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The Social World of Street Children

Street Children's Peer Friendship, Group Life,
and Subculture in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Master's thesis in Childhood Studies

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“...not family...but friends are my dearest....they are my strength and inspiration next to the divine creator” (study participant 2).

Abstract

This study attempts to explore the street children's social world, focusing on their peer friendship, group life, and street subculture in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The study shows how street children's peer friendship, street group, and subculture are part and parcel of children's quest for survival in the street in the absence of guardians conventionally considered as responsible for the provision and protection of children.

The main perspective of the study is grounded in the philosophy of the social studies of children and childhood, particularly on the principles of childhood as a social construct, and children as social agents in their own right. In addition, other concepts and theories which are relevant to study children and childhood in a street context are included as the foundational frameworks of the study. These are subculture theory, social capital, and we-ness.

The research methodology of the study is based on the philosophy of qualitative research design. The study draws on a multi-method fieldwork, lasting for (8 weeks), using focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation together with informal dialogue. Researcher's own field notes and reflections over field observations are also included. The study mainly used the above-mentioned methods to obtain data from the key participants of the study, the street children (aged 9-17) in three chosen sites of the city center, namely Meskel Square, Ambassador Park, and National Theater. Fifteen street children participated in the study, thirteen boys and two girls. The street children are locally called 'berenda adarioch,' which can be translated to children who sleep on verandas and have made the street as their source of income. In addition, I conducted semi-structured interviews with an official from the Addis Ababa bureau of social and labor affairs.

The analysis of this study reveals that children in the street situation are not passive victims because of living on the streets or 'living outside of their proper space' with the absent adults to guide and control. Rather street children's peer friendship and group life together with their street subculture enables children in accessing support to survive, and provides space to exercise their freedom in forming their own street subculture without adults' control.

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Lists of Acronym

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Child
ADBG	African Development Bank Group
AU	African Union
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Child
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
ETB	Ethiopian Birr (currency)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
ICFI	Inner City Fund International
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NOK	Norwegian Kroner
OAU	Organization of African Unity
SNNPR	Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child
UNDP	United Nations Environment Program
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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Chapter One

Background of the study

1.1 Introduction

Since United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF's 1979 report on the number of street children in the "international years of world child", street life of children as a global phenomenon has been a focus of attention for aid agencies and governments (Lalor 1999). Today, the issue of street children is an alarming and an escalating problem worldwide; and for the many street children, capital cities and urban centers of the world have become places of survival (Boakye-Boaten 2008).

There are always difficulties in estimating the exact number of children who are living on the street (de Benitez 2011; Panter-Brick 2002) due to the mobile or on/off nature of street children's life, and difficulties of counting (day or night), some sleep hidden, and seasonal changes. Numerical figures can also be the other contentious issue because of mixing different categories of children who are living and working on the streets such as:

"children of the street", "children on the street", "homeless children", "abandoned children", "children in conflict with the law", "children in especially difficult circumstances", "exploitive child labor" and other categories that might be included or excluded from the counting of children in street situations.

Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014:1

Because of the counting problem linked to the use of different terminologies, as mentioned above, it is difficult to know the exact number and it is debated. The number of street children worldwide, UNICEF estimated for 1989 and 2002 can exemplify this.

According to UNICEF the number of children who were living and working on urban streets globally in 1989 was 100 million (Panter-Brick 2002). The same international agency in 2002 reported, fourteen years later, estimates of the number of street children were 100 million (de Benitez 2011). More recently, in a 2005 UNICEF report stated that: *"the exact number of street children is impossible to quantify, but the figure almost certainly runs into tens of millions across the world. It is likely that the numbers are increasing as the global population grows and as urbanization continuous apace"* (de Benitez 2011:2).

Figuring out the numbers also varies depending on whether it is reported by governments or non-government organizations (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014). This is mainly related to differences in organizations' interests and reflects the particular agendas of the organizations (de Benitez 2011). The numbers can be exaggerated to increase the feeling of insecurity and justify the cleaning-up of children from the streets and/or be underestimated to preserve the image of a country (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014; van Blerk 2012). The number might have also become low because they are supplied by the government, which at times wants to underestimate the figures so that tourists and potential investors would feel more comfortable (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014).

Although street children are a global phenomenon, Asian, African and South American countries are more affected by the problem (Lalor 1999). In spite of the differences from continent to continent, country to country, society to society and even from one child to the other, there are various reasons why children can be found living on the street. Most often the reasons are credited to micro-level poverty in families and communities, including lack of money to pay for basic necessities such as schooling, the need to work to support themselves and their family, alcohol and drug abuse, and parental death (van Blerk 2012). However, it is essential to recognize the complexity of street children's lives and the reasons why they exist on the streets may vary across continents as well as countries (Kebede 2015; van Blerk 2012).

In the African context, for instance, key structural causes, such as war, AIDS, natural disaster, and famine, can be identified as factors why a child leaves the family home (Kebede 2015; Lalor 1999). In addition, some children are on the street not because of poverty or negative home life conditions, but simply through accidental causes such as hanging out with and befriending those already on the streets (Abebe and Bessell 2011; Kebede 2015; Lalor 1999).

In the late 1980's the movements on children's right and the establishment of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989 pushed street children themselves rather than the street to the forefront of public consideration (van Blerk 2012). Nevertheless, for long, researchers, social workers, and policymakers were worried more about the number of children on the streets, the root causes of the problem and have been attempting to explain the characteristics of street children worldwide, and consequences of a street lifestyle on the health and development of the children (Panter-Brick 2002).

Despite the apparent shifts of attention in recent studies of street children from the street as the primary focus of concern to the children themselves (Panter-Brick 2002; van Blerk 2012), a growing body of literature (e.g. Abebe 2008, 2009a; Ennew 2003; Heinonen 2011) focus on the street children's agency and capacities, emphasizing their individual agency rather than situating their street life as relational. During the last decades, there has been an increased interest in exploring the social world of street children from the children's own perspectives. However, only a handful studies has investigated children's street peer friendships, group life, and the subculture as the means used to face their adverse street life conditions, particularly in Ethiopia (Abebe 2008; Beazley 2003; Ennew 2003; Lalor 1999; Heinonen 2011; Naterer and Godina 2011). Therefore, the major aim of this study was to explore the street children's social world from their own perspectives focusing on their peer friendship, group life, and subculture in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Like many cities in developing countries, the number of street children in Ethiopian cities is steadily increasing due to complex socioeconomic and natural factors (Kebede 2015). Nevertheless, in Ethiopia, like in other developing countries, there is no comprehensive statistical information on street children; and this makes comprehending the magnitude of the problem of street children difficult.

According to *Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)* news report, humanitarian news agency, on street children rehabilitation projects in Ethiopia (2011) mentioned the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs report that some 150,000 children live on the streets in Ethiopia of which about 60,000 live in the capital (Kebede 2015). However, UNICEF and others estimate the number to be much higher. UNICEF (2006) reveals that the issue might be far more serious, with nearly 600,000 street children nationwide and above 100,000 in Addis Ababa.

Many researchers (e.g. Heinonen 2011; Kebede 2015) agrees that the number of street children is growing in many major urban centers of Ethiopia, particularly in Addis Ababa. As stated in several studies, (e.g. Abebe 2008; Ennew 2003; Heinonen 2011; Kebede 2015; Lalor 1999) in Ethiopia the contributing factors that lead children to join the life of the street are poverty, unprecedented population growth, and recurrent displacement as a result of drought and famine. Abuse,

maltreatment, and neglect of children by caretakers are also contributing factors for children to go out on the streets (Kebede 2015; UNICEF 2007).

Street children are the most marginalized, ignored part of the population, facing many human rights violations because of their existence on the street, even today in the era of the UNCRC (Ennew 2000). This is mainly due to the dualistic view of street children as out of place – as innocent and in need of protection from the tough realities of the street life; and as deviant and criminal by virtue of being part of the street (van Blerk 2012). This, in turn, ignores street children as the primary focus and their creative capacities and meaningful contributions to their life and the life of others, their adaptabilities and inventiveness as a means of facing their adverse conditions.

Therefore, being mainly concerned with the children's own view, this study explores the social world of street children, focusing on their peer friendship, group life, and subculture. Center of attention of this study are street children between the ages of 9 to 17, who live on the street and earn a living through street-based activities in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. My study participants are locally referred to as 'berenda adarioch', which can be translated to children who sleep on verandas and have made the street as their source of income. The study did not include children who were working on the street, but going back home or rent houses at night time to sleep.

1.3 Objective of the study

This study mainly aimed at exploring the street children's social world. In an attempt to achieve the main aim of this study, the following objectives were defined.

- To explore the children's peer friendship on the street;
- To explore the group life of street children; and
- To explore the subculture that street children have;

1.4 Significances of the study

This study contributes to broadening the understanding of how street children perceive of their social world. Furthermore, the empirical material presented in this thesis reveals important characteristics of peer relations on the street. Their social relations – either as friends or as groups – have great significance in terms of protection, livelihoods, and leisure. Therefore, my present study will contribute to the very few studies of street children’s peer friendship, group life, and subculture in general. It also contributes as the initial reference point to initiate researcher and academicians to think about the potential of the area to be researched in Ethiopia. The study will also contribute to various agencies, both governmental and non-governmental organizations, working with street children to think of adjusting their objectives and strategies to the daily life realities of street children rather than mere attempts of achieving agency objectives.

1.5 Thesis outline

This thesis contains eight chapters.

Chapter One: *Introduction*, which includes this section, introduce the research themes of this study and outlines the main and specific objectives of the study.

Chapter Two: *Background of the Study Area*. This chapter presents the profile of the country, Ethiopia, and the study area, Addis Ababa; and approaches to children and street children in Ethiopia.

Chapter Three: *Concepts, Theories, and Review of Related Literatures*, outlines and discusses concepts and theories used in this study. The chapter also reviews related literature.

Chapter Four: *Methodology of the study*. The chapter provides the detailed description and discussion of the methodological approach used in the study and related field experiences and challenges. In this chapter ethical principles are also discussed in detail.

Chapter Five, Six and Seven: these chapters discuss the results of the study based on empirical data. The chapter provides children's own descriptions, narratives, and perspectives about their street social world, focusing on their peer friendship, group life and group subculture.

Chapter Five: *Street Children's Peer Friendship*, this chapter discusses street children's social world focusing on their peer friendship, which exists within their street settings.

Chapter Six: *Street Children's Group Life*. This chapter discusses street children's social world, focusing on children's group life, which exists within their street settings.

Chapter Seven: *Children Street Subculture*. This chapter discusses street children subculture, which is distinct from the dominant cultural perspectives of children and childhood and an important aspect of children's social world on the streets.

Chapter Eight: *Conclusion and Recommendations*. The final chapter of the study presents the conclusions drawn and forwards some recommendations for future work.

Chapter Two

Background of the Study Area

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the profile of the country, Ethiopia, and the study area, Addis Ababa. The presentation of the chapter focuses on the overall geopolitical locations, socio-demographic and economic aspects of the country. The chapter also provides brief information on the approaches to children and street children in Ethiopia.

2.2 Country Profile: Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a country located in the northeastern corner of the Horn of Africa, at the crossroads between the Middle East and Africa. The country is as large as France and Spain combined and its total surface area is approximately 1,221,900 square kilometers. The country shares border with Djibouti and Somalia - in the east, the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of the Southern Sudan - in the west, Kenya in - the south, and Eritrea - in the north. Ethiopia is a center for diverse customs and cultures, it contains a complex variety of nationalities, peoples, and linguistic groups, and its peoples altogether speak over 80 different languages.

Ethiopia is one of the few African countries to have maintained its independence, even during the colonial era. Furthermore, the country is one of the founding members of the United Nations and takes an active role in African affairs, for example, played a pioneering role in the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In fact, the capital city, Addis Ababa, has been a seat for the OAU since its establishment and continues to serve as the seat of the African Union (AU) today.

Currently, Ethiopia has a federal system of government, and the government is made up of two tiers of parliament, the House of Peoples' Representatives and the House of the Federation. At present Ethiopia is administratively structured into nine regional states—Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP), Gambela, and Harari—and two city administrations, namely, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa Administration Councils.

The 2015 UNDP's report has shown the estimated population of Ethiopia was about 90 million in 2013, making the country the second most populous next to Nigeria in Africa. The great bulk of Ethiopia's population (about 84 percent) lives, in the rural areas and 44 percent of the total population is under the age of 15.

Ethiopia is an agrarian country and 84 percent of the population, relies on subsistence agriculture; and the agriculture sector accounts for 43 percent of the gross domestic product, GDP (CSA and ICFI 2012). Coffee has long been one of the main export items of the country; however, other agricultural products are currently being introduced on the international market. According to the 2015 UNDP's report, the government is pushing to diversify into manufacturing, textiles, and energy generation. The agricultural sector suffers from poor cultivation practices, and frequent drought, but recent joint efforts by the government of Ethiopia and donors have strengthened Ethiopia's agricultural resilience, contributing to a reduction in the number of Ethiopians threatened with famine (CSA and ICFI 2012).

Ethiopia is one of the least urbanized countries in the world; only 16 percent of the population lives in urban areas. The majority of the population lives in the highland areas. The main occupation of the settled rural population is farming while the lowland areas are mostly inhabited by a pastoral people, who depend mainly on livestock production and move from place to place in search of grass and water.

Ethiopia has been mostly free of recent civil unrest, but it has a history of internal strife and humanitarian disasters which have had an impact on today's society. Drought and famines have also been recurrent in Ethiopia for centuries. This is mainly due to a combination of low productivity, the absence of developed infrastructure, rapid population growth, and adverse climatic conditions (Heinonen 2000). Access to basic social services such as health care and education is severely confined to urban centers and their environs (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005).

On the other hand, the African Development Bank Group (ADBG 2010), recently reported that the economy has experienced strong and broad-based growth over the past decade, averaging 10.8 percent per year between 2003/04 - 2013/14, which is much higher than the regional average of 4.8 percent. According to the report the expansion of the services and agricultural sectors account

for most of this growth, while manufacturing sector performance was relatively modest. Private consumption and public investment explain demand side growth with the latter assuming an increasingly important role in recent years (UNDP 2014).

According to 2010 African Development Bank Group report, the economic growth brought with it positive trends in reducing poverty, in both urban and rural areas. While 38.7 percent of Ethiopians lived in extreme poverty in 2004-2005, five years later, this was 29.6 percent (Ibid).

2.3 The Study Area: Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa is situated at the geographic center of the nation in the mountainous Shewa Province. The city is the largest as well as the dominant political, economic, cultural and historical city of the country established in 1887 by emperor Menelik II. It has the status of both a city and a state. Unlike many other African capitals, its foundation, growth, and development, are not rooted in colonization. It is the capital of the federal government and a chartered city and it is where the African Union and its predecessor, the OAU are based, notably the headquarters of the African Union (AU). It also hosts the headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and numerous other continental and international organizations. Due to this Addis is usually referred to as the diplomatic capital of Africa.

With a total land area of 540 km², Addis Ababa is the largest city of Ethiopia. The city has three layers of Government: The City Government at the top, Sub City Governments in the Middle, and weredas at the bottom. The city is divided into ten sub-cities which are the second administrative units next to city administration. The sub-cities are also divided into the 116 weredas, which are the smallest administrative unit in the city.

Addis Ababa hosts 30 percent of the urban population of Ethiopia and is one of the fastest growing cities on the continent. Its population has nearly doubled every decade and according to 2010 UN-Habitat report the population is currently estimated to be 3 million (CSA and ICFI 2012). The accelerated growth of Addis Ababa can be attributed to natural increase, boundary expansion, and rural-urban migration. Considering the age distribution of the residents of Addis Ababa, the

proportion of children under the age of 15 is about 32 percent of the total population (CSA and ICFI 2012).

Its geographic location, combined with its political and socioeconomic status has made it a center for hundreds of thousands of people, including children, coming from all corners of the country in search of employment opportunities and other services. According to Mathewos (as cited in Alemayehu 2008), currently, about 80 percent of the population of Addis Ababa is living in slums, among other things, which are characterized by deteriorated physical structure, limited or no tenure rights, severe shortage of service and infrastructure facilities, problems of solid waste management, scarcity of amenities, infrastructure and open spaces (p. 85). The existing high rate of unemployment (31 percent), the concentration of slum dwellings and the existences of a large number of street children characterize Addis Ababa more than the few features it possesses (The City Government of Addis Ababa 2010).

2.4 Approaches to Children and Street Children in Ethiopia: ‘Right’ or ‘Favor’

Since the ratification of UNCRC in 1989, the convention has altered the many ways children have been perceived and treated all over the world (Lemessa and Kjørholt 2013). It gives several rights to the children ranges from protection through provision to participation rights (Kjørholt 2002).

Ethiopia ratified the UNCRC in 1991. In Ethiopia like other global south countries, the number children and youth population are large, about 44 percent, but they have marginalized position in society (Lemessa and Kjørholt 2013). Though, since the ratification of the convention, Ethiopia has taken several measures in implementing the convention, ranging from the harmonization of national laws with the provisions of the articles to the enactment of policies through the establishment of Child Rights Committees to the formulation of National Plans of Actions and its implementation (Lemessa and Kjørholt 2013; UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005).

In 2005’s UN Committee report on the Rights of the Child in Ethiopia, one of the crucial measures that have been taken by the government in implementing the convention was the revision of the Penal Code and its ratification, in force since July 2004. One basic change in the revised Penal Code was criminalizing extensive traditional practices executed against women and children, such as abduction, female circumcision and genital stitching, female genital mutilation, and child labor exploitation, especially in urban areas. The protection measure has given children the opportunity

to be protected legally from traditional practices that have been intimidating their overall physical, mental, social and other developments, despite the existing significant gaps due to lack effective juvenile system in the country (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005).

Beside the harmonization and establishments of institutional set-up for the implementations of the convention, awareness-raising efforts have been under way nationally, regionally and at the grass-roots level (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005). From these efforts, one of the basic ways was the establishments of children's parliament in different parts of the country from the grass root level, regional to the federal level as part of the implementation of the UNCRC (Lemessa and Kjørholt 2013). The main aim with the establishments of Children's parliament in Ethiopia is basically to give a real expression to the UNCRC and ACRWC requirements that a child's voice is heard as well as promoting the right to free association even if it do not allow children to participate in the determination of law and policy, they can make adult legislators aware of what children think and want (Ibid).

Although these measures have encouraging beginnings vis-à-vis promoting respect for the views of the child, still far from producing the required outcome (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005). This is directly related to the long-held view of children and childhood. There are several socioeconomic and cultural challenging obstacles that undermine the implementation process of the convention and the efforts to promote respect for the views of the child (Lemessa and Kjørholt 2013; UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005).

The long-held traditional views of children and childhood have been continued pushing children to have no position or a dependent position in their family, social, and other aspects of community life (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005). In Ethiopia, children's matter are always the matter of the family and every aspect of their activity is controlled and decided by the adult members or by their seniors because of their position in the society. Despite some changes in urban areas, in the majority of Ethiopian families and community, children do not have the opportunity to express and discuss their interests and feelings with their peers or with their seniors (Lemessa and Kjørholt 2013). The discussion of Lemessa and Kjørholt (2013) further indicated that children do not involve and have the right to have a say in matters that affect their lives, and their views do not receive respect from the senior members or adults. Children's contributions, since they are

three to four years old, have not been given values rather it is viewed as their responsibility to give their labor to their parents or adult members of the family. In the ACRWC, (1999) article 31(a) regarding the responsibilities of the children for his family, society, state and other legally recognized communities and the international communities is one of the reflections of what children are facing in their daily life in Ethiopia.

In addition to their marginalized position, poor participation, and obligation without rights, child abuse, and neglect are common and identified as acceptable modes of child rearing or shaping the behavior of the child and also it is regarded as a means of maintaining adult's power over children in Ethiopian families and societies regardless of cultural differences (Lemessa and Kjørholt 2013; Save the Children Sweden Ethiopian Program 2011). There are several practices that are harmful to children's development, health and welfare, such as early marriage (in some cases as early as the age of six), not sending children to school, especially girls, female genital mutilations, corporal punishment at home or in school, child labor exploitations, harassment, violence and killings of school children (Save the Children Sweden Ethiopian Program 2011).

As mentioned, past studies have reported that the contributing factors, often cited as the main reasons the children initially leave their family and home environment are poverty related to unprecedented population growth, and recurrent displacement as a result of civil war, drought and famine (Ennew 2003; Heinonen 2011; Lalor 1999). However, these studies have revealed that social causes such as high level of abuses, maltreatment, and negligence by caretakers, (especially by stepparents at home), and the quality of family relationships, often lead the children to look for other options. The existence of alternative sources of demand for labor in the informal sector has also been cited as factors that allure the children to switch home life to the street (Kebede 2015; UNICEF 2007).

According to Ethiopian government officials, as one of the signatories of the (UNCRC), the constitution protects the rights of children (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005). As part of their responsibilities, the government is conducting a campaign through state-run media to make the public aware of the true nature of the problems children are facing on the streets, at different levels starting from the federal to regional through local. The government has also good working relationships with different child-oriented NGOs, such as UNICEF, Save the Children – Sweden, and Italian Cooperation Project, which are giving different services to street children

starting from prevention of the problem to rehabilitation of street children. Their activities are mainly concerned with the provision of education, health, saving and credit, skills training, reintegration, and shelter services.

Despite the presence of many governmental and non-governmental organizations working with street children, there are problems in developing an integrated strategy and plan of action for tackling the growing number of children on the street. The working principles of many organizations are mainly based on the principle of working “for street children” rather than “with street children.” I have seen this during the individual interview with an official from the bureau of Social and Labor Affairs. The official mentioned that for the last 10 years the government has been working for street children. He admitted that since the street children do not have choices, they should accept what the government is providing for them. This view emanates from the adult-centric perspective which asserts the ‘rational’ adults as knowing what the best solution is for the ‘irrational’ and ‘ignorant’ street child. As I understood from the discussion with the official, the interventions are also considered as ‘favors’ rather than the rights which the street children entitled to through their citizenship.

