into a cohesive whole by which to address the overarching research questions: how can the adverse experiences of Ugandan children be understood, within the context of transition from familial home to a childcare institution?

1.2 Outline and Structure

Overall, the purpose of this thesis is threefold. Firstly, to emphasise the methodological rigour underpinning this research, in addition to providing enhanced understanding of the theoretical context of the critical hermeneutic methodology. Second, to demonstrate how my research articles form a coherent and synergistic whole towards addressing the overarching research question: how can the adverse experiences of Ugandan children be understood, within the context of transition from familial home to a childcare institution in Kampala? Moreover, I explicate how my work represents original contribution(s) to the body of academic literature concerning children in Uganda, and the important implications for policy, practice, and subsequently, cross-cultural social research, particularly with marginalised, stigmatised, disenfranchised, or oppressed groups.

This thesis begins by briefly contextualising the study background to allow an understanding of the research context, building on that I discussed in Bunyan (2021a). Subsequently, section 3 presents the theoretical context of the study, comprised of subsections including paradigmatic positioning, which expands upon bricolage and clarifies my situated ontology and epistemology as well as disambiguating paradigmatic terms within interdisciplinary research, such as interpretivism, constructivism and constructionism. Then, I expand upon the study's critical hermeneutic methodology, providing a history of the approach, to allow an understanding of Ricœur's (1971, 1976, 1990) critical hermeneutics and his three-step process of interpretation, which served as the methodological framework. In turn, this allows critical appraisal of the discrepancies within Ricœur's (1976, 1990)

approach, and elucidation of how I navigated these discrepancies in accessing meaning within study data.

Section 4 then expands upon the study's methodology further, contextualising the operationalisation that follows, in which the methods employed within the study are expanded upon, including procedures, reflections, ethics, and analyses. In section 5, I illuminate the findings of the study by summarising each of my research articles, emphasising how they contribute to a cohesive whole by which to address the overarching research question: how can the adverse experiences of Ugandan children be understood, within the context of transition from familial home to a childcare institution? Synthesising my collective works, section 6 then presents discussions and conclusions. This comprises responses to the research questions, including articulation of the overarching theoretical framework by which to understand the story that this research tells, drawn from the works of Bourdieu (1984, 1986, 2018) and his theory of Habitus, inclusive of the concepts of fields and capital. Additionally, the theoretical contribution provided by this thesis is presented, elucidating how the multidimensional theoretical layering employed throughout my research enables an important contribution to postcolonial theory and scholarship. Subsequently, I highlight the bodies of literature this research contributes to and discuss the implications of this research for both scholars and relevant stakeholders involved in or intervening in the lives of Ugandan children, including CCI operatives, volunteers, and policy makers, including specific policy recommendations resulting from this thesis. Finally, I discuss the limitations and critical appraisal of the work as a whole; and suggestions for how this work could be built upon or expanded in future. [1]

Terms and Definitions

Within this thesis and throughout my research articles, the terms 'children' and 'child' are used in reference to anyone below the age of 18 years old. The reasons are twofold. Firstly, the researcher prioritised a commitment to using the terms used by participants to describe themselves, and each other, as opposed to imposing a western construct or those based on existing literature. Although various terms such as 'adolescent' and 'youth' are used in a Western context to describe those under eighteen, these are not terms used amongst the study community in Uganda. Moreover, this use of 'child' and 'children' to delineate the participant group of those under eighteen henceforth reflects the definition within the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995), and the United Nations (UN) Convention on Child Rights (CRC) 1989, ratified in Uganda in 1990 (UNICEF, 2015). Similarly, the term "street children" has been used to reflect that which is used by the children to describe those who

2. Study Background and Context

As I elaborate upon in Bunyan (2021a), this study grew from my own experiences and observations working in and with a community of children within and around an orphanage in Kampala, including those residing on the streets. Propelled by empathy and compassion in learning from the children about their lives and experiences and eager to 'help' in whatever way I could, the study initially intended to focus on the children's and adult's interpretations of their adverse experiences through the lens of psychological trauma, for example, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As such, the study specifically intended to focus on participants' interpretations of potential psychological manifestations of adverse experiences, and their attributions of perceived psychological problems. Moreover, the study intended to investigate the ways in which psychological implications of adverse experiences are currently addressed amongst participants, within the context of psychological trauma. The overall aim was to inform the development of culturally appropriate interventions for psychological trauma amongst the study population, deliverable by CCI caregivers and relevant local stakeholders to be identified by participants, without the need for 'professional' (e.g., psychologists) or Western actor input, due to cost, accessibility

---

are under eighteen years old and live on the streets of Kampala, within Kisenyi slum – one of Kampala's largest - as opposed to the denoting the researcher's alignment with any existing "definition" of such children. This is not a homogenous group, and existing labels including "street children" have negative stigma attached as discussed in Bunyan (2021b; 2021c), however, this piece retains a commitment to the children's own words. For example, "children in street situations" – a term employed by UNICEF - though perhaps more palatable in a Western academic context for the author in terms of portraying sensitivity, is not a term that is used or recognised within the Ugandan context.

As previously mentioned, the WHO (2014) define health as comprising physical, mental and social well-being. This study values and utilises this definition for its ability to facilitate a holistic lens through which to consider health, valuing and inclusive of, the social determinants of health and mental wellbeing. Moreover, employing a broad definition reduces the imposition of a narrower western construct of health, as would be the case in delineating between 'physical', 'mental' and 'social' wellbeing.

and sustainability implications. However, throughout the research process, ongoing experiences, observations, and dialogue with the community led to an evolution of the study, in recognition of the pertinent need to harness and disseminate *critical* understandings of the children's experiences, illuminating and challenging the social forces that allow adverse experiences to remain pervasive. Moreover, contributing to the study's evolution within this critically reflexive process, I recognised that any response efforts to the problems faced by children in Uganda – including psychological trauma – interventions must be integrated and holistic, built upon a knowledge foundation which *explains*, *understands, and addresses* the multiple factors that combine and intersect to maintain children's adverse experiences, including those that can manifest as psychological trauma.

Therefore, in light of critical reflections such as those I present in Bunyan (2021a), the methodological approach evolved organically, with autoethnography serving as vehicle towards ascertaining and clarifying my own situated ontology, scrutinising my own work as a researcher, foregrounding the children's situated stories, and forming an important component of the analytical process thereafter. In so doing, the study embraced a bricolage approach, and a paradigmatic positioning in the liminal space between the interpretivist social constructivist and critical positionings, rejecting superficial, reductionist or dichotomous notions of the paradigms as binary and mutually exclusive (Bologna et al., 2020; Kincheloe, 2001, 2005). As the following section elucidates, a bricolage approach surpasses the 'dangers' of dichotomous approaches within research that feminist philosopher Sherwin (1988, p. 25) captured succinctly: "*One of the dangers that feminists have pointed to within traditional methodologies is that of accepting dichotomies. Dichotomous thinking forces ideas, persons, roles, and disciplines into rigid polarities. It reduces richness and complexity in the interest of logical neatness".* In what follows, this viewpoint is expanded upon in unpacking the paradigmatic positioning of the study, to allow an understanding of the situated ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Subsequently, I discuss the way in which the study's critical hermeneutic methodology facilitated this positioning, and methods employed within operationalisation.

3. Theoretical Context

Qualitative research is often critiqued for ambiguity and confusion concerning the definitions and parameters of each research paradigm. This is particularly the case amongst interdisciplinary studies, in which the terms 'interpretivist', 'constructivist' and 'constructionist' vary in conceptualisation between the social sciences, and are often used interchangeably (Lee, 2012; Schwandt, 1994). For example, there are social and psychological iterations of constructionism (see Gergen, 1992, 1996) with social constructionism further delineated between a weak or strong form therein, subject to the stance of the researcher on "the role that social factors play in what constitutes legitimate knowledge" (Schwandt, 2003, p. 308). Nonetheless, there are parallels and overlaps between paradigmatic definitions and understandings across the social sciences that must be acknowledged, in order to situate this study.

Writing from sociological and educational standpoints respectively, Denzin & Lincoln (2005, p. 24) describe the construc*tivist* paradigm as assuming a "*relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent cocreate understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures.*" Conversely, within psychology, Willig (2012) and Willig and Rogers (2017) describes a social constructio*nist* positioning in – broadly – the same way, emphasisng that there is multiple 'knowledges' rather than 'knowledge', and what one perceives and experiences as reality must be understood within the context in which realities are constructed. The ambiguity and interchangeability with which qualitative research paradigms are labelled incurs implications for an interdisciplinary researcher including myself in terms of usefully clarifying positioning. However, like Schwandt (1998), I argue that paradigmatic labels are best understood as 'sensitising concepts' that orient a reader towards the general direction in which a particular type of inquiry can be found, their precise meaning shaped by the intentions and methodology of the researcher.

Nonetheless, Crotty (1998), Lee (2012), and Schwandt (1994) propose a helpful distinction between social constructionism and *radical* constructivism, suggesting

that the former focuses on *collective* generation of meaning shaped by social processes, while the latter pertains to the notion that the individual mind exclusively constructs meaning in terms of cognitive processes, regardless of the social dimensions of meaning making. However, recognising the ambiguity and perhaps unnecessary confusion caused amongst jargon fuelled debates on paradigmatic definitions across disciplines that create an air of exclusivity and inaccessibility to some learners without the means to disambiguate, like Schwandt's (1998) argument on paradigmatic labels as 'sensitising concepts', Crotty (1998), refers to a broad 'constructivist/interpretivist' paradigm. According to Crotty (1998), the constructivist interpretivist paradigm entails an ontological position that assumes reality is created by individuals in groups, and thus must be interpreted to uncover hidden meanings of experiences, events, or phenomena. Though he separates the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm from the critical, the following section explains how paradigmatic boundaries were surpassed, evoking the essence of a bricolage approach that sees beyond 'paradigmatic boxes', into the spaces between constructivist/interpretivist (or social constructionism, to some), and critical positionings.

3.1 Paradigmatic Positioning

Within social research concerning lived experiences, studies tend to concentrate on either individuals' subjective understandings of experiences (interpretivist/constructivist paradigm) *or* scrutinising and illuminating the influence of social structures and power relations with the goal of emancipation (critical paradigm). Within the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, given the resulting multiplicity of realities and interpretations of these realities, social constructivists seek exploration and understanding of the complexities of study participants' perspectives in localised contexts, as opposed to universal truths or broadly generalisable application (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Crotty, 1998). Conversely, for those assuming an ontological position within the critical paradigm, a distinct reality is understood to exist; however, emphasis is on the role of power in the construction of both reality *and* knowledge, over time. Reality, and what constitutes 'knowledge'

is understood as being shaped over time by the social structures and associated power relations that – largely unseen, and unconsciously - permeate society (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, illuminating and understanding the influence of power, hidden within social structures, systems, and relations upon people's lives is a principal objective of those positioned within the critical paradigm, who ultimately seek emancipation of those who are oppressed by society (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln et al., 2017).

As many scholars such as Denzin (2010), Morley (2008) Nightingale and Cromby (1999), and Rehman and Alharthi (2016) have argued, the social constructivist and critical paradigms should not be viewed within a reductionist, binary, or monolithic lens that sees the two paradigms as mutually exclusive. Rather, this study was underpinned by a paradigmatic position that regards the two paradigms on an ontological, epistemological, and axiological, continuum whereby between the extreme ends of the scale which comprise 'purist' interpretivist/constructivist versus critical paradigmatic positions, there lays a middle ground, with a blurred boundary between the two (Bologna et al., 2020). Thus, on this paradigmatic continuum, this study is underpinned by an ontological, epistemological, and axiological position within this liminal space, embracing central tenets of both the interpretivist/constructivist and critical paradigms at intersection between the boundaries, whilst not subscribing wholly to the 'purist' positions of the scale, and associated research objectives.

Specifically, whilst this study did not view the children or adult participants as homogenous groups whose realities could be understood within a singular lens, distinct aspects of reality were understood as existing, shared – or experienced – by the study community, emanating from and shaped by structures and systems of power. As such, the study took the ontological position that each child's reality, and their interpretations of their experiences therein, are socially constructed. However, the construction of each reality, its interpretation (including my own interpretations) is shaped by social structures and associated power relations. Therefore, whilst interpretivists/constructivists seek deeper (subjective) understandings of people's

lives, experiences, or a phenomenon through exploration of the interpretations of participants, my stance is that inherent in gaining that deeper understanding is a requisite for exploration of the hidden (objective) influence of power. For example, within the study, whilst emphasising that each child's story and the reality it represents is unique, exploring the influence of social structures shared by the study community, allows a deep understanding of the complex ways in which participants' (and my own) reality, and knowledge, are co-created through social interactions. In this sense, facets of reality are shared, or collectively experienced and interpreted by the participants due to the social context in which they are embedded, however, the way each individual experiences and interprets that shared reality may vary.

As such, the study sought to explore and understand the complexities of children's lived experiences (from child participants) and perceived experiences of children (from adult participants), and the issues children face, within their localised environment of urban Uganda, replete with the power structures that permeate this social context. The study did not seek 'universal truths' applicable to a broader demographic of Ugandan children, nor generalisable claims that can be applied to the positions of all children living within CCIs on a broader basis, for example, within differing social, cultural, economic, or geopolitical contexts. However, in occupying the liminal paradigmatic space that embraces aspects of the critical paradigm, the underpinning position of the study sought deep, contextualised, critical understandings that inform a sustainable social change agenda. Specifically, this social change agenda is rooted in social justice, that strives for the reform of practices that reproduce the - often unconscious - social forces that maintain, or perpetuate, disenfranchisement, oppression, disempowerment, and ultimately – restrict children's ability to attain or maintain a state of health.

