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The Life Experiences of Juvenile Offenders in a Correctional Institution in the Oromia Region, Ethiopia

Masteroppgave i Childhood Studies

Veileder: Ida Marie Lyså

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Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet

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Abstract

This thesis explores the everyday life experiences of juvenile offenders in a correctional institution in the Jimma District, Oromia Region, Ethiopia. The thesis seeks to answer three research questions: 1) What are the everyday life experiences of juvenile offenders in a correctional institution? 2) How do juvenile offenders navigate and negotiate everyday institutional regulations? and 3) What are the everyday challenges of juvenile offenders in custody, and how do they navigate these challenges? The thesis draws on three months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted with adjudicated juveniles, using the methods of participant observation, individual interviews, and participatory methods such as role-play, drawings, essays, diaries, and ranking and scoring techniques.

Data analysis reveals that incarcerated juveniles at the institution experienced everyday life in prison as an *interruption of childhood*. I argue that imprisonment interrupted their childhood by preventing them from engaging with families and not adequately addressing their need for educational, social, psychological, health, and vocational skills. Children characterized their everyday lives in prison as boredom, idle, put on hold, and a waste of time due to the lack of adequate activities that can engage and occupy them. The study also reveals that incarcerated children experience multiple forms of abuse from correctional staff and other inmates, including physical, psychological, verbal, exploitation, and neglect. Incarcerated children face multifaceted challenges such as difficult living conditions, poor rehabilitation and treatment services, limited access to education and skills training, limited opportunities to engage with families and the outside community, lack of participation in institutional matters, and limited positive psychosocial environment within the custodial institution of the study site.

This study reveals that despite the negative situations and challenges that prison life presents, incarcerated children stay strong and enact agency to navigate and negotiate their everyday lives within the prison. Juvenile inmates navigate institutional regulations through collective and individual approaches. The collective or shared agency involves collaboration among children in finding a solution to their problems through which they care for and protect each other. The individual approaches of juveniles' agency to navigate and negotiate institutional regulations include learning the rules, complying, and enacting agency through staff manipulations. Learning the tricks, rules and regulations, and prison culture is the first approach they employ to manoeuvre their everyday lives in prison. Agency through staff manipulation involves juveniles playing the victims' role, such as trying to win the sympathy of correctional staff to meet their needs.

Findings further uncover how juveniles navigate and cope with everyday life challenges in prison, including solidarity with others, using external support from families, NGOs, and GOs, and using engagements in a variety of activities like labour work, educational and vocational programs, religious activities, playing games, and watching movies. The study reveals the reliance of juvenile inmates on each other and adult inmates, and sometimes on correctional staff to navigate and cope with daily life challenges at the institution. The study suggests the importance of concerted efforts among stakeholders, including children to improve the living circumstances of incarcerated children, and priority for the use of non-custodial alternatives for the management of children in conflict with the law, as well as further research on the pros and cons of placing and treating young people in adult prisons in the context of resource scarce settings like Ethiopia.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

NTNU	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
OAU	Organization of African Unity
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
NSD	Norwegian Centre for Research Data
I	Interviewer
P	Participant
NORPART	Norwegian Partnership Programme for Global Academic Cooperation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
GOs	Government Organizations/Offices
TC	Total Institutions
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
MOLSA	Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
CSA	Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency
NESH	Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics

Chapter 1: Introduction

This Master's thesis explores the everyday life experiences of adjudicated juvenile offenders in a correctional institution in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia. The initial impetus for this study stems from my previous work visit to a custodial institution where young offenders are detained with adults and treated as adults. During my visit to the institution, I had a chance to speak with some juvenile inmates regarding their experiences of incarceration, which piqued my curiosity about their life worlds. This sparked my interest in acquiring an in-depth understanding of the everyday life experiences and challenges of juvenile offenders while they are in custody at the institution where I carried out this fieldwork.

This study is also inspired by the field of Childhood Studies, which views children as active social actors with a voice and agency. Childhood Studies has challenged the hegemonic assumption of developmental psychology and functional sociology that see children as becomings, who are not yet fully developed but waiting to be moulded by adults. In doing so, research within the field of Childhood Studies demonstrates the active role of children in the various arenas of social reproduction of society, indicating that they are not mere receptacles of adult teachings (see, for example, Prout & James, 2015). Additionally, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sees children as active actors with the right to voice and participation in societal affairs (UN, 1989). How do adjudicated juveniles experience everyday life in incarceration, their ways of navigating institutional regulations, and what are their everyday challenges and how do they navigate these challenges in the context of correctional institution in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia are the focus of this study.

Theoretically, this study is embedded in the core premises of the theory of children's agency as the guiding theoretical perspective to explore and understand the everyday life experiences of juvenile offenders in a correctional institution. Juvenile offenders are often studied from the vulnerability approach and are perceived as deviant, unsocialized, vulnerable, and in need of adult guidance (Boyden, 1997). However, this study explores how children enact individual and collective strategies to navigate everyday life experiences and institutional regulations while in the correctional institution, using the concept of children's agency as a guiding theoretical framework.

Additionally, the theory of Total Institutions (Goffman, 1961) was employed to understand the particular nature of the lived experiences of juvenile offenders at the study site. In particular, the Total Institutions theory is used to explore and understand the everyday life challenges of juvenile offenders and their coping strategies as they navigate everyday lives in a correctional institution.

Furthermore, the youth justice models (Smith, 2009) that include justice, welfare, and participative models were utilized to gain an in-depth understanding and exploration of the treatment and the life experiences of juvenile offenders in the custodial institution of the study site. The models are used to examine the debates around juvenile offenders as *a risk* (the justice model) and *at risk* (the welfare approach) and their implications on the policy, intervention programs, and practice of handling and treating juvenile offenders.

The methodological approach of this study involves ethnography and participatory methodologies, which are the hallmark methodologies of Childhood Studies, viewing childhood as a socio-cultural phenomenon and children as active social agents (Prout & James, 2015). Ethnography is selected because it allows the participation of child informants in the research process and help their voices be heard (Prout & James, 2015; James, 2007). Participant observation and semi-structured interviews were ethnographic

methods used to conduct fieldwork with juvenile offenders in custody through participating in their daily routines, including play, work, and rehabilitation activities. Alongside ethnography, the participatory approach is used to gain rich insights into the life experiences of juvenile offenders in custody. The rationale for combining both methodologies was that each has a limitation when employed alone with children, and their combination can help to overcome the weakness of one approach with another (Abebe, 2009; Christensen, 2004). The participatory methods employed were role-play, essays, ranking and scoring exercises, drawings, and diaries to complementing participant observation and semi-structured interviews. These methods helped me collect rich accounts of juvenile offenders' everyday life experiences, strategies for manoeuvring institutional regulations, and their everyday challenges and coping strategies in the custodial institution of the study site.

The primary participants of this study were juvenile offenders who received a formal conviction and committed to a correctional institution. They were active co-participants in participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and participatory methods to generate data for this research project. In addition to children, some correctional staff participated in individual interviews, which helped broaden my horizon of understanding the everyday experiences of juvenile offenders in custody.

1.1. Research Statement

Children encounter the criminal justice system for various reasons. One of these reasons is juvenile delinquency (Mulugeta, 2020). Abrams (2012, p. 877) argues that *juvenile offending is a global problem* and that institutionalization of young offenders in residential homes, prisons, and correctional facilities is a common phenomenon worldwide. A report by the independent expert leading the United Nations Global Study on children deprived of liberty estimates that *410,000* children are detained each year in remand homes and prisons worldwide (Nowak & Krishan, 2021, p. 237). Ethiopia also experiences a high rate of juvenile delinquency, leading to incarcerations of a significant number of juvenile offenders in detention facilities every year (Kedir, 2013; Fufa et al., 2021). The age of minimum criminal responsibility is nine (9) years in Ethiopia. Children from nine (9) years to 15 years old are considered juvenile delinquents, while children between 15-18 are treated as adults in criminal proceedings (Kedir, 2013). In this study, juvenile offenders refer to persons under 18 years old, who have received formal convictions for violating the law and committed to a correctional institution at the study site.

However, the management of young offenders using institutional settings is debatable among social science scholars and policy circles. Boyden (1997) argues that the institutionalization of juveniles is a repressive measure that can expose children to more social and economic risks and isolation from family and community. Nowak and Krishan (2021) also argue that institutions restrict children's rights and agency, and their voices are often unheard in academic debates, policies, and practices. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) also states that "the arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period" (UN, 1989, p. 10). Despite these international and regional policies that recognize detention of children as a last resort, their incarceration in secure establishments, such as jails, prisons, and correctional institutions continues to rise in Ethiopia (Fufa et al., 2021). There is a research gap on how juvenile offenders navigate everyday life in custody in social sciences research. In addition, existing studies on juvenile delinquency are often shaped and influenced by the criminological assumptions

of cause and effect in Ethiopia. For instance, studies such as Tesfaye (2004), Wondimu (2014), Ewnetu (2014), Mebratu (2017), Nayak (2013) and Yilma (2018) have examined the causes and consequences of juvenile delinquency in the country. Yet there are limited studies that explore the everyday life experiences of juvenile offenders while in custody using the theoretical perspective of childhood agency. Smith (2009) notes limited conceptual understandings of childhood agency within the juvenile justice system. Donges Jr (2015) and Gagnon et al. (2020) also argue that there are limited studies that give account to the lived experiences of juvenile offenders while they are in custody. Additionally, Galardi and Settersten Jr (2018) argue that incarcerated children's life experiences and voices remain an under-explored area of inquiry. Shook (2005) pinpointed little understanding of the treatment of juvenile offenders in correctional institutions.

Moreover, while there is a growing body of research that explores the voices and life accounts of street children (see, for example, Aufseeser, 2015; Panter_Brick, 2002; Ansell, 2017; and Abebe, 2009), working and learning children (see, for example, Abebe, 2007; Johan & Abebe, 2018; Abebe & Bessell, 2011 and Bourdillon, 2011), orphan children (see, for example, Abebe; 2010; Abebe, 2012; Meintjes & Giese, 2006 and Guiney & Mostafanezhad, 2015), migrant children (see, for example, Ansell, 2017; Boyden, 2013; Coe, 2012, and Huijsmans, 2011), and children in armed conflicts (see, for example, Weyness, 2016 and Boyden, 2007), juvenile offenders' voices on their everyday experiences while in prison is little researched in the Childhood Studies. This study, thus, targets to contribute towards filling this knowledge gap in the area of childhood and delinquency in Ethiopia.

1.2. The Purpose and Significance of Study

The study explores the everyday life experiences and challenges of juvenile offenders in the custodial institution in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia. The study tries to uncover how children living in restrictive institutions, such as correctional institutions navigate their everyday lives using the theory of childhood agency and a combination of ethnography and participatory methodological approaches. It attempts to bring the voices and perspectives of those young people often seen as a problem to the forefront of debates in childhood studies, policies, and practices, as well as contributes to the growing body of sociological knowledge of children and childhood in general and about the lives of children in prison settings in particular.

This study can also significantly enhance the knowledge and insights of policymakers, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), child rights advocates, and practitioners working in the field of juvenile justice through spotlighting on the voices, concerns, and challenges of juvenile offenders within custody setting. The findings of this study demonstrate juvenile offenders' resilience on coping with harsh prison life, which can be tapped into by correctional practitioners. The study further reveals the gaps in services for the treatment of incarcerated children, particularly in resource-limited settings like Ethiopia, which suggests the importance of collaboration between public and civil society organizations to improve the rehabilitation and social reintegration of young offenders, which is essential to leave no one behind, that can ultimately contribute to working towards achieving the sustainable development goals of having peaceful and inclusive societies by 2030.

1.3. Research Aim and Questions

1.3.1. Research Aim

The general aim of the study is to explore the everyday life experiences of juvenile offenders in custody, their ways of navigating institutional regulations, and challenges and coping strategies in correctional institution in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia.

1.3.2. Research Questions

This study seeks to address the following research questions.

1. What are the everyday life experiences of juvenile offenders in a correctional institution?
2. How do juvenile offenders navigate and negotiate everyday institutional regulations?
3. What are the everyday challenges of juvenile offenders in custody and how do they navigate these challenges?

1.4. Outline of thesis

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the thesis project. It describes the motivation for the study, the research statement, purpose of the study, and the research aims and questions.

Chapter 2 provides information on the background and context of the study. It explains the historical understanding of juvenile delinquency and its influences in Africa and Ethiopia. It also describes the demographic information of Ethiopia and the study setting. Additionally, it presents the understanding of children and childhood in Ethiopia and the legal landscapes relating to juvenile justice at international, regional, and national levels. Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical perspectives of the study, such as the theory of childhood agency, the theory of total institutions, and the youth justice models (justice, welfare, and participative models) that were used to guide the exploration and understanding of everyday life experiences and challenges of juvenile offenders while they are in custody.

Chapter 4 will address the methodological approaches of the study. It presents ethnography and participatory methodologies as the guiding methodological approaches of the study. It elaborates on the fieldwork process of the study, the study participants, and methods and tools used for gathering data. Ethical considerations of the study are also addressed in this chapter.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 focus on the analysis and findings of the study. Chapter 5 explores the everyday life experiences of juvenile offenders within a correctional institution.

Chapter 6 builds on Chapter 5 and elaborates on the ways juvenile offenders navigate the everyday institutional regulations, including their admission procedures and adjustment processes to the prison environment. Chapter 7 will extend the everyday challenges of juvenile offenders and their coping strategies to navigate the challenges they experience within the custody. It explains several forms of agency that juvenile offenders enact within a correctional institution of the study site.

The last chapter offers conclusions and recommendations. It concludes the study, with recommendations for further research, policy, and practice to improve the living conditions of juvenile offenders committed to a correctional institution in the Oromia Region, Ethiopia.

Chapter 2: Background and Context

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides background information and context on the study. First, the chapter historicizes the global understanding of juvenile delinquency and its influences in Africa, particularly Ethiopia. Second, the chapter describes the country's populations, economy, and political contexts, including in the Oromia and the Jimma, which are the focus of the study. Third, it provides an abridged glimpse of understanding of children and childhood in Ethiopia, particularly in Oromia. Fourth, the chapter addresses policies and legal landscapes relating to juvenile justice at international, regional, and national levels.

2.2. A Historical Account of Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Justice in Ethiopia

According to scholars like Ariés (1982), childhood awareness did not exist in the western medieval society. In these early periods, children were considered miniature adults and used to be punished as adults if caught engaging in deviant behaviours (Winter, 2009). Monk (2009, p. 188) argues that "prior to the mid-nineteenth century, the criminal justice system treated children in the same way as adults". However, the tendency to separate the world of children from that of adults began in the early twentieth century following the advancement of developmental psychology and the expansion of education, which marked the beginning idea of modern childhood (Aries, 1982). Gittins (2004) also argues that the legal and political attitudes towards children and childhood started to change at the end of the 19th century. Winter (2009) extends that recognizing children as different from adults in their stages of development led to the idea of considering children's emotional, mental, and intellectual maturity to make them accountable for their acts. This thinking has contributed to the birth of the concept of juvenile justice, which led to the development of a specialized system that deals with the management of juvenile offenders separate from the legal system for adults in the west and eventually influenced its understanding in the rest of the world, including Africa.

The ideas of juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice first came to Africa through colonial governments in the 1920s and 1930s (Cole & Chipaca, 2014). African traditional laws used to deal with children who violated the local rules before colonialism (Cole & Chipaca, 2014; Krohn & Lane, 2015). Nyamu and Wamahiu (2022) argue that parents and adults predominantly used physical punishment to discipline children in the past. Krohn and Lane (2015) also note that the institutionalization of children for criminal deeds did not occur in pre-colonial African societies. However, colonial governments abolished African laws and established new judicial structures and social welfare services for delinquent children (Fourchard, 2005 in Cole & Chipaca, 2014, p. 62). "African juvenile offenders became the subject of serious state interest for the first time in the 1930s" (Cambell, 2002, p. 130). It was introduced by colonial governments to curtail the problem of street crime by children who had migrated into the colonial towns and cities from the rural areas. The colonial governments attributed the cause of delinquency to a lack of parental supervision, a lack of discipline by young people, and diminished respect for elders (Cole & Chipaca, 2014).

The concepts of juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice was unknown in Ethiopia before the Italian occupation (Tesfaye, 2004). It was developed in the early 1940s/1950s after Italians left Ethiopia. The war with the Italians left many children without parents

and abandoned and led to the escalation of street children in the country. It has resulted in the rise of delinquent acts on the streets, and consequently, juvenile delinquency captured public attention (Tesfaye, 2004; Abebe, Gizaw & Baudouin, 2013). This problem of street crime by children marked the beginning of dealing with juveniles as separate from adults in the legal systems of Ethiopia. It required the criminal justice systems to develop a differential response for delinquent children, with the intention of protection, separation, and rehabilitation. As a result, the emperor, then monarch of Ethiopia, formed a special court composed of three high court judges to handle juvenile cases and established a reformatory school for boys in Addis Ababa with the help of the British government (Tesfaye, 2004). It is also the only institution that currently serves as a specialized centre to host juvenile offenders in the country. Though institutional separation was a good start, neither the previous nor the present government did anything in terms of designing rehabilitation programs for juveniles despite some progress in the ratification of international and regional child treaties (Tesfaye, 2004).

2.3. Overview of Ethiopia: Population, Economy, and Political Contexts

Bordered by Djibouti and Somalia in the east, Kenya in the south, Sudan and South Sudan in the west, and Eritrea in the north, Ethiopia is located in the east of Africa (Heinonen, 2000). With 106,983 million inhabitants, Ethiopia is the second most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa (Central Statistical Agency (CSA), 2013, p. 28), with 80 percent living in rural areas even though Ethiopia is experiencing the fastest urbanization in Africa (UN-Habitat, 2014). The majority (over 60%) of the population is below the age of 25 years (UNDP, 2014 in Abebe, 2016, p. 30). Young people under 18 years old constitute 52.9 percent of the population, whereas older groups (over 65 years) account for 5 percent (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), 2014).

Ethiopia is the oldest independent nation in Sub-Saharan Africa and the only state that was not colonized except for the Italian occupation (1935-41) (Tesfaye, 2017 & Heinonen, 2000). "Ethiopia is a nation of nations" (Abebe, 2021, p. 6). Amharic is the federal government's working language (FDRE, 1995). Christianity and Islam are the dominant religions in the country (Heinonen, 2000).

Ethiopia is also one of the largest countries in Africa with diverse agroecological areas, consisting of abundant natural resources, and land is the major economic source of the country. Agriculture is the mainstay for most of the population. The principal export is coffee followed by a variety of grains, fruits, vegetables, and hide and skins, and to some extent minerals (Heinonen, 2000; Abebe, 2016). Although Ethiopia has suitable agroecological zones and has been experiencing fast economic growth, there is still a high burden of poverty rate in the country. UNICEF's (2019) report shows that 25 percent of the population lives below the poverty line (\$1.25 a day), of which 38 percent are in the Oromia region. This report also shows that the poverty rate is higher in rural areas (25%) than in urban areas (15%). Ethiopia is experiencing significant challenges in social, economic, environmental, political, and cultural contexts. Children and young people are most affected by these socioeconomic challenges, and childhood poverty remains a widespread problem in the country (Tafere, 2016).

Concerning polity, Ethiopia had a long history of state formation. The current Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was established in 1991 (Tesfaye, 2017), with 11 (eleven) regions and 2 (two) city administrations, of which Oromia is the largest region. In what follows, I provide detailed contexts to the Oromia Region and Jimma district where I conducted this study.

2.4. Research Contexts

2.4.1. Overview of Oromia National Regional State

Oromia National Regional State is one of Ethiopia's federal regions (Abebe, 2020). Oromia is the most populous region with an estimated total population of over 37 million: 18,683,00 males and 18,584,000 females (UNICEF, 2019; Oromia Plan Commission, 2021), and Oromo population accounts for more than one-third of the country's inhabitants (37%) (UNICEF, 2019, p.5), and speak Afaan Oromoo (Oromo Language), which is a Cushitic family (Abebe, 2021). According to UNICEF's report (2019), the Oromia population is overwhelmingly young, and 54 percent are children and young people under the age of 18 years. Oromia has been experiencing high population growth, with a fertility rate of 5.4 percent in a year, which is more than the national fertility rate of 4.6 percent (UNICEF, 2019, p. 5).

Oromia is also the largest region occupying approximately 34 percent of the land in Ethiopia (UNICEF, 2019). It stretches across central Ethiopia, extending in the west to the borders of South Sudan, in the east up to the arid pastures of Somali, and in the south to the borders of Kenya. It also shares boundaries with almost all other regions of Ethiopia except the Tigray region (Facquet & Feyissa, 2015). Due to its location, Oromia borders and interacts with all ethnic groups in Ethiopia. In other words, it is a home to multicultural society.

Furthermore, the region has diverse agroecological zones. The highland areas are occupied by people who practice a sedentary way of life, depending on agriculture and livestock, while pastoralist communities inhabit the lowland areas (UNICEF, 2019). The region has 21 (twenty-one) administrative zones and 19 (nineteen) City Administrations. Nearly 85 percent of the population in the region lives in rural areas, and agriculture is the source of livelihood for the majority (85%) (Oromia Plan Commission, 2021). Finfinnee (in the Oromo language) is the administrative seat and capital city of the Oromia National Regional State.

Oromia experiences high economic, political, social, and cultural interactions because it is at the heart of the country. It also serves as a transportation hub by connecting all regions of Ethiopia. Overall, Oromia's strategic location creates a conducive environment for high social, political, economic, and cultural interactions in the region and at the same time, it presents a wide range of socio-economic challenges. There is also a high influx of people into the region from all corners. Abebe (2020) argues that due to its proximity to Addis Ababa, there is high demand for Oromia land from local and international investors, resulting in a land-grabbing problem, which poses risk to many households and children's livelihoods. Oromia has the highest poverty rate in the country (UNICEF, 2019), and the socio-economic precarity of its young people is widespread and persistent.

2.4.2. Research Setting

Fieldwork for this study was conducted in Jimma, a town of multi-ethnic habitats located 352 kilometres southwest of Addis Ababa. Jimma City is the centre of the Jimma Zone (composed of 22 (twenty-two) districts and 2 (two) town administrations). It is an administrative seat for zonal-level governmental and nongovernmental offices.

Jimma is one of the oldest and largest cities in the Oromia National Regional State and the country. During their occupation of Ethiopia, the Italians transformed Jimma into one of the cities in Ethiopia. They built a hospital, hotels, a cinema, and many other government buildings and residential houses. Many buildings and neighbourhoods that were established during the Italian occupation still exist in Jimma (Mains, 2011).

Jimma is the birthplace of coffee Arabica and many people around Jimma earn a living from coffee. It is the country's largest export commodity. Jimma serves as the centre of a large market for coffee and other commodities like fruits, vegetables, and chat (mild stimulant crop).

Jimma is also a transportation hub in the southwest and is one of the populous cities in Oromia National Regional State, with an estimated total population of over 200,000, of which 29 percent are estimated to be children and young people under the age of 18 years (Jimma City Municipality Report, 2017). Because of the presence of coffee business in the area, relatively better social services, and stability, Jimma is a destination for numerous local and international investors and migrants from adjacent areas and other regions, especially during coffee harvesting seasons.

While Jimma experiences relative peace and stable social, political, economic, and cultural interactions, it has a high crime rate, including juvenile delinquency. Although Jimma is experiencing a fast urbanization process, the pace of economic opportunities and social services is not growing at the rate of its population. This challenge accentuates the problem of unemployment and social and psychological stress that contributes to beggary and crime. Jimma has a high youth unemployment rate (Mains, 2011), and many of its neighbourhoods and residential areas are experiencing poverty. Jimma and its surrounding districts also host many orphans and vulnerable children, such as children in street conditions (Abashula, Jibat & Ayele, 2014). Due to these widespread socioeconomic precarities in the area, the involvement of children in delinquent acts is also high, and I became interested in exploring how life accounts and everyday experiences of children who encounter criminal justice systems as offenders unfold while they are in correctional institutions.

The ABC correctional institution (its name changed for the purpose of anonymity), located in Jimma City, is one of the public correctional institutions in Oromia National Regional State, which houses more than 2000 prison populations. The establishment of the institution can be traced back to 1924, the year when the first prison was established in Addis Ababa, the capital city (Tesfaye, 2004). The institution is believed to have been built during this time, and since then, it has served as a facility for the control, management, and rehabilitation of inmates, including adjudicated juveniles in the southwest. I selected the institution as the study setting because it presents opportunities to engage with juvenile inmates for fieldwork. The map of the study area is depicted in Figure 1 below.

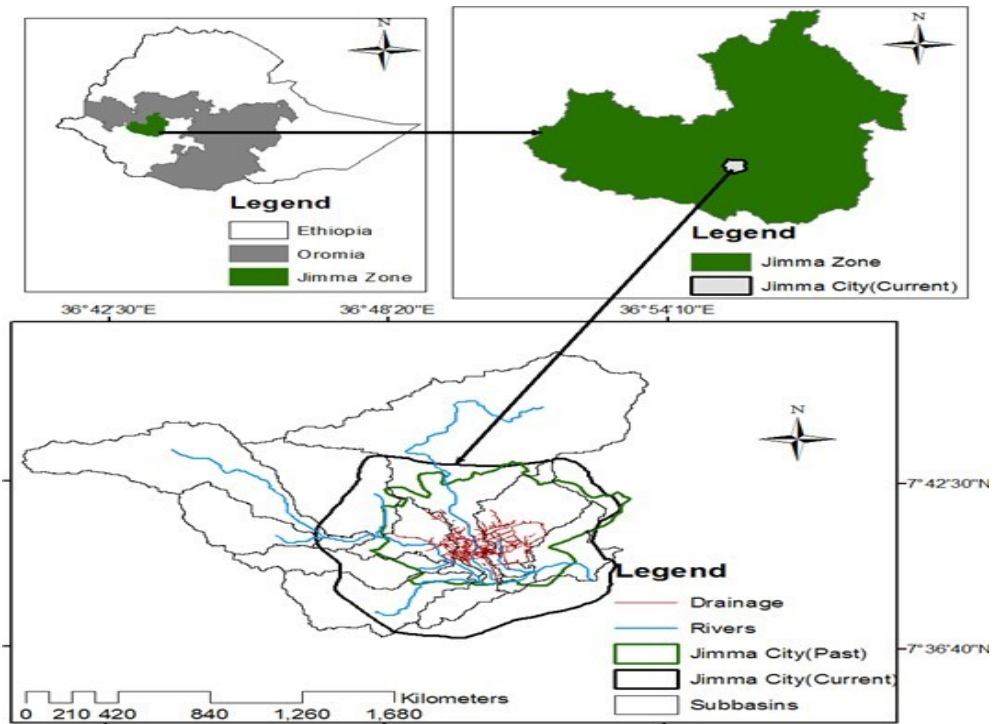


Figure 2.1: Map of Jimma City (source: Dibaba, 2018, p. 133).

2.5. Overview of Children and Childhood in Oromia/Ethiopia

In this section, I offer a short glimpse of children and childhood in Ethiopian societies. Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society with diverse religions, lifestyles, economies, and geographical contexts. This section draws on a few previous studies conducted in urban and rural areas of Oromia, Amhara, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region, and Addis Ababa City on children and childhood and children and adult relationships.

2.5.1. Ideals and Assumptions of Children and Childhood

Unlike in western nations where age is used as a primary criterion to mark between childhood and adulthood, in African societies like Ethiopia, age is not the sole definition of a child. Many Ethiopian parents had no formal education, and the tradition of keeping birth date records of their children did not exist in the past and is not well developed in the present either. Many people use events, periods, and times to memorize the birth years of their children.