Street children are most marginalized part of the population and are facing many human rights violations because of their presence on the street (Ennew 2000). As mentioned, the hegemonic perspectives of street children are twofold– either as innocent and in need of protection from the tough realities of the street life or as deviant and criminal (van Blerk 2012). Programs and policies often demonstrate that the street child is just a “target” of intervention, not reckoned as a participant: a social actor, as a subject of rights. This is to mean that in the street contexts where intervention approaches have been developed, the strategies do not tend to include the street children themselves in the definition of the program, from identification to intervention modalities (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014). Rather, as Panter-Brick (2003) indicated, their approaches have focused on addressing issues like the nature of the problem, the effects on children’s development, and mere provision of services what they deemed as the solution to the street children more rather than working with children’s own participation, including their views or possible solutions. This, in turn, as argued by Panter-Brick (2003) ignores the street children’s capacity to participate; using their creative capacities and meaningful contributions in their life and the life of others, their

adaptabilities and inventiveness as a means of facing their adverse conditions and finding possible solutions.

Chapter Three

Concepts, Theories, and Review of Related Literatures

3.1 Introduction

In research activities, theoretical concepts can be helpful to ‘lift’ the empirical experiences in serving the important task of providing insight and understanding (Nilsen 2005). However, although the theories are helpful in guiding the way of thinking in a research process, at the same time they are challenged by the continuously emerging knowledge. Since a single theory cannot adequately capture the complexity of reality, this study employs different theories and concepts to look into the complex social and cultural life of street children.

This chapter presents concepts and theories that are relevant to guide to the study. Concepts and theories are based on its aim and objectives as well as research questions of the study. In addition, this chapter presents a literature review related to the study.

3.2 Social studies of children and childhood

Social studies of children and childhood, which is also called an emergent paradigm, recognize children as active social agents worthy of study in their own right (Prout and James 1997). It seeks to give a voice to children (Qvortrup 2015). Therefore, as Hardman (2001) suggests children must be studied in their own right and not just as receptacles of adult teaching. The proponents of this approach criticize a developmental theory within psychology and sociology dominated research for their views and approaches in the study of children and childhood. The developmental framework sees and values children as what they will ‘become’ rather than as what they are (Prout and James 1997; Jenks 2009; Woodhead 2009). This approach views children as ‘human becoming’ and adults as ‘complete human being’ (Qvortrup 1994). Prout and James (1997) state some key concepts inherent in the developmental framework, within psychology and sociology dominated research, surrounding the study of children and childhood, which include three themes in relation to; ‘rationality’, ‘naturalness’, and ‘universality’.

The developmental framework emphasizes four main stages of development for children: sensory motor (0-2 years), preoperational (2-6 years), concrete operational stage (7-11 years) and formal

operational stage (12 years and above) (Woodhead 2013). In this developmental approach, each stage of intellectual growth is characterized by a specific schema or well-defined pattern and sequence of physical and mental actions governing the child's orientations to the world (Woodhead 2009). And these stages are universally and naturalized working principle in studying children and childhood (Prout and James 1997; Jenks 2009; Woodhead 2009). The naturalness of children, in this approach, both governs and is governed by their universality (Prout and James 1997).

The social studies of children and childhood draw inspiration from a wide range of disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, geography, and anthropology, and gives a methodological direction as to how children should be studied (Woodhead 2009). This emergent paradigm recognized the capacity of the child to exercise agency which includes the lived experiences of children in their everyday lives (Qvortrup 1994). Some of the tenets of the emergent paradigm, as discussed by Prout and James (1997) include understanding childhood, which constructed based on the ideas of the society and the ideas also vary with time and space in different societies.

The emergent paradigm views children as active agents or being capable of exercising agency on matters that concerns their development (Prout and James 2015; Qvortrup 2015). Based on the view of the paradigm, four approaches have been proposed as to studying children and understanding childhood (James et al 1998; Jenks 2009). The first approach is studying children as socially constructed. This means what childhood involves are socially constructed knowledge and ideas pertaining in societies and varies from place to place. The second approach is studying children using tribal child approach. In this approach, children should not be seen as having the misguided or an irrational understanding of the rules of their society. In this view, children should be seen as an autonomous being in the societies where they live, having their own rules, rituals, and folklore. The third approach is the view of children as the minority group. This means studying children as a group who are subject to discrimination and are marginalized just like women and ethnic minorities. The approach is universalistic, differentiated and global because it suggests that in all societies, children are marginalized and exploited at various levels to a various degree. The fourth is the social structural child approach, which is the view that children live within the social structure. The approach believes childhoods are manifested differently, through the various political, social, and economic structures at the places where they live.

According to Corsaro (2005), children have their own agency and continue to create their own culture different from adults. Children should be given a voice in issues that affect them because they have the ability and knowledge of the issues (Qvortrup 2009). Qvortrup (2009) argues that children should be seen as active subjects and not passive objects of the various structures and processes. The social studies of children and childhood emphasized that children are active beings whose agency is important in the creation of their own life-world (Prout and James 1997). Children are considered as competent human agents or social actors, who have freedom of choice and actions. Therefore, children should be studied in their own right, as full social actors rather than being viewed as adults in the making (Ibid).

Children should be studied from their present conditions and not as future conditions (Kjørholt 2005). In my study, the basic tenets of this new emerging paradigm can be essential from different angles. Starting from methodology, the paradigm is used for studying children and childhood directly from their perspectives, knowledge and experiences, presenting children's views on issues that affect their own lives as social actors and participants in their social world and also, participants in the formation of their own childhoods.

3.2.1 Perceptions of Children and childhood

The 2004 *State of World's Children* report defines childhood as:

Childhood is a time for children to be *in school and at play*, to grow strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and . . . *caring adult*. [As such], childhood . . . is a precious time in which children should live free from fear, safe from violence and *protected* from [work] abuse and exploitation

(Cited in Abebe and Bessell 2011:767).

According to Abebe and Bessell (2011), the above definition has for long been representing the common global description of a 'proper childhood', whereby children "*should have a care-receiving, safe, secure and happy existence and be raised by caring and responsible adults*" (p. 767). Consequent to this notion, Abebe and Bessell described, whenever children are seen outside the narrowly bounded spaces defined as acceptable, such as family and school, they are often considered as suffering an abnormal childhood, or as having had their childhood lost or stolen. Abebe and Bessell (2011) argued that this notion of childhood benefits the ideal childhood definition of the 'West'.

The ‘Western’ based notions of ‘childhood’ is a more general and abstract term used to refer to a status ascribed by adults to those who are defined as not adults (Gittins 2009). Gittins (2009) further elaborated that childhood does not have a universal definition yet.

How the status is conceived – by adults – varies and changes: sometimes it has been defined by physical and/or sexual maturity, sometimes by legal status, sometimes by chronological age alone. The state of being a child is transitory and how long it lasts is culturally and historically variable; in Western countries a child may become economically active now at the age of 15 or 16, while in the past, and in some Third World countries still today, children as young as 5 or 6 go out to work (Gittins 2009:37).

Woodhead and Montgomery (2003) discussed these differences in experiences of childhood as socially and culturally constructed. This means how childhood is constructed is based on the ideas of a particular society and so are culturally determined (Jenks 2009). The social constructionists’ view that the knowledge and ideas about children and childhood are not static and universal, hence changes from one society to the other and are influenced by the society, culture and the historical context of the society with time (Ansell 2005; Montgomery 2003). Ethiopian childhood can be a particular example to argue against the common global description of a proper childhood.

There is a small body of literature on Ethiopian childhood. In addition, the available studies are also silent on how children think about their lives (Abebe and Kjørholt 2013). The recent literature on childhood shows that, in Ethiopia, a person is considered as a child as far as the person continues to depend on parents for basic needs regardless of age (Ibid). In other words, a person may be well above the age limit UNCRC set out, (i.e. under the age of eighteen), but does not take any decision without the consultation of parents. One can argue that in Ethiopia the productivity of a person is what determines maturity and independence of the person instead of age.

According to Wells (as cited in Abebe 2013) the dominant paradigm signifies a view premised on, *“a child is a universal subject who should everywhere be enabled to be a free, autonomous, choosing and rational individual”* (p. 72). The UNCRC also states that by reason of physical and mental immaturity, a child needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth (UNCRC 1989). Abebe (2013), however, disputes that presenting childhood that way ignores the overwhelming evidence that intimately links childhood with cultural and social values. While in some countries children are seen as dependent until into their teens, in many other countries children are expected to be fully independent at an early age.

The contrast between Britain and Ethiopia is an informative example. In Britain, it is illegal to leave infants and small children under the responsibility of juveniles under the age of 14 (Boyden 1990). To the contrary, in Ethiopia, children are expected to contribute to their own as well as for the livelihood of the family from their early age 3 or 4 years (Abebe 2013). Furthermore, Abebe (2013) describes that in many cases, these children are heads of households and principal breadwinners in the family and are the persons solely in charge for taking care of younger siblings. Therefore, parent-child relationships and children's contributions are a vital instrument for sustaining of individuals and group cohesion and solidarity in Ethiopian (Ibid). Abebe (2013) further argues that, in Ethiopia, children's life is founded on interdependencies and reciprocity, where children have responsibilities and duties towards their parents and families. This is also clearly reflected in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Child under article 30 (a) *"the child...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"* (ACRWC 1999).

In Ethiopia, the local constructions of childhood give emphasis to the social maturity and the performances of the children on expected roles, which is central to measuring the development of the children (Abebe and Tefere 2014). Children are dutiful from their early age to seniors because seniors or adult, who vested with the power to exercise authority and control over minors (Ibid). Unlike CRC's conception of independent children, children are neither independent citizens nor autonomous individuals in separate, but interdependent beings whose daily livelihood are intricately entwined with and are inseparable from that of family collectives (Abebe 2013). Unlike the most western world, in Ethiopia, children earn their rights through their contribution to the collective life rather than being entitled as UNCRC envisages (Ibid).

3.3 Subculture theory

Culture is usually defined as a way of life established by the group of people and also the way in which these groups of people give their expressive form to their *"social and material life experiences"* (Baron 1989:291). In a society, there are several groups, and the dominant culture provides a means of solving problems for members (Williams 2011). Nevertheless, all people and groups do not have equal and fair access to the resources needed to solve their basic problems even though everyone in a society needs those basic needs of survival (Ibid). This is basically because of the structure and meaning that the dominant culture tends to represent, which is the position and

interest of the powerful groups of the society (Baron 1989). Therefore, whenever people lack or have limited access to the dominant means of cultural resources and starts their own means collectively to solve the problems by other unconventional means, a subculture is likely to emerge (Williams 2011).

The subculture theory tends to assume that particular groups emerge from certain notions of sameness in identity and effective interactions with one another due to a number of actors are living with similar problems like for instance limited in their access to dominant cultural resources (Williams 2011). In a society, people often go through a series of challenges and make a lot of efforts to solve the problems by devoting all their time (Williams 2011) and trying to solve everyday problems such as ensuring shelter, sustenance, and companionship (Harris 2008).

According to Brake (as cited in Baron 1989) youth subcultures are an example of struggle, negotiation, and redefinition process as they engage in cultural space. The subculture helps in addressing the problems of adjustment that members are facing more effectively than any solutions offered by institutional means. Subculture also provides an environment where status can be achieved and, furthermore, through the development of group values, norms, and boundaries support the decision to reject the dominant ideology (Baron 1989).

According to Ken Gelder (as cited in Williams 2011) the conception of subculture is that *“people in some way represented as non-normative or marginal through their particular interests and practices, through what they are, what they do and where they do it and who thus stand outside the bounds of ‘mainstream’ society”* (p. 9). This definition of subculture is the distinction between non-normative on the one hand and marginal on the other (Williams 2011).

Nowadays, subculture is not perceived simply as singular, fixed categories that youth is affiliated in order to resist the dominant culture as a group (Williams 2011). Instead, theories talk more about lifestyles, scenes, new communities, and so on changeable expressions of identity (Ibid). Subculture theory has thus been fundamental to work on young people’s culture and action (Harris 2008). While discussing the issue of subculture in relation to children and young people, Harris (2008) presented it as the way they oppose and challenge a dominant culture by appropriating or negotiation. Young people are constantly involved in negotiating their styles with their creative capacity and produce their own; whether this is music, clothes, or language (Ibid).

However, in recent times, the concept of resistance has been decoupled from subculture, especially as the class has diminished as a key marker of identity for younger people or children (Harris 2008). And this resulted in new ways the young people organize socially, expresses their identities culturally, and engage in actions (Ibid). Today, the subculture theory might not be considered as mere resistance to the dominant view of culture rather they are part of youth lifestyle, in that they represent *“the ways they can get together and debate social issues, enact alternative social arrangements, and create spaces for alternative forums”* (Harris 2008:5). These new ways of thinking about subculture are focused on understanding young people’s culture and their creative action and the conception focuses on young children’s agency (Baron 1989).

One major criticism of subculture theory has been its failure to recognize the continuities between subculture and the dominant culture of the society (Baron 1989). According to Baron (1989), there is the connection between subculture and the dominant culture of the society.

In this study, I used subculture theory to examine children’s street subculture as a new way of life or social connections that children have with differing social values and norms, serves them to survive in the new street environments in contrast to the mainstream societal views. Primarily, this requires recognizing the subculture, both as a creative strategy used by street children to adapt or survive in the new city’s physical and social environment and as a resistance to the dominant societal pejorative view.

3.4 Social Capital

The first systematic contemporary analysis of social capital was produced by Bourdieu, who defined the concept as *“the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition”* (cited in Portes 2000:45). Bourdieu’s discussion of the social capital is instrumental, emphasizing on the benefits that can be added to the individuals by the virtue of participation in a group and on the deliberate creation of social networks focusing on accessing resources that emanate from the social relationships (Portes 2000). The profit which accrues from membership in a group is also the basis for the solidarity among the participants, which makes the profits possible (Ibid).

The concept social capital is also used to refer to features of social organization, such as social networks, norms, values, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam 1993). From Putnam's discussion, a society or group that is dependent on reciprocity is more efficient than a mistrustful society or group. He also stated that stocks of social capital, such as trust, norms, and networks, tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative. Allan, et al (2012) and Putnam (1993) also argue that attachments, bridging and linking social capital, together with trust and reciprocity, is the key foundations of social capital that facilitate action and cooperation among participants for mutual benefit.

Social capital has two elements: first, the social relationship that allows individuals to access the resources possessed by their associates, and second, the amount and quality of these resources resulting from their associations (Portes 2000). Social capital as the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks and other social structures, the motivations to make resources available on concessionary terms is not uniform (Ibid).

Coleman (as cited in Portes 2000) discussed social capital as primarily the "*accumulation of obligations from others according to the norms of reciprocity*" (p. 46). By being together in common situations, members learn to identify with each other and support each other's initiatives. This solidarity among members is an evolving product of a common fortune; and social capital has the basic function: as sources of social control; as sources of social group support; and as a source of benefit through extra group networks (Portes 2000)

Sandefur and Laumann (2000) discussed the three most important benefits of social capital. The first benefit is information. Members of the same social circle are likely to receive the same information. Though the quality, timeliness, and trustworthiness of the information provided depends on both aspects of the structural form and the content of relationships conditions. The second benefit mentioned by Sandefur and Laumann is influence and control. In social life or relationships, an individual's capacity to influence and freedom from the influence of others depends on the content and the form of the relationships. However, the capacity to mobilize others for action which often entails placing oneself in a position of obligation to those who can be highly valuable. The third benefit they mentioned is social solidarity. Social solidarity exists when there exists a degree of mutual trust and commitment among actors independent of any specific

transaction. It may exist among interrelated actors by fate, as when cultural values, backed by effective norms that dictate one another and care for one another.

Nowadays, the concept of social capital is part of both policies and fields of social science (ABS 2002; Adler and Kwon 2002; Portes 2000). However, since the interpretations of social capital to children are often founded on adult-centered views, it needs adjustment to children's daily life realities and experiences. Goodwine and Esther (2004) argue that the existing accounts of social capital in policies and strategies have been facing difficulties to be applied to children's daily life for many reasons. The most important reason is the place of children in society, denied the rights to participate in matters that affect their fate. This is because the adults' control public spaces and organizations. The adults view children as the next generation rather than as active stockholders; subsequently, children have little or no influence on social issues that concern them. Therefore, the general working principles have been promoting dominant cultural standards where children have fewer voices (Stanton-Salazar 1997).

From my study, I argue that the merit of understanding the social capital that children have in their street peer friendship, group life, and subculture is twofold. It is essential to (i) devise visible intervention policies and strategies by the different parties working on in forming and reforming thereof; and (ii) overcome the challenge posed on by this serious growing social issue. In this regard, social capital among children should be treated as resources. In line with the views of Portes (2000), the potential diverse sources of social capital reduce the distance between the social and economic perspectives and simultaneously engage the attention of policy-makers seeking less costly, non-economic solutions to social problems.

3.5 We-ness

The concept "We-ness" was developed by Nilsen (2004). Focusing on the children, she discussed children everyday life, which is characterized by an undergrowth of spontaneously created groups, where children repeatedly construct social relationships with one another. The group consists of two or more people. The groups could involve only boys or girls, as well as girls and boys together.

The concept is used in a social context where, for example, children can get together forming the relational bond and share close spaces where masculinity is performed among children. There are many ways that contribute to creating the intimate and humorous mood, which bring children to

feel the togetherness. From time to time, their movements and the way they use the spaces could parallel children each other in a striking way.

We-ness involves an intimate social relationship, with meaning such as ‘we are together’ and ‘we are friends’. However, there is fluidity in the relationship; thus, togetherness is not fixed. The meaning of ‘we-ness’ is temporary. This is to mean that the definition of their relationship may move back and forth between ‘we are together’, ‘we are friends’- ‘we are not together’, ‘we are not friends’ (Nilsen 2005). Definitions shifts, and depend on the situation ‘we are together at this moment, might not mean that ‘we will be together in the next moment’. There is a movement between being together and not, being friends and not; a fluidity between inclusion and exclusion in groups of we-ness. We-ness might last for a short moment of social bonding or a longer period of interaction (Nilsen 2004).

In this study, the concept ‘we-ness’ is used in two ways. First, to discuss the dynamic nature of children’s street peer friendship and collective group life, mainly in relation to their mobility within the different settings of the street and at times between the street and outside of the street life such as going back home or to the rehabilitation and training centers. This refers to the continuous formation and reformation of peer friendship and collective group life. Second, the concept is also used to discuss the solidarity of street children by their peer friendship and collective group life to stay together, to help one another, to protect one another from outsiders attack, etc.

3.6 Street children

Since the first introduction by UNICEF following the UN international year of the Child in 1979, the term ‘street child’ have been at the center of contestation among academia, practitioners, and policymakers (Lalor 1999). Most definitions have for long been focused on two peculiar issues concerning street children: the *place* they occupy (the streets) and the absence of proper contacts or links with adults in the family home and in society (Panter-Brick 2002). According to Panter-Brick such works were concerned with establishing the hallmarks of a street lifestyle and the characteristics of street children in terms of their use of public spaces and their links with family and public institutions. These ways of approaching street children have proven problematic since it obscures the heterogeneity of street categories, as experiences vary in different circumstances and lifestyles (Ibid). Besides, there is a difference among children living and working on the street

across continents, countries, cities and even within the same urban settings, which consequently makes it impossible to provide generalization about atypical street children (Connolly and Ennew 1996).

According to Panter-Brick (2002), the term street children also deflects attention from the broader population of children affected by poverty and leads to social exclusions from those of home based street children to street based. There are many children affected with similar life conditions or events, for example, poverty, at home. Yet, it is not all that escape to the street. This shows important differences between children, their environment, and culture (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014).

Aptekar and Stoecklin (2014) used the term children in the street situation to refer to homeless youth in the developed countries and street children in developing countries. Glassher also discussed the definition, adopted by UNICEF and developed in Latin America in mind, of a street child as:

... any girl or boy... for whom the street (in the widest sense of the world, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and /or source of livelihood; and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults (cited in de Benitez 2011:7).

UNICEF and Save the Children as major agencies working on children, defined and redefined the term several times, with a difficulty to obtain a comprehensive statement about the children. Save the Children Fund defines, “*a street child is any minor who is without a permanent home or adequate protection*” (cited in Panter-Brick 2002:149). The most frequently mentioned and broadly accepted definition of street children is provided by UNICEF. UNICEF’s definition differentiated street children among three categories (de Benitez 2011; Panter-Brick 2002). First, *candidates for the street sometimes called children at high risk*. These are the urban poor children and at risk of being homeless and who spend time hanging out or working on the streets. This group forms the reserve from which street children emerge (Lalor 1999). Second, *children on the street*. This category comprises those children who work on the street during the daytime and return to their families at night; they are also known as street working children (de Benitez 2011; Panter-Brick 2002). These children spend most of their time on the street either working or hanging out with children who are already living and sleeping on the streets (Lalor 1999). The third category is *children of the street*. These children of the street could have a family accessible to

them, but they make the streets their home and they are described as the runaway and abandoned as the result of broken or lost family relationship and ties.

The above categorization also had the same problem of associating the definition of street children with their existence on the street and their relationship with their families rather than focusing on their actual life (Panter-Brick 2003). There are also many children, who sleep both at home and on the streets, and they also spend significant periods of time in residential institutions like orphanages, refugees, or correctional establishments (Ibid).

During the fieldwork phase of this research, I identified a group of street children who do not fit into the aforementioned categories. This observation makes making use of the term 'street children' more challenging. The children I came across and what I have named as 'children of the rent house', in terms of their street activities and peer subculture, they were almost similar to the street children UNICEF categories as, '*children of the street*'. Nevertheless, the places where they use to sleep make these children different. These children do not sleep on the street like *children of the street* rather dwell in rent houses together with their peers, girls or boys, paying about 6 NOK or 15 ETB per night. Apart from sleeping together, they also involve in the street subcultures in terms of drug consumption, sex, street language, friendship, music, creating their own social world among them. These children were mostly girls, but there are also boys.