3.2 Methodology: Critical Hermeneutics

This study was underpinned by a critical hermeneutic methodology, a framework which sits at the heart of a bricolage approach (Wyatt & Zaidi, 2022). The critical hermeneutic methodology drew from the works of critical hermeneuticist Paul

Ricœur (1971, 1976, 1984, 1990). Though critical hermeneutics is a notoriously ambiguous methodological approach including amongst scholars for whom it is their primary focus, Ricœur's conceptualisation offers both a philosophical foundation *and* methodological process (Roberge, 2011). However, acknowledging the ambiguity and complexity associated with the critical hermeneutic enterprise, the following section introduces hermeneutics then examines the origins and key principles of the critical methodological approach, in order to broaden understandings of the application that follows within elaboration of methods (4), and findings within publications (5).

Hermeneutics is the theory and practice of interpretation, that primarily seeks *understanding*, aiming to uncover meanings and intentions that are essentially hidden within texts (Crotty, 1998). 'Texts', in hermeneutics, can pertain to any aspect of the phenomenological world subject to interpretation, for example, narratives, interview transcripts, biographical accounts and other means of communication that concern the phenomenon of investigation. In hermeneutic understanding of a text, though varying in application across hermeneutic approaches, a key principle, is the notion of the hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle traditionally referred to an explicit methodological process or condition of understanding pertaining to the premise that understanding the whole of a text and understanding parts of a text were always interdependent endeavours (Kinsella, 2006; Schwandt, 2001). As Schwandt (2001, p.112) describes of the hermeneutic circle, *"construing the meaning of the whole meant making sense of the parts and grasping the meaning of the parts depended on having some sense of the whole".* As such, though hermeneuticists approach the practice of interpretation in varying ways, the essence of the hermeneutic circle - whether implicitly or explicitly referenced as such - underpins the methodological approach.

3.2.1 Critical Hermeneutics: A History

Though hermeneutics and critical theory view the world within two different frames, there are points of affinity and synergy that render the two perspectives complimentary, with distinct points of convergence (Busacchi, 2016; Kinsella, 2006;

Mendelson, 1979; Roberge, 2011). For example, epistemologically hermeneutics, like critical theory, has sought to illustrate the restrictions of the objectifying methods of natural science, while upholding the legitimacy of other types of discourse, although 'understanding' rather than 'critique'. Both critical and hermeneutic approaches reject objectivistic self-understanding by reflecting on the conditions of understanding and possibility and situating this in pre-scientific processes of human social life (Mendelson, 1979). It is within these methodological convergences that Ricœur's critical hermeneutics emerges from, developed in part from the famous debate throughout the 1960s and 70s between philosophical hermeneuticist Hans-Georg Gadamer and critical theorist Jurgen Habermas concerning methodology within social sciences (see Gadamer, 1990; Habermas, 1990). Broadly, within the Habermas-Gadamer debate, the former critiqued Gadamerian 'absolutised' hermeneutics as a methodology, for a lack of regard for the implications of factors such as coercion, structurally or systematically distorted communication, and ideology. As such, overall, the debate is described as hinging upon the "*relation of critical theory to the living traditions which prevail in the societies in which critique arises and which it seeks to transform*" (Mendelson, 1979, p. 44; Roberge, 2011). As elucidated within the following sections, Ricœur thus sought to mediate between the two approaches, in developing a critical hermeneutics that has come to be understood as "*at once a philosophy, a philosophical approach, and a methodological model for the human and social sciences, which works to coordinate explanation and understanding under the rule of interpretation*" (Busacchi, 2016, p. 82).

Expanding on a Heideggerian perspective, Gadamer – who is credited as the major thinker in hermeneutic philosophy - formulated an ontology of understanding centred in the principle of human finiteness, and of human embeddedness within a historic-cultural world (Kinsella, 2006; Roberge, 2011). Gadamer (1996) emphasises the circularity of interpretation and understanding, foregrounding a core aspect the hermeneutic tradition – the hermeneutic circle, in illustrating his perspective on hermeneutic understanding:

"*The interpretation of meaning that governs our understanding of a text is not an act of subjectivity, but proceeds from the commonality that binds us to the tradition. But this commonality is constantly being formed in our relation to tradition. Tradition is not simply a permanent precondition; rather, we produce it ourselves inasmuch as we understand, participate in the evolution of tradition, and hence determine it ourselves. Thus, the circle of understanding is not a methodological circle, but describes and element of the ontological structure of understanding*" (Gadamer, 1996 p.293).

Gadamer's (1975) hermeneutics thus reintegrated three disputed concepts of tradition, authority, and prejudice, contending that all understanding emerges from a pre-structure, or "Vorstruktur des Verstehens". In other words, all understanding proceeds from that which precedes it (Roberge, 2011; Gadamer, 1975). As such, Gadamerian hermeneutics emphasises historicity, and awareness of historically informed prejudices as a basic condition of understanding (Gadamer,1996; Kinsella, 2006).

Thus, Gadamerian hermeneutics is understood as a 'meta-critique', or a critique of critique itself, including the enlightenment and positivism, a stance which lay at the heart of Habermas' criticism (Roberge, 2011). For scholars such as Habermas (1990), Ricœur (1981), Bakhtin (1981), and Gardiner (2002), Gadamer universalised hermeneutic understanding, inherently omitting the dimensions of power, and specifically the ideological deformation of language use, including through coercion and structurally or systematically manipulated communication (Kinsella, 2006; Roberge, 2011). Whereas Habermas for example, perceived language as the location of ideology, arguing that through critical reconstruction of the pre-suppositions of speech, the influence of power in distorting expression can be critically examined (Busacchi, 2016; Thompson, 1983).

Moreover, from the perspectives of Habermas (1990), and Ricœur (1981), in rejecting explanatory methods, a universalised hermeneutics misses these facets of power within communication, such as those emerging from the critical social

sciences, but also by a lack of emancipatory agenda (Geanellos, 2000; Habermas, 2015; Roberge, 2011). Overall, whilst Gadamer's (1976, 2013) hermeneutics is aligned with understanding, Habermas' (1990, 2015) affinity lay with explanation (Kinsella, 2006). However, between the polemics of Gadamer and Habermas, the critical hermeneutics of Ricœur (1971, 1976) offers a mediatory position, facilitating a pathway to explanation *and* understanding, and encapsulating principles of social interpretivism/constructivism and critical theory, under the rule of hermeneutic interpretation (Bologna et al., 2020; Busacchi, 2016; Thompson, 1983; Wyatt & Zaidi, 2022).

3.2.2 Ricœur's Critical Hermeneutics

The works of Ricœur (1971, 1976, 1984) towards profiling an epistemological critical hermeneutics in dialectic between the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer (1976) and Habermas' (1987, 1990) critique of ideology encompassed an approach retaining principles of both perspectives. In so doing, Ricœur (1971, 1976, 1984) developed a framework for investigating, interpreting, explaining, and understanding complex human social issues (Wyatt & Zaidi, 2022; Thomson, 1983; Busacchi, 2016). Whereas ordinarily language philosophers predominantly treat language captured within text as the ultimate ground of inquiry, both Ricœur and Habermas view it as a region through which critical analyses must surpass (Thompson, 1983). To Ricœur, (1994, p.66), *"interpretation is the hinge between language and lived experience",* whereby human behaviour becomes inscribed text to be studied, with the intention of unfolding its hidden or obscured meaning ((Leonard, 1989). Moreover, to Ricœur (1994a) language, embodies a medium of objectification, for which it is the task of critical hermeneutics to unfold, illuminating the dimensions of being which are expressed in, and disclosed by, the semantic configuration of expression; including texts and symbols (Thompson, 1983). As discussed in Bunyan (2021c), 'objectification' here refers to a methodological process in which the researcher moves beyond the idea that only one understanding of a text (interview transcript) is meaningful or correct, embracing textual plurality (that preunderstandings propel readers to interpret the same text differently, but

faithfully, and multiplicity (that texts have many meanings, that can be interpreted differently maintaining justice to the text).

Further to his perspectives on plurality and multiplicity, to Ricœur (1976) discourse is understood as dialectical in that event and meaning are inconsistent. The 'event' of speech may be transient, in that the meaning of the speech within writing may be re-interpreted on subsequent readings, rendering speech impermanent and text existing as inscribed discourse (Ricœur, 1981; Thompson, 1983; Mendelson, 1979). As such, within this dialectical, texts function to *"to mediate between speaker and hearer by establishing a common dynamic capable of ruling both the production of discourse as a work of a certain kind and its interpretation according to the rules provided by the 'genre'"* (Thompson, 1983 p. 51). As a result, Ricœur's (1984) hermeneutics comprises a theory of interpretation facilitating *explanation* and *understanding*, through a process of a deconstructive dialectic, embedded within the text. Overall, whilst multiple interpretations can manifest from the text and the objective meaning of the text cannot be understood by the subjective intentions of its author, to Ricœur (1971, 1976) this dialectic process follows explicit yet iterative stages of interpretation, towards explanation and understanding.

3.2.3 A three-step process

Whilst the specific procedures and strategies involved in operationalising Ricœur's theory of interpretation are elucidated in my published works (Bunyan, 2021b, 2021c, 2022), broadly, this dialectical process involves three stages; explanation, distanciation, and appropriation, as elucidated below. Broadly referred to as Ricœur's hermeneutic arc – Ricœur's take on the hermeneutic circle – Ricœur (1984) also described this three-step process as applies specifically to autobiographical narratives, referred to as a 'three-fold mimesis' (see Bunyan 2021b).
To Ricœur (1984), although there many types of narrative, each share a common purpose; to trace, organise, and clarify temporal experience within a schematisation, or mental representation. Such representations of temporal experiences are manifested around a central plot, or "narrative emplotment". Foregrounding the

critical nature of Ricœur's (1984) hermeneutic approach encapsulated within his three-fold mimesis, a critical lens throughout the analytical processes, as illustrated in Bunyan (2021b; 2021c).

In profiling an epistemological framework for his critical hermeneutic approach, Ricœur (1971, 1976, 1984) first explicates the 'explanation' phase. This first stage can be understood as initial explanation and sense making from naïve interpretations of the text, before the second stage, known as distanciation, involves separating the discourse of the text from the circumstances of the individuals involved. Philosophically, the concept of distanciation is drawn from Gadamer's (1979) arguments on the historically situated nature of consciousness and understanding, and the concept of the fusion of horizons between that of the text and interpreter (Geanellos, 2000). To Ricœur (1971, 1976, 1984), this engenders an understanding of the possible world disclosed in the text. The final stage in Ricœur's dialectical process of interpretation, is constituted by understanding mediated by the explanatory strategies of a structuralist analysis, insofar as the structuralist notion that one cannot understand elements of human social life without understanding their interrelationships within broader systems. In essence, this reflects Ricœur's iteration of the hermeneutic circle.

Overall, as Thompson (1983) notes, these procedures ensure that the object of understanding is not identified with something felt, but instead, with a possible understanding unfolded by explanation, that which illuminates the possible world disclosed by the text. Referred to as 'appropriation of the text', operationalising Ricœur's (1971, 1984) interpretative processes subordinates the subjective meanings of the author to the objective meaning of the text, facilitating an opportunity for the reader to connect the world of the text, to the world of the reader's consciousness (Thompson, 1983; Ricœur, 1984; 1971). As previously indicated, the use of 'objective' here, does not denote the traditional meaning, rather, through distanciation and appropriation of the text, Ricœur (1984) argues that one dispossess, or distances, 'pre-understandings' shaped by historically situated sociocultural context of the interpreter - whereby self-understanding of the ego is subsumed by a

critical self-reflection mediated through the world of the text - inviting the reader into the spaces between objectivism and subjectivism, to understand a world of meanings inscribed in the text.

For researchers, this renewed, or revised, understanding of self allows a return to the text with an expanded horizon from which to understand it (Ghasemi et al., 2011). Or, as Ricœur (1973, p. 107) concluded of appropriation within his theory of interpretation: '*interpretation is the process by which disclosure of new modes of being ... gives to the interpreter a new capacity of knowing him [or her] self*'. As such, interpretative understanding facilitates the opportunity to see things differently, and of orientating oneself differently in the world. In emphasising this link between the interpreter's experience, understanding, and self-understanding, Ricœur's (1976) theory of interpretation foregrounds the existential, interrelated, interdependent sense of being and understanding, so that "*hermeneutics is thus, explicitly or implicitly, self-understanding by means of understanding others*"*(Ricœur, 1974, p. 17)*. As such, and as elaborated upon further in illustrating how employing autoethnography as a methodological tool in supporting the methodological process by which socioculturally embedded factors shaped and restricted my interpretive horizons, Ricœur's processes towards textual appropriation is not an act of possession but of dispossession of the ego, creating space for the text to reveal its world (Ghasemi et al., 2011).Within the context of my research, this means scrutinising my own situated socioculturally understandings, to surpass the interpretative boundaries that they entail in interpreting the worlds' of my participants, and their narrative texts. In so doing, allowing space for the meanings within the texts to reveal themselves, meanings that may have been hidden or inaccessible to me due to the ways in which my own positionality has shaped how I interpret the world, as I elaborate upon in Bunyan (2021a).