Tefera, Abebe, and Elefachew (2013) argue that concepts of children and childhood vary across cultures, economies, and geographies in Ethiopia. They note that children and childhood are often defined based on children's "social functioning-where fulfilment of rituals like initiation ceremony and circumcision play important roles and define when childhood ends, and adulthood begins" (p. 17). Regassa and Kjørholt (2013, p. 189) point out that in the Gadaa system (the traditional socio-economic and political institution) of the Guji society of Oromia, "the term *child* refers to a socially and politically immature human being. Children are seen as human beings with restricted rights and competencies compared to human beings with the status of adults". They argue that children in Guji society are seen as becomings and beings. As becomings,

children gradually learn the necessary social norms, values, and customs through social processes and interactions in the adult world. Children are also beings, because they are active contributors to their families' livelihoods by participating in activities such as herding cattle, collecting firewood, and providing labour assistance in fields.

Likewise, a study by Chuta (2007) in the central (urban and rural areas) Oromia shows that children support their parents in cattle herding, collecting firewood and water, and doing household chores starting from six or seven years old. Even children as young as three or four may help their parents as messengers-passing information between neighbourhoods in the village. The relationship between children and parents is hierarchical, and children are taught to respect and obey their parents and adults in and outside the home. A good child respects and obeys parents and adults, helps parents, does not insult or fight with others, and studies hard in school. Similarly, a good girl is one who respects others, helps her mother, does not talk aloud at home or class, and does not have sexual relations. Bad boys and girls are those who show deviant behaviours, such as not obeying adults, insulting, stealing, and not respecting social norms and values. Punishment with different degrees and forms at home, school, and the workplace is an integral part of child upbringing in Oromia.

Another study by Wonde, Jibat, and Baru (2014) in some urban and rural areas of the Jimma zone in the Oromia revealed that parents see physical punishment as an integral part of their children's upbringing responsibility. Parents believe that the administration of punishment is not to hurt children but rather to raise them into disciplined future adults. It is a common practice of disciplining children in the urban and rural communities of the area, but its extent of application may vary.

Like Oromia, studies conducted in Amhara, Addis Ababa, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' regions show the prevalence of authoritarian parenting in Ethiopian societies. Authoritarian parenting anchored on the hierarchical relations between parents and children seems strong in rural areas of northern Ethiopia, especially among Orthodox Christians (Abraham, 1996; Habtamu, 1995 in Tefera, Abebe & Elefachew, 2013, p. 72). Poluha (2004) and Tamene (2007) also argue that relations between adults and children are strongly authoritarian and hierarchical in Ethiopia, especially in the Northern part. On the contrary, studies in southern Ethiopia reveal that inter-and intra-generational relations between adults and children, boys and girls, are more egalitarian and complementary than those in the northern area of the country (Abbink, 1996 in Tefera, Abebe & Elefachew, 2013, p. 73).

Extending the discussion on childhood and traditions of child disciplining, Tefera, Abebe, and Elefachew (2013) found that many parents in Ethiopia believe mild physical punishment is a beneficial technique for moulding children's behaviour. Despite the dominant belief that physical punishment of children is an abuse in the west, it is a common way of shaping children's behaviour and raising them into disciplined and responsible adults in Ethiopia. Tefera, Abebe, and Elefachew (2013) further argue that in Ethiopia, controlling children's behaviour is a vital aspect of children's uprooting and to help them become good persons and successful adults. Parents do not support harmful kinds of punishing children, such as beating the child with heavy sticks, tying children to trees, or withholding food. But parents in Ethiopia believe in applying an acceptable level of physical punishment to discipline children's behaviour (Tefera, Abebe, & Elefachew, 2013). A Good child respects adults and obeys rules, norms, and values. Tefera, Abebe, and Elefachew (2013) illustrate that hierarchical, authoritarian, and communal approaches to raising children are predominant in Ethiopian societies.

Abdulwasie (2007) also found that in the Kolfe and Semen Mazegaja areas of Addis Ababa, there are different ideas of characterizing boys and girls as good or bad. In

other words, due to differences in gender socialization, the community uses different criteria to mark boys and girls as good or bad. A boy who is disrespectful and disobedient to his parents, adults, and schoolteachers is seen as deviant or bad. A bad boy is also characterized by frequent fights with peers, loiter, not helping his parents, gambling, and staying out late. Poluha (2004), in his study in Amhara, found that a bad boy disobeys, does not run errands, does not share his income, stays out late, steals, and does not respect his mother or other adults. On the contrary, a good boy respects adults, has patience, doesn't complain much, runs errands, does not girls' jobs (for example, baking and cooking), is obedient, and performs well at school. Alemayehu (2007) also noted similar conceptions of good and bad children in urban and rural areas of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region of Ethiopia. Abdulwasie (2007) elaborated that the characterization of boys and girls as good or bad may vary across time, place, play, and work. There is strict control of parents/guardians over girls' behaviour and more lenient with boys because girls are assumed to be vulnerable. Boys are often allowed to play and spend some time in playgrounds after school and on weekends, but girls cannot do the same thing; they are expected to stay inside the home doing household chores. Boys are also less likely punished for coming late to home in the evening, but girls who do this might be seen as mischievous and get punished. However, these differences may vary across culture, community, place (urban/rural), and time.

Parents, teachers, and adults use different praises and punishments to teach children what is good and bad/inappropriate behaviour. Oral appreciation, gifts, and other rewards are used at school and home for children to show respect and good behaviour. However, punishments are used for children who deviate from the expected norms of the family, school rules, and community values (Poluha, 2004). Young children are less likely to get punished because they are too young to understand right and wrong. But when they turn age three to five, children may get punished for their mistakes since they are expected to identify right and wrong at these ages.

Religion also plays a significant role in categorizing children as good or bad. Religions regulate children's everyday lives by teaching them how they ought to behave at home, in schools, and at places of worship. Poluha (2004) argues that religious teachings have an influence on the everyday practices of children, their worldviews, and their understandings of right and wrong, which often reinforces the widely prevailing hierarchical power relations between adults and children in Ethiopia.

Juvenile misdemeanours and delinquencies are extreme manifestations of children's deviant behaviour, where law enforcement actors intervene beyond parents and the community. In other words, parents and other adults in the community handle children's behaviour for status offenses. But the cases of violating the penal law demand police officer's intervention. Even though sending children to institutions for their deviant acts was not part of children's socialization in the past, it is currently common to see the wide use of secure establishments, such as jails, prisons, and correctional institutions in the country.

2.6. Legal Frameworks Relevant to Juvenile Justice

This section addresses policies and legal frameworks which are relevant to the management of juvenile offenders in Ethiopia.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international child convention, of which Ethiopia is also a part, addressed the issues of children in conflict with the law in articles 37, 39, and 40 (UN, 1989, pp. 10-119). Article 37 prohibits the use of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment of children who encounter the law, and the use of arrest, detention, or imprisonment as a last resort and for the possibly shortest period. It also states the need to protect the child from unlawful deprivation of liberty, and treatment with humanity and respect for children deprived of their liberty, as well as the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance. Article 39 demands that state parties promote the social reintegration of a child victim of neglect, exploitation, and punishment, including the reintegration of juveniles with families and community. Article 40 also requires state parties to take appropriate measures to promote the respect for the dignity and worth of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law (UN, 1989).

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (known as the Beijing Rules) (UN, 1985) is an international instrument that attends to child justice. The rules stipulate the need for special measures for the treatment of juvenile offenders, including the use of imprisonment as a last resort; the use of diversion and other non-custodial alternatives, and rehabilitation of juveniles and institutional separate treatment for young offenders from adults (UN, 1985). This rule has no binding effect, but state parties including Ethiopia are expected to implement it according to their specific social, economic, and cultural contexts.

The United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (Havana Rules) is another UN legal framework for principles and strategies for the treatment of juveniles in correctional centres and in custody. It mentions the standards for the handling of juveniles in correctional facilities and the minimum social services that they should be provided in custody, such as education, vocational training and work, recreation and religion, medical care, contact with the wider community, and rights to complaints, as well as assistance on their reintegration into the community (UN, 1990). Ethiopia must follow these rules in handling and treating juvenile offenders as a UN member state.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) has also relevant articles for the treatment of juvenile offenders. Article 4 dictates the consideration of the best interest of the child during the judicial proceedings and decisions. Additionally, article 17 focuses on the administration of juvenile justice and prohibits torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of detained or imprisoned children, and the use of any forceful measures on the child to testify or confess. It also states that the aim of treatment of every child found guilty of infringing the penal law should be reformation, reintegration with his/her family/guardian, and social rehabilitation (Organization of African Unity (OAU), 1990). Ethiopia is also one of the African states that has ratified the charter.

In addition to the above-mentioned international and regional policies, Ethiopia has developed national policies and laws that are relevant to the treatment of juvenile offenders. Amongst others, article 36 of the Ethiopian constitution addresses the issues of children's rights in general and states the separate treatment of juvenile offenders admitted to correctional institutions from adults (FDRE, 1995). The national children's policy also mentions juvenile offenders as one of the categories of children who are in

difficult circumstances that need rescue. The policy emphasizes the need for the protection of children who encounter the law, and it suggests the need for the provision of rehabilitation and reintegration services for juvenile offenders (FDRE, 2017). The National Criminal Justice Policy further sees juvenile offenders as vulnerable and states that the aim of treatment should be their reformation, social rehabilitation, and reintegration (Federal Ministry of Justice, 2011).

Overall, these policies and other legal frameworks of Ethiopia in connection to children in general and juvenile offenders in particular are framed in the context of international and regional child instruments, which may reflect the influences of global childhood thinking in developing countries through policy making. Oromia region is also required to implement national policies and legal frameworks in managing juvenile offenders as one of the constituencies of the federal state of Ethiopia.

2.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter addressed the historical understanding of juvenile delinquency and its influences in Africa. I discussed that the concept of juvenile delinquency was first invented in the west and later get transported to Africa through colonialism. The term juvenile delinquency was first recognized in Ethiopia after the Italian occupation. Since then, juvenile justice systems were incorporated into the country's legal framework.

The chapter also described the demographic, economic, and political contexts of Ethiopia, the Oromia, and the Jimma. Ethiopia is home to a young population, with Oromia having the highest proportion of young people. Oromia is the largest and most populous region that experiences a high poverty rate and youth unemployment. Jimma, located in the southwest of Oromia, has the high burden of youth unemployment and juvenile delinquency rate.

Additionally, in this chapter, I offered an overview of children, childhood, and child adult relationships in Oromia/Ethiopia. Studies such as Poluha (2007) and Tefera, Abebe and Elefachew (2013) reveal that authoritarian parenting practice is prevalent among Ethiopian societies. The relationship between children and adults is hierarchical, and children are socialized to respect their parents and other adults. Physical punishment is also customary approach to discipline children in urban and rural areas. The chapter discussed juvenile delinquency as an extreme manifestation of children's deviant behaviours for which they may face criminal justice procedures, including detentions.

Finally, the chapter presented an abridged overview of policies and legal frameworks relating to the administration of juvenile justice at the international, regional, and local levels. Ethiopia has ratified UNCRC and ACRWC, and they serve as guidelines for interpreting children's rights in the country, including juvenile justice. However, their implementations in the local realities of poorer nations like Ethiopia is challenging (Ansell, 2017).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Perspectives

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical perspectives I used in this study. The study centres on the core premises of Childhood Studies, which view childhood as a socio-cultural construction and children as active social actors with agency and voices (Prout & James, 2015). In particular, the study uses the concept of relational agency to explore and understand how incarcerated children navigate everyday life accounts and experiences in prison. Additionally, the chapter discusses the ideologies that inform different models of dealing with the treatment of young offenders in a custody (Smith, 2009). The aim of employing these models is to explore and understand how they shape the treatment of these children within the correctional institution and how children navigate their everyday lives in the closed setting. The chapter also addresses the theory of Total Institutions as the third theoretical approach of the study (Goffman, 1961).

3.2. Childhood Studies and the Concept of Agency

Children's agency has become more prominent in Childhood Studies (Mizen & Ofosu-Kusi, 2013; Tisdall & Punch, 2012; Valentine, 2011). Before the development of Childhood Studies as a field, developmental psychology and socialization theory have shaped and influenced research studies on childhood and children. Developmental psychology focuses on physical, intellectual, emotional, and social changes throughout the lifespan. It emphasizes examining normative development, viewing development as a universal and predictable phenomenon across populations. This approach distinguishes between childhood and adulthood based on age, where children are seen as immature, irrational, and not yet fully developed adults (Grison & Schwartz, 2000). From this perspective, maturity and rationality distinguish between adults and children, with adults being considered as mature, rational, and competent, while children are seen as incomplete or unfinished human beings who are in the state of becoming (Jenks, 1982; Woodhead, 2013).

Socialization theory emerged in the late 1950s as an alternative way of theorizing children and childhood to developmental psychology. Sociologists focused on how differences in child-rearing practices would shape children rather than children's natural development. The socialization theory assumes that "society shapes the individual" (James et al., 1998, p. 23) and sees socialization as a mechanical instrument that changes the natural child into a social and cultural person. This theory portrays children as passive recipients of adults' knowledge who then develop into social and conforming members of the human family by society (Prout & James, 2015). Both developmental and socialization theories view children as human beings in the process of becoming. These theories were developed in the context of the western world based on individual-oriented thinking and are often assumed to be universal phenomena across world (Prout & James, 2015).

However, the idea of viewing children as only future adults did not last long and has been challenged by scholars in Childhood Studies (see, for example, James et al., 1998; James & Prout, 1997; Montgomery, 2003). Sociology of Childhood developed as a critical reaction to the developmental psychology and socialization theory in the 1980s

and 1990s (Prout, 2011; Prout & James, 2015; Tisdall & Punch, 2012). One of the contributions of this field to the study of children and childhood was the idea that childhood is a socially constructed phenomenon that varies in time and place and that children are active social agents who can shape and be shaped by society. This thinking resulted in a paradigm shift in research involving children in academia and influenced policy and practice relating to children and childhood. Children are recognized as active members of the human family in the present moment (here and now) rather than being considered passive, incompetent, and future adults (Prout & James, 2015).

Alongside Childhood Studies, the formulation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as a global children's rights legal framework reiterates the recognition of children's agency in academia, policies, and practices. The UNCRC gives children the right to participation, autonomy, and self-determination in all matters affecting them, which implies the recognition of children's agency (Ennew et al., 2009). Since then, the notion of the agency has been widely taken up in research with children in various settings and is currently one of the central tenets of Childhood Studies (Abebe, 2019; Hammersley, 2017).

This study employs agency theory because juvenile offenders are often studied from a vulnerability perspective. They are perceived as deviant, unsocialized, vulnerable, and in need of adult guidance and supervision (Boyden, 1997). Additionally, juveniles who are committed to custodial institutions are presented as children who need professional interventions, such as psychology, sociology/social work, psychiatry, and laws because they are assumed to be unable to fit into a normal childhood within a family and community. In this regard, care and treatment flow in one direction from correctional staff to children, but what role children themselves can play in their correction activities is not accounted for. Smith and Creaney (2020) challenge the dominant view that *professionals know best* by arguing that children can be active agents and influence the delivery of youth justice services by responding to opportunities and challenges in their everyday lives. This study also utilizes the lens of children's agency to explore how juvenile offenders navigate everyday lives in the context of incarceration.

However, this study is cautious about the use of the concept of agency. There was the idea of valorising children as liberal and autonomous individuals with agency, particularly in the context of the west in the early stages of the field. This was criticized as a conceptual trap for Childhood Studies (Spyrou, 2018). Prout (2011, p. 7) also argues that "the agency of children as social actors is often glossed over, taken to be an essential, virtually unmediated characteristic of humans that does not require much explanation". Valentine (2011) similarly criticizes the liberal understanding of children's agency in Childhood Studies and recognized "children's agency as complex, multidimensional, and ambivalent" (p. 348). Furthermore, Abebe (2019) suggests understanding of contexts and relational processes that shape children's everyday agency, rather than merely recognizing children as agentful. Punch (2016) also notes that 'the strong focus on children's agency for empirical studies in Childhood Studies has become almost a taken-for-granted mantra' (p. 184). Tisdall and Punch (2012) extend this by arguing that the concept of children and young people's agency needs to be contested, rather than taken for granted.

Following these critiques, a more nuanced understanding of children's agency has begun to emerge in Childhood Studies research. For example, Valentine (2011) deconstructed the competent model of agency and proposed a social model of agency that is sensitive to the diversity of children's experiences and contexts. Valentine argued that the conceptualization of children's agency is not straightforward. Abebe (2019) conceptualized agency as a continuum and interdependent, which is a continuous, fluid,

and negotiated process between children and adults. He argued that "agency is dynamic, situated, and contextual" (p. 11). Klocker (2007) distinguished between *thin* and *thick* agency based on her research with child domestic workers in Tanzania. The former refers to "decisions and everyday actions that are carried out within highly restrictive contexts, characterized by few viable alternatives, while the latter refers to having the latitude to act within a broad range of options" (p. 85). According to Klocker, "structures, contexts, and relationships can act as thinners or thickeners of an individual's agency, by constraining or expanding their range of viable choices" (p. 85).

Abebe (2019) and Klocker's (2007) analysis exemplify the influence of circumstances on children's agency. Additionally, Honwana (2005, p. 49) introduced the concept of *tactical agency* to explain the behaviour of child soldiers in Mozambique. Tactical agency refers to ... "a type of agency that is devised to cope with the concrete, immediate conditions of their lives... Their actions, however, come from a position of weakness". Honwana's (2005) research shows that child soldiers navigate dichotomies between child and adult, victim and perpetrator, or guilt and innocence.

Payne (2012, p. 400) also introduces the concept of "everyday agency" to describe the living conditions of child-headed households in Zambia. "Everyday agency, therefore, refers to the expressions of agency perceived by children and young people to be part of their everyday life, even though these actions frequently go against the grain of what is considered socially and culturally appropriate". Payne stresses the importance of being open to children's interpretations of their agency and its implication for social interventions. Atkinson-Sheppard (2017) expands this and proposes the idea of a protective agency, which demonstrates how street children acquire protection by participating in organized crime in Bangladesh. Such behaviour is abnormal for mainstream society. Bordonaro and Payne (2012, p. 366) used the term "ambiguous agency" to illustrate how behaviors of children, such as underage criminals, child soldiers, street children, and child-headed households go against normative conceptions of childhood. Valentine (2011) noted the uncomfortable dimensions of agency, where children sometimes act as their own enemies due to living conditions or to resist powers. Mizen and Ofosu-Kusi (2013) elaborate that agency can be vulnerable, where children move to street life to escape vulnerabilities in their households and communities. In this sense, "children's agency was largely embedded in their social relations with their families and communities than being individually constituted" (Mizen and Ofosu-Kusi, 2013 in Spyrou, 2018, p. 125). These findings emphasize the significance of understanding children's agency in relational terms, with the agency being socially and relationally embedded. Spyrou (2018, p. 128) argues that "rethinking agency as a relational concept pinpoints the interdependence between children and adults and the willingness of both to negotiate the space of agency".

However, children's agency is not widely studied in juvenile justice research. According to Smith (2009), there is limited development of conceptual understanding of children's agency within the youth justice system. Polvere (2014, pp. 187-189) proposed four forms of agency among institutionalized youth in residential facilities and inpatient psychiatric hospitals in the United States: *Agency through resistance* (acting out and showing a certain level of resistance against institutional rules), *agency through compliance* (following institutional rules until get out-intentionally remaining submissive to avoid further traps within institutions), *agency through self-advocacy* (advocating through learning one's rights and influencing institutional reforms), and *agency through dialectical thinking* (maintaining a sense of hope and envisioning better future). Polvere (2014) also noted that "youth experience institutional environments as a site of coercion, oppression, and social control" (p. 190) and are often denied the opportunity to

participate in the decision-making process related to their treatment and the shaping of institutional rules and practices.

Similarly, Karlsson (2018, p. 320) studied children's agency in a Swedish asylum centre and identified two forms of agency: "Tactical awareness and tactical acts". Tactical awareness refers to the understanding of children about institutional strategies of control and surveillance and actors controlling it. Tactical acts involve escaping institutional regulation, such as using the school as a free place for play, going to school early, and leaving school late to avoid institutional control at the centre.

Atkinson-Sheppard (2017) argues that rehabilitation and social reintegration should be prioritized over punishment for children involved in crimes because they are victims of circumstances. Additionally, in developing countries, children are often imprisoned with adult offenders due to the limited facilities for the juvenile justice system. Bordonaro and Payne (2012) also criticize that "many social interventions and child protection programs regarded children as passive victims, acting in the name of children's best interests but in practice excluding them from participation and decision making, denying them an active role, and obstructing their capacity for action, resulting in a sense of powerlessness" (p. 366).

Franzen (2015) also discussed the dynamic relationship between power and resistance in a youth detention home in Sweden and found that boys are skilled at navigating the system, relating to rules, and strategically using them to resist adult power and position themselves as agents. Ayete-Nyampong and van der Geest (2013) found in their study with juveniles in Ghana that despite being constrained by the structural processes of the institution, children can negotiate the structural and everyday challenges in a variety of ways. This study similarly aims to explore and understand how young offenders navigate their everyday life experiences and challenges in a custodial institution using the agency as a theoretical guide of the study.

3.3. Youth Justice Studies: Theoretical Models of Interventions

This section presents two dominant perspectives on youth justice: the justice/correctional model and the rehabilitative/ welfare model. These perspectives construct youth offenders as a problem that needs to be forced or helped into becoming conforming adult citizens (Smith, 2009). These models are also reflected in the work of government and non-governmental organizations that deal with young offenders. The following discussion will delve further into the perspectives that underpin each model in detail.

3.3.1. The Justice Model

The correctional/justice model sees youth offenders as a risk to the public. This model focuses on containing offenders in secure establishments, such as prisons or reformatory schools to ensure the public safety. However, research showed that 'the conditions of such institutions are often unsafe, unsanitary, violent, and abusive' (Rizzini & Lusk, 1995, p. 397). de Benítez (2011) argued that this model is based on the premise that street children are deviant and a threat to public order. Smith and Creaney (2020) further argue that neo-liberal thinking informs the discourse of punishment in youth justice, viewing young people in conflict with the law as a source of threat. These authors also contend that while juveniles have the right to influence the delivery of services, their voices have not listened to because they are perceived as not deserving of a voice due to their wrongdoing.

Similarly, Smith (2009, p. 256) argues that criminalization underpins the justice model, inviting “containment and behaviour management as the standard response based on the assumption that children can be made into responsible adult citizens”. This perspective defines juvenile offenders as children whose behaviour is undesirable feature of childhood and requires behavioural management as a correction strategy (Smith, 2009). Society’s attitude toward youth offending is often negative because “they are viewed as troublemakers” (Merkle 2003 cited in Habitat, 2012, p. 14). Hansen and Dalsgaard (2008) further argue that the problem-oriented perspective characterizes youth (offenders) as troublesome and in need of controlling and curtailing. Boyden (1997) extends that correctional establishments are mechanisms through which compliance with accepted childhood behaviour is enforced. She argues that juvenile delinquency is seen as a problem of individuals rather than social conditions.

Furthermore, the justice model views delinquent children as those who have broken modern society’s childhood norms and need control. However, Alcock and Harris (1982 cited in Boyden, 1997) argue that measures designed to address children’s problems, such as juvenile courts and institutionalization, can be harmful by exposing them to a multitude of formal rules and procedures, leading to further social and economic marginalization and denying them access to services. Boyden (1997) argues that while the law gives children the right to care and protection from the state through social planning, children’s control and correctional aspect are inadequate due to limited resources in developing countries. The repressive responses to juvenile offending, involving containment and correction, are features of the juvenile justice system and have a detrimental effect on children by isolating them from their families and community and increasing their socioeconomic vulnerability. Research has shown that local solutions to the problems of childhood that align with customary law and practices are less materialized in developing countries (Boyden, 1997). Archard (2015) also argues that depriving children of liberty by incarcerating them during their formative years is more difficult than imprisonment during adulthood. This study will also utilize this perspective to explore and understand how juvenile inmates are treated and their experiences of challenges in custody at the institution of the study site.

3.3.2. The Welfare Model

On the other hand, the rehabilitative/protection-oriented model presents children involved in crimes as victims of life conditions and as having unmet basic needs. This approach argues that programs that promote their social rehabilitation and reintegration would turn them into productive citizens. However, it is challenging to expand rehabilitative programs in developing countries since many of these programs are supported by charities (Rizzini & Lusk, 1995). Additionally, Boyden (1997) points out that many state interventions in developing countries focus on correction rather than rehabilitation, promotion, and prevention. Nowak and Krishan (2021) also argue that states often rely on repressive responses that lead to children’s institutionalization rather than prevention.

Smith (2009) indicates that the welfare model assumes young offenders as marginalized groups and in need of support for social inclusion and opportunities due to poverty and other forms of social disadvantages. According to this view, “blame is not attached to the behavior of young offenders, as their actions are largely determined by adverse circumstances” (Smith, 2009, p. 256). Archard (2015, pp. 131-132) elaborates that children who have involved in delinquent acts are often victims of their social

backgrounds, and “it seems a double penalty to punish those who have done wrong in large part because they have been wronged”.

The model further recognizes young offenders as whose life circumstances are influenced by social exclusion, poverty, and family instability. These factors put juvenile offenders in “complex welfare needs” that demand services (Smith, 2009, p. 257). James et al. (1998, p. 210) argue that “children have to be understood in relation to socioeconomic factors, in relation to the public and the private, to the relative exercise of power...”. “The welfare model approach to intervention ... emphasizes children’s distinctive needs and interests” rather than social controls (Smith, 2009, p. 257).

3.3.3. The Participative Model

The justice and welfare models present young offenders as problems rather than acknowledging their agency. The justice/control model sees children as autonomous and culpable actors but ignores the contexts in which they act. The welfare sees ‘children as unable to exercise autonomy due to social constraints’ (Smith, 2009, p. 258). Both perspectives propose an adult-led solution to the problem of youth offending, with little space for children’s agency (Smith, 2009). The justice perspective attributes responsibility to individual children for their actions, viewing them as free and self-determining agents. It overlooks the living conditions of children and their vulnerability to various socioeconomic conditions that may drive them to delinquency. This angle of the agency “leads to an assumption that children should be held culpable for their acts, but this denies the realities of their lives and diminishes attention of their vulnerability” (Tisdall & Punch, 2012 cited in Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017, p. 425).

On the other hand, the welfare angle classifies young offenders as children from abnormal families and sees them as passive victims of their circumstances rather than as active members of society (Archard, 2015). Smith (2009) argues that dominant perspectives have a significant limitation because they have little room for the interplay between children’s agency and environment. However, research has shown that children can shape and be shaped by the society in which they live and are not just passive or purely active actors (Prout & James, 2015). In addition, Archard (2015) argues that the welfare and justice angles are not mutually exclusive. “The punishment of the offense and amelioration of the conditions of the offender can be within the remit of a juvenile justice practice” (p. 133). Archard stresses the importance of balancing punishment and the protection of child offenders.

In his effort to bridge between youth justice models and children’s agency, Smith (2009, p. 259) proposed an alternative model of *participative interventions*. This approach acknowledges children’s agency and the influence of the environment based on a nuanced understanding of children and childhood. Smith (2009) argues that participative interventions create space and opportunities for children to act rather than simply following adult instructions. The principles of engagement and participation are central to this approach. Recognizing children as social agents can positively influence the intervention process, at the same time, help children to see themselves as responsible citizens towards their actions. Involving, respecting, hearing, and giving a voice to young people, as stated in article 12 of UNCRC, is essential in working with children, including in juvenile justice practice (Ennew et al., 2009).