There are two problems related to the various attempts of defining the street child. The first is related to the use of continually changing and the substandard definition that simply aims to suit the purpose of a program or project of organizations through presenting a higher number of children, which is often a base to legitimate it and get hold of resources (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014; de Benitez 2011; Panter-Brick 2002). Second, it took a lot of effort and time of researchers in describing who the children are in relation to the street environment than focusing on the actual lives of the children (Panter-Brick 2002). Earlier studies of street children have been focusing on the street tends and promoted a unidimensional account of children's lives (Ibid). Panter-Brick further reviews that the most recent studies agree that descriptions of street children cannot be reduced to a one or two-dimensional focus on the street environment, defining the children's existence solely with reference to a physical and/or social dimension.

3.7 Literatures Review

Children's street life has globally been receiving the attention of governmental and non-governmental organizations; including research institutes. However, prior to the 1990s, developmental theory within psychology and sociology dominated research, focusing on dysfunction, pathology, and psychological breakdown among young people on the street (Ennew and Swart-Kruger 2003).

This research often utilized adult experts, such as social workers, rather than young people themselves (Boyden and Ennew 1997). Publications also in both academic and welfare literatures attempted to emphasize the sheer scale of the worldwide problem, to explain the root causes of the phenomenon, to identify the characteristics of street children worldwide, and to analyze the dire consequences of a street lifestyle for children's health and development (Panter-Brick 2002). For instance, Agnelli's study on *A Growing Urban Tragedy*, le Roux and Smith's study on *Causes and Characteristics of the Street Child Phenomenon*, and Wright's study on *Homelessness is not Healthy for Children*, capture the essence of such concern (in Panter-Brick 2002:147).

However, when children came to be recognized as meaningful research participants or agents, they increasingly would be invited to share their memories, thoughts, and opinions (Ursin 2016). Consequently, the "*perceptions of vulnerable or abandoned by their caregivers were gradually set aside, while young people's street knowledge, resilience, strengths, and aptitudes were increasingly recognized*" (Ibid: 4). Of course, in the last twenty years, change has been seen on the perspectives of studies concerning street children (Panter-Brick 2002). Current work tends to examine the lives of street children in light of more general analyzes of poverty, social exclusion, coping strategies, vulnerability and resilience in adversity and most of these academic work originate in Latin America (Ennew and Swart-Kruger 2003; Lalor 1999). However, there is very few knowledge on the street children's peer friendship and subculture (Naterer and Godina 2011).

Previous studies on children's street subculture have been done by Beazley's (2003) and Naterer and Godina's (2011). Beazley's work explores how street children are living on the edge of society and facing multiple forms of social and spatial segregation in their daily lives. She has noted that despite the challenge related to living on the streets, children on the street are not passive victims. Instead, they have formed and involved in multiple and resourceful ways to exercise their agency

in their own rights. She further discussed children's street life as a subculture within the broader society focusing on "*subculture as a technique for street children to resist the negative stereotypes which are given to them by mainstream society*" (Beazley 2003:1). The various street children subcultural expressions such as their clothing style; their acts of bodily subversion or dissent (in the form of tattoos, body piercing, and sexual practices); the music they play and listen to; and their use of drugs and alcohol, are discussed in her work. She also describes these practices as the street children's obligatory performances, and the expected ways of behaving in order to remain accepted by the street subculture.

Naterer and Godina's longitudinal study on the street children subculture in Makeevka, eastern Ukraine, presents the subculture of street children in Makeevka based on classical knowledge of the subculture; produced by the Chicago and Birmingham schools, and on post-subcultural studies. Their work offers insights into the most characteristic feature of the subculture of street children as well as the functioning of the subculture. The study also highlights the manifestations of the collectivity of street children on three levels: the level of the city, the level of the group (the subculture) and inner-group levels. The study attempts to extend the discussion on the socialization of children into street life, particularly through processes of integration. Naterer and Godina's study also offers the contextual definition for children's street life in Makeevka. Therefore, a street child is defined "*as a member of the street children subculture, living most of his/her time on the street and been well integrated into street life, but at the same time keeping strong and relatively frequent ties with his/her family*" (Naterer and Godina 2011:24).

Their study is based on the view that different groups of street children as subculture and children as competent social actors. The study of Naterer and Godina also discuss the many subcultural characteristics that street children exhibit such as image, language, behavior and a specific culture. However, as they discussed, street children's subculture are not class determined, and their motivations for running into the street are rather individual than collective. Their social formation is not a mechanism for social adjustment or a way of coping with status frustrations, but rather a form of alternative to a dysfunctional family.

In fact, in Ethiopia, there are numerous articles and reports on the street children that offers statistical data and generalized information regarding the street children's circumstances and survival strategies (Heinonen 2000). However, just like western based recent studies on children

and childhood, these articles and reports focus on social policies addressing family welfare, leisure, health and education (Ibid). These studies were mostly conducted using the psychopathological model to study street children and ‘troubled’ childhoods instead of acknowledging the positive aspects of their lives, in particular, their adaptability and the inventive and resourceful ways in which they cope with adverse living conditions (Abebe 2008). Studies on the reason why children are on the streets to begin with, the impacts of living on the street, how they cope with being there and staged explanations of their involvement in the street life are also common themes on exploring the life of street children (Ibid).

Heinonen’s (2000) research is one of the studies done on the street children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Her work, however, has an objective of understanding the nature of the children's involvement in street life in Addis Ababa as well as their links to their families, and institutions by incorporating the children, their families, and non-kin adults' voices in the discourse. Her work investigated the categories of childhood, which binds street children to institutions associated with the housing, health, and education and wished to analyze the social and emotional benefits such children derive from being part of (or free from) parental domination. She was also particularly interested in the form of domestic and street-based violence girls and boys are subjected to.

Studies that dealt with street children’s peer friendship, group life, and subculture are rarely found in Ethiopian based literature. Therefore, my present study will contribute to the very few studies of street children’s peer friendship, group life, and subculture in general. It also contributes as the initial reference point to initiate researcher and academicians to think about the potential of the area to be researched in Ethiopia.

Chapter Four

Methodology of the study

4.1 Introduction

This chapter, divided into four sections, provides the detailed description and discussion of the methodological approach used in the study and other related fieldwork experiences and challenges. I start the first section by discussing how I accessed the research site along the related challenges. Following, the second part discusses research participants and methods used to recruit study participants. The third and fourth section discusses the methods used in the field to gather data's from study participants and ethical principles in detail.

4.2 Gaining Access

In a fieldwork, gaining access is not a simple task in research activity with all age categories. The process of gaining access to talk and/or spend time with children makes fieldwork activities more complex due to the legal and the general public views of children (Sime 2008). In doing research with children, one of the main challenges is negotiating access at multiple levels with adults' gatekeepers that control the places appropriate to conduct research with children, such as the street (Abebe 2008; Sime 2008). These gatekeepers may not necessarily have a legal right to control children's decisions to participate, but they have a direct legal right to control the venues that children access (Sime 2008). This is to mean that, negotiation of access could take place initially with adults at multiple levels, for instance, public officials (Ibid). Initially, gaining access was one of the first challenges that I have experienced during my fieldwork.

At the beginning of the fieldwork, I was not successful in gaining access to the street children in Wolaita Sodo Town, which is the capital center of Wolaita Zone in the SNNPR of Ethiopia, the place I originally proposed to conduct this study. This refusal to access was mainly due to, what I have named "hypocrisies of officials." Despite the attempts to convince the officials by either presenting official letter of support (e.g. Norwegian University of Science and Technology and, previous employer¹) and by introducing the overall objective of the study, the municipal officials consumed two weeks without any positive or negative response. While waiting for the permit for

¹ Wolaita Sodo University.

access, I carried out observation in some places of the town. What amazed me during my observation was the removal of street children and beggars from different parts of the town and how they were kept in one of the public colleges to hide the existing scenario from the sight of the visiting prime minister and other higher officials of the country. For a duration of one week, the local government was providing food and shelter to keep street children and beggars away from the public view, however, after one week they were released and went back to their street life. The Hypocrisies of Officials' were mainly an effort to create a false impression as if the administration has solved the problem of street children (van Blerk, 2012). Later I figured out that their delay or silence in consenting to give me access to carry out the research in the city might be related to their attempt to hide the problem. Therefore, while waiting for their response, I decided to look into other options and opportunities in other cities and finally I requested permission of the city administration of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. In Addis Ababa, I received the city administration's letter that consents in access to the city within only two hours. However, the street children in Addis Ababa were removed from some areas of the city for the aforementioned reason those in Wolaita Sodo Town, were cleared from the streets. During my fieldwork, Ethiopia hosted two major events: the 'Third Finance for Development', global conference (July 13 to 16, 2015) and state visit of President Barack Obama to Ethiopia (July 26 to 28, 2015). In an attempt to hide and create a false impression of the city to the coming guests, street children were removed by police from their usual street life activity and were kept far away from the city, according to the information of study participants. From my observations, these two major events and officials' hypocrisy might be the main reasons for temporary and artificial removal of children from the city.

On the one hand, it is argued that gaining access to entering into the social world of street children are often challenging task related to their legal status, as minors and the general public views of children, as incapable (Sime 2008; Vakaoti 2009). On the other hand, studies on street children also indicate that developing contacts and gaining street children's confidence is not a very challenging activity. This argument is also mainly based on the nature of street children life which is dependent on their activeness to have good interaction, to beg, since their living mainly dependent on people's charity (Heinonen 2011). However, these two arguments were not merely the case during my fieldwork. In my case, initially and in the course of fieldwork, gaining access of the street children's social world to develop contacts and gaining their confidence was challenged by street children themselves.

Warming (2005) indicated that, especially participant observation as a tool takes considerable time and effort before the researcher is recognized as an accepted member of the researched groups. Getting access also depends on the level of study participant's trust and willingness to participate with the researcher and involve the researcher in their day to day activities (Warming 2005). Abebe (2009) argues that time is always a crucial factor between the researcher and the researched to build a trustful relationship. The personality and positionality of the researcher also matter to reduce to days or weeks rather than months or years in building trustful and confident relationships (Abebe 2009; Crang and Cook 2007; Warming 2005).

In the case of this study, denial of accessing was more prevalent among street children not to welcome strange people to their social world. Nowadays, children's (boys) sexual abuse and exploitation are becoming one of the emerging social problems affecting the physical, social and psychological wellbeing of children in Addis Ababa (Tadele 2009). For this reason, initially, my participants had a fear to spend time with strange people who were coming in the name of help or like a researcher. This was because of the threat of sexual abuses and the attempts they have been experienced such as rape. Therefore, at the beginning of the study, my research assistant helped me a lot, especially in my attempt to attend their night time. My fieldwork assistant used to be, a street child until four years before my fieldwork, and he used to know many of the street children. Thus, I tried together with my assistant to take part in the street children's everyday activities to win their trust and build a good relationship. Consequently, despite their suspicion, over the course of my fieldwork, the presence of my fieldwork assistant, my continuous presence, and repeated contacts in their street life setting helped me to win their trust.

Although I successfully won the participants trust to participate and observe their usual activities, still my attempt was not out of challenges especially after midnight. The second challenge was the presence of police surveillances all around the city, especially in the areas where I was conducting the fieldwork, possibly due to the presence of many street children there and the way they perceive street children. As one officer and social affairs office expert from the Addis Ababa Bureau of Social and Labor Affairs said, "*These days' terrorist groups are using street children as one of their own plan accomplishment*" and he further said "*they [street children] don't care if they receive incentives. Therefore, we are watching them seriously.*" This view was based on the recurrent

terror groups' threat from neighboring countries, for example, *al-Shabaab*, which is Somali²-based terror group. These recurrent attempts resulted in widespread suspicion. Thus, if the police finds when someone acts strangely, they can take quick and serious measures.

Therefore, having these two challenging conditions in mind, I made a decision to have time until midnight and leave the places afterward; and this, in turn, made street children at least to get less suspicious. My decision also helped me not to encounter police surveillances and to feel free while doing my field observation.

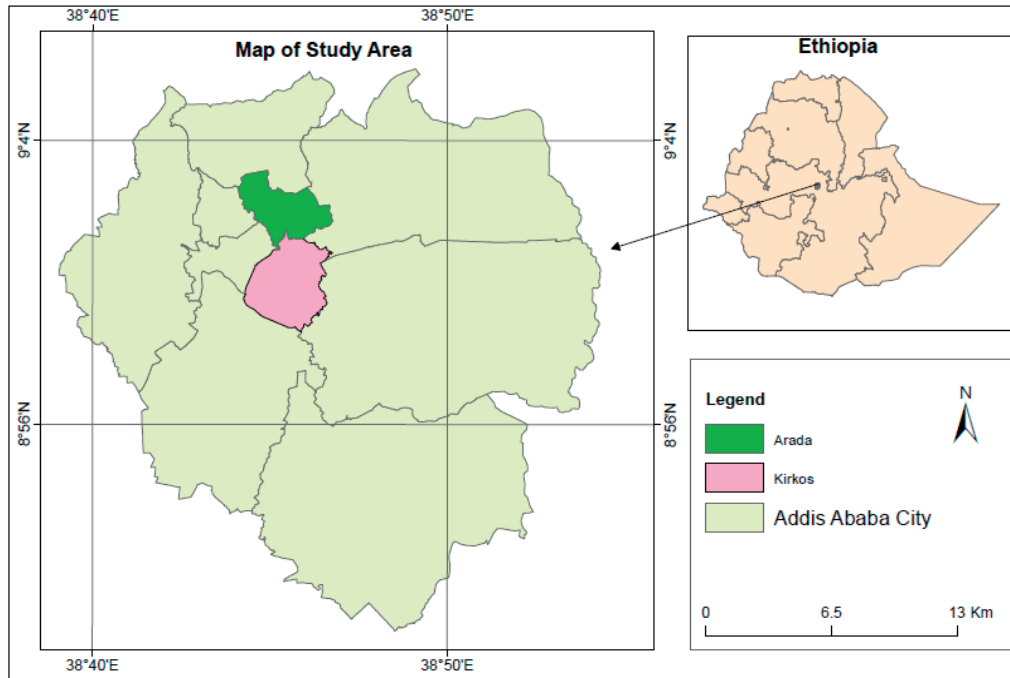
I used the initial phase of the fieldwork to introduce myself as a student and a researcher individually and during group discussions. However, during my introduction, one of my participants thought that I was a journalist, who was collecting information for media purpose, because of his experiences of being interviewed by a journalist before. This was due to lack of knowledge or understanding with the concept of research. Therefore, I had to explain what it entails being a researcher in ways they understand, focusing on the points that my research was purely academic, and how important the study was to fulfill my study requirements. I made the clarification at the outset as well as during the fieldwork to avoid any misunderstanding between me and the study participants. This confirms with the discussion of 'process' consent', whereby the consent of research participants is obtained in negotiation as an ongoing process rather than something that it is assumed on the basis of initial consent, is necessary (cited in Sime 2008). Despite the challenging political measures to clean children from the street and children's own skepticism, I conducted my fieldwork in Addis Ababa, starting from July 1 to August 30, 2015.

4.3 Research Site

Addis Ababa is a big city and the street children scattered throughout the city. Therefore, my first attempt was identifying areas with high potential for achieving the objectives of this study. Based on my observations and recommendations from my fieldwork assistant, I screened out three major areas from two sub-cities, namely Kirkos sub-city and Arada sub-city. I have chosen Meskel Square areas from Kirkos sub-city; and also Ambassador Park, and National Theater areas from the Arada sub-city, where a large number of street children live, work and pass their life around in order to make their living.

² Neighboring country of Ethiopia in East

Figure 1. Map of the study area and the study sub-cities



4.4 Study Participants and Techniques of Recruiting Study Participants

Since this study is mainly concerned with exploring the social world of street children, focusing on their peer friendships, group life, and subculture, street children were used as the principal participants of the study. However, the term street children have proven problematic, as previously discussed, since

it obscures the heterogeneity of street categories, as experiences vary in different circumstances and lifestyles, from those of home based street children to street based, the ways many children relate their own experiences or to the reality of their movements on and off the street (Panter-Bricks 2002:149).

Bearing this complexity in mind, one category of street children, (i.e. *children of the street*, according to UNICEF's definition) was considered. For these children, the street is the place to dwell and earn their living. The children of this category are locally called 'berenda adarioch', which can be translated to children who sleep on verandas and have made the street as their source

of income. The number of participants in this study were, fifteen street children between the ages of 9 to 17; consisting of 13 boys and 2 girls. The unequal gender distribution reflects the difficulty to find girls who fulfill the criteria I set for the purpose of this study. Many of them dwell in rental houses paying 15 ETB (6 NOK) per night. Therefore, even if they were one category of street children that I found during the fieldwork, they were out of my scope since my concerns were those children who made the street as their abode and source of income. Thus, this study did not include children who were working on the street, but going back home or rent rooms at night time. The focus of the above-mentioned age range (9-17) is directly related to the methods used in the fieldwork. This means, due to the shortage of fieldwork time, this study did not use or combine child-friendly methods (task-based methods) which are viable to the capabilities of younger children to offset the barrier related to limitations of languages and lack of articulation of children less than the age of 9.

Table: 1 Study participants by their pseudonym, age and gender

Study participants pseudonym	Age	Gender
Participant 1	17	Male
Participant 2	16	Male
Participant 3	17	Male
Participant 4	15	Male
Participant 5	14	Male
Participant 6	11	Male
Participant 7	14	Male
Participant 8	17	Male
Participant 9	12	Male
Participant 10	16	Male
Participant 11	15	Male
Participant 12	13	Male
Participant 13	13	Male
Participant 14	15	Female
Participant 15	17	Female

4.4.1 Snowballing Method

During the fieldwork phase of this study, I used the snowballing method to recruit study participants. This method is important in getting access and recruiting ‘hidden populations,’ or ‘disadvantaged population’, as Wiebel and Lambert (1990), such as street children, prostitutes, juvenile delinquents, gang members, drug addicts, etc. These segments of the populations are often absent from nationally representative surveys, mostly because of their flexible or mobile nature of life, a lack of fixed address or because they are less likely to be found at home (Wiebel and Lambert 1990).

Therefore, as Valentina argues, in accessing these hidden populations, snowballing, as a method of “*contacting one participant via other*” is important (cited in Browne 2005:48). Biernacki and Waldorf (cited in Browne 2005) defined snowballing as “*a chain created through a series of referrals that are made within a circle of people who know each other*” (p: 48). Snowball sampling thus depends on the behavior or ‘trait’ under study being social, and the potential participants sharing the characteristic under examination (Browne 2005). According to Browne’s discussion, this method helps to gain access to individuals who live outside of taken for granted boundaries of a society. In this method, initial contacts with potential participants can be made in a number of ways and one is using one’s personal network and asking friends of potential participants and connecting whom they know to be involved (Ibid).

Therefore, in the processes of recruiting the participants in this study, I initially used my fieldwork assistant. Because of his previous street experience and social network, he introduced me to two street children, participant 1 and 3 (see table 1). However, as Lewis (1992) argues, it was practically challenging to identify and recruit those of potential individuals for the study in situations where there is no clearly defined group, for example, street children. Therefore, as Lewis argues, using snowballing technique is one most effective single criteria in recruiting study participants. With this method, participants were recruited when the first participant suggests another possible participant who in return suggests others. During the fieldwork, with the friendship networks, only one street child was unwilling to be part of the study.

During the individual interviews, one of the study participants (Participant 3), whom I found first with the help of my fieldwork assistant, indicated that in street life there were many groups and

that he was also a member and leader of one such street group. He further disclosed that each group has its own group name, and most often the names of the groups were taken from movies. Therefore, he helped me to establish contact with other members of his group for a group discussion. When we were on our way to find group members, the boy also introduced me to a member of another group, Participant 1. Therefore, I used these two children's street network, snowballing method, to find other members of the two street groups.

However, as Lewis (1992) argues looking friendship network was also vulnerable for being too consensual, especially during group discussion. To use multiple research methods was one of the possible solutions to reduce such a problem. Thus, I used one study participants to be part in more than one research method, as it helps to triangulate.

4.5 Research Methodology

Methodologically, this study was based on the philosophy of qualitative research design. The rationale of using this method lies in its paramount usefulness in understanding the social world of street children more or less as the way they experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who live them out (Crang and Cook 2007). Unlike quantitative research design which assumes reality is fixed and measurable, qualitative research design assumes that perspectives and experiences of individuals are socially constructed (Greig, Taylor, and MacKay 2012). The qualitative research approach also has the ability to provide complex contextual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It also provides information about the human side of an issue, i.e. the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals.

4.5.1 Methods of Data Collection

In this study, I used multiple methods such as focus group discussions, semi-structured interview, observation with and/or without the participation together with informal dialogue and field notes, as they enabled me to triangulate and offset the weakness of one method by the strength of the other (Abebe 2009). Using multiple research methods together to investigate the same phenomena is also important to increase the depth of understanding of the study phenomenon (Denzin 1978). The following sections, elaborate more on the methods employed.

4.5.1.1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

During my fieldwork focus group discussion was one of the methods I employed to have a discussion with the study participants. As Crang and Cook (2007) argued this method enables information about group perspectives and the variety of opinions or views within the group regarding their street life. They further argue that FGD enables to collect a large amount of information over a relatively short period of time.

In this study, two focus group discussions were conducted with the study participants. The intention of the group discussions, was to uncover a street children's peer relations, group life, and subculture and the influence it has on their street ways of life, and to explore whether or not they had group norms and other related issues.

However, as far as group discussion is concerned, the composition of the group has its own effect on the contributions of the participants (Ennew et al 2009). Lloyd-Evans (2006) argued that participants might feel uncomfortable during the discussion due to differences in terms of age, gender, street experiences or physicality and other factors. Therefore, as per the suggestion of Lewis (1992), the most effective single criteria employed in recruiting participants were looking for friendship groupings.

The first group discussion was held on (28 July 2015) with six group members, including the leader of the group and all participants were boys. However, during the first group discussion, the presence of the group leader had some visible influence on others' ideas and participation. And the leader dominated the other participants during the discussion and these might be related to the street experience or age. Therefore, the second group discussion, on (16 August 2015), was held with four street children of the second group members. The leader of the group was intentionally kept out of the group discussion, but an individual interview was held with him afterward.