3.2.4 Operationalising Critical Hermeneutics: Discrepancies and Outcomes

Before further elucidating the operationalisation of Ricœur's methodological approach within my research, in the interests of critically appraising the study

methodologically, it's pertinent to first acknowledge three of the inconsistencies within Ricœur's (1971, 1976) theory and how they were overcome. These inconsistencies primarily relate to the concepts of 'guess' and 'validation', as follows.

Ricœur (1971, 1976) suggests that the only way to establish meaning within text is to 'guess', that – given textual plurality and multiplicity - the product of interpretating the text cannot access or reflect the intended meaning of the author. However, this contradicts Ricœur's philosophy in suggesting only one possible meaning exists and contradicts his process of distanciation, in that freeing the text from the confines of author or interpreter's intentions and interpretive horizons, it's meanings can be appropriated by any reader (Geanellos, 2000). As Gadamer (1989, p. 579) argues of hermeneutic interpretation, relevant here, *"the ongoing dialogue permits no final conclusion. It would be a poor hermeneuticist who thought he [or she] could have, or had to have, the last word"*.

Moreover, contradictions emerge between the emphasis on the validity of plurality in interpretations of texts and seeking criteria through which to assess alternative interpretations. Though acknowledging that the interpretation of texts is mediated through tradition, any notion towards criterion for validation is in danger of leaning into a positivist agenda, underpinned by the objective of a singular 'correct' interpretation. That said, Ricœur (1971) emphasises that validation does not equate to verification, as the latter does not align with the principles that underpin critical hermeneutic, thus making a measure of verification obsolete. Overall, Ricœur (1971, 1976) argues that some interpretations are more probable than others, however, does not consider the perspective that different interpretations may do equal justice to a text, a position which I maintain.

Methodologically, seeking to guess the participant's meaning raises three central issues pertinent to this study. As Geanellos (2011) notes, first, this omits the possibility of the co-creation of interpretation of research interviews and findings between participant and researcher. Second, the notion of guessing, as others have

noted, individualises lived experience to a degree whilst simultaneously emphasising that whilst it may be recounted by an individual, lived experience is relational in that it manifests through interaction with others. Third, to pre-eminent the researcher's interpretation meanings contradicts Ricœur's philosophy in regressing to a position of seeking singular, static, and un-evolving knowledge, for either research participant or interpreter. In negotiating these tensions within operationalising a critical hermeneutic approach to access meaning within text, true to the essence of bricolage, my research was informed by Gadamer's (1976, 1990, 2013) concepts of prejudice and the fusion of interpretive horizons, as indicated above and throughout the attached publications. Gadamer's (1976, 2013) concept of prejudice – which is both a precondition and impediment to understanding - refers to an individual's pre-existing ideas, assumptions, biases, and foreknowledge, manifested through interaction in socioculturally, geographically, linguistically, and historically embedded tradition. Moreover, Gadamer's (1976, 2013) perspective that understanding occurs through a fusion of horizons between the meaning of the text and that which is possible to the interpreter, whilst working synergistically within Ricœur's approach, extends it to accommodate the notion of the co-creation of research findings. For example, as elaborated upon within the methods and findings sections that follow, within my research, in emphasising Gadamer's (1976, 2013) concept of stereotyping recognising my pre-existing positionality, I extended Ricœur's (1973) process of Distanciation and appropriation, through the use of the methodological tool; autoethnography (see below, and Bunyan, 2021a). In so doing, as I discuss in Bunyan (2021a), postcolonial theory and scholarship extended my interpretative horizon by which to analyse and understand my study data, as well as my position and influence within this process. Contributing to a theoretical foundation by which to understand the study community in context, as a result of this multidimensional methodological approach, the postcolonial theoretical lens - in turn - complimented analyses of both children's and adult's interview transcripts, thereafter, linking the theoretical foundations that run through Bunyan (2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2022). Specifically, overall, as discussed in section 6 postcolonialism enhances understandings of the overall study findings within the overarching theoretical framework; Bourdieu's theory of Habitus (1984, 1986, 2018).

Though the methods I employed in data collection are discussed in the subsequent section, to summarise how I navigated methodological tensions within Ricœur's critical hermeneutic approach, I highlight three important prisms through which I accessed, or co-created, meaning within the research texts (data transcripts). First, long term participation within the traditions of my study community (tradition). Second, critical reflection on pre-understandings and foreknowledge relevant to the study community (prejudice). Third, critical reflection on my positionality, inclusive of my academic, clinical psychological, and personal background (horizon). The purpose in negotiating methodological tensions in this way, was to expand the interpretive horizons from which to understand and explain the research texts, minimise, or identify the influence of my own sociocultural background (tradition), and prevent interpretations to the restrictions of my (then) positionality (prejudice). As such, I would argue, that in interpreting the resulting texts from the following methods, does not amount to "guesswork", instead, emphasising Gadamer's (1990, p129, 133) perspective that: *"every authentic interpretation must provide itself ...against the limitations caused by unconscious habits of thought [therefore] it is indispensable that consciousness take account of its secular prejudices and prevailing anticipations"*.

4. Methods

Just as bricolage surpasses the superficiality of parochial methodological boundaries within research to promote the synergistic potential of philosophical and theoretical understandings within research, so too does bricolage break arbitrary boundaries between research methods (Kincheloe, 2001). For example, along with narrative life stories, this study strategically employed a variety of additional investigative methods in order to further explain and understand the experiences of children. Although procedural descriptions are provided within Bunyan (2021a; 2021b; 2021c; 2022), the following section expands on the specific methods employed within the study and clarifies the process of analyses. This includes: narrative and freelist interviews with children with an age range of 10-17 (n=30); semi-structured

interviews with adult key informants and local community members (n=14); semi-structured interviews with the two primary orphanage operatives (n=2). Though as I demonstrate in Bunyan (2021a) autoethnography was also employed as a methodological tool informed by reflective journaling, field notes, and photography, and the use of these methods is summarised along with my other publications in section 6 for clarity.

In what follows, the rationale and evidence base behind each method is described, including elucidation of how they fit within the critical hermeneutic framework, as well as critique of their application in terms of use and value within a cross-cultural context, with emphasis on the nature of data yielded. Finally, referring to each method and participant group specifically for clarity, this section expands upon ethical issues and considerations pertaining to power dynamics between researcher and participants, how these issues were navigated, and data analyses.

4.1 Children's Interviews: Life-story narratives

This work was borne from the sharing of life stories, from the valued moments in which children asked, "can I tell you, my story?", long before a research study was envisaged. As such, life-story narratives were chosen as a method upon ethical grounds, in terms of maintaining a means of communication that I already had with the intended study participants with the knowledge that they – the children – were at ease discussing their lives in this way (see Bunyan, 2021a). That said, as Denzin & Lincoln (1995) argue, the classic norms of objectivity within the social sciences have shifted, and methods and procedures employed within a study are inextricably connected to the subjective values of the researcher.

Though the stories that people tell and the way they tell them are influenced by inter- and intrapersonal motivations, shaped by socio-cultural context and power therein, as a human being and as a researcher – I value human's stories. I am eternally honoured and grateful to be a listener or witness to any human's story. Our stories are more than 'narratives', and our narratives are more than a story. Our stories are important,

they are vessels of our 'selves', facets of our self-concepts, self-knowledge, and identities, emerging through the way we experience, make sense of, and author our narratives. Through telling our stories, whether to ourselves or others, our stories reveal our interpretations, beliefs, and knowledge, of how our experiences, and make sense of our lives. As Ricœur (1986) argued in explicating his narrative identity theory, narratives are an interpretation of how one experiences and makes sense of their past, present, and future. What people do and do not disclose, the facets of their selves that they present and those that they don't, are equally important and must be unfolded in order to understand and explain the author's experiences, and their interpretations of them. Ricœur's (1987) narrative identity theory illustrates this active process, in emphasising how the self comes into being only in the process of telling a life story (Cho, 2017). Rejecting essentialist conceptualisations of identity – that suggest that identity is a stable construct, unchanging but unfolding from birth – such as the Cartesian cogito, and radically de-centred non-subject conceptualisations associated with postmodernism, Ricœur (1986) argued that self-understanding is an active process, emerging through narrative. In constructing narratives, then, the storyteller or narrator is not only the one telling the story or the one about whom the story is told, but both interpreter and author of their own life and experiences, and the receiver of the interpretations through which one makes sense of their lives, and their world.

Whilst life story narratives, to my knowledge, have not been employed as a method in this research context in Uganda, making this a novel approach that foregrounds the stories of the children, this method was supplemented by a commonly used cross-cultural qualitative interview approach, known as 'freelisting'.

4.1.1 Children's Interviews: Freelisting

Within the study, the participant group of children (n=30) also completed a freelisting exercise within the interview, a method employed to compliment the story-telling component by exploring what the children view as "problems", and to

identify adult key informants through which to enhance understandings and explanations of children's experiences further.

Described as an emic approach embedded within a social constructivist paradigm, freelisting is a widely used method employed within cross cultural research – including in Uganda - focussed on understanding local interpretations of the issues people face, particularly pertaining to psychosocial wellbeing (Betancourt et al., 2009, 2009; Bolton & Tang, 2002). The use of freelisting is advocated by researchers such as Bolton and Tang (2009), who contend that the methodological process allows researchers to inductively explore participants' identified problems, the way they are conceptualised, and the way they are attributed, within the study's sociocultural context. As an emic, indicative approach, this contrasts an etic process by which one investigates existing theories and hypotheses generated outside of the sociocultural context of study deductively, of which studies are largely embedded within a positivist paradigm.

Freelisting questions are formulated in a way that generates answers in the form of a list. Typically, the freelist questions are broad or general in nature to limit basing the questions on western or personal concepts, for example the initial question may be, "What are the problems affecting local people?" (Bolton, 2002). This approach allows the identification of a wide range of subjects without potentially limiting the response to a specific subject therefore avoiding missing any significant issues. The researcher can use probes throughout the freelist interview if responses are limited in order to gain as much information as possible, in this case using the example question above, probes would ensure that the researcher gained a list of as many 'problems' as possible. This process allows participants to list and briefly describe what they perceive to be problems using non-leading, open-ended questions, rather than limiting responses to pre-determined categories based on the researchers, or western, assumptions of what issues may exist amongst the population.

Following completion of the list, the next stage of the freelist interview process involves the researcher going through the list and asking for brief descriptions of each concept identified by the participant, recording the responses on the response

sheet. The researcher then asks participants who within the community, would be knowledgeable about each issue in order to identify key informants who would participate in semi-structured interviews to explore each issue in depth.

A subsequent purpose of freelist interviews is to establish what the participant's daily tasks/activities are. The purpose of this is to provide data that could be used to assess functioning in future, separate, stages of research, whereby the influence of 'problems' identified by participants' and any additional issues illuminated through analysis can be explored as to their impact on daily life. For example, in exploring the influence of specific 'problems' relating to health, including mental health. In turn, targeted interventions can be developed to address the issues detrimentally effecting people's daily lives. As such, each participant is asked to list their daily tasks and activities, with brief descriptions of each, in the same manner as above, however, key informants regarding daily tasks or activities are not sought at this stage.

Concerning analyses of freelisting data, following completion of all freelist interviews, each 'problem' and task/activity identified by participants is labelled by separating them into categories or themes, dependent on the topics that emerged. The 'problems' are then compiled into one single composite list. Generally, the identified problems are listed by order of frequency of mentions based on the data from all freelist participants, reflecting the qualitative analytical process (Bolton & Tang, 2002). The researcher then uses the composite list of problems to guide key informant questioning to ensure issues of importance – in this study, to children - are addressed, as elaborated upon below.

4.1.2 Children's interviews: Reflections

Implementation of freelisting relied on the researcher's knowledge of the manner in which children use the term "problem", which was based on several years of face to face and remote conversation and immersion within the study community. Without this experience, the efficacy of this approach is unclear, and would certainly rely on

the use of either research assistants as translators who can consult on the appropriate term for "problem" in the local language. Alternatively, should the researcher not have the time or resources to learn the local language(s), a research assistant employed from the local community should be trained to carry out the interviews independently before translation. Whilst impossible within the financial, time, and resource constraints of a self- funded PhD project, these options also present challenges beyond those of a practical nature, that lead me to question the use and value of this method on a broader basis, based on experience of implementation with the study population and additional findings I reported in Bunyan (2022). Involving additional parties within the data collection process in this way, particularly those from within the children's immediate community, would rely on an assumption that those participating would feel comfortable discussing deeply personal experiences with either an adult *or another child* from within from their community, as would be the case employing focus groups as a method.