In this study, I employed the perspectives of the three models to understand the treatment of young offenders in the custodial institution and the ideologies that inform the work of correctional staff with young offenders. These perspectives help to critically examine the assumptions that guide the treatment and handling of young offenders in a correctional institution in the study setting. A key theme of this study is to understand

how juvenile offenders navigate their everyday lives in custody and how the interplay between institutional regulations, structures, and systems shapes the daily experiences of young offenders. The participative model serves as a middle range approach in between the justice and welfare models. It is consistent with new understandings of childhood that view children as social agents who can actively contribute to their own experiences and society. It also coincides with the concept of relational agency, which helps to understand the dynamics of children's everyday experiences in custody institution.

3.5. Theory of Total Institutions

The other theoretical orientation used in this study is the theory of Total Institutions (TI). The lens of total institutions can help to explore and understand the lived lives of young offenders within the correctional institution. The following discussions delve further into the characteristics of total institutions in detail.

According to Goffman (1961, p. xii), the total institution is "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life". Goffman describes total institutions as all-encompassing social establishments with physical barriers, such as barbed wires, high walls, and locked doors, which limit contact between inmates and the outside world. Prisons, jails, penitentiaries, concentration camps, and correctional centres are examples of total institutions. Goffman also notes that life within total institutions happens in the same place, under the same authority, with the same others, and with bureaucratically scheduled and coordinated activities governed by a single rational plan to fulfil organizational aims. As Goffman (1961, p. 6) argues, "the handling of many human needs by the bureaucratic organization of whole blocks of the people-the key fact of total institutions". In this sense, total institutions are rationally planned, processing many inmates by small and bureaucratically organized staff.

Goffman also identifies two social classes within total institutions of a prison: Staff and inmates. Inmates live (work, play, and sleep) within the institution, while staff often work for a limited number of hours and leave for leisure and sleep outside the institution. Each class views one another differently. Staff often view inmates as "bitter, secretive, and untrustworthy, while inmates see staff as condescending, highhanded, and mean" (Goffman, 1961, p. 7). Staff perceives themselves as *superior* and *righteous*, while inmates tend to feel *inferior*, *weak*, *blameworthy*, and *guilty* (Goffman, 1961, p. 7). The staff's responsibility is to ensure the compliance of everyone to institutional order through surveillance rather than guidance. The communication between staff and inmates is often restricted, and inmates are excluded from the institutional decision-making process. There is a social distance between inmates and staff within total institutions. This theoretical discussion emphasizes the life world of inmates than staff because this study focuses on the experiences of juvenile inmates.

Goffman (1961, p. 12) describes total institutions as "the forcing houses for changing persons". Inmates of these institutions are cut off from the outside world and subject to restrict social control and routines. Upon entering these institutions, inmates abandon their former identities and re-socialize into institutional life. This process is called the mortification of inmates, which involves separating from society and restricting the number of visitors or visiting away from establishments. Inmates also must show obedience and respect to staff members by addressing them with polite words (Sir), acts, and requests. Goffman elaborates that degrading, humiliation, beatings, physical

contaminations (unclean foods, messy quarters, dirty facilities, and so on), and loss of privacy are common forms of inmates' processes of mortification in total institutions. He argues that total institutions disrupt the civil rights of inmates, such as self-determination, autonomy, and freedom of action.

Alongside this mortification process, Goffman also identified how inmates readjust to life in a total institution through privilege systems, including knowing the house rules and rewards and punishments. The notion of a privilege system refers to the mechanism by which staff ensures inmates' compliance with institutional regulations and cultures. Inmates may also engage in *messing-ups* to resist the unjust situation of the total institutions and maintain a certain level of agency.

Messing up involves a complex process of engaging in forbidden activity (including sometimes an effort at escape), getting caught, and receiving something like full punishment. Typical infractions involved in messing up are fights, drunkenness, attempted suicide, failure at examinations, gambling, insubordination, homosexuality, and participation in collective riots (Goffman, 1961, pp. 53-54).

The resocialization of inmates to the institutional culture through the privilege system represents the primary adjustments that are officially designed and sanctioned by the institution.

Goffman also described secondary adjustments as informal means through which inmates meet their needs. The secondary adjustment refers to "practices that do not directly challenge staff but allow inmates to obtain forbidden satisfactions or to obtain permitted ones by forbidden means. These practices are variously referred to as the angles, knowing the ropes, conniving, gimmicks, deals, or ins" (p. 54). He argues that secondary adjustments are even more important than primary ones for inmates to maintain and rebuild their self-identity. One of the secondary adjustments is the fraternization process in which inmates provide social support, solidarity, and community to one another. The inmate's solidarity may involve fighting with staff through acts of defiance, such as mass food rejection and mocking. Solidarity through fraternization and clique formation is also the secondary adjustment for inmates. Understanding these concepts helps to explore how juvenile offenders cope with the challenges they face in a custody institution.

In addition to privilege systems and mortifying processes, Goffman identified other approaches inmates use to adapt to total institutions (TIs). These include *situational withdrawal/regression/depersonalization*, *intransigent line* (fighting staff), *colonization* (happily living inside and not trying to leave), *conversion* (taking staff's viewpoint of inmates and embracing the role of perfect inmate) and *playing it cool* (an opportunistic combination of secondary and primary adjustments to leave physically and psychologically unharmed) (pp. 61-64).

Goffman described dominant themes of inmates' culture, including a focus on self-concern and apologetics, the belief that time spent in the institution is time stolen from one's life, the lack of significant gains or reform from time spent in the institutions, and the use of removal activities such as field games, art classes, card games, woodworking classes, readings, and watching TVs, and others) to provide psychological release. However, the insufficiency of these activities has a detrimental effect on inmates, leading to a feeling of deprivation.

Overall, Goffman explained the formal and informal processes through which inmates adapt to total institutions. The formal one includes privilege and reward systems used to mortify inmates into the institutional new life systyle. The informal process involves social support systems among inmates through fraternization and clique

formation. The informal systems help to address needs not provided by the formal structures of the institutions. Goffman's analysis shows that although total institutions are highly regulated and structured, there is a little space for people's agency in total institutions.

However, the idea of prison as a total institution of closed setting has been questioned recently. Ellis (2021) argues that prisons are porous institutions because the outside institutions can proffer attitudes, practices, and resources that shape individuals' material experiences within a host institution. She argues that prison gates are open daily to visitors and others to enter and exit the prison. According to Ellis (2021), a prison institution is not totally cut off from the outside world. Prison can be influenced by absorbing beliefs, mores, and resources of external institutions. Ellis reconsiders prisons as porous institutions that can interact and be shaped by external institutions. She argues "prisons do not remove individuals from society, but rather they transfer them into a controlled, punitive location that can never be fully unlinked from the outside world" (Ellis, 2021, p. 194). While conceptualising prisons as porous institutions, she also acknowledges that they are not purely open institutions as entry into and exit from prisons remain highly controlled and regulated.

These theorizations of prisons as total institutions (Goffman, 1961) and prisons as porous institutions (Ellis, 2021) can be helpful in this study for understanding how juvenile offenders navigate their everyday life experiences in custody from the inside out and understand how the internal system of the prison operate from total institutions theory, as well as how the prison institution interacts with and influenced by the external institutions, and how that shape juvenile offenders' experiences of prison life, using the concept of prison as porous.

3.6. Chapter Summary

This study aimed to understand, explore, and analyse the everyday life experiences of juvenile offenders in custody using the relational concept of children's agency, as well as through the justice, welfare, and participative perspectives and theory of total institutions to gain an in-depth understanding and exploration about the challenges and coping strategies of young inmates in correctional institution in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological approaches I employed to conduct fieldwork with juvenile offenders in the custodial institution in the Jimma city of the Oromia Region, Ethiopia. The chapter is divided into eight sections. The first section discusses the methodological approach, such as ethnography and participatory methodologies. The second section addresses the fieldwork process of the study from the initial field entry to its final termination. The third and fourth sections describe the fieldwork site and study participants. The fifth section discusses my field role engagement with participants. The sixth section addresses the study methods used to gather data, such as participant observation, interviews, drawings, role play, ranking exercises, and essays. The seventh section presents the data analysis process of the study, particularly thematic analysis. The final section discusses the ethical considerations of the study, such as institutional ethics, informed consent, privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, and compensation.

4.2. The Methodological Approach

I employed an ethnographic approach and participatory methodology, viewing childhood as a socio-cultural phenomenon and children as active social agents (Prout & James, 2015). In the earlier period, developmental psychology influenced research with children by positioning them as objects of the research and researchers as expert observers. However, since the 1970s, this shifted to a view of children as active social agents, which led to recognition of children as research subjects and participants. One of the figures of such scholars was Charlotte Hardman (1973 in Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008, p. 11), arguing that the voices of women and children were often *muted* in academia, policy, and practice. Similarly, Alderson (2003) pointed out that children's views were often ignored in past studies, instead relying on adult analysis like family.

Starting from the 1980s, Childhood Studies have criticized the idea that adults are experts on children and recognized children as one of the dependable sources of research knowledge (Prout & James, 2015). This shift in thought has also changed the way children were considered in research from objects to subjects and gradually to participants (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008). Lange and Mierendorff (2009) argue that the shift in the school of thought from positivism to a social constructionist paradigm has also resulted in a methodological shift toward ethnography and increased attention toward the perspectives of children. Woodhead and Faulkner (2008) also argue that viewing childhood as a social construction and children as active members of society has shaped the methodological choices, focusing on doing research *with* children rather than *on* children. Freeman and Mathison (2009) add that the change toward recognizing children's perspectives has happened over decades and across different disciplines.

In addition, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), a political-legal document that declares children's right to participate in all matters that affect them, paved the way for children to express their views and opinions in the research process (Bucknall, 2014; Ennew et al., 2009). This has also brought a change in the way children are treated in research, focusing on their views and perspectives.

The methodological approach of this study also centres on the idea that children are worthy of study in their own rights, the notion of childhood as a social construction, and seeing children as co-participants (Prout & James, 2015).

4.2.1. Ethnography

According to Prout and James (2015) and James (2007), ethnography is one of the central tenets of research in Childhood Studies as it allows direct participation of children in research and have their voices heard than surveys and experiments. Cheney (2011, p. 169) also argues that “participatory ethnographic research with children is essential to the task of better understanding children’s everyday situations in any given social context”. The principles of ethnography are consistent with the idea of viewing children as active research participants and interpreters of their lives and the lives of others around them (James, 2007). My study also found inspiration in ethnography as it places due emphasis on children’s views and perspectives to explore and understand their everyday life of incarceration.

Ethnography also involves qualitative methods, such as unstructured and semi-structured interviews and participant observation of people’s everyday lives to gain emic perspectives (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). In addition, ethnography facilitates the researcher's complete immersion in the lives of participants for an extended period across a range of social settings with various kinds and levels of engagement (James, 2007). Ethnography views children as reliable sources of information and active contributors to knowledge production (Christensen, 2004). Smørholm (2021) sees ethnography as learning through participation, listening, observing, and taking notes by being part of people’s everyday lives. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) illustrate that ethnography is a set of methods that involves participation in people’s daily lives for an extended period, watching, listening, and asking questions. Geertz (1973, p. 6) extends ethnography to “thick description” beyond techniques of participant observation and asking questions.

Similarly, this study employed ethnography as a methodological framework that guides a detailed and in-depth exploration and understanding of everyday life experiences and challenges of juvenile offenders in custody by engaging with them in their daily activities, such as during play, work, and rehabilitation activities.

4.2.2. Participatory Approach

This study used the participatory methodology in combination with ethnography. I believed that the ethnographic method alone may not suffice to listen to children’s voices and perspectives in a custody setting. In this light, participatory methods are used to complement ethnography and gain rich insights into the life experiences of young people in custody. Although the participatory approach was initially used in development studies (Chambers, 1983; Clark & Moss, 2011), it has been adapted into Childhood Studies to explore the everyday lives and voices of children in various settings following the recognition of children as active social agents (James, 2007). Currently, a range of participatory methods has been developed in Childhood Studies to encourage the active participation of children in research (see, for example, Grant, 2017). Clark and Moss (2011) also developed a mosaic approach that combines a range of verbal and visual methods to listen to children’s voices in daily lives in their study in the United Kingdom. In addition, prominent scholars in Childhood Studies, such as Ennew et al. (2009), Ennew and Boyden (1997), Abebe (2009), Punch (2002), and Christensen (2004) have discussed the benefits of employing participatory methods in research with children. The

participatory approach acknowledges children as experts in their own lives, right holders, and meaning makers, not as mere objects of adults' knowledge. This approach coincides with the core premises of Childhood Studies that view children as social agents with voices and agency who need to be studied in their own right (Prout & James, 2015). Participatory methods include different techniques that provide the opportunity to select, adopt, and adjust them to fit with the needs of participants in the process of undertakings research (Clark & Moss, 2011). Flexibility is another quality of the participatory methods that captured my interest. However, scholars suggested that participatory methodology is not a panacea approach in research with children. They have argued that participatory methods also carry challenges when used with children, and participation lies in how the method is utilized, not in the method by itself (Beazley, 2006; Ennew et al., 2009). In this sense, the focus must be on how the participatory technique is used with children rather than the method.

In this study, a participatory approach combined with ethnography was employed to overcome the limitation of ethnography with the strength of participatory and vice versa (Abebe, 2009) and to guide the selection of methods for the exploration of the life experiences and challenges of incarcerated children. Participatory methods used include role-play, essays, ranking and scoring exercises, drawings, and diaries to complement participant observation and semi-structured interviews. I collected rich accounts of the children's mundane lives in the custody by triangulating ethnographic and participatory methods (Christensen, 2004; Punch, 2002).

4.3. The Fieldwork Process

I conducted fieldwork for the study for three months (mid-June to mid-September 2022) in Ethiopia. The fieldwork process of this study involved three phases. The first phase involved traveling to the field site, negotiating with gatekeepers to gain access to the field setting and field entry. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), gaining field entry and identifying relevant gatekeepers, particularly within formal organizations can be challenging. I experienced similar challenges in the fieldwork of this study. On the first day of my visit to the field site, I did not meet with the director-general of the institution and was given another appointment. When I returned on the second day, the commander was in a staff meeting, and I was again unable to meet with him. On the third appointment, I fortunately met with him and presented my letter of support. In addition to the letter, I explained the study's purpose and provided a copy of the proposal. After our discussion, he directed my letter to the next-level manager, specifically the coordinating office of guards and social workers. Finally, the manager of the guards instructed the guards to allow me to meet with the children and told the social worker to introduce me to the children, tour me around the prison premises, and assist me throughout the fieldwork period.

Although I was able to enter the field, the process of getting there was not easy, particularly in terms of navigating the bureaucracy and administrative rules to gain access to the participants. I noted how the division of institutional powers is at play, with top management granting permission to enter the field setting while guards have the real authority to allow or deny access to participants. I noted that the general manager's official permission to access the physical setting of the study site was not a guarantee to access the target participants. In this study, guards played a critical role in allowing or denying actual access to participants because they are authorized to control the daily movement of young inmates within the institution. In this regard, one can argue how the division of institutional powers can play out to access participants. In this study, I

understood the critical role that guards and social workers play in facilitating or hindering access to participants. This study may remind us of the importance of understanding how different levels of institutional management can influence research activity in institutional settings. This point confirms the argument of Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), saying that identifying whose power can grant or deny access is the key element of the sociological understanding of the field setting.

The second phase of my fieldwork focused on getting to know the nature of the setting and the study participants and staying in the field. After I received permission to conduct the study, I began exploring custody premises and quarters of inmates accompanied by a social worker. I then introduced myself to the potential participants, which were juvenile inmates. During this phase, I get acquainted with the institutional rules and regulations and its culture through informal conversations and observations. It took me some days to learn the common language used to address correctional staff since many of them are military personnel and are called by titles like Commander, Inspector, and so on. As McCuish et al. (2021, p. 246) note, "entering the custody centre meant adapting to its culture". This phase was important for building rapport with correctional staff and the study participants.

Although the fieldwork appeared smooth at commencement, it was always an ongoing process that required negotiations with various actors in the field. Every day, going to the site required me to pass thorough police checks, obtain permission from the guards on duty, and negotiate with multiple parties. As Freeman and Mathison (2009) note, gaining access to children for research often requires discussing with multiple gatekeepers over the course of fieldwork. Corsaro and Molinari (2008) also argue that ethnographic fieldwork involves building trust with gatekeepers and understanding the social structure, interpersonal relations, and routines of the field site. This challenge was also the case in this study because dealing with multiple adult gatekeepers of the institution and understanding how the institution functions were crucial for conducting research at the facility.

The last phase of my fieldwork focuses on leaving the field. As to entering the field, departing from and saying goodbye to the participants was not straightforward (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). As the deadline for the fieldwork get closed, I informed my participants that I had to leave to return to school. Some had mixed feelings about the end of the fieldwork project because many participants enjoyed the research as a therapeutic activity, and they enjoyed my stay in the field. However, I tried to comfort them by sharing my contact information for future communication. I also organized a tree planting event in their block in collaboration with correctional staff to memorize our friendships. This event somehow helped to smoothen the process of leaving the field setting.

4.4. The Fieldwork Site

This study was conducted in a correctional institution in the Jimma Zone of the Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia. The institution can hold up to 2000 prisoners, including men, women, and young offenders. Although the exact date of its establishment is unknown, it is an age-old custodial institution in the southwest of the Oromia Region. It is a locked facility from the outside world, and residents cannot leave the institution at their will. The residents sleep in overcrowded quarters, with separate blocks for adult male prisoners, women, and young male offenders. However, there are no separate quarters for female young offenders, but they share sleeping places with adult women inmates. Additionally, there is no segregation between young male

offenders and adult inmates for their everyday activities except to separate sleeping quarters. The institution is run by correctional practitioners such as social workers, police guards, legal officers, and health workers. Overall, it is a facility where convicted criminals are arrested, controlled, managed, and rehabilitated, including young offenders. I conducted fieldwork at this facility with juvenile inmates for three months.

4.5. The Study Participants

In this study, I engaged with adjudicated young people for offenses of pickpocketing, shoplifting, stealing, vandalism, burglaries, rape, arson, killing, and causing physical injury to others. They came from different family backgrounds and places in the adjacent rural areas of Jimma, other regions, and towns within the surrounding areas. Many of these offenders were first-time offenders, while others had a history of recidivism.

The length of their stay within the institution varies, with some being there for several years and others being admitted to the facility recently. Additionally, the number of juvenile offenders in the institution fluctuated over time. At the start of my fieldwork, there were 38, but later that number rose to 44. I witnessed the increase in young people's incarceration during the fieldwork. The presence of diverse young inmates created an opportunity to engage with old and new inmates to understand their institutional navigations. In total, 17 (14 boys & 3 girls) participants between 12 and 17 years old participated in the fieldwork. My participant's recruitment policy was only seeking their willingness to participate. I introduced them to the study purpose and gave them some days to decide whether to participate or not. Even though I invited every juvenile inmate to take part in the study, finally I worked with 17 who had volunteered to participate.

4.6. The Researcher's Field Roles

I adopted different roles at different stages of the fieldwork. In the early weeks of my fieldwork, I took on an incompetent position to gain an understanding of the research context through observation and listening (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Punch (2002) also suggests the need for a critical and reflexive approach to researching children in adult-controlled environments like the prison setting. Different from other settings, a custody institution is a highly controlled, structured, and routinized environment (Walton et al., 2021). In this study, I was concerned about prevailing unequal power relations between the young inmates and the staff, how this can influence the researcher and participants' relationships, and how participants respond to the research question. James (2007) notes that the question of the researcher's role is one of the central issues in research with children. In this regard, Childhood Studies scholars have used different roles in their fieldwork with children, including the atypical/incompetent adult/peripheral role adopted by Corsaro (2003 in Corsaro & Molinari, 2008), the unusual type of adult role adopted by Christensen (2004), the friendly adult role adopted by Abebe (2009), and the least adult role adopted by Mandell (1991). Mandell (1991, p. 59) conceptualized the "least-adult as a membership role that suspends adult notions of cognitive, social, and intellectual superiority and minimizes physical differences by advocating that adult researchers closely follow children's ways and interact with children within their perspective". By adopting these roles, childhood studies researchers have tried to respond to the challenge of adult and child power relationships in research with children.

In this study, participants perceived me in two different ways, particularly in the initial weeks of the fieldwork. The first was that participants perceived me as a new staff

member at the institution. In this regard, some young offenders approached me as a correctional staff. The second was that many children saw me as a government official visiting the institution. These associations stemmed from their previous experiences, where officials from the Ministry of Justice sometimes pay a visit to the facility. Additionally, NGO workers also visit the centre with donations, particularly for women and young offenders. These factors led the participants to perceive me as either an insider going to work at the institution or an outsider coming from NGOs or the government. These misperceptions regarding my field roles have somewhat reflected in my relationship with the participants during the early weeks of the fieldwork.

However, I honestly responded to their questions by saying I am a student pursuing my Master's degree in Childhood Studies in Norway. This answer helped me to make my role explicit to the participants as I am neither of the above members. Christensen (2004, p. 166) notes that children often ask researchers who enter their lives as strangers, "Who are you?" and that responses to this question are crucial in building rapport and engaging with the lives and questions that are important to children as part of their genuine participation in the research process.

In addition, I adopted an adult-friendly role by engaging in children's daily routines, such as spending time with them in their rooms, hanging out with them on the prison premises, sharing meals, playing, and having informal talks and jokes. I refrained from taking traditional adult roles like giving instructions to young inmates like the correctional staff. As time passed, I got closer to the children and started watching and listening to them when they teased each other. They also started guiding me on tours around the premises and took me to places where they spend much of their time, such as the film house and other play spots in the setting. They also taught me how the prison structure functions, and I also submitted myself as a naive to learn about their life worlds. This way helped me to minimize the power imbalances that could have occurred between participants and me as an adult researcher during the fieldwork process.

Overall, my fieldwork process was smooth as I was able to build a trustful rapport with the participants. I tried to follow the course of the children's daily activities without making any interference. I also adopted flexible field roles that changed according to my level of engagement with participants, such as an incompetent position in the beginning and adult friendly role as the fieldwork progressed, rather than adhering to a single role.

Apart from young offenders, I also engaged with staff members of the correctional institution. I used a different approach with correctional staff than the one with child participants. I invited some key personnel of the institution to the cafeteria outside the premises and explained my research project while having snacks and coffee. This informal talk was in addition to presenting my official letter to the institution. My initial plan was to organize a seminar for the correctional staff about the project, but I didn't find time due to their busy schedules. Instead, I invited some authorities in correctional management for a coffee talk in the cafeteria after their regular working hours. This talk helped me to explain my project less formally and helped me develop a trusting relationship with the workers. I had a smooth fieldwork process, except for minor challenges from some guards during data collection activities.

4.7. The Methods and Tools

As mentioned, a combination of ethnographic methodology and participatory approaches informed the design and selection of methods for this study. Punch (2002) suggests using a combination of traditional and participatory methods than relying on a single method in research with children. Christensen (2004) also supports the use of

ethnographic interviews and participant observation alongside participatory methods, as they promote children's active participation by giving them a range of opportunities to express themselves. Using multiple methods can provide rich insights into children's everyday lives, overcome the weaknesses of a single method with the strengths of another, and offer opportunities for data triangulation and cross-checking (Abebe, 2009; Punch, 2002).

Similarly, in this study, I used oral, visual (drawing), and written participatory methods with interviews and participant observation to explore the everyday life experiences and challenges of juveniles in custody. The following sections delve into each technique in detail.

4.7.1. Participant Observation

Participant observation is a "core activity" in ethnographic research (Lopez-Dicastillo & Belintxon, 2014, p. 523). It involves engaging with and "deep hanging out" with participants, understanding their lives and experiences, and how they make sense of the world (Montgomery, 2014, p. 124). It is different from other types of observation, such as complete participant or complete observer, because the researcher's role is explicit to the participants, which helps minimize role confusion. In participant observation, the researcher studies the participants in their environment, and participants are aware of the researcher's role and his/her presence in the setting (Gold, 1958 in Lopez-Dicastillo & Belintxon, 2014).

I conducted participant observation at a custody facility with juvenile offenders. I spent two months observing and participating with juveniles in various activities, including play, meals, work, school, religious activities, and free time. I visited the facility for one to four hours at least three days a week, taking field notes each day. Using this method, I gained insight into the living conditions, interactions, and daily lives of the juveniles and staff at the facility. Additionally, participant observation helped me to build rapport with the study participants and become familiar with the institutional culture. It also informed and shaped the data collection process, including the selection of participants, the place and time for conducting data collection activities, and the overall fieldwork process of entering, staying in, and exiting the field.

4.7.2. Interviews

According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), the semi-structured interview is a useful method for understanding interviewees' everyday life. They help to acquire descriptions of the interviewees' lived experiences. Semi-structured interviews are not as open-ended as a regular conversation nor as structured as a standardized questionnaire. Flewitt (2014, p. 140) also notes that semi-structured interviews offer a more flexible approach, with a set of predetermined questions serving as a "backbone" for the interview but open to including new questions as needed.

In this study, a semi-structured interview was conducted using an interview guide (see appendix) with open-ended themes that focused on juveniles' everyday experiences, treatments, challenges, and coping strategies in the custody centre. Additional points that emerged from the participant's responses were also considered during the interview. The interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone and transcribed later.

Overall, I conducted ten semi-structured interviews with nine boys and one girl, focusing on participants who had less opportunity to participate in participatory methods due to limited skills and/or personality traits such as shyness. Interviews are beneficial for gaining access to the voices of children who are less outgoing and may be less likely

to engage in participatory methods (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). In addition, casual walk-and-talk conversations took place with individuals and groups of children within the facility, which provided important insights into their everyday experiences and challenges in the correctional centre. Themes such as the reasons why children were charged, their social backgrounds, and their treatment and handling in the custody environment were explored through these informal conversations. During unstructured interviews, children shared their stories and views on institutional rules and regulations. This informal talk has facilitated a conducive atmosphere for the children to freely talk about their own experiences within the custody. As Flewitt (2014) points out, unstructured interviews involve the researcher spontaneously joining in a discussion among participants and later noting down what was said, which can provide rich insights into children's everyday lives. One of the advantages of using an ethnographic semi-structured interview is that it allows for on-the-spot views of participants and the opportunity to raise probing questions about the subject under discussion. Interviews can be useful for clarifying questions and probing for elaborative ideas to gain in-depth insight into the everyday lives of the participants (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

However, the use of interviews with children can involve methodological, ethical, and practical concerns. One such concern is the potential for power imbalances between the interviewer and interviewee. To mitigate this, Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p. 34) suggest adopting "collaborative interviewing," in which the researcher and subject approach each other as equals in questioning, interpreting, and reporting. I tried to create an open and friendly atmosphere for children to actively engage in the fieldwork process by building relationships with them as the fieldwork progressed. I also involved participants in decision-making about the time and place of interviews and encouraged them to ask questions at any point during each session. To avoid boredom, I kept the interview sessions short, on average between 20 and 30 minutes. Despite these efforts to make the interview climate as friendly as possible, some children struggled to maintain eye contact with me during the interviews. This may have been due to feelings of shame or their socialization to show respect to adults, particularly in Ethiopia (Poluha, 2004). Alderson and Morrow (2011, p. 19) also note that "maintaining eye contact" can be intimidating for children, highlighting the need for sensitivity to their feelings during the interview process.