Deciding where and when to conduct the group discussions is also an important and challenging task. It is not always possible to get a place that is neutral, informal but not noisy, easily accessible; and places where participants feel comfortable, especially when conducting on the streets (Abebe 2009; Lloyd-Evans 2006). In this study, to give the study participants a voice and to find a suitable venue, I gave street children the chance to choose places, and the discussions took place by the choices of study participants at Ambassador Park and National Theater public café and restaurants,

which were easily accessible. I also found these places more suitable to sit down, and to minimize the effect of weather condition, which was rainy and also the cost of having a discussion since the service charge was cheap. However, the places were not so good to record participants' voices with quality due to loud music and conversation, and I also faced the problem of getting the full attention of the group during the discussion as there were a lot of other activities going on.

In the beginning of the discussion, I also introduced the topic for discussants and told them to have a say on those topics of the discussion they would feel comfortable about being repeated outside the group. I did this because, in group discussion it was difficult to think the privacy since it was not only me hearing the information's provided by participants, but also all members of the group hear what participants' were saying (Lewis 1992; Morrow and Alderson 2011). In the course of the discussion, we also had some short break and soft drinks like Cola, tea, and coffee, as reciprocating and appreciating their participation.

4.5.1.2 Participants Observation

In my fieldwork participant observations were also used to learn what life looked like for an insider in the street children's daily life while remaining, inevitably, an outsider. Frequent field observations are increasingly important in order to understand street children further than a one-off interview and to gain a greater understanding of their views and experiences (Abebe 2009; Punch 2002; Tingstad 2007). This method also helps participants to have a direct voice in the productions of knowledge about their life than other methods like experimental or survey style of study (Vakaoti 2009).

Vakaoti (2009) indicated that participant observation, which was mainly based on the relational method of creating meaning with study participants, helped to enter into the social world of street children. It provided the opportunity to explore and see, and hear stories of study participants and other aspects of their social world, including their street peer friendship, group life and subculture such as norms, values, etc. In this study, this method together with informal dialogue was also used as a means to cross check the information taken from other methods (Vakaoti 2009). Patton (as cited in Vakaoti 2009) indicated that participant observation also helps to uncover some information that participants did not reveal during individual interviews and focus group discussions, for instance, in this study issues related to drug addiction, sexual abuses like rape, etc.

I used this method as both as participant observer and some time as a mere observer. The observation took place at different places where my study participants used to work, play, eat, and sleep during the daytime and until midnight. This method also needed my participation by joining in the regular activities of the study participants like for instance when they play soccer together. In my fieldwork sometimes I also had time with my participants having lunch and sometimes dinner in public restaurants such as Ambassador Park, and National Theatre, conversing with while they chew *khat* and walking with them in places where they frequently used to pass their time. This, in turn, constructed my relationships with the study participants and brought trust to some extent and it also helped me to relieve their suspiciousness.

One major challenge that arises during fieldwork can be a failure to win participants trust to access their street social world. As discussed in section (4.2), this is due to two reasons. These are: (i) street children's fear not to welcome strange people to their social world related to the threat of sexual abuses, for example, rape; and (ii) the presence of police surveillance related to the view that street children can be a victim of others will, for example terror groups, in threatening the peace and security. Therefore, having these two challenging conditions in mind, I made a decision to have time until midnight and leave the places afterward; and this, in turn, made street children at least to get less suspicious. My decision also helped me not to encounter police surveillances and to feel free while doing my field observation.

At the beginning of the fieldwork, my fieldwork assistant, played a prominent role in introducing me with the study participants. So in order to shorten the challenges of time, I devoted all my time, especially in the first two weeks, for field examinations and to start and to inform to the recruited study participants about the project in a way they understand and have continuous contacts with certain individuals who were displaying certain attributes which are relevant to this study. My repeated contacts, interest and respect for participating in the street children's social life and different street events helped me in building and winning their trust and confidence despite challenges of night participation. Therefore, my continuous presence opened up opportunities to participate and observe and at the same time to have informal dialogue with them.

One of the challenges I encountered to use this method was taking notes while observing and participating in the research setting, especially at night time, in my case until midnight. As Warming (2005) argues, this might be due to fear if it possibly divert participants attention from

their usual activities to the writings and lead them into fabricating another personality rather than their usual life and it might also provoke some participants to see with suspicion. Therefore, as Warming argue, I jotted down some phrases to remind me of key event to write up in more detail later.

Over the course of my fieldwork, doing participant observations helped me to know street children's reactions to an outsider coming to their settings, as part of their subculture. Frequently people and street children themselves exhibit some apparent signs of amazement to my presence in the life activities of study participants and their friend who were not part of.

In general participant observations had brought much more enjoyment and data in my fieldwork and only once I encountered and received the warning from police surveillance while sitting together my study participant. As I mentioned above, this might be due to their perception of street children as a threat to public peace and security and their exposure to the will of terrorist from their experiences before. At the time, I did not have my consent letter on my own bag just to show what I was doing as a researcher. Meanwhile, they commanded me to leave the place and therefore, I left the place with no further discussions.

4.5.1.3 Semi-Structured Interview

In my fieldwork, I also used semi-structured interviews with ten street children including two girls and eight boys. The interviews were held basically to explore the street children social world, focusing on their peer friendship, group life, and subculture. Initially, I used the interview guiding questions that were prepared before the fieldwork. And the interviews were conducted by a local language called *Amharigna*³.

I also used this method to have a discussion with one social officer and expert from the Addis Ababa city Bureau of Social and Labor Affairs. The discussion was held on 3 September 2015. It mainly aimed at discussing issues such as the institutional definition of who street children are, institutional descriptions of street children life, their character, and institutional image, the magnitude of the problem in number, the participation of and benefits that children accrues from

³ One of the eighty lingual groups in Ethiopia and working language at a federal level.

the overall development activities of the country, some issues mainly related to child right based on the UNCRC, etc.

During the fieldwork, the individual interviews gave me an opportunity to go beyond the already defined questions by providing a flexible environment (Kvale and Brinkmann 2014). Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) argue that this method goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views in conversation, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge. They further discussed in this method the knowledge was constructed in the interaction, interview, interchange of views about a subject of mutual interest, between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Vakaoti (2009) indicated that keeping an appointment time was one major challenge in fieldwork in the process of conducting formal interviews, especially when working with street children. The argument was based on the lifestyle of the street child, which is mobile. In this study, while taking care of keeping an appointment time, many times I postponed my interview schedule mainly due to inconvenient of weather condition of my study area, Addis Ababa, which was rainy; because of the mobile nature of street children's life, sometimes I had also a problem of finding participants in places we supposed to meet; and difficulty in arriving there on time with crowded trafficking. Despite these challenges, when I met study participants, the interview takes place with minimal challenges because of close relationships I already made.

The interviews were held in different areas including open spaces at Meskel Square, at Ambassador Park, at National Theater café, and in places where participants used to sleep, chew *khat* and do other activities. All individual interviews with study participants as well as a social officer of the Addis Ababa city bureau of social and labor affairs were taped.

During the interview, one of the major challenges was the public attention. The interview sessions, especially in Ambassador Park, and National Theater café attracted the considerable attention of many people, including waiters; and it had also some influences to conduct interviews freely. The attention might be due to the public view of street children as passive victims of others will. As I have discussed previously, this might be because of the widespread view that terrorist groups could use street children as one of their own plan accomplishment and also street children themselves do not care if they receive incentives. So, if the public finds when someone acts strangely, what is

called '*tsegure liwux*⁴', they are distrustful and quick to inform the concerned body such as the police. The other reason might be differences I had with the participants, in our cloth's and physical appearance. For instance, in one of my interview sessions, while conducting an interview, the participant started crying because of his memories of the sexual attack. Later I found that he was one of those victims of rape in the street. Then people began to look at me. Therefore, in the meantime, I stopped interviewing and started talking about other fun aspects of the street life, particularly about his peer friends and the street subculture, since it was part of my study. I made an effort to make relaxed; and continued interviewing some minutes later. Then afterward, I was very sensitive to such private issues.

4.5.1.4 Field Notes

During my fieldwork, I took notes which were part of my reflections on my day to day fieldwork activities with my participants, officials, assistants, and my own self-reflection. Taking notes mainly concerned in writing during my observation in the field and during individual and group discussions. Emotions, facial expressions or body languages and challenges from officials in my attempt to consent letter, police officers' reactions to the street children's presence, and other many more events were included in my field notes. Mostly I used home when I was alone, and quiet places like Cherchil café in Piassa to write up those events in detail and I did most often after fieldwork as soon as possible. Lloyd-Evans (2006) indicated that writing notes still they were fresh in mind makes much easier to remember.

4.5.1.5 Secondary Sources of Data

In this study, I also used secondary data from different sources, such as books, research publications, articles, conventions, and other relevant unpublished materials, including information from the Addis Ababa Bureau of Social and Labor Affairs.

4.5.2 Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues are common in all research activities to all age categories and not necessarily unique in research activities while working with children (Valentine 1999). Nevertheless, ethical complexities of conducting research with children have been discussed by many authors (e.g

⁴ Someone acting strangely, especially as a threat for the public peace and security.

Abebe 2009; Ennew et al 2009; Valentine 1999). This is mainly related to the long-held view of children as a pre-social, potential social, in the process of becoming, dependent, ignorant and minors legally and in general, they were thought as needy of protection of adults including parents, guardians, and the state (Valentine 1999). But, the 1980's movements for the rights of the child and the coming of UNCRC provided some challenging guidelines about children's right to be protected, provisioned and participate in all concerning areas. And particularly, Article 12 of the convention states that:

“the child who is capable of forming his or her own views, the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.” (UNCRC 1989).

Ennew et al. (2009), having UNCRC's principles in mind, also mentioned several ethical principles that researchers should consider when doing research with children, such as protecting children emotionally, physically and mentally from any kind of harm; protecting children from violence, abuse, and exploitations, not placing children at risk, respecting their privacy and ensuring confidentiality, and seeking their consent.

Having this in mind, in my fieldwork I had also given special considerations to the ethical principles such as getting consent, respect privacy and confidentiality, power imbalance, and reciprocity. The following section discusses ethical issues in detail including their processes and challenges.

4.5.2.1 Consent

One of the basics in research activities particularly in fieldwork is securing the consent of the participants and other institutions that have a stake in and responsibility for the groups of children with which the researcher is planning to conduct the study (Abebe 2009). Informed consent does mean that a participant of the study has agreed to be part of research, after being cognizant of and understanding of who the researcher is, the aims, methods and processes, topics, the usage of data and withdrawal from the research at any time (Abebe 2009; Beazley et al. 2009). However, it is not mere giving information rather it should be in the ways that participants should understand.

According to Hill (as cited in Sime 2008) “*consent should be obtained from the participants in person, and after a participant was given the opportunity to hear information about the project, they should be given the opportunity to ask questions or raises concerns*” (p. 6). Vakaoti (2009) argues that participants consent to participate should be attained for each specific research tool. As Mason states such an approach creates the maximum opportunities for the participants to have their view and experiences in the topic under study (cited in Sime 2008). Although the provision of information about the research may help participants in determining whether to become study participant, in practice it is quite difficult for any participant to understand the full implications of participating in research. Therefore, as Heath *et al.* argues the role of ‘process’ consent’, whereby the consent of research participants is obtained in negotiation as an ongoing process rather than something that it is assumed on the basis of initial consent, is necessary (cited in Sime 2008).

In this study during the fieldwork phase, I asked the participants to give their consent from our first contact, during the individual interview session, and during focus group discussions. Individually participants were informed about the purpose of my presence and the overall picture of the study. And only one street child refused to give his consent and participate after hearing what I was presented by myself and the purpose of my study. As I have mentioned, his refusal was possible because of his fear of spending time with strangers. All other participants were given me their consent and all of their consent were recorded using a tape recorder during the individual and group discussions.

Informed consent was also obtained from group discussants. Before the beginning of group discussions, I gave the participants’ information by explaining and specifying clearly about the purpose of the study and discussion particularly. Then after all the participants were asked and given their consent verbally and as I did during individual interviews, their individual consent was tape recorded and also all were also informed that of their right to leave the discussions at any time during the discussions time if they feel discomfort.

4.5.2.2 Respect Privacy

Street children as one of the most marginalized groups in a mainstream society, hence, do not receive respect. As Beazley (2003) discussed, for the state and society, children who are living in the street are viewed as a source of social crime. Therefore, when they meet together in places not

specifically intended for them, or not sufficiently marginal that they are ‘invisible’ to the public, they are seen as threatening and kept under close surveillance (van Blerk 2013). Their very existence in the street settings also viewed as against to the conventional conceptions on the family beliefs, notions about the community of what it means to be a child (Ibid). Often, they are stigmatized and expressed in a pejorative and negative light as work-shy, drug-crazed, antisocial delinquents, pressed by adults into crime (Panter-Brick 2002). Despite these images, my fieldwork is basically based on the rights of the child (Beazley et al. 2009; Ennew et al. 2009). Therefore, during the fieldwork, participants right and preference, dignity and opinion, which was worthy of respect (Morrow and Alderson 2011) were given respect as every child. During fieldwork participants' right of privacy and confidentiality were given particular emphasis.

Although privacy, avoiding undue interference into the personal affairs of children as well as adults, has not always been respected in research with adults or children, it has been one of a vital ethical issue (Morrow and Alderson 2011). This is also clearly mentioned in Article 16 (1) of UNCRC: “*No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family or correspondence or to unlawful attack on his or her honor and reputation*” (UNCRC 1989).

Therefore, in my fieldwork, one of the major steps, in respecting their privacy was to get the consent of each participant in accessing and learning about their street experiences. Although informed consent has been achieved, many times I was a bit worried to find quiet and private places, especially during individual interviews. However, frequently interviewees mentioned that in street life, ‘nothing is private’ and he said, “*Do not worry; we can talk wherever*” (Participant 1). Despite my participant’s comment, I wanted to be alone with my interviewees and asked them their preferences of places; because over time I thought among street children’s there were some issues which were considered as private that they did not want to discuss. For instance, issues related to family background and their family life, possibly due to their bad memories, drug, crime, sexual abuses, even attacks from their own peer groups, etc. Therefore, I gave all of them the chance to make decisions regarding places, days, and time, to have one to one interview sessions as well as group discussions.

Especially, as I have discussed under group discussion, it has always been difficult to think about privacy since all the discussants hear the information what each was saying (Lewis 1992; Morrow

and Alderson 2011). Therefore, in the group discussions, I applied the same thing as I used in an individual interview to guide the discussions with the already defined format to discuss and remind discussants to discuss those things they were feeling comfortable.

4.5.2.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality, having secret participant's identity and other details when reporting, is also one of the vital ethical concerns in research activities with children as well as adults (Morrow and Alderson 2011). As Ennew et al (2009), argues collecting participant's name is irrelevant in social research. They further argue that research participant's identity should be protected by changing their names (or not collecting names at all) and if necessary, the name of their community, in the research report and other publications. It is also accepted it is that the researchers' responsibility to provide participants information about the right to confidentiality to the participant before taking part in the research (Kirk 2007).

During all my fieldwork time with my participants, I often asked them to take their pictures and record their voices and took only based on their free will. However, I was also asked twice by my participants to include their pictures while writing up my thesis. However, it was not my plan to include street children's picture and other personal identities, including their real names. This is because of some sensitive information I had during my field observations and discussions with study participants such as police violations, sexual attack, etc. that could be directly related to the human rights violations towards street children and it could also uncover the silence of state. Therefore, including pictures and real names could endanger study participants street freedom. Therefore, as part of researcher responsibility to keep the anonymity of participants' information and confidentiality, I did not include pictures and other personal identities, including their names and group name and backgrounds while writing my thesis or if a study will be published. Rather, I used my own format only including participant's age and gender.

In my fieldwork, my participants were given the chance to select names rather than their real names for the purpose of this study only, to make it anonymous. Although some of them said no problem even if I used their real name, I encouraged them to select names for the purpose of the research activities. Throughout the course of the fieldwork, I also promised an assurance to study participants the information they were given me will be kept secret and confidential from anyone's

access unless it was related to my research work even if they do not care for it. In addition, I also used my personal computer to keep all fieldwork documents including interviews and pictures using my own personal password. I also formed my own format which consists of study participants by their pseudonym, age, and gender (see table 1).

4.5.2.4 Power Imbalance

The negotiating unequal power relationship between the researcher and participants is also a central aspect of ethical research (Ennew et al. 2009). The major ethical challenge for researchers working with children is the difference in power and status between adults and children (Morrow and Richards 1996). This may be due to the way the researcher's self-presentation, gender, the language of the researcher and the way participants perceive the researcher (Abebe 2009; Ennew et al. 2009). According to Corsoro's (as cited in Mandell 1991) suggestion "*age and authority separate children from adults, preventing the researcher from assuming talking about a complete participation role*" (p. 39). To the question of power, Mandell (1991) suggests that researcher can minimize power differences by taking 'least adult role'. She further discussed that in order to gain entry into the children's social world, (adult) researchers must engage in joint action with the children. Thus creating mutual understanding through following children's way, understanding children's language, trying to learn and use words participant understand, and building rapport with continuous interaction with children, spending time with participants to learn what, how, and why they do things, etc. (Mandell 1991). Even physical differences can be minimized when participating with children in interaction (Ennew et al. 2009; Mandell 1991). Mandell further discussed becoming 'least adult' with the children is a gradual role enactment process that occurs in two ways: naturally in the course of interaction and reflectively, as a result of encountering challenging situations. However, this does not mean those power imbalances are equalized within any research since the adult researcher cannot avoid always being in control of research agendas (Mandell 1991).

During my fieldwork, I used different techniques in my attempt to minimize the power imbalance between me and my participants. One of these techniques was showing respect for whatever they

were doing, talking and creating a trustful relationship without commenting for whatever they were doing, for instance: chewing *khat*⁵ or smoking cigarettes, etc.

One major benefit of working with street children was their openness when they were sharing their street life experiences. However, it also depends on the degree of interaction one has with the street child. Abebe (2009) indicated that being communicative and having the skills to narrate stories, whether true or not, is one of an important means of earning their daily income from what they were calling *kifela*.

In most cases, researchers (adult) tend to be more conscious of their use of language in research with children (Punch 2002). This emanates from their view of children as non-competence or limitations of languages and lack of articulation. However, children equally can use different language which adult researcher do not understand. This was what I encountered during the fieldwork, which equally created power imbalance. In the early stage of my fieldwork, I often found myself with difficulty to understand what my participants were talking about, because of their attempt to hide what they were talking and to force me to leave their settings. Street children were used unique words or languages, they sometimes use to insult or degrade others or may use to mock if they did not like someone's presence in their setting and also to communicate with one another without outsiders noticing it (see chapter seven, section 7.4.5). However, because of my continuous interaction, interest to know what they were saying, and in respect of their lifestyle and interactions, I was able to win their trust and began asking and learning how and for what purpose they were using those words. Over time, I was also able to understand and use those words during our interaction and communication and even in our individual interview and group discussion sessions, and these also helped not to limit myself to formal academic words merely.

4.5.2.5 Reciprocity: Researchers Abuse

With regard to reciprocity, there is a crucial debate about the properness of giving money or other incentives to participants for their involvement in research (Abebe 2009; Beazley et al. 2009; Ennew et al. 2009; Lloyd-Evans 2006; Morrow and Alderson 2011). Despite the existing debate, some researchers (e.g. Abebe 2009; Beazley et al. 2009; Lloyd-Evans 2006; Morrow and Alderson 2011) argues that research participants should be compensated for their time or participation by

⁵ *Khat* is a stimulant leaf commonly used to chew as a drug.

offering an incentive, particularly for the participants with lower-income or marginalized groups such as street children, beggars; since their time is bounded by income-generating activities. As Morrow and Alderson mentioned, there are several reasons why researchers should make a payment such as:

to refund expenses, including attendant costs; to compensate for the time, inconvenience and possible discomfort; to show a token appreciation for participants' help; to pay for young people's help just as adults are paid; to recompense people who would have been earned by working or begging if they had not been helping with the research (Morrow and Alderson 2011:9).

There is also an argument which advocates not giving money to research participants since it can promote expectations and could lead tensions in a community between those who are part of the research and those who are not (Ennew et al. 2009). A payment that may be small to some people can be high for others, including disadvantaged people and many children. Therefore, participants may then feel pressured into accepting payment and feeling that they have to disclose more than they would choose to say, or say more strongly what they think the researchers want to hear (Morrow and Alderson 2011).

During my fieldwork, none of my participants demanded a payment for their participation. This was mainly due to my initial self-introduction as a student. Though, if you come from somewhere abroad, say Europe or the US, people could expect something from you in return for their contributions, even if you were a student. This is mainly because of the assumption that western countries and the people coming from those countries are wealthy. Hence, apart from introducing myself as a student, I also clearly mentioned the voluntary nature of their participation to avoid unrealistic expectation. Though, introducing of the voluntary nature study participation was not intended to leave study participants without any compensation rather it aimed at avoiding their expectation of payment based on the assumption mentioned above.

Despite my stance on keeping the voluntary nature of study participation to avoid unrealistic expectation, sometimes I made a payment in cash at the end of each interview session (maximum of 20 Ethiopian Birr or approximately 8 Norwegian Kroner) and I also paid for meals and café services during a one-to-one interview and group discussion sessions as a compensation for their time and it also as a way of appreciation and encouragement. The reciprocity was made based on my stance like other researchers (e.g. Abebe 2009; Beazley et al. 2009; Lloyd-Evans 2006;

Morrow and Alderson 2011) that argue research participants like street children should be compensated for their participation and time since street children's time was bounded by their income-generating activities. Apart from the reward participants for their time, it is also my stance that the researcher should help study participant, especially marginalized groups like street children, for their kind contribution by sharing their own private life experiences for the production of knowledge as well as for the promotion of the researcher. I also argue that reciprocity should not be intended merely to reward study participants for their time, even if they were not demanding any payment, but also as the right holder to benefit from their contribution to the research in knowledge production and researcher's promotion.