However, I was aware, as was emphasised among findings reported in Bunyan (2022), that there are significant issues of distrust felt by children, in addition to a general fear of aspects of their lives being discussed as gossip or rumours within a 'close knit' community, both within the CCI and beyond in the surrounding area. This could be overcome with the time and resources to ensure that those responsible for conducting interviews are either chosen by children or are unaffiliated with the CCI but given the platform to facilitate the trust required to prevent limited responses. Secondly, a challenge is presented among these alternatives in ensuring the research assistant is safeguarded in terms of preserving their own mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, and adequately trained or qualified in responding appropriately to disclosure of potentially traumatic information and participants' emotional expression, to ensure participant wellbeing. In this case, I had extensive training and qualification within Clinical Psychology and Mental Health with a broad range of vulnerable groups, specifically specialising in psychological trauma and PTSD, including experience with both children and adults in Uganda. Additionally, I benefitted from forging a relationship with local mental health professionals who were able to act as advisors, if necessary. However, without ensuring such

safeguards, which require a wealth of both relevant training and experience, and knowledge of nature and manifestations of psychological trauma, employing these methods could be inappropriate because of the potential for psychological harm to both participant and researcher.

4.2 Adults Interviews

Both key informant (n=2), who were those identified by the children, and local community member (n=12) interviews began by exploring what adult participants perceive to be problems for children within their local area, before focusing on the issues identified in freelisting if they had not already been addressed by the participant. As such, these interviews addressed a broad range of topics, from issues described as poverty, including a lack of basic necessitates and the inaccessibility of services and resources, to issues of health, including physical, mental, and social wellbeing, as I illustrated in Bunyan (2022) and summarised below.

The purpose of these interviews was twofold; to gain an in-depth understanding of the problems mentioned by children after adults narrated their own perspectives on what the issues are for local children, and to broaden the interpretive horizons by which to understand the experiences of children from exploring issues and phenomena from a broader, diverse range of perspectives of those who comprise, or contribute to, the children's community. For example, how phenomena such as 'rape', 'nightmares', or 'drugs use' are understood and explained within the local community, amongst both those affiliated with the CCI (key informants) and unaffiliated, with no immediate connection to the organisation or children who reside there (local community members).

As such, interviews began by asking adult participants what the problems are for children within the local community, in and around Kampala. Following a free flowing narrative in which participants listed and explained what they perceive to be the issues facing children, the probes that were used in the adult interviews focused on exploring all the effects of the 'problem' at an individual and group level;

perceived causes and manifestations of the problem; severity or prevalence of the problem; how people approach the problem in terms of dealing with it; and what they feel would help deal with these problems.

Furthermore, an additional set of supplementary interviews was conducted with orphanage operatives, who also act as caregivers (n=2), in order to explore their perceptions and conceptualisations of how and why the children came to be living within their organisation, including specific case examples. The purpose in adding these interviews was to add a measure by which to avoid the imposition of my own interpretations of how and why children come to be living within the CCI, providing another prism by which to understand children's transition from their homes to an orphanage and issues they (children) face within this context.

4.3 Ethics

Informed consent was obtained from all participants (children and adults) prior to interview, with CCI caregivers providing written consent for both of their interviews under the capacity of key informant, and as a caregiver. All participants were provided with both written and verbal information and debrief on the study, with contact information of a local and UK based independent advisor should they wish to discuss or withdraw at any point. Though CCI caregivers provided secondary consent as guardians for child participants, they were unaware of who did or did not participate in the study. All consent packages were subject to SMOG readability tests, to ensure clarity.

Fully recognising that although the adverse experiences of the children had been discussed with me prior to the study without ill-effect afterwards, the nature of children's stories – and some adults – could be distressing for them to recount. From experience working with the proposed participants, it appears that the risk of the children becoming upset if they choose to discuss their past experiences is minimal, rather they appear to find comfort in discussing their experiences both during the conversation and afterwards. The children have frequently expressed their

appreciation in being able to discuss their experiences and perspectives with me, explaining that ordinarily, they do not have someone to listen to, someone that cares for, or someone to trust with their life stories. This has been re-iterated during visits since data collection in which I have observed no evidence of any negative impact of participation in the study, rather, the participants continue to express gratitude and talk about their lives in the same manner.

However, support for the participants - if needed - was considered and strategised prior to data collection. Based on my knowledge of the participants and discussion with orphanage caregivers, the most appropriate support structures were considered, and I was prepared to direct participants to their local church pastor should external support be required. Whilst this situation did not arise, measures were in place if needed in the event that the participant wanted external support that they did not feel could be fulfilled by their caregivers. This support model was determined as it would be in inappropriate to disrupt currently adopted coping strategies (as informed by CCI caregivers) including involvement of external agencies, other than facilitating contacts for the orphanage caregivers to pursue for the longer term should they choose to.

Given my position as a white, western researcher, though recognising the potential for issues of power to influence participants choice on whether to participate and what may be said within interview - particularly in the context of the children – several factors were considered prior to the study. Only children who I had spent substantial time with, who had voluntarily told me of their life experiences, and who generally voiced their thoughts and opinions – including reluctance to participate in activities – were invited to participate in the study. For example, despite having pre-existing relationships with those who were at the CCI compound at times during the fieldwork on their return from boarding school, I felt it may be inadequate time to establish the degree of conviction in their confidence to refuse to participate, in comparison to the time spent day to day with those who did participate. Moreover, in addition to having pre-existing long-term relationships with those affiliated with the CCI thus increasing my confidence in their agency within the consent and interview

situation, only local community members who I had established a preliminary relationship with were invited to participate.

That said, if there had been any indication that a child, or adult, did not have sufficient understanding for informed consent, they would have been excluded appropriately and sensitively in a manner that would have been determined in consultation with orphanage caregivers and supervisors. Potential participants were given at least 1 week between written and verbal information, and consent forms, to allow time for consideration and questions, and children were reassured of the lack of pressure from either myself or orphanage operatives, who would not be aware who participated and who did not. Further, all potential participants were informed that there would be no adverse impact on our relationship should they choose not to participate, and there was no incentive, or reward to do so. The latter points were of particular importance, given the situation in which the participants are embedded whereby there is a lack of necessities, thus, any reward or incentive may have been coercive.

Finally, in instances throughout both children's and adults' interviews where participants appeared emotional, I offered to end the interview, or end the recording. However, no participant chose either option, always electing to continue. Moreover, re-affirming my confidence in the participants' agency within the consent and interview situation, several of the child participants chose to specifically say that they would like to discuss elements of their stories within the confidentiality of interview time, but not have it recorded as data. The instructions of the participants in this case were followed at all times, with some children ending their recorded interviews, before discussing further aspects of their stories, which are not included in their data transcripts, or reporting of their narratives.

4.4 Interview Analyses

Each dataset (children's and adults' transcripts) was subject to separate analyses, before being considered as a whole, moving backwards and forwards between data

sources throughout the analytical process in the spirit of the critical hermeneutic framework. Moreover, field notes, photographs, and autoethnographic critical reflections were revisited throughout the analytical process, reflecting the multifaceted nature of the critical hermeneutic enterprise that should not be considered as a static, or unidirectional process, in that each component of each stage can overlap, or merge as simultaneous endeavours, as follows:

1. Naive Reading

- Transcribing, reading, and re-reading verbatim transcripts and field-notes

- Developing an explanatory overview of each transcript

- Distanciation, supplemented by autoethnography.

2. Structural Analysis and Distanciation

Informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2019) Reflexive Thematic Analysis

- Identifying patterns within and across transcripts

- Identifying sub themes

- Thematic mapping to analyse the relationships between sub-themes

- Identifying themes

3. Critical Interpretation and Understanding

- Critical analysis of themes: explanation and understanding in relation to existing theoretical, conceptual, and relevant research literature.

As Roberge (2011) argues in explicating what operationalisation *should* do, theoretical accounts of experience are required in understanding and explaining why the autonomy of the individual – or participants – are influenced by sociocultural

factors underpinned by, or interweaved with, ideology. Thus, as is illustrated throughout the findings summarised below (see section 5), multiple theoretical lenses were employed throughout analyses to explain and understand the experiences of Ugandan children living within a CCI in Kampala. However, within the process of analysis, Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis provided a means by which to retain the methodological framework in unearthing, organising, and investigating themes within and across a large volume of data.

4.4.1 Thematic analysis

Initially, all the data within each participants' interview transcripts were highlighted and coded systematically in a way that allowed extracts appropriate to each code to be collated and to further identify interesting features in the data set. Subsequently, potential main themes were formed, and each coalition of the codes derived within the previous stage of analysis was assigned to the main themes coherently. Following this stage of the analytical process in which the coded data from within each data set was compared to that of the overall data set including all participant groups, the proposed themes were assessed using a pictorial thematic map. This process allowed me to build a comprehensive thematic map of the overall data, in which connections and contradictions within the data were illustrated. The transcripts were then continually revisited in order to assess the validity of the thematic map and re-evaluate the themes, subthemes and potential extracts.

This constant comparative process, that compares '*parts of the story to the whole'* also assisted in refining the number of major themes down by developing precise definitions of each theme that encapsulated the subthemes appropriately, reflecting the ways in which they were conveyed by the participants. Furthermore, as there were several participant groups, this process facilitated a form of consensus analysis, which assessed whether the information obtained was generalisable or transferable across the whole study population or specific to, for example children, or adults. This level of analysis increases the internal validity of the study by allowing discussion of topics from the perspectives of different participants within and across samples

(Sobo & De Munck, 1998).

As Boyatzis (1998) argues, this process facilitates latent (or interpretive/ constructivist) level analysis, which goes beyond the semantic qualities of the data in exploring underlying conceptualisations, ideologies, and constructs, consistent with the critical hermeneutic methodology. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe the semantic level as purely demonstrating the surface meanings of the themes emerging from the data, shaped by the positionality of the researcher. Whereas at the latent (interpretive/constructivist) level, the analysis involves exploration of the factors that give these themes meaning, or what context makes them an important theme. Within the context of this research, this was informed and facilitated by the process of distanciation, which in itself was supported by the employment of autoethnography as a methodological tool by which to enhance critical reflection, and in so doing, distance myself from previous foreknowledge and pre-existing interpretations embedded in tradition and prejudice (Gadamer, 1976, 2013; Ricoeur, 1973), as follows below (section 4.5).

Finally, extracts were selected encapsulating each theme, subtheme, and category with final critical analysis of selected themes then explained employing the various theoretical lenses, as I demonstrated in Bunyan (2021b, 2021c, 2022), offering several prisms through which to address the overarching research question. In so doing, subsidiary research questions offered the scope to focus on different aspects of the data in order to build an holistic, multidimensional body of work by which to address the overarching research question: How can the adverse experiences of Ugandan children be understood, within the context of transition from familial home to a childcare institution in Kampala?

5. Findings

The following sections summarise my research articles before outlining how they form a cohesive whole towards understanding and addressing the adverse experiences faced by Ugandan children in Kampala.

Paper	Focus	Key points
(1) Can I Tell You, My Story? The Story Beyond the Stories: An Exploration into the Use of Autoethnography Within Cross-cultural Qualitative Research in Uganda, A Postcolonial Approach. (Bunyan, 2021a)	. Exploring and illustrating the use and value of autoethnography as a methodological tool within cross-cultural social research.	Value of autoethnography as a methodological tool in enhancing critical reflection and understandings within my study context. In so doing, further extending my understanding of the participants, within their sociocultural context, and expanding my interpretive horizon by which to access meaning within their narrative transcripts.
(2) Can I tell you, my story? A critical hermeneutic inquiry into the life narratives of Ugandan children living within an orphanage in Kampala (Bunyan (2021b)	From the perspectives of children, how and why do they transition into an orphanage? How can the experiences of children in transition to an orphanage be understood, from their perspective? To what extent are the experiences of the children shaped by their social context, and how do socially derived dispositions shape the children's lives?	Illustrates, through the stories of the children, how their experiences can be understood in terms of deprivation, disenfranchisement, and marginalisation, highlighting the manifestation and repercussions of socially acquired dispositions, norms, and stereotypes.
(3) The Mzungu Phenomenon: Help or Hinderance? The Repercussions of Western Childcare Interventions Among Street Children in Kampala, Uganda Paper? (Bunyan, 2021c)	The way in which the Mzungu phenomenon features within the children's experiences, it's meaning and influence on the children's choices and actions, and the wider repercussions, in terms of the Ugandan social, cultural, and historical context.	Through the children's narratives, this case study illuminated and problematised the perpetuation of colonial legacies, ideologies, and praxis, illustrating the way these social forces contribute to disempowerment for children, their families, and their communities, and the dual oppression of women. Illustrates the misalignment between national and international rights-based policies, and the current approaches of Western CCI operatives, highlighting the need for reform to support for children separated from families to ensure their health and wellbeing.

| (4)
Multidimensional health inequality among children in Kampala, Uganda: A social ecological analysis (Bunyan, 2022) | The voices of adult stakeholders from the children's community, both affiliated and unaffiliated (with no connection) to the children or CCI, concerning the issues facing children in and around Kampala. Extends and focusses the inquiry into specific pathways towards emancipation from the social injustice children face. | Illustrating that children separated from families face substantial barriers to health with girls – and particularly girls on the streets – the most at risk. Holistic, multisectoral response that addresses harmful social norms and praxis, is required for Uganda to meet SDGs and consequently, ensure the health of children, as defined by WHO, to which they have the legislated right. Specific strategies highlighted. |

Table 1 Summary of Papers

5.1 Can I Tell You, My Story? The Story Beyond the Stories: An Exploration into the Use of Autoethnography Within Cross-cultural Qualitative Research in Uganda, A Postcolonial Approach (Bunyan, 2021a)

As Ricœur (1974, p.17) contends "*hermeneutics is thus, explicitly or implicitly, self-understanding by means of understanding others*". A key aspect towards this is the art of critical reflection, for which I employed autoethnography, as illustrated in Bunyan (2021a). Though the purpose of this publication was to examine and demonstrate the use and value of autoethnography thus only a very small portion of my autoethnographic reflections are documented within it, this piece illustrated the value of autoethnography as a methodological tool in enhancing critical reflection and understandings within my study context. Specifically, I highlight the tensions between Uganda's geopolitical history of colonial oppression and ongoing semi-authoritarian rule, and the implications of my own positionality including a decade of personal experiences with the study community before, and beyond formal fieldwork. In addition to exploring and appraising autoethnography as a method, this article demonstrates the use of autoethnography within my study context engaging a postcolonial lens to illuminate the sociocultural and historical systems of power, that that shape personal reality (ontology), the ways the experiential components of this reality are portrayed and therefore the constraints under which such portrayals can be

interpreted (epistemology), for example within narratives or interviews. In doing so, the methodological value of a moderate approach to autoethnography is argued: that blends the value of personal experience as embodied knowledge with the scholarly affordances of theory and literature, showing how this method assists in situating one's positionality and consequent influence within their research context; but offers words of critique and caution concerning the challenges of autoethnography.

