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**Streetism: The Lived Experiences of Unaccompanied Migrant
Children and their right**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that except for the references cited and duly acknowledged, this thesis is my own original attempt and that it has not in part or in whole been presented for award of any kind anywhere.

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December, 2010, NTNU

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving and caring husband Samuel Narku Nortey and my little angels Nii Noi and Naa Shormeh Nortey

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to explore both the pre-street and the current lived experiences of unaccompanied migrant children on the streets of Accra and the motivations, contributions, perceptions and the challenges these children face at the point of destination. The study further explores street children's views on their rights in terms of their schooling, health care and economic participation.

The overarching perspective of the study is based on the philosophy and tenets of the social studies of childhood. A number of concepts and theories which are very prominent in the study of children and childhood were used as the underpinning framework of the study. These concepts are; concepts of agency, participation, social structure, street children, working children, and migration theory. Unaccompanied migrate children become street children as a result of migration. The various social structures that confront these children inflame the agency and competent spirit which pushes children to engage in economic participation for their existence and survival in an unknown destination. These concepts and theories will help in making cogent analysis and also help put my discussions in focus.

One major aim of my study was to give children the voice and the platform to air their views in issues that concerns their own lives. In this child focus research, qualitative research approach and specifically the ethnographic method were adopted in the data collection process because these approaches give in-depth analysis on social issues. Data collection tools used includes interviews, participant observation and focus group discussion. My field work was in Accra (Ghana). In all 15 informants made up of both genders were sampled from two research sites, a market and a lorry station.

The analysis of the study revealed that, there exists manifold variety of childhoods. Children's lived experiences involve work no matter where they are, either with their families or on the street as indicated by the study. The results also indicated that, children's motives for migrating can be linked to personal, family and structural conditions which serve as both push and pull factors, from and to their destination point. Additionally, the results indicated that children's work in their destination point is one of the major activities in their daily lives. Again peer relations on the street are used as a means to support one another in times of need, and play was identified to be a part of children's street life. Also evidences from the study indicated that children make contributes towards the well being and the development of themselves, their families and the society as well. Majority of the children living on the street have no classroom education, neither do they have access to "proper" medical care. Finally the study revealed that, children face a number of challenges as a part of their lived experiences on the street.

Furthermore the following lessons and conclusions from the study are drawn. It was clear that street children need their work in order to survive because children in the Global South experience particular structural conditions which necessitate them to work. The universal model of childhood cannot be applicable to some categories of children, like the informants in my study. Aside the adults' defined spaces for children, there exist different spaces in the Global South where children can occupy, such as the street.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

LEAP.....	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
FGDs.....	Focus Group Discussions
NGOs.....	Non-governmental Organisation
UNICEF.....	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNCRC.....	United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child
MIE.....	Middle Income Economy
CBD.....	Central Business District
PAR.....	Participant Action Research
CEDC.....	Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances
ILO.....	International Labour Organisation
CNSP.....	Children in Need of Special Protection
MDAs.....	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
PDR.....	People’s Democratic Republic
SSB.....	Shoe Shine Boy
JHS.....	Junior High School
SHS.....	Senior High School
FCUBE.....	Free Universal Basic Education
NHIS.....	National Health Insurance Scheme
AMA.....	Accra Metropolitan Assembly

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 An overview

Human migration is the movement of people from one place to the other. By casual observation rural urban migrants are among the most deprived people in terms of economic, social and human development. Migration involves both adults and children. Migrant children have to go through child work in their destination point which raises a question about children's rights issues. One important aspect of Ghanaian population dynamics is the mobility of children. Children's migration has been researched to have "three main dimensions in the Ghanaian literature: fostering, street children and trafficking" (Anarfi et al, 2003 p 24). The focus of this thesis is on the street children dimension of these migrant children. It is interesting to note that unaccompanied migrant children are highly prone to become street children because of the inadequate local knowledge they have on their destination points. As street children they cannot afford not to engage in work, which also makes them working children.

Children living on the street should be understood in light of a growing global discourse on child labour and children's rights (Beazley, 2002). As it stands now, work is a vital activity in the lives of street children in order to take care of their basic needs and their right to work as children has always been in contention. The work of street children is very important to them. In many regions of the world, the phenomenon of street children is a huge issue, while in others it is not. "Street children are said to be an alarm signalling the dire need for social development and poverty reduction policies to improve the situation in the community at large, and to prevent more young people from becoming marginalized" (Volpi 2002, p 1). This is because poverty is often cited as one major reason for being on the street. A survey conducted by a group of researchers revealed that most street children go on the street first and foremost to work for money in order to buy their personal effects such as clothing, cooking pots, bowls and buckets (Apt and Greico 1995). This is an obvious observation because most people work for material possessions which include street children who work. These and other reasons are the things that attract children and even adults to move to other places for greener pastures.

1.2 Child streetism: a concept in contention

The term “street children” have been debated in various quarters about the motive behind its use. The term street children itself has almost disappeared from the welfare and analytical literature according to some researchers, which now uses different appellations to refer to street children and other underprivileged groups. Kapadia (1997), pointed out that, welfare agencies now talk of “*urban children at risk*” who conceptualizes street children as one of a number of groups most at risk and require urgent attention (in Panter-Brick, 2003). Why street children are considered as children at risk can only be attributed to the harsh conditions children have to face on the street.

Some agencies argue that the term “street children are inappropriate because it creates an artificial category and diverts attention from the interconnected dimensions of child vulnerability” (Volpi 2002, p 3). It will be agreed that not all street children are homeless, school drop outs and criminals which makes the lumping of all these different groups into one very problematic. On the other hand as the term has now become part of our daily vocabulary, I have little choice in its usage if I want to discuss this issue.

Freeman explains that, “childhood is synonymous with innocence; It is a time when we are spared the rigours of adult life; it is a time of freedom, of joy, of play” (1992, p 30). Such a construction of children is a privilege to some few but not the majority of children in the Global South (Developing countries, majority south). In the Global south, work is part of children’s everyday lives, therefore children living on the street need their work to fend for them. Childhood as a universal entity has often been defined by ideologies of the North that states that childhood should be a periods of study and play. At the heart of this ideology lay a firm commitment to the view that “children should be reared in families, a conviction that the way childhood was spent was crucial in determining the kind of adult that the child would become, and an increasing awareness that childhood had rights and privileges of its own” (Cunningham,2005, p 41).

In most countries in the Global South a substantial part children are reared outside families. The street and institutions have been the home for some children and their families. The circumstances which drive people to the street may sometimes be the last resort for families who do so. Children living on the street are still children who are also covered by the United

Nation's Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) without any discrimination. "In 1991 street children were estimated to comprise 5 per cent of the global south's total child population", (Taçon, 1992, cited in Arnon Bar-On, 1997, p 67). This figure is on the high side, which shows how enormous the phenomenon is, taking the existing economic, social, cultural, and political as well as the legal framework of the region into consideration.

1.3 Perception of street children

In some countries street children are perceived to be a disgrace to the image of the country so the police are always after them, to prevent them from being on the street. In most case street children are perceived to be criminals as a result of their appearances. The children sometimes look unkempt because of the type of work they do. Their appearance makes people associate them with criminal. There have been some debates about the appropriateness of the term 'street children' because of its negative connotations and narrow scope of exploring the issues of urban children. Putting two words together (street and children) as a means of describing a category of people is worrying (Ansell, 2005). Personally, the term street children sound demeaning and undignified and I have high reservations in its usage. Child streetism is a concept used to identify children in the Global South who regularly engage in economic activity on public space. It is interesting to note that street children are not the only people who make their living on the street.

In Ghana for example there are a number of business people who prefer moving their wares to the road side or the street to sell in order to catch the attention of passersby. This does not make them street people because they are making use of public spaces. "In the Global North (developed countries), children with similar characteristics are more commonly called 'homeless', 'runaways' or 'delinquents' which carry quite different connotations" (Arnon Bar-On, 1997, p 67). Can it be that street children in the Global North are given different names because they have access to facilities that can take care of them but the children themselves chooses to stay outside the home? This might be the case because in the global south which facilities are inadequate.

1.3.1 Demonising street children

Street children have been demonized in the sight of the public because of their appearance and the circumstances that might have brought them to the street. There are documentations pointing to the fact that most street children find themselves in all sorts of criminal activities including petty theft, pick pocketing, drug pushing and drug use, but beside these perceptions, there is also a belief that under what seems to be the ordinary, lays the extra ordinary. The ordinary children who are found loitering on the streets also have other competences and positive attributes which need to be recognized. It has been argued that the label street child does little to serve the interests of the children in question. Consider this statement:

The term (street children) has a stigmatizing effect, since the child is, as it was, allocated to the street and to delinquent behavior. The term neither gives consideration to the experience or testimony of the children in question nor to other facets of their identity, which do not necessarily have any relevance to the street. Thus it becomes a cause of discrimination of the children and triggers or strengthens negative social reactions” (Invernizzi 2001, p. 79, in Panter-Brick 2002, p. 152).

Invernizzi (2001)’s statement on street children summaries the problems of my study. In most cases these children are treated in very inhumane ways by adults who think they are up to no good, because their behavior towards these children have been influenced by the dominant view of society about who these children are. I agree with Invernizzi (2001) that, the term “street children” alone can trigger or strengthens negative social reactions (in Panter-Brick, 2002). In some countries in the global south, the police are no exception to this; they chase the children within the city like rats and arrest them for using public places. The situation has not changed because there are a lot more children living on the street now than in previous years. This is because what causes the problems which make children to move to the street still exists.

1.4 Children’s rights issue

Rights are important to every human being, being it an adult or a child. Freeman argues that “Those who lack rights are like slaves”, (Freeman, 1992, p. 31). The right of children to decide issues concerning their lives can be very important especially in the lives of unaccompanied migrant children, who have to make personal and sometimes life threatening decisions everyday in order for them to survive and also fend for themselves.

Article 6 of the UNCRC states that “1. State parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life. 2. State parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child”. In a situation where countries are unable to provide basic necessities for the citizens, they make sure to provide themselves with whatever they can through whatever means possible. In the absence of such provision in a country, children take it upon themselves to do whatever they can to survive. This may include leaving their homes and staying in open public places and also taking up all kinds of jobs to stay alive. The UNCRC document which covers the protection and provision of and for children also recognizes children’s participation as one of its cardinal points in upholding the rights of the child. The question that critics often ask is about the extent of these participation rights.

1.4.1 Rights of participation

Migrant children’s participation is in various forms including economic participation which is very vital in their survival on the street. It is interesting to note that, while in many countries children are seen as dependent until they become teenagers, in many other countries they are expected to be fully independent from an early age. The contrast between Britain and Peru, for example, is instructive. In the former it is illegal to leave infants and small children in charge of juveniles under the age of 14. In the latter, on the other hand, the national census records a significant group of 6 to 14 year olds who are heads of households and as such are the principal breadwinners in the family, and sometimes also the sole person in charge of the care of younger siblings (Boyden 1990, cited in Ennew and Boyden, 1997 p. 34). This shows how differently countries of the Global North and Global South perceive children’s participation and its practices. Avoiding children from participating economically maybe suicidal to many children, because in the global south children need these work to survive.

1.5 Rural urban migrations

The direction of migration is often said to be from rural to urban centers. The reverse is assumed to happen after people have spent all their youthful days in the urban area working and only return to the rural center when they are old and have retired from work. Zhang suggests that migration is the oldest course of action against poverty and that migration decision is based on expected income differentials between rural and urban areas. Whilst the

main reason for internal migration maybe the intention of raising income, in most case, migrants could offset the balance between urban population and the social amenities available (Zhang, 2010). It is being recognized that migration issues are highly complex and dynamic because there are a number of reason one can associate with it. Tacoli and Mabala, suggests that this may encompass a wide range of forms and types of movement which involves; a growing number of destinations where migrants can choose from and migrant flows which comprises of different sex, sex, age and ethnic compositions.

1.6 Current situation of migrant children

By casual observation around the city of Accra the number of migrant children who are currently in the city may run into thousands. Migrant children are perceived to be at risk because of the difficult circumstances they go through in the cities. Some migrant children under go very difficult circumstances during their childhood because of the early untimely termination of their educational progress, engagement in hard labour under harsh tropical conditions, sleep in unacceptable places and crime. There is certainly no contest about the fact that being on the street is a very challenging situation that children can find themselves in. These are situations where children and young people's rights are either denied or grossly trampled upon. The daily economic struggles and hustles of such children and young people in their activities in the city signify how difficult life is treating such categories of children in the urban centers.

The movement of people from different locations converging at a particular point inadvertently put pressure on the existing facilities in the destination city which makes lives of these migrants very difficult in most situations. In other to make a living, these children find themselves in all sorts of activities including crime. Migrant children and young people in urban centers do menial jobs in and around the city in order to earn a living. As a result of lack of education and skill in any vocation, the income they receive for their services is often next to nothing, which puts them in the category of being part of the urban poor.

1.6.1 Unaccompanied migrant children living in difficult circumstances

Most unaccompanied migrant children virtually become street children because of the lack or inadequate knowledge of their new destination. Children living in difficult circumstances in the global south can also be attributed to issues such as poverty, conflict, diseases and inadequate social support for very needy families, who try to cope with their situation by putting their children at all sorts of environmental risks. Ansell (2005), Listed in her article

“six prime areas of children in especially difficult circumstances”, these include children in armed conflict, street children, sexually exploitation of children, children affected by AIDS, children with disabilities and children in institutions.

Urban children at risk include all vulnerable children who find themselves in activities that are considered to be inappropriate for their well being. In the past few years, there has been a change in perspective, reflecting a shift of attention from street children as the primary focus of concern to paying close attention to the diversity of their actual experiences and strategies for coping with adversity (Ansell, 2005). I will also argue with Ansell, that being on the street itself should not be the primary focus but attention should be better drawn to what these children do and their experiences on the street.

In many cases, it is the livelihood strategies that particularly impoverished and vulnerable children and families employ that place children in especially difficult circumstances (Ansell, 2005). The livelihood strategy that street children adopt in the city is to work and also engage in other activities for their living. Any type of work that fetches money or food is worth doing by the street child, even the type of work that he or she knows she cannot do are considered for its monetary reward . The lack of financial support for families and children in difficult situations such as migration and life on the street makes some children play into the hands of men who exchange their benevolence for sex. Children migrate in order to support themselves and their families in adverse situations. Children are thus able to contribute to the coping strategies of a household or family in response to HIV/AIDS, depending on their age and sex, and may undertake a series of distinct migrations as they grow older (in Ansell and Blerk, 2004: p 675).

The activities or livelihoods of these children are a matter of concern and needs to be addressed. A range of individual, household, community and national factors influence migration. For example the “high population growth rate in Ghana within the last three decades according to Abdulai (1999), has generally increased the domestic supply of labour, and in areas like the Upper East Region in Ghana, puts pressure on the available cultivable land, thereby encouraging migration” (Abdulai 1999 cited in Anarfi et al, 2003). Such mass movement cuts across the country and movement of people into the city of Accra daily is estimated to be around 3.5 million. This figure obviously includes people who come and stay permanently in the city to look for job.

1.7 Statement of the problem

There has been a growing concern of some advocates who claim to be fighting for the cause of children to protect children from all forms of work. Work is one of the major activities in the lives of migrant children living on the street. The facts of the matter is that, children in the Global South work no matter where they find themselves, either with their families or on the street. These are children who are for one reason or another living outside the “home”, without their families, are not in school and are on the street working for themselves and sometimes for their families. Trying to take children off the street without putting structures in place to take care of their needs will be detrimental to the livelihoods of children who work and live on the street for survival.

Secondly, the over exaggeration by which NGOs and some agencies, magnify the circumstances of street children and claiming they are children at “risk” needs to be re-examined. As Panter-Bricks (2003), puts it, “at risk of what”. Saying street children are at “risk” contributes to the negative perception society has on these children, and also down plays the positive impacts of street work.

Furthermore the notion of an “ideal” childhood, which proposes that children are to study, play and not to work, is another issue that has to be re-examined as well. This is because the circumstances prevailing in the Global South where streetism is very pervasive is different from what is prevailing in the countries who are proposing this. Children living on the street cannot waste their energies on play, whiles they need the energy to work for their survival, because they have no social support to help provide for their daily necessities. Some children are privileged to have their needs provided for them, but not all children have such privileges. Working therefore becomes a must for children living on the street. Hence applying the notion of an “ideal” childhood universally can be problematic and will amount to discriminating against street children, because work is part of their childhood.

More so, children have been assumed to be irrational, incomplete human being, immature and incompetent (James and Prout, 1990). These assumptions can be considered baseless, because some adults also exhibit such characteristics. All these call for further enquiries into the lived experiences of street children and also examine whether street children have the right to economic participation. This will enable us to understand their current situation and try to

cope with them until their current situation changes. Until then we should also understand that there exist varieties of childhood including “street childhood”.

1.8 Aims of the research

The purpose of the thesis is;

- ❖ To achieve insight into the lived experiences of street children in the context of migration.
- ❖ To get insight into what motivates children to migrate to the city.
- ❖ I aim to achieve insight into the perceptions children have about themselves and the challenges at the destination point.
- ❖ I aim to explore the contributions of street children to their families and the society.
- ❖ Finally I will again gain insight into the children’s experiences on their schooling, access to health care and economic participation.

1.9 Research questions

The under listed research questions were formulated based on the objectives of the study.

- ❖ What are the living experiences of unaccompanied migrant children in the city of Accra?
- ❖ What are children’s motivations for migrating?
- ❖ What are children’s own perceptions of themselves and challenges migrant children experience?
- ❖ What are the contributions of unaccompanied migrant children living on the street to their families and society?
- ❖ What are migrant children’s experiences on schooling, health care and participation?

1.10 Methodology

The overall methodological perspective of this thesis is based on the philosophy and the tenets of the new social studies of childhood, for which qualitative research method and specifically ethnography which is particularly a useful methodology for the study of childhood which allows children a more direct voice and participation in the production of sociological data (Prout and James, 1990). The research method employed was based on the

research questions set. As I aimed to explore and understand the lived experiences of my informants, giving them the chance to tell their own story was the reason for selecting this methodology. The specific methods used are; interviews, participant observation, and peer group discussion.

My fieldwork took place in Ghana for a period of two months at two different sites; the M.K market and the K.N lorry station. My informants were unaccompanied migrant children who work on the streets of Accra. My female informants were mainly head porters are in the M.K market site, while my male informants were in the K.N lorry station site. *Kaya yei* is a term used to refer to women who engage in carrying loads for a fee. The term is derived from two words, *kaya* a Hausa word meaning wares or goods, and *yei* a Ga word meaning woman (Attah et al, 1997).

1.11 Relevance of the study

This project is chiefly about unaccompanied migrant children who have moved to the city for greener pastures but have become street children. They are children who have been described as children who need special attention because of their situation (UNICEF). The relevance of this project includes the fact that children all over the world have rights and these rights have to be respected no matter one's situation. Migrant children on the streets of Accra are seen by the public and in most of the literature on children's rights discourses as urban children at risk and therefore in difficult circumstances.

This project is also in line with this vision of giving children the voice to stage their case and express their joy, distress and frustrations as children on the street, and also respect them for who they are even if the society thinks otherwise about them. The project also seeks to bring the rights of children to the forefront by looking at the right of children to schooling, health care and to economic participation. Also the thesis will be relevant to policy makers to update their knowledge on street children and this time round hearing it from children's own perspective.

In summary, the relevance of the project will be;

- The relevance of the study will be to serve as a reference document for policy makers on the realities of life of the migrant child.

- It is also hoped that knowledge of the agency, competence and the situation of the urban migrant child on the street, will help reconstruct the image of these children from a negative one to a more positive one.
- The study will also bring to the notice of the public, the various activities street children engage in.
- The outcome of the research report may serve as a source of literature to help advance the cause of knowledge.
- Possibly to contribute to the public debate on migrant children living on the street.

1.12 Organisation of the thesis

My thesis has been structured into seven chapters.

Chapter one is on the introduction of the thesis which gives a brief recap on the major key issues that forms the core of the thesis. The key issues in this chapter are on migration, street children, participation rights, the aims and research questions, implications of the study, relevance of the study and a brief introduction of the research methodology.

Chapter two; deals with the background of study area which involves a country profile and the specific study area which is in the greater Accra region. The profile of the points of origin of my informants will also be presented. Finally the chapter touches on the push factors emanating from their various regions which motivated their movement, and also the pull factors of the destination region. The information provided in this chapter is to help paint a mental picture of the study country, the specific area and the situations in both the origin and the destination points of my informants. The chapter is a very brief one.

Chapter three, deals with the theories and concepts of this thesis. The chapter begins with some discussions on the issue of children and childhood in general. The concepts and theory discussed are: agency, economic participation rights, streetism, and migration. This chapter is prominent because it seeks to give focus as well direction of the thesis as far as the analyses and the discussion of the thesis are concern.

Chapter four covers issues on methods. The chapter is basically divided into three areas, namely, the before, during and after research activities. The chapter evolves into the use of

the methodological paradigm used, as well as the specific research techniques used during the data collection process.

Chapter five; deals with the presentation and the analyses of the chapter. The chapter present the research results and further goes to analyse the data within the framework of the concepts and theories in chapter three. The analysis is structured around three broad thematic areas, under which sub-themes are developed. The chapter generally show cases the salient issues discovered from the data.

Chapter six presents the discussions of the thesis. The arguments raised in this chapter were informed by the findings of the study. Some of the issues here include; the fact that “other” childhoods are to be considers and the reasons for that, competent street children and the rights of street children to participate economically. The current situation of street children was generally and seriously examined in this chapter.

Chapter seven which is the final chapter deal with the summary, recommendation and the conclusion of the thesis. The summary covers the theory and concepts, the methodology objectives and the research questions. The objectives of the thesis are used to organise the summary of the results of the thesis, followed by the recommendations on the study and finally the concluding remarks.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the profile of the country and the specific area under study. The chapter begins with the description of the country Ghana, that is the economic, socio-cultural, ethnic and regions. It also gives a description of the study area which is the Greater Accra Region and in Accra to be precise. The chapter further goes on to give a brief profile on the various regions my informants migrated from and also tries to identify the push and pull factors associated with the migration of the children.

2.2 Country profile

The Republic of Ghana is a country in West Africa which borders Cote d'Ivoire to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east, and Gulf of Guinea to the south. The word Ghana means "Warrior King". The country's economy is dominated by agriculture, which employs about 40 percent of the working population. Ghana is one of the leading exporters of cocoa in the world. It is also a significant exporter of commodities such as gold and lumber. A country covering an area of 238,500 square kilometres, Ghana has an estimated population of 22 million, drawn from more than one hundred ethnic groups - each with its own unique language. English, however, is the official language, a legacy of British colonial rule (www.ghanaweb.com).

2.2.1 Economy of Ghana

Ghana is a lower Middle Income Economy (MIE). Well endowed with natural resources, Ghana has twice the per capita output of the poorer countries in West Africa. Known for its gold in colonial times, Ghana remains one of the world's top gold producers. Other exports such as cocoa, Oil, timber, electricity, diamond, bauxite, and manganese are major sources of foreign exchange. An oilfield which is reported to contain up to 3 billion barrels (480,000,000 m³) of light oil was discovered in 2007. Oil exploration is ongoing and the amount of oil continues to increase. There is expected to be a tremendous inflow of capital into the economy beginning from the first quarter of 2010 when the country starts producing oil to be sold through overseas licensed counter-part GAZPROM in commercial quantities (www.wikipedia.com, the free encyclopaedia)

2.2.2 Ethnicity and Region

In 1960 roughly 100 linguistic and cultural groups were recorded in Ghana. Although later censuses placed less emphasis on the ethnic and cultural composition of the population, differences existed and had not disappeared by the mid-1990s. The major ethnic groups in Ghana include the Akan, Ewe, Mole-Dagbani, Guan, and Ga-Adangbe. The subdivisions of each group share a common cultural heritage, history, language, and origin. The various regions and their capitals are; Greater Accra Region, (Accra), Central Region, (Cape Coast), Eastern Region, (Koforidua), Western Region, (Sekondi Takoradi), Ashanti Region, (Kumasi), Northern Region, (Tamale), Upper East Region, (Bolgatanga), Upper West, (Wa), Volta Region, (Ho), Brong Ahafo Region, (Sunyani). (www.ghanweb.com).

2.3 area profile of informants' place of origin

My female informants are from the Northern Region of Ghana while the males are from the Central Region.

2.3.1 Northern Region

The place of origin of my female informants is the Northern Region. The Northern Region, which occupies an area of about 70,383 square kilometres, is the largest region in Ghana in terms of land area. It shares boundaries with the Upper East and the Upper West Regions to the north, the Brong Ahafo and the Volta Regions to the south (www.ghanadistricts.com).

The region is one of the least developed areas of Ghana. More than 70% of the economically active population are in agriculture. The small population density is partly caused by emigration due to extreme poverty in the region (ibid).

Some children are given away in marriage below the age of 16 years. The proportion of households headed by females in the region (14.1%) is much higher than the national average (11.0%). The average household in the region has, on the average, 7.4 members. Of this number, 44.6 per cent are children of the household head and 21.6 per cent are other relatives (www.ghanadistricts.com). For the total population, majority of the people (71.1%) are either currently married or have ever been married. The corresponding proportion for females is higher, (78%) while that for males is lower (62.9%).