To correct these challenges, I adopted different roles, as discussed in Section 4.5, particularly during interviews. I tried to create a friendly interview atmosphere, for example, by sitting outside in open air in children's quarters yard and conducting walking interviews instead of holding interviews in formal workplaces like offices and classrooms (Alderson & Morrow, 2011).

In addition to interviewing children, I held semi-structured interviews with four correctional staff members to gain a holistic understanding of the everyday experiences and challenges of juvenile offenders in the custody centre.

4.7.3. Drawings

As one of the participatory visual methods, drawings are often seen as children's natural activity and can be utilized with small resources (Tafere, 2016). They are also effective for researching the complex and entangled lived experiences of children as they allow for freedom of expression (Smørholm & Simonsen, 2017). Hill and Miles (1997; 2000 in Fargas-Malet et al., 2010, p. 13) argue that drawings can serve as "a good icebreaker, can help children relax and establish rapport, can act as prompts and as triggers for remembering or for eliciting discussion, and may help children organize their

narratives". In addition, drawings can be used for exploring sensitive topics such as experiences of abuse and crime (Ennew et al., 2009). Grant (2017) illustrates that drawings are a way to understand children's imagination and interpretation of their environments in their own words. Molina et al. (2009, p. 163) also argue that "drawing helps to stimulate creative thinking about what they are trying to achieve, why it is important, and what else needs to happen to help them deliver their future community". Punch (2002, p. 331) extends that "the advantage of using drawing with children is that it can be creative, fun and can encourage children to be more actively involved in the research".

I aimed to use drawing as a starter for participatory activities. Initially, eleven boys expressed willingness and interest in participating in the drawing. However, as the activity progressed, many of them struggled due to a lack of prior experience with similar drawing exercises. This is supported by previous research, which suggests that "children's practices of drawing vary based on their culture, class, education, and individual skills, and that the method may be unfamiliar and uncomfortable for children who lack the necessary resources and competence" (Serpell, 1979; Mohan, 1999 in Smørholm & Simonsen, 2017, p. 382). Punch (2002) also notes that some children may lack drawing competence and may not see drawing as a fun or simple method. This was also evident in this study, as some of the children struggled with the drawing method. To address this issue, I adopted a flexible approach and adjusted the drawing exercise to the needs of the participants by asking them to draw anything they wanted to about their life within the custody different from the initial question posed for drawing. As a result, three boys drew places that they often go to within the facility like the mosque and school, and explained when and why they like to go to these places. This approach is consistent with the perspective of Clark and Moss (2011) that the participatory approach is flexible enough to adapt to the needs and interests of participants. Additionally, drawings can be a useful way for children to communicate their thoughts and ideas freely with the researcher (Ennew & Boyden, 1997).

However, it is important to note that drawings can have some limitations, particularly for children with limited drawing skills (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010) or children may copy drawings from friends or other sources (Ennew et al., 2009; Fargas-Malet et al., 2010). To minimize the limitations of drawings, I augmented them with other methods.

4.7.4. Ranking and Scoring Techniques

The other participatory method used in this study with young offenders was ranking and scoring techniques. Ranking and scoring are valuable methods for identifying the priority needs and preferences of the research participants (Ennew et al., 2009; Grant, 2017). This technique is also useful for quickly identifying the problems, preferences, and priorities experienced by participants (Ennew et al., 2009).

In this study, ranking and scoring techniques were used to address the research question, which is to explore the everyday challenges of children and how do they navigate these challenges. The ranking exercise was conducted with three groups of male offenders, each group containing five members. A total of 15 male offenders participated in the exercise. Participants were asked to list the main challenges they face while in custody and to rank them on a scale of one to five (one being the most severe challenge and five being the least severe). After that, each group was allowed to present their identified challenges and provide short explanations on the criteria used to rank them, as well as how they were coping with them. The ranking method was able to generate

different perspectives on the challenges of young offenders in a custody centre. The method also allowed young offenders to express their priorities and concerns in the centre.

However, there were certain challenges with using the ranking method in groups. I observed that participation in the group discussions was uneven, where some members were active than others (Ennew et al., 2009; Ennew & Boyden, 1997). Also, young female offenders were not included in the ranking method as it was not allowed to mix girls with boys in the custody centre. The other challenge was some disagreements occurred among group members during ranking and scoring the challenges. This highlights that, while the ranking method can be useful in obtaining diverse views and opinions on participants' priorities and needs, it can also create difficulties in analysing and interpreting the results when participants have varied views about the issue at hand (Grant, 2017). To address this limitation, I conducted a group discussion with participants to bring their concerns to the forefront. Overall, the detailed discussions with all participants helped to gain insight into the diverse concerns they have in the custody.

4.7.5. Role Play

Role play was used to explore children's narratives about life in custody. According to Clark and Moss (2011), role play can be used to explore children's narratives about life in childhood institutions, such as nurseries and schools. Role play can also help children express themselves in a less sensitive manner (Ennew et al., 2009; Grant, 2017). In addition, role play can be a useful tool for investigating sensitive subjects like crime and abuse experiences, as children can act out these experiences in a de-personalized way (Ennew et al., 2009). Role-play also gives children the freedom to express themselves without fear of punishment from adults and can encourage them to express their views and opinions in a relaxed and enjoyable way, as well as facilitate the expression of deep feelings about the subject being studied. Role play can create opportunities for children to demonstrate their talents and improve their confidence (Ennew & Boyden, 1997).

This study also aims to explore the life experiences of young offenders in a custodial institution. I asked participants to perform a short role-play (ten to fifteen minutes) about their everyday experiences in custody, including their treatment and interactions with correctional staff. Eight of the 17 participants took part in the role-play activity, composing a script, and assigning roles themselves with my minimal input. The role-play allowed the participants to demonstrate their creativity in composing, rehearsing, organizing, and performing the drama, and they found it an enjoyable and therapeutic activity (Ennew & Boyden, 1997). The issue that focused on the treatment and handling of juveniles in a custody centre was addressed using a role-play, with the value of empowering the young offenders and providing them with an opportunity to express themselves in art. This confirms the idea that these research methods I employed are not only meant to help children express their opinion freely, but also empower them (Punch, 2002).

However, the role-play method demanded time to prepare, organize, and perform the drama, which some participants struggled to balance with their regular schedules (Ennew et al., 2009). Also, it was not possible to include female young offenders in the role-play due to the institutional rules that restrict a mix of sexes in the centre.

4.7.6. Essays (life story, diary, poem, and letters)

Essays were used to gather prison life stories of young offenders. Ennew and Boyden (1997) argue that essays are powerful tools through which children can express their feelings, experiences, and accounts of life. These methods can also free children from the influence of adult researchers and are suitable for children with limited drawing skills and for those who are shy to participate in group-based activities like role play. In addition, Fargas-Malet et al. (2010) argue that essays can offer children a wide range of forms, including diaries, life histories, recall charts, and lists, through which they can express their stories, views, and concerns. Furthermore, Ennew et al. (2009) argue that written methods can be effective for generating large sets of data, particularly among school children. As Abebe (2009) notes, story-writing can be beneficial for gathering honest views of children on sensitive issues in a less traumatizing and more confidential way. Ansell (2001) argues that story-writing can enable children to produce the authentic voice of their life accounts and can provide them with more control over the process of expressing themselves than many other methods.

Using the life history essay, children were asked to write about their experiences, both positive and negative, from the moment of their arrest to the present in custody. Eleven participants, eight boys, and two girls participated in this method.

The other method used to engage young offenders was a diary. Diaries can provide "information about the everyday, routine aspects of children's lives" (Punch, 2002, p. 335) and were used to explore the everyday routines of young offenders in the custody. Two male offenders wrote a diary about their daily activities for one week in the facility. Many other participants declined to write their daily accounts due to time and limited writing skills. Poem and letter-writing exercises were also used to explore the experiences and challenges of young offenders in the custody centre. Six male offenders participated in the letter-writing activity regarding their views and opinions on situations in the facility. The question posed for the letter-writing was, *what you would like to tell a Minister of Justice if you had a chance to meet him?* One boy also wrote a poem about the positive and negative experiences of young offenders in the prison setting. The research questions focusing on the lives, experiences, treatment, and challenges of young offenders in custody institutions were reflected in children's essays.

In this study, several benefits of using essays were revealed. Firstly, it can allow children to express their feelings and ideas freely, without the fear or influence of adults. Children, especially young female offenders, preferred essays over interview or participating in other methods. Secondly, essay can reduce power imbalances between children and researchers and can give children the opportunity to express themselves freely without pressure. This is consistent with arguments of previous researchers, such as Punch (2002), who suggested that participatory techniques can reduce unequal power between adult researchers and child informants. Thirdly, essays can be useful for exploring sensitive topics, like delinquent acts, that children may not want to talk about in front of other participants due to feelings of shame or guilt. Thus, essays can be an effective way for children to express their feelings with less sense of embarrassment.

However, essays are not free of limitations. It is not appropriate to use them with non-literate children. Also, essays can be difficult to control because sometimes children may develop a story that is not related to the research question. For example, in this study, the children were asked to narrate their own stories as juvenile offenders in a custody, but some of them included in their essays the life challenges of children who are living there with their mothers. This shows that children could include different issues in their essays such as daydreams, wishes and everyday concerns rather than focusing on

the research theme as it is difficult to guide them to stay on track while they develop their stories.

Another limitation of using essays is authenticity. Children may be selective about the information they share with the researcher and may conceal some important details. It is also not possible to ask follow-up questions or probe for more information, as we can in an interview unless the essay is used as a starting point for an interview.

Furthermore, children may ask other friends or adults to write their essays, which could affect the quality of the data. Some children may even see it as a school assignment.

Despite these challenges, essays can be useful because they give children the freedom to express their views on the issues being studied with less adult influence. Children can share their preferences, interests, and abilities in their own way (Abebe, 2009; Ennew et al., 2009; Ennew & Boyden, 1997; Punch, 2002).

4.8. Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is an ongoing process that begins at the pre-fieldwork stage and continues through the writing-up stage. Data are analysed as they are collected; it is not a separate step that occurs after data collection (Lopez-Dicastillo & Belintxon, 2014).

For this study, the data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach. "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). It is a flexible method that can be used to analyse a wide range of data types, such as interviews, focus groups, diaries, stories, and other visual data (Terry et al., 2017). The process of thematic analysis involves several phases, including familiarizing oneself with the data, generating codes, developing themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing a research report. These phases are not linear but reiterative, where researchers move back and forth between them (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Terry et al., 2017).

The data analysis of this study also followed a thematic analysis process. First, all audio interviews, field notes, diaries, essays, and visual data like drawings were transcribed and translated into English. Second, the transcriptions were organized into different datasets, such as essays, visuals, and interviews. In the third stage, the data was carefully examined through repeated readings to gain familiarity with them. Fourth, initial data coding was conducted by combining inductive and deductive methods. After initial coding, theme searching, reviewing, defining, and naming were conducted. Finally, the data was sorted out for similarities and differences across themes and developed constructs that assisted the interpretation and report writing on how juvenile offenders navigate their everyday lives within custody. Illustrative quotes and examples from interviews and essays were used and discussed.

4.9. Ethical Considerations

This section presents the ethical strategies employed in the study, including getting institutional ethics approval, obtaining informed consent from participants, protecting the anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality of the participants, and providing compensation for the participants.

4.9.1. Gaining Institutional Approval

Carrying out ethical research requires seeking ethical clearance from institutions before contacting participants (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). This requirement was also

needed for this research project. Prior to contacting potential participants of my study, ethical approval was sought from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). This process involved completing a notification form, submitting project descriptions and data collection tools, and addressing concerns or questions posed by the case worker at NSD. This research project was approved by the ethical committee after it went through a rigorous review process by the NSD (see appendix). This process took almost two months.

Although the institutional ethical review committee can monitor the ethical soundness of a research project, it cannot solve ethical challenges that may arise during fieldwork. Alderson and Morrow (2011) argue that navigating procedural ethics can be challenging, as it involves multiple layers of ethical procedures that can delay a research project for several months. Abebe and Bessell (2014) also argue that formal ethical procedures can be bureaucratic, resource-intensive, and time-consuming and that putting these procedures into practice in various research settings can be challenging. Ellis (2007, p. 5) elaborates that formal ethical rules often do not provide specific guidance on what to do in all situations and relationships a researcher may encounter, instead stating vague phrases like “do not harm”.

I share the critiques given on formal ethical procedures, and there is a need to critically examine the gap between formal ethics and the actual context of research (Abebe & Bessell, 2014; Ellis, 2007). In my study, getting NSD approval required two months, and it was difficult to convince the caseworker about the project due to its sensitive nature. I suggest a more flexible, prompt, and easy way of navigating ethical approval procedures for researchers, particularly students without undermining the ethical soundness of the research project. As Alderson and Morrow (2011) argue, ethics committees often prioritize the protection of participants, particularly young people, but do not give equal weight to their rights to participate in research. Alderson and Morrow (2011, p. 10) also argue that “ethical research has to be sensitive to local concerns, values, and customs, and adapt to them”.

4.9.2. Gaining Informed Consent from Participants

Ethical guidelines state that participation in research should be based on information and consent of potential participants. According to the Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics, (NESH, 2022, p. 18), “ethical consent to participate should be voluntary, informed, and unambiguous, and it is preferably documentable”. Cocks (2006) and Homan (2001) also argue that the principle of informed consent involves the researcher presenting information to potential participants and understanding and responding to it by participants. Alderson and Morrow (2011) further argue that consent must be freely given without external pressures, such as coercion, persuasion, or threats. Homan (2001) emphasizes that it is a research standard to inform potential participants about the nature and implications of the research and to ensure that participation is voluntary.

For research with young participants, consent must be obtained from parents, guardians, or significant others, followed by oral assent from the children (NESH, 2022). In this study, first, the administration of the correctional institution provided consent for contact with young offenders. Then, children received detailed information about the aims of the study and their participation, including a translated copy of the information sheet to keep for themselves. An oral consent was used for children with limited literacy skills to sign the consent form. Children were also given some days to decide whether to participate in the study. The consent process has followed the principles of informed,

voluntary, and documented consent. Additionally, gaining and maintaining children's participation in the research was a result of continuous negotiation during the entire period of fieldwork. Of the 17 children who initially agreed to participate in the research, four withdrew as the study progressed, and four more joined later. This process demonstrates that participation was open and flexible and that the right to consent or dissent was respected at different stages of the research (Ahsan, 2009; Alderson & Morrow, 2011; NESH, 2022).

I found that children expressed their right to dissent in various ways. For example, some children did not participate in interviews or other participatory activities by not showing up for meetings, and others used body language to show that they were bored or tired and wanted to leave. Ellis (2007, p. 23) emphasized the importance of "process consent-checking" to ensure that participants continue to want to be part of the research project. Warin (2011, p. 808) further argued that "the ongoing nature of continuing consent must be matched by a corresponding process of continuing information from the researcher as the children become more able to understand the aims of the study". This suggestion highlights the importance of reflexivity and ongoing consent in research with children because they can be influenced by gatekeepers and the research context in deciding whether to give or withdraw consent (Warin, 2011). In this study, sensitivity to children's feelings and bodily expressions, and regular reminders of their right to dissent were crucial in ensuring that their participation was informed and voluntary. Additionally, being mindful of the setting, creating a friendly research climate, and not acting as a teacher during research activities helped to keep children's right to dissent throughout the research process.

4.9.3. The Privacy and Confidentiality of Participants

Maintaining the anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality of participants is essential in ethical research studies. According to ethical guidelines, participants' identities and information should be kept confidential at all stages of the research process (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; NESH, 2022). In this study, measures were taken to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants. Participants' official names have been replaced with pseudonyms during data collection and in the research report, transcribed data were anonymized, and all audio, drawings, and paper records were stored in a password-protected personal computer that is inaccessible to unauthorized persons. All personal data will be safely discarded when the study period ends. The name of the institution where participants are incarcerated is also kept confidential to prevent the risk of exposing participants.

However, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of child participants in an institutional context was not straightforward. Alderson and Morrow (2011, p. 19) suggest that "some children like to have a copy of their transcript or tape but before offering these it is worth thinking about how confidential they might remain. The children may have said things about family members who might find the transcript and not be pleased". A similar situation happened in my study. Some children wanted copies of their role-play audio-visual and tape-recorded group interviews. However, I politely declined their requests to protect the privacy and confidentiality of other children who participated in the study in line with the advice of Alderson and Morrow (2011). Additionally, the materials contained sensitive information about the children's experiences in the facility and could cause discomfort if discovered by correctional staff. While my decision not to give children copies of the materials may be subject to criticism, I believe it was in the best interest of all participants and necessary to avoid potential consequences if the

materials were leaked out. However, I did play back the recorded voices and audio-visuals for the children at their request before leaving the field (Alderson & Morrow, 2011).

Scholars have noted that keeping confidentiality and privacy can be ethically challenging in conducting research with children. Abebe (2009) and Ahsan (2009) highlight that parents or other adults or children wanted to be present during interviews with children which can create difficulty to maintain privacy. Alderson and Morrow (2011) also argue that respecting the privacy and confidentiality of children in research is not easy as it can be challenged by various factors. They note that "in the UK, for example, teachers often walk into rooms where private research groups or interviews are being held. Some do not see a problem about staying to listen until the researcher politely asks them to leave" (Alderson and Morrow, 2011, p. 19).

Similarly, I faced the challenge of maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the study participants. I experienced one example of this kind in the fieldwork. While I was in an interview with a female participant, a guard on duty unexpectedly came and joined us. Despite my request for her to leave, she insisted on staying and listening to our conversation, arguing that she is entitled to attend any meetings held with children within the institution as a staff. Later, I interviewed the child privately as other staff members helped me. In addition, other guards often tried to interrogate children about what they had discussed with me at the end of each research activity. I recognized that guards were often suspicious of the information children shared with outsiders. Maintaining privacy and confidentiality in a prison setting was also influenced by other children, who sometimes joined interviews or other participatory activities without being asked and even refused to leave when asked. Getting a quiet and comfortable space for research activities was another challenge in the prison setting.

To summarize, disruptions to research activities were daily experiences due to the interferences of adults and other children and a lack of a quiet space for conducting interviews. These challenges illustrate the difficulty of maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of participants for fieldwork conducted in a custodial institution. However, as the fieldwork progressed, these tensions eased, and I conducted interviews and other participatory methods more securely and confidentially.

4.9.4. Compensation for Participants

Payment and compensation are debatable in research involving children. Some argue that it is unethical to pay or give gifts to participants while others argue that it is unfair to deprive children of compensation for their time and effort (Skovdal & Abebe, 2012). Ennew et al. (2009) noted that many scholars oppose payment or gifts to participants due to the potential for creating tension between those who participated in the study and those who did not. Some have also argued that payment may be bribing participants to take part in research (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). On the other hand, Abebe and Bessell (2014) argued that not compensating children for their contribution to research is unethical and unjust. Abebe (2020) further argued that research is a two-way process and that not rewarding children who participated in a study are unfair. He also suggested that compensation schemes should match with participants' actual circumstances, such as providing school supplies for school children and cash for children living on the streets, as well as refreshments for all participants during his research activities in Ethiopia. Alderson and Morrow (2011, p. 9) also emphasized the importance of considering "the context" in which research with children is taking place and suggested that compensation for disadvantaged children should be provided in a way

that is sensitive to their cultural norms and values, but also cautious to avoid inducing participation.

In this study, I offered compensation to participants both in cash and in-kind, including refreshments and school materials. It is important to note that reciprocity was not just a one-way side, as the participants also showed their appreciation by sharing food and inviting me to meals. While compensation is important to acknowledge participants' time and contributions to the research project, I was cautious not to coerce anyone into participating against their will. Overall, it is good to consider the context and cultural norms of participants when considering compensation for research participants (Abebe, 2009; Abebe & Bessell, 2014; Alderson & Morrow, 2011).

4.10. Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the methodological approaches I used in the study, including Ethnography and Participatory approaches. These approaches are chosen to empower and engage the juvenile offenders who were participants of the study, which was conducted in a custody institution. I used flexible field roles, including incompetent/peripheral and adult-friendly roles in the due course of the fieldwork. Data was collected using a combination of participatory and ethnographic methods, such as drawings, ranking and scoring techniques, role play, and essays, as well as semi-structured interviews and participant observations. Thematic analysis was used as a framework for analysing the data. The chapter also discussed the ethical strategies employed in the study, including obtaining institutional ethical approval, obtaining informed consent from participants, protecting their privacy and confidentiality, and providing compensation. It finally emphasized the importance of using ongoing reflection of ethical strategies when conducting research with children.

Chapter 5: The Life Experiences of Juvenile Offenders within Custody

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the study findings, focusing on the first objective, which is to explore the life experiences of juvenile offenders in a custodial institution. The themes of this objective include reasons and placement of children in adult custody, the everyday life experiences of juvenile offenders, juvenile offenders' experiences of idleness, and their experiences with abuse within custody. These themes are developed based on the research questions, from previous studies, and some emerged from interviews with children.

5.2. Reasons young people are committed to a Correctional Institution

This section discusses why many young people are placed at the correctional institution where this study was conducted. In the interviews, correctional staff described that children are apprehended for a variety of delinquent activities and their offenses may also vary by gender. Many young male offenders were convicted of and committed to custody for property-related crimes, such as theft, burglary, and vandalism. They often commit these categories of offenses in groups of two or more, where children might get roped into theft by peers or other adult collaborators. One of the correctional staff described that many children who have been convicted of theft have a background of dysfunctional family life, such as divorce, loss, or separation of parents, and/or running away from home to cities/towns and start living on the streets. Confirming this, during the interviews and informal conversations with the children, they shared with me that many children come from single parents and others from poverty-stricken households. The correctional staff emphasized in their interviews that many children were involved in property-related offenses out of necessity due to the economic hardships they had experienced in the family or outside the family environment. This social background of children may signify their marginal position in society. This is also consistent with Archard's (2015) point that young offenders are victims of circumstances and are often from dysfunctional family backgrounds. It also resonates with the concept of thin agency where children's theft acts can be driven by limited survival opportunities (Klocker, 2007).

Rape is another prevalent criminal offense for which young men are committed to custody in the area where the study was carried out. The reason for the prevalence of rape among young male offenders is yet to be explored; however, correctional staff in interviews alluded somehow to the weakening of social norms due to urbanization, social media, and family breakdown. When it comes to killing and physical violence, these are acts that often happen unintentionally among young people during play with peers or in group fighting.

Regarding offenses that young female offenders are charged with, the interviews with correctional staff indicate that young females are often committed to custody for killing a new-born baby. One of the female police officers described that many young women were convicted of either abandoning or killing their new-born babies, particularly in rural areas. Another female correction officer elaborated that young girls in rural areas are more prone to teenage pregnancy due to limited awareness of contraceptive use

and/or they may get pregnant out of forced sexual intercourse/rape. The officer describes that when they face teenage pregnancy, young women are often tempted to take difficult measures, including undertaking a risky abortion without medical help or abandoning/killing the child after immediate delivery. For a young girl to give birth while living with her parents before getting married is seen as taboo in the local community of the area. As a result, they may tend to abandon or kill a new-born baby to escape societal blame and shame. Young girls are vulnerable to stigma and stereotypes from their family members, friends, and community if they give birth in the family. This finding also corroborates Klocker's (2007) analysis of thin agency that I will return to later.

Theft is also another common criminal offense for which many young female offenders were arrested at the institution where I did fieldwork. According to interviews with correctional staff members, arrests for homicide except for killing or abandoning babies and physical violence were rare among female juvenile offenders in the area.

In their interviews, most of the correctional staff were concerned about the increasing number of young offenders admitted to custody every year. There are more male young detainees than young females (44 to 5) during my fieldwork at the facility. There is no vivid reason for the differences between males and females in their delinquency rate, but some correctional staff members indicated that there is less likelihood for young girls to be dragged into delinquent acts similar to boys due to their restrictive socialization and tight supervision of parents or guardians on girls than boys. Additionally, police officers are also lenient towards immediately arresting young females except for serious crimes like killing; however, they are more stringent when it comes to male offenders because they are seen as more violent than girls. This may be due to the societal constructions of girls as more innocent and vulnerable than boys and boys as aggressive perpetrators. This may demonstrate the variation of societal construction of deviance by gender where boys are often seen as perpetrators and girls as victims.

Regarding their history of imprisonment, many juvenile offenders were first-time offenders while a few had a history of recidivism. From the interviews with correctional staff, I learned that the institutionalization of juvenile offenders has been increasing over years in the area. This may be due to the increasingly repressive response of the criminal justice system to children involved in delinquent acts than focusing on prevention and rehabilitation. In other words, this may connote to the rising criminalization of children with poor social backgrounds in the area. This may also allude to the connection of deviance with marginal childhood. This punishment-oriented approach of handling juvenile offenders using custodial institutions stands against the principles and provisions of children's instruments. The international, regional, and national policies related to juvenile justice state the use of imprisonment as a last resort for children alleged guilty of violating the law (for example, see, UNCRC (UN,1989), ACRWC (OAU, 1990), and Ethiopian Criminal Justice Policy (Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Justice, 2011).

In contrast, correctional staff in interviews said that detention is widely used as a response to handle young offenders in the area. Even they are worried about the toll of convicted children coming to their institution from time to time, as the holding capacity of the institution is stretched beyond its limit. On top of this, some young offenders were sentenced to long years like 14 years. During my fieldwork engagement with children, I learned that the shortest period of a sentence was six months, and the longest sentence was 14 years. Article 37 of the UNCRC states that if the detention of a young person is taken as a viable option, it should be for the shortest possible period (UN,1989). This instrument did not specify the possible length of a sentence for children found guilty, rather than stating the vague term *shortest possible period*. The overreliance of the justice system on institutions for handling children who committed criminal activities in

the area may signify the weakening of traditional practices of resolving conflicts by the modern correctional systems.

5.3. Placing Juvenile Offenders in Adult Custody

The data on this theme was drawn from my field observation and interviews with the correctional staff. In the southwest of the Oromia region, children convicted guilty of committing criminal offenses are often placed in a public correctional institution together with adult prisoners. There is a lack of a special institution that is dedicated to the care and treatment for adjudicated juveniles separate from adult inmates in the region. Juvenile inmates contained in a small block with a dorm-like room within the general adult prison premises. Their quarter has a shortage of basic amenities, such as beds, mattresses, blankets, water, a bathroom, and a toilet. It is a highly overcrowded room, with 44 residents living together in a single room during my fieldwork at the institution. There are also no closets for juveniles to store their belongings, which often resulted in the loss of items and lack of privacy. Children reported that stealing other inmates' belongings is often a source of conflict among themselves due to a lack of secure storage facilities.

The unit of juvenile offenders, including the physical environment, are not suitable living spaces. It has no good sanitation and is not a child-friendly environment that can contribute toward rehabilitation and social reintegration of juveniles. There is no separation of units for female juveniles from adult women inmates. They are housed with adult women in the same unit (see picture 5.1 in the appendix).

During my fieldwork and interviews with the children, I learned that there is close contact and interaction between juvenile inmates and adult prisoners. All prison populations spend time together during the daytime and move to their respective sleeping accommodations after 5:00 PM. There is no segregation between young and adult inmates except for the separation of the sleeping place for male juvenile offenders. Within the facility there is no mix of genders. Men and women are separated by walls and are not allowed to interact.