Overall, whilst portraying autoethnography as a method and demonstrating its use within the context of my study, I also emphasised that this account was/is only part of 'my story'. As such, I argue how a critically reflective autoethnographic account could be expanded upon in future, for example, delving deeper into the social psychological processes that underpin our interpretations of our social worlds and influence behaviour. As discussed in section 6, in-keeping with critical hermeneutics, prisms through which to explore this could include social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) or Markus & Kitayama's (2010) cultural self-concept theory (see section 6).

5.2 Can I tell you, my story? A critical hermeneutic inquiry into the life narratives of Ugandan children living within an orphanage in Kampala (Bunyan (2021b)

A core aspect of understanding the experiences of the children within the study concerns how and why they come to be living within an orphanage (CCI). Set within the critical hermeneutic framework and aims of developing an holistic understanding, this includes understandings of the influence of social factors within this transition from home to an orphanage. As such, the inquiry presented in Bunyan (2021b) focussed on subsidiary research questions: From the perspectives of children, how and why do they transition into an orphanage? How can the experiences of children in transition to an orphanage be understood, from their perspective? To what extent are the experiences of the children shaped by their social context, and how do socially derived dispositions shape the children's lives?

In pursuing this line of inquiry therefore, this paper first illuminates why this topic is important by initially providing an overview of important literature concerning the

situation of institutionalised children in Uganda, including evidence of misappropriation and exploitation, and the relevant Ugandan national policies, strategies, and legislation towards supporting children separated from families and deinstitutionalisation. Subsequently, the theoretical lens of Bourdieu (1986, 2018, 2018) is introduced and employed in stage 3 of critical hermeneutic analyses in making sense of the data – or understanding and explaining the experiences of the children. Presenting the findings of the inquiry using extracts from the children's narratives, I illustrate how poverty drives children to the streets in search of economic opportunity and organisations perceived to offer access to basic services of which they are deprived, such as education. Education, as a form of cultural capital, was understood amongst participants as ensuring an elevated position within society, or a means of overcoming poverty. Moreover, within this transition from home to the CCI, whilst on the streets, socially acquired dispositions and harmful stereotypes contribute to the manifestation of the 'street kid' construct, for which the children are marginalised, and experience physical and sexual abuse. Girls are most at risk, whereby gender inequality contributes to their exploitation and the normalisation of rape. However, for the children entry into a CCI from the streets, though one may assume offers a 'better alternative', means relinquishing agency and social capital that is integral to the children, often leading to their disengagement, and ultimately a return to the streets (Bunyan, 2021b).

Overall, this piece argues that the children are disenfranchised throughout their lives thus far and illuminates the social injustice they face, concluding that proactive familial support and reform to existing CCI based approaches is required to ensure their health and wellbeing. In so doing, the research I present in Bunyan (2021b) contributes to the wider body of work and overarching research question by illustrating, through the stories of the children, the complexity of their lives, and how their experiences can be understood in terms of deprivation, disenfranchisement, and marginalisation.

5.3 The Mzungu Phenomenon: Help or Hinderance? The Repercussions of Western Childcare Interventions Among Street Children in Kampala, Uganda (Bunyan, 2021c)

Having illuminated Western operated CCIs as a pull factor away from home and substantial influence upon children's experiences in Bunyan (2021b), this third paper (Bunyan, 2021c) investigates this matter further. Therefore, this case study investigated the 'Mzungu phenomenon', through the prisms of the children's narratives employing postcolonial and postcolonial feminist lenses in explaining and understanding how the mzungu (white, western actors) is implicated within children's experiences. As such, the case study questioned the way in which the Mzungu phenomenon features within the children's experiences, its meaning and influence on the children's choices and actions, and the wider repercussions, in terms of the Ugandan social, cultural, and historical context.

Bunyan (2021c) therefore begins by introducing the Ugandan study setting including current and historical political and geopolitical history, before delving deeper into the relevant literature concerning the situation and experiences of Ugandan children separated from family, and on the streets, and the current models of support available to the children. In so doing, building on my previous paper, Bunyan (2021c) problematises the 'orphanage model', its colonial underpinnings, and implications in terms of maintaining colonial power relations to the detriment of children's rights, and local and national efforts towards de-institutionalisation.

In arguing that we as researchers must work to address this issue by developing critical understandings of children's experiences from their own stories, delving beyond surface interpretations shaped by our own positionalities that can reinforce and reproduce misrepresentations of Ugandan children, Bunyan (2021c) provides an in-depth methodological account of Ricœur's (1984) three-fold mimesis. The purpose in doing so is twofold, to demonstrate the methodological rigour underpinning the study, and also to offer scholars involved in similar research

endeavours a framework for consideration, demonstrating operationalisation in the findings that follow.

Overall, within amalgamated findings and discussions in Bunyan (2021c), through extracts from the children's narratives, this case study illuminated and problematised the perpetuation of colonial legacies, ideologies, and praxis, illustrating the way these social forces contribute to disempowerment for children, their families, and their communities, and the dual oppression of women. In concluding, I argue that despite a need to enhance child protection measures in Uganda, the current approaches that do not align with national and international rights-based policies must be further critically examined, challenged, and reformed, to ensure the health and wellbeing of the children.

5.4 Multidimensional health inequality among children in Kampala, Uganda: A social ecological analysis (Bunyan, 2022)

Finally, in Bunyan (2022) I present the important voices and findings of the adult stakeholders. This piece also draws the four articles together, emphasising how they form a cohesive whole towards understanding and addressing the adverse experiences of children in Kampala, Uganda.

Having illuminated the children's experiences through their narratives, and ways of understanding and explaining their experiences in terms of social injustice, in Bunyan (2022) I add the voices of adult stakeholders from the children's community to enhance the inquiry further. Moreover, having argued in Bunyan (2021a, 2021b, 201c) that reform is required among existing approaches to supporting Ugandan children, for example, the perpetuation of the 'orphanage model', in Bunyan (2022) I draw the overall study findings together to illuminate an holistic rights-based approach towards overcoming the adversity and social injustice the children face. Foregrounding the children's rights enshrined with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), a rights-based approach is at the heart of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for children in Uganda as I illustrate,

offering examples of programmes such as the UN Communication for Development (C4D) strategy, that seek to address harmful social structures and norms that underpin the adversity faced by children. In Bunyan (2022), I argue that given evidence from existing literature and the findings from the children's narratives summarised above, a rights based holistic approach is required in alleviating the adversity children face, and thus ensuring their health.

Therefore, having articulated how iterations of the Social Ecological Model (SEM) such as that of UNICEF (2016) are useful in developing holistic understandings of the situations of populations facing adversity, in Bunyan (2022) I employ the SEM as a conceptual frame within critical hermeneutic analyses of adult participants data (semi-structured interviews). Aiming to inform progression towards Uganda's SDGs for children, the findings presented in Bunyan (2022) illuminate specific factors of risk and influence upon children's health, and the sociohistorical foundations from which they manifest. In so doing, the ways in which influential factors at proximal and distal levels interact and intersect to reinforce and reproduce barriers to health were highlighted. This included the way in which proximal factors at the community level such as gender inequality and patriarchy, stigma and stereotyping of street children, and elitism, underpin the gender-based violence, marginalisation and abuse, and disempowerment amongst children in situations of poverty.

Moreover, at the broader institutional and policy levels, this publication presented findings revealing the systems by which influential structures are maintained, or shaped, including: CCIs, schools, and religious institutions. Also at the distal level, the potential need for a child-centred referral system is illuminated, as is the lack of provision of equitable, inclusive, and accessible health and social services, such as sexual and reproductive health (SRH), mental health (MH), and education, the lack of which maintains health disparity and disenfranchisement. Subsequently, the historical underpinnings from which harmful structures manifest, and are maintained, were discussed, with regards to colonial legacies and contemporary Western influence, including religious cultural imperialism, western patriarchy, homophobia, and the perpetuation of CCI's, and the intersections between each construct.

In addition to broadening understandings of children's experiences through an alternative but important prism – that of the adults that comprise the children's community – Bunyan (2022) extends and focusses the inquiry into specific pathways towards emancipation from the social injustice they face. In so doing, I conclude (Bunyan, 2002) that overall, children separated from families face substantial barriers to health with girls – and particularly girls on the streets – the most at risk. Holistic, multisectoral response that addresses harmful social norms and praxis, is required for Uganda to meet SDGs and consequently, ensure the health of children, as defined by WHO, to which they have the legislative right. Finally, I emphasise how the four publications – reflecting four strands of the research - comprise a cohesive whole towards understanding and addressing the adverse experiences of children in Kampala, emphasisng future directions, learnings, and implications for both scholars and actors intervening in the lives of children in Uganda, such as humanitarian volunteers and missionaries.

6.   The whole story? Discussions and conclusions

Although in Bunyan (2022), as summarised above, I argue the 'cohesive whole' formed by each strand of the research published thus far towards understanding of the experiences of Ugandan children in transitioning into a CCI, several factors must be acknowledged for the purpose of critical appraisal. First, though forming a cohesive whole as a body of work, the idea that the conclusions drawn are absolute, static, or 'complete' in terms of the possible interpretations of meanings of children's experiences, contradicts the study's critical hermeneutic methodology. That is, as Ricœur (1971, 1976) and Gadamer (1976, 2013) alike contended, the act of interpretation is always situated and never 'complete', in that there are always other possible interpretations of meaning. However, for the purposes of this piece, the following amalgamated discussions and conclusions consider the attached work as a cohesive whole in addressing the research questions: How can the adverse experiences of Ugandan children be understood and addressed, within the context of transition from familial home to a childcare institution? As such, the following section begins by offering an overall theoretical framework by which to understand

the story this research tells, through Bourdieu's theory of Habitus (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986, 2018) before articulating the theoretical contribution this thesis provides to postcolonial theory and scholarship. Subsequently, the research questions are directly addressed, synthesising the study findings, in order to propose policy recommendations to NGOs and FBOs intervening in the lives of children in Uganda.

6.1 Habitus: An Overarching Theoretical Framework

Though employing multiple theoretical lenses to explore the data in Bunyan (2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2022), Bourdieu's theory of Habitus (1986, 2018) provides an overarching theoretical framework by which to understand the overall story that this research tells, binding the threads that run through each publication together. I provide a more in-depth account of this theoretical frame and its application to the children's stories in Bunyan (2021b), however, the following provides an overview and summary as an overarching theoretical framework.

Habitus (Bourdieu, 1986, 2018), including the concepts of fields and capital, is a useful theoretical framework by which to understand the context and underpinnings of children's adverse experiences, by explaining how their dispositions, actions, and expectations, are shaped by their contextually bound experiences and social norms. Moreover, habitus allows an understanding of the social forces, constructs, and products that shape the context in which adverse experiences occur, such as cultural capital, and how socially acquired dispositions are negotiated or endure through different social spaces (fields), as Ugandan children transition from home to a CCI.

As I discuss in-depth in Bunyan (2021b) Bourdieu's Habitus (1984, 1986, 2018) contends that the dispositions influencing behaviours, choices, and expectations are shaped by social norms engendered through the perpetual reification of power, manifesting culturally and symbolically through an interplay between agency and structure. Habitus emerges through social, as opposed to individual processes, that cause enduring, transferrable, but adaptable, patterns of thought and behaviour, of which origins can extend back into distant history (Navarro, 2006). The social and institutional spaces through which such patterns of behaviour are transferred, are

known as fields, in which the manifestation of habitus is largely unconscious, produced and reproduced "without any deliberate pursuit of coherence… without any conscious concentration" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170).