2.3.2 Central Region

The Central Region is one of Ghana's ten administrative regions. It is bordered by the Ashanti and Eastern regions to the north, Western region to the west, Greater Accra region to the east, and to the south by the Atlantic Ocean. The region is also the second most densely populated in the country, with a population density of 162 persons per square kilometre. Out-migration, which continues to be a problem in the region, is declining gradually with immigrants constituting about a quarter of the population in all the districts

2.4 Study area profile

The Greater Accra Region is where the study was done, specifically in the Accra Metropolitan Assemble (AMA). The economically active population of AMA is estimated to be 823,327. However, the daily influx of people from dormitory towns makes the figure higher than estimated. It is worthwhile to state that the estimated figure of all the economically active population who dwell within the Metropolis excludes the workers of both formal and informal sectors who commute daily to engage in various economic activities. As an urban economy the service sector is the largest, employing about 531,670 people. The second largest, secondary sector employs 22.34% of the labour force (that is 183,934 people). Accra has 114,198 of its labour unemployed, making an unemployment rate of 12.2 (www.ghanadistricts.com).

The AMA is made up of 11 sub-metros which has the Makola market and the Kaneshie area as (my research sites) as part of it. The AMA houses two famous markets the Makola market and the Kaneshie market in Ghana. It also has a number of big lorry stations and parks, which make the city, attract a lot of people from all over the country daily. It has a very wide area earmarked for dealers in all sorts of shopping items. It is actually one of the busiest places in the city and that is where most people do their shopping. The area is a very good business place for children who are often seen doing all kinds of work in the market. The porter job is also very attractive because shoppers need these people to carry their goods into their cars or to the lorry station for them. This is where my female respondents do their work.

2.5 Push factors

Deducing from the information from the various regions or place of origin of my informants, I realised some probable indicators that can be viewed as push factors that contributed to the

movement of my informants. Upon reviewing each of the regions I identified; general regional underdevelopment, agricultural economies, cultural issue such as early marriages (in the northern region in particular), inadequate white collar jobs, and low numbers of cottage industries (maybe as a result of the non existence of electricity or governmental facilitation of rural economic projects). It is important to note here that these are the conditions in the regions; I presume the situation in the exact villages of my informants will be something worse. The wider issue among others can be either the children are running away from farm work or the “boring” rural life.

2.6 Pull factors

This section also presents the probable indicators can be considered as pull factors of the region which is the point of destination of my informants. Upon reviewing the regional information, these were identified; it is the capital of Ghana, high population of the area, relatively high economic opportunities, availability of social amenities such entertainment centres, restaurants, cinema and video houses, the presence of business facilities such as big markets and places of business, the relatively good infrastructure and the existence of slums. The attractive nature of this urban setting provides for the means and livelihood of the children.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTS, THEORITICAL PERSPECTIVES AND LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This third chapter begins by setting the basis in terms of conceptualising who a child is. For the purpose of this thesis, the UNCRC's definition of a child is used to define my informants' status as children. Setting this parameter is deemed important because this will give readers the real understanding as to what I mean by using the term child. Again the issue of "childhood" and the study of it are discussed in this chapter, bringing out the various assumptions of children from various schools of thought, and the notion of an "ideal" childhood. Also the over arching theoretical perspective of this thesis which is, bases on the tenets of the social studies of childhood will be explored, because without theory analyses will be impossible. Furthermore the; concepts of agency, participation rights, streetism, children's work, social structure and migration theory which are some of the key concepts in childhood studies, will be examined. Finally some related studies within the area of my study will be reviewed and presented.

3.2 Who is a child?

This question has no straight forward answer. A child is most often defined by its chronological age, simply how long the child has lived (Gillis, 1999). The definition mostly depends on the culture, society and the political undertones of the area where one finds himself or herself. The definition is highly contextual. In the United States for example, 16 year olds are allowed driving licence, and 21 years to drink alcohol. In Norway you have to be 18 years in order to obtain driving licence, in the same Norway, 16 year olds are treated as adults in the cases concerning sexual and criminal matters. Most of the time people use age as a perimeter in measuring who a child is.

James and James (2008), defines a child as "a human being in the early stages of its life course, biologically, psychologically and socially; It is a member of a generation referred to collectively by adults as children, who together temporarily occupy the social space that is created for them by adults and referred to as childhood". In trying to describe who a child is,

James and James outlined the biological and sociological descriptions, comparing the distinctive differences between a child and that of an adult, saying that; children tend to be shorter, weigh less, have yet to develop the secondary sexual characteristics in terms of younger children, less emotionally mature, less socially skilled, less articulate and less competent in terms of life-skills (ibid). James and James further argue that, the differentiating factor described above serve to underline one of the main problems in defining the child using such developmental and aged criteria, according to them this lacks precision. Thus, it is possible for adults to be less heavy, short and less socially and psychologically developed (ibid).

The term child is socially constructed just as childhood. In most countries in the south the term child can be used in various ways. For example in some cultures in Ghana even a forty year old woman who has no child can be considered a child while a thirteen year old with a child can be considered as an adult, making the use of age in determining who a child is very problematic. Article 1 of the UNCRC defines a child as; “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. Also in the children’s Act of Ghana 1998, Act 560, a child is a person below the age of eighteen years. For the purpose of this thesis, the definition by UNCRC will be used as the yard stick to determine my informants’ status, because of the different cultural interoperations, and the fact that there are different cultures with in the country under study.

According to Nick (2001), the division of international regulations reflects a widespread tendency to think of adults and children as fundamentally human beings and human becoming. Meaning that adults are the human beings and children the human becoming. He further reiterates that the dichotomy between beings and becoming is about one being complete and independent and the other incomplete and dependent, giving further descriptions of the human being characteristics, include being complete, self- possessed and self- controlling, capable of independent thought and action, independence that merit respect. The human becoming characteristics on the other hand he suggested is changeable and incomplete and lacks the self-possession and self-control that would allow it the independence of thought and action that merits respect (Lee, 2001). This categorisation of a child and an adult is very problematic, because there are a lot of adults who are also dependent on society and far from having independent thoughts and actions. In Ghana for

example as a result of the high levels of unemployment in the country, most adults are dependent on their relatives for their daily bread and upkeep.

3.3 Childhood and the study of it

According to Cunningham, in history “childhood is certain ideas that surround the children. There is a relationship between childhood and the experiences of being a child. If the ideas of being a child change, the child’s childhood experiences also changes” (Cunningham, 2005). A child’s daily experiences are what can be considered as his or her childhood. For example if one goes through child work or any form of treatment as a child, that can be considered as part of her/his childhood.

Childhood in the developed country (Global North) is significantly different from childhood in the developing country (Global South) in a lot of respects. For example in the Global North children school enrolment is hundred percent whiles in the Global South it is impossible to achieve a hundred percent education enrolment, mainly because of inadequate resources and other factors. In this sense one of the important places of children in the Global North is the school, the home and also playground. According to a book edited by Qvortrup, “children have lost legitimate visibility in public as they are confined within a variety of forms of childhood: a family childhood, a school childhood, a kindergarten childhood, a leisure childhood and so on” (Qvortrup, 2005, p.2). In the Global South it is only a fraction of children who have the opportunity to go to school which makes it possible for the creation of other places where children hang out and experience childhood.

Children in the Global South are highly public in the sense that most children can be seen in public spaces (Qvortrup, 2005). Some of such places include the street in the urban areas and also on the farms in the rural areas. These spaces allow different forms of childhood such as street childhood and farm childhood. Most children in the Global South spend majority of their childhood not in school, or home but rather in other places such the street.

In the area of childhood studies, some earlier disciplines that worked in the area of children made it seem their point of view is the only legitimate way to view children and childhood. This group of disciplines also known as the “Dominant Framework” have ideas or concepts such as Socialisation and Development. “The predominant sociological view tends to highlight children’s lack of mental contents (culture, values and conventions) whiles the predominant psychological views tends to highlight children’s inability, relative to adults, to

undertake certain mental processes that amount to rationality”(Lee, 2001, p 38). The argument is that the dominant framework of knowledge about children makes us fail to recognise them as fully humans as argued by Nick Lee (2001). These theories work from the assumption that children are in some sense incomplete that they are not fully human. Those children mature to become more like human beings as they grow either more rational or more cultural (Lee, 2001). James and Prout’s (1990) criticism of the dominant framework is that it leads people to see children in stereotypical terms, and that to be accurate in our studies of children, and fair in our treatment of them, we must abandon our stereotype of them and try to recognise them for what they are – that is persons in their own right .

3.4The social studies of childhood

The over arching theoretical perspective of this thesis, is based on the philosophy and the tenets of the social studies of childhood. In an attempt to drift from the marginalisation of children and childhood, another school of thought came up with a new paradigm which seeks to treat and see children as persons in their own right. James and Prout (1990), called this an “emergent paradigm”.

The proponents of this paradigm points to some key concepts in the dominant framework surrounding the the study of children and childhood which include three themes predominately in relation to; ‘rationality,’naturality’ and universality’. They argue that these themes, have stretched beyond the disciplinary boundaries of psychology, influencing not only sociological approaches to child study but the socio-political context of childhood itself (James and Prout, 1990). This approach of studying children and childhood, seek to challenge the dominant framework views and provide a guideline for a different approach of studying children. This theoretical perspective draws its inspiration from a wide range of disciplines. It gives a methodological direction as to how children are to be studied. This new approach of studying children also sees children as social actors who exercise agency in a wide range of areas. They emphasize that, children are active beings and not passive (ibid).

3.4.1 The tenets of the new social studies of childhood

The section of the chapter lists the features of the social study of childhood , and it include:

- Childhood is socially constructed;
- Childhood is a variable of social analysis which cannot be entirely separated from other social variables, example, Gender, class and ethnicity;

- Children's social relations and cultures are worthy of study in their own right, independent of the concerns of adults;
- Children are actively involved in the construction of their social lives;
- Ethnography is a particularly useful methodology for the study of childhood as it allows children's voices to be heard;
- The development of a new paradigm is a contribution to the process of reconstructing childhood in society (James and Prout, 1990, pages 8-9).

The usefulness of this theory in my study can be seen from different angles. First and foremost, this theory helps the choice of methodological paradigm that is useful in studying children and childhood, and also gives me the opportunity to present children's perspectives on issues that affect their own lives. Also pointing to the agency of children was also remarkable, because of the activities my informants engage in as street children. Here children become the key informants rather than adults. However the theory has been criticised by Ryan (2008) in his write up on "How New Is the "New" Social Studies of Childhood; a Myth of a Paradigm Shift", for drawing too much on existing disciplines and laying claim to issues on children which has been in existence for ages and calling it "new". That the issues argued for by the proponents of the approach have already been a subject in other disciplines. Also the over emphasising the agency of children has also been found to be problematic.

3.5 The concept of agency

The term agency refers to the ability for an individual to act independently and to make own decisions and choices. The idea of children being social actors has been an issue on the table for some time now. James (2009), states that "the origin of this intellectual debates begun in the 1960s and 1970s that culminated in a new paradigm for the social study of childhood". Summing up these developments in 1990, James and Prout provided a definition of what this notion of children as social actors might embrace: "children are and must be seen as active in the construction of their own lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live and that children are not just the passive subjects of social structures and processes (James and Prout 1990). Jame and James on the other hand summaries agency as; "the capacity of individuals to act independently" (James and James, 2008).

The dominant notion that children are immature, irrational and lack the experience in making decisions have created a problem in a way which makes it very difficult for most adults to

take children serious. As Mayall (2000) points out; “children are now seen as people who, through their individual actions, can make a difference to a relationship, a decision, to the working of a set of social assumptions or constrains” (in James, 2009 p. 34). The time has come for the dominant view about children is reconsidered because children can be very independent. An article by Davies, on street children in Kenya, shows how organized these children are in their own world.

According to Davies (2008), the street children in Makutano recognize a single leader *kichwa* (a Swahili term meaning ‘head’). The *kichwa* regularly arranges small jobs for other children, doing things such as fetching water, sweeping shops and verandas, and running errands. In this way, most of the children have built up a network of relations with local employers and perform certain tasks for them on a regular basis. The *kichwa* further acts as an arbitrator and an organiser in a variety of situations. He possesses contacts with the local police and is able to argue for a certain degree of respite from police harassment. He often intervenes in disputes and on more than one occasion, Davies witnessed the *kichwa* physically intervene to prevent fights (Davies, 2008). Such leadership skills of children show how independent children can be without the intervention of adults. In most societies in the Global South children are given responsibilities similar to adults. Punch’s study on: “Childhoods in the Majority World: Miniature adults or tribal children” shows that, when the child in her research comes home and finds the house empty, since the mother had taken lunch to her husband working in some distance fields, the child stops playing and assumes a parental type role by feeding her siblings and putting things in place in the house (Punch, 2003). Children take part in both domestic and industrial work alongside their adult counterparts in many scenarios. Children can be very responsible by taking care of themselves and their siblings without adult supervision.

3.6 The concept of social structure

“Social structure refers to the social institutions and relational components of the social fabric around which societies are organised; These delineate the processes through which social reactions are organised and transacted, and from which each society derives its identity” (James and James, 2008 p. 137). The importance of understanding social structure in the study of childhood is that sociology, as a discipline, examines the influence of social structure in determining who we are and how we behave. In other word, childhood exists in a social space that is defined by law, politics, religion, economic etc., and within this social space, the

nature of childhood is further influenced by social class, generation, gender, ethnicity and so on. Thus, any individual child will be the “product” of powerful external social and institutional forces, and that any understanding of childhood, both as a social status and as a lived experience, must incorporate such analytical perspectives (ibid).

Within the social structure concept, a child is seen to be operating within parameters such as economic, political, social and environmental. Such an approach enables us to compare children within same countries that is intercultural and also internationally because we are availing ourselves to the same type of parameters (Qvortrup 1994 cited in James et al, 2003). This approach begins from such an assumption that, children are not pathological or incomplete in the sense that children form a group, they are social actors, and as citizens they have needs and rights (James et al, 2008). Just like adults, these social structures affect them, and they in turn affect it. It is an undeniable fact that structures limit our choices and often serve as an impediment to free will. It is a fundamental assumption for structural sociologists that when we are born we are confronted by social world realities is evident through our behaviour (Bilton et al, 1992).

The application of this concept to this study is very important because the street children I worked with are also confronted with these social structures which motivated in pushing them out of their original habitat and other factors pulling them to their destination points. For example in the area of schooling, the political decision of cost sharing may be beyond the reach of some parents, thereby keeping their child at home. In the rural areas and even in the urban areas for instance not attending school makes children move from one place to the other.

This concept has been criticized for being deterministic, in the sense that, individuals and their identity are little more than the end product of the combined effect of such social structural forces, transmitted through the process of socialization. Such sociological determinism can usefully be compared with the psychological determinism represented by developmental psychology (James and James, 2008).

One major contribution of childhood studies has been to demonstrate that, although it is important to acknowledge the powerful influences that structure exerts on children and their childhoods, within this, children constantly exercise agency: they make self-conscious decisions and choices as independent social actors they are not determined solely by structure (ibid).

3.7 Streetism

The United Nations define a street child as “any girl or boy for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings and wastelands, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults” (www.unitednations.org). The phenomenon of ‘street children’ in the global south compares favourably with Schurink’s (1993) definition of a street child which he suggests that; “A street child is a boy or a girl who is under the age of 18 and who left his or her home environment, part time or permanently (because of problems at home and or school, or try to alleviate those problems) and who spends most of his/her time unsupervised on the street as part of a subculture of children who live an unprotected communal life and who depend on themselves and on each other, and not on an adult for the provision of physical and emotional needs such as food, clothing, nurturance, direction and socialization” (in Grundeling 2005).

Further, street children are categorized by the United Nations in four different ways: 1) those who spend part of the day on the street working to earn money for their family, 2) those who return home following a number of days on the street, 3) those who return home only on the weekends, and 4) those who spend their entire lives on the streets and who may travel home on occasion. This framework defines streets children in diverse ways which makes it very difficult to exclude most children in the Global South from being labelled as “street children”. The reality of the matter is that majority of children fall under one of these four categories.

UNICEF differentiates between street children through a three-fold category:

- Candidates for the street (poor children who spend time hanging out or working on the street).
- Children on the street (those who work on the street, but usually sleep at home).
- Children of the street (those who work on the street without family support), (in Ansell 2005).

Street children represent highly visible challenges to idealised (Western) notions of childhood. This is because one of the characteristics of street children is work, and the notion of a “proper” childhood exempts children from working. Ansell suggests that, putting “street” and “child” together to generate a label for an object of concern implies children’s presence in public space is illegitimate (Ansell, 2005).

The relevance of the concept to the study is that, my informants are migrant children living on the street. In the first place I consider my informants to be street children because their livelihood is earned on the street and are inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults. My informants earn their living by working as head porters, hawkers and drivers mate in the city. Some of the children actually migrated to the city chiefly to find greener pastures in order to take care of their families and themselves

3.8 Working children

The concept working children as defined by James and James (2008, p 145) is; “Children who contribute their labour, either on an unpaid basis or for monetary gain; they may or may not combine this with education”. According to James and James, the concept of working children is one that in recent years has become the preferred way of describing children who carry out all kinds of activities that used to be glossed by the term “child labour” or child work”(Boyden, et al., 1998, in James and James, 2008). The reason giving for this shift in definition is the difficulty in sustaining the distinction between work and labour. Until the 1980s, the term “child labour” was traditionally used to describe all kinds of adult activities that children carried out. The criticism here is that it is mostly, only associated with children in the Global South, child labour was condemned as being incompatible with childhood (ibid). It was seen as exploitative and as damaging to children’s social, physical and psychological development. The difficulty is that, sometimes the term “child labour” was used more broadly to include other types of work done by children, including work on family farms, care of siblings or general household work. This kind of work is not exploitative and was even judged to have educational functions (ibid).

Referring to “working children” in the Global South, Boyden et al (1998), identify four categories of working children:

- Children in rural areas who perform unpaid work for their families;

- Children who do domestic work, either unpaid in their own homes or for employees
- Children who work in the informal sector in small shops or back street workshops, or street-children who make their living through, for example, windscreen washing, begging or prostitution
- Children who work in the formal economy in industrial or commercial outlets (in James and James, 2008)

They went further to say that out of this wide range of working children, it is the children working in the informal sector who are popularly held by western media to represent working children. Yet these children constitute the minority of working children worldwide and they may not, in fact be the worst off (ibid). This concept is important to the study because work is one of the important daily activities in the lives of street children who are my informants.

3.9 The concept of participation

Participation according to James and James (2008) is “to take part in and contribute to a situation, an event, a process or an outcome, although the extent of the contribution and the autonomy with which it is made may vary considerably in various ways”. James and James further explained that the concept has assumed particular significance in the context of childhood studies because in many societies, children’s ability to participate have been limited to clearly defined social spaces, most of which are policed and regulated by adults (ibid).

The entire document of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC) can be summarized into what is popularly known as the (3Ps), namely protection, provision and participation. The UNCRC has four principles which includes non-discrimination between children (article 2), the best interest of the child (article 3), the right to life, survival, and development ensured to the maximum extent possible and including physical health and mental, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development (article 6) and the views of the child should be taken seriously in judicial and administrative procedures affecting them (article 12), (UNCRC document, 1989). These four principles can only be realized if children are made to participate in issues that affect their own lives (www.unicef.org).

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child has recognised the peculiar situation of the African Child and has given the children certain responsibilities.

Article 31 states;

Every child shall have responsibilities towards his family and society, the State and other legally recognized communities and the international community. The child, subject to his age and ability, and such limitations as may be contained in the present Charter, shall have the duty; to work for the cohesion of the family, to respect his parents, superiors and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need;

In other words it is understood that children can participate in work in order to help their families whenever they are in crises.

There are four key forms of participation, economic, social, cultural and political participation. In the global south, economic participation is one of the major roles of children which involve working and earning a living for oneself and sometimes for the family. Most street children work and others beg for their needs.

The new social studies of childhood share views which allow children to be seen as beings in their own right and allow them to participate in activities that affect their own well being. This concept is vital to the study because of the need for my informants to participate in work. They need this participation for reasons beyond satisfying their personal needs, but also help their families and the society as well.

3.10 Migration theory

This section describes the various migration theories which were used in analysing my study. The theories under discussion include; migration as explicative, the system schema model and the household strategy model.

3.10.1 Migration as explicative

Boyle et al (1998), suggested that, within the strand of migration research that focuses on individual migration; usually from a behavioural approach the essential question with regard to the research question can be boiled down to whether the act of migration, on balance, is a result of push or pull factors (in Rye, 2006). The theory suggest that, people leaving the

countryside is indicative of the inability of rural societies to provide attractive, or at least acceptable, living conditions such as job and education opportunities for their inhabitants. Traditionally, the pull factors have been emphasized, and migrants have been conceived of as actors actively deciding to leave their original place of living in favour of a location which offers them better terms; improved living conditions, higher wages, and more pleasant residential environments. In this way migration becomes – by definition– conceptualized as a good thing (Halfacree, 1995, in Rye, 2006).

However, Fielding (1992), argues that the push side should also be included in the equation, and introduces an analytical division between ‘exciting’ and ‘sad’ migration – the latter being the result of deteriorating circumstances in one’s home environment for which the relocation does not fully compensate (in Rye, 2006). In either way the research task within this approach is to map the actors’ preferences, compare the match between these and the offers of various locations, and then calculate whether migration is beneficial or not for the migrants. Migration then becomes explicative: the decision to migrate (or not) changes one’s life prospects (ibid). The theory is very useful in many ways to my study because of the migrant children I am studying. The theory will help me analyse the various motivations that led to the migration of the children and whether the destination point is being able to help make their future aspiration come through. Approaching migration decisions from both the push and pull factors of the origin and the destination point is also very interesting as they form one of the major factors of individual’s migration. As there are other factors that forms the reasons for migration, the theory has therefore been criticised for not consider the characteristics of the individual migrant and the wider macro structures that also impact on the decisions individuals take before migrating.

3.10.2 The system schema model

This model was introduced by Mabogunje (1972) as an explanatory theory of rural-urban migration. The model states that socio-cultural, economic and political factors act as stimuli to migration. The model shows the interaction among the potential migrants, the family and the community are important in migration decision making process. The model further highlights the implications of rural-urban migration at both places of origin and destination. It also shows the role of kinship relations between migrants and non-migrant members of a household or a family, particularly in the provision of information about a destination,

financial support to potential migrants, and assistance to newly arrived migrants to enable them to adjust to urban life. This model is important to my study because of the role of kin-relations and non-migrants' in the decision and in helping migrants to adjust in their new destination. The limitation of the model is that it does not take into account the differences between males and females in terms of the stimuli that motivate them to migrate; moreover, males and females may not have equal economic opportunities in urban areas (Lean, 1993 in Tanle 2003).

3.10.3 The household strategy approach

In this perspective, the household is considered the social arena where family members meet to make decisions concerning their well-being. Migration arises because the household needs additional activity to satisfy livelihood requirements, and the household decision who can leave and who has to stay behind. The approach can be a useful tool for analysing one's position in the house as well as their ability and power to act. The household strategy approach also tries to "face" several of the problems the previous models, taking into account reproduction and production, social-cultural and power relations within households. The approach also tries to incorporate both the micro level perspective and in that way facilitates comparism between different locations (Synnove, 1999, in Tanle, 2003). However the approach has been criticized because of the difficulties in defining a household and making a general statement about it (Tanle, 2003).

3.11 Review of related literature of the study

3.11.1 Introduction

Most researchers who study the "street children" phenomenon have over the years helped in documenting various issues confronting children on the street. This include; the various reasons that contributes towards the phenomenon, the characteristics of street children, the forms of street life and the dire consequences of children living on the street. Beazley proposes that, issues of street children should be understood in the light of a global discourse on child labour and children's rights (Beazley, 2002). He throws light on the issue of work in the life of these children. Examining carefully the literature on street children in relation to my study, this section of the chapter will be exploring related studies on street children and migration, looking specifically at; the forms of street children's participation, children's experiences on the street which mostly involves work, and the contributions of street children towards themselves, their families and society at large. This section will also look at issues on

children's migration as my informants are unaccompanied migrant children living on the street.

3.11.2. Reasons for migrating and being on the street

Various reasons have been ascribed to migration which makes the issue little complicated. In Zhang (2010)'s study on "rural urban migration in China", he pointed out that people see rural employment which is mainly agriculture as low prospect job. Although Zhang's study was in China, the agricultural sector is one of the major employers in the economy of Ghana so some lessons can be learnt from his study. According to him, agriculture is held in very low esteem in China that, villagers would not even consider it to be proper "work" as this term is reserved for permanent, stable, and income-generating employment in the non-agricultural sector. This he suggests contributes to rural urban migration.

Doing one particular work for a long time can be monotonous and people will always look around for alternatives. Migrating becomes an option whenever these alternatives are not available in the rural areas. Zhang further explained that education is positively related to off-farm employment for which education level has also been found to be an important factor affecting migration in this case (Zhang, 2010). Meaning that people who wants to do other work apart from what the agriculture sector can offer should have some form of education as well.