As I have mentioned in the above section there are several studies (e.g. Aptekar and Heinonen; Ennew and Plateau; and Mikkelsen (as cited in Abebe 2009) arguing against compensating the study participants for their time. However, I do not think such stance takes into consideration the imbalance of benefits that one accrued from the study. For instance, what is the benefit of conducting research for the researchers? Are they conducting the research for nothing? In fact, often there are promotions in status, in wage, and other benefits for the researcher. So, if we argue against compensation, what is the benefit of the study for participants' contribution? Indeed, many studies start their research with the aim of solving the problem or to contribute to the formation of policies and strategies. However, the results have been far from reaching such aims. For instance, in the case of street children, though many studies have been done with street children, apart from knowledge production and researchers own status promotions, the phenomenon endures. However, it is not my stance that studies are not contributing, but, I am critical towards exploiting study participants for one's self-benefit or promotion, especially marginalized groups like street children.

There are also other researchers, such as Sime (2008) and Vakaoti (2009), who argue that reciprocity should be contextual. But still they argue about compensating with cinema tickets and gift coupons as tokens of thanks and others also pay for meals (e.g. Abebe 2009). Why not money, but coupons or food? This remembered me the interview I had with an officer from social and labor affair bureau and he said: "*street children should accept what we think is good for them whatever it is since they have no choices.*" Mostly these views emanating from the adult-centric views that 'rational' adults know what is good for the irrational child or a street child. Even if

many child researchers today advocates of children's agency and to have voices in their own social world, what they practically are doing also not much different from those organizations that advocates children's ignorance. Many argue their preference to give cinema tickets or food, rather than giving money merely based on the researchers' own views of what is good or bad than taking participants or children's own choices.

In general, my argument is that reciprocity should be contextual, but also it should not be merely focused on giving money, cinema tickets or food, which cannot help the study participants' to improve their lives, especially when working with marginalized groups, (e.g. street children). Rather apart from considering the imbalance of benefits that one accrues from being part of the study, as part of the researchers' social and/or moral responsibility, they should help the disadvantaged children.

In the case of street children, no street child wants to stay for life on the street. All have an aspiration to quit their street existence. Therefore, apart from considering the imbalance of benefits that one accrues from being part of the study, as moral or social responsibility, researchers should go further to help by doing what they can to the study participants kind contribution, especially marginalized groups like street children. I argue that research and researchers should not be merely focused on gathering data's from study participants solely to know one's private life in the production of knowledge, as... researchers, own self-promotions as the latent benefit of the study.

In my case, during the last phase of the fieldwork, i.e. two weeks before my departure, although I have never made any promises, I was inspired by their courage to start work and quit their street life. I decided to buy equipment to facilitate mini business activities like shoe-shining and all the equipment's (box, brush, etc.) was costing me 200 ETB (80NOK) and a mini mobile kiosk, "*Jebulo*," which is a collection of soft, cigarettes, candies, gums, and mobile cards, which cost me 600 ETB (233 NOK).

From my experience, what I did really bring changes in their lives to some extent and also brought strong linkage not only with those of my participants (beneficiaries) rather their friends were also looking me as their brother and friend.

The 15th of September, 2015 was the day I depart my study participants. On this day, they bought and presented me a gift while I was there to see them off. Hopefully, the linkages I already made with my participants and other street children will bring good study environments in the near future of my subsequent fieldwork studies with street children. According to Messay (as cited in Abebe 2009) and from my own experiences, it is possible to argue that reciprocity reflects “*how ethical principles were the byproducts of interrelationships and the reproductive nature of those principles*” (p. 462).

4.6 Data transcription and Analysis

This section presents how field data were transcribed and analyzed. Transcribing and translating field data from oral language to a written language (Kvale and Brinkman 2014) is an important and challenging aspect of the research processes. In this study, all the field data’s first transcribed in the local language, *Amharigna*, by me and the research assistant. This was done during fieldwork right after each session as soon as possible to remind and avoid self-interpretations all the social and emotional aspects surrounding the interview, group discussions, and observations. In doing so, I transcribed the dialogue and the stories of study participants, street children, while listening to the recorded voices. In fact, it was a very time-consuming task. And later translated into English for the purpose of analysis. This process is important as Kvale and Brinkman argues that a researcher who takes the time to do their own transcriptions might benefit from the research process and also are reminded of the social and emotional aspects surrounding the interview. The categorizations of data first done according to the already structured research guideline and then according to the research questions. After doing categorization, the needed data’s were reorganized into themes, in order to help me later process of writing.

This study used the narrative analysis method. This was basically because most data’s collected from study participants were stories of their daily experiences in their street social world. According to Kvale and Brickmann (2014), the narrative analysis is used in order to be able to get the meaning of what the study participants were experiencing since the analysis focuses on the meaning and the linguistic form of the texts. In this study, participants choice of words and language use was given due attention to keep their voices, this, in turn, helped in adding more meaning to what the participants said.

Chapter Five

Street Children's Peer Friendship

5.1 Introduction

The primary focus of this and the next two chapters is discussing street children's social world focusing on their peer friendship, group life, and subculture, which exists within their street settings. The focus of these chapters is street children with whom I spent time in the study area, Addis Ababa. These chapters highlight the study participants' views of their social world as expressed by their own voices. The structure of the chapter is guided by the overall aims of the study.

The theoretical framework for these chapters draws on the concept of social capital together with subculture theories. The conceptual frameworks on children and childhood together with Nilsen's concept of 'we-ness' has been applied for understanding child-child interaction and their everyday life.

This particular chapter is divided into three sections and discusses primarily street children's social world focusing on their peer friendship, which exists within their street settings. The first section briefly discusses the reasons why the study participants left family home life to the street life. The subsequent section discusses children's first impressions of the street life. The third section- and the main focus of the chapter- discusses street children's peer friendship in detail. This section begins by examining the function of peer friendship before it sets out to explore the other aspects of street peer friendship in detail.

5.2 Leaving Home Life to the Street Life

Many studies on street children have cited poverty as a major reason for leaving the family home to the street, especially in developing countries of South America, Asia, and Africa (e.g. Aptekar 1994; Aptekar and Stoeklin 2014; Lalor 1999; Plummer, et al 2007). Often the public, policymakers and social workers alike believe that children whose basic needs cannot be met within the household leave the home life to the street (Conticini and Hulme 2007). For instance, in Ethiopia, it is common to cite poverty due to drought and famine as contributing factors to the proliferations of street children in Addis Ababa (Heinonen 2000).

On the other hand, Conticini and Hulme (2007) argue that the conventional view frequently ignores the indication that the social factors closely linked with consistent domestic violence and abuse can influence the migration to the street. Thus, this study starts the discussion by arguing that the reasons the participant children left family home are multiple, divergent and individual.

According to UNICEF's report, there were 369 million poor children under the age 15 in the cities of the developing world (1990 cited in Aptekar 1994). Nevertheless, the same report discloses that the great majority were not on the street. This poses a question, to those who cite poverty as a main cause leading children to the street: why is that some children leave their home life while their siblings, who are as poor and presumably as abused or neglected, stay at home.

This study argues that, although a single factor, such as poverty, can be an immediate factor to make a decision, the process of becoming a street child is usually the result of many interwoven problems inside the family home. For example, during the individual interview while recounting the reason for leaving home to join the street life, participant 1 said:

“When I was a teenager, I used to take some money from home to gamble. While gambling the time passes by unknowingly, so came back home really late. I did this repeatedly and one day the gates of our home were closed. So I was forced to stay out and sleep on the street. That was the first night I slept on the street. So in the next morning when I went back home, I was punished by my father with a stick. But in the meantime, my parents died successively in 2009. Then, I and my siblings could not stay together any longer due to the lack of basic necessities. Hence, I left home to the street. Afterward, I went to jail for beating and damaging my friend's teeth. While I was in prison, my brothers and sisters were no longer in harmony with one another because of some differences in religion. So they decided to sell the house our parents left to us. So I took my share when I was released and spent it recklessly. Since then I wanted to enjoy my life outside the home and enjoyed with money until I left nothing. When I was short of supply, I went to the street.”

At first many of the study participants, singled out a single factor as the reason for leaving the family home. Nevertheless, as they discussed their cases in more details it got clearer that it was more complex and intertwining. For instance, as indicated in participant 1's account, even though, at first, the boy singled out a lack of support for basic necessities as a reason for leaving home to

the street, the process of becoming a street kid have started long before his abandonment of home life. While living in the family home, he used to steal money from home, gamble and stay away from home for long hours. He also slept on the street when the doors were closed. And the other intervening factors such as parental death(s), lack of family support, lack of basic necessities were also factors that precipitated the process of becoming a street child. This corresponds with Aptekar's (1994) finding that indicates that children often start their street life in a gradual process, at first by staying away for hours, or a night or two, and then gradually staying more days away from home. Likewise, this study argues that the long-lasting family related problems inside the family house, for example, the death of parent(s), violence and consistent abuse, the arrival of a new male or woman in the house or remarriage; and the tradition of physically disciplining children, can be factors pushing a child to become a street child.

The following section, discusses some of the reasons that made the children in this study to leave the family home and head for the street.

5.2.1 Family related problems

In this study, family related problems such as parent(s) death, reorganization of family structure, i.e. living with stepparents and stepchildren, and parenting method of disciplining children or fear of physical punishment were mentioned as the reason for children to leave their family home head to the street.

In most cases parental death affects children in many ways. As revealed in the account of the above-mentioned quote (participant 1) parental death leaves him and his siblings with little or no help. Subsequently, lack of emotional support, lack of financial support, lack of guidance and controlling misbehavior mostly characterize such houses. However, as mentioned in theory chapter (see section 3.2.1), the customary practice in majority Ethiopian society dictates that children are the responsibility of the extended family, even more than their nuclear family, thus the role of the relatives play in childcare and nurture becomes important (Abebe and Tefera 2014). Family collectives are crucial to ensure the well-being of the children before or after the parental death. To the contrary, parental death leaves children alone with little or no help from other close relatives, especially in most cities where nuclear rather than extended family prevails. This corresponds with Aptekar's (1994) finding that indicates in the modern city family children are no

longer growing up in the extended family with strong community support, where modern nuclear family or individualistic life prevails. Furthermore, the inefficient welfare system of the country, Ethiopia, to support child leaves children with little or no help (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005). Therefore, over time, parental death could lead children to look some other options to the problems they are facing within the house due to the absence of guardians or family support. So, as indicated in participant 1's and others account, street life could be used as the possible option to leave home life.

Other participating children also explained that they left home to the street life because of violence and consistent abuse inside the house, resulting from the reorganization of family structure- (i.e. the coming and living with stepparents and stepsiblings). During the individual interview with the study participants, 10 and 15, they revealed that consistent domestic violence and abuses are the reason for leaving home to the street life. While recounting the reason for leaving home to the street life, study participant 10 said:

“In fact, I do not know my real father whether he was dead or alive. However, my stepfather always hurts me and my mother by using abusive or exploitative words. Sometimes he also used to hit me seriously by almost anything he had. So, I had been in this unbearable and miserable family relationship for long. Then I heard that my relatives were living in Addis Ababa and decided to go there. But in Addis, my relatives were not accepted me to stay there for long and so I left my relatives home to the street life.”

This confirms with previous studies that reported violence and consistent abuses at home as an important reason for leaving home to the street (e.g. Aptekar 1994; Aptekar and Stoeklin 2014; Conticini and Hulme 2007; Ennew 2003; Lalor 1999; Plummer, Kudrati and Yousif 2007). Participant 10's account, showed the violence's and abuses were caused by the reorganization of family, i.e. the coming of a new male or female in the house mainly because of remarrying upon the death one of the parent's. With the reorganization of family structure, the coming of stepmother or stepfather and their newly born or arrived stepchildren could leave children from the previous marriage in abusive family environments and relationships. Children from the previous marriage could face neglect by newly arrived family members. This concurs with Lalor's (1999) study in Ethiopia that indicated that insults, bullying or physical punishments and unequal treatments

among children and stepchildren frequently occur within the house to the children from the previous marriage.

This is in line with Aptekar's (1994) argument that the children who live with their stepparents in abusive familial relationships can leave the family home to the street. However, it would be difficult to conclude that all children living with their stepparents are experiencing abusive relationships and are forced to leave their family home and head for the street. I rather argue that the long-lasting family related problems inside the family house could be the cause rather than a single factor. Therefore, an assessment of the reasons for the presence of abusive familial relationships that could lead children to leave home to street life is necessary.

Other participants also told that they left home to the street life because of methods of parental disciplining they experienced or fear of physical punishment. Physical and humiliating punishments are highly prevalent in Ethiopia society with a long and deep-rooted historical background and are widely accepted as a means of disciplining a child not only at home, but also by the community including schools (Heinonen 2011; Save the Children-Sweden 2011). In Ethiopia, regardless of cultural differences, physical punishments are common and identified as acceptable modes of child rearing or shaping the behavior of the child. It is also regarded as a means of maintaining adults' power over children (Abebe 2008; Lemessa and Kjørholt 2013). This showed in participant 3's recount during the individual interview:

"I left home in 2011 when I was 13 and now I am 17. The reason I left home to the street because I feared my father's punishment for faults I did by insulted my teacher. But my parents knew nothing about it. But I knew how my father is going to deal with the issue, mainly serious physical punishment is going to happen, so I kept silent. And I did not want my father to punish me physically. So I left the home village without telling them where I was going."

Participant 3's and other participants' accounts and from my own personal experiences, as the one who was growing up in Ethiopian society, sometimes the physical punishments are harsh and unbearable: for instance, being bound, hung by their hands, flogged and starved. Therefore, this mode of family relationships leaves children under tension for any kind of faults they were doing in their childhood, as participant 3 said. The continuity of this kind of family relationship could

create problems for the child to stay with their parents and can lead them to abandon their family home.

5.2.2 Peer influence

Participants also said that they headed to the street because of peer influence. From the participants' recount, these children were motivated by their peer friends who had a prior street experience. As already mentioned, being a street child is caused by many interwoven problems rather than a single factor. Thus, for children living with the various domestic problem, the information they receive from their peers can easily convince them to leave their family home. While recounting the reason for leaving home participant 2 said:

“It has been four years since I left my home village. My peer friends were the one who used to tell me everything about Addis Ababa [the study area] I had never known and even they paid for me the transportation cost from the home village to Addis.”

Children who live on the streets, sometimes visit their parents' before they return to the street again (Aptekar 1994; Auya and Oino 2013; Lalor 1999). Other children are reintegrated with their parents by the agencies working with the street children. However, the reintegration program does not recognize the reasons that caused children to leave home as it is mainly concerned with removing children from the street to avoid their visible presence (see also van Blerk 2013). However, many children do not stay long in their parents' house because of the continuity of the previous problem inside the home and that the children cannot do at home the things as they got used to doing in the street. This can lead children to feel, as Ursin (2011) called, 'at home in the street.' This means *“when children maintain a fantasy of returning to their families, but when they carry out this dream they are often rejected, resulting in a longing for the acceptance and status of the street”* (Ursin 2011:227). Thus, whenever children visited or attempted to reintegrate with their parents, they did not manage to stay for long. Sometimes they also bring other children to the streets. During the individual interview, participant 2 said:

“I left the home life to the street with my friends from the home village after having information about Addis. What I heard about Addis from my friends, they told me that Addis is such a big city and there are numerous options to live. My expectation was to work and live a better life, not to sleep on the street. I was not expecting street life when I was

leaving home. Even I did not have any awareness or idea about street life. However, the description was never true.”

From the above finding, it is evident that children who were going to visit their parents and who were reintegrated by institutions, governmental and/or non-governmental, had a major role in influencing their peers, in addition to domestic problems.

5.2.3 Street Peer Friendship and subculture attraction

The study also found that the reason children leave of their well to do families to the street life is not merely because of the problems in the family home life, but also due to the street children's peer friendship and subculture. In some cases, this could directly relate with the perceptions freedom of street life that street children have in all their daily activities that might influence or attracts those children who already have developed a strong street connection with street children to leave their home and join the street children.

According to Wells (as cited in Abebe 2013) the dominant interpretation of UNCRC signifies one such construct related to the premises that *'a child is a universal subject who should everywhere be enabled to be a free, autonomous, choosing and rational individual'* (p. 72). However, this is not the case in Ethiopian society where children do not have the opportunity to be free to participate even in the matters that affect their lives (Abebe 2013). Children's matter are always the concern of the family and every aspect of their activity is controlled and decided by the adults' because of their position in adult-centered society (Abebe 2013; Lemessa and Kjørholt 2013). Therefore, even to have fun outside the home environment with their peers, children normally need the approval from their parents or adult siblings.

Despite some changes resulting from the UNCRC's influence, the majority of Ethiopian families expects children to be submissive to their parents as well as their elder brothers. In contrast to the home environment, children on the street enjoy relatively more freedom to play and do whatever they want to do. According to the study participant, children's peer friendships, group life, and street subculture attracted children who hang out with them. Therefore, as discussed in the first section of this chapter, the process of becoming street children starts first when a child gets attracted by playing and staying away in the daytime, and then for a night or two and then gradually

more time away from home environment (Aptekar 1994). While recounting the reason for leaving home life to the street participant 5 said:

“While watching how street children interacting, I was amazed by their happiness. They always have fun with each other even though they were living on the street. Then I started having contact with them and playing with them. Over time, I adapted and started using some of their living styles and some of their subcultural elements, especially their languages, as part of my daily ways of life. Sometimes later I left home to live with my street friends with complete freedom from home environment.”

Looking for the perceived freedom is a cause for some children to leave the family home, even after governmental and non-governmental organizations reintegrated them with their family.

5.3 Children’s first exposure to the street life and their feeling

“At first, the street lights and night clubs seemed interesting and I felt confident. But then the coldness of the night made me cry.” (Participant 2)

“My first day Oh my God! It was a living hell. I remember myself trying to hide. I was lost and dazzled. It was a nightmare. I was thinking all the things I did, especially the words I used to say to my teacher. It was full of regrets.” (Participant 3)

The above recounts were taken from individual interviews with the aforementioned participants, concerning their first experience and feelings to street life. In this section, I first argue that children’s first experiences and feelings relatively vary from child to child depending on three factors. These are: (i) children’s life experience to outside environments before abandoning home life to the street life; (ii), the places where children come from, i.e. whether they were from the countryside or from the urban areas; and (iii) with whom the children came to the street, i.e. alone or with peers.

Children’s previous experience with their parents in the outside world, i.e. what is called an “adult world” has its own impact on their first exposure to street life. While recounting his street exposure before leaving home to the street life, participant 1 said: *“my dad was not such a great model to me. He used to be an alcoholic and a gambler. He even took me with him several times to the street*

and alcohol bars.” He further reasoned that his experience enabled him to feel fearless in the urban environment at night. The other study participant, participant 15, also said: *“when I was a kid, I had been used by my mother for begging on the streets. So when joining the street life, I found nothing new since I already knew what does it to mean to be a street child.”* This reveals that children’s previous experiences outside the domestic sphere or urban experiences could lessen their disorientation, distress, and fear at their arrival on the street.

I also found that differences of experience related to the places where the children came from. Some of the participants were originally from the countryside, others were city inhabitants’ and some others were from the study area, Addis Ababa. From these three groups, the level of distress was higher for those children who were originally from the rural area, since every aspect of city life was new and unknown from their village experiences. While recounting his confusion at the first few days of his arrival in Addis Ababa, participant 10 said: *“Oh it was awful really. Look, I did not know where to go, but I was also hungry, I did not know whom to ask since everybody was running, no one was caring about you. Especially at night... Oh, it made me cry.”* Participant 10’s and other participants’ accounts reveal that when children come to the street alone, especially from the countryside, everything is new and confusing. So, the level of confusion, tension, fear, and loneliness is relatively higher on their first arrival.

For those children who were originally from the study area, it was relatively less confusing even if they were lonesome because of their prior experience and exposure to the street and street children before leaving their family home. Thus, they could find places to go to and develop contacts with children of the street easier. Study participant 1, who was originally from the study area, said: *“my first exposure was not such problematic since I already knew some of them when I was at home. Even I remember that first day they (street children) even made me sleep between them.”*

When newly arrived children come to the street with their peers from the previous hometown, they can relatively easily join others friends with the help of those children who brought them. Therefore, at first arrival, places to sleep as well as getting food is not a problem since their peer provide help. But when children come alone, their individual effort is a must at first.

As discussed in the first section (5.2.2), many children have expectations of work opportunities and a better life when they migrate to the capital, they do not imagine to sleep on the street. Arriving in the street, each child is expected to be active in order to get something to eat. However, this is not always simple since they do not know how to do this on their first arrival. Therefore, on their first few days children feel lost and hungry, and in some cases regret their decision to leave the family home, as participant 3 said. Finding places to sleep, sleeping on the street and adapting to the cold environment at night can be the serious challenges for children on their first arrival to the street life.

Despite all challenges the street poses and the absence of those institutions traditionally responsible for caring children, most children are an active social agent rather passive the victims and are quick to get used to and adjust to their new life on the street through their 'relational agency' (see section 5.5). One of the methods used to adjust new street life is developing peer friendships with children who already experienced living on the street and adapting to the street subculture. Children of the street sometimes get involved in forming or joining group life of the street with their peers. The next section discusses children's street peer friendship in detail

5.4 Street Children's Peer Friendship

5.4.1 Functions of Peer Friendship

"I had a friend who did everything what he can do, not only for me, but for other friends of mine. He was so kind. He was the one whom I love more to stay with him."

(Participants 1)

As mentioned in the previous sections (5.3) upon the first arrival to the street life environment a child often finds itself confused, lonely, hungry and/or confronted with other challenges of the new street environment possess. However, children are not passive victims of these challenges. As indicated in participant 1's account, rather through forming peer friendship, children are quick to build their social capital and get used to and adjust to their new life. Peer friendship plays an important and valued part in the lives of children at different levels (Barnes 2003), mainly as a source of social capital (Ridge and Millar 2000) to relieve and/or minimize the above street challenges. One of the fundamental ways in which people form social capital is through their connections and ties with others, such as forming the friendship (Froerer 2010). As discussed in

the third chapter (section 3.4), social capital is used to refer to features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that enable coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam 1993). Thus, street peer friendship could be thought of as a helpful strategy to adjust to the new way of life and to minimize many problems entailing the new life in the street environment. By forming a peer friendship, children are able to deal with the demands of street life (Aptekar and Stoecklin2014). In children's street life, this study identified three important functions that peer friendship has, as the source of social capital, beyond their mere daily interactions, which could determine children's street survival. These are (i) Peer Friendship as a substitute for the family support; (ii) Peer Friendship as a source of information; and (iii) Peer Friendship as a source of Protection. However, this study concurs with Portes's (2000) discussion of social capital in that in street peer friendship, children can only secure those benefits of social capital by their membership in social networks and by their motivations to make those resources available.