The setting can be described as an arena where interaction between intra-and inter-generational groups, such as children, young adults, adults, and older prisoners takes place; they spend time together working and playing, unlike common patterns of living in the outside world of the institution, where children are often spending their time in schools while adults stay at the workplace. Even though juvenile offenders are expected to be separated from adult prisoners, the facility houses together all social classes of inmates, regardless of their age, gender, and social backgrounds. Article 37 of the UNCRC which Ethiopia is a part states the separate treatment of juvenile offenders from adults in institutions (UN, 1989). The Havana Rules which focus on the protection of children deprived of their liberty, assert the design of the physical environment and accommodation of facilities for the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents (UN, 1990). Article 17 of the ACRWC states that juvenile offenders are subject to special treatment separate from adult criminals (OAU, 1990). Article 36 of the Ethiopian Constitution also mentions the separation of juvenile offenders admitted to correctional institutions from adult inmates (FDRE, 1995).

Despite these international and regional declarations, the containment of juvenile offenders with adult inmates in a single institution is a reality in this setting. The findings demonstrate the discrepancy between policy commitments and the real situation of juvenile offenders in practice at the institution. This may also imply the implementation challenges of globally professed child rights in the context of resource-limited settings,

including Ethiopia. The standards which are set in these policies are not only designed based on the assumptions of wealthy countries but also are not properly contextualized according to the real situations of low-resourced communities. In my interviews with correctional staff, they pointed out that putting policy standards into practice seems unattainable. Illustrating this point, one of the male correction officers explained:

In my view, young offenders are better treated separated from adult inmates if all the needed services, resources, and staff are made available. However, in resource-scarce settings like this facility, the placement of young inmates with adults may be beneficial because adult inmates provide support to children. In our facility, many children live on the support of adults for food, clothes, materials, and counselling. According to the laws, the government is responsible for the protection of the well-being and welfare of children admitted to correctional institutions, but we are unable to deliver those promises. There is a gap between policies and practices, and policies do not reflect the actual situation of this country. From my experience, I often see courts just sending a convicted person to prison, and then there is no sufficient follow-up and regular monitoring of their living conditions afterwards. Our institution is responsible to execute the courts' decision of admitting the adjudicated children and watch them in the centre for their period of sentence. That's it.

Another correctional staff elaborated that:

According to the laws, we know that the government is responsible to treat young offenders in a separate institution different from adults with all essential services and staffing. However, this is, for now, a nightmare for child offenders as the government capacity does not allow to do so.

These quotations are stark examples of the gap between policy and practice for the care and treatment of incarcerated children with adults at the study setting due to lack of resources. This affirms the arguments of Archard (2015) and Ansell (2017), that the ideal childhood that is codified based on a western childhood needs to be sensitive to the practical challenges of implementing them in poor societies. This is also the case for Ethiopia where an acute shortage of resources creates a challenge for implementing policies and conventions adapted from industrialised countries into the realities of contemporary Ethiopia. This study shows a critical gap between what is professed in international and regional agreements and practice for the treatment and rehabilitation of incarcerated children in the region.

Despite the arguments that juvenile offenders need to be separated and treated differently from adult prisoners, the evidence of this study highlights some beneficial aspects of containing young offenders with adult inmates as it gives them an important support opportunity of adults, where the government has failed to provide needed treatment and rehabilitation services (for more detail, see chapter 7). This may also challenge the global assumptions of viewing juvenile offenders separate treatment from adult prisoners as always in their best interest and positive, particularly in poor communities. The containment of youthful offenders with adult inmates can offer them an important support system in resource limited facilities. However, it is important to note that this may also have negative implications for children. This may invite further debate on the pros and cons of separating or placing juvenile offenders with adults in custody centres in resource-limited contexts.

5.4. The Everyday Life Experiences of Juvenile Offenders within Custody

“Every day’s the same. The same place, same people, same food, ... It’s boring!” (Boy, 14 years old). This section describes the everyday life experiences of juvenile offenders in a custodial institution. Their accounts of daily life in the facility were captured using a diary, field observation, and interviews.

According to the interviews and diaries of children, their day begins at 6:00 am, a time at which the guards count inmates for the morning shift. Children described that inmates count is done twice a day, i.e., every morning and evening. It is only conducted by the prison guards. Sometime before the opening of the door, everyone wakes up, makes their beds, and gets prepared for the count of the morning shift. During the counting time, they go out of their room one by one, so that the guard checks their presence according to their list. Someone who gets up late may get punished with beating or cleaning the toilet. This is the start of the day for everyone in the institution.

Thereafter, children have breakfast in their cells, often at 8:00 am. After breakfast, everyone plans their own day as there is no organized program. Most children spend their time in adult inmates’ unit watching movies and playing cards. Some others engage in various works such as handcrafts, daily labour, and sewing clothes, while few others spend time attending religious studies, for example, studying the Quran. During lunchtime, everyone returns to their cells for lunch, which is often at 1:00 pm. In the afternoon, they then go to different places within the premises of the institution similar to the morning time in which some hang out, some keep playing and watching movies and others keep on working.

During my fieldwork, I learned the everyday social routines of juvenile offenders within the institution, that for many children, their daily life is filled with playing, watching movies, working, and hanging out or sitting around. Their day ends at 5:00 pm, at which time there is another inmate count. At this time, everyone must return to their cells, and no one is allowed to go out then. They are confined there until the next day morning, approximately for 12 hours. Before sleeping, some children may study religious or textbooks, while others may play with each other by sharing their daily experiences and/or by telling stories and jokes. At 10:00 pm, everyone must keep silent, and talking is not allowed afterward. Anyone who violates the rule of the house by talking and disturbing during the night will be punished which can range from minor punishment like cleaning the toilet to a serious one including a transfer from the children’s house. This is roughly how children’s everyday life revolves and passes in the institution until their day of release.

5.5. Juvenile Offenders’ Experiences of Idleness within Custody

From my field observations of children’s daily routines in the institution, the interviews with them, and their dairies, I became aware that many children have similar patterns of daily life that revolves around play, watching movies, sitting idle, working, studying, and hanging around. In a broad sense, the term *idleness* can describe most of the juvenile offenders’ daily life within the custody of the study site. In most of the interviews and causal talks with the children, they expressed the *suffering of idleness and boredom* they are experiencing every day in the facility. Idleness was described as a common disease of children living in the institution. Children explained it as a disease because they are experiencing several negative challenges, such as boredom, gambling,

depression, hopelessness, and violence out of idleness in custody due to a lack of activities that can engage them. Goffman (1961) argues that inmates who had busy schedules in their civil life suffer extremes of boredom in total institutions. This was also the case for juvenile offenders at the study setting as many had a busy schedule of learning, working, playing, and supporting parents before their admission to the institution. Lack of children's engagement in organized activities in the institution is a source of idleness and boredom.

However, it is also important to note that there are variations among children on how they plan and manage their daily time in custody. During my participant observation, I learned that some children organize their daily life somehow in productive ways by doing any available or a bit of job that come their way to escape *boredom* and *idleness*. It is worth mentioning here, for example, that a boy, 16, stated in his diary note "I hate watching films and going to gambling sites in the prison premises, but I like sewing clothes, attending school, and learning Quran". This quotation can remind us of the variations among children on how they respond to their circumstances, which also demonstrates children's agency (see Chapter 7).

Despite little variations among children regarding how they structure their everyday lives in custody, I noted the deprivations they are enduring day in and out. The daily life structure of these children differs from Goffman's (1961) analysis of inmates' life in total institutions of prison. The characteristics of total institutions include that the daily activity of each member is carried out in the company of other large groups of individuals who are treated alike and required to do the same tasks together. Additionally, the daily activities of people in total institutions are strictly scheduled, monitored, imposed, and regulated by formal rules and a body of officials. But the daily activity of juvenile offenders in this custody is loosely controlled and regulated, except for sleeping, mealtimes, and counting time. Other aspects of their everyday life, such as work and leisure, are fared by children themselves and are not necessarily carried out in the presence of other fellow inmates, as well as they do not follow strict schedules that come from correction officials. The institution also lacks rehabilitation plans for juvenile offenders, which is the very purpose of the institution, rather than just holding them for the duration of their sentence. The idleness of children due to the lack of rehabilitation activities contrasts with the primary goal of sending delinquent children in institutions, because in principle these institutions have the responsibility of correcting the deviant adolescents into law-abiding citizens of the future.

5.6. *They beat us: Juvenile Offenders' Experiences of Abuse within Custody*

In most of the interviews, essays, and role plays, children described a range of abuse and other experiences that they face from staff members, particularly guards, and sometimes from other inmates. Children described the physical, psychological, verbal abuses and neglect they experience in their daily life in custody. Particularly, in role-play, children demonstrated instances of physical and verbal abuse that they are experiencing from guards. Using role-play, they reflected on how prison officers systematically discouraged them from accessing information and services, as well as reducing contact time with visitors like parents, relatives, and friends. In their role-play, children played scenes that show when police officers forcefully confiscate their radios, and that they block children from visiting the central administration of the custody. Children also played instances when prison officers blocked them from receiving medical attention. Children have further portrayed in their drama that staff often degrade, insult, and

condemn them as criminals that do not deserve better living conditions. Children described that the staff often despise, undervalue, and do not count them as humans by saying that criminals should not be given good living conditions. They also reflected that sometimes institutional management cut the budget from inmates' food rations which is less than US\$ 1 per person in a day, with the belief that criminals are not expected to eat luxurious food like meat.

Labour exploitation is another form of abuse that children experience inside custody. In one of the interviews, a 14-year-old boy described that "sometimes guards force us to do heavy work like carrying heavy wood or stone to the construction site...". Children also described physical punishments like beatings as prevalent abuse. Additionally, they described the verbal and emotional abuse children face in custody from prison staff and other members of the institution. In many interviews, children indicated that humiliation, physical punishment, and verbal assault are part of their everyday experiences inside custody.

Children described neglect as another type of abuse they face but it is not often recognized in custody. Illustrating this, a boy, 15, stated "The staffs do not care about us; they are not concerned about our living conditions, they just only move us in and out". This quote exemplifies how much children in custody are deprived of attention by the staff and the government as they are less visible groups due to their restricted settings. Children also reiterated that some staff members have a negative attitude toward them [inmates]. This is reflected in one of the interviews with children. "They [staff] view us as something bad. They see themselves as superior. We are often treated like garbage. They don't answer with positive words when we try to ask them about any issue" (Boy, 16 years old). This quote can demonstrate a negative relationship between some staffs and juvenile inmates, as well as it shows the mistreatment of juvenile inmates by staffs.

From the interviews with children and staff, I also learned that children's experience of abuse may vary by gender and age of the juvenile offenders. The interviews of children show that boys would experience more frequent instances of abuse than girls perhaps because boys often confront the prison staff more than young girls do.

In general, these analyses highlight different types of abuses that juvenile inmate experiences in prison. Goffman (1961) has identified two social classes in Total Institutions, including prisons: staff and inmates. However, in this study, I can add juvenile offenders as the third category of prison social class because children are often seen as different from adult inmates. Because of their age, children occupy the lowest social strata in the tiers of prison institutional powers. The abuse experiences also vary between juvenile offenders and adult prisoners, where juveniles are more vulnerable to experiencing abuse than adults as they cannot defend their rights due to physical immaturity compared to adult inmates. Goffman argues that staffs are individuals or groups who are in positions of authority to rule over inmates. Staffs have the authority and power to maintain control and constraint over inmates even by using abusive behaviour like beating, intimidating, and imposing restrictive schedules on individuals in low positions (inmates). He also explained how individuals in staff positions see inmates as inferior, weak, and guilty. This was also reflected in the quotations of children, where some staffs have used degrading or belittling language to humiliate them. Child inmates encounter verbal, physical, and psychological forms of abuse every day. Even though these forms of abuse are children's human rights violations by UNCRC (UN,1989) and ACRWC (OAU, 1990), they are juvenile inmates' everyday life reality in the study setting. In theory, such institutions are expected to be a safe place for children, but it seems that total institutions of prisons are emphasizing protecting the public at the expense of the

welfare of inmates. Although the main goal of these institutions is to turn delinquent children into law abiding future citizens, they are rather becoming sites of abuses and oppressions for juvenile inmates.

5.7. Juvenile Offenders' Experiences of Imprisonment as Interruption of Childhood

As mentioned, the everyday life experiences of juvenile inmates were mostly characterized by idleness because of the lack of proper rehabilitation activities in the institution where fieldwork was conducted. Due to this, children experienced their imprisonment as an interruption to their childhood life. Many children feel that their life is *put on hold*. The view of incarceration as childhood interruptions became evident in most of the children's interview transcripts and analyses of their essays. An example is presented below.

I: How would you describe your life experience in prison?

P: I feel I am stuck in life. I lost contact with my mother and other two younger siblings. I miss them a lot. I feel sad I couldn't fulfil my obligation as an older daughter to assist my mother and take care of my siblings. Sadly, I couldn't be with them at a time they need most my help (A girl, 16 years old).

To the same question, another boy, 15, stated:

My sentence has disrupted my school, work, and whole life. I was a Grade 5 student before, but I am now not attending school. I also used to work in the car garage after school, earn money and support myself and my mother. I am now sitting idly, and it is boring.

These quotations are some examples of children's feelings on interrupted childhood due to their placements in custody. Detachment from families and limited work and education opportunities inside custody heightened their sense of being interrupted in childhood. The lack of rehabilitation services, resources, and inadequate staff in custody can signify children's experiences of interrupted childhood. Children are not engaging in activities that can prepare them for social reintegration into the community upon their release.

In most interviews, children described their everyday lived experiences in custody as difficult, boring, hurting, and simply time wasting. Children stated that custody focuses on physical control rather than rehabilitation and social reintegration. A 17-year-old girl described custody as a dark site, by saying "I hope one day, I will see the light". They characterized the custody setting in negative words because most children spend their time idly with limited education, work, or leisure opportunities which are instrumental for proper child upbringing on the outside. The feeling of wasted time is strongly reflected in this quote. "prison is taking an important part of my childhood time. This time was time to work and support my family, attend school, and play with friends. However, I lost all these opportunities due to incarceration" (Boy, 14 years old). This quotation can illuminate children's feelings of incarceration as an interruption to their childhood time.

A 17-year-old boy expressed himself using poem about his life experience in custody as follows:

Mee hubadhaa ilaalaa waan nurra dhaqqabeeru
Warra alaa yoo ilaalaan nuti qabirii jirra.
Waan nurra gahe ilaalaan hidhaa fi rakkina.

This loosely translates as

Let someone understand what has happened to us.
If we look at outsiders, it feels like we are in a grave.
Look at our situation, imprisonment, and suffering.

In this poem, the youth attempted to portray the negative situations that children are experiencing in custody. It is stressed in the poetic statement that life in custody feels like living in a grave. In this sense, children reflected the feeling of being unable to move on in their formative years of life which may symbolize interrupted childhood. These experiences of children are consistent with Archard's (2015) argument that depriving children in prisons during their formative years is more difficult than depriving them in adulthood. Archard (2015) argues that juvenile offenders are mainly victims of social backgrounds and putting them in custody is a double punishment as they have done wrong in large part because they have been wronged. In other words, it is the failure of the society to protect the vulnerable boys and girls.

Using other poetic statements, the child also described custody as follows.

Mana hidhaa, yaa bakka rakkinnaa- Prison, O place of trouble
Mana hidhaa, yaa bakka dhiphinaa-Prison, O place of distress
Mana hidhaa, yaa bakka maraannaa-Prison, O place of madness

In this verse, the child characterized prison as a place of suffering. The child also described how custody detaches and separates him from his parents using poetic descriptions below.

Ati hoo yaa lammii koo And you, my people
Eessa jirta laataa Where do you exist?
Utuun si argadhee If I had found you.
Waan hedduun sitti himadhaa I would tell you many things.

By this, the child expressed his sense of detachment from the community and explained his affection for them, whom he could not meet due to confinement in custody. This could also reflect a sense of interruption in childhood because of separation from family and the community.

He further expressed the trouble of life in custody as follows.

While in prison, we have never stopped worrying about life.
Let me speak up about the lack of soap and food.
Let me speak up about the troubles and suffering.
Let me speak up about the lack of clothes and the right to amnesty.
Let me speak up about punishment and hatred.
Let me speak up about insects that bite us.
In general, nothing is good about prison, it is an ugly place to be.

These poetic expressions can exemplify the difficult living conditions that children experience in custody at the study site. Moreover, in their letter collections, children described life in custody as the most negative situation that they have ever faced in childhood life, and they viewed it as miserable and a disaster-interruptions of one's social routines (Maruša & Marjan, 2021). They mentioned that custody disrupted their childhood lifetime in multiple ways, including isolation from their parents and obstruction of their opportunities for education, work, and leisure time activities.

In these analyses, childhood interruption denotes children's sense of being stuck in life. Children have experienced everyday life in prison as a trap. The children's feelings of interrupted childhood were reflected in two respects. First, imprisonment detached them from their parents, friends, and the community. Children described that the immediate consequence of their incarceration is isolation from families and community. They emphasized that imprisonment hampers them from getting the care and support of their parents, as well as their contribution to their respective families. During their interviews, children also reflected a sense of feeling shame and guilt for being incarcerated, because they are unable to contribute to and support their parents. Second, it limited their opportunity to access education, vocation/work, and social skills as these are limited within the hosting institution.

Furthermore, children's feelings of imprisonment as childhood interruption may allude to that proper childhood is time to be spent within the family environment, working, studying, and playing. This is also an accepted childhood norm in the local community of the area. In most Ethiopian societies, a good childhood experience is expected in the family environment, because children can receive nurturing care and support from their parents, extended family members, or guardians. Good children are those who support their families by participating in various activities, such as doing household chores, providing labour assistance in the field, herding cattle, fetching water from streams, collecting firewood, and engaging in different income-earning activities to contribute to the family. In contrast, children who are not able to stay within the family environment and are not able to contribute to their families are often perceived as deviant or bad children (see, for example, Chuta, 2007; Poluha, 2004; Andulwasie, 2007).

Similarly, the findings of this study reveal that many juvenile inmates had feelings of self-blame for being unable to fulfil the societal expectations of children and childhood. Children reflected in their essays and interviews that isolation and separation from families and community, as well as dropping out of school are manifestations of interrupted childhood compared to their childhood experience outside before being admitted to custody. In many of the interviews, children emphasized their failure to be with families and were unable to support them due to their imprisonment made them develop a sense of less worth and weakening their bond with the community. In one of the interviews, a girl, 16, mentioned that "as I am unable to progress in life, I feel like my life is stuck. My school friends are moving forward with their education, but I am just sitting around here. I see my time here as a waste". As this quotation shows, children perceived their time in custody as a waste because the institution is not able to offer them educational and vocational opportunities that can prepare them for reintegration and a smooth transition from custody to community. Goffman (1961) documented inmates' perception that time spent in the total institutions as time stolen from one's life due to the lack of significant gains or reform from time spent in these institutions. Similar feelings were reflected in most of children's interviews and essays as I discussed earlier.

The concept of an interrupted childhood can further symbolize the deprivations experienced by children in custody like lack of education and job opportunities and limited contact with the outside world, and at the same time, they are developing a sense of diminishing belongingness to the community due to cutting off from engagement with them. These children's understanding of incarceration as an interruption to childhood can also appeal to courts to review their decisions of sending children to custody centres, especially to the facilities that have inadequate rehabilitation services. Relying on custody as a way of managing children who committed criminal offenses in the study site go against the deliberations of child policies like UNCRC and

ACRWC which stress the use of imprisonment as the last option. The children's view of incarceration as childhood interruptions supports Boyden's (1997) idea, arguing that institutionalization can expose children to more social and economic marginalization by isolating them from families and community and limiting their access to services. She argues that the use of imported approaches like juvenile courts and custody for the containment of child offenders in developing regions, including Africa is ineffective due to limited resources. This may imply the importance of revisiting heavy reliance on the use of correctional centres for the management of children committed delinquent acts in the region and looking for non-custodial interventions.

5.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the everyday life experiences of incarcerated children in custody. The study revealed that children are often put in custody for theft, and many are from a dysfunctional family background. There is no segregation between children and adult inmates except for sleeping place. The study also reveals the discrepancy between child policies and practices in handling juvenile offenders in the area because they are imprisoned with adults and treated as adults in the same correctional institution. The study has indicated some benefits of putting children with adults as it offers them the opportunity for a support system in resource-limited settings although it is not a conclusive argument.

Additionally, children reported their everyday life in custody as idle and boring due to a lack of organized activities that can engage and occupy them within the custody. Children have limited access to education, work, vocational, and leisure time activities in the custody. They conceptualised their imprisonment as an interruption to childhood life as it caused detachment from their parents and school. Children also viewed their life in custody as a waste of time since they are not engaging in activities that can prepare them for a smooth transition from custody to community life. In contrast to the aim of institutions to rehabilitate and protect juvenile offenders, they experience multiple forms of abuse that include physical, psychological, verbal, and labour exploitation. Children described their life experiences in custody as difficult, boring, hurting, and simply a waste of time.

Chapter 6: Juvenile Offenders' Ways of Navigating Institutional Regulations

6.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the ways in which juvenile offenders navigate and negotiate institutional regulations, beginning from their first day of admission and during their stay in the institution. It explores themes, such as juveniles' process of admission and adjustment to prison life, and their strategies for navigating institutional regulations and agency through staff manipulation. Before going into detail about children's institutional navigation, I discuss the stages that juvenile offenders move through to adapt and adjust to custody life (confusion, calming, and acceptance stages). These findings and this theme are based on data obtained through interviews and essays, particularly using institutional life history essays.

6.2. Juvenile Offenders' Process of Admission and Adjustment to the Custody Life

Goffman (1961) argues that upon entering the gate of the total institutions of prison, a new inmate is immediately stripped off and cut off from the outside world and he/she faces a mortification process through the removal of personal identity and belonging, humiliation by staff, loss of autonomous decision making, and restrictions of communication with the outside world. Correspondingly, this study reveals that juvenile offenders navigate through similar patterns of mortification process on their admission to the custody centre although the methods of mortification may not be the same with Goffman's analysis of the inmate's stripping process. From the interviews with correctional staff, I learned that a new juvenile offender, upon entering the gate of the institution undergoes several processes before being allowed to enter the facility. First, upon arrival at the institution, he or she undergoes a thorough search of his/her body and belongings by the guards. The inmate's personal belongings, such as mobile, lighter, cigarettes, and other things that are not allowed to enter inside the custody are taken away, but some may be given back during their release. In his essay, a 15-year-old boy stated "I had very long hair when I arrived at the institution, but the prison police cut my hair with a scissor before letting me inside. They also took away my cigarettes and lighter". This demonstrates that the mortification process starts with a thorough search of the body, including cutting hair and dispossession of inmates' things. Second, prison guards send the juvenile offender to the institutional health worker for examination of communicable diseases. Third, the legal officer of the institution gives an orientation to the new inmate/s about the regulations of the institution, including the punishment system. During the orientation session, they use warnings and intimidating language to scare new inmates. Goffman (1961) also argues that the staff produces a feeling of terror in inmates. Fourth, before being allowed to enter, new inmates are sent to the prison record officer and complete their background information, and then assigned to a guest house, which is a temporary accommodation before being moved to the main prison. Correctional staff described that new inmates are expected to stay in a guest house for at least seven (7) days before being given permanent accommodation in the facility. The guest house is used to acquaint new prisoners with the institutional regulations and cultures before mixing them with old inmates. It is considered an induction week for new

inmates to learn the dos and don'ts of the facility. From this, I learned that the idea of a guest house is being used as one of the tools of the mortification process before allowing new inmates to start living with the old prisoners. This notion of using the guest house as a mortification tool may expand on Goffman's analysis of inmates' mortification process. Goffman (1961) also stated that new inmates may suffer more from the first few days of the mortification process than later on. In other words, the mortification process may continue throughout the prisoners' stay in custody, but the initial periods are often difficult.

However, during the interviews with the correctional staff members, they described that sometimes not all new juvenile offenders navigate through all these processes on admissions. Women and young offenders are often allowed to enter their accommodations directly before staying in the guest house because they are considered vulnerable and malleable to handle compared to adult male inmates. This also may remind us of that viewing children and women as weak and vulnerable sections of society transcends family, school, and community and extends to closed institutions like prisons. In other words, although they are criminals under correction, children and women are still considered vulnerable, which lead to differential treatment patterns between juveniles, women, and adult male prisoners. This point may also add new insight into Goffman's (1961) analysis of inmates' mortification process as there are variations between individuals on how they move through the process of mortification based on their age and gender, where young offenders and women experience a lenient mortification process than male adult prisoners. In this regard, vulnerability can be seen as a resource because women and young offenders have received differential treatment because of being seen as vulnerable. In this light, vulnerability can be understood as relational that varies in terms of context, age, and gender. Children are seen as vulnerable because they are assumed to have less coping capacity with the harsh prison life. At the same time, they are also seen as easy to manage than adult prisoners. This thinking resulted in differential treatment between children and adults in the process of admission at the study site.

Having discussed some processes of juvenile offenders' admission to the custodial institution, I now discuss how juvenile offenders adapt and adjust to the custody life once admitted. Based on data obtained from interviews and institutional life history essays of juvenile offenders, their process of adaptation and adjustment to the custody life can be roughly divided into three stages: Confusion, calming, and acceptance stages. These stages are my constructions and are discussed as follows.

1. Confusion stage

This stage involves the initial experience of juvenile offenders inside custody. This stage can extend from the early weeks of stay in custody to two or three months. In interviews and essays, children described the initial weeks and months of their life in custody as filled with confusion, anxiety, depression, irritation, and fear. They described these early months in custody as difficult and challenging times. Many children characterized their initial weeks in custody as a time of instability, anger, and confusion. In one of the interviews, a boy, 12, said:

During some of my early weeks in custody, I used to cry a lot. I was depressed and unable to fall asleep. I missed my parents too much. Everything was new: people, place, and food. I didn't have prior knowledge about prison. It was a time of confusion.

Another participant added:

As I was new to the prison environment, the early periods of my life were tough. I was in trouble with many other fellow inmates. I was also disobedient to guards and get punished several times for violating the rules. Initially, it was difficult for me to learn the rules and adjust myself (Girl, 15 years old).

In their essays, children further explained that their initial period in custody was a difficult, and they were in a state of disillusionment and denial to accept their condition in prison. In her essay, a 17-year-old girl mentioned:

When I came here first, I felt so sad and was frightened a lot. I was crying, feeling sad, and unhappy. I lost eating appetite. I was not feeling comfortable and secure. It was a difficult time to accept my condition in prison.

As these quotations demonstrate, juvenile offenders' initial experiences in custody which may last up to three months can be stated as periods of instability and confusion. In this stage, children may experience a lot of difficulties in adjusting to the prison environment (its food, living with crowds, missing parents, respecting rules, and adjusting to confined and regulated lifestyle). At this stage, many children feel the negative impacts of prison, and they may manifest some behavioural problems, such as frequent conflict with other inmates, the difficulty of learning and respecting routines and rules of the institution, and the difficulty of accepting their conditions in prison. Staff also reported that most juvenile offenders experience emotional and physical instability, confusion about the rules, and that they often disobey the staff during their early weeks in custody.