Zhang again stated two obstacles that poor migrant's face, which involves contacts, information and the cost of migration. The diffusion of information to potential rural migrants regarding the opportunities available in cities may encourage new migration. Whilst television, newspaper, radio, returnees, and visitors generally build up a picture of life and prospects in the cities. In Zhang's explains that the success of migration is determined by the following three conditions: whether or not the potential migrant has basic financial support to move about; whether the migrant can find a job in the cities; and whether the new job fits his/her human capital and personal goal (ibid).

In the same domain, a study by Tacoli and Mabala (2010) "exploring mobility and migration in the contest of rural urban linkages: why gender and generation matter", the researchers found that, in all the diverse locations they studied in Global South, the numbers of young people migrating, especially young women moving independently have increased substantially. Tacoli and Mabala's study revealed that this is due to the combination of

increasing employment opportunities away from the home settlements (even when these are largely limited to domestic work, waitressing and the sex industry in the case of young women), as well as economic and resource constraints in their home areas. They again pointed out that the socio-cultural transformations that underpin the changing aspirations of both young men and women are also reasons for their migration.

Tacoli and Mabala's study also found significant differences in destinations and forms of mobility. In this they found that, men dominate short-distance and short-term migration, often moving within the same districts or to neighbouring ones, whereas women tend to move for longer periods of time to work in export-oriented factories in peri-urban areas, or as domestic workers in urban centres. Compared to women, men's destinations and employment opportunities are more diverse. Beyond intra-household relations, the gendered nature of labour markets is thus an important explanatory factor of the diversity of internal migration.

Similarly, a study by Camacho (1999) titled "family, child labour and migration: child domestic work in Metro Manila" revealed the most common reason children give for working in their destination point were; to help parents and siblings, to pursue studies, the high wage and better opportunities, and family poverty (least on the list). Other reasons were; to buy personal needs, ideas of good life in the city, to be independent and learn how to work, domestic violence or problems. The children in Camacho's study wake up at 4:00am or earlier and start their work at 5:00 am.

Majority of the children end their work at 10:00 pm. The study shows the children were deprived of the required number of sleep for children. Camacho also identified some of the domestic work children do include; babysitting, house cleaning, laundry and caring for the elderly. The youngest ages of the children in his study were between 13-14 years, and the children have no savings. The study further revealed that, majority of the children sends remittances home, and some of them up to half of their earnings. The children in his study revealed that their families use their remittances for; day to day necessities, education and other needs for their siblings, as capital for investments, emergency needs and also as payment of debts. (ibid). According to Bourdillon (2005), poverty is the main reason why children work instead of going to school. While the incidence of children's working is generally high in poorer countries than richer ones, other variables are also influential. Like; low cast status can push people into work, the local demand for labour as does supply, irregular incomes in the family, and loss of household head.

While poverty is the most common reason cited for migration and child labour other scholars have pointed to other factors such as the growth of urban centres where there is a growth in small firms engage in informal subcontracting and export on the demand side and the positive attitudes of family regarding child work and children's own desire to earn a living, and family and peer problems on the supply end (ibid).

Contrary to this highly trumpeted "poverty hypotheses", a survey conducted by Korboe (1996), in Kumasi the second largest city in Ghana found that while poverty may be the route reason, it is not always the immediate cause of departure, nor is it the only reason mentioned by the children he worked with. Indeed, many children in the study cited multiple causes, and the evidence available from the informal interviews the researcher conducted is that for some of these children, poverty alone may not have compelled them to seek an independent existence on the streets.

According to Korboe, other significant push factors catalysing the decision to opt into the street include "parental neglect, divorce and the death of a parent or guardian. Parental neglect comes about as a result of different reasons. In some instances, fathers may deny the paternity of their children by so doing leaving all the responsibilities of caring for the children in the hands of the mother. Also in the study by Raffaelli et al (2001), children's reasons for living home include; death of a family member, abuse in family, family conflict, poverty, drugs, friends and freedom.

3.11.3 Children's experiences on the street

Children's experiences on the street can be identified through careful observations of their activities. Raffaelli et al (2001), study on "how Brazilian street children do experience the street" revealed that street children's overall feeling on the street involves the feeling of freedom that is; they do not want to stick to a schedule, the feeling of greatness that is; they have a lot of friends, pals and clients, others also feel sad, in the sense that they feel something could happen to them, loneliness and the fact that there is no one to talk to or to help them on the street. Raffaelli et al's study further solicited children's own perception on the street; The children said there are those guys who kill people on the street, you learn things you should not know like sniffing glue and stealing, there are a lot of criminals, it is not a place to live and it is not the future said the children. Others said they dislike the, physical conditions (food, weather, and the living situation), authority figures or violence (the police hitting us, assaults and murder) and drugs. The researchers also asked the children the

attitude of people towards them. The responses included; rude, aggressive, can be mean, insensitive, obnoxious, suspicion directed to the youth, (afraid of us because they think we are going to rob them).

Also on Orme and Seipel (2007)'s study on "street children in Accra", all the children Orme and Seipel interviewed without exception, either worked or sought opportunities for work. Some children were lucky to have several jobs to support themselves. The children themselves consider begging for money or food to be an unacceptable behaviour that is why they sought for opportunities to work. A 16-year-old unemployed boy in Orme and Seipel's study emphatically made it known that Ghanaians do not beg, even if they had nothing to eat and no place to sleep. The child in the study believed that one day he would find a good job and might even go to school to make himself a better person. Another boy likewise stated that whenever he needed money he could always work to get it. He said that he was even willing to carry "bola" (trash) for someone, or sell rubber (polythane bags) in the market place. He did not worry about tomorrow because he could always work (ibid).

Again Grundling (2005)'s study on "concrete particulars of the everyday realities of street children" explained that, although migration might be common among street children elsewhere, in Namibia it is most likely restricted by the remoteness of towns. Grundling states that more than 80 percent of the Namibian street children operate in groups, which seems to indicate that, once on the street, these children develop support systems or networks, which effectively substitute for the family support system. In general, the children organize themselves into small groups, pool and share resources, and take care of one another and of those who are not able to take care of themselves (ibid). This shows the level of solidarity amongst street children in his study. The study also support findings with regard to the Third World phenomenon that most street children are actually children *on* the street rather than children *of* the street. Majority of the children interviewed indicated that they return home at night, and therefore have regular contact with their families. Street children all over the world have a similar image curved for them by society simply because they live outside the home. People who live outside homes are often considered out cast in some circles and others as deviants. They are considered deviants because they have deviated from the normal cause of society's everyday behaviour, which is living within a family and in a home, to living on the street. Children living in homes are usually supervised and under certain level of parental or adult control which society sees as a good environment for children to have a sound mind and an avenue to learn good and very responsible behaviours. Anything short of these is

considered abnormal and for that matter a deviation. Such children who are considered deviants are often treated as pests that should be gotten rid off.

A study by Aransiola et al conducted in Nigeria to understand the relationship of the street children (both children ‘on’ the street and children ‘of’ the street) with the law enforcement agents (police), shows that in the total sample, 50.2 percent said that they did not have cordial relationship with the police, in a similar manner; majority of the respondents across the three locations selected for the study reported that they did not have cordial relationship with the police. Also, 74.2 percent in Kaduna, 36.4 percent in Lagos and 42.0 percent in Port Harcourt claimed that they did not have cordial relationship with the police (Aransiola et al, 2009).

In a report by The Human Rights Watch (2003) entitled “Charges with Being Children: Egyptian Police Abuse of Children in Need of Protection”, portrays a disappointing picture of the behaviour of Egyptian police. Besides the fact that police routinely arrest and detain children who need protection (and not punishment), these children are subject to extortion, beatings, verbal abuse and being transported in vehicles that are unsafe and that transport adult criminals as well (Human Rights Watch, 2003). In the same vein a study by UNICEF (2005), includes short life histories of 13 street children, 8 boys and 5 girls. Eight of the children (61%) underscore the brutal and corrupt police behaviour that they have encountered. Ammar also pointed out that, in recent years street children have witnessed a number of episodes of police brutality in Egypt (Ammar, 2009).

3.11.4 Children and work

Children’s work has been an issue of debate for some time now and the controversies have often been on the definitions of children’s work James and James (2008). In Wolfe and Dickson (2002)’s study on “Apparel Manufacturer and Retailer Efforts to Reduce Child Labour”, they presented various views on children work. Children work primarily because of poverty (ILO, 1998; UNICEF, 1997). Some researchers have suggested that work for children can result in healthy socialization into the working world and into adulthood (Fyfe, 1989; Grootaert & Kanbur, 1995 in Wolfe and Dickson, 2002). For example, before the industrial revolution most child labour was casual. The factory system of production had yet to be invented and children worked with their parents, assisting them with farming, hunting, and household chores (Hasnat, 1995). Presently, in Muslim cultures, where women’s work may be restricted to the home, children are needed to act as intermediaries to the outside world (Bequele & Boyden, 1988a, *ibid*).

Ennew et al 2005, have argued that there is no single definition for child labour because it is a social construct not a natural phenomenon, and social constructs are cultural ideas that differ between actors, histories, context and purpose. They went further to suggest that to understand child labour, one first must explore the ways it is constructed as a problem by various actors and in different situations. Ennew et al 2005, suggests four distinct constructs of child labour. These are products of specific discourses, or sets of ideas with their own internal logic. These four constructs they have labeled “labour market”, “human capital”, “social responsibility” and “children-centered”. An interesting construction of child labour is “human capital” concept which the researchers suggest it is a recent phenomenon. In Ennew et al (2005)’s identification of the constructs of child labour, the second social construct of child labour is the product of human capital discourse, which is much influenced by the language that economists use to discuss economic development, example; poverty alleviation, the productivity of labour, and developing human resources with marketable skills (ibid).

From this perspective, Ennew et al explained that, child labour is seen as the results of underdevelopment and defined as work or working conditions that undermine development of the health status, knowledge and skills that children will require to contribute in adult life to both national development and their own prosperity (ibid). In this discourse there is no fundamental objection to children being economically active, as long as their human capital is not threatened. Thus children are viewed as human potential to be prepared for productive adulthood, and childhood as an investment that produces future returns through tax paid, increased productivity, and an expanded economy. The human capital places emphasis on education, at least insofar as this focused on schooling and skills training, and supports programs that ensure access by all children, including working children (ibid).

Manfred Liebel (2004)’s study, looks at children’s work in different cultures as well as different economic situations. He looks at ways in which work can be helpful to children to become responsible members of society. He argues that rather dichotomising work and school, work from play we should see the work of children as activities that satisfy particular needs (in Bourdieu 2006). Liebel cites what children themselves say about their work, and he suggested that children are often proud to contribute to their own livelihood and that of their families. Through work, they find friends, education, and lessons on how to look after themselves that schools do not teach.

Further in Huijsmans (2008)'s study on "children working beyond their localities: Lao children working in Thailand", shows that none of the reports he has studied have found the selling of children or kidnapping being used as a 'method of recruitment' in Thailand. Instead, it is in most cases the children themselves that initiate the migration process, motivated by real and/or perceived differences in lifestyles, employment opportunities and pay levels between Thailand and Lao PDR (People's Democratic Republic). Furthermore, the reports commenting on the decision-making process of migration state that it is frequently the children who decide to migrate, often without soliciting parental consent. Huijsmans' reports stated that, children's active participation is also highlighted in the 'transit' stage. That is travel on the Lao side of the border is predominantly self-organized, either individually or collectively. Huijsmans also pointed out that, Lao child migrants and trafficked children are working in a variety of sectors, such as construction work, agriculture, factory work, the fishing sector, domestic work, sex work, in restaurants and bars. The various occupations show strong sex segregation, with girls more likely to work in restaurants, bars, as domestics and as sex workers than boys, who outnumber girls in the other occupation

3.11.5 Children's rights

UNICEF (2009), publication on the "state of the world's children", and on the section which commented on participation has it that; Participation is one of the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, yet it is arguably taken less seriously than the other key principles of universality, the best interests of the child, and survival and development. To some extent, child participation may be seen as more controversial, challenging or difficult to implement than measures supporting child survival, development and protection because it is based on presenting children as rights holders rather than as recipients of charity (ibid).

The UNICEF report goes further to state that; the convention does not use the term 'participation' or explicitly state that children have a right to participate except as a goal for children with disabilities (article 23). But it requires that their views be heard in relation to all matters that affect them and that their views be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity (article 12) (ibid).

Bourdillon (2009)'s comment on "children's rights" states that; rights do not depend on benevolence and benefits do not allow conditions and exemptions. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 states that everyone is entitled to all rights set forth in the

declaration, without distinction of any kind. These rights include the right to work and to form trade unions, rights that are now denied to children below a minimum age of employment. Fundamental human rights provide for both empowerment and protection and street children's for of empowerment include work. The right to work is not simply an economic issue; work elates to status and participation in society.

Ennew (1995) argues that the fundamental right to work may legitimately be removed only when it can be shown that this is necessary for children's protection and not on account of a legally designated minimum age. Ennew added some important yet unwritten rights for children outside society and "normal" childhood. These include the right for street children not to be labelled, to be correctly researched and counted, to work and have their own support systems respected, the rights to privacy and respect for their vulnerability (including sexuality), and the right to be protected from exploitation by the media, activists, or fundraiser (ibid).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological approach of my study. The choice of a methodological approach was informed by my research questions. The chapter is structured into three different broad activity groups namely; the pre-field work activities, during field work activities and the post field work activities. I structured the chapter this way in order for me to be able to give a detailed account on what actually goes into my research process. The first stage involves all the preliminary preparation before the actual data collection process. The second stage takes care of the actual data collect. The data collection methods employed on the field includes; interview, participant observation, and peer group discussion. The third stage finally touches on all the activities that go on after the data has been collected. This involves showing appreciation to informants, interpretations, transcribing, categorizing, the and finally planning the writing process with the analysis of the thesis firmly in mind.

4.2 Pre field work activities

This includes all the knowledge acquired on the subject on research methodology in relation to children which involves, the issue of adopting qualitative research methodology in conducting the research understudy, the specific methodology used (ethnographic method), and what goes into doing children's research. This activity also involved, the general planning of the research project; developing of research interview guide, the surveying of research sites, searching for informants, asking for informed consent.

4.2.1 Qualitative research methodology

Qualitative research methods were the major consideration here. Qualitative researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour, and the reason that govern human behavior. My choices of this method was informed by my research questions and the philosophy of the new social studies of childhood, which is the over arching perspective of my thesis. The methodological consideration of this perspective is ethnography which is a qualitative research method (Prout and James, 1990). Qualitative research relies on reasons behind various aspects of behaviour. Simply put, it investigates the *why* and *how* of human behaviour, not just *what*, *where*, and *when*. Hence, the need is for smaller but focused samples. Qualitative research categorizes data into patterns as the primary basis for

organizing and reporting results. Qualitative researchers rely on these methods for gathering information: participation observation, group discussions and in depth interviews.

4.2.2 Ethnographic method

The proponents of the new social studies of childhood, which is the perspective of this thesis, strongly recommend that ethnography is particularly a useful methodology for the study of childhood. This method allows children a more direct voice and participation in the production of sociological data (Prout and James, 1990). Ethnography is a distinct type of research where the knowledge produced depends on the researcher taking part in close social interaction with informants over an extensive period of time (Christensen, 2004). Atkinson, outlined some features of an ethnographic research which includes; exploring the nature of particular social phenomenon, working primarily with unstructured data, work with a small sample or even a single case in detail and analyzing of data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human action (Atkinson, 1994).

4.2.3 Doing child research

The approach used in studying my informants was the participatory approach. Participation in this sense refers to “taking part in” or being present (Ennew and Boyden, 1997). My informants were involved in taking some major decisions such as where, when and how the interviews will be conducted and I chose the site before going to the field.

My research project explored one of the social phenomena which are very peculiar in the Global South. “The issue of child migration and children’s living experiences in the destination point”. According to Solberg, the common assumption underlying the study of children is that, studying children is significantly different from studying adults (Solberg, 1996). Most people are also of the view that, studying children need knowledge about children and competence in some particular child centred technique. According to Solberg, her own experiences from doing interviews and participant observation with people of different ages were that, studying children was nothing special (ibid). In my study for example, I used interviews, participant observation and group discussion with my informants. Giving the numerous researches on the agency and competence of children, the idea of using different methods, because of my informants’ age was not a concern here. The choice of methods should be viewed in the context of the informant and not by their age. Christensen suggested two important questions that researchers researching on children must consider;

first of all, are the practices employed in the research process in line with children's experiences, interests, values and everyday routines? Secondly, what are the ways in which children routinely express and represent these in their everyday lives (ibid)? I see these questions to be very relevant because in my study the questions and the issues I discussed with my informants borders on the experiences of the children.

4.2.4 Field relations and my research role

This sub-section describes my role as a researcher and my relations with informants during the field work. During my field work, I assumed the role of an adult "friend" as suggested by Fine and Sandstrom (1988), that ethnographic child researchers has to find a way of straddling the divide between adults and children's world and they suggested that researchers should adopt roles such as that of adult "friend" to the children. During my study, I tried to develop a friendly relationship with my informants, by asking them to call me by my first name and stop calling me "madam" as they did the first time we met. Although it was difficult for them, I insisted it was okay to do that. I also conversed with them on issues I thought will interest them, so that they can feel relaxed and open up during the interview conversation. Although they saw me as a friend, they still knew I was not a child and we made sure we respected each other's views. I became a friend to my informants but still maintained my adult identity and becoming their friend allowed me a partial access to the children's experiences and perspectives (Christensen, 2004).

Solberg in her discussion on interviews with children raised a concern which borders on the issue of power and powerlessness which she suggests influences the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Solberg, 1996). In my research the power between me and my informants was shared because informants helped in taking decisions on the where, when and how the field work was going to be conducted, and most importantly the ultimate power of deciding to be part of the study or leaving the study was solely theirs. All though I was in charge of the questioning and the moderation of the conversations, I thought that was my responsibility but not exercising my power over them. The issue of power over one's informants becomes possible, when the researcher cuts of her informants from the field work activities that concerns the children, by taking all the major decisions and the informant's part is only to answer the questions.

4.2.5 Ethical concerns

Paul Cozby suggests that “ethical concerns are paramount when planning, conducting and evaluating research” (Cozby 2001, page 32). During my field work, I made sure I adhered to all the ethical issues that will help me conduct a good and a responsible research. According to Davis 1998, the ethics of children’s research can be divided into three broad groups; informed consent, confidentiality and protection (Davis 1998).

Informed consent;

Specifically in seeking informed consent one has to ensure that respondents participate freely, as opposed to the use of force in research about which informants have been provided full and transparent information and have opportunities to question the researchers (Bhutta, 2004, in Czymoniewicz-Klippel et al, 2010). Ideally, all research should provide research participants with full informed consent. Informed consent means that research participants are informed about the purpose of the study, the risks involved with the procedures, and their rights to refuse or terminate participation in the study. In other words, “participants are provided with all information that might influence their decision to participate prior to making that decision” (Cozby 2001, page 35). Information was provided to the children concerning the entire process and duration of the fieldwork. I told them, I am a student in Norway and conducting a research on children who have migrated from their villages without their families or any relatives. I showed them my student identity card to proof my identity. It was unfortunate some of my informants could not read my introductory letter from my institution, but I read and translated it to them. My aim there was to allow them, to tell me the reasons why they came to Accra, and what their daily activities were when they were in their point of origin. I told them we (researcher and the children), will also converse on their lived experiences in Accra.

After going through my mission and telling them about my research, I also told them they always have the liberty to opt out if they so wish. As my informants were unaccompanied migrant children who live on the street, I had no significant adults to ask any permission before working with them. They gave me their consent by accepting the procedure and the process that we will be going through for the period.

Confidentiality

Informants were provided with information concerning confidentiality. I verbally explained to my informants whatever information they give will not be disclosed to the media or any other person who is not directly related to my research work. I made it clear to them that the exercise was purely academic. I did the oral explanation because my informants were children who have little or no education at all and for that matter could not read or write.

As part of exercising a high level of confidentiality, anonymity of my informants was highly respected because the children selected different names of their choice for the purpose of the study. The children wanted to use their real names because they thought there were a lot of children who have the same names as them and for that matter they cannot be identified, but I insisted they select different names for the purpose of the research work. I also made it clear to them that, the conversations are going to be on their everyday living experiences and if they find some of the questions out of place, they can decide not to answer. Valentine's concern about confidentiality was that; this can be broken if parents request to have a copy of the research study (Valentine, 1999). In my case the parents of my informants were not present because they are unaccompanied migrant children, and they also changed their names. This will make it difficult to single them out of the lot.

Protection

As researchers, the interest of our respondents should be our number one priority. Morrow and Richard (1996), suggests that "the perception that children are vulnerable and that interaction between researcher and child involves power relations, creates an obligation on adults to ensure children do not suffer harm when participating in research" (in Davis 1998, page 328). In planning my fieldwork, I made a commitment not to interfere in the daily activities of my informants in any way. I made children decide the time, and place of our conversations, and also chose their own specific days for my one-on-one conversations. As children who work for their existence, I thought one of the ways in which to protect their livelihood is to as it were buy the precious time they spend with me, to cover for the income they would have gotten when they were out there working. In Berestford (1997)'s words, "researchers must be aware that children may feel a number of pressures, from for example fear of failure, threats to self-esteem, reactions to invasions of privacy, conflict, guilt, or,

embarrassment when acting as respondents” (in Davis 1998). In fact throughout the data gathering process, I was very mindful of some of the examples Berestford raised. In situations where others wanted to make fun or ridicule any informant who says anything funny I step in immediately to end it. I made sure to build enough trust between myself and my informants so that Berestford 1997’s claim can be minimised during the research process, and tried my possible best to uphold and follow these ethical issues to the later.

4.2.6 Accessibility

In this sub-chapter, I would like to share my experience on the field and how I managed to gain access to my informants. My first day experience really put me to the test of revisiting a language I learnt some years back because I had not spoken the language for some time now and that is the native language of my informants. This is a narration of how I got access to my informants. When I went to the market car park, I saw a group of about five girls between the ages of 12 and 14 years, braiding their hair closer to a parked vehicle and I greeted them in their native language. All of them responded immediately and asked whether I want somebody to carry my load for me. I shook my head and told them I have no load for them but rather want to plait my hair, because what they are braiding is very nice and I want to have something similar. All though I am not good in their local language, I asked them in their local language whether they can plait my hair for me for a fee and one of the girls said yes. I negotiated for how much I was suppose to pay for the hair do and she told me one Ghana cedi (1 GHC) for a simple “corn roll” (a type of hair style) woven all back.

I got hold of one of their head basins which they use to carry the loads as a seat and they begun to braid. I took the opportunity to ask their names and I also told them mine. As the site is one of the busiest market centres in the city, I really felt very uncomfortable initially because passersby were looking at us and probably thinking what was wrong with me engaging the services of *kaya yei* to braiding my hair. I seized the chance to tell them my mission as a student researcher and want to have them as part of my research informants. One of the girls asked with some kind of excitement whether they will be coming on television, and I answered no. I asked them how many of their friends take their rest at their joint during that particular time in the afternoon. With joy they offered to tell their friends to be part of the research and they asked me how many girls I want them to inform because they are a lot. I told them I need maximum five more so they will be ten. All these conversation was going on in the process of plaiting my hair. The girls told me they will be bringing their friends to join

them tomorrow same time. This was how I managed to gain access and also earn their trust. In fact they made my search for informants so easy I did not expect that at all.

On the second day I went to the field with one of my research assistants who actually come from the area where the girls are from. We went to the site exactly the time they gave me and low and behold the girls had brought lot of girls more than the number I was looking for and were waiting at the same place for me. I heard one passerby asking whether they are going to have a kaya yei conference at the place. I told the girls I needed only five people in addition to the first five already chosen and I suddenly realised a change in their faces as all of them wanted to be part of the research. I just selected five upon asking them few questions for me to know whether they were really unaccompanied migrant children.

Gaining access to my male informants was easier than the girls. I went to the research site at night where some of the boys usually sit on the foot bridge where they sleep. I approached them individually, told them my mission explained what my research is all about and the fact that they can opt out any time they wanted. Upon posing some few questions to verify the whereabouts of their parents, I realised they came to the city alone to work. I then selected those who want to be part of the study.

4.2.7 Gate keepers

Gate keepers are individuals or group of people who have some level of control over others. Valentine (1999) suggested that parents, guardians, teachers and social workers all act as “gate keepers” come between researchers and children. During the third day on the field some of the girls told me some adults on their compound (where they sleep) has told them we were going to bring them on television so the government will come for them and take them back to their villages. They actually told them not to participate in the research. One of the girls was threatened to be thrown out of her sleeping place if she participated in the research because the adult’s fear was that, I am from the media and I am just going to use the children to get to them. The adults were concerned because some of them wants to hide their identity for one reason or the other, maybe they have left their children and husbands, or are even running away from a crime they committed whiles at the their points of origin. Allowing the media access, will blow their cover. Others also lie to their village folks about their occupation in the city, by making people think he or she is into one lucrative business or trade and therefore has a lot of money, or he or she has become wealthy because she migrated.