5.4.1.1 Peer Friendship as a substitute for the family support

When children abandon family home to the street, at the same time they leave familial, institutional or communal provisions and protections. They develop their social capital through street peer friendship that serves as a means of substituting familial, institutional or communal support. In line with Barnes's (2003) discussion of friendship, this study also argues that peer friendships provide members the sense of support, companionship, and protection that otherwise would have only been found within the family. Aptekar and Stoecklin (2014) argued that children's peer friendship in the street, appear more like family and friends than business partners.

While describing his street friendship and how it was helpful in his street life, participant 2 said: *"You know, here [on the street] my friends are people that I consider to be dear. They are my strength and inspiration next to the divine creator. I cannot even imagine this life in the absence of my peer friends."* During focus group discussion, the other group participant, participant 3 also said: *"It is such a privilege to have these guys [pointing to his friends] as the friend. You know, street peer friends are everything. It is not your family that takes care of you here [on the street setting]."* Accounts of the above two children reveal how important the role peer friendship plays for the newly arrived street children in right after leaving the family home to the new street life and afterward. As mentioned in the accounts, peer relations assured the emotional, social, and livelihood support to the street children whenever someone is in need of it. In the street

environment, where primary caregivers or guardians were absent, peer friendship is the main source of social capital, which a family renders traditionally. As discussed in the above (section 5.4.1), however, accessing these benefits, social capital (Portes 2000; Putnam 1993) requires the participation of each beneficiary in the social relationship or friendship. Ennew (as cited in Mizen and Ofofu-Kusi 2010) has mentioned that *“peer friendships between street children permits the forging of affective relationships otherwise denied by abusive families”* (p. 444). Nevertheless, as Barnes’s (2003) discussion of friendship showed although children rely on one another’s friendship to a significant extent, they are not completely dependent on their peer friendships. However, peer friendship is not a kind of support that one can provide to the other. It rather bases on the principle of sharing or reciprocating that assures the motivation to adhere to.

5.4.1.2 Peer Friendship as a source of information

In this study, peer friendship has been revealed as important sources of information about street life. Upon leaving home, new demands and challenges arise commonly due to inexperience and lack of information. Such things get the children more and more confused. Peer friendship has reportedly been helpful for the children to clear confusion and has proved to be a useful source of information. As discussed in chapter three (section 3.5), children of the same social circle or environment, (for example, the street) are likely to receive the same information by virtue of their membership in the social relationships (Sandefur and Laumann 2000). Undoubtedly, connection with street children who have prior street experiences is necessary to survive on the streets. It is also a key strategy to develop or learn street social skill and lifestyles. Ennew (as cited in Mizen and Ofofu-Kusi 2010) noted that one interesting feature of peer friendship is that *“it allows for the development of new or parallel processes of peer socialization, modes of development initiated for and by children outside adult supervision and control”* (p. 444). In this regard, children who have prior street experience have an important role as a source of information, especially to the new entrants.

The individual interviews and group discussions revealed that, in the street, especially at first arrival, children do not know how to make or beg for money, food, and do not understand the subcultural meaning of street life. Through peer interactions (social connections), children learn best how to survive among equals in a wide range of street environments (Ridge and Millar 2000). Through their peer friendship and social networks, children who have prior experiences play

an important role by teaching fellow peers the basic tactics to survive on the streets. This is possible by virtue of peer friendship and social networks. This is sometimes also used by older children as a process of socializing newcomers into their subculture, as will be further described in the next chapter. Though the provision of quality, timely, and trustworthy resources that emanate from the social ties depends on the content of the relationships the individual has (Sandefur and Laumann 2000).

5.4.1.3 Friendship as a source of Protection

In this study, peer friendship is also thought as a means to feel safer from security challenges from both outsiders and street children themselves. In this regard, the children mostly express their collective protection with the phrase '*we are together*', '*we protect or defend ourselves together*', *we-ness* used as a social capital. Often children experience the harm and exploitative relationship from both outsiders and among street children. In the street, children frequently receive abusive challenges from police and sexual attackers of *bushties*⁶ (derogative word used by street children to refer homosexuals), and a pejorative treatment of the mainstream society.

For instance, recently, several tempts and actual rape on the street have been reported. This is an emerging issue among street children in urban areas in most of Addis Ababa. Children with prior street experiences are more aware of these challenges and know when and how people with ill motives approach them. On the contrary, new children who come to the street by no means know about these challenges beforehand. Therefore, peers provide help and play an important role in informing and protecting new entrants from *bushties*. This issue will be dealt in greater depth in chapter six (section 6.7). From the children's account, this study argues that peer friendships are important sources of collective protection from any kind of attack from both outsiders and insiders. However, Sandefur and Laumann (2000) indicated the quality of accessing this social capital depends on the level social relationship the recently arrived child has with other peers. In other words, the social relationship that the children formed through associations allows the access to the resources possessed (Portes 2000).

⁶ Derogative word used by street children to refer homosexuals

5.4.2 Forming and Reforming Street Peer Friendship

The previous section 5.3 has shown how life gets challenging first upon leaving the family home to the street. Therefore, forming peer friendships in the street has been revealed to be a predominant mechanism, i.e. social capital, in order to escape the above-mentioned bad feelings. These peer friends can be composed of two or three or more children who shared intimacy and friendship.

However, it was evident from children's accounts that forming or accessing the social capital that could be accrued from children's peer friendship is not simple at first. The experiences thereof were not similar to all children, especially at their first arrival as well as afterwards. This is basically because of their way of coming to the street, i.e. alone or with their street experienced peer friends when leaving home life. The formation and reformation of street children's peer friendship can also be influenced by factors such as age and sometimes by the places where one comes from. The next sections discuss the process in which children form and reform peer friendship on the street.

5.4.2.1 Moments of first arrival

When children leave the family home to the street alone, children who have prior street experiences commonly challenge the new entrants at their first arrival. For instance, participant 3 said: *"my first night on the street was not the one that terrified me most. It was the next morning on the street. Because, as a newcomer everyone mock and tease you nonstop. Then I fought them."* The other participant 11 also said:

"On the first day, I was asked to give all I had in my pocket including money, which I brought from home by those children who were already living on the street for long and got beaten. But at some point, I was out of control and fought them. Then in the next days, we became friends and now we are best friends."

The above two study participant's account showed that the children who have been living on the streets, abuse a new arriving child orally and physically. In many instances, the child who just joined the street life is mocked, beaten or forced to sing, dance or beg. In spite of these challenges, it would often help new entrant's to form friendships later, which in turn helps to expand their social capital. These children were not passive victims of those challenges, but rather get involved

in fighting to show their physical and/or masculinity. Hence, it can be argued that challenging and responding to physical confrontations and mocking is a means the new entrant children use to get respects and later develop their social capital through peer friendship. In the process of socializing oneself to the new life environment, children's resistance to others abuse can be seen as self-empowerment to gain control over some of their everyday experiences apart from avoiding the authority of others over oneself (Nilsen 2009/2014).

On the other hand, participants also revealed that encountering challenges depend on the age of the child. Mostly, the newly arrived children confront those children who are at their same age level. Yet trying to stand up to challenge an older child could be put oneself in danger. For this reason, younger children at the beginning would submit themselves to do whatever they are told to do. This was mentioned clearly during the individual interview, by participant 8:

“At my first arrival, the one whom I met, challenged me a lot, even by taking my clothes, which was the one I wore when leaving home. However, later he became my best friend. And I never forget him for what he had done on my street life. Sometimes challenge makes you strong. Later I knew that what my friend did make me strong.”

In the street, challenging newly arrived children at the beginning of their street life is also part of the socialization process, especially in street groupings. This happens frequently when a child comes to join street groups. This is basically used to identify the motives and to know the loyalty of new entrants. From the children's account, it was learned that there are some people coming to join the children having other ill motives, for example, rape. Thus, this day's children are very suspicious for the new street arrivals.

Many children do not know several elements of street subculture in the first few days of their street life. This, in turn, could bring some challenges of children who already had experience on the streets. While describing what he faced in his first days of street life, participant 12 said:

“In my first days of the street while eating, [what they are calling, fossa or bule or uffu, which is leftover food]... [...calling his friend's name] wanted and asked me to share what I was eating but I did not want to do so. Then he wanted to fight and hit me. [.....] you know what, in the street life, it is a must to share. I really did not know that. But in the next day, we began to hang out, then after we are still together.”

From this child's description, lack of knowledge of street lifestyles or subculture could expose new entrants to attacks from other street experienced children. Especially, when it happens to the older children, they would beat to death a new entrant at the nighttime when no one is there to help or protect him. However, most of the time the fights would end up sparking off friendships. Friendship is one of the key areas where children's own norms and customs apply and where children develop their social identity (Ridge and Millar 2000).

Other children told me that they left home with their peers, they had through the friendship network they formed while living in their family home. So, when children leave their family, they would come to the street with their peers who had street experiences and they would keep their friendship. As described by participant 2 during the group discussions:

"I have been for the last four years on the street and he [pointing to his friend] was my friend on the street since the first day. I have known him back home. Of course, my friend had prior experience on the street. After coming here in Addis, through his social network, I was also able to know other street children."

As previously discussed (section 5.2.2), one of the reasons to leave the family home to the street is the influence of peer children who already had prior street experiences. Some street children reported that they covered the transportation cost of their new peer friends from back home village to the destination and keep their friendship afterward. However, this does not mean that all children who left their home village by the influence of their peers' succeeded in keeping and maintaining their peer friendship afterward. While describing during the individual interview, participant 2 further said:

"I left home with my peers who had prior street experience. They even paid the transportation for me until Addis, Kality bus station and then we walked from there to the stadium on barefoot. Since the life is mobile, they abandoned me soon when we reach to the stadium on their way to find their meal. So I was rejected and alone then."

As indicated in this child's story and of the other participants, many times the newly arrived children would face abandonment by their peers when they reach the street even if they came to the street by their influence. Therefore, it would be children's own activeness that helps or forces

new entrants to form and reform peer friendship afterward. This can be taken places by initiating oneself to join in joint street activities.

5.4.2.2 Joint street activities

This study also identified other circumstances which could help newly arrived children to form social capital through peer friendships in their first days of street life. In the street, especially, the nighttime brings many children together either to have fun by playing different games, for example, imitating what they watched from movies, or chewing *khat*, singing and dancing or sleeping together. However, as discussed in the aforementioned section, it is not simple to participate in children's joint street activities. Despite the challenges at first to participate, the more activities that the individual share with another, the more likely it is that they will become interpersonally tied through friendship. These nighttime activities are used by many as an opportunity to form friends despite initial challenges. This confirms to Froerer's (2010) discussion of peer friendship in that friendships tend to develop when individuals are placed in a context where people regularly participate in joint activities. While recounting how he made friends, participant 13 said:

“I was 9 when leaving home to the street life. In my first night, I saw children having fun, but I was alone and a bit away from them. The darkness worried me a lot. So to avoid my worries and loneliness, I approached them. But it was not simple to join them. In the meantime, one of them called me and asked to sing a song and dance. You know, they were doing this intentionally to mock and tease and create fun of it when they encounter someone newly arrived. I had no choices than doing what they asked. In the next morning, I started to play, eat and walk together. We are still friends afterward.”

Joining nighttime activities, street subculture, was mentioned as an opportunity for the newly arrived children to form the peer friendship by approaching the experienced street children to avoid the apprehension of the dark night and loneliness. Nevertheless, it is not simple to join since the child would face many challenges from those children who already had prior experiences, as stated in the above children's account. This way of forming a friendship could also happen in the daytime.

Street children often enjoy their days doing many things jointly, for example, playing soccer. This was noticeable among the street children who were living at Meskel square, an open space with

taxi stands and cafes and restaurants. Upon the first arrival, many children reach the square easily, due to the accessibility of the place. So while watching the matches between groups, forming a friendship could happen as described by participant 5:

“Upon leaving home, I directly went to Meskel square. While watching street children who play soccer, I asked to join them as arbiter first and then to play. So, we played together and started to hang out. Then afterwards, we are friends still.”

5.4.2.3 Street Mobility

Children’s street life is intimately connected to their spatial mobility, navigating from one place to the other. This influences the children’s relationships or peer friendship, making them fluid as demonstrated by participant 2: *“some of your peers stay with you for the longer time and others not. Thus, when you lose someone, you could find the other in similar living conditions.”* Although children can be together forming the relational bond, *we-ness*, to share and construct close spaces, but after sometimes they also stop their togetherness (Nilsen 2004) due to their mobility. Thus, following the loss of someone close, children in the street, continuously seek to form and reform peer friendships in different settings of the city. This was also further asserted by participant 1 while speaking about his mobility, and his multiple and diversified friendship: *“I have been in different parts of Addis since I left home to the street. In the meantime, you can make several friends since the life is mobile.”* Of course, the duration of *we-ness*, in the peer friendships, can vary due to the level of intimacy and quantity and quality of support. The above quotes show how the mobile nature of street life gives children an opportunity to build the friendship in different city settings.

The narration of the street children reveals that, in the course of street mobility, children can make peer friendship wherever and whenever they found someone living under the same conditions on the street. This mean sameness in living condition would be one possibility to be acquainted forming peer friendship. For instance, while explaining how he reformed friendship after losing his friend who joined *El Shaddai* training center, participant 1 said:

“One day it was summer and raining and I was near the stadium. I was sitting alone and chewing khat of mine. He [pointing to his friend] was doing the same with his friend, so I

asked [pointing one of his friends] if I can join them and they were willing. Since then we are together for the last four years."

What is important here would be the question how street children identify someone is a street child or not. This question directs to children's street living styles and subculture. This study identified some of the techniques they use that are directly related to their daily life and street subculture. For example, clothing style is a good identifier because street children are often untidy: outfits clothes and are barefooted or with sandals. Other identifiers include the tendency towards drug use like *khat* or cigarette; hairstyle, and street slang are also another good identifier. Participant 1 said: *"Simply if their mood fits you, you can make them your friends. After you make sure that you can get along with them, the friendship develops."*

However, there are often very different and complex reasons for each individual's mobility. This means not all street children engage in the same forms of mobility, i.e. there is mobility within city spaces or between the street and non-street location like for instance from the street to the rehabilitation or training centers (Ridge and Millar 2000; van Blerk 2005). This study identified the following reasons: children's decision to quit the street life to go back home or to join a training or rehabilitation center, in rare cases the death of peer friends, and to a larger extent the mobility within city spaces, as the factor to the loss of peer friendship.

Participant 1 and many other participants of this study mentioned that mobility and having a diverse friendship network in different parts of the city is helpful in getting support and making money with minimal challenges from other street children of the areas. In other words, developing or having multiple peer relations in different street settings helps in diversifying resources that are necessary to enhance their survival strategies. This concurs with van Blerk's (2005) discussion in that street mobility does give the street children a number of opportunities and freedom they desire and access to the social networks that are necessary to enhance their survival strategies on the street. Nevertheless, in line with Ridge and Millar's (2000) and van Blerk (2005) argument, this study also asserts that the motives behind street children's mobility influences and shapes their peer friendship, street experiences, and identity.

Although having multiple street social network helps children increase the likelihood of income source, at the same time it has its own impact on the quality of friendship. This is basically because

of differences in expectations of the best friends from friends who are not best friends. Barnes (2003) explores friendships among children in a global perspective, including street children, and distinguishes best friends from acquaintances on the ground that best friends are physically close, give help, and enjoy the same activities and share similar expectations and feelings of pain and joy. Barnes (2003) further claims that best friends are importantly attributed by their understanding, loyalty, having an interest in common and being willing to listen to and respect personal secrets.

In the street, though the children had a mobile lifestyle, having multiple social networks does not always mean that children loosely form best friendships. For instance, while recounting the one whom he was considering as a best friend, participant 1 said:

“Upon my first arrival, the one whom I met had been doing many good things for me. From our first contact, we had been good friends of each other. For me, he was my best among others whom I met in the street. He was the one whom I am always sharing all my feelings and stories. I will never forget what he did. Right now I do not know where he is living and even I do not know whether he is alive or not. But I hope that I may find him one day.”

Even though street mobility affords children with the opportunity to be acquainted with their peers in different settings, they do not only form or have friends but they do have someone whom they consider their best friends. During the fieldwork, best friendship was notable from the emotions expressed in a moment one of the study participants left the street life. For instance, one of the study participants left the street to receive training at *El Shaddai*, which is a vocational training center, established mainly to provide vocational training for the street children. When asking what his peer friends felt about their friends' departure, all expressed that they were sad that they lost their friends. While expressing how he felt about losing his best friend participant 3 said: *“I had a boring day. I even asked him [his friend] not go, but he was not willing to do so. He was my best. You know...we were always together while doing things on the street. I felt bad and lonely.”*

However, despite friends' departure, it is also evident that children are always in the process of forming and reforming peer friends since their lifestyle is mobile. This clearly expressed in the above participant 3's account: *“even though they are not my best, I have many friends in other areas of the city, so I have to go there to find them.”* This suggests that street life always forces

them through the process of forming and reforming peer friendship, which is essential to survival on the street.

5.4.3 Essence of peer friendship

On the street environment, the social capital that children built through peer friendship is not based on a mere interaction. Rather, it has its own essence which could determine their, social capital, interactions and the benefits that one can receive from the friendship. Even though the street provides children with individual freedom, life has many challenges. Especially, living in isolation apart from the other peers would not help anyone to face the street's adverse conditions. As I have discussed in the previous sections, peer friendship could be helpful, according to study participants, at least in the adjustment of life to the new social and physical environment and minimize many problems associated with the life in the street environment. According to Barnes (2003), this can happen in two ways. The first is that friendships with peers provide an arena for many aspects of the subculture, in the world street life. For example, when they play together, share experiences, search for income or daily meals together. The second is that within and through their friendships, children have opportunities to explore dimensions of experiences which can have both formative and lasting effects, For example, within peer friendship children may experience affection, intimacy, communication, sharing, and cooperation.

In line with Mizen and Ofosu-Kusi's (2010) discussion, this study observed that, during the fieldwork, while street children in peer friendship, frequently sit and do their usual activities such as playing, laughing, working and eating together. Having the observation, the study tried to explore the factors that brought children together beyond their noticeable daily interactions. The next two sections discuss the basic essences that the study found as essential to making and sustain street peer friendship in details.

5.4.3.1 Sharing

“As long as you are on the streets sharing is a must. Everything you have should be shared.” (Participant 10)

Many of the study participants concur with the above view of participant 10 and affirm that sharing is one of the basic essences of the street life used to build social capital through peer friendship.

When children leave the family home, they abandon the provisions and protections that they could get from their family relationships inside the home. Therefore, forming and reforming peer friendship could be used as a substitute for what they have lost.

In the street, sharing can take place in many forms such as the sharing of food, places to sleep, and painful moments of illness by providing care and in almost everything, as indicated in the above participant 10's account. In order to assure the benefits of social capital emanated from peer friendship, sharing can suppress individual freedom since life is interdependent; and it became an important element of street subculture.

In the street life, one of the serious challenges is getting access to food. In most cases, the way they access food entails psychological pain because of the insults and degrading remarks the public makes. Therefore, the children have to be courageous enough to scrounge food (leftover) from restaurants or hotels (see also chapter seven, section 7.3.1). This, however, does not mean that all people react in the same way. Despite the challenges, whenever the children succeed in finding food, they share among themselves. During the individual interview, participant 10 asserted that:

“Whenever if someone gets something to eat, we often eat together, it is a must to share. This is because of the nature of street friendship unless it would leave you alone without help whenever you are in trouble. You know, you may not get food and money all the time, thus, if you do not share with your friend what you have today, no one takes care of you other time.”

From the above account, it is evident that sharing could be helpful to maintain the social capital through street friendship and keeps one's survival as well as peer friends. The reciprocal character of sharing is important. When someone shares, another time the peers will share them. In the street life, it is also evident and known among street children that they could not get food all the time, i.e. access problem. Therefore, by sharing the food, they cope together with the access problem because they would get food from their peer friends in moments they do not have anything to eat. However, leftover food is not the only sources of food for children. Sometimes they buy food with the money they collected through *kifella or shikella*⁷.

⁷ *Kifella or Shikella* is a kind of begging used by street children as a source of income

Sharing of sleeping places is also one of the essences of street peer friendship, which would help street children to build, maintain and keep their social capital through peer friendship. Sleeping on the streets has its own problems since it exposes children to many violent, attacks and injuries from both insiders, (i.e. other street children) and outsiders. In the street life, as Kovats-Bernat said '*a street child's vulnerability is never more heightened than when they are sleeping*' (cited in Ursin 2016:8). Especially when a child sleeps alone, the street environment makes the child vulnerable to attack, especially sexual abuses and theft. This is clearly revealed during the individual interview with participant 11, who is a victim of *bushties* sexual attack.

"I remember it was night time, during the first day of my street life upon leaving the family home. I was all alone for some time. That day, while I was asleep deeply, I was attacked sexually...ufff [an expression of sadness]...raped by the people called bushti."

The other participant 13 also said:

"If you are alone and sleep and have money, for sure it will be stolen. But it is not only your money, your clothes will be taken away from you if it is new. This was what I experienced once when asleep alone."