2. Calming stage

I call the second stage the calming stage because many children described that after challenging initial periods, they eventually start to calm down and reduce their level of anxiety and confusion as time passes in custody. After getting acquainted with the people and rules of the institution, their level of instability and relentlessness started to reduce. In many interviews, children reflected that after staying for a while in the custody, they start to learn the rules of the institution; familiarize themselves with the environment, and create friendships with other inmates, particularly with individuals that they knew from their neighbourhood area. In one of the interviews, a 17-year-old boy mentioned "I felt so sad about my imprisonment at the beginning of my stay in prison. But I gradually learned and tried to get calm as time went inside and I started knowing with some friends". These and other factors would give them a kind of calming situation in custody. This stage serves as a transition from the initial stage to the third stage. It can be seen as a temporal time break between confusion and acceptance stage.

3. Acceptance stage

In this stage, children start to accept custody life as a new normal. Many children expressed that as they have no other choice, they convince themselves and accept life in prison. A boy, 16, said that "when you live in custody for some time, it becomes normal". As time passes, children develop ways of surviving within the prison environment. At this stage, children begin to craft strategies (collective or personal) for coping with the living conditions of the environment. This may symbolize juvenile offenders' acceptance of life in custody.

From the interviews with children, however, I learned that these stages are not linear because children move back and forth in their processes of adjustment to the custody life, as well as there are differences between juvenile offenders on how they navigate

them. Some juveniles, particularly children with a history of recidivism can easily acquainted with the prison culture and setting. Whereas it may take a longer time to adjust for first-time offenders. In addition, different factors can shape children's process of adjustment to the custody environment. Those who receive guidance of older inmates can easily learn and quickly adapt to the setting. However, it may require more time to adapt to the prison culture and environment among asocial and less outgoing child inmates. Children's experiences of hopelessness and anxiety may extend to the acceptance stage or beyond when job opportunities and support systems are scarce in the facility. Physical illness or other health-related and abuse issues can aggravate anxiety in juvenile offenders even during their acceptance stage. In this sense, these stages are not linear, rather juvenile offenders move back and forth between them as a continuum.

Furthermore, juvenile inmates with less sentences may be released before reaching the acceptance stage, but many long-term sentence inmates can navigate and experience these stages and in the acceptance stage, they focus on searching for ways of surviving custody life as a new normal. Long-term sentence offenders attempt to find work opportunities in the facility, hunt for barely available vocational training and school, and tend to engage in religious activities, to mention a few. The acceptance stage may extend up to the day of their release since such juvenile offenders try to participate in barely available rehabilitation activities, including prison school.

6.3. Juveniles' Navigation of Institutional Regulations

From interviews and observations, I learned that children have different strategies through which they navigate and negotiate institutional regulations at the institution. As mentioned earlier, some juvenile offenders are directly assigned to children's unit on their first day of admission to the institution, while some may be required to spend some days in the guest house before being allowed to enter the children's quarters. A new juvenile offender is required to pay a house fee (30-50 Ethiopian birr, which is approximately US\$ 0.55 to 0.92) when move into children's unit, as well as to gain membership status. Children described that if someone has no money to pay for the house fee, he will bet his clothes or be required to borrow from a friend. This rule is not part of the formal rules of the institution, but it is part of inmates' culture at the study institution. After paying the house fee, a new member will be given a bed. If there is no empty bed, the inmate will sleep on the floor for a while.

Children have a house leader (locally called *Kaapo*) who enforces the house rules. The house leader is often elected by the members of the unit, and he should be a role model of them. He is responsible to collect the house fees and inform new inmates about the house rules and insures their observance by all children. These rules are also written in a visible place on the wall of the children's living room to remind them every day. The rules were written in two different local languages (Afaan Oromoo and Amharic respectively), which may demonstrate the inclusiveness of children in terms of language diversity (see picture 6.2 in the appendix). The rules were six in number and roughly translated as follows.

1. Talking is forbidden after the house leader claps his hands. Hand clapping is the sign of keeping silent and sleeping time for all residents at 10:00 PM.
2. Fighting is prohibited in the room at night and anyone who quarrels will be expelled from the room and transferred to the adults' unit.
3. Moving beds from their assigned places and hanging things on the wall is prohibited
4. Disturbing and roaming around during Muslim children's praying time is not allowed.

5. Verbal assault against any member of the house is prohibited.
6. Jumping from one bed to another bed is also prohibited.

Children described that these rules were drafted by older juvenile inmates and new inmates must follow them. Many children also described that they learn these rules and other institutional regulations from older inmates and the house leader. In this regard, learning and being aware of the regulations is the first activity that juvenile offenders undertake to craft strategies for navigating and negotiating the house rules and institutional regulations. Children explained that they have experienced numerous challenges until they learn and get acquainted with the institutional regulations. After learning about the institutional regulations for some time, they start to find ways of navigating them by employing a combination of several strategies as discussed below.

Regarding the house rules, many children comply with and live by them as they have agreed on them. The *Kaapo* or house leader explained that when any member of the house shows defiance against the rules, he will be subject to punishment that ranges from minor penalties like cleaning the toilet to being expelled from the children's house and transferred to the adult unit for a repeated or serious violation like fighting. He also stated that they are managing their own house rules by themselves and only in rare cases, guards can intervene, particularly when serious fight erupt between children. Children stated that most of the time, they manage their house affairs by themselves.

From this, I learned the role of children in leading and managing their own everyday lives in the absence of adult guidance and support in their quarters. The house rules can symbolize the agency of young people in leading their own everyday lives in contrast to the views of juveniles as deviant, dependent, and vulnerable that need to be guided by the adult (Boyden, 1997). This shows the role of children in making their own rules and enforcing them which is often thought to be the adults' role. This conforms with Childhood Studies' idea that children are active social agents that can contribute to the social reproduction of the community in which they live (see, for example, Prout & James, 2015). Within the prison system, young inmates can play active role in the reproduction of the inmates' culture albeit it went unnoticed oftentimes.

Additionally, this finding highlights that one way through which juvenile offenders can navigate institutional regulations is by showing compliance. In most of the interviews, children described that they comply with institutional regulations and obey the authorities of the institution to not get punished. They explained that many children abide by the institutional regulations until they get released. They also described that within the prison environment, there is little space to influence the system, especially for children. In this regard, children are compelled to stay passive until they complete their sentence. This may not be due to children's lack of agency to resist adult power, but they stay passive to escape further entrapment in the institution. One may call this a passive agency where children intentionally take the passive role to meet their goals of getting out of custody without any delay. The passive role involves compromising one's interest and rights with the intention of achieving the later life goals. In this sense, children pretend as if life is okay for them while it is not because they want to pay a price today for tomorrow's life after prison. This supports Polvere's (2014) analysis of the agency of institutionalized youth. She identified four forms of agency among institutionalized youth in residential facilities, of which one is the agency through compliance. However, I want to extend Polvere's (2014) analysis of children's agency in institutions with the concept of collective agency. This is explained in the following paragraph.

While describing house rules, children have explained that their room is cold at night because there is a large opening space between the wall and the roof. According to

the design of their quarter, open space is left between the walls and the roof to allow air circulation as putting windows are not allowed. Cold air comes through these open spaces, particularly during the night, and the children complained to management but received no solution. However, to protect themselves from the cold air, children tried to patch up the space with a plastic sheet during the night and remove it during the day not to be caught by the guards. Sometimes guards may find them and tear them out, but children repair them and use them to cover the holes again.

This can demonstrate children's collective strategy to skilfully navigate institutional rules and shows their collective agency (shared agency). These actions of children can remind us of the interdependence of children through pooling resources to care for one another. The well-being of an individual inmate (in this case, protection from cold air) is connected to the well-being of other fellow inmates. This is also consistent with Abebe's (2019) analysis of agency as interdependent and continuum. Abebe argues that agency is a continuum and interdependent that involves continuous negotiation between children and adults, as well as the interdependent agency changes with context, time, and circumstances. I extend his idea in that the agency of children involves not only negotiation between children and adults (staff and adult inmates in this case) but also negotiation and collaboration among children themselves in pooling resources and protecting one another from the cold air. They also have strong solidarity and loyalty among themselves, and they do not share their house secret with the guards. Loyalty of members has important place among children, and they often act as one family, with the house chief acting as head of the house.

6.4. Agency by Staff Manipulation

As mentioned, juvenile offenders are often seen as weak and vulnerable groups of the prison society who do not complain as much as adult inmates do. It is also described that children have less power to influence the institutional system than adult prisoners. There is also a general perception among the staff that children and women inmates are often victims and malleable of the prison population. As a result, many staffs tend to show consideration and sympathy towards children and women inmates compared to male adult prisoners. Children, by exploiting this knowledge of being seen as a victim and vulnerable to their advantage, try to win the sympathy of some staff members to obtain what they need inside the custody. By staff manipulation, I mean the tactics that children make use of to win the sympathy of some staff members to meet their needs. To illustrate this point, I quote one of my participants' interviews here below.

When I want to make a phone call to my mother, I politely approach Martha (pseudonym), a female correctional staff, and beg her to call my mother. I diplomatically approach her, and she is also a very kind and generous officer to me to make a call to my mother. So, I can sometimes talk with my mother using her phone (Girl inmate).

Many children also described that they politely approach and beg some members of the correctional staff to stay in touch with their respective families on phone because telephone service is not provided by the institution. Prisoners are not allowed to own their phones while in custody or the institution does not provide telephone services for the inmates. Not only telephone service but also many children receive different kinds of small favours by diplomatically appropriating their ties with some members of the correctional staff in different ways. Another participant elaborated it as follows.

Sometimes if we want to eat different meal from ordinary ones, we politely approach to institutional health worker by pretending (sometimes in actuality) a feeling of stomach pain and request him to write a memo to the management for food change for some days. Sometimes he helps us in writing a short memo to the management, but we may not always manage to win his willingness (Boy inmate).

Children's agency by staff manipulation can also be analysed from age and gender perspectives. Children, by being young, are often seen as weak and victims, and this can be utilized as a resource to manage to win favours. When it comes to gender, young female offenders may be in a better position to easily win the sympathy of the staff than young males because they are considered needier than boys. This may highlight variations of children's agency through staff manipulation in terms of gender and age. When it comes to age, the youngest inmate(s) can easily receive special consideration and care from the correctional staff, and she/he can easily manipulate the staff (see chapter 7).

In a broad sense, age, gender, and vulnerability status can be utilized as a resource for appropriating their ties with the staff to gain access to things that they otherwise. Children also try to provide support to the staff members by cleaning their shoes, washing their clothes, and others. Diplomacy and reciprocity are some of the tactical methods through which juvenile inmates navigate everyday lives in prison.

It is also worth noting that there is a difference between juveniles in their ability to exercise agency through staff manipulation. In most cases, younger children (as mentioned above) and those who show respect to the staff and good behaviour in their everyday lives in custody often receive more sympathy from the staff. The personality traits (e.g., kindness) of the staff member can also influence how children exercise agency through staff manipulation.

Furthermore, agency through staff manipulation may also extend to the involvement of children in illegal acts in collaborating with some staffs. In the interviews with children and some of the staffs, I learned that there are instances in which children, adult inmates, and/or staff members collaboratively engage in illegal activities, including bringing in prohibited substances, such as cigarettes and khat (a mild stimulant leaf) in prison. In one of the interviews, a male correctional staff mentioned:

Correctional staffs have low morale of working in prison institution due to their low salary. Because of this, some staff members tend to engage in contraband activities like bringing in khat, cigarettes, and other prohibited things to prison for bribes.

Children also described widespread corruption in prison, and they are often involved in it by transferring these prohibited things from the staff to the adult prisoners. In other words, children may serve as intermediaries in smuggling illegal things between adult inmates and the prison staff. This role gives them a chance to gain access to the prohibited substances in prison setting. Although it involves a complex process, children who have information about these acts of illegality can easily influence a member of the staff involved in the smuggling of the substances. This helps some children to easily manipulate the staff who is engaged in the illegal acts.

These findings demonstrate different tactics that children use in the process of staff manipulation to attain things that are either prohibited in custody or not provided by the institution. The findings can extend Polvere's (2014) four forms of agency among

children admitted to residential facilities. These include agency through resistance (acting out and showing a certain level of resistance against institutional rules), agency through compliance (following institutional rules until get out-intentionally remaining submissive to avoid further traps within institutions), agency through self-advocacy (advocating through learning one's rights and influencing institutional reforms), and agency through dialectical thinking (maintaining a sense of hope and envisioning better future). The agency through staff manipulation and juveniles' collective agency can be considered the fifth dimension of children's agency in institutional settings like custodial institution. This finding also resonates with Klocker's (2007) analysis of thin agency that reflects children's actions in highly restrictive and limited options. The concept of thin agency can explain juvenile offenders' act of agency by compliance (passive agency) and agency by staff manipulation because they carry out these activities in the highly regulated environment and out of scarce options.

Additionally, in their interviews children explained that some juvenile inmates commit stealing other inmates' things and sell them. Although they are aware that it is a risky behaviour when discovered by the guards, children commit the stealing activities using secretive tactics in order to meet their needs. This agency of stealing can be explained by thin agency-limited options, as well as by the concept of ambiguous agency that illustrate children's behaviour that go against the normative conception of childhood (Bordonaro and Payne, 2012). Valentine (2011) also suggested the risky behaviours that children carried out to survive in difficult conditions as uncomfortable form of children's agency, which is less examined in many studies of childhood studies. These analyses of juveniles' agency can demonstrate how little agency is able to be exercised in everyday lives of children in the context of incarceration. Goffman (1961) described that even though total institutions of prison is highly controlled, regulated, and structured, there is a little space for people's agency in total institutions. This study also demonstrated different forms of child inmate's agency as discussed although it may involve complex processes and vary in terms of gender, age, individual abilities to navigate the system, length of stay in prison (between experienced and less experienced inmates), and the persons they interact and collaborate with.

6.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed some strategies that children use to navigate institutional regulations of the prison. It described the stages that juvenile offenders move through to adapt and adjust to the prison environment. These stages include the confusion, calming, and acceptance stages. These stages are not linear, and there is a variation between juveniles on how they navigate them. Some children may go smoothly through each stage and easily get adjusted to the prison setting. Whereas other inmates may take a longer time to navigate these stages and adapt late to the institutional lifestyle.

In addition, the chapter discussed how children enact agency using personal and collective strategies although the prison environment is an oppressive and highly regulated place. Among others, children enact agency through tactics of learning and compliance and agency by staff manipulation. The learning and compliance tactic involves being aware of the institutional rules and regulations and purposefully showing compliance with the rules and showing respect to the correctional staff to avoid punishments inside custody. Agency through staff manipulations is another tactic that juvenile offenders employ in prison setting. This includes children's tactics of skilfully approaching some staff members to win their sympathies to meet their needs for access to phone calls and other small favours. The study also reveals that children may

participate in an unacceptable kind of agency, such as collaborating with staff and adult prisoners in smuggling forbidden things in prison and engaging in acts of stealing other inmates' belongings. The agency that juvenile inmates try to exercise in prison may also vary in term of gender, age, individual skills to navigate the system, duration of stay in prison (time), and the individuals they interact with.

Chapter 7: Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of Juvenile Offenders within Custody

7.1. Introduction

This chapter builds on the preceding two chapters, by focusing on the everyday challenges of juvenile offenders in custody and their coping strategies. The chapter explores the everyday challenges that juvenile offenders experience in custody as an individual and group. It also delves into and explains the coping strategies that juvenile offenders employ to navigate and overcome the everyday challenges they face within custody. Finally, the chapter ends with summary points.

7.2. The Everyday Challenges of Juvenile Offenders in Custody

The data on this theme were obtained through interviews, drawings, ranking and scoring techniques, and field observations at the study site. In particular, the child participants were asked to identify their everyday challenges in prison using the ranking and scoring techniques. From this, I learned that juvenile offenders experience a myriad of challenges within the custodial institution of the study site. The overarching challenges that juvenile offenders experience in the custodial institution can be roughly divided into structural (for example, the low government budget for prisons) and institutional factors (for example, underdeveloped or lack of rehabilitation programs). As structural factors are beyond the scope of this study, I will discuss institutional related challenges of juvenile offenders in the following section.

The first challenge that children described using the ranking and scoring technique was inadequate living conditions. Children explained that they are living in extremely difficult and painful conditions. From interviews and field observations, I also learned that children are accommodated in an overcrowded single room with limited amenities, such as clean water, beds and mattresses, toilet, bathrooms, and unsanitary conditions. As mentioned earlier, a 14-year-old boy drew their quarters showing the presence of gaps between the wall and the roof through which cold air comes into the room, particularly during the night-time (see Figure 7.2 in the appendix). The boy explained that their room is cold during the night because of the open space between the wall and the roof. He also explained that they do not have an adequate number of beds with mattresses, bed sheets, and blankets, toilet, water, and their room is overcrowded (44 inmates to 40 beds at the time of my fieldwork). Another 16-year-old boy also drew the same quarters depicting a lack of electricity in their room due to intermittent power cut in the area (see Figure 7.3 in the appendix). Overall, one of the key challenges that children experience on daily basis in custody is insufficient living conditions, particularly poor accommodations.

The second challenge that children indicated in their ranking and scoring exercises was the limited (a lack of) treatment and services in the facility. Children described the inadequacy of treatment and an extreme shortage of services in the facility. Children shared with me that the institution offers them inadequate accommodation, inadequate food, and poor medication. In most of the interviews, children explained that the prison food is of poor quality and quantity because of the meagre amount of money that government pays for their meals, which was 44 Ethiopian Birr/person/day (approximately US\$ 0.814). Children mentioned that they eat every day a kind of monotonous food

(bread with tea for breakfast and Injera (pancake-like local bread) with a sauce of beans for lunch and dinner), and they rarely get fruits, vegetables, or meat. These latter food items are seen as luxurious food and are not often given to prisoners. Another everyday challenge for juvenile offenders is the lack of leisure time and sports-related activities in the facility. Most children explained the lack of play materials such as indoor and outdoor playing opportunities as an everyday challenge in prison. Additionally, children described the lack of psychosocial, legal support, and information services as a challenge they face in the facility. Children repeatedly mentioned that they have no access to media sources such as television, radio, and newspapers. I also observed that children are barely provided with any media sources in the custody centre and there are no other communication devices like telephone in the facility. Lack of access to information sources can exacerbate children's feelings of isolation and detachment from the outside world. One can argue that TV, radio, and other media sources not only provide information, empowerment, and entertainment to incarcerated children but can also help them to stay connected with the outside world. However, the absence of such sources can worsen children's feelings of total isolation and detachment from the community. The disconnection of juvenile inmates from the outside world can lead to weakening their bond with the family and community. Overall, children's feeling of deprivation is heightened by the lack of appropriate treatment and services, including media sources. In this sense, prison institution is not only a place of physical isolation of inmates, but also a place of information deprivation.

The third observed challenge in the custody centre of the study place was the limited (a lack of) access to education and vocational training opportunities for children. In their interviews and essays, children shared that many of them are not attending education and vocational workshops inside the custody. They described the limited educational opportunities in the facility despite its relevance to facilitate their smooth transition from prison to the community. Children also explained that the lack of education in the custody will have long-term consequences on their life even after their release. Many children were attending schools before their admission to the custody centre, but now most of them are out of school. Most children explained that factors, such as low prison school facility and education quality, a shortage of teaching staff, and a lack of educational materials support have discouraged them from attending the school inside the custody. Children described that they had better education opportunities when they were living outside than inside the facility. Although education is a fundamental human right, these children are not provided adequate access to education in the facility. Illustrating the severe shortages of treatment and services, including education in the facility, a girl inmate mentioned "They (correction officials) watch our body inside the custody, but they don't care about our minds". This is a stark example of children's feeling of deprivation due to a chronic lack of rehabilitation programs, services, and resources in the facility. Children also explained the lack of hygiene supplies for keeping personal and environmental sanitation, especially girls are not having any access to sanitary pads.

The fourth challenge children described was the lack of participation in institutional matters. They explained that their voices are silenced in the decision-making process of the institution. Children have limited opportunities to participate in different institutional structures or voice their concerns in the overall management of the institution. Due to the perception that children are immature and irrational to speak for themselves, they are not given a place in the hierarchical structures of the institution (from top management to the inmates' committee and house chiefs) according to the interviews of correctional staff.

Children also shared with me that they were not included in any of the committees operating in the institution, and they are barely given opportunities to participate in the formal and hierarchical structures of the institution. Children added that even their effort to communicate or reach out to the management of the institution is often blocked by the guards, and it is not easy for them to meet with the correction officials. The correctional administration follows an authoritarian approach where higher bodies give order and instruction to the front-line staff, including inmates and inmates' committees. It is then hard for children to voice their concerns in an authoritarian nature of administration. From interviews with children and staff, I learned that both have limited awareness about children's rights to participate in matters that affect them. Coupled with limited awareness of children's participation rights and the authoritarian nature of the institution, children have had very limited opportunities to influence the system. The boys' house chief (locally called *Kaapo*) described "We can only tell our concerns to the adult inmates' committee, but they often don't solve our problems. We are not represented in any of these committees, it is run only by adults". This quote exemplifies children's lack of participation opportunities in issues of the institution. Children's feelings of exclusion from institutional matters were reflected repeatedly in their interviews and essays. Smith and Creaney (2020) also argue that the voices of juvenile offenders are not given a place in the delivery of services because they are perceived as not deserving of a voice due to their wrongdoing.

However, studies show that involving children in matters that affect them would contribute to improving their well-being. Smith (2009) argues that participative interventions that create space and opportunities for juveniles to engage in decisions making about their everyday life in custody are vital for improving interventions. The participative intervention model acknowledges children's agency in that involving children in finding solutions to their challenges and giving them opportunities to contribute to the design and delivery of services can help them to see themselves as responsible citizens towards their actions. Ennew et al. (2009) also argue that involving, respecting, hearing, and giving a voice to children, including juvenile offenders in line with article 12 of UNCRC is essential to improve their well-being. This study reveals that while the participation of juvenile offenders is important in shaping the delivery of services, their voices and agency are not given due emphasis in the institutional activities of the study site.

Overall, the everyday life of juvenile offenders in the custody of the study site is marred by complex and multifaceted challenges and circumstances, such as difficult living conditions, underdeveloped rehabilitation and treatment services, limited access to education and skills training, limited opportunities to engage with families and the outside world, lack of participation (lack of rights), and limited positive psychosocial environments. These challenges can have short and long-term negative consequences on the physical, social, psychological, and intellectual well-being of children. The correctional staff has also acknowledged the challenges that juvenile offenders are experiencing in their institution, but they referred to the lack of resources as a key bottleneck. This highlights that the containment of juvenile offenders in the custodial institution where resources are scarce has less rehabilitative function but rather exposes children to a multitude of problems. Boyden (1997) argues that placing children in confinement is harmful by exposing them to many formal rules and procedures and denying them access to services, particularly in poor societies. Rizzini and Lusk (1995) also argue that the conditions of detention institutions are often unsafe, unsanitary, violent, and abusive environments for children.

Furthermore, the dominant youth justice models, such as welfare and justice approaches, suggest different ways of dealing with juvenile offenders and the challenges they face within the custody setting. The justice model sees the containment of juvenile offenders in detention facilities as a way of protecting the public from young aggressors (Smith, 2009), and the challenge they face in their everyday lives in custody is seen as the price they pay for their wrongdoings. This model places blame on the individual child for committing the offense, rather than focusing on the circumstances in which he/she committed the offense and the challenges they are enduring in the prison environment is a price paid for their wrong acts. In this approach, the well-being of juvenile offenders in custody is not emphasized, rather the challenges they are undergoing on a daily basis within the custody are seen as part of their rehabilitation activities. It is believed that the challenges juvenile offenders are experiencing would give them deterrence from a life of crime. The children's feelings while explaining their everyday challenges at the study site also reflect this idea in that they perceive their challenges as a price they are paying for the criminal offenses they have committed.

In contrast, the welfare model describes the challenges that juvenile offenders experience in custody as an injustice against innocent children and it shows the punitive nature of the juvenile justice system (Smith, 2009). It argues that juvenile offenders are victims of their circumstances and their placements in custody is seen as double punishment (Archard, 2015). The challenges that juvenile offenders face in custody settings symbolize the government's low attention to the rehabilitation and treatment of youthful offenders. This model emphasizes tackling the socioeconomic challenges that children face before, during, and after imprisonment, and the need for holistic rehabilitation and support programs to improve the living circumstances of children involved in criminal offenses (Smith, 2009). Juvenile offenders are children with complex welfare needs that require joined-up forces to address (Smith, 2009).

These models classify juveniles as either perpetrators (as a risk) or victims (at risk/innocent). However, the participative intervention focuses on balancing between protection and punishment of children who have committed delinquent activities. This model seems relevant for the management of juvenile offenders as it gives priority for rehabilitation over punishment while responding to youthful offenders.

7.3. The Everyday Life Challenges Coping Mechanisms of Juvenile Offenders

According to Maruša and Marjan (2021), "coping capacity could be seen as a buffer to exposure and susceptibility. It consists of all resources that are in someone's possession and can help to deal with the hazard and mitigate the negative consequences" (p. 138). This section explores and discusses the coping mechanisms that children employ to navigate their everyday life challenges in the custody of the study site. The theme of this section uncovers several coping mechanisms that children creatively develop and utilize to navigate the challenges they encounter in their everyday lives. These include, but are not limited to, internal support or solidarity among inmates, external support from families, NGOs, and GOs, and the use of engagement in different work activities and educational programs, religious practices, games, and watching TV and movies. In what follows, I discuss the identified coping strategies of juvenile prisoners.

7.3.1. Internal Social Support Systems

In interviews and essays, children reflected that although life in prison is challenging, they are not daunted by its challenges. Instead, they survive it through a variety of personal and collective strategies. Amongst others, the internal social support system is one of the informal mechanisms that juvenile inmates develop among themselves to cope with prison life. The internal support system constitutes three components of informal support: children-to-children support, adult inmates-to-children support, and staff-to-children support.

The first component of the internal social support system involves the informal support that juvenile inmates provide to one another. Children described the existence of a strong sense of community among themselves, and they support each other. Children and correctional staff explained that juvenile inmates are not equal in terms of possessing resources and can roughly be divided into two groups. The first groups are the privileged children who get a dependable amount of support from their families and relatives while in custody. These groups of juvenile inmates have better access to financial and material resources from their parents, which helps them to lead less difficult prison life. In one of the interviews, a boy inmate said "my parents and relatives sometimes send me money through the bank. I use it to buy additional food and other basic things like clothes. If you have money, life in prison won't be difficult".

The second groups of juvenile inmates are less privileged. They do not receive any parental support because they have either no parents or their parents have no economic capacity to help them in custody. In one of the interviews, a girl inmate mentioned "...I live upon the support I receive from my fellow inmates. They help me in sharing sanitary pads, makeup, soaps, food, and others". In addition to this quote, in most of the interviews, children described that they are staying alive and sustaining in prison because of the care and support they receive from one another. The inmates' tradition of helping each other, which operates out of the formal rules and regulations of the prison system, is strongly practiced at the study site. The juvenile inmates support one another through sharing little resources at their disposal, where those who have some resources share with have-nots. This demonstrates the existence of strong sense of community and culture of solidarity among juvenile inmates at this institution.

The second element of the internal social support system includes the support that adult inmates offer to young offenders. Children explained that they enormously benefit from a range of supports that they get from adult inmates. Many adult inmates show consideration for young offenders as they are considered the most vulnerable sections of the prison population. Illustrating this, another girl inmate described "there is nobody who visits me here. I sometimes get help from a generous woman called Chaltu (pseudonym), who is an adult woman inmate. She helps me by providing hygiene supplies like soaps, body lotions, and sanitary pads". This quote demonstrates the support that adult inmates provide to young offenders in custody. Most of the children also explained the existence of strong support of adult inmates to juvenile offenders, particularly because some adult inmates have strong sympathetic feelings and consideration toward the young inmates. Children get (no matter how big or small) material, educational, psychosocial, and spiritual support from adult inmates. As I discussed (see Chapter 5), juvenile offenders are not separated from the adult inmates at this study site. Children's placement together with adults provided them with opportunities of gaining access to the support of adult inmates. Many children reported that they are dependent on the resources they receive from adult inmates in one way or another.