As a result of the adult threats and their concern about the media, some of the girls had a second thought about participating in the research because they did not want to be sent back to their hometown now. I told them whatever they are going to tell me is going to be very confidential and that I am not from the media. As part of my research ethics, I explained every aspect of my work to them and told them I will not film them or even take their photographs if they do not want me to. I then asked them what their decision was and they all agreed to be part of the work. I scheduled the times with the children, that I would be meeting them as a group and also individually. And the data collection process continued smoothly afterwards. I never did anything for example recording, taking pictures and other things without asking for their consent because of the fear the gatekeepers put in them and also as part of my ethical considerations. I was given the permission by the children to record our interview and also take pictures.

4.2.8 The use of research assistants

During the data collection process, I used research assistants for various purposes. One purpose was for the; translation and interpretation of language. I needed this for my female informants. With the male informants, I handled all the interviews myself without the help of my assistants, because we had a common local language. I selected my assistants through the recommendations of friends and relatives. My language translator was recommended to me by a relative of mine, who happens to be in close contact with him. Others were also pre-university students who were introduced to by friends and where also interest in my research when I asked them to be my assistants. As I have already stated, my female informants are from the Northern part of Ghana who communicates best in their local language. Although they understand but not fluent in my local language for example the Ga language or the Twi language, I thought it appropriate to engage the girls in their own local language so they can express themselves better. I understand their local language somehow but not a fluent speaker of it, so I was doing the conversion together with my assistant. Another purpose for engaging the services of assistants was on the transcription of the raw data and putting the information on the computer. I needed help here because of the language interpretation and putting the data on the computer. I also used research assistants on my observation tours at night especially for safety purposes. Before the actual field work begun, I took my assistants through my research project and what is required of each one of them.

4.2.9 Research site

The area within which the research was conducted was the Accra Metropolitan Area. This location was strategically chosen because of the Central Business District (CBD), the busy nature of the place and the numerous business activities that goes on in the capital. These are the places that most deprived and “homeless” children in some of the suburbs in Accra and beyond go to find themselves some work to fend for themselves. It is situated in the middle of the city which makes it very accessible to every visitor who comes to the city. The market is also part of the CBD, where most of the buying and selling activities in the city goes on. The business activity that goes on here, serves as a huge motivating factor that attracts both the young and the old. People from all walks of life also take advantage of the business activities to earn a living and also wile away time. This was the site of my female informants who are mainly Kaya yei (head porters).

My second site was in K.N area, the specific location being the lorry station which is closer to another market but not the M.K. market. This site was again chosen because I wanted to explore the diverse activities that unaccompanied migrant children undertake. The K.N area is also part of AMA. The attractions of the area are the market and its’ lorry stations. These lorry stations make hawking very attractive. Another reason for choosing this site was because of the foot bridge where I first had contact with some of the boys. This was the site of my male informants whose work includes; hawking, shoe shinning and a driver’s mate.

4.2.10 Sample selection

My selected sample is made up of shoe shine boys, driver’s mates, hawkers and kaya yei. Most of the girls who are head porters in the city centre are from the northern part of the country. My female informants who are mainly head porters and popularly known as “kaya yei” are in the M.K market site. Kaya yei is a term used to refer to women who engage in carrying loads for a fee. The term is derived from two words *kaya* a Hausa word meaning wares or goods, and *yeyi* a Ga word meaning woman” (Attah et al, 1997). In relation to the boys, looking at the target group of my research who are unaccompanied migrant children, the easiest approach I adopted in locating them (boys) was their sleeping place. Putting my local knowledge of the area into use, I immediately figured out the usual places where migrants who do not have accommodation in the city normally hang out. This helped me in my selection process for the boys. My male informants were in the K.N lorry station site whose main work were; shoe shine, driver’s mate and hawkers who migrated from the rural

areas in the Central Region of Ghana to the city of Accra. I girls were also selected at their site in M.K market.

4.2.11 sampling technique

I used a number of sampling techniques because of the specific migrant children I proposed to study. The major techniques are; purposive sampling and snowball techniques. The first technique I used was the snowball. Here, I got in touch with about 5 girls initially and the girls lead me to other migrant children. I then continued the sampling process with purposive sampling because I was specifically going to study unaccompanied migrant children but not migrant children in general. I had a number of children who were migrants in Accra, but selected the unaccompanied migrants to serve the purpose of the study. I then finished it off with random sampling, because I had about 25 girls who wanted to be part of the study, but I was looking for only ten, so I randomly sampled 10 girls from the 25. I used only purposive sampling for the boys because I approached them individually by myself at their sleeping place.

One of the features of qualitative research technique is a small number of sample. The sample was composed of 15 informants, 10 girls from the M.K site, and 5 boys from the K.N site. The rational for the 10 girls in M.K and 5 boys in K.N was that, in the M.K site, the population of kaya yei I found there far exceeded those spotted at K.N market. I also chose the boys from K.N because it was very easy to locate all of them at one particular area which was very convenient for me. The lorry station was the location of all the male informants.

Also the total number of 15 is to enable me have diverse views on the subject under study. I argue with the French sociologist Bertaux 1981 that quantity thus means something for perceptibility, but not in the sense of representation (in Nielsen 1995). The small sample of 15 informants is just a fraction of all street children in the city. My aim is not to argue for representation of my sample to the entire population of unaccompanied migrant children on the street (ibid), this quantity will enable me to go in-depth in my line of questioning so as to understand the situation of the living experiences of this group of migrant street children under study.

4.3 During research activities (field work)

This sub-chapter describes all the activities that went on during the field work which includes; the interviews, participant observations and group discussions. These methods were specifically chosen because of my research questions, which needed methods that will help me have in-depth knowledge. In all, two months were spent on the field selecting, gathering research data and also transcribing aspects of the raw data that needed to be translated. This was done between the months of June and August. Both sites were studied concurrently. My field work went on as planned, although there were some challenges, the experiences were enormous. I had an arrangement with my informants, and decided to meet the girls during their afternoon break when they have gathered to find some food to eat. This was between 12:30pm and 1:30pm. Our meetings were scheduled to last for 30 minutes on the days we meet. This time schedule was for both boys and girls.

4.3.1 Interview

“Qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, this process unfolds the meaning of subjects’ experiences and uncovers their lived world prior to scientific explanation” (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009 p 1). Interviews with children allow them to give voice to their own experiences and understanding of their own world (ibid). The interview is important in ethnographic research methodologies because I wanted to have an in-depth focus of the street children phenomenon (Marton 1981, in Gudmundsdottir, 1996). The interviews were carried out in settings that were familiar to the children (mainly at their place of work that is at the research site) as suggested by children themselves. In the case of the boys where possible, the interviews were arranged at a place where the informant will suggest we go and mostly it was an open space bar where we can have a bottle of coke while having a purposive conversation.

The decision to choose a suitable place for my interviews was decided upon by me and my informants, with the final decision depending on the choice of my informants. Choosing a sitting for the interview was one of the biggest challenges for me on the field. The challenge was that my research site was in one of the market’s car parks where my informants take their rest during the day, and was a noisy place. As I committed myself not to distract the smooth flow of work of my informants, we decided to set up the interview post at their resting place. Although the place was a little noisy, I realized my informants were very comfortable and relaxed with the place and that was all that mattered. I wanted a place where they could feel

free to talk and also not to be distracted from their work at the same time. Although some of the children had a rented room which can be called their home, I decided not to interview them in their “home” because of adults and also the fact that they spend most of their day time in the market where they work.

4.3.2 Interview process and procedure

This sub section describes how my interview was conducted during my field work. My interviews were normally conducted at the resting place of my informants on the research site. Kvale and Brickmann (2009) explained that, the research interview is based on a professional conversation; it is an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. They further explained that, an interview is a conversation that has a structure and purpose (ibid). To guide me in my conversations, a semi-structured interview guide made up of different themes was developed to give me focus and direction, prior to the fieldwork, but certain adjustments were made as the actual field work begun. All my interviews were in the local languages of my informants. I had both formal and informal conversations with my informants for various purposes. The formal interview was the one that was guided by my interview guide, while the informal conversations had to do with other general things that were not covered in the research questions, but was very important in getting the attention of my informants and also assessing their general mode before the actual questions are asked. The informal conversations also helped me in the interpretations of what my informants’ meaning regarding certain issues was. The questions were kept very simple and made very short for them to be able to understand and to avoid Kvale and Brickmanns (2009)’ s explain that, several difficulties of interviews with adults, may be aggravated in interviews with children, such as the interviewer asking long and complex question.

At the beginning of every interviewing session, I usually have informal conversations with my informants, asking them about how they are faring and how their day has been. The informal conversations helped in building trust and confidence among us.

During the conversation, I introduce the topic to the informant and also tell them they can refuse to answer if they think they do not feel like answering it. I tell them they can also ask me questions. I begin by asking a major question and wait for the informant to finish with whatever he/she has to say about it, and then follow up with a subsequent one, using the information in their major question they answered as a lead. I also ask informants to clarify

and also explain further what they mean by what they tell. I was always asking how and why, to enable the informants to elaborate on issues further. Although the conversations were guided, the process was not a rigid one. In a group discussions for example the girls weave, plait their hair and whatever they want while the conversation is going on. The informants also ask questions if there seemed to be any ambiguity in a question. On the other hand on a one-on-one interview with the boys, we usually have our conversations with a drink because of the difference in the interview site. In order not to over burden my informants with a lot of question for a single period, I adopted what I called “one question per day” tactics. This is where my informants are introduced to a single question, so that we can have enough time to have an in-depth discussions and meaning interpretations on the issue. This really helped me to have a very wide range of my informants’ views on issues throughout my field work. At the end of every interview session, I ask my informants to give their impression on the process. I ended the process finally, with informal conversations on general issues.

4.3.3 Participant observation

This sub chapter describes how my observations on the field were conducted. The focus of my participant observation was on; informant’s work, play, interactions with adults and my informants’ sleeping places. Going by the fourfold typology of observation that is; complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, and complete participant (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994), my informants were observed during the day and at night. A particular choice of participation type is dependent on the time of day and whether it is night or day. During the day I assume the role of a participant as observer and at night I assume a complete observer role. During the day I observed my informants’ work, play, peer and adult relations and observed their sleeping situations at night around 12:30 mid night when everybody is supposed to be asleep. Participant observation was used during the day in order for me to capture what my informants’ daily routines were. I used this method during the day because this was the only period I can learn about informants actively engaged in their livelihood activities. Observation as a method of data collection helps the researcher to understand her informants’ operating in their own natural setting (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994). All of my informants work during the day and majority of them rest at night. On my informants’ work, I observe the nature and the mode of operation in their working activity. I participated in their type of work especially with the head porters by helping them put customer’s loads on their head and also following them to wherever they take the loads. This allows me to know at firsthand how heavy these loads can be. My participation in this case

was not a full participation where I get involved with the actual carrying of the loads. My concern was to know the weight and the distance my respondent's cover daily in order to survive.

I also observed their play, here I observe what type of play and the purpose of it, and also the times they do play those games and the people involved in the play, whether they have fun when playing and their attitudes during play time? On adult interaction I observed, how both parties treat each other in the service delivery process, I watch out for assaults, both verbal and physical, informant's reaction on client's comments, and the bargain process. In peer relation, I observe informants attitude toward friends during play and working time, and the type of things they talk about during their leisure periods. In spite of this, in the night I observe where my informants sleep and the conditions of the place, the people at the sleeping place and the sleeping arrangement. I most of the time conceal my identity, while observing what is going on from a distance.

4.3.4 Field notes

During the field work, I took notes which my audio recorder could not capture. The purpose was to record in writing, mostly all that I observed on the field and also during my interviews and group discussions. As most of these writings could not be done on the field, I normally scribbled them in short form and expanded them when I am off the field. I put down notes on my informants' non-verbal communication queues such as; facial expressions during conversations and body language and later ask informants for their means in the context that I observed it. For example some of the girls cover their mouths with their hands when talking and remove it all of a sudden. I noted this behaviour in my field notes and asked for the meaning and interpretation from one of my group discussion sessions. My informants then gave their versions of the meaning of that in different contexts. Keeping field notes became very helpful during the analysis of the data, where I used the notes as a quick guide on various issues that will hitherto been lost in the huge pile of transcribed data.

4.3.5 Peer group discussion

This section describes the processes I used on the field while conducting my group discussions. Focus group discussion; "is described as one of the qualitative methods, which possess both observational and interview techniques while maintaining its own peculiarity and uniqueness as a distinctive research method" (Morgan 1988 in Colucci, 2007 p 1422). During this part of the field work, the girls were put into smaller groups of 3, made up of

friends. I did not have group discussions on the boys because they did not meet my grouping criteria. The boys in my study did not know each other or they were not friends because they had different types of work, unlike the girls who knew themselves as co-workers. The focus of the group discussion was on the activities of the informants with their peers. Group members were allowed to talk about activities that they do together in the city. From what I learnt on my first meeting with the girls, putting all 10 girls together at the site was impossible looking at the busy nature of the place. Our first meeting generated a lot of attention from the public and heard people asking “what is going on”. By putting my informants in groups of 3, it made it possible for me to reduce the attention on us at the location. Also every informant in the group had the chance to contribute during the conversation and reducing the situation where informants might be ridiculed by other group members when one says something they think is “funny”. Again taking field notes on pointers became very convenient as well. It also made it easier for my research assistants to handle the translations.

During such meetings, the topic for the day is introduced, and children are expected to say whatever they want to say about the issue. I made a lot of observations here, for example, the informants who looked and seemed shy during one-on-one interviews were rather very vocal within the group. This gave me the opportunity to ask those informants certain questions I want them to elaborate. I recorded the interviews and also put down notes. I argue with Colucci (2007) that, despite the focus group discussion’s increasing popularity, they are not an easy option, and that moderators must find appropriate ways to approach participants to achieve good-quality data. As the moderator, I made sure every group member’s view is heard on an issue to prevent the loud ones from taking the centre stage, although it was not easy for me to have full control over who speaks on what at what time. This was done by pointing at individuals in the group to share their views. This made me generate diverse views on a single question or topic.

4.3.6 Analysis and interpretation

As a researcher the procedure and the methods of analysis was one main issue that has been ongoing throughout the entire research process. The specific analytical tool adopted was the narrative analysis. The narrative analysis method was used first and foremost because; most of the information from my informants was stories about their pre street lives and their current street lives. This method was used in order for me to be able to get the meanings of what the children’s experiences are, because narrative analysis focuses on the meaning and

the linguistic form of texts (Kvale and Brickmann, 2009). In my study, I focused attention on informant's choice of words and language use, which helped in adding more meaning to what the interviewee says. Narrative analysis also addresses the temporal and the social structures and plots of interview stories as indicated by Kvale and Brickmann. In my analysis I interpreted children's experiences by addressing their pre street lives, their current lives and street children's future aspirations. Both informants and I tried to work out the interpretations of what they have said. In order for me to get the meanings of what my informants tell me. During the analysis of the data, I did my data transcribing, by putting by recorded conversations on my computer. By this, I typed the dialogs and the stories while I listened to the tapes, this was very time consuming. I did the transcribing and the organisation concurrently. Before then I listened to my tapes over and over again to familiarise myself with the data. What I identified most was that, no two stories were the same. I posted dialogs and stories to my already structured guild line according to my research questions. After the organisation, the needed data was sifted and reorganised into themes, which were later developed in my writing.

4.3.7 Field work challenges

One of my greatest challenges on the field was about the location of my research site. The nature of my study involved the use of unaccompanied migrant children who could be easily identified at their job locations. These locations were in the central business district (CBD). As part of my research ethics, I pledged not to interfere unnecessarily with the daily working activities of my respondents in anyway because their work is their means of survival. As a result of this commitment, I had to engage them in an area within where they work. This was in the central business district (CBD) where there were a lot of activities involving buyers and sellers.

Where to sit and conduct my conversations was a problem but a minor one as my informants and I always find a solution to it. The major problem was the passersby who stop and gaze at us when I was conversing with the informants. This was a huge challenge because we were bothered about the recording quality of the interviews and also the fact that the girls may be destructed by the numerous bombardments of different stimuli around us. As the data gathering process began, realised the girls were very comfortable in their own territory and never bothered about the people around.

As I indicated earlier on, the language in which to communicate in was one of my initial challenges. Some of my respondents spoke only their native language, and others speak a little of other languages that I perfectly understand. Although their native language was not a strange language to me, I am not a fluent speaker of it. This initial challenge was minimised when I had a research assistant who spoke the language and helped me in translations, although I would have wished to do all the conversations directly with the girls. I had no problems with the boys because we had the same native language.

Another challenge I encounter on the field was in connection with my male informants. My problem was that my meeting times with the informants are often not on schedule. In my group discussions for example we most of the time begin with less numbers, and they join later. This often delays my plans. The delays were understandable looking at the activities my informants engage in.

4.4 Post field work activities

This aspect of the research process specifies whatever that goes on after leaving the field. This involves showing appreciation to informants, interpretations, transcribing, categorizing and finally planning the writing process, handing in the thesis and contacting my collaborators. During my last day on the field, the entire group that participated in the study with exemption of my male informants had a small eating and drinking get together at one of the wayside eateries. This was to say thank you to them for making time for me. The raw data was then transcribed, analysed and the writing begun.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analyses of my research, and the major aim here is to articulate children's perspectives on issues that affect their own lived experiences as unaccompanied migrant children living and working on the streets of Accra. As a narrative text, I took into account the previous, current and the future aspirations of my informants in order to understand what their past conditions before migrating was and what they are facing currently. The chapter begins by presenting the personal and family profile of my informants, in order to establish their background. The chapter is further organized according to three broad thematic areas that were deduced from the data. These major themes include; the living experiences of children at the point of origin, the current situation in their destination point and what the children's future aspirations are. The structure of the chapter is also guided by the set aims and research questions of the study. The analyses cover children's activities before and after migrating in order for me to have a deeper insight into the motivations of children's migration.

5.2 Informant's profile

I deem it necessary to give a brief profile of my informants because although they are all seen as a single group of migrant children living on the street, they all have their peculiar differences in terms of; age, gender, place of origin, place of work, type of work, educational level if any, type of social network in the city and period spent in the city.

Female informants: the ages of my female informants range from 12-14 years. The bulk of the girls are in the 14 year old group. All the girls are from the northern part of Ghana. Out of the 10 girls, only one of them has ever attended school, the rest have never had any form of classroom education. As already stated all the girls are head porters and according to them some of the other activities they engage in include; weaving, plaiting of hair, sweeping of shops, tidying up of shops for shop owners. Their place of work is in the Makola market area. The types of social net work they have at the destination point are their friends and elder women from the same area with the girls. In addition to this, all the girls said they play during their leisure hours with their friends. The data reveals that the range of period spent in the city

by the girls is between, 8 months-1 year. Most of the girls have spent exactly one year and the rest have also spent basically eight month in the Accra.

Male informants: the ages of my male informants also range from 12-15 years. Out of the five boys selected as part of my key informants, one is 15, two of them are 14 years, one 12 years, and the other 13 years. The findings revealed that all the boys are from the Central Region of Ghana. All the boys have had some basic classroom education mostly up to Basic level one. Amongst the type of work the boys have in the city are; shoe shine, hawking and selling confectionaries and driver's mate. It is only one of the boys who do another type of paid work in addition to what he regularly does, and he fetches water for people in the nearby houses closer to the Kaneshie station for a fee. The duration or period spent in Accra ranges from 3months -1 year.

5.3 Informants' family profile

Most migration studies have proven that amongst the myriad reasons why people migrate include the issue of poverty within the family and economic and resource constraints in their home areas (Bourdillon, 2005; Tacoli and Mabala, 2010). Hence children's migration decision maybe as a result of prevailing family conditions. This family profile I will be looking at includes; parent's marital status, family size, birth position and composition, parent's occupation and parent's involvement in migration decision.

Female informants: almost all my female informants are from polygamous homes. This means that all the children have step mother and step siblings. According to the children their mothers are still in their marriages and have not been divorced. Again almost all the girls come from large families with the numbers ranging from 8-18 children excluding parents. The girls are generally part of the younger children in their families, with birth positions being generally last or next to last but not first or second borns. The composition of their families was found to be males in the majority. The information gathered revealed that the occupation of all the parents of the children are farming and trading of farm produce. On the question of whether their parents were involved in the decision to migrate to the city, 7 out of the 10 girls said their parents were not aware of their coming until they got to their destination point, and those who said their parents were aware made mention of only their mothers.

Male informants: asking the children about the marital status of their parents, almost all the boys said their parents are still in their marriages but two of them said their fathers are deceased. From the information gathered, it was identified that, the boys are from monogamous families with family sizes relatively small comparing with that of my female informants. The family size ranges between 4 and 6 for the males and they are mainly first or the second born in the family. The birth composition is also male majority, with two of the boys coming from female majority homes. The question about parent's occupation showed that all the parents are farmer and mothers trade in farm produce as well although that is not a regular occupation. All the boys indicated that their mothers knew of their traveling with the exception of one who said he made the journey with a friend without his parent's consent.

5.4 Migrant children's pre-street experiences

In view of the fact that I am researching into the lived experiences of migrant children, one of my interest as a researcher was to have insight into the motivations of children relating to their migration and how they are coping in their current point of destination. My interest was to know whether they were living with their families before they migrated and what activities they were engaged in. The results of the study indicated that, all the children were living with their families before moving to Accra and work was seen to be one of the activities children engaged in even when they were with their families. Again other activities the girls mentioned they were highly involved in, was dancing on moon light nights in their various communities.

5.4.1 Children's working experiences before migrating to the city

During the interviewing process, my informants narrated the type of work they used to do in their home town before migrating independently to the city. These types of work are part of the daily activities of the children. Amongst some of the work they mentioned include,

- house chores,
- farm work,
- selling in the market,
- running errands for family members and taking care of their younger siblings and

As members of a family, children are suppose to partake in the activities that will enable parents and other relatives with in the household to provide food, shelter, cloths, health care and other necessities of life. A family's well being in most cases is dependent on the available resources for which every member can feel comfortable in its usage. In situations

where families' are faced with inadequate resources to go round, children are used as agents to rescue it. Sometimes mothers use their children in their businesses by allowing children to help them sell their wares, and children like Lasa one of my female informants, reported of engaging in such work. According to Lasa, her mother used her to go and supply her customers in their houses because the family needs all the money they can get to take care of their expenses. Also culturally (Ghana), it is a girl's responsibility to help her mother so she can learn from her and do same when in her husband's house when she marries. There is a general positive attitude towards children's work and it is not seen to be a bad thing for children to work, either on the farm or in the house (Camacho, 1999). Parents always want to engage their children in work so that they will be busy all the time and not be wondering about in the village without aim.

I learnt from my female informants that, house chores in their households were done by only the females. The males are considered to do the "hard" work either in the house or on the farm. The hard work at home normally involves the lifting of heavy items whenever the need arises and on the farm they do prepare the land and do the weeding, spraying and so on. Nasa, one of the female informants said, because she was the youngest girl amongst her siblings, she had to do all the sweeping, dish washing and also help her eldest sister in doing the cooking in the house, and that her younger brother does not do anything, what he does is to sits with their father any time they come back from the farm.

All the children I worked with were farm workers before they moved to the city. They worked on the farms of their parents and other relatives during week days (un-paid), and some worked on other people's farms on weekends for pay or exchange their labour for farm products. Analysing children's work in their previous communities, it was evident that, children's work was mainly unpaid work in relation to the girls. Out of the 10 girls, it was 3 of them who said they had to work on other's farms for money; the other 7 girls did not have paid work, but work on their family farm. The only time the girls who help their mothers and elder sisters get money is when they are able to sell something above the recommended prices. On the other hand, all the 5 boys had paid work when they were in their villages.

As suggested by James and James, to participate means giving children the opportunity to take part in and contribute to a situation, a process or an outcome (James and James, 2008). These farm girls' participation in the work on farms makes it possible for them to earn some money in order to take care of their needs, because in most situations family resources are too

limited to go round. They participate in work so they will not become a burden on their families.

In finding out what the girls have to say about their work on the farm, I learnt from Nasa (13), Raza (14), and Shai (13) that, they used to work on groundnut, corn, millet, yam and cassava farms, and the work in these farms are basically to uproot weeds and also help in harvesting the farm products when they mature during the harvest season. According to them they get paid when they uproot weeds on people's farms, but during the harvest season they exchange their labour with some of the farm produce they harvest and sell them later.

The boys also did a lot of farm work for pay and on their parent's farm for no pay. Results from the study indicate that, all the boys were "by day" workers (daily farm labours) on cocoa farms when they were in their home town, they also had to work in other people's houses looking after their animals. Working on other people's farms means getting paid at the end of the day. The boys need the "by day" money to pay for their schooling and other expenses. In the rural areas, there exist a large number of plantations who often recruit farm workers who will assist in preparing the land, clearing of weeds, spraying, harvesting and other kinds of work. It is said that, where there is a demand for something, there will always be supply for it. Given this demand for workers, children and adults alike are recruited on daily basis to work on these farms.

The children are motivated by the monetary incentive of their work and compare it with what they will get from going to school. Children decide to stay out of school because they do not see any immediate benefit in going, but rather have to spend money in order to be in the classroom. All my male informants were combining school and work when they were in their destination point. K.M (male, 15, shoe shine boy, (SSB)), said he was working on the farm whiles going to school and he dropped out from school because his work schedules were coinciding with that of his school hours. He rather chose to stop the school because he needed the money for his up keep and also help the mother.