From the above two children's accounts, it is evident that in street life, loneliness, especially at night, could expose children to various abuses such as rape, theft, etc. In the streets, most of the time peer friends sleep together, being two, three or more at a place. In most cases, children use the phrase 'we' to express their togetherness while sleeping "*We sleep after midnight, around 3 pm.*" and "*We sleep until mid-day.*" Their sleeping arrangement, '*we-ness*', provides children a feeling of togetherness and security. This concurs with the discussion of Schwartz in that in the street "*children's sleep patterns position them socially as well as spatially, generating membership and identity in strategizing to increase safety while sleeping*" (cited in Ursin 2016: 8). Therefore, by sharing a place and sleeping closely to one another, the children achieve a greater level of safety resulting from the presences of peer friends around and achieve greater strength to defend themselves from any attacks. This study concurs with Ursin (2016) in that in the street even, the choice of when, where, how, and with whom to sleep all social constructs are since different settings of a city provide children with different street identities.

Generally, in the social world of street children, sharing takes place among themselves in many ways. Sharing food and sleeping places are just only two examples of the essentials of the street life which manifest on a daily bases the street children peer friendship. Apart from the above two aspects of sharing, street children share clothes, drugs: (*khat*), cigarettes, alcohols, (especially locally produced: *teji, tella, arke*⁸, etc. and money. To build, maintain and keep the continuity of their social capital through peer friendship, involving oneself in reciprocal relationships is a must. According to the study participants, a choice to be alone or not to share leaves children for many problems. Among others, these include, hunger, insecurity, abuses (i.e. by other street children and outsider, etc.), which are mainly caused by living on the street where no one care about anyone else.

This study also found that peer friendship has a positive impact in terms of providing care during illness, as explored below.

5.4.3.2 Caring

“When someone from our team is sick we usually take to “sister”, she is a foreign woman but she treats us without paying. It is free for street children. I even know boys who have been circumcised and stayed there until they get better. Thus, in all cases, we care each other since no one is here to give care for us.” (Participant 3)

In accord with the observation of Mizen and Ofosu-Kusi (2010) illness and injuries appear to occur commonly in the sites where the study participants live. This is disputed because the children live in the unhygienic and hazardous environment, and the street life also exposes children to accidents and injuries. Food and water can be contaminated, and the insects, animals, and humans can constitute as sources of physical danger (Mizen and Ofosu-Kusi 2010). The absence of primary caretakers or guardians aggravates the problem. The study participants expressed how children’s peer friendship is an important source of support or care for children when they get ill. For instance, during the group discussion, participant 2 said:

⁸ *Teji, Tella and arqe* are local produced beverages

“We have been ill. We care for each other. You can see this crunch. It was them [group members] that bought me a new one. You know... I cannot walk without it, as you see since I am disabled, it is difficult to walk if they did not buy it to me.”

The other participant, participant 1, also mentioned that: *“One day another friend of us was sick and in his case the sickness was recurrent. You know what I did, I spilled some gears on my face and begged as I have got diabetes.”*

When someone gets sick, it hinders the child from earning money or food (laborious or begging). During such critical times, peer friends play an important role in the provision of care, this might include financing, sharing of food, helping to get access to medical services and helping each other in treating the health problem of friends. However, children must be embedded in a very good peer friendship to be treated in this way. In general, caring for one another can be a very good way to express peer friendship and a way to build it in the street life.

5.5 Relational Agency

Even though this study recognizes children’s competence or agency and the life course of children as being rather than becoming in contrast to the psychological study of developmental framework that sees and values children in the process of ‘becoming’, the study argues that in the street children’s social world there is no such autonomous right (individualistic agency) to act independently by making individual choices and decisions. Since children’s street life is interdependent. This means that the survival of an individual to the larger extent depends on the social relationships or friendships that the individual has.

Though the term ‘agency’ in most cases is used to refer to the individual’s ability or autonomy to act independently and to make individual choices and decision. In the psychological study of the developmental framework, the term agency has been used for long to show the completeness of adults as being and the immaturity of children in the process of becoming (Lee 1998). This view has been criticized by many recently published studies (e.g. Corsaro 2005; Prout and James 1997; Qvortrup 2009). Corsaro (2005), Prout and James (1997), and Qvortrup (2009) criticized a psychological studies of developmental framework asserting that children are active social agents in their own right and being capable of exercising agency on matters that concerns their development. They further argue that children are competent human agents, who have freedom of

choice and actions, and determine their own individual lives. The dominant interpretation of UNCRC also signifies such construct related to premises that a child is a universal subject who should everywhere be enabled to be a free, autonomous, choosing and rational individual (cited in Abebe 2013). In many sociological studies (e.g. Clegg 1989, Fuller 1994), the concept, the agency is treated as the property of persons; and it also the faculty of individual action (cited in Lee 1998). This view focusses on the child's individual contribution and capacity to determine the everyday life. The view separates the child from other people around him/ her and from the relational norms and values, i.e. the concept gives less emphasis to others that can also influence the lives of the child, focusing on solitary child's autonomous capacity.

In the street life, children's lives are founded on interdependencies and reciprocity, where each child has responsibilities and duties towards their peer friends to support one another. In other words, children's individual survival depends on the social capital they formed through their peer friendships or social relations where children own social norms and customs, apply and develop their social identity. Of course, children competently can make resources that become the vital instrument for sustaining the individual and others if and only if the individual acts according to the friendship and group (social life) norms and values afterward, which keeps the cohesion and solidarity.

For instance, in the case of street life, participants revealed that, as discussed in section 5.3, many of the children left the family home to the street, hoping to get relief and looking for positive changes from the life they were experiencing at home. Even though it was their individual decision to leave the family home, at first many of them experience confusion, feeling of being lost, lonely, hunger and in some cases feeling of regret, i.e. their decision to leave home. This can show how a child would be incapable of surviving lonely with autonomous right making one's own individual choices and decisions apart from other fellow peers. Though children can act in some way to support themselves at the same time they immensely need the help of others in many other ways of their street life to survive. This is clearly evident in street children's life. This is also why children are quick to get used to and adjust to their new life on the street by forming their street peer friendship and/or group lives where they develop the new social identity. However, in the street social relations or friendships, children are expected to obey and follow norms and values (for example: sharing, caring, protecting) of peer friendship and group life in order to avoid the

risk of not being accepted and isolated. Otherwise, the child could face rejection from the circle of friendship despite the child's competence to make means of support to keep street survival. This, in turn, exposes the child to many street made challenges, for example, police surveillances, sexual abuses, and physical attacks by other street children. Therefore, in the street life, children are expected to build their social capital through their social relationships or peer friendships. This is what I have called 'relational agency', where the children's choices and decisions would recognize the values other peer participants of the circle of friendship. Child's individual survival also depends on the profit they accrue from their membership in the social relationships or peer friendship. This concurs with Edwards and Mackenzie's discussion of the concept 'Relational agency' (cited in Edwards 2005). They discussed that the concept involves the capacity of the individual to offer support and to ask for support from others (Edwards 2005). The individual's ability to engage with their social world is enhanced by doing so alongside others (Ibid). This view of relational agency also has some resemblance to the concept of social capital in that the provision of quality, timely, and trustworthy resources that emanate from the social ties depends on the content of the relationships the individual has. This further discussed by Sandefur and Laumann (2000) that the capacity to mobilize others for action which often entails placing oneself in a position of obligation to those who can be highly valuable. The concept relational agency has also resonance with the idea of reciprocity and mutual strengthening of competence and expertise to enhance the collective competence of a community (Edwards 2005). Therefore, this study argues that in the street life there is no such autonomous right of choice and decision independently (in individualistic agency) rather the life of children is interdependent children's relational agency, where the survival of the child depends on the social relationship formed and the contribution the child made to the mutual benefit together with other members of social relationship.

Chapter Six

Street Children's Group Life

6.1 Introduction

Despite the fact that most of the children are found in the street in company with their peers, some hardly recognize the existence of group life on the street (cf. Hecht 1998). The participating children's argument was based on the fact that there is a rare existence of an organized and stable group due to the mobile nature of their life. In other words, it is uncommon to have a formal and organized group membership and a stable group which provides care for the children. In addition, they mentioned that there are no formal rites of entry and punishments for dissociating or deviation oneself from a group and group norm. In addition, study participants further argued that they would seek to involve in different settings of the city rather than having a stable group since all places give unique feelings. This is basically their view of forming diversified peer friendships, the social network in different street settings, which in turn would determine their diversified social capital as a source of livelihood.

There are also children who hardly recognize the existence of street groups because of their daily lifestyle, which requires individual effort. Since every child has the responsibility of earning and acquiring his personal resources in daily life, they tend to live a highly personal lifestyle and do not like to be controlled by others. These children perceive themselves as free agents who do not have bosses (cf. Hecht 1998). During the individual interview, participant 4 said:

"In the street, there are children who involve and form groups. But me, I do not want to have and controlled by the group... you know, I am a free man, I am doing what I want to do. So I do not need someone who wants to control my life in the streets. After all, I am here in the street, not at home, a place to exercise my whole freedom."

This has been proclaimed by some of the study participants who had dyadic or triad peer friendships instead of being involved in a group life, which is controlled by the one who is considered the leader of the group. From the above account, children want to exercise their full freedom in the streets without being controlled or involved in the street groups. They argue that the street is not like a family home to be controlled as what parents, siblings or other guardians do

at home. Rather, they view street as a place where they fully exercise their freedoms to do whatever they want to do. They also said their street lifestyle is the outcome of their own actions rather than group influence. Concerning the term 'freedom' as an important part of street children's daily vocabulary, Butler (2009) posed an important question, citing Berlin: "*is, a person should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without the interference of other persons*" (Butler 2009:21). Undeniably, there are a great number of restrictions and interferences that children face in their day-to-day lives. In the street life, as observed in the previous chapter (section 5.4.3), what keeps or determines children's survival is their adherence and solidarity to the friendship values. Because of this, if one fails to live accordingly the friendship system rejects their participation and expose for the street made challenges.

Though some children speak more about their street freedom, it does not mean that they are alone. This is asserted by participant 4 during the individual interviews: "*In fact, we have friends, and we are two or three, but also our relationship is with mutual respect rather than like bosses... so, no one guides the other.*" These children mostly prefer peer friendship, which is dyadic or trio rather than the group based. In such cases, they assume that no one can influence the other since their friendship is mutual or based on reciprocity, even if the reality is far from what they said, as discussed in the previous chapter. Even in dyadic or trio relationship or peer friendships- children are expected to involve themselves in sharing things both material and non-material (see chapter five, section 5.4.3) to keep their *we-ness*.

Despite the above children's view, and preferences of peer friendship, as opposed to group life, it has been observed several components that show the existence of group life among street children. The next section discusses in detail the overall aspects of children's group life, starting from the formation of street groups.

6.2 Formation of street children's Group Life

Barnes (2003) and Beazley (2003) discussed the three factors that influence the formation of successful group life. The first is children's frequent contact with one another on the street environments and the second is that the children that are similar in certain respect such as suffering from the same street made problem (Barnes 2003). Beazley (2003) also described the third factor, which is a children's collective reaction to the pejorative treatments of mainstream society.

Inconsistent with Barnes (2003) and Beazley (2003), this study also identified three interconnected components of street life that influence the formation of street children's groups. These are: (i) the socio-spatial environment of the street; (ii) children's daily lifestyles and challenges mainly related to living on the streets; and (iii) children's collective reaction.

6.2.1 The socio-spatial environment

When living in the street environment, where one cannot ask and look for the care, provision, and protection from the guardians or families, children face many challenges due to the physical environment. For instance, since the places get quiet and dark at nights, the street itself creates fear among the children at nighttime, especially for new entrants. In spite of the problems during the fieldwork to have participant observations after midnight, almost all study participants expressed how the physical environment is challenging, especially at nighttime: "*The coldness and darkness of the night create challenges and sometimes makes children cry.*" This was more prevalent especially, at first arrival to the street.

There are many instances on the streets that bring children together, thereby helping them to resolve the problem related to the physical environments. It eventually leads children into forming street groups and facing street made challenges collectively. For instance, the nighttime subcultural events (see chapter seven) bring many children together from wherever they dispersed during the daytime and tend to sleep together. So, as mentioned in the previous chapter, sharing sleeping places and sleeping together could bring some friendliness and warmth (Aptekar and Stoeklin 2014) among children and help at least in minimizing and resolve the problems of the nighttime. In line with Barnes (2003) discussion, therefore, this study argues that children's frequent contact with one another in the same places for the same activity (for example, sleeping on the same street environments) leads them towards identifying themselves with their peers and excluding others, and eventually forming groups. This also concurs with Williams's (2011) discussion on the subculture that particular groups emerge from certain notions of sameness in identity and effective interactions with one another due to a number of actors are living with similar problems.

6.2.2 Shared everyday life and challenges

As mentioned in the previous chapter, children's street lives depends mainly on people's charity, but it might not always be simple to obtain one's daily needs to survive. As discussed in theory

chapter under subculture theory, children frequently interact with one another effectively because of the similarity of the same problem they experience, for example, limited access to basic resources such as food, clothes, protections, etc. Their collective actions, i.e. serious efforts and devotions to solve or, at least, minimize their everyday problems by acting together could lead children to form groups (William 2011). In the street life, it is necessary for every child to struggle to survive or cope with street made challenges forming social relationships. In doing so, children's peer relationships beyond dyadic or trio peer friendship would help their survival by facing street made problems together. As discussed in the previous chapter, peer friendship would help in the provision or attain and share of food, what they are called, *bulle* from restaurants. Hence, sharing of street life events frequently leads children to feel themselves subjects of the same street made problem and eventually lead for developing *we-ness* forming street groups.

6.2.3 Collective reactions to societal view

This study recognizes that children's street group could be the result of their collective reaction to the societal views and pejorative treatments and marginalized position. In the street, children often face many challenges from the police, *bushities*, older street children, and others who were not among the street children's community. For instance, during fieldwork, it was noted that children are frequently put under surveillance by the police, resulting in a forceful scattering of the children from the places where they slept. Detentions by the police at nighttime are common abusive experiences for children, even though they are released in the next morning. During group discussions, the children revealed that, whenever foreign leaders come to visit the country, the police gathers and forces them to leave the city. The police also insist on using the money they collected through begging to go back home. During the group discussion, participant 12 said: *"police often gather and throw us outside of the city center and sometime in the forest, so some children become victims of animal attack like hyena."* The other participant, participant 7 also said:

"Whenever the police find us with sniffing glue or gambling, flog us and take off our clothes and splash very cold water on our bodies. And then make us clean toilets. Others take our money and give it to older beggars."

Of course, this marginality is partly because of long held society's view of children and their 'proper places' that emanated from the traditional moral views of children and childhood (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014; Beazley 2003). Thus, a child depicted as deviant and criminal by virtue of being part of the street in contrast to the dominant conception of children's proper place (van Blerk, 2012). Partly it was also the result of the view that street children are, as discussed in the fourth chapter (section 4.2), vulnerable for outsiders requests (for example, terror groups). Hence, children experience illegal treatments in contrast to the rights found in UNCRC's (Ennew 2000; Valentine 1999; van Blerk 2012). In line with Beazley's (2003) study of street children, this study argues that street subculture or street subcultural groups are children's own reactions to the marginalized position imposed on them from the dominant culture.

The study also found that street children's collective reaction to societal perspectives and treatments differ accordingly. Children have mentioned that aspects of societal reaction to their living on the streets have its own contribution. They cited the need for forming street groups and devising their own ways of communication are meant to deal with the very prejudices and unfair treatment. Furthermore, they recognize that the social views could be challenging and difficult for a child to deal with it all alone. During the individual interview, participant 3 said: *"The way we dress also discourage people from coming and getting closer. People consider us restless fighters. We are trying to deal with every prejudice and unfairness, but our reaction varies accordingly."* The other study participant, participant 2 also said: *"Some think of us as aliens from the other world. But there is also people who considerate. Some insult with the words that can damage you. Of course, we can defend ourselves collectively from such negative treatments."* During the group discussions, participants commonly mentioned that: *"The federal police considers us as a trouble maker. They even take our photos when they try to harm. Prisons are our homes. Police officers frequently imprison us at night and release in the next morning."* The above societal views also confirms with Ken Gelder's conception of subculture in that *"people in some way represented as non-normative or marginal through their particular interests and practices, through what they are, what they do and where they do it and who thus stand outside the bounds of 'mainstream' society"* (cited in William 2011:9).

However, this does not mean that societal perspectives do not vary. In fact, there are people who compassionate and considerate. For instance, participant of one group said: *"There are also some*

police officers who buy bread and distribute among us after taking the money we were gambling.” While describing the societal reaction, participant 4 said: *“The perspective actually differs. Some people simply consider us mere addicts because of the things they see when we are doing. Others are compassionate and considerate. They do not judge us by our appearances.”* Children’s account describes the ambiguity of societal relation to the street children. In this regard, street children have a clear awareness of the public’s perception towards their lifestyle. Therefore, in order to protect one another and escape the challenges, the children often stay and acts together forming their own ways of communication or language. Eventually their togetherness and frequent contact with the same situations leads children to form their groups to act collectively.

From the above children’s account, it is clear that the children have an awareness of the conventional view of the society towards them; as addicts, aggressive, aliens, troublemakers, etc. They are aware of the society’s prejudice, and unfair treatments. They also revealed that sometimes it could be difficult to tolerate how they are treated, thus defending themselves with their collective action. This has been frequently featured among street children who were sleeping together, especially, at night. Over time, of course, children develop *we-ness*. This, in turn, could bring them to start identifying themselves with some children in similar life condition and excluding others approaching their territories. Therefore, from the above children’s account, this study argues that sharing common life events and challenge emanates from living in the same street eventually lead the children to form a group life.

6.3 Organizations of Street Children Group

Since all children were living in the street environment and could have been facing the same problems related to the street, the background of the child, i.e. where the child come from, would not be a problem in forming and compositions of the group.

Street groups have a relatively homogeneous composition of gender, made up of, almost entirely, boys. As discussed in the third chapter (section 3.6), this might relate to the girls’ relative absence from the street as a street child or hidden population because many of them sleep at nights in the rental houses rather than the streets. Sometimes the girls’ choose not to join the boys for fear of attacks, for example, rape. Yet, this does not mean that girls are entirely segregated from the boys’

street group. The groups included in this study, however, were exclusively composed of boys of mixed age.

In the street groups, the age of the children varies. The age difference entails differences in responsibilities, including leadership role and the privilege to command other members of the group, especially teenagers. In this regard, especially older children (in between 15-17, in the case of this study) have advantages over the younger (in between 9-14). Nevertheless, since the street life demands each child's effort to survive, even if children's were living in group life, no one has exploitative relationships or excessive power over others. When this happens, children safeguard one another from the explosive relationship and prevent the leader not to take too much power over others.

The structure of the group is informally organized. There are oral agreements and rules, which define the ways group members and newcomers behave. Street children's group has informal leadership and structure. The next section discusses in detail the major components of street children's group, which put them together with solidarity. The section starts by discussing the leadership in the street groups and its role.

6.4 Leadership in Street Groups

From this study point of view, leadership is one aspect of street children group life. However, there were no formal ways of appointing leadership in the group. Being a leader of a group is not always by the choice of the group members. Rather, the oldest boy and/or the one with the longest street experiences becomes the leader of the group. In addition, showing one's masculinity over others and courageousness to protect children from outsiders would help in attaining and maintaining the power. The leaders also maintain their power by being physical to others and sometimes by having an exploitative relationship. This study identified also some roles the leader has been playing within the group.

6.4.1 Protecting group members from outside and inside attacks

In the street group, a leader is a reference point in intermediating between the group and the outside world and undertakes the responsibility of protecting the group members from insiders and outsiders. Children face many problems due to unfair treatments from different bodies such as the

police and other community members. Since the leaders know many people, including the police and other community members due to their street experience, whenever someone comes to the group (for instance the police at night), the leader involves himself in negotiating, but also fights for the group if someone comes forcefully. While describing his group leader, participant 7 said:

“You know, some of us do not have the power to defend ourselves, but our leader is always around to protect us from anyone else coming to attack. Police officers also try to scatter us from our places, especially at night, but our leader sometimes negotiates for us, and the other time he shows us codes to leave those places when the police officers approaching.”

Leaders play an important role in protecting members from the external attacks by either negotiating or responding physically. Nevertheless, the leader of the group does not work all alone in protecting the group members; rather he unites the members to stand together in protecting one another from outsiders. Participant 1 and leader of a group said: *“We do not like to fight and we always try to solve peacefully at first, but if not, we will all stand together with our leader and fight to protect one another.”*

Children themselves often involve disputes with one another. Ursin (2016) also discussed that *“peer relations in the street group as both a source of protection and conflict and danger”* (p. 9). Hence, the group leader as a source of authority and responsible body commands and involves as conflict intermediaries in solving quarrels. Children sometimes involve in showing their physicality, imitating what they have observed from movies, this could often lead to fighting. So, if there is a bully within the group, the leader is there to control and punish those who try to abuse others. The presence of a leader helps to avoid quarrel or fighting with each other. Therefore, a leader could play an important role in keeping the unity and avoiding the physicality of one member to the other.

6.4.2 Recruiting newcomers to the group

The leader is responsible and plays an important role in recruiting newcomers to the group. Due to the recently increasing problem of sexual abuses street children are highly suspicious of newly arriving children to include in the group. Participant 1 and leader of the group said while explaining how they have been encountering sexual harassment:

“One thing that really makes us suspicious nowadays is the case of bushties. They take advantage of the little children, especially newcomers. They come to join us looking innocent and when you let them, they try to force or rape children to do sexual acts, and others also come and try to fool the kids or newly arrived children with incentives and take them to restrooms to rape.”

The above quote reveals that there are people, including children coming to the group looking innocent but abusing children. The leader knows this problem, thus, takes care of the issue when recruiting new members (the last section of this chapter will discuss sexual abuses and children’s collective group action to prevent it). This way, the leader protects the group members. This chapter later (section 6.5) discusses street group membership or entry requirements.