To Bourdieu (1986), capital is the catalyst in the process of Habitus and influencing power relations and hierarchy, and capital may be social, cultural, or symbolic, transferrable across fields (Navarro, 2006). Moreover, to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital plays the integral role in the manifestation and maintenance of domination and marginalisation, that both creates and hides causes of inequality, and thus unjust social order. This '*social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds*' through '*cultural products*', which includes health and education systems, judgements, beliefs and values, strategies of classification and the day-to-day activities and roles within life (Bourdieu, 1986, p.471). For example, as I illustrate and argue throughout Bunyan (2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2022), the study findings suggests that education signifies a cultural product ensuring one's elevated position within society. As a result, accruing cultural capital in the form of access to education is driving force behind both children's initial journey to the streets of Kampala, and then into an orphanage. However, this appraisal of school, and indeed the education system in Uganda itself, is a colonial legacy, consistently reinforced by Western CCI operators promoting access to education as a means of overcoming poverty. Thus, whilst the manifestation of Habitus is evident as early as when children are in their original home through findings concerning pull factors towards the streets, the perspectives engendered are transferred through fields, enduring life on the streets until transition into an orphanage. However, as suggested by Bourdieu (1986), the national inequality faced by children in Uganda within the context of education becomes hidden or de-prioritised, due to the way in which those seeking education are constructed and represented by western actors; first as 'street children', then as 'orphans' within an orphanage. This - in part - perpetuates the establishment and maintenance of CCIs, as opposed to efforts to address structural inequalities in access to education or alternative paths towards self-sustenance.

Within this process of habitus, western actors (the mzungu phenomenon, see Bunyan, 2021c) are perceived as a gatekeeper to education and opportunity – contrasted by

the constraints of poverty faced at home and on the streets. As such, the Mzungu phenomenon can be understood as signifying both a power structure, which - to the children - mitigates the acquisition of cultural capital, *and* a cultural product, shaped through colonial legacies of Western saviourism and superiority. Again, this disposition that entails this perception of Western actors and pull towards them behaviourally endures through fields, from home, through the streets of Kampala, resulting in admission into a CCI.

Although the children largely perceive interactions with western actors in this context as means of navigating poverty within fields, this interplay between the agency of the children and the structural context of inequality and western influence imparts dispositions among children to align with the western constructs of them, as powerless, and helpless. This is consistent with the perspective of Bourdieu (1984), who contends that labelling processes that create stereotypes and stigma contribute to the conditions, experiences and behaviours that are synonymous with the labels, but that this does not always include acceptance of the *meanings* of such labels (Moncrieffe, 2007). According to Habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), despite discrepancies between the meanings of labels from the perspectives of others versus to whom they are applied, people can therefore unknowingly become complicit in the reproduction of hegemonic power relations. This is attributed to the extent to which societal hierarchy, social norms and values becomes ingrained, and disempowerment ensues, meaning that inequality goes unchallenged (Bourdieu, 1989; Moncrieffe, 2007). Thus overall, whilst the children assume elements of the labels and hierarchy that unfolds within the process of habitus and accrual of cultural capital such as helplessness in the presence of those perceived to offer resolutions, privately, their agency endures through fields. For example, though expressing a need for support from western actors and elements of helplessness and accepting invitation into a CCI or support whilst on the streets, as the findings articulated, the children are not in-fact helpless or powerless. Rather, this disposition represents a social strategy by which to navigate adversity, and their agency in doing so endures across fields.

That said, the sense of agency is not equal, and habitus is gendered. Though societal gender inequality shapes girl's dispositions from the offset, when transferred through fields to the streets, the behaviours, thoughts, and feelings are detrimentally exacerbated, enduring thereafter into life in a CCI. For example, as the study findings illustrated, whilst on the streets women and girls experienced disproportionate rape, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and lack of opportunity for income generation outside of transactional sex. The increased marginalisation and disenfranchisement of girls on the streets manifests through socialised norms in which dispositions towards them are cultivated from historically rooted patriarchy, combined with the Western imposition of a 'street kid' construct, as powerless or helpless. In turn, girl's ability to exercise agency is impeded, a sense of fear and distrust of men and inferiority or subservience to them manifests, and their future projections in terms of opportunity and ambition are restricted.

However, though offering a useful overarching theoretical lens by which to understand this research, the issues of applying a Western conceived theory in the Ugandan context must be acknowledged. Though there have been important theoretical contributions conceived from the African context, unfortunately, and reflective of unjust Western dominance in academia and lack of non-western representation, at the time of writing Ugandan voices and theoretical contributions are still underrepresented in academic literature. As such, though the works of Bourdieu (1984, 1986, 2018) offered the most useful overarching theoretical frame at this time, I contend that this was in part a result of my methodological process of theoretical layering, whereby application was extended and enhanced by contextualisation through a postcolonial theoretical lens, as I expand upon below. Overall, then, I argue that whilst I would've preferred to employ a Ugandan conceived theoretical frame built on knowledge drawn from this population, by navigating the discrepancy of applying a Western theory in the Ugandan context through maintaining a postcolonial lens throughout, this work yielded important findings, that are representative of the context in which they are drawn from.

To summarise, considering the social and institutional spaces (fields) through which the children of the study transition, as their original homes, the streets of Kampala,

and the CCI, habitus offers a broad theoretical framework to help explain how the interplay between agency and structure shape their journey, choices, and adverse experiences therein. Conceptualising influential factors such as education and western actors as cultural products socially constructed through colonial legacies, navigating fields in pursuit of cultural capital accrual wherein adverse experiences ensue, lends sense and salience in understanding the children's stories. Moreover, the application of Bourdieu's (1984, 2018) lens allows deeper exploration and understandings of the sources and forces of power that underpin habitus, namely, colonial legacies. As such postcolonial theory and scholarship extends understanding of the adverse experiences of study population and positions this thesis as offering an important theoretical contribution to postcolonialism.

6.1.1 Postcolonialism: A Theoretical Contribution

Though arguably the theoretical contribution of this thesis could thus lay within conceptualisations of habitus within a cross-cultural context, I argue that the overall contribution offered results from the multidimensional theoretical layering employed within the study, whereby postcolonial theory and scholarship enhances and expands understandings of habitus. As I argue throughout Bunyan (2021b) when employing Bourdieu's theoretical lens in illuminating the children's stories of transition from home to a CCI, the colonial legacies underpinning habitus are revealed, that shape the children's lives and dispositions therein. As such, this synergy between Bourdieu's Habitus and the recognition of colonial legacies afforded by a postcolonial lens, represents a theoretical contribution to postcolonialism by revealing the underlying sources and forces that propel the processes of Habitus. As I discussed in Bunyan (2021a) postcolonialism is concerned with how colonial legacies continue to influence global politics, economics, development, and social structures.

Specifically, then, this thesis contributes to postcolonialism by demonstrating how colonial legacies of Western saviourism, associated with the imposition of orphanages, education, religion, and ideologies, are – largely unconsciously – reproduced through NGO/FBO actors within the Ugandan context. As such, overall,

my theoretical contribution is the contention that, neo-colonial structures, systems, and relations underpin, or exacerbate, the adverse experiences of Ugandan children, within the present day. As exemplified throughout this thesis and Bunyan (2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2022), this neo-colonial cycle of Western saviourism within NGO and FBO operations reproduces the power relations of the colonial era, reinforcing a perceived dependency on western actors, and sense of western superiority in overcoming adversity, such as poverty. This is an important theoretical contribution because where previously postcolonialism has been critiqued as too esoteric thus lacking in use in applied contemporary settings, this thesis illustrates the use and value of a postcolonial lens within cross-cultural research. Moreover, within the context of children in Uganda, the importance is intensified by the national situation in which around 80% of the nation's CCIs are operated by North American 'Christian' groups, namely Evangelical and Pentecostal (Milligan, 2016). Moreover, as postcolonial scholar Bhabha writes, postcolonialism 'bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order' (1994: 245). This thesis has demonstrated the hegemonic influence of socially constructed representations of Ugandan children that frames them as 'in need of saviour' as opposed to agentic social actors, shaping, and shaped by their social context.

To summarise, this thesis and my associated publications (Bunyan (2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2022) represent a theoretical contribution to postcolonialism in revealing how colonial legacies manifest within the contemporary Ugandan context, and the mechanisms and processes (habitus) by which neo-colonial power relations both contribute to disenfranchisement and disempowerment, and impede national child protection strategies such as national child protection policies and frameworks established by the Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD), such as The National Orphan and Vulnerable Children Policy ([NOP] MoGLSD, 2011) and the National Alternative Care Framework ([NACF] MoGLSD, 2012). In so doing, the knowledge garnered from this theoretical contribution informs the policy recommendations within the following section.

6.2 How can the adverse experiences of Ugandan children be understood and addressed? A response and implications

As I summarise in Bunyan (2022) from the synthesis of the multiple dimensions of the research, the experiences of the children can be understood in terms of intersectional disenfranchisement and disempowerment, underpinned by multidimensional poverty and deprivation which interacts with harmful structures and stereotypes such as patriarchy, white saviourism, and the misrepresentations and misattributions of those living within orphanages, and on the streets. These sociocultural conditions allow the adverse experiences of children to continue unabated, such as separation from family, physical and/or sexual violence, substance use and/or addiction, a lack of access to necessities or services, and disempowerment. Overall, then, though significant to them, children's agency is restricted, to the degree that their ability to attain or maintain a state of health, as understood as physical, social, and mental wellbeing, is diminished. As I argue in Bunyan (2022), given the multidimensional nature of the adversity faced by children and the complex ways in which social factors compile and intersect to create the conditions that allow their disenfranchisement to ensue, holistic response efforts are required. Specifically, whether response models that seek to ameliorate the adversity faced by children are developed and delivered at national government level or international humanitarian level, they must be community level focussed, with *all* the children's rights at their core. An holistic rights-based approach aimed towards reducing, navigating, or eradicating the adversity faced by children in this context, must begin and end with the voices and choices of the children and families to whom interventions pertain. Although beyond the scope of the current body of work to propose specific interventions, I highlight examples of specific holistic strategies employed by UNICEF (2016, 2018) aimed towards addressing harmful social norms, such as those that underpin violence against women and girls, in Bunyan (2022).

Moreover, this work emphasises the implications for the policies and practices of existing CCIs, and those that continue to emerge. For example, in Bunyan (2021b, 2021b) having discussed Uganda's existing national policies concerning the

protection of vulnerable children in-depth, I illustrate how the imposition and perpetuation of the use of CCIs contradicts both Uganda's national de-institutionalisation policies, and children's rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989). As such, the implications of this work for existing and emerging CCIs, and those supporting children Uganda, as I argue throughout Bunyan (2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2022) is the need to align both policy and practice with national and international rights-based frameworks. This begins with fostering a greater awareness of the academic evidence base that illuminates the detrimental impact of CCIs and white saviourism both short and long term amongst CCI operatives, particularly Western volunteers, and missionaries.

This should include raising more critical awareness amongst potential western volunteers within educational institutions, including schools and universities here in the UK, where young people are often encouraged to 'volunteer abroad' to enhance CVs, without thorough awareness of the geopolitical or sociocultural contexts to which they are travelling, or the wider implications of their activities. Moreover, as I emphasised in Bunyan (2021a, 2021b, 2021c), the adoption of rights-based policies is encouraged within the activities of CCIs, particularly concerning how they admit children into their facilities and whom and the measures of assessment involved, for example, in tracing children's family, and how they support children in practice therein, or within outreach works. Overall then, the implications of this work within the context of Uganda's deinstitutionalisation efforts articulated within the National Orphan and Vulnerable Children Policy, and National Alternative Care Framework (Uganda Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, 2011, 2012), is the call and evidence for greater alignment and dialogue between both researchers and CCI operatives, and both parties with national policy makers, to strategise and ensure that evidence based policies are adequately implemented.

Specifically, then, I make three broad policy recommendations to NGOs, FBOs and organisations intervening in the lives of children in Uganda, that address these issues. Embedded and inherent within these policy recommendations, are practice guidelines to ensure stakeholders operating within such organisations act in accordance with

policy. This includes, for example, key issues such as religious proselytisation and discrimination, access to sexual and reproductive health care, respect for agency and choice, and the principles that emphasise institutionalisation as a last resort, in which case, legal processes must be adhered to.

1. All NGOs, FBOs, and organisations involved in the provision of support for children in Uganda should operationalise the UNCRC (1989) within policy and practice.
2. All relevant stakeholders associated with the operations of NGOs, FBOs, and organisations involved in the provision of support for children in Uganda, including international volunteers and missionaries, in addition to the children and families supported, should be made aware of, and have access to appropriately accessible versions of the UNCRC (1989). For example, the UNCRC Child Friendly Version (UNICEF, 2019).

3. The activities of all those associated with NGOs, FBOs and organisations involved in the provision of support for children in Uganda – including international volunteers and missionaries - should align with and adhere to Uganda's national child protection policies and legislation. This includes the National Orphan and Vulnerable Children Policy, and National Alternative Care Framework (Uganda Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, 2011, 2012) and the National Orphan and Vulnerable Children Policy (Uganda Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, 2011). Attention should be paid towards developments and amendments across national policies and legislation on a regular basis to ensure that the policies and practices of NGOs, FBOs and relevant organisations remain in-line with national child protection frameworks.