During my interview, I became curious to find out why the children left their paid work in their villages where they have their family and friends and came to Accra to work without their families with them. I had a conversation with Bena (male, 14 years, driver's mate) and this is what he said;

The money I receive from the farms was very little, but being a SSB (shoe shine boy) now in the city I get a lot more than what I used to get in the village. Working on the farm is not an easy job, it is very difficult and the money is also not enough. What I am getting now is far more and better and I am happy to be making that much. When I was in the village I was not saving but now I am a “susu” contributor (small businesses saving scheme). My family is not here but my mother knows am here. I send them money any time somebody is going to my home town. She also knows it is better living in Accra or Kumasi (the second largest city in Ghana) than to be in the village. I am the first born male of my mother and have the responsibility to help take care of my brothers and sisters. I dropped out of JHS (junior high school) but I want them to finish JHS and possibly continue to SHS (senior high school). I will work hard to help them. I am just praying for health and long life.

This example gives an idea as to why children leave their families and decide to stay alone in the city to work although they face some of challenges in their place of destination. He was comparing the money he gets from the farms with what he is currently earning as the basis for leaving the farm work to work on the street. Now that Bena is getting what he wanted in the city, his migration can be said to be a “good” migration as suggested by Halfacree (1995), where he conceptualises migration as a good thing when the destination point can provide the expectations of the migrant (in Rye 2006, confer theory chapter) . The money Bena gets on the street is substantial because he manages to save and also send some to her mother, which hitherto he could not have done these.

Bena, is very happy at his destination point because he is getting what he wants at where he is and from what he is currently doing. The system schema model (migration theory, confer in chapter three) explains that socio-cultural, economic and political factors act as stimuli to migration, which implies that, Bena’s family economic conditions in the village made him to come to the city and the money he is currently getting will help to make situations better back home.

5.5 Children’s motivations for migrating

Researchers on migration have cited a number of reasons that promotes the movement of people. As suggested by Camacho that, poverty is the most common reason cited for migration and child labour, other scholars have pointed to other factors as being the reason (Camacho, 1999). In my study my informants gave a number of reasons for migrating to the city. My informants attributed a number of socio-cultural reasons to their migration. The reasons my informants gave for migrating include;

- inadequate family resources
- peer influence
- For a better life style

- Future respect by village folks
- running away from farm work
- house chores
- step parent behaviour
- the death of one parent
- pressure from parents
- adventure to the city
- Work for money

The above reasons given by my children can be grouped into; personal, family, peer, and structural reasons (the reasons are not ranked).

Personal; the personal reasons children gave include; running away from house chores, from farm work, adventure to the city, to make money, and for a better life style. In Muda (female, 12years)'s family, there are only two young girls, she and her sister. These two girls are responsible for the sweeping, fetching of water, washing dishes and also preparing the place for the senior ones to cook. The responsibility was too much for her so she decided to flee from it. Again in my conversations with Babi (female, 14 years), and Wayi (male, 13 years), their main motivation for coming to Accra was to come and work for money. Babi had a problem with the no pay work she has been doing both at home and on her family. She wanted to make money on her own, which can also be regular as well. This is what Babi said about the reason she gave;

Owusuaa: so you prefer working here to what you used to do back home?

Babi: yes, because at home I used to do all the work in the house. I sweep, go for water, look after my little brother and also go to the farm to uproot weeds. I always get tired.

Owusuaa: you also get tired here in Accra, isn't it?

Babi; yes, here I don't do anything, I just work for money. I don't get money when I was at home. I was just helping on our farm. I did not have the time to work on people's farm for anything.

To Babi, it is the heavy load of house chores and no monetary incentives that made her follow her friend to Accra. Drawing from Halfacree, (1999)'s conceptualization of migration as "a good thing", migrants have been conceived of as actors actively deciding to leave their original place of living in favour of a location which offers them better terms; improved living conditions, higher wages, and more pleasant residential environments (in Rye, 2006). It is in this same light that Babi and the other informants decided to migrate to the city for improved conditions, high wages and what have you.

Children's fantasies of city life are often influenced by returnees from the city. These people often do things that differentiate them from the village folks because of the exposure they have had. These differences are seen from the way they dress; for example if the norm in the village is for females to tie a piece of cloth around their waist, put on a blouse and also put on a head gear, they tend to put on already sown dresses or gowns, perm their hair and so on. They actually exhibit city life whenever they visit the village. Children and adults alike see them as enlightened or civilized and want to become them. They immediately assume these people are living a good life in the city, because even the eating style of these returnees change, they prepare their food differently and they stop drinking from the borehole and now buy purified water. All these changes by these returnees make children to think of becoming wannabees. The decision to migrate to an unknown place alone to be like someone else shows agency in practice in the behaviour of children.

Friends can be a bad influence or good influence to us. The types of friends children make can sometimes be a source of worry to parents and other significant others of the children. During play time, children are seen to be playing with their friend, either at school, at home, or on the street. In the case of Fari (female, 14 years), her coming to the city was influenced by one of her play mates in the village. This is a conversation we had;

Owusuaa: what made you leave your family back home to Accra?

Fari: my friend told me to come with her

Owusuaa: why did you decide to come with that particular friend?

Fari: we came to work together here.

Owusuaa: did your friend tell you about the type of work you will be doing here?

Fari: I already knew the work everybody does in Accra. They are "kaya kaya" (meaning they carry things for people)

This is an example of peer influence and other children like Fari, gave similar testimonies. Apparently Fari's friend had a relative in Accra who promised her assistance when she manage to come to the city, but according to Fari, they had to spend about a week at the lorry station before getting in touch with the contact person.

Parental influence here includes; step parent behaviour, death of one parent and parental pressure. Sometimes the parents and other members of the family play a role in the decisions children take to migrate. In the case of K.M (male, 15 years), her mother persuaded her to

live the village and come to Accra, because there is no future for him in the village. He came to the city to help his family change their lives in the village. Some parents knew about their children's migration intentions but other parents became aware only when the children arrived at their destination. Children specifically tell their mothers when they decide to migrate. The household strategy approach to migration (Confer theory chapter) relates migration decisions to the position of family members and their power to act. The female parent of my informants is the people who decide with the children about their decisions to migrate. In certain cases it is the mothers who pressure the children to migrate looking at the poor economy of the family.

Also I learnt from P.J (male, 14 years), that he came to Accra because he did not like his step father's behaviour and he just wanted to avoid him. P.J was living with his mother and step father, he is the first born of his mother, comes from a family of five and have four sisters. Narrating his story, this is what P.J had to say;

I used to live with my mother, my sister and my mother's husband. My father lives in a nearby town closer to ours. My parents are divorced and my mother has a new husband now. This man is just something else, my mother helps him on the farm everyday but she does not look after us. He does not care whether we go to school or whether we have eaten. He normally tells us we should go to our father's house and that he cannot look after other people's children. Any time he drinks he comes home and insult everybody in the house including my mother. I always want to fight him but something tells me to stop. I decided to go away from the village because I might go to prison if I don't stay away from that man.

The agency exhibited by P.J, shows how competently children can read in between the lines and decides to avoid certain situations if they know their presence can bring chaos. This informant left the village because he thought his step father's behaviour was not good enough for him to continue staying with him. P.J's migration to the city made it possible for him to have the peace that he wanted in his live, that he did not get when he was with his family.

The socio-cultural explanation children gave as a reason for migrating was something that was very revealing to me; I leant from Nasa (female, 13 years), that in the village where she comes from, families that have their relatives working in the city are highly respected because they are often among the first people to show case the latest fashion styles and other new products that comes in the city in the village. They are the families people consult whenever they want any advice on the newest things in town. This presupposes that families who have their relatives in the city being it adults or children do receive remittances in various forms from them. These remittances change their life styles in the village which

makes them to be highly respected. As Nasa also wants her family to be respected she took the competent decision to also come to the city, work hard and send items to her family back home so they can be respected.

The decision to migrate is most of the time children's own choice, but the reasons why they move were mostly external to them.

5.5.1 Children's reasons for choosing Accra

The particular choice of destination became a concern to me because of the distance the girls in particular have to cover before getting to Accra. That is from the northern Region to the Greater Accra Region. Studying the map of Ghana (in the appendices section) one can have a fair idea about the distance. On the other hand, the distance of the boys' place of origin is shorter comparatively. Between the Northern Region and the Greater Accra Region, there are other equally attractive places that the girls could have settled but they decided to move down to the capital and the question is why.

The information gathered revealed that the children chose Accra as their destination point because of the following reasons;

- their friends are here,
- they have people from their home town already here in Accra
- the fact that Accra being the capital city of Ghana,
- because that is where everybody wants to come,
- there is money in Accra,
- some wants to go to the beach
- This is where one can easily find work.

Accra being the capital city of Ghana has a number of infrastructure and amenities which other cities may lack. For example Kumasi which is the second largest city in Ghana is one of the places the girls have to pass before coming to Accra. Apart from the population differences between these two cities, that is having the largest population than Kumasi, all the other infrastructure in Kumasi can be compared to what exists in Accra. Also one other thing that Accra has, are its beaches for which Kumasi does not have because of its landlocked nature. Children's choice of a finally destination was greatly influenced by the fact that Accra is a capital, has beaches and also the fact that they have people from the same ethnic group at the place. Indeed it is the girls who were particular about where they can find other people from the same ethnic group. The boys did not show such particularity but K.M (male, 15

years), was interested in coming to Accra in particular because of it being the capital city of Ghana.

5.6 Children's lived experiences in the Accra (destination point)

This section of the chapter deals with the research question and objective which seeks to gain insight in the lived experiences of informants in the city. This objective is justified because it forms the core ingredient within the topic under study. This goes to indicate that all subsequent objectives were predicated on this. Furthermore, exploring this objective enabled me to know exactly what the daily activities of street children are in terms of their use of time, what they do the nature of their activities and what their activities entail, in order to know what they have to go through to survive in an unknown destination.

As a result of the lack of local knowledge and the absence of any close relatives in the destination point, unaccompanied migrant children tend to become street children. In situations like this, it is only public spaces such as the street that children can occupy to earn their living. The results from the study indicated that the realities of the lived experiences of unaccompanied migrant children on the street involves;

- work,
- interaction with adults,
- meeting personal demands,
- play and leisure,
- peer relations and
- Social life.

For instance, Mewa (male, 12 years), who have been on the street for eight months had a conversation with me on his daily activities on a typical day.

Owusuaa: Mewa, at what time do you begin your day, I mean the time you wake up and the time you start to do any other thing?

Mewa: I wake very early, around 5.30 am, find some water to wash my face and mouth and sit on the bridge for some time till it's 6.30am, when people begin to go to work.

Owusuaa: so it means you begin your day with work right?

Mewa: yes, I don't do anything here but work. I pick up my shoe shine box at dawn, around 6:30am and wait for my customers here.

Owusuaa: do you mean your clients come to you here?

Mewa: Yes, those who come here are those who are going to work in the morning. I wait here till 9:00 am, and then I walk to the near offices and come back here again at 1:00 pm.

Owusuaa: what time do you take your break?

Mewa: I take my break at 1:00 pm. I normally go to the lorry station to see my friends and also find some food to eat. During this period I also play card with my friends, and go back to work after 2:00 pm. I go round the residential area to repair people's shoes.

Owusuaa: what time do you sleep?

Mewa: I come from my rounds at 6.00 pm and sit here (here meaning at the foot of the bridge where he sleeps), and wait for people who want to shine and mend their foot wares. I sleep very late because I have to wait for the users of the bridge to reduce before I sleep.

The whole conversation depicts a very high level of agency, the manner Mewa organises his day, what he does, what he eats where he sleeps and so on are just evidence of it. He is in the city alone without his family and the purpose of his migration was to come and work for money, through the conversions it was clear that his mission for coming to the city is gradually being accomplished. He works hard and tries to save some of his money. The competence with which Mewa uses to execute his daily routine may be the reason why he is still surviving the challenging street life.

5.6.1 Street children's work

Work can never be excluded from the lives of street children because it is one of the major activities that occupy the bulk of children's daily lives on the street. A study by Apt and Grieco (1995) on street children in Accra found that; chop bar attendants, and street trading activities for example selling iced water second hand cloths, doughnuts and gari are among the work street children do in Accra. As part of their lived experiences, work was seen to be paramount in street children's lives as suggested by the results of the study. The results indicated the type of work my informants engage in, and it includes;

- head porter (a person hired to carry goods)
- sweeping of the market,
- shoe shining,
- hawking,
- fetching of water for clients
- drivers mate and
- Packing and loading things for shop owners in the market.

Dividing the various street work according to gender, the boys are engaged in; shoe shine, hawking, driver's mate and fetching of water for clients, while the girls are engaged in; head portering, sweeping of shops, packing and loading things for shop owners.

Work has often been associated with street children and my informants are not exempted. Here in the destination point, children's work is mainly paid work. Both boys and girls have paid work and relatively higher than what children received back home. Levine, (1999)'s study on "children's work and the global march against child labour" stated that; house work according to his findings is organised according to age and gender. His findings were confirmed by my study when it comes to the house chores children engaged in before coming to the city. Relating children's work on the street and the work done at home, one can say that the types of work children do on the street is also gendered to some extent. For example the shoe shine and drivers mate work is a domain solely for boys of different ages. On the other had the portage work is an area for males and females, adults and children alike.

On the contrary, the head porter work is for only females of different ages as well. Just as how household work is normally organised according to age and gender, so are some of the work on the street organised. In the case of my informants their work is mainly organised according to gender and not age. Age is not a very serious consideration here because the girls try to carry the load no matter how heavy it is, provided it will fit into their basins. The very heavy loads that cannot be contained in the head porter's basin will be given to the males who use hand drawn carts. The children participate in this work in order to earn a living. The heavier the load, the higher the money one gets so the children make sure they carry it no matter how heavy it can be, in order to get more money. Nobody forces any load on any child, the children themselves decide on which load to carry and what not to.

On the field, I also learnt that, there exist other types of work which my informants are not currently engaged in. The other street work children mentioned include;

- carrying of garbage (bola)
- Gather and sell of scraps.
- Truck pushing

From the interviews I had with my informants and what I also observed during my research, the above mentioned work (carrying of garbage, gathering and selling of scraps and truck pushing) including what my informants are currently engaged in, are the legitimate work that children can find whiles living on the street. On the other hand, there are certain types of work the boys mentioned that they said other children do. They mentioned things like; pick pocketing, stealing and becoming an apprentice to an adult weed (wee, Indian hemp) seller.

According to some of my informants they are content with what they are currently doing and have no plans in doing any other thing in addition, although some of the children said they have other work they do in addition to what they regularly do. For instance P.J (male, 14 year) who has been in the city for eight months and has hawking of confectionaries as his main working activity, also fetches water for people in nearby residences.

The modus operandi of children's street work

Observing children's street work in terms of its nature, duration, time, space and the mode of operation whiles I was on the field, I realized my informants must be very competent in order to go through such work giving the weather conditions as my basis for saying this. In order to know the "modus operandi" (mode of operations) and what usually goes on during the course of their work on a typical day.

The work of a Kaya yei

This is the domain of my female informants. My informants find what they are currently doing on the street very challenging as compared to what they used to do back home. What I realized during the conversations were that, they seem very happy and excited about the work they are currently doing in the city, compared to what they used to do back home. One of the girls told me although they have problems sometimes they are happy where they are. Raza (female, 14 years) narrated what she does as a kaya yei, and I will share her experiences here.

I wake up very early around 3:00 am, to be able to meet the traders who travel from the villages to the city to sell their wares. Some of them come to the train station, so I had to walk for more than five hundred meters from the lorry station where I sleep to the train station. I then wait for the market women to arrive so I can help them carry their goods to their various selling places. This continues till morning when I move to the market to prospect for clients. I go round the entire CDB (Central Business District) just looking for clients. The walking can go on for a long time, without getting a single person to carry her goods. If I am lucky to get a shopper to work with, we first of all negotiate the amount to be collected depending on the distance and the weight of what I am going to carry. The money to be paid by the client is also dependent on the places, that the client will be taking me before getting to the final destination. For instance, in most cases what I usually do is by going round with a shopper, whiles she does her shopping and putting the items she buys in my basin to carry for her. In such a situation the money to be paid is always determined when we finally get to where the shopper is going. Normally when the money to be paid is not decided before I start the work, the clients usually pay less when we get to the final place. What I always do is to decide on the amount to be paid before I agree on taking the work. I take my rest in the afternoon, at one of the car Park in the CBD. Here I rest and buy some food to eat. This is also the place I meet my friends and have fun. Looking for clients is not an easy thing, because most of shoppers have their permanent porters who carry their goods for them. If am not lucky to find my regular clients to carry their goods, then I have to go round the market to look for client

after the leisure is over. The clients are not located at a particular place to find, one has to look for them.

The purpose for reproducing this story is to help in creating a mental picture about what is involved in working on the street.

In Grundling's study on "the concrete particulars of the everyday realities of street children", street children are able to organize themselves into small groups, pool and share resources, and take care of one another and of those who are not able to take care of themselves (Grundling, 2005). Grundling's children and the children in my study, are examples of agency and competence which children on the street can comfortably exhibit in the face of adversity.

Being a *kaya yei*, can be very challenging. This type of work that the girls do, show how willing and desperate the children are to make earnings meet in an unknown location as independent migrant children. The above, description of what street children's work entails is one of the typical illustrations of agency on the part of my informants. The independent way the children use to organize their daily activity, in order to render good service to their client to me is very commendable. They work in the scorching sun for hours just to make a living for themselves and their families back home. The children exhibit a high level of agency in their work, considering the fact that they live alone without their family, shows a high level of competence as well. Their daily activities including their work are all organized by the children themselves without any adult supervision.

What I observed on the field was that, to add another job to what one has currently is not a problem for street children because there are different kinds of work children can choose from. The actual problem is, whether one will have the time to do the work and also do it well without bring any trouble to the person, is another thing to have in mind. Analyzing the information on the children who have additional work responsibilities revealed that, these children have either been in Accra for a longer period of time, their current work schedule is not demanding enough and the money they are getting from their current work is not enough for them for some reason. This was the case among both boys and girls who have additional work load.

5.6.2 Meeting personal demands

Every individual owes it upon him or herself certain personal commitments which include taking good care of the body. The data gathered revealed some personal demands that street

children have to satisfy on daily basis whether they have money to carry that out or not. The personal daily demands of street children include;

- personal hygiene (bath, laundry, where to keep personal belongings, toilet)
- feeding
- health care and
- a place to sleep

These are all part of street children's daily commitments, although health care is not a daily issue; one cannot afford not to plan for it whether one lives at "home" or on the street. I learnt that the boys take their bath 2-3 times a week and the female 4-5 times a week and all in the evenings. In the mornings t both boys and girls wash their faces, brush their teeth and off they leave for work.

Comparing the sleeping places of boys and girls, all the boys sleep in open spaces, while some of the girls have rented room and other girls also sleep in open spaces (children's accommodation in the city will be analyzed further in this chapter under, "challenges"). The children patronize public bathrooms and toilets in the community where they live. They buy water, rent towels, comb and pomade before they can bath because they do not have their own towels and even if they have, a safe place to them will be a problem, so it is better to use what the bathroom operator has. They also have to pay to use the public toilets as well. The children patronize these facilities only when they have money, because they find the money they pay for these services very high.

For the boys and girls who sleep in open spaces, finding a place to bath in the morning will not be possible because of the presence of others and those who have rented rooms, the queue that one has to stand before getting a chance to take a shower in the mornings can sometimes be a bother. This is the time of the day that both adult worker and school children have to take their bath. For children who go to school, it is mandatory to bath before going. This put a lot of pressure on the available public bathing places, which the street children always try to avoid and rather do their bathing at night when nobody is watching.

Almost all my informants have never sort any professional medical services when they fall sick. They buy off the counter drugs and use them whenever they have malaria or headache (access to health care will be analyzed further in this chapter). The children confirmed they never cooked their own meals. They buy food from venders every day, claiming it is cheaper

to buy food because of the long process involved in cooking. They do their washing and other things on Sundays because this is the only day they do not go to work.

Although being able to meet one's personal needs seem to be a challenge to the children, they are able to manage through the situation and make the best out of it. Having to pay for using public facilities, contributes to the children skipping bathing for a long period because it might be difficult for them to pay for these services all the time. When confronted by a situation where the children do not have money, they find their own means in attending to nature's call when the need arises, such as going to the rubbish dump and big garters to ease themselves, for which they do not have to pay any money.

5.6.3 Interactions with adults

As part of the lived experiences of my informants on the street, coming into contact with adults is something that they have to encounter every day because of the nature of their work. The children mentioned they interact with adult porters and adult clients everyday on the street. Their relationship with some adults is characterised by generational conflicts, where the adults always want to play the master role and the children the servants. The adults do not get it easy whenever they want to cheat the children.

Adult competitors

Adult completion is only between the girls and adults, but the boys do not face such completion in their work. It is interesting to note that, it is not only children who work as head porters on the streets of Accra. There are all manner of people who do this type of work, these people include adults both males and females. The children battle with adults to catch the attention of potential shoppers in the market. In this type of work, females carry customers' wares in a basin on top of their head whiles the males' use hand drawn carts to do the work. The kind of aggressiveness that the males use to do the work is something which is worth noting. It is even alleged that, these males use hard drugs in discharging their duties because of the way they go about shouting on top of their voices when they are pushing their carts and hand drawn trucks on the streets. The males are able to carry very heavy loads because of the means they use in going about their job, which makes the competition between the male porters and children head porters very indirect. It is indirect competition because of the different modes of their operations and also has a different target audience they serve. They carry very heavy load which the porters cannot carry in their basins.

On the other hand, the female adults' means of doing the work is the same as the children, so the competition is very direct. Looking for clients to work with in the market is often "fought" for, because everybody wants to earn some money. In the case of the adults, they have to fight for potential shoppers because they have children and other responsibilities which involve the use of money to take care of. This is the type of work they do in order to take care of their families. In respect to the adults, the time to jump into another trade or apprenticeship is too late for them now, so having this type of job means a lot to them. The children on the other hand, also need the job just as the adults do. Talking about my informants who are unaccompanied migrant children, they need the job in order to take care of their daily basic needs and also send some of the little money they get back home to their families. Competing for clients in the market is something that is necessary in their daily working activities.

For example, Shai (female, 13 years), who has been in the city for 8 months, shared her experiences with one adult head porter, and this is what she had to say;

I always have to be running after shoppers because the grownups are always around. They often try to beat me whenever I win over a client that they also want to have. They most of the time complain that, I and the other children charge very low for our services, which makes it difficult for they the adults to also charge high. They even threatened me not to come to their area again to take away their clients or else I will see. One adult seized my basin to prevent me from carrying a client's load.

In Shai's situation, shoppers prefer using her to carry their goods for them because they can bargain to get a good deal as compared to adults who charge very high for their services. Shai, just like some other children in the head portage work, are often very easy to be convinced and easy to be manipulate sometimes, that is why shoppers often use the children. I see Shai's attitude toward her work and the adult competitors as a strategy to win more clients, but not as a weakness or exhibiting any limited competence. In the face of competition one has to be very smart and also apply tactics that will help you to beat the competition. The agency as well as the competence exhibited by the children in their work makes them survivors on the street.

Adult clients

My informant's encounter with adults is not only with the adult head porters, but also the relationship between them and their clients. There are the shopper clients and shop owners as clients. The results from the study indicate that, the relationship between my informants and

their shopper clients is not always smooth or cordial. On the other hand, there exist a cordial relationship between shop owners and the girls. There are certain periods that misunderstanding arises between them. I witnessed in some instances during one of my numerous observations, where clients and one informant have been in hot quarrels and arguments as a result of some misunderstanding of some sort. Most of the misunderstandings come about as a result of; changing destination by clients after the amount to be paid has already been bargained and accepted by both parties.

I will now share Babi (14 year old)'s experiences with one adult client at this moment;

I had a bitter encounter with one of my clients one afternoon. After we had decided on how much she is going to pay for my services, she gave me a lesser amount which made me very angry and decided to bring the goods back to where I picked it. She stopped me from moving and started insulting me; I also insulted her and called her a thief. She pushed me on the ground and I also threw her things on the ground and run away.

Such encounters often happen to children head porters because I observed a similar situation during my field work, where the child ended up with a knee injury because she was thrown severely on the rough ground by a client. Adults always want to have their way but the children in most cases insist that the right things are done. They are told to be disrespectful if they challenge the adults, because adults have the idea that children cannot reason for themselves and they are to take anything that comes from the adults without complaints. Babi showed the client she is not such children, if there are any like that. She insisted to have what is due her even if it means she has to cry to draw the attention of others, which most children head porters do when they feel cheated by irresponsible adults.

5.6.4 Play and leisure

Playing is one of the areas carved for children. It is said that the “ideal” situation of childhood is a period of play and study. Western ideologies of childhood see children’s play and study as the only things children should be doing during their childhood days. In deed Article 31 of the UNCRC (1989) categorically states children’s rights to play. It is a common knowledge that, children in Global South are said to work more and play less.

The results of my study indicated that street children aside their schedule of work also finds time to play. The facts of the matter are that, children in the Global South also play even

when they work. According to Punch 2003, children frequent play whiles working or on the way to and from their tasks and in her study, on “childhoods in the minority world”, one of the children in her study said;

“I went to fetch water and my sister saw a little pigeon. We went to catch it but we couldn’t catch the small pigeon, we fetched the water and went to play football” (Punch 2003, p. 288).