The children's support from staff is the third pillar of the internal social support systems that children rely on to cope with prison life challenges at the study site. This is an intermittent type of internal help that children receive from some generous correctional staffs. Children described that although many of the correctional staff members mistreat them, some are generous and kind enough to help them in many ways. Explaining this, a girl inmate stated as follows.

Some officers are generous enough to give me holiday gifts. There is one male police guard who often shows me consideration; he treats me like his sister and helps me a lot. He gives me money whenever I need it.

As indicated in this quote, some correctional staffs have a positive attitude towards young offenders, and they offer them help. Supporting this point, one of the correctional staff described the presence of some generous staffs who provide support to young inmates from their own resources. This may demonstrate the dynamic relationship between staff and inmates where some staff act beyond their official duty to help juvenile inmates. In other words, some young inmates meet their basic needs through the support they get from some of the correctional staff. Goffman (1961) argues that there is a distance between inmates and staff and the relationship between inmates and staff is often hostile in that they have different perspectives toward each other. Although this argument is partly true, from this study, I learned that some children formed close and strong ties with some correctional staff to acquire or access what they need inside the custody. In this regard, through cooperation with correctional staff, some young inmates attempt to meet needs that are not addressed by the institution. This demonstrates that young inmates find several ways of surviving in the prison environment in addition to relying on inmates-to-inmate support. This expands on Goffman's (1961) analysis of the informal support system in the prison. In his theory of total institutions, Goffman identified two ways in which inmates adapt and adjust to the prison environment. The first one is called the primary adjustments, which involves the formal rules and structures of the institution that inmates follow to survive inside. This mainly focuses on knowing the privileges and punishment systems of the institution and using every meagre support provided by the institution to cope with life in prison. But the secondary adjustments refer to the informal systems that inmates develop among themselves through fraternization and clique formation. According to the theory of total institutions, the internal support system is the most vital component of support systems that inmates often rely on for their survival within the prison. Both approaches are also revealed in this study, but inmate-to-inmate support was strong and seen as the crucial means through which children cope with the everyday challenges of life in prison. This study shows that juvenile inmates form connections among themselves, with adult inmates, and with some staffs to find ways of coping with the everyday challenges of life. This also shows how children endeavour to create better living circumstances for themselves by relying on each other and forming connections among themselves.

However, it is worth noting that all juveniles are not equal in accessing and grabbing opportunities of internal support systems in custody. During the interviews with the children, I learned that some children are skilful at exploiting the support of adult inmates while others are not. To illustrate this point, I quote a 12-year-old boy interview as follows.

I am the youngest of the juvenile inmates. Many adult inmates are sympathetic toward me. They love and support me in many ways like sharing food, clothes, and anything else. By being the youngest, I got many special favours from adult inmates and some staffs than other older fellow inmates.

This quote demonstrates the variations between children in navigating internal support systems in the facility. This may also reflect how age can be used as a *resource* in expanding support opportunities for the children in custody. In the eyes of adults, the youngest children are seen as too weak to protect themselves; as a result, many adults tend to provide more care, support, and protection for the younger ones. This weakest position of children in custody is used as a resource to get better support and protection from adult inmates and correctional staffs.

From the above analysis, one can understand how the reciprocal understanding and sympathy among inmates provide a source of support to children living inside the facility. These informal support systems among inmates and some staff members' support to inmates may reflect the shared and collective lifestyle of the local community from which they come. This also resonates with Abebe's (2019) analysis of accumulated interdependent agency. The support that adult inmates provide to children may also speak to the role that adults may want to sustain inside as many of them were parents during their outside life. As they cannot play that parental role while in prison due to their separation and isolation from family, some adults want to keep that role by providing support and showing sympathy to young offenders living with them in the facility. In my view, the adult inmates' efforts to play a substitute parental role for the child inmates inside the custody could be seen as a means of trying to preserve their previous roles while in the institution. Role dispossession occurs when people enter the prison gates (Goffman, 1961) but they attempt to keep practicing their previous civil role in prison in different ways. Additionally, the general societal construction of children as dependent and immature and needing adult guidance might have helped them to receive the attention of adult inmates inside the facility.

7.3.2. External Support Systems

Another coping strategy for juvenile offenders, while they are in custody, was using external support that comes from family members and relatives, volunteer individuals, charitable organizations, and local government offices. Children described that they sometimes receive donations of different supplies from NGOs and local government offices like the Women and Children Affairs Office. The NGOs and local governments help them by providing food, clothes, school materials, play materials, and hygiene supplies (soaps, cosmetics, and sanitary pads for girls). They also explained that more external support is channelled towards young offenders and women inmates than adult men prisoners. Young inmates tend to receive more attention from external community members than adult inmates because they are often seen as vulnerable and in need of additional support in prison. In elaborating external support system, one of the correctional staff mentioned "There is one ex-prisoner of our institution, who now lives in Germany. He donates mattresses, blankets, and hygiene products for inmates, especially for young inmates and women once every year...". This quote is an example of the existing practice of external support systems for young offenders while in custody. Staff highlighted that there are some humanitarian aids that young offenders and all prisoners receive at different times of the year from local and international donors, particularly on religious and new year holidays. They also highlighted that children and women inmates

are more likely to receive the attention of NGOs, GOs, and volunteer individuals for support within custody. In this regard, the construction of children as victims served them as a source of support. The idea of victimhood is often interpreted as negative in many aspects of juvenile offenders' everyday life. However, in the prison context, one may argue that it helped them as a source of resources. In other words, the societal construction of juveniles as deviants, victims, and vulnerable may have positive implications, particularly in settings where the government has failed to provide them with adequate care and support, as it can bring resources.

In addition, this finding may highlight the importance of cooperation between NGOs and correctional institutions to provide treatment and support for incarcerated children, particularly where the government has limited resources to meet children's rehabilitation needs. Goffman (1961) focused on secondary adjustment for inmates' survival factors inside the prison. However, this study adds an external support system as another dimension of the informal support system that inmates could use to cope with the everyday challenges of life within the prison. Juvenile inmates can use the external support system in complement to internal support systems. This may also allude to the permeability of the prison environment for people outside of the prison system. This is contrary to Goffman's (1961) argument of prison as a closed setting. There is a close interaction between prison and organizations in the outside, as well as the interaction of inmates with people outside of the prison environment. However, it is important to bear in mind that I am not referring to prison as an open environment, but it is possible to question Goffman's (1961) idea of viewing prison as a totally locked setting from the outside world. This finding is consistent with Ellis's (2021) argument of prisons as porous institutions. She argues that prison gates are open on a daily basis for visitors and other volunteer individuals, and there is a constant flow of material resources into the prison from the outside, which can shape the individuals' prison experiences. Prison institutions are influenced by external institutions in several ways and there is an interaction between prison institutions and external institutions. These interactions can also shape the prison life experiences of inmates in the institution. This is also revealed in this study where the external supports that juvenile offenders receive through donations and familial support are part of their coping strategies inside the prison and it can also shape their lived experiences within the custody, particularly visits by loved ones, religious fathers, volunteers, and others to instil hope. This demonstrates juvenile offenders' interaction with people outside of the prison system although those interactions happen under strict regulations. This can also reflect the permeability of the prison institutions.

7.3.3. The Use of Engagement in Different Activities as Coping Mechanisms within Custody

The third pillar of juvenile offenders' coping mechanisms for everyday life challenges in prison was the use of engagement in different work activities, religious practices, educational and vocational activities, and different games like playing cards and watching TV and movies. During my interviews with the children, they shared with me that making oneself busy and occupied by engaging in different activities within the prison premises is one way of coping with the everyday challenges of life in prison. These activities are used as ways of avoiding boredom for most juvenile offenders.

7.3.3.1. Engaging in Work Related Activities

One of the activities that juvenile offenders engage in is knitting and sewing clothes. After spending some time in the prison environment, children become creative

and learn to acquire new skills, such as developing handcraft and sewing skills. Knitting was one of the creative handcraft skills that children learn from each other within custody. I observed that many children, particularly male juvenile inmates knit caps that Muslim men use to cover their heads during their daily prayers. Sometimes the caps might be worn in everyday life. After exploring the market need for these caps within and outside of the prison area, children start to learn and knit the caps. It is locally called *Xaaqiyaa* - loosely translated as a cap or hat which Muslim men wear for religious purposes. In this regard, by knitting different types and sizes of caps, children make a little money to support themselves within custody. This can demonstrate the ability of children to try to find ways to cope with the life challenges they encounter by acquiring new skills and adjusting to the environment in a way it can give them a little agency and control over their lives. I learned that children strive to make a bit of money to support themselves in limited opportunities for work within the prison environment. This coping capacity of children with harsh prison life contrasts the view of presenting juveniles as always vulnerable and passive (Boyden, 1997).

Another coping capacity of juvenile offenders in the prison is through learning vocational and technical activities. Since there are no organized vocational skills training activities for children in the custody, they try to learn new vocational skills by assisting and working for adult inmates who own different workshop centres like woodwork, metalwork, and sewing machine. In the interviews, correctional staff mentioned that the existing workshop centres inside the custody are owned and run by private rich adult inmates. The institution has no adequate resources to provide skills training activities for inmates, including young offenders. To overcome this challenge, children craft different strategies for acquiring new skills in welding metals, sewing clothes, and making furniture. One of the children's strategies is through working for adult inmates in their respective workshops. Illustrating this point, a 16-year-old boy described his story as follows.

I have known with an adult inmate who is a tailor inside the prison. I started to spend time with him at his workplace assisting him in arranging some stuff, washing, and ironing clothes. In return, I earn a bit of cash to buy additional food. I also learned how to mend old and new pants, jackets, and T-shirts. Eventually, I became a novice tailor and I now get a little money from sewing clothes. Even for the future.....

As this quote demonstrates, children have amazing coping capacity in difficult life circumstances, including the prison environment. The knitting and tailoring skills that children learned from each other, and adult inmates to support themselves signify children's abilities and creativity skills to cope with the everyday challenges they experience in their daily lives in the setting. This also symbolizes children's active social actors who can shape their own experiences and the people around them.

In addition to engaging in skills oriented activities, many children also carry out different physical work activities, such as serving in the tea house, working as a daily labourer (digging holes, carrying wood and stones in prison construction activities), washing clothes of adult inmates, washing dishes in prison canteens, washing a motorbike for correctional staff, and assisting kitchen workers by peeling and chopping potatoes and by doing other temporary jobs in the prison. I also observed that female young inmates often engage in household-related activities like assisting in prison kitchens and canteens, whereas male juvenile offenders mainly engage in vocational

workshops, daily labour, and other physical works. This shows that children's coping strategies vary in terms of gender, age, and type of works they engage in.

7.3.3.2. Engaging in Religious Practices

Another coping mechanism that children rely on is the use of engagement in religious services and practices. In most of the interviews, children described that they participate in different religious services held inside the prison. They explained religion as a source of hope in custody life. It is a place where they find therapeutic relief from the stress, anxiety, and depression that prison life brings to them. In one of the interviews, a 15-year-old boy described that "Mosque is the place where I forgot my worries". The child explained that religious place is where they get psychological relief, and they hide themselves from the stress and boredom by engaging in religious activities like studying the holy Quran. Adding to this, another participant in a drawing exercise drew a picture of the Mosque (see Figure 7.4 in the appendix) describing it as less stressful place inside the custody. Children described religious places as less regulated space inside the prison environment. This is also consistent with Karlsson's (2018) analysis of tactical acts through which children try to avoid institutional regulation and control, such as using the school as a place of free space and play. Likewise, in this study going to religious places gives children psychological relief because religious fathers also provide them therapeutic counselling and hope in addition to preaching Bible or Quran. Children mentioned that meeting with and talking to religious fathers is therapeutic by itself. Through participation in religious practices, some children also acquire new language skills like literacy in reading the Arabic language, which is the holy Quran language. Quran is often taught in Arabic in Ethiopia. In this regard, children get psychological help by engaging in different religious services and practices in prison. However, the engagement of all juvenile offenders in religious practices is not equal, where some are closely attached to their religion, whereas others tend to find ways of escaping the challenges of prison life through other activities like hunting for any available job within the prison environment. That means children follow different paths of coping approaches with their everyday challenges in the prison setting.

7.3.3.3. Playing Games and Watching TVs/Movies

The other widely used coping mechanism of juvenile offenders within custody is through engaging in different games and watching movies. In most of the interviews and essays, children described that they spend a lot of time playing cards and watching movies. I also observed that many children spend time playing different games with adult inmates as a way of escaping stress and depression in prison. It is one of the mechanisms that many children use to hide themselves from the mental and physical health challenges that prison life presents. Goffman (1961) also argues that inmates use ball games, woodwork, playing cards, and Tv watching as the removal activities of boredom and getting a psychological release. However, in my study, I learned that this is not free; children must pay fees to access and play the games or to watch movies inside the custody. Children shared with me that they use different tactics to get money to manage to pay and play the games. Here I want to cite the story of a 16-year-old boy as an example.

I spend a lot of time in the film house in prison. The one-time film fee is 1 birr (US\$0.018). In the first month, I spent all the money I had on watching films every day, but later I run out of money and started to sell my breakfast. For nine

months, I sold my breakfast to be able to collect money for watching films. I also sold some of my clothes to get additional money. The film house is where I try to forget my life worries and find psychological relief.

This quote demonstrates that watching movies is a means of coping with boredom of prison life. They also use different strategies, such as selling breakfast and clothes to make as little money as possible to pay for watching movies inside the prison. As the above quote shows, the only option that the child had was to go hungry by selling his food rations to be able to watch movies and play other games. Here we can see how children prioritize their needs based on the circumstances in which they are. Watching movies is given priority than eating breakfast. Sometimes children are forced to act against their interest in difficult circumstances, which Valentine (2011) called uncomfortable form of agency. She argues that children's agency is not always positive, because, in some difficult life conditions, children may act as the worst enemies of themselves or others like when street children engage in risky behaviours such as theft, substance abuse, or violence. This is also reflected in the above quote where the child decided to skip breakfast to make money out of selling it.

I also observed that children make balls from plastic bags to play as there were no playing materials for outdoor sports and physical activity by officials of the institution. This shows children's agency to find ways to play and stay active inside the prison, which is also consistent with the concept of thin agency (Klocker, 2007).

Overall, the analyses of children's engagement in various creative activities as a coping strategy for everyday life challenges can demonstrate their agentic capacity through which they strive to create a better life circumstance for themselves within the prison setting. Children acquire new skills in carrying out technical activities, for example, sewing clothes, by being a servant to adult inmates. They also engage in different labour activities collaborating with adult inmates, correctional staff, and the institution itself like volunteering in the construction projects of the prison. These findings reveal how children innovatively assert agency in difficult circumstances like prison. Here Klocker's (2007) analysis of thin agency can help to understand juvenile offenders' agency within the prison environment. The concept of thin agency refers to the decisions and everyday actions that children carry out within highly restrictive contexts, where options are quite limited. The structures, contexts, and relationships can thin children's agency by constraining options for making choices (Klocker, 2007). This is also the case for Juvenile offenders in prison, as they have limited opportunities within this institution due to a severe lack of rehabilitation programs and inadequate resources. Their everyday life in the institution is controlled, regulated, and dominated by adult authority. Despite these challenges, children attempt to find ways of doing agency, such as by learning new skills and cooperating with adult prisoners and correctional staff. Additionally, the agency that juvenile offenders have can be characterized as relational and interdependent, because it is shaped by how they interact among themselves, with adult inmates and officials of the institution (Spyrou, 2018; Abebe, 2019). Showing respect and having smooth relationships with fellow inmates, adult inmates, and correctional staff are vital in order to have avenues of enacting agency in the prison. Also, respecting the institutional rules, acting within the framework of institutional regulations, and showing obedience to correctional staff can help them to materialize agency within the custody setting. This implies that the type of agency that juvenile offenders may have in the context of the custodial institution varies in time, with the type of activities they carry out, with whom they interact, and the place at which they interact (Abebe, 2019). This kind of juvenile offenders' agency within the custodial institution can be explained in terms of the

interplay between formal and informal practices of the institution. Goffman (1961) called this kind of coping strategy *playing it cool* to show how inmates can make use of the combination of primary (formal rules) and secondary (informal) to adapt to the total institutions. In this study, juvenile inmates navigate their everyday life through respecting the institutional rules (primary) and collaborating with adult inmates and some correctional staffs (secondary) to exercise agency as a way of coping with the prison life.

Furthermore, the analysis of children's agency refutes the assumptions of youth justice models that construct juvenile offenders as passive victims who are lacking agency in the process of rehabilitation. The models lack acknowledgment of juvenile offenders' agency by seeing them only as vulnerable and weak (Smith, 2009). Oftentimes, social programs regard children as passive victims and act in the name of children's best interests without listening to their voices (Bordonaro and Payne, 2012). This is also the case in the present study because juvenile offenders are not actively engaging in the formal systems of the institution. But they try to cope with life challenges by acquiring new skills of doing different activities in their motivation and initiation that help them to survive everyday challenges, as well as that can prepare them for life after release, even when the institution has failed to provide them proper treatment and rehabilitation services. As Goffman (1961) argues, inmates carry out different works in prison to stay active and reduce boredom. Similarly, in this study children described that they hunt any available opportunities that come their way within the prison to reduce the boredom of idleness and stay active in the prison environment. They manage to navigate everyday lives in prison through engaging in a variety of activities, which demonstrate children's agency to just control over their lives as little as possible in prison. Children's agency in the context of incarceration involves a complex process that can be shaped by a number of factors, such as job opportunities, relationship among children themselves, with adult inmates and correctional staff. Children also have different skills of enacting agency and coping approaches that vary based on children's social background, age, gender, and the people with whom they interact.

7.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the everyday challenges that incarcerated children experience in the custodial institution and their coping strategies for these challenges. The study reveals that incarcerated children experience a wide range of challenges that include difficult living conditions, underdeveloped rehabilitation and treatment services, limited access to education and skills training, limited opportunities to engage with families and the outside world, lack of participation in the institutional matters, and limited positive psychosocial environments like lack of counselling service, media, legal support, and play materials. The challenges these children face in the custodial institution of the study site were associated with the government's lack of resources to support the rehabilitation services of incarcerated children. According to the laws, the government is responsible for fulfilling its paternalistic role in providing services and protecting children under its custody, including incarcerated children. However, the actual living conditions of young people in custody reflect the discrepancies between policy commitments and actual practice.

However, the study shows that children have shown resilience and agency in coping with the everyday challenges in custody, using different strategies. It is revealed that children learn different vocational skills in collaborating with adult inmates to create a better life circumstance for themselves. They also use engagement in different

activities like finding work opportunities and skills training, engaging in religious practices, different games, and watching movies as coping strategies for the everyday challenges they face in prison. These strategies can give us some ideas on children's agency in custodial institutions, by which children attempt to find ways to cope with difficult life circumstances. The children's agency and coping strategies also involve complex processes and negotiations among themselves, adult inmates, and correctional staff. This is also confirmed by the previous studies, showing the capacity of juveniles to negotiate structural and everyday challenges in a variety of ways despite being influenced by the structural processes of the institutions (see, for example, Ayete-Nyampong & van der Geest, 2013).

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1. Introduction

This chapter offers conclusions, with recommendations for further research, policy, and practice based on the study findings.

8.2. Conclusions

This study explored the everyday lived experiences of incarcerated children, their ways of navigating institutional regulations, their everyday challenges, and coping strategies in the correctional institution of the Oromia Region, Ethiopia.

The thesis reveals that many young people were incarcerated for theft, mostly out of economic necessity, and most have a history of broken family, such as divorce, separation, or the death of one or both parent(s). Many are underprivileged and victims of socioeconomic circumstances. These children are held together with adult detainees as there is no special institution that is dedicated to the care, rehabilitation, and treatment of youthful offenders in the region. There is no segregation between adult inmates and juveniles within the institution, except for a separate sleeping place for young male offenders. Although young offenders were seen as children in their previous everyday lives, they are treated as adults within the institution. In other words, there is no institutional differential treatment between juvenile inmates and adult prisoners at the institution of the study site.

International and local child policies proclaim the separate treatment of juvenile offenders from adult prisoners in a child-friendly special institution designed for the purpose of caring for and treating them. However, this is not the case at the institution of the study site. There is a discrepancy between policies and practices regarding the treatment of juvenile offenders at the facility. I observed that the implementation of the policy standards into practice in resource-limited settings like in the Oromia region remains a challenge. Previous research also showed that the ideal childhood that is codified based on western childhood is challenging to implement in poorer societies (Archard, 2015). This study also highlights that these policies are not properly contextualized into the socio-cultural and economic circumstances of Ethiopia, the Oromia. As the everyday lives of children were entangled with adults during their outside life, their placements with adult prisoners can also offer them support opportunities in the context of resource limited facilities. This study indicates that juvenile inmates rely on each other and adult inmates to survive the difficulty of life in prison. In this light, the separation of juvenile offenders from adult inmates in settings where resources are not adequate may not be in the best interest of children as proclaimed by the child policies that were drawn on the thinking of the ideal childhood of the West.

Even though children find a variety of ways to survive in a prison, their everyday stories within the institution indicate that they are suffering from idleness due to a lack of rehabilitation programs. They are also experiencing multiple forms of abuse and mistreatment from the correctional staff and other inmates within the institution. Children also described custody life as an interruption of their childhood. Imprisonment as an interruption of childhood was reflected from two respects. The first was that incarceration separates them from their loved ones and the community. Secondly, it limited their opportunities to access education, work, and play as these services are not available in the hosting institution. Staying idle and simply roaming around within the premises of the institution are everyday experiences for children at the facility. Children are not engaging in activities that can prepare them for their future reintegration into the

community and they feel that their everyday lives are on hold in prison. The thesis reveals that their time in custody is simply a waste. The institution focuses on controlling bodies rather than children's rehabilitation and social reintegration interventions. The everyday lived experience of juveniles within the institution differs from what is seen as accepted childhood in the local community from which they come. Children's understanding of accepted and normal childhood involves spending time within the family environment, working, studying, and playing. However, children experienced their imprisonment as an interruption of childhood due to a lack of appropriate childhood tasks, such as attending school, offering help to parents, working, playing, and other activities at the institution where they are held. The idea of interrupted childhood symbolizes the deep concern of children for their future life as they are deprived of access to education, job opportunities, lack of engagement with their parents, and rehabilitation programs that can prepare them to cope with daily and future life challenges.

In this thesis, I have also looked into how juvenile inmates navigate their everyday institutional regulations despite the difficulties that prison life presents. The study shows that new juvenile inmates undergo three interconnected stages to adapt and adjust to prison life: confusion, calming, and acceptance. The confusion stage involves the first early weeks of juveniles in the prison environment, and it is a time of confusion in which children struggle to accept their conditions in a prison. The calming stage refers to when juveniles start to reduce their level of emotional anxiety and begin to create friendships with the experienced inmates, and also when they are getting acquainted with the rules of the institution. This stage serves as a transition to the acceptance stage, where their familiarity with the prison system and established friendships helps them to move toward acceptance. The acceptance stage is when juvenile offenders adjust to prison culture, rules, and regulations. It is the stage when they start to accept prison life and adapt to a new institutional lifestyle. These stages are not a linear path, and all juvenile inmates may not encounter similar experiences while navigating them, in which some children quickly move on and easily adjust to life in prison, while other children may struggle a lot and take a longer time to manoeuvre through each stage. There is a variation among juvenile inmates on how to navigate these stages in the process of adapting and adjusting to life in prison.

Another important conclusion of this study focuses on the way juvenile offenders attempt to exercise agency within the prison setting. The way juvenile inmates navigate institutional regulations can be divided into collective and personal strategies. The collective or shared agency involves collaboration among children to find a solution to their common problems; in doing so they try to protect one another. When they face problems at their quarters, they pool the resources they have together and try to solve those problems. Group loyalty and solidarity play a paramount role in the process of enacting a collective or a shared agency. They try to struggle for their common interests as much as their capacity. Juvenile inmates attempt to create better living circumstances for themselves as a group when the institution failed to do so.

The other form of agency that juvenile inmates use to navigate and negotiate institutional regulations is by developing different personal strategies. Among others, juvenile inmates use the tactics of learning and compliance, and agency through staff manipulations. Learning or getting acquainted with the tricks, rules and regulations, and prison culture is the first strategy they employ to craft ways of navigating them. After staying in the prison for some time, they begin to learn how the institution operates and where the institutional power of control lies. The study reveals that the majority of juvenile inmates employ the agency of compliance, where they intentionally stay passive

and obey the institutional authorities to not get trapped within the prison for more than their court sentence. In this form of agency, they tend to comply with the institutional rules and regulations until they get released from prison. Even though they know that institutional practices are oppressive and unjust, they prefer to stay passive and do not want to confront institutional power. In this way, they try to appear calm and play it safe until they get out of prison. In agency by compliance, children decide to compromise their rights and interests to achieve their goal of getting released from prison without delay. It is a kind of price that they purposefully pay until they get out of prison because they calculate the costs and benefits of confronting the institutional regulations while in prison. They give priority to their later life goal over immediate needs. This speaks of the rationality and capacity of children to make decisions in circumstances where choices are limited, which also corroborates with the notion of thin agency (Klocker, 2007).

Agency through staff manipulation is the other form of agency that juvenile inmates enact within the custodial institution of the study site. This involves children's tactics of playing the role of victim to win the sympathy of correctional staffs. In this form of agency, children play the role of the victim in that they politely approach and beg some of the correctional staffs to make a phone call to their parents, relatives, or friends. By taking advantage of the adults' perception of children as weak and vulnerable, they attempt to win the sympathy of correctional staff to find what they are not provided by the institution. This is what I call agency through staff manipulation. Sometimes children play agency through staff manipulation in negative ways. There are instances in which juvenile inmates engage in illegal behaviours within the prison setting in collaboration with some correctional staff and adult inmates. These illegal behaviours may include engaging in meddling illegal things to enter the prison collaborating with some staff and adult inmates and stealing other inmates' belongings. These behaviours are risky for them when discovered by the institutional authority, but some children try to play this form of agency in secretive ways collaborating with adults, which can be seen as a form of uncomfortable agency (Valentine, 2011).

One of the main conclusions of this study regarding the juvenile inmates' agency within the prison setting is that it involves ongoing negotiation among themselves, adult inmates, and correctional staff, and it also ranges from being a subordinate or passive agency to an uncomfortable form of agency in which children may involve in some risky behaviours to meet their needs. The agency that these children try to enact also changes in an interplay of circumstances, time, and with the people they meet and interact (Abebe, 2019). The agency of staff manipulation depends on the personality of the staff members where children try to create close ties with those staff who are caring and loving, not with aggressive ones. In this sense, they do not beg for help from a staff member who is stingy to offer help. This can build on the growing understanding of children's agency as relational and interdependent in the field of childhood studies.