In addition to contributing to the knowledge base on supporting children within the Ugandan context by offering policy recommendations, this thesis also contributes to academic literature across several other domains. Though there has been more research focussed on the lives of children in Northern Uganda in the aftermath of

civil war, this work contributes original insights into an underserved population within academic literature, through the operationalisation of a novel methodological approach. Although the adverse experiences and poor health profile amongst children living on the streets has been reported within academic literature as discussed in Bunyan (2021b; 2021c; 2022), to my knowledge no study has examined children's journeys from their familial homes, through life on the streets, and onto a CCI. Moreover, existing research within the urban Ugandan context that has sought to document children's experiences, has predominantly relied upon quantitative measures within a positivist approach, as I documented in Bunyan (2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2022). Whilst these studies are invaluable in shedding light on the prevalence of issues such as abuse, service access, or health status, little space has been left for the stories of the children themselves. This point is important, because in so doing, space has thus also been left for the perpetuation of stereotypes of groups of children, for example, those on the streets or within CCIs (Bunyan, 2021a; 2021b; 2021c). Ultimately, in employing a multidimensional critical hermeneutic approach that subordinated my subjective interpretations of the study participant's lives and data to the objective meanings hidden within texts, I have strived to connect the world of each participant's texts, to the consciousness of you, the reader. In this way, evoking the intentions of Ricœur's (1984) critical hermeneutics, I have both challenged and extended existing academic works concerning the lives of children in Uganda.

Namely, this research challenges and dismantles stereotypes of Ugandan children living in orphanages and on the streets of Kampala as defenceless 'orphans' without family, there through parental death, neglect, abuse, or abandonment, in need of rescue by Western actors or institutions. Conversely, alternative literature concerning street children has sought to frame or label such groups in terms of 'resilience', for example, see Malindi & Theron (2010) and Ager (2013). Whilst the former issues do occur amongst my study population and should not be minimised, and so too could my participants be described as resilient by any measure, my research demonstrates that they, as individuals, and as a group, cannot be defined or categorised within any single or simplistic frame. My research emphasises the complexity of the children's transition from home, through the streets and to a CCI, and in so doing, stressing that portraying this population as a homogenous group in terms of their suffering allows

the maintenance of harmful structures and social norms, such as white saviourism, perpetuation of the orphanage model, and patriarchy. With a commitment to social justice at its heart, this work provides important insights for both humanitarian or missionary actors intervening in the lives of children in Uganda, *and* scholars.

For scholars engaged in social scientific research concerned with 'vulnerable' populations, particularly within cross-cultural contexts, this work illuminated important factors in the way we as researchers, or interpreters, investigate, explain, and understand research subjects and phenomenon. As I argue in Bunyan (2022), this work Illuminates the need for social scientists to resist dualistic, mechanistic approaches that seek over-simplistic linear cause and effect explanations for issues that are comprised of – or influenced by - complex social processes. Such approaches, attempt a sort of misrepresentative "social physics", that maintains Anglo-American centrism within knowledge production and dissemination, contributing to simplistic, colonial misrepresentations, that – often unknowingly, or unintentionally – perpetuate harmful stereotypes (Bunyan, 2021a; Kasper, 2009; York & Clark, 2007). Just as we should not categorise individuals or groups within monolithic frames, nor should we impose these same restrictions upon ourselves as researchers through conforming to rigid paradigmatic constructs.

Overall, to summarise, this thesis contributes to academic literature specifically within the domains of methodological practices in cross-cultural research, postcolonialism, and global child protection.

6.3 Limitations & future directions

Maintaining the philosophy of critical hermeneutics, Ricœur 's (Ricoeur, 1976, 1984, 1990) emphasis on the 'self' and his later explications of narrative identity (Ricoeur, 1994b) draw attention towards the ways in which this research could be built upon in future. Throughout his works, Ricœur (1971, 1994b) argues that the self is not immediately transparent to itself, nor Master of Itself, rather, self-knowledge emerges through our understandings of our relation to the world, and of our life with and among others in time in the world. Though it may be considered a limitation of

this work to not extend explorations deeper into the cognitive processes that are theorised to underpin the 'self' and consequent influences on interpretations and behaviours, the following considers how this work may be extended in this way in future. This is important, because there is consensus within psychological and sociological research that our 'selves' and identities shape how we view and interpret our worlds, relate to and interact with others, the way we understand experiences, and the way we behave (Baumeister, 1999, 2010; Leary & Tangney, 2003; H. R. Markus & Kitayama, 2010; H. Markus & Wurf, 1987; Shavelson et al., 1976; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). As such, within future – separate – extensions of this research, social psychological theories such as Markus & Kitayama's (2010) cultural self-model and Tajfel & Turner's (1979) may offer prisms through which to enhance understandings further, not only in explaining the experiences and behaviours study participants, but also in guiding researcher critical reflection, as follows.

There is a myriad of psychological and sociological definitions of the 'self', and substantial ambiguity permeates the topic with overlapping and/or contradictory terms. For example, self-concept, self-construal, and self-knowledge (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Nonetheless, from a social psychological perspective, broadly, self-concept is understood as a multidimensional dynamic hierarchical structure comprised of an individual's self-perceptions – shaped by experiences with, and interpretations of one's environment – that is useful in explaining or predicting a person's actions and behaviours (H. Markus & Wurf, 1987; Shavelson et al., 1976). For example, Markus and Kitayama's (2010) theory of self-depicts a cycle of mutual constitution in which culturally embedded social norms, values, and beliefs within one's environment shape the self, within an ever-evolving active construal process. Acting as a foundational schema (cognitive representation), the self, shaped by culture, recruits more specific self-regulatory schemas guiding perception, interpretation, behaviour, and emotion (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Though the current work illuminates important sociocultural factors relevant to investigating the lives and experiences of Ugandan children through this prism, to extend this work further to investigate underlying processes research must investigate how individuals view and understand themselves, as opposed to relying on western measures of self-concept.

For example, Markus & Kitayama's (2010) model could be employed as a lens through which to investigate how participants view themselves, their relationships, and behaviours. This could also involve the same participants narrating their life stories now, before revisiting their original narratives, to explore how the self and identity manifests and changes over time, the influential factors within this process, and how developments in self and identity alter understandings of experiences, and behaviours. Though traditionally understandings of self and self-relevant behaviours were separated cross culturally across the dimensions of collectivism and individualism, or interdependent and independent selves, critique on the overly broad nature of such categorisations has paved the way for sociocultural understandings of self-relevant behaviour. As such, an approach such as this offers a broad scope of inquiry further contributing towards holistic understandings of this population with the aim of contributing towards socioculturally response efforts in alleviating the adversity faced.

Alternatively, focussed on extending researcher critical reflection through the prism of self and identity, a social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) approach offers a means by which to investigate how social group membership and identity processes of social categorisation, social comparison, and social identification, shape the self and consequent behaviour. For example, employing the lens of social identity theory extends my critical reflections illuminated autoethnographically in Bunyan (2021), to explain the psychosocial and cognitive processes that underpin the interdependent relationships between facets of positionality, social categorisation, and social identity, relevant to my research context.

However, this task is not simple, or straightforward. Beyond the need for socioculturally specific understandings of self and identity processes, there is also the need to recognise the profound implications that traumatic experience, particularly throughout childhood, can have on self-concept and identity, in turn, profoundly shaping how we see and interpret the world, and our experiences. Though recognised, the implications of adversity or traumatic experience on self and identity

remains an area underserved within academic literature – particularly beyond Western populations. This study presents an in important component towards such investigations, for example, in instances of gender-based violence. Do we see ourselves and thus our worlds through a lens tainted by trauma, by patriarchy, or both? Much of this debate comes down to academic lens, or through which prism one views this issue from. How do we pick this apart – or sow this together - in a meaningful way that allows solutions, rather than further deepening debates that separate two sides of the same coin largely by academic discipline?

6.4 Personal Reflections and Conclusion

Discussions of self and identity, brings me to my concluding points. Ricœur (Ricoeur, 1974, p. 17) states of his methodology that "*hermeneutics is thus, explicitly or implicitly, self-understanding by means of understanding others".* The self-understandings, lessons, and knowledge, taken from this PhD far surpass academia, theory, or that which can be presented within this piece or those attached. For example, whilst I cannot, and would not compare our circumstances, through better understanding the ubiquitous nature of patriarchy in hiding – or normalising – violence, abuse, and disempowerment of women and girls within my study community, I see for the first time, how patriarchy intersects my own experiences of violence, abuse and disempowerment throughout childhood and adolescence and in turn, made me somewhat incognizant to it. Through understanding how the tensions between elitism, multidimensional poverty, agency, and structure, intersect to propel my study community towards enduring situations that diminish their health, I better understand my own path through life thus far – namely this work. This cycle of empathetic understanding, for which this list is not exhaustive, further expanded my interpretive horizons by which to understand the experiences of my study community, emphasisng that our life stories our co-created, between narrator and interpreter.

Though there is deep pain and struggle within this thesis, there is also profound hope, determination, and unfaltering commitment. To this end, I hope that we, as

'academics', resist parochial, superficial boundaries and binaries between epistemological standpoints and methodological approaches, between 'us' and 'them', between researcher and participant, that we strive not for the colonially embedded prescription of what constitutes knowledge production, but to *understand*, and to *learn*, how we may challenge injustice for *all*, without border or boundary. In so doing, whilst we must recognise the uniqueness of each of our stories, I hope that we learn too from our similarities, through empathy, through compassion, and through the never-ending cycle of understanding others through learning ourselves, with kindness through the discomfort this brings, and courage through challenging the patriarchal, colonial conceptualisations of knowledge production. Above all, I hope that we strive for humanity to a greater degree than fitting into exclusive academic boxes that make 'knowledge' production inaccessible, non-representative and non-relatable for most.

On this note, I end this PhD, I hope, with an extract from Lyla, a mother from the local community, who recounted her previously untold life story as reported in Bunyan (2022 p. 13):

But finally, I want to thank you, thank you from my heart, thank you for listening to my story. I feel release, relief, like my burden is lifted in some way because I have never shared this, now look, I'm smiling!

References

Ager, A. (2013). Annual Research Review: Resilience and child well-being–public

    policy implications. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *54*(4), 488–

    500.

Atilola, O. (2016). Mental health service utilization in sub-Saharan Africa: Is public

    mental health literacy the problem? Setting the perspectives right. *Global*

    Health Promotion, *23*(2), 30–37. https://doi.org/10.1177/1757975914567179

Atilola, O. (2017). Child mental-health policy development in sub-Saharan Africa:

    Broadening the perspectives using Bronfenbrenner's ecological model.

    Health Promotion International, *32*(2), 380–391.

    https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/dau065

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (M. Holquist, Ed.; C.

    Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). University of texas Press.

Baumeister, R. F. (1999). Self-concept, self-esteem, and identity. In V. J. Derlega, B.

    A. Winstead, & W. H. Jones (Eds.), *Personality: Contemporary theory and*

    research (pp. 339–375). Nelson-Hall Publishers.

Baumeister, R. F. (2010). The Self. In R. F. Baumeister & E. J. Finkel (Eds.),

    Advanced social psychology: The state of the science (pp. 139–175). Oxford

    university press.

Betancourt, T., Speelman, L., Onyango, G., & Bolton, P. (2009). A Qualitative Study

    of Mental Health Problems among Children Displaced by War in Northern

Uganda. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *46*, 238–256.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461509105815

Bologna, R., Trede, F., & Patton, N. (2020). A Critical Imaginal Hermeneutics

Approach to Explore Unconscious Influences on Professional Practices: A

Ricoeur and Jung Partnership. *The Qualitative Report*, *25*(10), 3486–3519.

https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4185

Bolton, P., & Tang, A. (2002). An Alternative Approach to Cross-Cultural Function

Assessment. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, *37*, 537–543.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-002-0580-5

Bourdieu, P. (1984). A social critique of the judgement of taste. *Traducido Del*

Francés Por R. Nice. Londres, Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of*

Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education (pp. 241–258).

Greenwood.

Bourdieu, P. (2018). Structures, habitus, practices. In *Rethinking the Subject* (pp. 31–

45). Routledge.

Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and*

code development. sage.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative*

Research in Psychology, *3*(2), 77–101.

https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis.

Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, *11*(4), 589–597.

https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806

Bunyan, E. (2021a). Can I Tell You My Story? The Story Beyond the Stories: An

Exploration into the Use of Autoethnography Within Cross-cultural

Qualitative Research in Uganda, A Postcolonial Approach. *International

Journal of Arts, Humanities & Social Science*. https://doi.org/doi:

10.5281/zenodo.5201625

Bunyan, E. (2021b). Is the Mzungu phenomenon a help or hinderance? *International

Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147- 4478)*.

https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v10i6.1320

Bunyan, E. (2021c). Can I tell you, my story? A critical hermeneutic inquiry into the

life narratives of Ugandan children living within an orphanage in Kampala.

*International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147-

4478)*, *10*, 281–296. https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v10i7.1409

Bunyan, E. (2022). Multidimensional health inequality among children in Kampala,

Uganda: A social ecological analysis. *Manuscript Submitted for Publication*.

Busacchi, V. (2016). *The Ricøeurian Way: Towards A Critical Hermeneutics for the

Human and Social Sciences*.

Bwambale, M. F., Bukuluki, P., Moyer, C. A., & Van den Borne, B. H. (2021).

Utilisation of sexual and reproductive health services among street children

and young adults in Kampala, Uganda: Does migration matter? *BMC Health

Services Research*, *21*(1), 1–9.