Play is also part of street children activities and this takes place during their leisure periods. The girls also do some weaving as well during this time that they are free from work. The males only play cards during the leisure times. During my field work I observed on few occasions when my informants were playing during the period of their rest at the car park. The girls usually play Ampe one of the local physical plays which involves jumping and clapping of hands, and also play in their local language where words and sounds such as singing in the play.

Most of the literature on street children is often silent on the play aspect of these children’s lives, but very loud on the work that the children do on the street. Although work is a prominent activity in the daily lives of my informants, street children also find time to play. My male informants also find time to play, although they have a lot of responsibility on them as working children in the city. All the boys told me they play cards during their spare time with their friends. They also join other people to play football in a nearby school park on Sundays. The girls have a leisure period every afternoon between 12:30 pm and 1:30 pm. During this resting period they sometimes take turns in plaiting their hair and also weave hats and other accessories. These are the major activities I observed the girls doing when they were not playing or working.

Relying on the data available to compare how much time street children spend on work and the time they allocate to play, I observed that street children work more and play less. This pattern of behaviour is understandable, because street children; take care of themselves, have some responsibilities towards their families and have a lot of commitments which other children do not have to worry about. Therefore street children cannot afford to spend more time on play and less time on their work, because their work is too important to them if they want to survive on the street. Street children’s everyday lives need money to be managed and spending time on frivolities will not be in their own interest.

5.6.5 Peer relations

As part of their lived experiences in the urban center, street children have a network of friends which they associate with on daily bases. In some cases street children form a gang of friends which they use to perpetuate all sorts of activities to help them feel at home.

Peer relationship is one thing that can be considered as important in the lives of migrant children. Unaccompanied migrant children cling to their peers because of the lack of families in their destination points. In certain circumstances, my informants call their friends “sisters”. They have a sense of security in such relationships because they become each other’s keeper and support one another during difficult times. According to the children, they support each other in many ways including;

- financial support
- times of sickness
- food
- information from home
- news in the community
- companionship (in the sense of accompanying each other to places)

In my conversations with Babi (female, 13 years) about her friend, this is what Babi said;

Anytime I fall sick, it is my friends who get me my medicine. We play together when we are not working. It is my friend Shai, who thought me how to weave this handkerchief. We sometimes eat together when we buy different foods.

Functioning in a group of friend living on the street can be very demanding. Each member in the group has the responsibility to relay information to other members of the group. Working in a place where both children and adults compete for the same clients, passing information round to friends for them to locate potential shoppers and market women who need their services can be very useful. New arrivals who are also migrant children find such groups very useful as well. Such people usually begin their relations in the vehicles that transport them to the urban center. In most cases they travel in twos or threes from their home towns as I learnt from Lasa (female, 14 years).

Narrating how she got in touch with her current crop of friends, Nasa (female, 13 years) told me she came to Accra together with a friend on the same day. Nasa and her friend came on the same bus and became friends on their long journey to Accra. Nasa had no idea where she was going to live in Accra, but she was told before starting her journey that, there were places at the lorry station that people sleep, so she can also sleep there. Nasa’s friend was having telephone number of her contact in Accra. Upon arriving in Accra, it took Nasa and her

friends about a week to contact the person, so they were sleeping at the lorry station. It is their contact who found Nasa and her friend the place they are currently living in the slum, and when the girls had a room, their roommates became their friends.

Concerning my informants, having friends or being in one form of a group is like a snowball formation, one person introduces you to one person and you also do same and it continues. By the time they realize they have a lot of friends. The children use their friends as their source of strength and hope. They encourage each other and motivate one another to move on when situations become tough. As Mizen and Ofofu-Kusi (2010), puts it; it is very common thing to encounter one street child in central Accra to find her or him in the company of another, and throughout their study among the children, Mizen and Ofofu-Kusi have come to know that it is a rare occurrence, to find one street child alone for more than a short period of time. With the conception of street children being children at “risk”, they need each other’s company in time of need.

5.6.6 Social life

Discussing the issue of their social life in the city, my informants were quick to mention a number of programs they attend. The presence of different forms of social amenities such as entertainment centers, video, theater centers, cinema, night clubs, restaurants, drinking spots and beaches are some of the attractions of the city, which may be absent or in very minimum supply in the rural areas. I learnt during the study that, street children also have social lives just like any other group of people. In order for the children to be able to acclimatise, they have to socialise so they can feel at home in their new area. The availability of entertainment centers provide the avenue for the migrant children to visit such places and entertain themselves and also make new friends. The children have a number of places they attend on both weekend and week days. Amongst the social activities of street children include;

- weddings (amaria, meaning wedding in the Hausa language),
- naming ceremonies
- film shows and
- Going to the beach.
- Visiting friends

I was not surprised to hear my informants saying they often attend marriage ceremonies. My female informants are children living in a predominantly Muslim area. The girls attending wedding ceremonies were not a surprise to me because such ceremonies are rampant in most

Muslim communities. One famous reason the girls gave for rushing to weddings grounds, was to see the latest lace and the dress styles in town.

It is during marriage ceremonies that both families of the bride and the groom display their finest cloths and their wealth. Everybody who is invited to the wedding must also be elegantly dressed. These weddings are often days of pomp and pageantry. The wedding ceremonies are actually beautiful ceremonies to watch. There is mostly free food and drinks, drumming and dancing and other very entertaining shows. As children who buy their own food regularly, having free food during marriage ceremonies, is something that my girls look forward to anytime they hear something of that nature is going to happen in the vicinity. The exercising of their agency is very much expressed here. The girls also attend naming ceremonies although they are often not invited, they attend it any ways. The boys do not specifically dress up to attend these ceremonies, but they make sure they enjoy the ceremony any time they come across one.

The patronage of video, cinema, and the beach is something that most children do when they have any free time. Some truant children even skip school to watch videos. Both boys and girls enjoy watching movies. My informants' video watching attitude is as a result of the high number of video centers in the slum that they live. During my field work and my visits to the place the girls live, I spotted a lot of drinking bars and video centers in such a small area. The operators are not strict in checking who comes in and who does not. They allow anybody to watch the movie provide the person has money to pay for it. Although the content of these movies can be described as having "adult content", children of all ages including adults are allowed to watch provided you can pay. The children seem to like these movies and often talk about them with their friends. I guess "adult content" or not, the competent children are often able to sort out the lessons from the movie and discard what is not relevant to them.

I learnt from Mewa (male, 12 years) that, he uses film watching as a means to keep awake until his sleeping place (the foot bridge) is vacant, so he can go to sleep. The females on the other hand enjoy going to movies because that is the time all the girls find time to be together during the night. Such calculated and timing tactics of Mewa's sleeping patterns, suggest how some street children are very cautious in their use of public space. Mewa knows the purpose of the foot bridge is not for sleep, but for people to use to get to either sides of the road. Going to sleep whiles people are still passing, will obstruct their movement. Mewa therefore decides to go watch movies and sleep after fewer people are using it. Such high level of maturity exhibited by street children contributes to the numerous evidences on the issue of

competence in the study of children and childhood. The children know they are not the only users of that particular public space, so using the place at times that will not inconvenience other uses, is a nice strategy to adopt if one wants to survive in such an environment. My informants are seen to be actively involved in the construction of their own childhood.

5.7 Street children's contributions

This section explores one of my research objectives and questions which seek to explore the contributions children make to their families and the society. This objective is seen to be very important because such contributions are vital, looking at the scanty earnings of some street children. It is obvious that the activities of working children yield benefits even if not to anybody at least, to themselves, sometimes to their families and the society at large. According to Camacho (1999), the economic benefit of child labour migrants are unquestionable, giving the overwhelming motivation of the children to alleviate their families' dire economic conditions, and the hard work that they invest in order to send money back home.

In trying to explore this area of contributions of street children, I began by inquiring about how street children spend their earnings. It is only through this means that I can deduce what they actually contribute to. The studies indicated that street children use their earnings to;

- pay rent,
- buy food,
- pay for personal needs,
- send some to parents back home,
- save,
- lend
- buy cloths,
- pay for AMA (Accra Metropolitan Assembly) toll,

I learnt from K.M (male, 15 years) that, he send money to his mother all the time, through the drivers who ply their village to Accra. K.M, does this because he has promised her mother sending her money, so that is what he is exactly doing. K.M, buys things only when it is necessary for him because he has to save money to help his mother look after his younger siblings. What K.M sends to his family is not much, but her mother appreciates it because it is better than none. Looking at the cost of living in the rural areas, K.M's contributions toward the up keep of his family can be said to be substantial, because the money is often used to support the purchasing of basic necessities.

Almost all the children use their money for similar things such as; food, paying for personal needs, cloths and savings, and only girls who sleep in rented rooms pay for rent and only those who have family commitments, send money home. It is interesting to note that not all the children send money home, although majority of them do. Generally speaking, remittances include; money transmitted to villages by migrants through the post or by friends (Zhang, 2010). Lasa (female, 14 years), told me; she only send money occasionally, to her family. All the boys on the other hand told me they send money regularly to their mothers because that was part of the agreement back home before coming to the city. The boys had to send money home for the up keep of their younger siblings. Another contribution street children make is by paying their tolls to the AMA officials every morning and also helps shoppers and shop owners to carry and tidy up their shops.

Such contributions of street children towards the welfare of their families do matter because in a study by Camacho (1999), the children in his study revealed that their families use their remittances for day to day necessities, education and other needs for their siblings so are my informants. Although my female informants did not specify what their families use the monies for, the boys told me their mothers use the money to take care of their families' personal needs. The children try very hard to save some of their money for future use. As children living alone on the street they can rely on their savings when they fall sick or need money urgently to solve any pressing problems. Street children also lend their friends money if only they have, so that their friends can pay on a later date. This lending attitude helps street children to feel relaxed in anxious situations if they know they will be able to get help from their friends. In the absence of their families such support are very much welcomed in times of need.

5.8 How Street children perceive themselves and the life on the street

This section of the chapter presents the results on the research question which explores children's own perception of themselves as street children. During my interactions with my informants, one thing became very clear to me and that is, the children I worked with seemed like very happy children and very content with what they currently have or do. There are a lot of things that have been said about street children which makes society to despise them. For example in the "Ga" language which is the local language of the people of Accra, the term "*kuborlor*" meaning a person who does not stay or sleep at home. This term is normally used

to refer to street children, especially street children who for the fact that they do not bath, or wash their cloths, do not comb their kinky hair and generally move about looking so unkempt because of the nature of their work. Telling someone to be a *kuborlor*, may be interpreted to mean the person does not stay at home and therefore he or she is a thief. Children seen with such an appearance, makes people become very suspicious of them, thereby associating stealing with them. This is sometimes how the boys in my study appear. The boys themselves confirmed that, some of their clients do not want them to sit on their verandas, because the clients think they will take something.

Raffaelli et al (2001), did a study on “how Brazilian street children do experience the street” they revealed that those street children’s overall feeling on the street involves; the feeling of freedom that is; they do not want to stick to a schedule, the feeling of greatness that is; they have a lot of friends, pals and clients, others also feel sad, in the sense that they feel something could happen to them, loneliness and the fact that there is no one to talk to or to help them on the street. Asking about how children view their presence on the street, the emerging results of my study indicates that, some of the children have positive perceptions while others have negative ones, although majority of the children were positive, about how they perceive themselves as street children and the street in general. The children’s perceptions on the life of the street include;

- This is where they make their money
- This is where we can find work
- They make a lot of friends
- They see a lot of things (examples they gave include, latest fashion styles or trendy things).
- We do whatever we want
- Nobody controls us
- Sometimes afraid in the night
- The work is difficult

The children really understand the dynamics of street life and they care less about how and who perceives them in anyway. The children saw themselves as any other person living in Accra but not as “street children”. The street children live a normal ordinary life, like any person. They perceive themselves as children who work on the street, because they travelled from their villages to Accra mainly to come and work for money. They perceive themselves as any other people in the city. They work, they make money, and they make a lot of friends and have less adult control.

Street children perceiving themselves as any other person in Accra, is very understandable, because there are a lot of children who live with their families in Accra but are also doing the same work they are doing. There are also some children who sleep in open spaces even though they are with their families, and more importantly it is not only street children who sleep in a room of 10-15 people. There are families who also occupy single rooms just like theirs. There are adults who sleep in the open spaces, both men and women. All these goes to establish the point that, the situations that street children find themselves is not peculiar to them. It is an everyday issue that majority of the people they interact with also go through. Making a lot of noise on “street children” and leaving out “street adults” rather beats my imagination, because there are some adults who live on the street.

Tuna (female, 15 years), told me; she is in Accra alone and she is happy. She does whatever she want and carry things to make her own money. Tuna does not have any parents or elder siblings to tell her what to do. She really likes the city and street life. Drawing from Halfacree (1999), conceptualisation of migration as a “good thing” (in Rye, 2006), where the author associated migration to be good if migrant’s current location offers them a better living conditions compared to that of their previous location. This is exactly what is happening to Tuna in the city, she is happy because she works and get money therefore street life is good.

With the kind of relationship I built with both my male and female informants, I realised how funny it can sometimes be when people label others they do not know as “bad people”. It is a fact that some category of street children are into all sorts of antisocial behaviour, this does not mean every child who live or work on the street should be branded as such. Just as there are adult criminals, so are there children criminals as well. My informants have “legitimate” work that they do daily which includes head porters, shoe shining, hawking and a driver’s mate. These are work, which fetches them legitimate money no matter how meagre it may look. These are very hard working children, who want to live by society’s standards, by conforming to societal norms and by behaving in socially acceptable ways without crime. Although they are seen by society as non-conformist, because they live on the street and not in proper “homes” with their families, they are making it possible to live a quiet and a modest life in the city.

Asking my informants about what they think about the various tags and brands that some sections of the society have given street children and children in their situation, almost all of them thought it was very unfortunate for people to classify all street children as “bad

children” or people who need to be feared or avoided. Responding to this, K.M (male, 15 years, a SSB) said;

Most of the times my customers do not allow me to even sit on their veranda to shine their shoes or nail their sandals. I know it is because they think I might steal something of theirs or look inside their rooms and give armed robbers a tip off. This idea of stealing has never come into my mind but I do understand them and why they feel that way about us. What is important to me is to get the job done whether rain or shine, get paid and continue my journey. I know am not a thief.

As I listened to such stories, I realised how unfortunate the situation is, because of the stereotype and perception people have about street children, they even care less about their welfare.

Babi (female, 14 years), also shared her experience and she said;

Sometimes my clients tell me I should make sure not to pick any of their items they have asked me to carry. They tell me this as if I am a thief. Also when we are on our way to their destination, they will be shouting on me and also tell me not to walk too fast before I run away with their things.

In a nutshell my informants perceive themselves as good and happy children contrary to what society thinks about them. They never denied the fact that there are bad nuts amongst them, but they think and also know that they are not criminals. According to them they have never been arrested by the police before. If they were criminals, they would have been in juvenile detention by now one of them said. According to them they know some children who are often been harassed by the police because they have done one bad thing or the other. According to them they are normal children who are trying to earning some money for themselves and their families. They believe they are as normal as any other child out there.

5.9 Children’s rights in relation to schooling, access to health care and participation

In this section I will attend to a few topics of relevance in the UNCRC. The convention makes it clear that the rights of the child under the convention are related to the special needs relating to childhood. The needs include; protection, to particular provisions such as schooling, health care, family life and to participation (James and James, 2008). As my informants were children, I decided to also have a fair knowledge about their experiences in; schooling, access to health care and their views on their economic participation.

The right of children to participate in issues concerning their own lives was one of the main issues on my interview guide. As usual, none of my informants knew there is a document that

gives them the right to participate in issues concerning their own lives. As Africans, it is not part of our culture for children to be consulted when parents are taking decisions in the home. In fact my informants were amazed to know there is such a document available. I learnt from Fari (female, 14 years) that, such a thing can never happen in her family. Even her elder brothers and sisters are never consulted so she does not expect to be consulted either.

In all the dimensions of participation that is cultural, social, political and economical participation, it is children's participation in politics and economics that is very much associated with controversies within some sections of the public (James and James, 2009).

5.9.1 Schooling

I learnt from the study that, some street children have no classroom education, while others have. For those who have, they became dropouts along the way. Comparing the boys and the girls, all the boys in my study have some form of basic school education before they came to Accra. The highest level they had was up to Junior High School (JHS). Amongst the girls, it was Babi, who attended school when she was in the village, but had to drop out for some reason. The rest of the girls never attended school. However, Muda and Lasa were seamstress apprentices who go to learn how to sew after finishing all their house chores in the morning. I now present a conversation I had with Babi (female, 14 years), about her previous school experiences.

Owusuaa: Babi, you said you were attending school when you were in your hometown, right?

Babi: yes, I was attending school but stopped when I got to class five.

Owusuaa: why did you stop?

Babi: I never understood what every the teacher says when she comes to class. The only thing we do most at school was to play because our teacher hardly comes to school.

Owusuaa: do you have to stop school if your teacher doesn't come to school? Are you saying that your teacher never comes to school every day of the week or some days?

Babi: she doesn't come on market days and other days too. We just play when we go to school. I then started going to the market with my elder sister to help her. So I stopped.

Owusuaa: so do you attend school here in Accra?

Babi: No, I am here to work and not to go to school. I think I am too old to go to school now. I don't want children to laugh at me.

Babi is a 14 year old girl, so referring to school going children as "children" is understandable. She works, she is independent, and she is not under any parental control,

takes decisions on her own and also takes care of herself, so she feels like an “adult”. Babi ones attended school, but had to dropout because of school and family problems. Her class teacher was not frequent in the classroom, because she goes to do business during market days. Such situations usually happen in village schools, where teacher supervision is not forthcoming as a result of logistical problems of the education service. Teachers do whatever they like, because they know nobody is watching them. In Ghana for example teachers often complain about their low salaries, which can also be the reasons for village school teacher to top up their income by doing other businesses as well. They end up using their classroom hours on their own businesses, leaving the children to suffer for it. Babi was driven out of school because the dysfunctional educational structures in place, forced her to take the decision she took. On the other hand as a social actor with the sense of agency, she took the decision to migrate in order to make good use of her time.

Again, Muda (female, 12 years), had never attended school. I share Muda’s story here;

My sister and I have always been at home. We have never been to school or the classroom before. But my brothers go to school. We help our mother in the house and also in the market. I wish I can have the chance to go to school.

The attitude of Muda’s parents towards the girls in the house can best be attributed to cultural influences. The preference of the boy child to the girl child in most societies in Ghana sometimes influences some parents to make certain decisions which do not always favour the girl child. In most societies in Ghana, the male child is often seen to be the one who carries the family name and the females will go out of the family to be with the husbands and so carry another person’s name. Such idea makes the fathers to treat the males with value than the females, because it is the boy child who will inherit his properties in future. This becomes evident in families with very little resources and wants to take the decision on whom to spend what on. The boys are the ones who are considered first. There is a usual saying in Ghana which goes like “the place of a woman is in the kitchen”. Girls are therefore seen to be fit for the kitchen, to help our mothers in the house, take care of the younger children, or help our mothers in the market. All these stereotypes of women go a long way to influence such preferences between the girl and the boy child within families.

Again one other factor that can affect the schooling of children is the decisions of politicians. The decisions that politicians take go a long way to affect the progress and development of children in all aspects of their lives, being it health or education. Most often than not, when African governments want to cut down spending or undergo structural adjustments, the

sector they target first and foremost is always the educational sector. Such cuts in educational spending puts additional financial burden on parents. Such burden manifests in school fees and other educational materials. In situations where parents and guardians find it difficult to pay such commitments, the children become dropouts or delays in their schooling. It is some of these educational commitments that made some of my informants to become dropouts and find themselves on the street.

Majority of children in Ghana are in school now, although a number of them are still outside the school system. The Free Compulsory Basic Education (FCUBE) program is one of the long standing educational programs to see to children's free education. The recent additions such as the capitation grant and the school feeding program are all in place, to motivate children to go to school and also stay in school. In spite of all these, there are still some children who are outside the classroom. I discovered from both boys and girls that, they never had free education in their villages, because they had to buy their own books, school uniforms and also make other payments in the school. Nabe (male, 14 years), dropped out of school not because of his parents could not pay his school fees, but because most of his friends were not going to school. He liked it at home because he can go into the forest with his friends to hunt for game and other wild foods. Nabi's parents never encouraged him to go to school, so he stopped going from primary 6.

Children's decisions to stop school can be influenced by a number of factors that have been demonstrated by the children. In Nabi's case, he stopped going to school, because his friends were out of school. He did not find school to be interesting without his friends so he decided to join them where ever they maybe. Nabi's decision may also have been fuelled by the conditions in the school he was attending. The question of whether there are teachers, text books, classroom furniture and all the needed items that schools need to operate available in Nabi's school? As a village school, some of these items may be lacking, the situation then becomes worse when there are no teachers to teach and also supervise the children when they go to school. More so, Nabi's parents were also not encouraging him to go to school just as Nabi said himself. His adventures with his friends in the forest were beneficial to Nabi, because at least he is putting his time in a good venture that yields results.

Of greater interest to me when it came to children's experiences on schooling, was the issue of combining work and school. In some situations working children combine their school

with work, and this can be said about majority of children in the Global South. I present a convention I had with P.J (male, 14 years), on his schooling experiences.

I dropped out of school when I was in JHS (from 1). I used to enjoy going to school very much but after the death of my father I had to stay out of school to help my mother on the farm, because I am the first born male. I have little brothers and sisters who have to be taken care of by my mother. My mother cannot do it alone so I had to help by working as a labourer in people's farms to support her. I tried going to school and helping my mother at the same time, but this did not work. The farm work begins very early in the morning before the sun comes up, and my school was also in the morning. I could not combine, so I stopped.

Leaning on the concept working children as defined by James and James (2008, p 145) which states that Working children are; “Children who contribute their labour, either on an unpaid basis or for monetary gain; they may or may not combine this with education”. P.J is one of the children who work and does not necessarily combine working with school, because he did not have the opportunity to do so. Bourdillon (2006), suggest there is sometimes competition between school and paid work, just as the competition between P.J’s work and his schooling. Although P.J, tried to combine his working activities with that of his schooling, he could not do that, because of the rigid school systems we have in Ghana. School children are supposed to get to school early in the morning and close in the afternoon and sometimes in the evening. This system makes it difficult for children who want to combine school and work, such as P.J.

5.9.2 Health care

The issue of health care became a concern to me, because of the provisions in the UNCRC stating that, children should have the rights to health care. My informants have very limited access to “proper” health care. Street children’s health care information from the study shows that the children;

- have no medical insurance,
- do not go to hospitals when they are sick
- they self medicate
- uses herbal medicine

Health care is now covered by insurance and in private clinics it is cash and carry in Ghana. Until recently, both public and private health care in Ghana was “cash and carry”, which means the patient has to pay the full cost of the service after the service has been rendered. The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) was introduced not too long ago, which makes the payment of money instantly a thing of the past.

None of my informants have ever attended any health centre whenever they are sick. The children purchase malaria and pain killers at the drug stores anytime they fall sick. Although the country now has health insurance policy, my informants have not registered, so they are not covered. Raising the amount to pay the initial premium seems to be very difficult for the street children now. The results also showed that my female informants access herbal medications some times. The children find this alternative medication to be affordable that is why they patronise it. The street children's limited access to health care is very worrisome, because of the mosquito problem the children face. Sleeping outside in an open space, means one should be prepared to endure the discomfort and the displeasure of mosquito visitations at night. This means that my informants' plan for a regular malaria treatment should be part of children's street life dynamics. Not being able to access the regular hospital care, forces children to look for alternative means of treatment whenever they become sick. Relying on herbal medication as an alternate to solve their health problems is one of the smartest decisions street children can make. In Ghana, herbal medicines are available and also very easy to access. One does not have to go through bureaucratic structures as seen in the regular hospitals, in order to access herbal treatment if one wants to.

Also, street children's personal hygiene behaviour can be seen as a health issue. Children using public towels and sponges can easily spread diseases among themselves. The children need to be educated on the need to have their own personal items such as towels and sponges. Their behaviour can be interpreted as lack of education in personal hygiene. Both boys and girls need this education. Children who have limited access to health care can be educated to practise good personal hygiene so that they do not have any diseases that will need any medical attention.

5.9.3 Street children's view on their economic participation (work)

The views of children on their economic participation which involves work will be presented next. As work is very vital in the lives of street children, their views about their work was explored. The results indicated that children's views on their work were generally positive. Their views about work include;

- I get money from my work that, is why I do it,
- I have my own schedules,
- am able to help people with what I do,
- I will change this work if I get enough money.
- It is very difficult

Some of the children lamented how difficult their work can be and others also agreed that although the work is difficult they will still continue to do it because the work is lucrative. The girls thought their work was good and fetches them money, but they also expressed the difficult nature of it, in terms of walking in the sun on hot afternoons and carrying very heavy loads some times. K.M (male, 15 years, SSB), was very happy about his work, he was happy about the progresses in his life so far for doing this work. All his facial expresses, showed K.M is really making it on the street. He also did not hesitate to point at the difficult nature of his work and cited the hot weather as one thing that makes his shoe shine work, very difficult. Their participation in work is need for their general up keep.