The last conclusion of the study is that juvenile offenders employ several coping strategies to navigate their everyday challenges in prison. These include solidarity among inmates, external support from families, NGOs, and GOs, and using engagements in different activities like work, educational and vocational programs, religious activities, playing games, and watching movies. The study shows that despite the complex and multifaceted challenges that prison life presents, juvenile inmates form strong connections among themselves, with adult inmates, and with some staffs to find ways of coping with the challenges. The children endeavour to create a little better living circumstances for themselves by relying on each other, indicating their agency and role as active social actors who can shape their own everyday lives in a closed setting like prison. The study contributes to raising our knowledge and understanding of children's

everyday life experiences and challenges in a custodial institution, and the agency through which they navigate and negotiate institutional regulations, as well as their coping strategies with the everyday challenges of life in prison, particularly in resource-limited settings like Oromia Region, Ethiopia.

8.3. Recommendations

Based on the analyses and findings of this study, the following recommendations can be made for policy, practice, and further research.

The findings of this study can speak to the decisions of justice personnel, particularly the decisions of the courts regarding sending young offenders to custodial institutions. As special institutions for juveniles are lacking in the region, as well as rehabilitation programs are underdeveloped in the institutions that are currently hosting juvenile inmates, the non-custodial approaches should be prioritized for the management of such children. Proactive measures, such as raising public awareness about juvenile delinquency, support to parents and children in need, and other prevention activities can contribute towards reducing children's involvement in crime, rather than focusing on reactive responses like sending them to detention facilities.

Additionally, building the capacity of the institutions in terms of needed facilities, resources, skills and knowledge, and staffing is crucial to improving the living circumstances of juveniles placed in correctional institutions. The strengthened collaboration between public and civil society organizations is important to fill the gaps in resources and services that the hosting institutions lack for the positive rehabilitation and treatment outcomes of children. The policymakers and all concerned actors should also pay attention to the situation of incarcerated children as they are often invisible groups whose voices are silenced. The participation and voices of juvenile inmates should be considered in the service delivery of the correctional institutions hosting them as they are active social actors who can shape their life circumstances. The mechanisms of monitoring and following up on the handling and treatment of juvenile offenders while they are in custody should be in place and the correctional staff and other inmates who commit violence against juveniles need to be accountable.

Furthermore, this study suggests further research on the issues of incarcerated children as this study was conducted on a micro level, based on fieldwork at one institution with a small number of participants. A study that looks into the life experiences of juvenile offenders while they are in custody in various institutional settings is needed in the country because correctional institutions vary in terms of location, staffing, structural patterns, facilities and services. Additionally, a study on childhood experiences of juvenile offenders that connects between the pre-custody, during custody, and post-custody life experiences is also needed to gain an in-depth understanding of their sense of agency in the process of committing a crime, during undergoing the trial processes, in custody, and after release from custody, including their processes of readjusting into the community life, and on how they navigate the possible experiences of facing stigma and stereotypes. The pros and cons of placing young offenders with adults in adult prisons and how children navigate the institutional power dynamics beg for further research, particularly from an intergenerational lens and Foucault's concept of knowledge and power.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Consent form for Children (Afaan Oromoo)

Unka Hayyamaa Dargaggootaaf

Qaama Qorannoo Kanaa Ta'uuf Waliigaltee

'Muuxannoo Guyyaa Guyyaa Daa'imman To'annoo Seeraa Jalatti Argamanii'

Maqaan koo Birhaanuu Fufaa Fayyisaa jedhama. Ani Yuunivarsiitii Saayinsii fi Teeknooloojii Noorweey keessatti gosa barnoota Mastersii Qo'annoo Daa'immaniin barataadha. Yeroo ammaa kana, 'Muuxannoo jireenyaa guyyaa guyyaa dargaggoota balleessitoota murtii argatanii to'annoo jala jiran' irratti mastersii koo guutaachuuf qorannoo gaggeessaan jira.

Dargaggummaatti hidhaa keessa jiraachuun maal akka fakkaatu caalaatti baruu waanan barbaadeef, pirojektii kana keessatti si hirmaachisuun barbaada. Qorannoo kana keessatti hirmaachuu akka ati dandeessu bulchiinsa mana amala sirreessaa irraa hayyama argadheera. Haa ta'u malee, ati hirmaachuufis hirmaachuu dhiisuufis murteessuuf mirga guutuu qabda. Kana malees, hirmaachuuf murteessitee yeroo booda yaada kee yoo jijjiirte, qo'annicha addaan kutuu ni dandeessa. Odeeffannoon ati naaf kennitu iccitiin kan qabamuufi hirmaannaan kees miidhaa tokko illee sirratti hin qabu. Waa'ee qo'annichaa gaaffii yoo qabaatte yeroo kamitti iyyuu na gaafachuu ni dandeessa.

Qaama qorannoo kanaa ta'uuf yoo waliigalte, asii gaditti maqaa fi mallattoo kee barreessi. Koppiin waraqaa kanaa tokko siif kennama. Hirmaannaa keef galatoomi!

Maqaa hirmaataa: _____

Mallattoo hirmaataa: _____

Mallattoo qorataa _____

Bakka/guyyaa: _____

Appendix 2: Consent form for Adults (Afaan Oromoo)

Unka Hayyamaa Hojjetoota Mana Sirreessaaf

Kabajamtoota Hojjetoota Mana Sirreessaa,

Qorannoo Kana Irratti akka Hirmaaattaniif Isin Gaafachuu

Maqaan koo Birhaanuu Fufaa Fayyisaa jedhama. Ani Yuunivarsiitii Saayinsii fi Teeknooloojii Noorweey keessatti gosa barnoota mastersii Qo'annoo Daa'immaniitiin barataadha. Xalayaa kanaan qorannoo 'Muuxannoo Jireenyaa Guyyaa Guyyaa Dargaggoota Balleessitoota Murtii Argatanii To'annoo Jala Jiran' irratti akka hirmaattan isin gaafadha.

Qorannoon kun muuxannoo jireenyaa guyyaa guyyaa dargaggootaa mana amala sirreessaa keessatti argamanii irratti kan xiyyeeffatudha. Odeeffannoon barreeffamaas ta'e sagaleedhaan kennamu of eeggannoo fi iccitii guddaan ni qabama. Bu'aa barreeffamaafi ykn afaaniin dhihaatu keessatti maqaan dhugaa nama dhuunfaa kamiyyuu hin fayyadamu. Odeeffannoon isin kennitan hundi iccitiidhaan eegama. Pirojektiin kun Tajaajila Eegumsa Daataa Noorweeyiif gabaafamee mirkanaa'eera.

Qaama qorannoo kanaa ta'uuf yoo waliigalte, asii gaditti maqaa fi mallattoo kee barreessi. Koppiin waraqaa kanaa tokko isiniif kennama. Hirmaannaa keessaniif galatoomaa!

Maqaa hirmaataa: _____

Mallattoo hirmaataa: _____

Mallattoo qorataa _____

Bakka/guyyaa: _____

Appendix 3. Consent Form for Children (English)

Agreement to be part of this research.

Everyday Experiences of Young Offenders in Custody

My name is Birhanu Fufa Feyissa. I am a student in a Master of Philosophy in Childhood Studies at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway. I am currently undertaking fieldwork on the *'Everyday life experiences of adjudicated juvenile offenders in custody'* as a requirement for the partial fulfillment of MPCHILD.

I want to involve you in this project because I am trying to learn more about what it is like to be in custody as a young person. I have received permission from the correctional administration if you can be in this study. However, you can decide to be or not be part of it. In addition, if you decide to be part and change your mind later, you can withdraw from the study. I ensure that the information you gave me is kept confidential as well as your participation has no harm. If you have any questions about the study, do not hesitate to ask me during and post fieldwork.

If you agree to be part of this study, write your name and signature at the bottom of this paper. A copy of this paper will be given to you. Thank you in advance for your participation!

Participant's Name: _____
Signature of Participant: _____
Signature of Researcher _____
Place/date: _____

Appendix 4: Consent Form for Correction Staff (English)

Dear Staff,

Request to Participate in Research Project

My name is Birhanu Fufa Feyissa, and I am a student in the Master of Philosophy in Childhood Studies at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway. With this letter, I request you to participate in a research project '*Everyday Life Experiences of Adjudicated Juvenile Offenders in Custody*' which will be used for my thesis project.

The study focuses on exploring the everyday life experiences of juvenile offenders while they are in a correctional institution. Both written and audio information will be handled with great care and confidentiality. Pseudonymous will be used in the thesis report writing so that no one will be identified. I will follow scientific standards of ethical responsibility and the information you provide will be treated confidentially. The project has been reported to and approved by the Norwegian Data Protection Service.

If you agree to be part of this study, write your name and signature at the bottom of this paper. A copy of this paper will be given to you. Thank you in advance for your participation!

Participant's Name: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Signature of Researcher _____

Place/date: _____

Appendix 5: Research Project Information

Are you interested in taking part in the research project "The Life Experiences of Adjudicated Juvenile Offenders in the Oromia Prison, Ethiopia"?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project that focuses on exploring and understanding the life experiences of juvenile offenders serving time in custody. In this letter, I will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the Project

The main purpose of the study is to understand the life experiences of juvenile offenders serving time in custody as a requirement for the partial fulfilment of the Master of Philosophy in Childhood Studies at NTNU, Norway. The study responds to the questions, such as, what are the everyday life experiences of juvenile offenders in custody; how do juvenile offenders navigate and negotiate everyday institutional rules and regulations, what are the everyday challenges of juvenile offenders in custody, and how are they coping? Thus, the information you provide will help to answer these research questions and data will be used for educational purposes.

Who is Responsible for the Research Project?

The Department of Education and Lifelong Learning at NTNU is the institution that hosts the MPhil in Childhood Studies Program and is responsible for overseeing this project. However, I am responsible to conduct the research fieldwork under the supervision of Ida Marie.

Why are you being asked to Participate?

You are being asked to participate in this research project because you are among juvenile offenders who are the main target groups of the study. We have received approval or permission from the prison management if you can part take in the study. In total, about 17 juvenile offenders will be contacted to participate in this research project.

What does participation involve for you?

If you decide to take part in the project, you will involve in the data collection activities of the project, including interviews, and participatory methods like a diary, drawing, role play, and essays. The interview sessions will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes. I will record your answers using a voice recorder and will also take notes. The interview questions focus on the life experiences of juvenile offenders in custody.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is fully voluntary. If you decide to participate but change your mind later, you can withdraw your participation without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw. It will not affect your life in and post custody as well as your relationship with correctional staff in any way. This study will have no connection with your sentence and/or criminal record.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data.

I will not ask for your personal data such as name, address, telephone number, national identity number, and other potential indicators that could enable others to identify you, instead, pseudonyms will be used in data collection and report writing. I will keep all records confidential from access and use by third parties except to share the transcribed

and de-identified document with my supervisor when needed. All soft copy materials will be kept in a safe password-protected folder on a personal computer throughout the whole process of undertaking this study. All materials will be safely discarded when their functions end except for the anonymized transcripts. No personal identifiers will be attached to this research project.

Your rights

- So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- request a copy of the report.
- request that your data be deleted at the end of the project.
- request that incorrect information about you is corrected/rectified if any.
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your data, if any
- request clarification on the data processing and handling if you have any inquiries.

What gives me the right to process your data?

I will collect and process your data based on your consent. In addition, The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) has assessed and approved the project for ethical clearance in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project or want to exercise your rights, contact:
 Ida Marie Lyså, Project Supervisor
 Email: ida.marie.lysa@ntnu.no
 Telephone:(+47) +47 99722377
 Data Protection Officer at NTNU, by email: thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no

Yours sincerely,

Student (if applicable)

(Project supervisor)

Statement of the Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project "*The life experiences of juvenile offenders in Custody*" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in data collection activities (e.g., individual and group interviews)
- to participate in participatory tools (e.g., a role play)
- for my data to be processed and used for report writing and publication
- for my data not to be accessed by the third party and stored in a safe place and discarded after the end of the project

I give consent for my data to be processed until the end date of the project, approximately July 30, 2023.

(Signed by parent/guardian for under 16, date)

(Signed by child, date)

Appendix 6: Interview Guide for Children

Participants' Life Experiences in Custody

1. Please, would you tell me a little bit about yourself? (E.g., for what reason are you charged, length of your sentence, time of sentence, childhood stories, life prior to custody like family background, etc.).
2. How does it feel to be a young offender and live here? (Feelings of life in prison)
3. How would you describe your daily experience in custody from the first night in custody to date, so long as you remember? (E.g., stories of navigating daily life experiences in custody, typical experiences of positive or negative, feelings and emotions in the first couple of weeks or months in custody, what happened to you when you first enter the custody, first impressions about the prison environment, etc.?)
4. How did you adjust to the custody life system? (E.g., get to know the institutional rules and regulations, familiarity with the custody culture, difficulties/pains of prison life, structured and unstructured time, adaptation strategies, etc.) What helped you to adjust to the prison environment? What were your main challenges in the initial weeks of your arrest? What went well and wrong?
5. How would you describe the custody systems for children? (E.g., care, treatment, child-friendly, oppressive, imagination about living in prison, how it looks like, etc.)
6. What is it like being in custody as a child or young person? (E.g., good or bad aspects of being in custody, difficult parts of life in custody, positive and negative experiences, etc.)
7. How would you explain your overall life experience of staying in custody? (E.g., waste of childhood time, memories of life, lost childhood, or learning some positive changes, rehabilitative or criminalizing, general feelings, or concerns about life in custody, etc.)
8. Would you explain your daily routines in custody? (E.g., lists of daily activities, cycles of daily life, education, work, training, play, free time vs work time, hours of engaging in structured activities, sense of idleness or kept busy in custody, how time is passed in everyday lives, routinization of life, etc.)
9. What are your rights in custody? (E.g. things that you are allowed/not allowed, entitlements that you have as a child such as rights to social services, freedom of expression, the exercise of agency, participation in decision making, mechanisms of complaining/showing grievances, things that are mandatory and voluntary, how power and control are practiced, who has final say on behalf of you, how rules are translated into actions, report mechanisms of any complaints, compliance with rules or culture of resistance against rules, how children's rights are translated in custody, navigations of daily life in custody, etc.) What complaint mechanisms are available within the institution/prison system?

Treatment in Custody

1. How would you describe your handling in custody by staff? (E.g., feelings about institutional treatment, likes or dislikes, how you explain your treatment by staff, etc.)

2. Can you tell me about the treatment services you receive? (E.g., educational, vocational, counselling, recreational/sports activities, religious, social services, adequacy of treatments, etc.)
3. In what programs do you actively participate? (E.g., School, vocational training, counselling session, recreational/sports activities, etc.) and how these programs improve your life.
4. How would you describe your relationship with staff and with other juveniles and adult prisoners? (E.g., positive/negative, how daily interactions look like, meetings, informal and formal relationships, flows of communication, orders, etc.) What are the qualities that correctional staff have and should have? How caring are they?
5. How would you explain your participation experience in the planning, design, and delivery of treatment services and institutional systems? (E.g., consultation about intervention programs, having a say over treatment you receive regarding preferences, adequacies, options, and opportunities of expressing views, etc.)
6. In what ways do you express your views and participate in the decision-making process of the institution? (E.g., feedback-giving mechanisms, individual or group participation, written or oral feedback, etc.)
7. What are children's rights in the context of child justice? What are your views on young offenders' detention? Should young persons be arrested when get involved in the criminal justice system? If you had been given a chance to be a judge, how would you decide children's cases?

Challenges and Coping Strategies in Custody

1. Please describe any issues you face in a prison. (E.g., bullying, violence, punishment, different forms of abuse, any form of suffering in institutions, etc.).
2. What are the most difficult things for you in institutional everyday lives?
3. Can you tell me your coping strategies against challenges you face in your daily lives? (E.g., ways of working out against daily life challenges, etc.) What do you think are your best qualities/strengths? What makes you strong while living here? What gives you a sense of power?

Thoughts on Future/Future vision

1. What are your goals upon your release?
2. How do you view your prospects after release? (E.g., return to school, avoid being trapped in a vicious cycle, work, etc.) What would you like to do after release? What do you aspire for? How do you envisage life from this onwards? (E.g., hopes, wishes, aspirations, optimism, despair, etc.) Where do you want to see yourself after 10 years?
3. What would be done to improve the living conditions of children in custody?
4. What additional information would you like to share with me about your everyday life experience in custody that we have not discussed so far?
5. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix 7: Interview Guide for Correctional Staff

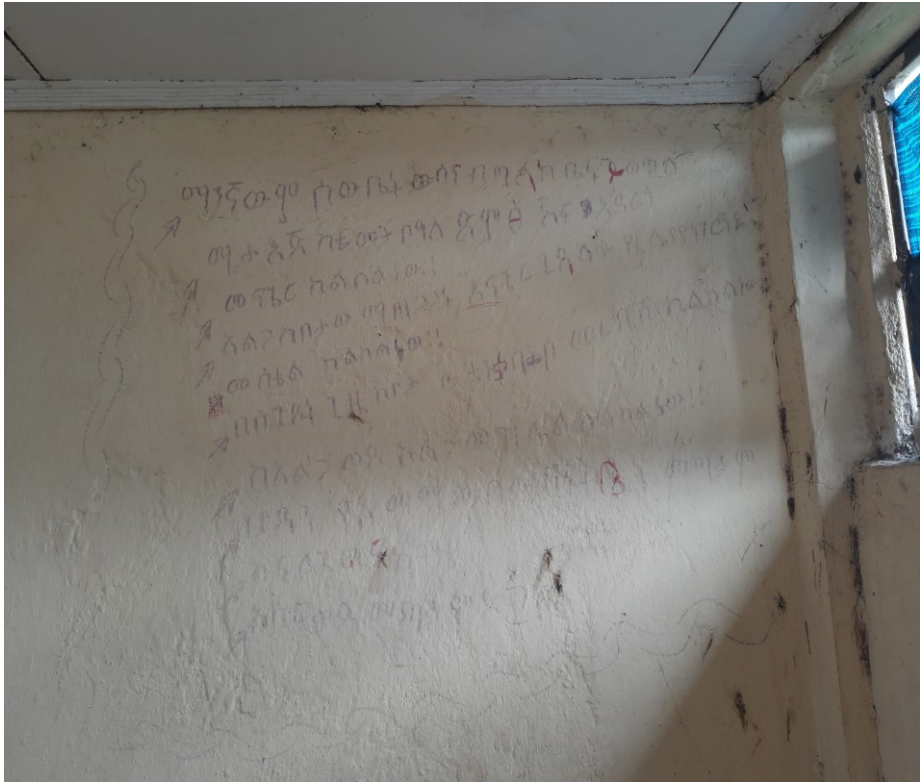
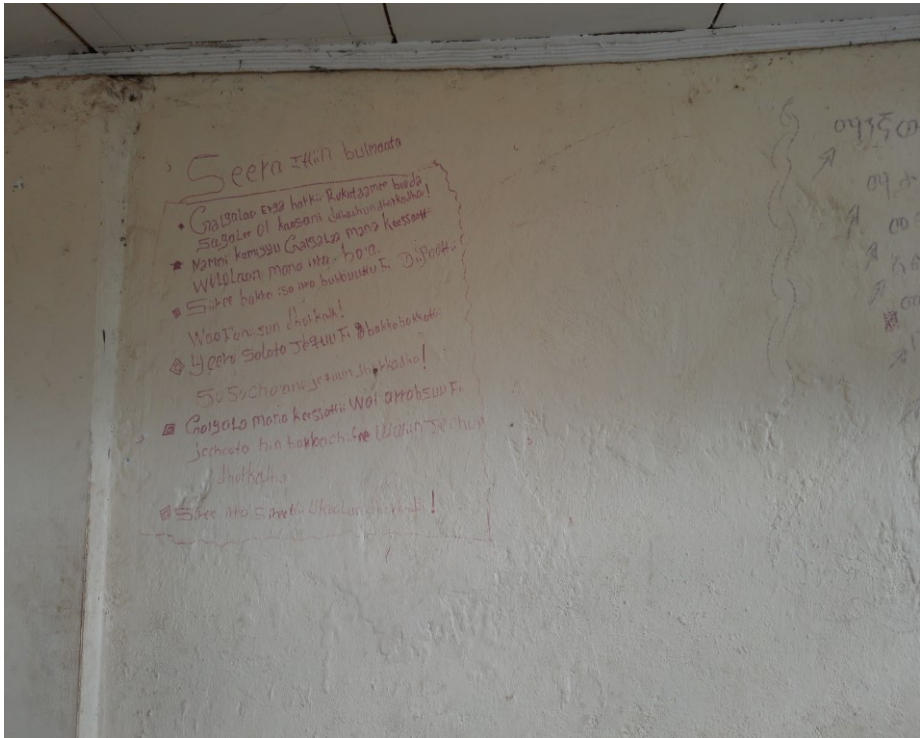
1. How long have you been working here? How do you feel working with young offenders? Do you like your job?
2. How would you describe the living conditions of juvenile offenders in custody? (E.g., number of juveniles, what they are charged for, facilities available to them, etc.)
3. How would you describe the treatment and handling of juvenile offenders? (E.g., rehabilitation services, their adequacy, care, etc.)
4. How would you describe the relationships between juvenile offenders and staff?
5. How do you inculcate into children about the rules and regulations of the institution?
6. How would you engage children in institutional decision-making processes? (E.g., participation culture within decision-making and holding children's interests, rights, viewpoints, and needs into consideration) What complaint mechanisms are available through which children can make reports to the prison administration?
7. How would you approach children's rights to participation in practice here?
8. Would you explain the principles informing your processes and strategies for treating children in custody?
9. How would you describe the voice that young offenders have in institutional matters?
10. Would you explain the rights that juvenile offenders are entitled to in custody and how these rights are translated into practice in institutional terms? Elaborate on issues of children's rights in the prison environment.
11. Would you describe the rights they are deprived of in custody?
12. What are the challenges of juvenile offenders in custody?
13. How would the life chances (rehabilitative approach) of juvenile offenders be improved?
14. What additional information would you like to share with me about juveniles' everyday life experiences in custody that we have not discussed so far?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix 8: Pictures and Drawings



Picture 5.1: The quarter of male juvenile inmates, July 2022



Picture 6.2: Juvenile Offenders' House Rules, July 2022

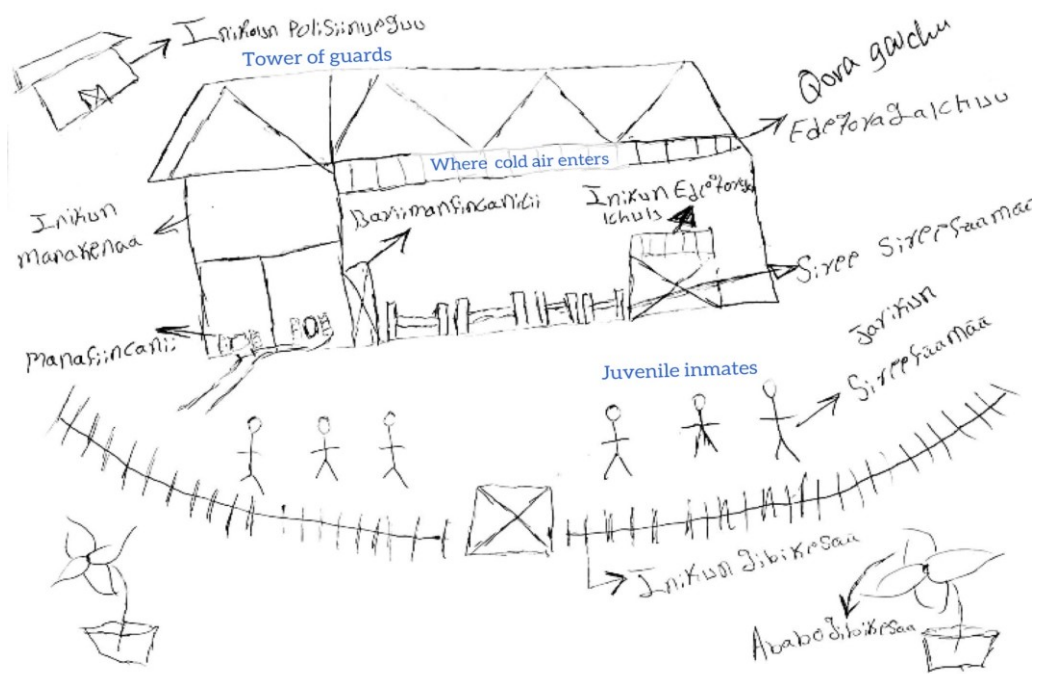


Figure 7.2: 14-year-old boy's drawing of their facility

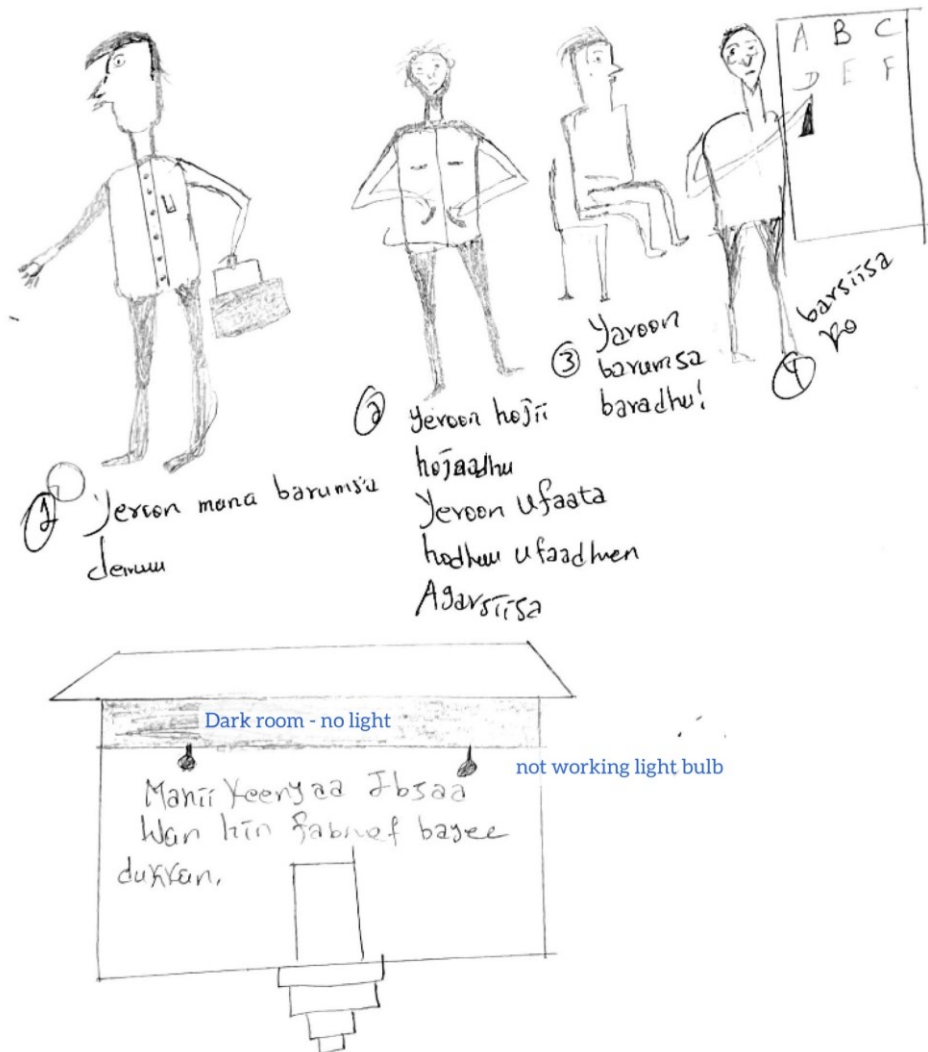


Figure 7.3: A 16-year-old boy's drawing of their quarter and daily activity in custody



Figure 7.4: a 16-year-old boy's drawing of a Mosque