Cadigan, K., & Alberts, M. (2009). *Section One: Special Education Policies Through

an Ecoloogical and Family Impact Lens* (Policy Issues in Special Education

Finance, pp. 2–5). The University of Minnesota's Children, Youth, and

Family Consortium. https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/fii/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/s_mnfis02report.pdf

Chiang, L., Howard, A., Stoebenau, K., Massetti, G. M., Apondi, R., Hegle, J., Kyatekka, M., Stamatakis, C., Wasula, L., & Aluzimbi, G. (2021). Sexual risk behaviors, mental health outcomes and attitudes supportive of wife-beating associated with childhood transactional sex among adolescent girls and young women: Findings from the Uganda Violence Against Children Survey. *PLOS ONE*, *16*(3), e0249064. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0249064

Cho, E. D. (2017). Narrative Identity. In D. A. Leeming (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion* (pp. 1–3). Springer Berlin Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-27771-9_200167-1

Clark, H., Coll-Seck, A. M., Banerjee, A., Peterson, S., Dalglish, S. L., Ameratunga, S., Balabanova, D., Bhan, M. K., Bhutta, Z. A., Borrazzo, J., Claeson, M., Doherty, T., El-Jardali, F., George, A. S., Gichaga, A., Gram, L., Hipgrave, D. B., Kwamie, A., Meng, Q., … Costello, A. (2020). A future for the world's children? A WHO–UNICEF–Lancet Commission. *The Lancet*, *395*(10224), 605–658. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32540-1

Clarke, K., Patalay, P., Allen, E., Knight, L., Naker, D., & Devries, K. (2016). Patterns and predictors of violence against children in Uganda: A latent class analysis. *BMJ Open*, *6*(5), e010443. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2015-010443

Coll-Seck, A., Clark, H., Bahl, R., Peterson, S., Costello, A., & Lucas, T. (2019). Framing an agenda for children thriving in the SDG era: A WHO–UNICEF–

Lancet commission on child health and wellbeing. *The Lancet*, *393*(10167),

109–112.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design:*

Choosing among five approaches. Sage publications.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in*

the research process (Main Stock 300.72 CRO). Sage.

http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat02513a&AN=qm

u.b1066169&site=eds-live&custid=s1234290&authtype=ip,shib

Denzin, N. K. (2010). Moments, mixed methods, and paradigm dialogs. *Qualitative*

Inquiry, *16*(6), 419–427.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1995). Transforming qualitative research methods:

Is it a revolution? *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *24*(3), 349–358.

Denzin, N., K., & Lincoln, Y., S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Sage

Publications.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). *The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative*

Research.

Gadamer, H.-G. (1976). Philosophical hermeneutics (DE Linge, Trans.). *Berkeley,*

CA.

Gadamer, H.-G. (1990). Reply to my critics. In G. Ormiston & A. Schrift (Eds.), *The*

Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur (pp. 273–297). State University

of New York Press.

Gadamer, H.-G. (2013). *Truth and method*. A&C Black.

Gardiner, M. (2002). *The dialogics of critique: MM Bakhtin and the theory of*

ideology. Routledge.

Geanellos, R. (2000). Exploring Ricoeur's hermeneutic theory of interpretation as a

    method of analysing research texts. *Nursing Inquiry*, *7*(2), 112–119.

    https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-1800.2000.00062.x

Gergen, K. J. (1992). *The social constructionist movement in modern psychology.*

Gergen, K. J. (1996). Social psychology as social construction: The emerging vision.

    The Message of Social Psychology: Perspectives on Mind in Society, 113–

    128.

Ghasemi, A., Taghinejad, M., Kabiri, A., & Imani, M. (2011). Ricoeur's theory of

    interpretation: A method for understanding text (course text). *World Applied*

    Sciences Journal, *15*(11), 1623–1629.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research.

    In *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). Sage Publications, Inc.

Habermas, J. (1987). 8. The Tasks of a Critical Theory of Society. In *Modern*

    German Sociology (pp. 187–212). Columbia University Press.

Habermas, J. (1990). The hermeneutic claim to universality. In G. Ormiston & A.

    Schrift (Eds.), *The hermeneutic tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur* (pp. 245–

    272). State University of New York Press.

Habermas, J. (2015). *Knowledge and human interests*. John Wiley & Sons.

Jacob, W. J., Smith, T. D., Hite, S. J., & Yao Cheng, S. (2004). Helping Uganda's

    street children. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, *10*(1), 3–22.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/1079612042000199207

Kakuru, R., Archangel, B., & Gervase, T. (2019). Social protection mechanisms for

    children living on the streets: Perspectives from Uganda. *Journal of African*

    Studies and Development, *11*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.5897/JASD2018.0523

Kamya, I. R., & Walakira, E. J. (2017). Perpetrators or Protectors of Children Against Violence: Police Officers in Uganda and Their Encounters with Children in Street Situations. In D. Kaawa-Mafigiri & E. J. Walakira (Eds.), *Child Abuse and Neglect in Uganda* (pp. 179–197). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-48535-5_10

Kasper, D. V. S. (2009). Ecological Habitus:Toward a Better Understanding of Socioecological Relations. *Organization & Environment*, *22*(3), 311–326. https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026609343098

Katana, E., Amodan, B. O., Bulage, L., Ario, A. R., Fodjo, J. N. S., Colebunders, R., & Wanyenze, R. K. (2021). Violence and discrimination among Ugandan residents during the COVID-19 lockdown. *BMC Public Health*, *21*(1), 467. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10532-2

Kincheloe, J. L. (2001). Describing the Bricolage: Conceptualizing a New Rigor in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *7*(6), 679–692. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040100700601

Kincheloe, J. L. (2005). On to the Next Level: Continuing the Conceptualization of the Bricolage. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *11*(3), 323–350. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405275056

Kinsella, E. (2006). Hermeneutics and Critical Hermeneutics: Exploring Possibilities within the Art of Interpretation. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *7*, 47 paragraphs.

Kok, M. C., Kane, S. S., Tulloch, O., Ormel, H., Theobald, S., Dieleman, M., Taegtmeyer, M., Broerse, J. E., & de Koning, K. A. (2015). How does context influence performance of community health workers in low- and

middle-income countries? Evidence from the literature. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, *13*(1), 13. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-015-0001-3

Leary, M. R., & Tangney, J. P. (2003). The self as an organizing construct in the behavioral and social sciences. *Handbook of Self and Identity*, *15*, 3–14.

Lee, C. G. (2012). Reconsidering constructivism in qualitative research. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *44*(4), 403–412.

Leonard, V. W. (1989). A Heideggerian phenomenologic perspective on the concept of the person. *Advances in Nursing Science*, *11*(4). https://journals.lww.com/advancesinnursingscience/Fulltext/1989/07000/A_ Heideggerian_phenomenologic_perspective_on_the.8.aspx

Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A., & Guba, E. G. (2017). Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences, Revisited. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 108.

Malindi, M. J., & Theron, L. C. (2010). The Hidden Resilience of Street Youth. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *40*(3), 318–326. https://doi.org/10.1177/008124631004000310

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (2010). Cultures and selves: A cycle of mutual constitution. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *5*(4), 420–430.

Markus, H., & Wurf, E. (1987). The dynamic self-concept: A social psychological perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *38*(1), 299–337.

Mendelson, J. (1979). The Habermas-Gadamer Debate. *New German Critique*, *18*, 44–73.

Morley, C. (2008). Critical reflection as a research methodology. *Knowing Differently: Arts-Based and Collaborative Research Methods*, 265–280.

Napier, A. D., Depledge, M., Knipper, M., Lovell, R., Ponarin, E., Sanabria, E., &
Thomas, F. (2017). *Culture matters: Using a cultural contexts of health
approach to enhance policy making*. World Health Organization. Regional
Office for Europe.

Neefjes, P. (2018). Current Developments in Global Child Health Care: Unicef Data
and Experiences. In *Children's Rights in Health Care* (pp. 32–47). Brill
Nijhoff.

Nightingale, D., & Cromby, J. (1999). *Social constructionist psychology: A critical
analysis of theory and practice*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Perry, E. W., Culbreth, R., Swahn, M., Kasirye, R., & Self-Brown, S. (2020).
Psychological distress among orphaned youth and youth reporting sexual
exploitation in Kampala, Uganda. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *119*,
105587. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105587

Rehman, A. A., & Alharthi, K. (2016). An introduction to research paradigms.
International Journal of Educational Investigations, *3*(8), 51–59.

Ricoeur, P. (1971). What is a Text? Explanation and Interpretation. In D. M.
Rasmussen (Ed.), *Mythic-Symbolic Language and Philosophical
Anthropology: A Constructive Interpretation of the Thought of Paul Ricœur*
(pp. 135–150). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-011-
9327-6_7

Ricoeur, P. (1973). The hermeneutical function of distanciation. *Philosophy Today*,
17(2), 129–141.

Ricoeur, P. (1974). Metaphor and the main problem of hermeneutics. *New Literary
History*, *6*(1), 95–110.

Ricoeur, P. (1976). *Interpretation theory: Discourse and the surplus of meaning*. Texas Christian University Press.

Ricoeur, P. (1984). *3. Time and Narrative: Threefold Mimesis* (pp. 52–88). University of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226713519-004

Ricoeur, P. (1990). *Time and Narrative, Volume 3*. University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, P. (1994a). History and rhetoric. *Diogenes*, *42*(168), 7–24.

Ricoeur, P. (1994b). *Oneself as another*. University of Chicago Press.

Roberge, J. (2011). What is critical hermeneutics? *Thesis Eleven*, *106*(1), 5–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513611411682

Schwandt, T. A. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, *1*(1994), 118–137.

Schwandt, T. A. (2001). Dictionary of qualitative inquiry. In *Dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (pp. xxxiv–281).

Schwandt, T. A. (2003). Back to the rough ground!'Beyond theory to practice in evaluation. *Evaluation*, *9*(3), 353–364.

Senefeld, S., & Perrin, P. C. (2014). Applying an ecological model to orphans and vulnerable children programming. *Development in Practice*, *24*(1), 129–139. JSTOR. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24565379

Shavelson, R. J., Hubner, J. J., & Stanton, G. C. (1976). Self-concept: Validation of construct interpretations. *Review of Educational Research*, *46*(3), 407–441.

Sherwin, S. (1988). Philosophical methodology and feminist methodology: Are they compatible. In C. Overall, S. Mullet, & L. Code (Eds.), *Feminist Perspectives: Philisophical Essays on Method and Morals* (pp. 12–28). University of Toronto Press.

Sobo, E. J., & De Munck, V. C. (1998). *Using Methods in the Field: A Practical Introduction and Casebook*. AltaMira Press.

Swahn, M. H., Gressard, L., Palmier, J. B., Kasirye, R., Lynch, C., & Yao, H. (2012). Serious Violence Victimization and Perpetration among Youth Living in the Slums of Kampala, Uganda. *The Western Journal of Emergency Medicine*, *13*(3), 253–259. PubMed. https://doi.org/10.5811/westjem.2012.3.11772

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2004). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In *Political psychology* (pp. 276–293). Psychology Press.

Thompson, J. B. (1983). *Critical hermeneutics: A study in the thought of Paul Ricoeur and Jürgen Habermas*. Cambridge University Press.

Uganda Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development. (2011). *National strategic programme plan of interventions for orphans and other vulnerable children 2011/12-2015/16* (The National Orphan and Vulnerable Children Policy). MGLSD. http://www.unicef.org/uganda/Final_Printed_OVC_Strategic_Plan_Uganda_-NSPPI_2.pdf.

Uganda Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development. (2012). *National Alternative Care Framework*. MGLSD. http://www.alternative-care-uganda.org/alternative-care-framework. html.

UNICEF. (2016). *A social and behaviour change agenda for inclusion and equity in education* [Programme brief]. UNICEF. https://www.unicef.org/esa/reports/social-and-behaviour-change-agenda-inclusion-and-equity-education

UNICEF. (2018). *Communication for Development (C4D) Global Progress and Country-Level Highlights Across Programme Areas* (Communication for Development) [2017 Programme Report]. UNICEF. https://www.unicef.org/reports/communication-development-c4d-2017

UNICEF. (2019). *UNICEF Uganda Annual Report 2019* (Supporting Children to Have an Equal Opportunity to Survive and Thrive). UNICEF Uganda. https://www.unicef.org/uganda/reports/unicef-uganda-annual-report-2019

United Nations. (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child. *Treaty Series*, *1577*, 3.

United Nations. (2018). *Sustainable development goals report 2018*. United Nations Publications. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2017/

Walakira, E., Ddumba, I., Lishan, S., Baizerman, M., & Francis, T. (2014). Walakira Eddy J., Ismael Ddumba-Nyanzi, Saba Lishan & Michael Baizerman (2014): No place is safe: Violence against and among children and youth in street situations in Uganda, Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies: An International Interdisciplinary Journal for Research, Policy and Care, DOI: 10.1080/17450128.2014.934750 (http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17450128.2014.934750). *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies: An International Interdisciplinary Journal for Research, Policy and Care*. https://doi.org/10.1080/17450128.2014.934750

Willig, C. (2012). *Perspectives on the epistemological bases for qualitative research.*

Willig, C., & Rogers, W. S. (2017). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology*. Sage.

World Health Organization. (2014). *Constitution of the World Health Organization* (48th ed). World Health Organization. https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/151605

Wyatt, T. R., & Zaidi, Z. (2022). Bricolage: A tool for race-related, historically situated complex research. *Medical Education*, *56*(2), 170–175.

York, R., & Clark, B. (2007). The problem with prediction: Contingency, emergence, and the reification of projections. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *48*(4), 713–743.