Participation according to James and James (2008) is “to take part in and contribute to a situation, an event, a process or an outcome, although the extent of the contribution and the autonomy with which it is made may vary considerably in various ways”, hence my informant’s participation in work helps them to contribute towards their current living conditions and that of their families. Recognizing children’s right to work as outlined in The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child identifies the situation the African child faces and the responsibilities children have toward themselves and their families.

In Mason et al (2009)’s study on Children and Participation, it was found that one of the benefits of children participation is that; children feel closer to their parents and also have greater respect for the opinion of others. In applying Mason et al (2009)’s findings, street children’s economic participation can also be beneficial for them and their families in the sense that, children will have the family bond existing between them strengthened. This can be done through children’s street work and the remittances that they give to their families.

5.10 Challenges street children encounter

This part of the chapter is very important because it deals with the objective that seeks to explore the challenges children face in their destination point. This objective was informed by some researcher’s claim that street children are children at “risk”. According to Kapadia (1997), current welfare literature has categorized street children as “children at risk”. This phrase has replaced the one “children in need” and has been taken over by UNICEF using the appellations “children in especially difficult circumstances” (CEDC), and “children in need of special protection” (CNSP) (in Panter-Bricks, 2000). As Panter-Brick will ask, at “risk” of what? (ibid). Exploring the challenges children face on the street, will enable me to

understand the CNSP and the CEDC UNICEF is talking about and whether indeed, street children are really at “risk”.

The results of the data collected during the study indicated the challenges my informants face in their destination point include;

- peer influence,
- assault,
- accommodation (including where to sleep)
- meeting daily needs
- finding clients

During my interview sessions with my informants, it was clear that the general conditions in which they live are not the best. One of the difficulties my informants had to encounter when they came to the city was the problem of accommodation. During my night observations in the city trying to know how the night life of my informants was, I observed a peculiar situation during my rounds. The event as I recorded in my field notes unfolded as follows;

At one of the lorry stations in the city centre, where two of my informants sleep, the children sleep in the open space. They use large plastic bags to cover themselves, and this serve two purposes; to prevent mosquito bites and also from the rain during rainy season. The children sleep together with adult females including some families. The individual sleeping spaces are not permanent, because it is on first come first serve bases. Those who come to the sleeping place early, choose where they want to sleep and the choice of a particular place depends on how closer the place is to the grownups or adults. When I asked why they want sleeping places closer to adults, Babi (female, 14 years) told me they often become afraid something might happen to them, but if they sleep in the middle of the group they are assured to be safe.

Such accommodations are free but can be very expensive in the long run because the health of the children can seriously be in danger. This was evident in the study where informants had to buy drugs often to cure malaria.

I also visited the sleeping place the SSBs that is, K.M and Mewa, during my night observations at the foot bridge where they sleep. My informants were not the only people who sleep on the foot bridge; there were some other children and adults there as well. The sleeping arrangement here is significantly different from what pertains at the girls’ open space at the lorry station. Here each level of the step of the bridge becomes a “bed” for each person who sleeps on the bridge. The similarities between the two sleeping places are that the males also use black polythane bags as sleeping cloths to prevent mosquito bites as well.

It will be interesting to think that, all the difficulties these children mentioned were not exceptional to them, in fact they are difficulties that majority of the population faces for being

an under developed country. For example a world bank report (2005) on poverty state that, the head count of people earning below the poverty line of 1.25 dollar per day, estimates around 30% in Ghana (www.worldbank.org). My informants themselves realized the difficulty do not pertain to them alone, but others as well. In spite of all these “difficulties” my informants experience in the city, they were clear in pointing out that, they are happy about what they are currently doing as children and are glad they are making a difference in the lives of their families, in the face of all these economic hardship.

To say street children are Children in Need of Special Protection (CNSP) and Children Especially in Difficult Circumstances (CEDC) because they face certain challenges on the street, may be exposing one’s ignorance about the general socio-politico-economic realities in the entire Global South and not only African or Ghana to be precise. This is because the challenges street children encounter, is just a microcosm of what majority of the people in the Global South have to battle with on daily basis. Therefore setting aside street children and branding them at “risk”, “CNSP” and “CEDC”, confirms Panter-Brick (2002)’s assertion that this is manipulated to serve socio-political agendas.

5.10.1 Finding accommodation in the city

Finding a decent or any form of accommodation can be very difficult in the urban centers. This difficulty cuts across all income levels, those who have the means find the rents highly expensive and those who are within the low income brackets in the formal sector have to accept any structure provided it is roofed and can provide shelter. One of the difficulties my informants have to encounter when they came to the city was the problem of accommodation. In the first instance they are children with no income and have no capacity to go round looking for a place to rent. The only low rent areas in the city are the residential structures within the inner city. This is where most low income earners try to find accommodation in order to be able to live in the city. It is also in the inner city that we have the slums which inhabit the very lower income groups in the city including some of my informants.

Theories on street children suggest that, street children can be; *children on the street*, *for the street* and *of the street* (UNICEF document, in Ansell, 2005). It can be noticed that my informants can be fit into the various categories. It is said that, in most societies only a small percentage of working children are children living completely on the streets and even the great majority of them fluctuates between home, the street, and the variety of programmes

that exists to help them (Aptekar, 1988, Visano 1990, in Aptekar and Abebe, 1997). There are a group of girls who have some form of accommodation, with a roof on top of their head which they call home and return to after a hard day's work on the street (children on the street), and a group who have no roof on their head but sleep on the street where they work (candidates for the street), and putting all my informants together, they can be described as (children of the street), because they work on the street and have no family support. In the mist of all these, the children wake up every morning and always look forward for a brighter day because of their strong will to succeed.

Some of my female informants are very lucky to have accommodation in the slums. These girls live in rooms which contain 10 to 15 girls per room and have to pay their rent on daily basis but not monthly. I learnt from Lasa (female, 14 years) that, she and 13 other girls sleep in a small room and pays 20 pesewa per day to her landlord daily. Landlords take their rents on daily basis because most children have no means of or keeping their rent till the end of the month before they pay. Paying their rent daily means, children are not committed to pay anything if they decide to sleep outside on some days. Such payment arrangement helps the children, because if they do not sleep in the room they do not pay.

I also learnt from Fari (female, 14 years) who lives in one of the rented rooms in the slum that, she has her belongings in a polythane bag, which she keeps in the room, but she keeps some of her daily earnings with a "susu" (small scale savings scheme) at the market. Nabi (male 14 years), who sleeps in the bus he works in, has his belongings in the vehicle and keeps his cloths under one of the seats in the bus. K.M (male 15 years, SSB), has very few cloths so does not border the safety of them. He keeps his cloths in a plastic bag in one abandoned truck in the vicinity. Also Babi (female, 14 years) who sleeps in an open space, has her dresses in a plastic bag which she keeps under one of the lotto kiosks along the road.

As street children, sharing a room with 12 to 15 other girls in the city, can be a haven and can be considered a privilege, because some children sleep in open spaces on the street and some children even with their families sleep in open spaces. One does not have to run for cover when it rains and also roommates can contribute to buy mosquito repellent to protect them from mosquito bites and malaria. The only commitment one has to make when in a rented room is to fulfill her daily rent obligations and also try and live in harmony with roommates. The children do not have to worry if they cannot pay for their rent; they just have to find

elsewhere to sleep. One of the problems the girls in the rented rooms also face is the problem of theft. Stealing of belongs such as panties, is something they have to deal with very often.

On the other hand, the children who sleep in open spaces have to take cover when it rains, and also make sure they are always within a group of people in order to get help when something unfortunate happens in the night. Babi (female, 14 years) has to be buying tablets to cure her malaria very often, because the plastic bag she uses to cover herself to prevent the mosquito bites does not seem to work. One problem with sleeping in open spaces is that, this type of accommodation makes the children spend their earnings on drugs which they find very worrisome.

In all these two different sleeping conditions, the agency street children exercises, makes them cope and also manage the situation in such a way that, they do not even have to think about where to sleep or what will happen. Their motivations for being on the street are far stronger than the accommodation challenges that they encounter. It is the motivations and their future aspirations that are keeping them. Mosquitoes, rain, theft, nowhere to keep their things and all that, are just temporal things that they a managing very well currently, whiles they live on the street. The bigger thing is to work, get money and survive. As unaccompanied migrant children such a living condition was not strange to my P.J, because this is what he envisaged when he decided to move to the city to find greener pastures.

5.10.2 The challenge of finding clients (please confer above on adult interactions)

Although the probability of working children having paid clients daily has been one of the challenges for my informant, engaging in criminal activities has not been part of their schedules. To some of them, their religious believes does not permit them to engage in activities which society frowns upon. I learnt from Wai (male, 13 years) that, it is better to get small or little money to avoid the police, than to get more money and go to the police cells. The children are engaged in their legitimate street work and are not into any criminal activities. It can be very challenging in the situation where children have to toil daily for their bread and at the same time try to avoid other socially unacceptable behaviours. My male respondents actually confirmed that, it is very tempting not to be part of certain criminal activities; this is because those in it are often protected by their “masters” (adults who are into

such activities). P.J (male, 14 years), confirms having some friends who abuse and also push Indian hemp (drug), but they try to hide it from him.

5.10.3 Assault as a challenge

Another challenge that featured prominently was the issue of assault. The understanding I got from the children's descriptions of assault was that, this act was most of the time perpetuated by males, both boys and men. Some of the street boys sometimes become very aggressive, whenever the girls refuse them from touching certain parts of their body. These boys hit them and use all sorts of abusive language on them when they try to stop them. Asking Nasa (female, 13 years) what she does when such things continue to happen, she told me; she does not walk alone at night because it is always dangerous to do so. She enjoys walking with her peers whenever they have to go to somewhere at night. Nasa said it is very easy to get help from others when someone assaults you during the day. Although she tries to insult them to put them off she said.

I argue with Mizen and Ofosu-Kusi (2010) that, street children's experiences on harassments on the streets of Accra does not include police or any other paramilitary organisations as it is common in other places in the Global South. The police come in when children are engaged in criminal activities and they are caught. The street children in my study did not mention any incidents of police. In the contrary, The Human Rights Watch report (2003) entitled "Charges with Being Children: Egyptian Police Abuse of Children in Need of Protection", reported a disappointing picture of the behaviour of Egyptian police who routinely arrest and detain children who need protection and subject them to extortion, beatings, verbal abuse and being transported in vehicles that are unsafe with adult criminals as well (Human Rights Watch, 2003). All the children had no problems with the police. In respects to the city task force in charge of collecting daily tolls from the informal sector workers in the city, one has no problem with them if they pay their tolls. The problem begins when the children refuses to pay. The children refuse to pay because; it is not all the time that street children make earning in their course of work. Some days can be very difficult to find clients and when this happens there will be no money to pay such tolls.

5.10.4 Peer influence as a challenge

Peer pressure also came into our discussion because of the social network that these girls and boys form when they migrated to the city. We can all attest to the fact, about how difficult it is to say no to people we consider as friends. Our peers can be of great help to us sometimes and also a bad influence on other times (please confer the positive sides of peer relations on the street in this chapter, I will deal with the negatives here)

I learnt from the girls that, their roommates and other compound mates often ask them to go out to cinema and also visit friends at night. They complained it is very difficult to resist such an invitation, because they often want to please their friends. Tuna (female, 14 years) often uses excuses of not having any decent dress to wear to such places in the night, but her friends often provide her with one, which makes it very difficult for her to refuse the invitation. It is always very difficult for Tuna to refuse to go out with her friends in situations like this. I share Tuna's fear and not wanting to go out visiting friend at night because there have been police and news paper reports on the high incidence of women killings in Ghana. It was reported in the Herald news paper (Ghanaian paper) and carried by Ghanaweb (www.ghanaweb.com), on 27th November 2010, issues concerning the gruesome killings on 34 women between the periods 1998-2000. To avoid losing their friends, get insulted and ridiculed, the children often accept to go out with their friends at night.

5.11 Street children's future aspirations

The results from the study pointed out a number of future aspirations of my informants. These include;

- Some children still want to having classroom education,
- Others want to learn a trade
- Some want to set up own small business and
- All of them want to go home eventually.

The children know they cannot be living in Accra for the rest of their lives, and K.M (male, 15 years) and Tuja (female, 13 years) showed the interest in going back to their villages eventually if they get enough money, so they can operate their own drinking spot in the village. The future business agenda runs through all the individual information the children gave. Every child wants to set up his or her own business in future. Their hope for the future was to mobilize funds so they can enter into any apprenticeship training of their choice, and better still they welcome the idea of any NGO coming to their aid to help them enroll in the

training. Shai (female, 13 years) and Raza (female, 14 years), wants to learn hair dressing, and they are saving seriously towards that course. Shai and Raza need money to buy the equipments for their future plan. P.J (male, 14 years), wants to go back to school.

My informant's future aspirations show their desire to change their status in future. The desire to improve one's image and command self respect when they return home in future. Children's aspirations also show the determination to break the chains of poverty and avoid persistent hardship in their generation and the generations to come. They are striving to avoid poverty in their adult lives by working and saving towards establishing themselves for a better life in future. The realization of street children that they cannot be on the street forever is an indication of hope. The children themselves have the hope that their conditions can change and when it does, they will be glad to change their current situation. The belief and hope that the children have for the future can be attributed to the influence of the religious institution. As part of the teachings of all religions is the "hope for the future". In Ghana for example this idea of "hope for the future" is always been preached in buses, market places, lorry stations, on radios and televisions. Incorporating such messages as part of one's mind set always helps the individual in thinking "there is going to be light at the end of the tunnel". This serves as a motivation for my informants to move on, thinking things can change for the better.

Giving the oil resources that the country will soon be enjoying, I will share in the children's faith and hope they have in the future that, Ghana's "new money" can change the lives of all Ghanaians and not only street children.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the study in relation to the theoretical and conceptual framework presented in chapter three. My research questions of the study, served as a guide in this respect. Nevertheless, a number of arguments are raised from the analysis and the issues are discussed here. Having said that, the issue of, “other childhood” and the fact that there exist a “manifold of childhoods” is discussed, drawing evidence from my study. Again, I will be discussing “street children making a difference” pointing out the benefits of street work as indicated by my study. Furthermore “competent street children” and “children’s right to economic participation”, shows how children exercise agency in the mist of challenges. In my quest of presenting children’s perspectives on issues that emanated from the study, specific arguments are made within the text to establish the peculiarity of children and childhood in the Global South.

6.2 Considering “other” childhoods

This section of the chapter was provoked by the research question; “what are the lived experiences of unaccompanied migrant children in their destination point”? The results that emerged, was what informed this discussion. As Kesby (2006) explains, “other” childhoods in the Global South can be difficult to conceive except in terms of what they “lack” compared to the universal ideal of play and study. In Ghana, there are some children who go to school, play and are free from work and adult responsibilities, and there are others who go to school and also work and yet another category who do not go to school, but only work. The “other” my study is referring to is migrant children living and working on the street. Chapter 5 revealed that, migrant children living on the street are exposed to a number of experiences in their daily lives in the destination point. Some of the experiences include; work, adult interactions, meeting daily demands, peer relations, play and leisure, social life and also challenges.

According to Kesby et al, “the universal models of childhood employed by the international organizations are actually based on idealized western norms and often obscure rather than reveal childhoods in the developing world” (Kesby et al, 2006 ; 186). The characteristics of this model suggest that an “ideal” childhood should be; within a family, home, school, playground, and that, children are to study and play but free from work and adult

responsibilities (ibid). My study illustrates that, street children do not; live with their families, do not live in a “home” or go to school. One important activity in the everyday lives of street children is work. My informants became street children as a result of their migration, therefore to survive, children need to work.

Furthermore street children’s childhood experiences may not be what pertain within the global model of childhood, but my argument in this chapter is that, children everywhere can never experience the same things because the contextual economic, social, cultural, political and the legal framework of societies varies. My informants need to work first of all to satisfy their social responsibility towards their families and themselves.

6.2.2 Variety of childhoods

Drawing from the concept of streetism in chapter 3 and in particular the UNICEF’s “children of the street” (those who work on the street without family support) (in Ansell, 2005), the street children I worked with in my study are working children on the street without any family support, and are also out of school. Which goes to suggest that the adult defined spaces for them are not being occupied by these children? My informants therefore occupy public spaces such as; lorry stations, foot bridges, street corners, ghettos, and what have you. The children simply live on the street. The fact of the matter is that children engage in work no matter where they are either on the streets or with their families as indicated by the study. If work is used as the dividing yard stick, then the universal model of childhood will be in the reach of only the children in the Global North, because in the Global South work is part of children’s everyday life. Female children in most cultures in Ghana are often over burdened with a lot of responsibilities which often hinders their development in all spheres of their lives including their schooling. Results from female informants in the study indicated that children migrated to the city because they want to get away from farm work and house chores. Doing farm work, house chores, street work and also not going to school are all part of my informant’s childhood experiences. This goes to emphasis the point that, work is part of the everyday lives of my informants. Just as Quortrup suggested that there are various varieties or forms of childhood such as; a family childhood, a school childhood, a kindergarten childhood, a leisure childhood and so on” (Qvortrup, 2005), so can there be; a ghetto childhood, bridge childhood, street childhood, work childhood, migrant childhood, homeless childhood and so on.

The picture is painted by the believers and followers of the “dominant framework”, as if there is a single childhood which every child in the world must look up to. Punch asserts that we must recognize childhood as being both a social and cultural construction and that a diversity of childhoods exist both within and between cultures (Punch, 2003). In my study with migrant street children, it was evident that the children were experiencing their childhood on the street.

6.2.3 Understanding the circumstance of the “other”

Structural sociologists and various social structure concepts argue that, individual’s lives are decided by the particular society in which we live, and by the particular social group to which we belong. This is so because the world around us including the social, economic, political, cultural and legal world channels our actions, constraining us to act in particular ways (Bilton et al, 1992). The poor economic conditions that prevail in Ghana contribute to the reasons my informants are living and working on the street. Ethnic conflicts, poverty and under development in the rural areas in some parts of the Global South, have been observed to be some of the contributing factors of migration.

Examining the various regional profiles or place of origin of my informants, I identified some probable social structural indicators that can be viewed as push factors that contributed to the movement of my informants. The problem of; general regional underdevelopment, economy being predominantly agricultural, cultural issue such as early marriages (in the northern region in particular), inadequate white colour jobs, and low numbers of cottage industries (maybe as a result of the non existence of electricity or governmental facilitation of rural economic and developmental projects). These were the structural conditions in which children in my study were in before they decided to move to the city. Indeed, I am not suggesting that these are the only constraining issues confronting migrant children, there are other micro level factors for which, children’s family situations and peer influence and more importantly children’s own internal dynamics also play a part for being on the street.

James and James (2008), argued that these social structures determine who we are and also how we behave, and that childhood exists in a social space that is defined by law, politics, religion, economic etc., and within this social space, the nature of childhood is further influenced by social class, generation, gender, ethnicity and so on. As a result of the general underdevelopment in the area of my informants, results from the study showed that children moved from their villages because they were running away from the farm work that they

were doing. They needed a change and maybe, if these alternatives were to be in their places of origin they may have stayed.

Furthermore, children themselves gave their own reasons for migrating to Accra to work. The following are what motivated children to move to the city as depicted by the results of the study. These are; inadequate family resources, peer influence, better living style, future respect by village folks, running away from farm work, house chores, step parents' behaviour, the death of one parent, pressure from parents, adventure to the city, work for money. These reasons can be summed into; socio-cultural and economic factors.

Every member of a family becomes distressed whenever the family resources begin to dwindle. In situations like this, children within the families have no other choice but to help make the situation better. In the case of my informants, they decided to migrate, to be on the street in order to support themselves and their families back home. The collective society of the Global South puts a lot of responsibilities on children to act towards a collective goal. This means that children have the responsibility to help promote the welfare of their families. Some street children therefore have the responsibility towards their families which the results of my study indicated. It is in this light that Article 31 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, state that; the child has a responsibility towards the family and society, and that the child has the responsibility to work for the cohesion of the family (www.africa-union.org).

More so, both nuclear and the extended families need children to help execute a number of responsibilities as part of their membership in a family. "Some of the so called un-childlike behaviours include children who care for adults and child head-headed households" (Kesby et al, 2006). Most children are responsible for the up keep of their sick parents, support the family income and also help in taking care of each other is typical in African culture. All these are additional responsibilities of children in the Global South which makes their situation very peculiar in the sense that, these activities are all work. In some cases, children migrate because their parents want them to or the children themselves take the decision because of their responsibility towards their family's welfare. They travel far and near to work in order to help their families. The involvement of street children's participation in economic activities becomes very crucial, when their lived experiences are carefully examined because it is their participation in work that set them aside from the global model of childhood.

According to Robson et al (2007, p 135), “agency is understood as an individual’s own capacity, competencies and activities through which they navigate the context and positions of their life worlds, fulfilling many economic, social, and cultural expectations, while simultaneously charting individual or collective choices and possibilities for their daily and future lives”. Although my informants are school drop outs, they have taken their destiny in their own hands and making their existence count. They are doing this by working on the street to fend for themselves and their families. As strangers in the city without any parental supervision, my informants manage to take care of themselves in such harsh conditions.

Indeed in trying to understand the circumstances of street children, I argue with Bourdillon that “vulnerable” children are often harmed rather than protected by being prevented from working, and particularly from earning money, and that children’s work is to be seen as an activity that satisfies particular needs (Bourdillon, 2006). Street children appreciate their work because it is this type of work that helps them pay their rent, feed and clothe them and above all send some money home to their families.

6.2.4 Implications of the idealized universal notion of childhood

Examining the conditions migrant children go through, makes the argument of an idealized universal notion of childhood or the global model of childhood irrelevant. The phenomenon of migrant children, street children and working children is as a result of the prevailing conditions within which the children find themselves and it should be understood that the children’s behaviour and actions are just perfect given the society in which they live. Robson (2004) investigated the vital reproductive work undertaken by children who care for adults. His study suggests that such care is only an extension of the substantial domestic work that forms a normal part of childhood in the Global South (in Kesby et al, 2006).

Robson agrees with Aitken (2001) that, the idealized universal notions of childhood systematically undervalue and erase the real life experiences of children in the developing world and need to be replaced by the understanding of other childhoods . My male informants left their villages to come to the city to work on the street so their younger siblings can go to school and also feed. Although they have no decent accommodation in the city, they sleep in open spaces and they also work just to be able to fulfill their responsibilities as members of a family and also for themselves. Creating an “ideal” standard for all children to conform to makes the effort street children are making to have better living conditions for themselves

and families come to nothing. Panter-Bricks (2003), suggest that, associating negative perceptions with street children means that the positive impact of their existence are largely ignored.

In my view the worse implication of this universal notion of childhood is that; street children are rather taken off the street and thereby prevented from their livelihoods. The fact that NGOs, MDAs and some international organization's thinking and actions are overwhelmingly influenced by the universal notion and assumptions of the children and childhood, cannot be underestimated. These are evident in some NGO's claim of rescuing street children. The concept of rights is very keen here. In Article 6 of the UNCRC (1989), states children's right to life, survival, and development ensured to the maximum extent possible and including physical health and mental, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development. Street children participate economically as both their right and a responsibility to themselves and their families. In most cases, the street turns to be the last resort and also a safe haven for children who have problems staying with families and also within institutions. Children who find it difficult to cope with family pressures find themselves on the street because there are very minimal social interventions in most countries in the Global South to take care of the needs of these children. Taking children off the street, claiming they are at "risk" may not help the children (Panter-Brick, 2003). This may rather give street children the chance to think about more innovative ways to make a living.

In Conceptualising working children, James and James (2008) referred to the study by Boyden et al (1998) on "working children in the Global South". They pointed out that upon all the wide range of working children we have in the global South, it is the children working in the informal sector who are popularly held by western media to represent working children. Yet these children constitute the minority of working children worldwide and they may not, in fact be the worst off.

Finally, portraying street children as victims, villains, dependents, or deviants also have an impact on the type of intervention (Ennew, 1994). Interventions focus on "rescuing" children from the streets by placing them back at school or with the family. In the case of my informants, taking them back to their villages or to their families may not be a good intervention because evidence from my study shows the positive views children have on their destination point as compared to their villages and suggests that children who are sent back will again find their way back to the city. The only thing that will probably encourage the

children to stay in their villages is when the local conditions which served as push factors change.

6.3 Street children making a difference

This theme is informed by my research question which “seeks to explore the contributions of street children to their families and the society”. The study indicated that the different areas street children are making a difference is in their own lives, their families and the society. I argue here that children are to be viewed as competent and not incompetent, rational but not irrational, mature but not immature as some schools of thought wants us to believe (Lee, 2001). The dominant view of children to be lacking mental contents (culture, values and conventions) and children’s inability to relative to adults, to undertake certain mental processes that amount to rationality (Lee, 2001) assuming that children are in some sense incomplete that they are not fully human. If children can take care of themselves on the street and also help contribute to the welfare of their families then this evidence goes to nullify these assumptions.

Street children are also making a difference in the society by providing their services to city shoppers or clients and shop owners alike. Street children’s role in the market is very significant because results available indicates that, they help shop owners by sweeping their shops or stalls, help them arrange wares and also help them to pack these wares back inside their shops at the end of the day. The girls also help shoppers to carry their heavy loads around town. K.M (male, 15 years, and shoe shine boy) also helps his client by mending and shining their shoes for them. Also the drivers mate helps passengers by taking them to their destinations. All these are very useful services within the society necessary for the system and the way of life of the people.

There is also an important economic contribution my informants make during the course of their work. The children pay daily tolls to the local authorities for the upkeep of the city. Although there have not been any official data as to the total amount the city authorities collect from these children, I can say the amount is significant enough for it to motivate the authorities to come back every day for it. The financial contributions of these children help the day to day administration of the city just as the importance of any other tax.

6.3.1 Competent street children

This section of the chapter is informed by the research results which indicated on a number of occasions where informants exhibited a high level of competence in their activities on the street. The issues raised here go to support the argument that children are to be viewed as competent, rational and mature. Areas that street children exhibited competences in the study had to do with their; work, how they manoeuvre to overcome the challenges they face and the effort they put in to help their families. To come clear by what I mean by competence, I have adopted James and James's meaning of the concept which is; "the ability, capacity or qualification to perform a task, fulfil a function or to meet the requirements of a role to an acceptable standard" (James and James, 2008).

The activities my informants engage in daily is mainly about their work. Work, as indicated by the results of my research is about the most important activity among street children taking their lived experiences into consideration. It is the work my informants engage in that makes them very visible within the city. As I have already stated, my informants confirmed they enjoy what they are currently doing and according to them they have no other choice than to do this type of work because they are able to make some earnings from it. Explaining the mode of operation of their working activities, street children lamented on how difficult their work can be and the fact that they must get up early and sleep late. The agency and the competence which the children use in executing their work often sparked a confrontation between them and their adult competitors in their fight for clients as showed in chapter 5.

Punch's research exemplifies that, when the child in her research comes home and finds the house empty, since the mother had taken lunch to her husband working in some distance fields, the child stops playing and assumes a parental type role by feeding her siblings and putting things in place in the house (Punch 2003). The competency of the girls in my study, stems back from the day they decided to migrate to the city. Out of the 10 girls, 7 took the decision unilaterally, while the other 3 girls had their mothers consent. Out of the 5 boys, it is only 1 boy, who did not inform anybody about his travel. The rest of the 4 had their mothers helping in the decision making process. This is illustrating agency and the idea of children being social actors and acting independently. These children single handedly pay for their rent and other expenses and also organise their daily activities for their upkeep. An

article by Davies, on street children in Kenya, shows how organised these children are in their own world (Davies 2008). Results from my study also showed such organised behaviour of my informants in their daily activities, for example the specific times they start their work and to the time they sleep. My informants in their daily activities exercise a high level of agency which makes them survivors in an environment where they have to battle with adults for clients.

As I have noted above, head porters in and around the Central Business district (CBD) in Accra, actually help shoppers and shop owners in diverse ways. Their services cannot be ignored by shoppers who always need help in carrying their shopping from the market to their cars or to the lorry station. Mayall (2000) points out that, children are now seen as people who, through their individual actions, can make a difference to a relationship, a decision, to the working of a set of social assumptions or constrains (in James, 2009). My informant's activities in their work, clearly shows they can really make a difference. According to children themselves shoppers prefer working with them because of the flexible tactics they use in their dealings with their client. Another example from my male informants is where children give credits to their regular clients if they tell them they do not have money. The girls, especially those who work for shop owners say they sometimes go to the homes of their clients and do their washing and scrubbing of floors for them. All these are strategies that children use in order to earn money to survive on the street. As competent as these children are, they always make sure they do all they can to earn a living. According to them they take care of their daily needs by working hard for their money. Because of how my female informants go about their work, they always have problems with their adult competitors because the children are very skilful in determining who to charge high and who to charge low for their services at what time and place. This enables them to have some earnings no matter how bad the day may be.

6.4 Children's right to economic participation

This part of the chapter was inspired by my research question which seeks to "explore children's experiences in their schooling, health care and participation rights". My study showed the level of involvement of my informants in schooling, health care and participation in relation to what is in the UNCRC. I argue that; street children's rights to schooling, health care and economic participation should be important concerns to policy makers and children's program developers. The basis of my argument stems from the fact that majority of

my informants, especial the girls have very low or no level of schooling, and those who attended school dropped out for some reason. Also my informants never accessed any “proper” health facility because they have no money to access professional health attention.

The entire document of the UNCRC (1989), can be summarized into what is popularly known as the (3Ps), namely protection, provision and participation (www.unicef.org). Among these are the provision of education (schooling) and health care by state parties, and the fact that children are to be allowed to participate in issues that affect their own lives. Children’s education has been one of the important developmental agendas in most countries including Ghana. Primary and JHS (Junior High School) education is tuition-free and mandatory in Ghana. Article 39 of the constitution of Ghana, mandates the major tenets of the free, compulsory, universal basic education (FCUBE) initiative which was launched in 1996. Although basic education is free, there are still a number of children, who are out of school and this group include street children. Being outside the classroom makes it possible for children to occupy different spaces which include the street. The rigid nature of the regular school system for example was one of the reasons children gave for not being in school, citing how his farm work used to clash with his schooling as an example. It will be appropriate therefore for policy makers to try out a program that can allow street children to combine their street work with schooling. This proposal is important because some of the children have future plans of going to school.

Ennew pointed out that, fundamental human rights provide for both empowerment and protection, hence street children’s form of empowerment is the work they do. I argue with Ennew that, the right to work is not simply an economic issue but work relates to status and participation in society (Ennew, 2005). She argue further that the fundamental right to work may legitimately be removed only when it can be shown that this is necessary for children’s protection and not on account of a legally designated minimum age (Ibid). The challenges street children face is often the reasons people give for their removal from the street. My study indicates the recognition by street children that, these situations are pervasive in many places not only on the street. Street children need economic participation to earn a living.

6.4.1 Reasons street children need their economic participation rights to be respected

Children’s economic participation involves children’s work. There are a lot of situations in children’s lives which makes them seek to work no matter the consequences. My point is that

if children have the right to participation as stated in the UNCRC, why are working children seen to be at risk and protected? Street children need economic participation in the form of work for both the economic and social needs of themselves and their families. The children also need to work because given their current situation, it will be in the best interest of street children to work (UNCRC article 3). I argue here that children's economic right is not only a right but also a responsibility. This is because it is the responsibility of the African child to help promote the welfare of its family as stated in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (www.africa.union.org). The basis of my argument is that street children need their economic participation rights to be respected because work is part of their lives and it will continue to be until the current situations confronting them happens to change. My informants discussed at length the reasons why they migrated and how important their work is to them in the study.

Children are said to be protected from all forms of labour which does not exempt my informants. Enforcing children's non-participation of work as suggested by some advocates of the CRC will amount to deprivation of life, survival and development of mental, physical and the emotional well being of street children (Article 6 of the UNCRC). They are migrant children living on the street and therefore need to work in order to be able to pay for their daily expenses. According to Salazar, ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child without making real institutional and societal changes to render respect for all children and youth is akin to wearing a mask in the presence of the global community, commenting further that, the mask projects an image of agreement and compliance, while behind it these rights remain elusive. (Salazar, 2008). I agree with Salazar because, street children are said to be protected from work but there are no concrete structures in place to take care of their needs, even if there exist such support not all street children can be covered given the quantum of financial resources that will be needed to execute such program.

The facts stand that Ghana was one of the first member states to sign the UNCRC document. In article 18:2 of the UNCRC, it is stated that; "For the purpose of guaranteeing and promoting the rights set forth in the present Convention, States Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children" (UNCRC, 1989). In Ghana sure assistance are rare. A lot of children find themselves on the street because parents can no longer take care of them, so they have to go

find some work on the street in order to fend for themselves as was evident in the study. In my study, children cited inadequate family resources, as a reason for their migration onto the street.

Another problem some countries in Global South faces, borders on inadequate systems and structures which can help promote the welfare of children and also fight poverty. In Ghana for example, the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) is one social intervention program to help alleviate poverty from category of people classified to be extremely poor (www.ghanadistricts.com). My informants are out of this support group because they are not considered to be extremely poor people. In situations like this, it will be no fault of the children to be on the street if there is no body to help take care of their basic needs.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents a summary of the objectives and analysis of the study. It touches on the objectives which are linked to my research questions. One of my broad aims of the study was to articulate children's perspectives on their lived experiences, this chapter summarises the result that emerged from the study. The chapter again draws conclusions on major issues that were discussed and finally gives recommendations from the study.

7.2 Summary of analysis according to research objectives

My research work has been on the lived experiences of unaccompanied migrant children and children's experiences on schooling, access to health care and participating rights. The study also examines the motivations, the consequences, challenges as well as the contributions of these migrant street children to the society in which they live. The specific issues include;

7.2.1 Unaccompanied migrant children's lived experiences in their destination point

One objective of my study was to explore the lived experiences of children in their destination point after migrating from their places of origin. This objective is justified because it forms the core ingredient within the topic under study. This goes to indicate that all subsequent objectives were predicated on this.

The analysis illustrates that street children (informants) undergo a number of lived experiences in their destination point. This involves; work, interaction with adults, meeting personal demands, play and leisure, peer relations and social life.

Work related issues featured prominently in my discussions with the children, because work takes a huge amount of my informants' time compared with other things they do. As my informants are migrant children, I began by knowing what the children's previous work in their home of origin was before they migrated, so I can understand the situation that made them move. The results revealed that children's work back home involved; farm work, selling in the market, running errands, doing house chores, working in people's homes, and taking care of younger siblings in the family. On the other hand their current work in their point of destination on the street involves; shoe shine, hawking, driver's mate, head porter, sweeping of market, tidying up of shops for shop owners and fetching of water for people. The study

revealed the contributions children make to their families which include remittances in the form of money and the paying of tolls to the AMA. The study further shows that, a street child's working activities are very well organized and the children will always put their work first before any other thing.

On street children's interactions with adults, the results indicated that, the children interact with two different groups of adults. These are the adult clients of the children porters, and the adults who also work as head porters. The study found that, the relationship between the clients and the head porters is normally not cordial. The adults always want to have their way when there is a misunderstanding and often rain insults on the children by the least provocation. As tough as the children porters are, they also make sure they give the adults their piece of mind. On the other hand the relationship between the children and the shop owners they work for is very cordial. The second groups of adults who are also competitors of the children are the adults who do the same kind of work with the children. The research shows that, these adults often castigate the children for taking very small amounts of money from clients when services are rendered and the adults complain they have been losing clients because the shoppers often wants to do business with the children rather than they the adults.

On the issue of meeting street children's personal demand as part of their lived experiences, the study indicated that, meeting their daily needs such as accommodation (sleeping place), feeding, personal hygiene and access to health care were very problematic. The study shows that, the children sleep in crowed rented rooms in one of the slums, in open spaces such as lorry stations and in front of shops, parked vehicles, and on top of a foot bridge.

When it comes to personal hygiene of street children, it was revealed that the children hardly take their bath especial the boys. The boys take their bath 2 -3 times in a week and the females 4-5 times all in the evenings. All my informants use public places of convenience and bathing places, which they find to be expensive. They pay for water, rent sponges and towels, pomades and combs to use because they cannot keep their own. On the issue of health care, it was found that, my (informants) self medicate. None of the street children I worked with has medical insurance cover. They never attended any medical facility when they are sick.

As part of their lived experiences as children on the street was the issue of play. The children always play Ampe one of the local plays in Ghana and they also play their local language where they use words and sounds such as singing in the play. The boys only play cards

during their leisure times. On peer relations, it was indicated that, unaccompanied migrant children depend on their friends in times of sickness, financial support, information and comfort in times of distress. They girls live together with their friends as if they are family. On the other hand the study also shows that, some of the friends the children have, tend to have bad influence on them because of the behaviours of some of them. The males were those who expressed this fear of bad influence the most.

On the issue of street children's social life, the study illustrates that they have a number of social activities they attend during their leisure times. This includes attending marriage ceremonies, child naming ceremonies, movies and also going to the beach. Going out to watch movies was found to be very popular among both males and females.

7.2.2 What motivates children to migrate from their villages to the city?

Another object of the study was to find out what motivates children from moving from their point of origin to a particular destination. This objective was considered important because Iversen (2002) asserts that misery beyond poverty that is, domestic discord, can be a direct cause of child labour in his discussion on migration. My study showed out that, the reasons that made my informant migrate are; inadequate family resources, family and peer influence, better living style, running away from farm work, house chores, step parent behaviour and the death of one parent among others. Low or inadequate family resources were cited as a major reason for leaving the village by both males and female informants. The females cited work related issues such as farm work and house chores for being the issues that propelled them to move whiles the males cited mostly the death of one parent(mostly father), and peer influence as other major motivations. In addition to this, the study also indicates that, both males and female informants are motivated by self respect back home and the behaviour of step parents as very important reasons for migrating.

7.2.3 The contributions of street children to their families and the society.

The contributions of street children to their families and the society cannot be overlooked. This object is seen to be very important because such contributions are vital looking at the scanty earnings of some street children. The analysis of the data revealed that street children's participation in economic activities was seen not only to benefit the children but also to their families and the economic sector as well. To the families, the contributions come in the form of remittances and to the economic sector, street children's working activities

generates income within the informal sector and children also pay daily tolls in a form of tax to city authorities.

7.2.4 The perceptions children have about themselves on the street

The results of the study indicated that majority of street children (informants), have positive perceptions about how they view themselves on the street. The views children gave include; this is where they make their money, this is where I can find work, I make a lot of friends, I see a lot of things (examples they gave include, latest fashion styles or trendy things), I do whatever I want, nobody controls me and I become afraid in the night. Although the children admitted that their work on the street and the general street life is sometimes challenging, they still want to be there because that is where they can find work, earn money and also take care of themselves and sometimes cover the needs of their family.

7.2.5 The challenges in their destination point.

During the study, my informants revealed the challenges that they often face whiles on the street. These include; peer influence, assault, accommodation, meeting daily needs and finding clients. Amongst these, the issue of accommodation featured very prominently in the conversation with the children. Every informant seems to be having a problem with his or her accommodation. It was revealed that children's accommodation in the city include; sleeping in numbers of 10-15 in rented rooms in slum areas in the city and sleeping in open spaces such lorry stations, packed vehicles and on a foot bridge. All the informants had something negative to say about the type of accommodation they have in the city. Assaults perpetrated on the girls were revealed to be, by their male counterparts on the street and adult males. My informants did not mention anything relating to violence because they said they are always careful about what they do on the street. Meeting their needs and finding clients were also mentioned to be challenging because the children had to battle with adults for the attention of their client and this is not an easy task for them. Some of their daily needs are also ignored or overlooked because of lack of money to execute those needs such as, bathing and using the toilet.

7.2.6 Children's rights on their schooling, health care and economic participation.

The basis of this objective was the fact that my informants are children and some of the basic needs of children according to the UNCRC, includes, education (schooling), health care, and participation. My conversations on participation have basically been on the economic

participation of the children which involves work. Their views on their work was explored which the children mentioned the following; I get money from my work that is why I do it, I have my own schedules, am able to help people with what I do, I will change this work if I get enough money and very difficult. The children said although the work is difficult they will continue doing it until their current situation change, because this is what brings them money for their daily up keep.

On schooling and health, only one of my female informants ever attended school and she dropped out of primary school. The rest of the girls had no classroom education or never attended school. My male informants had some level of basic school education but also dropped out without completing. The children are currently out of school and are not combining work and school. On health care my informants are all not registered with the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The children buy off the counter drugs to cure their sicknesses most of the time, and they also use herbal medicine.

7.3 Conclusion

In Ghana, the harsh economic conditions the country faces, is one of the major factors that encourage children to go onto the street. There exists a high level of unemployment, low come levels, as well as poverty in the country. According to World Bank (2005) statistics on Ghana, about 30% of the people earn below 1.25 dollars per day, which is described as being below the poverty line. There are a category of people who can be described as facing extreme poverty depending on their situation. The pervasive nature of poverty in the country makes both children and adults to strive very hard to do any kind of work in order to earn a living. Indeed, my informants are living and working on the street because of the current circumstances they find themselves.

Additionally, unaccompanied migrant children become street child as a result of migration. My informants were living with their families together in their various homes before they migrated to Accra. As a result of the lack or inadequate local knowledge on the destination, no family support and poor finances of migrant children, they ended up living on the street in their destination point. Some of the children have no money to rent a place and so have to sleep on the street. On the other hand, those who are lucky to be connected to a room will also have to work in order to be able to play for the rent. The children then have to go to the street and find work in order to take care of their personal needs in the city because they have

no support from family and the government. Nevertheless my informants' involvement in working related activities, set them aside the global notion of how childhood should be, because the UNCRC's globalised model of childhood does not recognize work to be a "normal" activity for children. The evidence available therefore calls for the considering of "other" childhoods, and the fact that there exists variety of childhoods

Again, children engage in work where ever they may be, either with their families or on the street as was shown by my study. Work was seen to be part of children's lives when they were with their families in their place of origin. Aside the work that street children do, they also find time to play during their leisure periods. The girls play with their friends when they take their usual afternoon breaks, while the boys also play cards. This evidence defeats the notion that children in the Global South, only work but no play (Punch, 2003). Although children work, they also find time to play.

Furthermore, meeting personal demands was shown to be a challenge which involves children's feeding, health care and hygiene. These things need money to be able to be executed. It was evident that street children meet their personal demands only when they have the means to do so. All these challenges go to explain the various circumstances children face while living on the street. I conclude here that amidst all these challenges children still has the courage to live and survive on the street because they recognize that the difficulty that they face is a pervasive one and not an issue for street children alone.

More so, the current rigid nature of the school system in Ghana is a contributing factor that is preventing the children from combining school and work. Some of my informants have no level of schooling experience and those who have are now school drop outs. The children are not going to school, even though they have future aspirations to go back to school. My studies show that, children before they migrated to the city tried combining their work and school which became impossible as a result of the school system, which begins at the same time that the children's work also begins. My informants could not choose the option of going to school because they need to work in order to earn a living.

Finally it was shown that children exercise agency in all that they do on the street and are also competent. Their competence makes them capable of contributing to the welfare of the families and the society through their work. The lived experiences of street children as shown in my study make the situation of living on the street different from those who are not. These

experiences give the idea as to how some children experience their childhood. My informants are children with manifold of childhood experiences which includes; migrant childhood, street childhood and working childhood.

7.4 Recommendations and policy direction

This section of the chapter discusses my recommendations from the study. My study explores the lived experiences of unaccompanied migrant children living and working on the street. This recommendation goes to policy makers (NGOs, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and international organisations working for and with children). Before planning any program for children, their views must be sort and incorporated in the programs, because children's actual needs may be different from adult's desired need for them. Franklin (1995) asserts that the legitimacy of children's claims to enjoy the possession of rights has been acknowledged, and informs government policy and legislation. Therefore street children's working activities are to be recognised and incorporated into programs and policies on schooling for example, so that street children can easily combine work and school. The analysis of this study shows that street children's future aspirations is to go back to school, learn a trade and set up their own businesses.

Also the health concerns of street children are to be looked re-examined, because of the street children's inability to access "proper" health care as a result of their limited financial resources. My studies indicated that street children often self medicate and also uses herbal medicine whenever they are sick. Self medication can lead to children taking over dose of the drug and putting her/him at risk. I recommend that, street children should be exempted from paying the premium on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), so they also enjoy "proper" heath care, because the use of alternative medicine has its own complications. Nevertheless, the personal hygiene of my informants is to be seen as a health issue. Children using public towels, sponges and combs can spread diseases among themselves. The public health department can help educate the children about the health risks of their habit and should be encourage keeping their own.

Additionally, describing children as CEDC and CNSP and setting the characteristics of street life in global terms, is not in the interest of the children (Panter-Brick, 2002). Such descriptions came about because of the fact that, street children do not live with their families, do not live in a home, are living and working on the street and also as a result of the

challenges children face on the street. Street children need their work in order to survive. It is also a fact that street children go through some challenges while experiencing their street life, but these challenges are general to majority of people in the country but not only street children. I recommend that governments in the Global South try very hard to alleviate the sufferings of their people and also expand the coverage of their social support to cover all street children.

Finally, my recommendation in relation to the topic has to do with further research. Future research can explore areas relating to; the organisation of children's street life, a critical study on the gendered nature of street work, comparative study children's street work and the dynamics of street life. Such studies will help provoke further debates on the street children phenomenon within the field of academia. I will also recommend the use of Participatory Action Research (PAR) is important in helping street children, and those who work with them, generate relevant insights into their specific needs and priorities and help them influence decisions that are taken about their lives (Nieuwenhuys, 1995).

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APPENDICES

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research question 1

- 1) What are the living experiences of unaccompanied migrant children in the city of Accra?
 - a. When did you to Accra?
 - b. Who do you live with
 - c. What do you do here
 - d. Do you have friends in Accra
 - e. What are your daily activities
 - f. Where do you sleep

Research question 2

- 2) What are children's motivations for migrating?
 - a. Where did you come from
 - b. Were you staying with your family
 - c. How many where you in the family
 - d. What were your daily activities when you were with your family
 - e. Why did you come to Accra
 - f. Who knew about your travelling
 - g. How did you get here

Research question 3

- 3) What are children's own perceptions of themselves and challenges migrant children experience?
 - a. How are you coping in Accra
 - b. How do people treat you here
 - c. How do you see yourself doing this type of work here in Accra

- d. What are some of the problems you face when doing your work
- e. What are your personal needs and how do you meet them
- f. Do you encounter any problems here in Accra?

Research question 4

- 4) What are the contributions of unaccompanied migrant children living on the street to their families and society?
 - a. Are you paid when you work
 - b. How much do you get
 - c. What do you do with your the money

Research question 5

- 5) What are migrant children's experiences on schooling, health care and participation?
 - a. Where you attending school when you were with your family?
 - b. Do you attend school now
 - c. Have you been sick since you came to Accra
 - d. Which hospital did you go
 - e. Why are you here working and not in school

STREET CHILDREN'S LIVED EXPERIENCES AT A GLANCE

A. POINT OF ORIGIN (PRE-STREET) WORK

- house chores,
- farm work,
- selling in the market,
- running errands for family members and
- taking care of their younger siblings

B. REASONS FOR MIGRATING

- inadequate family resources,
- peer influence,
- better living style,
- Future respect by village folks
- running away from farm work,
- house chores,
- step parent behaviour,
- the death of one parent,
- pressure from parents,
- adventure to the city,
- Work for money (please note; this is not in any order of importance)

C. CHILDREN'S CURRENT LIVED EXPERIENCES ON THE STREET

- work,
- interaction with adults,
- meeting personal demands,
- play and leisure,
- peer relations and
- Social life.
- Challenges

D. REASONS FOR CHOOSING ACCRA

- their friends are here,
- they have people from their home town already here in Accra
- the fact that Accra being the capital city of Ghana,

E. STREET CHILDREN'S WORK

- head porter (a person hired to carry goods)
- sweeping of the market,
- shoe shining,
- hawking,
- fetching of water
- drivers mate and
- Packing and loading things for shop owners in the market.

F. OTHER AVAILABLE WORK ON THE STREET FOR CHILDREN

- sweeping of stalls for market women market,
- carrying of garbage (bola)
- Gather and sell of scraps.
- Truck pushing

G. DAILY PERSONAL DEMANDS

- personal hygiene, (bath, laundry, where to keep personal belongings, toilet)
- feeding,
- health care and
- a place to sleep

H. PEER RELATIONS ON THE STREET (IT'S USEFULNESS)

- financial support
- times of sickness
- food
- information from home
- news in the community
- companionship (in the sense of accompanying each other to places)

I. STREET CHILDREN'S SOCIAL LIFE

- weddings (amaria, meaning wedding in the Hausa language),

- naming ceremonies
- film shows
- Going to the beach
- Visiting friends

J. THE USES OF STREET CHILDREN'S EARNINGS

- they use their money to pay rent,
- buy food,
- pay for personal needs,
- send some to parents back home,
- save,
- buy cloths,
- pay for AMA (Accra Metropolitan Assembly) toll

K. HOW CHILDREN PERCIEVE THEMSELVES ON THE STREET

- this is where they make their money
- this is where we can find work
- they make a lot of friends
- They see a lot of things (examples they gave include, latest fashion styles or trendy things).
- We do whatever we want
- Nobody controls us
- Sometimes afraid in the night

L. MODE OF HEALTH CARE ON THE STREET

- have no medical insurance,
- do not go to hospitals when they are sick
- They self medicate.
- Herbal medicine

M. CHILDREN'S VIEWS ON THEIR ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

- I get money from my work that is why I do it,
- I have my own schedules,
- am able to help people with what I do,
- I will change this work if I get enough money.

- Very difficult

N. CHILDREN'S CHALLENGES ON THE STREET

- peer influence,
- assault,
- accommodation (including where to sleep)
- meeting daily needs
- finding clients

O. CHILDREN'S COMPARISMS ON LIVED EXPERIENCES BEFORE AND AFTER MIGRATION

- the type of work they do
- types of play
- crop of friend
- Where they sleep
- having freedom
- less adult control and their
- Social life in the city.

P. STREET CHILDREN'S FUTURE ASPIRATION

- Some children still want to having classroom education,
- Others want to learn a trade
- Some want to set up own small business and
- All of them want to go home eventually

MAP OF GHANA

SOURCE (WWW.GHANADISTRICTS.COM)