6.4.3 Socialization of group entrants

The leader has the role of training and sending children for variety ways of income making strategies, for example, modes of *kiffela*, stealing, etc., which would help to keep the survival of both the leader and other members including the new entrants. Socializing the new entrants has two implications. The first relates to the reciprocal feature of group relationship, although there are differences in power and responsibilities among children. As mentioned in the above section (6.4.1), older children or leaders have the responsibility of protecting younger children from outsiders attack. In return, younger children, as a group norm, are expected to use the basic street survival instincts to bring food, cash money, *chat*, cigarettes, which could be new or leftover, liquor, etc., as part of reciprocity to the protection they are receiving. The second implication deals with the life cycle of children and societal reaction to children change in the appearance of children, i.e. societal reaction changes as a child get older. This was also discussed by Mizen and Ofofu-Kusi (2010) in relation to street friendship. They have discussed that, at a younger age, society perceives children with compassion and gives them food and money. However, as a child gets older the society begins to react with more suspicion and gets worried by their presence (Ibid). The older children know this societal perception well, thus, they would not act the way they did when they were younger. They rather train and send younger children. While explaining his relationship to group members, the leader of the group, participant 3 said: *“much of the work was done by younger children in making a daily livelihood since people are more sympathetic to them,*

but I am always around them to negotiate, prevent and protect when someone comes to attack them.” However, in the socialization process, the new entrants are not passive rather they play an important role by entering into the system adapting the new environment (see chapter seven, section 7.4.1).

6.5 Membership in the street group

On the street, both new and street experienced children often come into street groups hoping to join. However, some children, who had street experiences, encourage newly arriving children to return back home by telling the problems related to the street life and participant 1 also said: *“I always insist newcomers go back home by arguing street life is for those with no parents.”* However, if the child insists on staying, they let go through all the processes to join the group. In fact, it is not always simple since gaining acceptance and affiliations into the group needs group’s recognitions, and the approval and recognition of the group leader to be affiliated with.

Due to the mobile nature of the street life, children often move from one place to another and they always strive to affiliate themselves whenever they find someone in similar condition. Even though the child had street experiences, it would not be simple to join groups. There are many groups in different settings of the city with different lifestyles, which might result in varying group subculture, norms, and values. So, when children move from one place to the other, they are always moving with their experience from their previous places. This would create difficulty to join groups with little effort. From my observation, for instance, in one of the study areas, *Meskel square*, glue sniffing was common among most children and was not a problem. However, this was not the case in the other study area, at the *National Theater*. During the individual interview participant 1 said:

“If newcomers have some new behavior that the group member do not have, we immediately insist them to leave the area or we are going to send them back, for instance, if they are users or want to use Mastish or glue sniffer.”

From the participant 1’s account, the prohibition was related to the health problem associated with glue sniffing, they despised it based on their own or of others experiences. Therefore, whenever someone comes to the group, if they involve behavior, which is forbidden in the group, they would

be face rejected and have to leave the place. They argue that this is, to keep group members from learning and adopting such behaviors.

Upon the first arrival to the streets, children are expected to pass through certain group requirements (subcultural norms and values) before they gain entry into the group and have to perform certain activities before acquiring full membership in a group. Newcomers would face certain inquiries from the group such as: where they are from and why they ran away. Sometimes leaders would take valuables newcomers have, including their money and clothes. Street experienced children often ask newcomers their origin or former place of residence and also ask if there is someone they are familiar with. If they failed to give the response correctly, then the group will send them out viewing them as liars.

It is also common for the newly arrived group entrants to experience initial harassment and abuse in the group, in preparation for the hard life they are going to experience on the streets. But they have no other choices than accepting these challenges. If newcomers insist on staying with the group, they are expected to do whatever the group is doing, including addiction, which is often used to keep group solidarity.

In consequence, the initial preparation, support, and exposure to hard challenges are extremely important for their course of streets life. For instance, they can ask new entrants to beg and buy drugs and other stuff for the group. The group also mocks and tease them. If newcomers refuse to do, the group will send them out. While recounting his first few days of group life upon arrival to the street, participant 2 said:

“Upon my first arrival, the group has even taken my walker or crutches, so that I can beg. They order also you to bring food and even deny you not to eat with them. They will ask you to buy and look for cigarette and chat.”

However, newly arrived children’s treatments are relatively different from those of street experienced children. New entrants are expected to obey and follow the instructions given to them by the leader of the group to avoid the risk of not being accepted into the group. Therefore, a new entrant is expected to learn attitudes, norms, values and forms of communication within the group.

6.6 Street Children's Social Interaction with Outsiders

Children are involved in social interaction with different people outside their group. This, in turn, allows children to negotiate for their survival through diversifying the means on the street by having multiple social networks. However, children's social interactions would not be always smooth and free from challenges because of the long existing views over children's street life.

Several studies have shown the societal reactions to children in street situations (e.g. Aptekar 1994; Aptekar and Stoeklin 2014; Beazley 2003; Ennew 2002; Panter-Brick 2002; Ursin 2016). These studies reveal that societal reactions to street children are largely grounded in a conventional view of children and childhood and nurturing practices. Thus, as Punch (2002) points out the way in which society perceives children affects society's treatment of them. With regard to street children, society's reaction to children's life situation in the street differs among the extreme aggressiveness, indifference, and provision of help (Aptekar and Stoeklin 2014). There are several instances of consistent violence and institutional aggression against children of the street such as arrest, cleaning from the street, torture, killing, and other physical abuses. On the other hand, there are also examples of people's compassion and provision of goods and health care services provided to street children (Ibid).

Children themselves know well these societal pejorative views, but they also know people who understand their livings and are compassionate and considerate of them. During the individual interviews and group discussions, participants said: *"some people simply consider us as deviant because of the things they see when we were doing and some other people are really scared of us. They try to keep their things tightly whenever they saw us."* The other participant also said:

"The languages we are using is quite offensive, it is full of nasty, and insults for others, but it is normal in our street living environment. The way we dress also discourage people from coming and getting closer. People consider us evil doers."

From the children's own evidence, the study asserts that the societal view of street children is partly the result of children's own street lifestyle and their street makeup or subculture in contrast to the conventional social ways of daily life (as further discussed in chapter seven). Pejorative reaction to street living is the result of society's long-held view of childhood and children's place

and status in the society. During the individual interview, it was asserted that with the social department officer from the bureau of labor and social affairs, *“street is not a living place rather it is a place for different daily activities takes place, but, the presence of children in the streets has been creating the problem.”* Children have known these views from daily police reaction and participant 1 said: *“police dislocate us continuously. We usually make homes out of plastics, but whenever they came, ruin our houses.”*

Children also blame the society failing to understand the way they were raised and lived at home before coming to the streets and the many problems they are facing. Participant 1 said:

“I do not know how the society is understanding us, do you think living on the street is our choice, look it is not. You know, in the street nothing makes you happy. Our daily life is full of troubles and challenges. The weather can be awful sometimes, bitter cold and often rainy.”

They also blame the media for presenting what most people think of them, which is directly taken from the media, mostly documentary films made by foreigners on the life street children. While explaining how the media influenced the societal view of them participant 2 said: *“they assume and portrayed us like trash cans since we are surrounded by dirty materials.”* Aptekar and Stoeklin (2014) also mentioned that the media often emphasizes entirely on the observable and spectacular behavior of street children, strengthening the series of stigmatization towards street children related with their street living. This is often embedded in a different kind of discourse, interpreting them vulnerable rather than dangerous.

Despite the societal view of street children as a threat because of their presence on the streets in contrast to the societal view of ‘proper place of children’ (Ennew 2002), children assert that: *“we do not harm people intentionally but people think that way.”* The study participants said, often the society consider them aggressive. However, as societal perspective actually differs, children’s group reaction to any attack also differs from people to people, either peacefully or forcefully. As participants 3 said, they do not like most of the time to fight because they said: *“we know how the police are going to treat if they found us while fighting.”*

But, in the street, children also respond to any attack on the same way. For instance, participant 1 said: *“sometimes bypassing drunken people insult us, we also do the same at the same time. But,*

street children the responses are different from people to people. During the individual interview, participant 3 and leader of the group told me that:

“One day someone was really drunk and he wanted to sleep with us. He had money and smartphone. But none of us took advantage of the scenario. The next morning when he wakes up, he was really amazed. He could not even believe that nothing has been taken out. So he thanked us a lot and gave us 200 ETB. He even usually visits us after that moment onwards.”

The above quote indicates that children handle every societal reaction accordingly. For example, there are people going to the street to conduct research, others to pray for and still others from the compassion and considerate to help financially. Study participants said these people do not judge street children by their appearances. But still there are people who come to attack. Thus, if someone wants to attack, they all stand together to do everything to defend themselves. As study participants said, in association to any attack first they ask if anyone of their members has done or said anything bad. If attackers are not open to negated solutions, they will all stand together and fight. If the attacker is someone whom they know on the street, they prefer to remain silent and solve it with negotiation. But if they do not know the attackers, what they mostly do is, throw stones on the attackers to terrify them.

They also sometimes invite other street children to fight along with them if attackers outnumber the group. The children living in other parts of the city, who are not members of the group, join in to defend one another from outsiders attack. In the street, because of children's mobile nature of street life, there are opportunities to be acquitted with many children who are living in the street same condition. This would help to bring each other up and develop supportive or defensive relationships one another during the time of any challenge on the streets.

“Once three people attacked one of our group members and then we asked them if anything their friend have done or said anything bad. But rather than negotiating, they started shouting at us. Then we all together kicked them out. The next day they came to revenge. They were 20 in number, but other street children, who were not among our members and living in other parts of the city, came and helped us. Even though they do not know us that much we defend each other.” (Participant 1)

From the above Participant 1's account, the study has revealed street children can make friends outside their group, which would help them to strengthen relationships among street children themselves. Thus, it increases their solidarity. The benefit of establishing a good relationship with street children in different street settings was highly evident, especially to protect one another from any danger and aggressions from outsiders. Such social friendships would increase social bondage among different street groups of the street.

6.7 Sexual abuse and group's collective reaction

Nowadays, children's sexual abuse and exploitation are becoming one of the emerging social problems affecting the physical, social and psychological wellbeing of children in Addis Ababa (Tadele 2009). From Tadele's discussion, the magnitude of the problem seems much worse among the street boys than girls because of their risky living conditions in the streets. He further asserted that younger children, especially newcomers to the street life are more likely to be abused compared to older children because of their lack of ability to defend themselves, and their relative trustfulness.

In Ethiopia, from both cultural and legal perspectives, the act of abusing boys sexually or homosexuality is a deviant action and evilness. However, from my own interviews with the social officer in the bureau of social and labor affairs and from Tadele (2009) study, there was a lower tendency to report the problem. This is due to fear of stigmatization. Victims, street children, of the problem do not want to make the rape that they have faced known to everybody to avoid any stigmas and discrimination. This to mean that if the case is known, the children will start a feeling harass of being abused when their peers start calling them *bushiti*.

Study participants identified city's rich people and the Ethiopian diaspora's living abroad as the most offenders'. Most of these people often come at night to where the children sleep with their cars and if a man wants to have sex, he tries to persuade the children by giving money or clothes and other incentives. Some also pretend as if they were sympathetic and ready to help children to get out of the street life. Sometimes they even offer clothes just to trick the mind and to fool. The most common mechanism they often use to deceive is a promise to get them a job and let them live with them. They take advantage of their situation, making tempting offers to trick children into doing sexual favors. If children agree to go with them, they take to hotel rooms. However,

when they arrive at the hotel rooms, they openly tell to do sex in the room. A newcomer can easily be cheated. And some openly ask to have sex with children, even before going to the hotel.

Children's account revealed that it is common for children to encounter sexual abusers attempt or actual rape at least once in the street life. During the individual interview, participant 2 said: *"I have even been asked by a gay man to sleep with him and spent the night with him."* As children noticed, they have the information and knows when people come to their group with ill-conceived intentions especially, at night. For instance, when people come and give much money than they expect, it often makes them suspicious. However, children treat also accordingly. If that person has tried to do this anywhere, anytime, as they said, children know it. They will do everything do defend themselves collectively with group members. During the individual interview, Participant 1 said:

"Once a man come to join us looking drunk to our sleeping place to sleep with us and was trying to sexually abuse a small kid. Then, we kicked him almost to death and chased him and reported to the police by presenting him in front of the police."

The other participant 10 said: *"if anyone asks us to carry goods for them at nighttime, we say no unless we are three or four."* These are the various protective strategies, to increase their level of safety on the street.

Chapter Seven

Children Street Subculture

7.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, street children's social world has been discussed in detail, giving special attention on their peer friendship and group life. The primary focus of this chapter is to discuss street children subculture, which is distinct from the dominant cultural perspectives of children and childhood and an important aspect of children's social world on the streets. The chapter begins by examining the conceptual framework of subculture theory in relation to children's street life and summarizing some of the points discussed in the previous two chapters. Then detailed aspects of the street subculture follow.

7.2 Street Subculture

Subculture is defined as a set of activities or routines, artifacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share in interactions with their peers (Corsaro and Eder 1990). In the case of street life, upon leaving the home life, children often involve in the new ways of life or social connections with differing social values and norms in order to survive in the new street environments in contrast to the mainstream societal views. This means that the street child shares a lifestyle or can have their own street subculture which is distinct from the dominant cultural perspectives of the children and childhood. Thus, children's street subculture can be understood in relation to the dominant mainstream society's culture.

This particular chapter concurs with Aptekar and Stoeklin (2014) and Beazley (2003), Naterer and Godina (2011) in that child in the street situations are a competent social actor in their own street social world, where through their relational agency builds their street social capital in contrast to the conventional view of children as a passive victim. The study also coincides with the view that street subcultural values are the extensions of the dominant culture (as cited in Baron 1989). Thus, a subculture of street children can be understood both as a creative strategy used to adapt the new city's physical and social environment and as a resistance to the dominant society's pejorative view (Williams 2011).

In the mainstream society, children's very existence in the street and their daily life deeds, for example, begging, using drugs, are seen as deviations and are mostly treated in pejorative ways.

This is, basically, as it has been discussed in chapter three (section 3.2), because of the dominant conception of childhood and the 'proper place' of children in the society (Beazley 2003; Ennew 2002).

This study would start the section with the argument that street subculture is not a mere consequence of children's reactions to societal pejorative treatment. Rather, it is also children's creativity, lifestyle used in the urban phenomenon, organized for survival. Mostly the three interrelated components of street life, as mentioned in chapter six (section 6.2), are the factors contributing to the emergence of children's group or street subculture. These are: (i) the socio-spatial environment of the street; (ii) children's street daily lifestyles and their interaction with the mainstream culture; and (iii) street made challenges and children's collective reaction.

As mentioned in the previous two chapters, in the street life children face the same street made problems such as lack of food, attack or abuses by police, older street children, and sexual abuses by *bushties*, etc. This is mainly related to their very existence on the street in contrast to the dominant conceptions of proper places of children. However, they always involve collectively forming their own ways survival strategies, at least, to minimize and relieve the problems and to negotiate their daily survival on the streets. In the street environment, on a daily basis children share their food, clothes, cigarettes, drugs, sleeping places.

In line with Williams (2011) discussion of subculture theory, this study also tends to assume that street children's subculture emerge from certain notions of sameness in identity and their effective interactions with one another due to a number of children are living with similar problems like for instance limited in their access to dominant cultural means of survival. The study revealed that, however, in the street life there is little way for a street child to secure basic means of daily survival with minimal effort, especially lonely apart from their peer friends. Therefore, street survival can be possible if and only if children are active in building their social capital through their social relationships with other children who are living in the same street life environment. This, in turn, needs the relational agency of the child, where he can contribute his part for individual and other peers' survival. The following sections discuss some of the basic aspects of street children's daily life activities as a subculture of their social world, childhood.

7.3 Street Children's Daily Life

This study starts with the argument that in the street life, children's daily lifestyle and activities directly reflects their peer subculture. Children's street actions and motivations are complex and different, based on the environments where they are part in and with whom they are involved in the interaction. In street life, children possess fluid identities which shift depending on the circumstances, the places they occupy, their daily interactions (Beazley 2003) and their mobility.

In fact, in the street, the study identified that the daily lifestyles differs from children to children and among street groups in different settings of the city, but also to the larger extent it clearly differ from the mainstream society's dominant culture. These differences are mainly related to their daily activities, which are the direct reflections of street children's respective subculture.

In Ethiopian society, for instance, a day, 24 hours, can be categorized into three sections, morning to midday or the first section (usually starts from 7:00 am-1:00 pm), afternoon to sunset or the second section (after 1:00pm-6pm), and night or the third section (starts from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am). In Ethiopia, the daylight and nighttime are equal, i.e. 12 hour day and 12 hour night. These categorizations are based on east Africa's time zone. In Ethiopian society the nighttime, i.e. starting from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am, mostly used to take a rest, dinner, and sleeping; and the daytime is often used for different daylight activities including income generating activities, schooling, etc.

But this is not the case in the daily life of most street children. In most cases, children use their day in contrast to the dominant cultural practices, and it can also be categorized based on their daily street life activities, which directly reflect their peer subculture. *'We sleep until midday.'* This was observed and reiterated by the study participants, during the individual interviews and group discussions. Although children in the street environments share many things in common, different settings or territories have their own influence in children's daily lifestyle or street identity because of differences of activities in a different territory (cited in Beazley 1999). This reveals how they adapt to their socio-spatial surroundings, capitalizing on the opportunities each setting offers. The children, therefore, show great versatility, creativity, and adaptability. For instance, in a place called *Merkato*, which is the biggest market center of the country, children are always busy from 5:00 am to 11:00 pm searching their daily income (livelihood). Children's daytime-related to the area's business activities, therefore, the crowd cannot give children time to sleep or other street

made activities. But in the areas the fieldwork for this study were conducted, *Meskel Square*, *Ambassador Park*, and *National Theater* were less crowded and gives children a different identity and provides an opportunity to exercise a subculture quite different to that of the *Merkato*. The following section discusses the study participant's daily life activities focusing on their livelihood strategies.

7.3.1 Searching for Livelihood

"We can do anything we find to survive." This is the common voice of street children who participated in this study. Children in the street often involve in creative, multiple and complex survival strategies (subcultural means of survival) in contrast to the dominant societal values. This is basically because of the difficulty for some groups (for example, street children) to access the basic necessities or work opportunities to make the livelihood in conventional ways, as discussed in chapter three (section 3.3), even though everyone needs those basic necessities to survive. The most common livelihood strategy among street children, which is contrasting the dominant societal values, is begging for money and/or food.

Attaining daily meal is the priority of every child in the street. Thus, they usually beg to meet their daily meal, what is called, *bulle* (leftover food), from hotels and restaurants. Though, there is a division of labor based on their age, especially within the group. Often begging foods from hotels and restaurants is the responsibility of the younger children (see chapter six, section 6.4.3). However, they get their *bulle* in exchange for their labor to the hotels and restaurants, for example cleaning and washing dishes.

The group leaders often scatter their members, especially at nighttime, thus, children are busy looking for money. Mostly younger children beg to bypass people by extending their arms with phrases like, for example, *santiem sitegn* (give me alms), *dabo gizalign* (buy me bread), and *yemaderia* (give me to a shelter). By sitting together they also sing songs in front of bypassing people to draw the attention of sympathizers. The following is an extract taken from the lyrics of the song street children use to draw the attention of sympathizers (the translated lyrics are copied from Abebe 2008:279):

*“The street has become my home
The wind and cold my relatives
The rain is my dearest neighbor
No blanket, no plastic, no bedsheets
A paper is my mattress
Please, people, look around you – and see
Give us what you have
The amount does not matter.
If my life wasn’t unfortunate
I wouldn’t have come forward to beg.
I wish you a long and healthy life
I know that my destiny will be bright
Wearing dirty clothes, eating whatever [we] find
Being happy among ourselves
This is how we fare our lives
Those boys and girls who live in villas
Come over here to see our plastic shelters.”*

Children exactly know whom to beg, where to beg, at what to beg, and how to beg. Mostly older children teach this skills to younger children (see chapter six, section 6.4.3). For instance, they prefer begging drivers than walkers; couples than single individuals because of their assumption that gentleman gives alms when they are together with their girlfriends to appear kind or caring. They prefer drivers because of the children’s assumption that they are rich. One of their strategies of begging from drivers is waiting at the traffic light. Begging at the traffic light can be dangerous or it can expose them for the accident, but for the street children that was not their worries, they rather fear the police than the accident. They also have their strategies while approaching couples, for instance, they can use flattering words by saying “*tamralachu*” used to say “you look good”, “*ayileyachu*” used to say “may stay together forever.”

They also wipe the windshield of the cars, without seeking the permission of the owners. Sometimes they also carry luggage and other time they repair or help in repairing tire for passing by drivers in need of their support. Even though, some of the children are willing to carry and do

anything they found if they had the opportunity, others do not want to do anything while chewing *khat* just not to get out of their mood.

7.4 Socialization to the street subculture

Socialization to the street subculture is one important way to build and maintain solidarity among street children. It takes place among children themselves out of adult control. Upon leaving the family home, children frequently encounter new lifestyles in the street environment, thus helping one's self in learning and integrating to the group subculture is basic to enhance and maintain street adaptation and survival. Hence, new entrants are expected to learn attitudes, norms, values and modes of communication and act according to group subculture. The environment (physical, and social), group leaders and peer children who have been in the streets longer play important roles in influencing the socialization processes and preparing new entrants to the street new life. It is also used to keep children's street solidarity.

However, in traditional adult-centric society, often socialization can be understood in unilateral line, i.e. the social, competent, and rational adult trains or socialize the asocial, incompetence, and irrational child (Nilsen 2009/2014). In other words, the state of children as passive recipients from adult's guidance just to be functional in the already existing social system (Beazley 2003; Jenks 2009; Nilsen 2009/2014; Panter-Brick 2002; Prout and James 1997; Qvortrup 1994; Woodhead 2013). Nilsen (2009/2014) criticized the above view of socialization, for ignoring the influence of peer friendship in the socialization process, i.e. child-child interaction as a means of socialization. From her own study, Nilsen argued that children in their own world or setting could learn from their peer friendship. She has further reconstructed the concept of socialization as a process of both 'adaptation and resistance' where children can play an important and active role in the process of learning.

Newly arrived children themselves can play important roles by entering into and learning street lifestyles or subculture to get out of or at least to minimize the street made problems that could be created by the absence of basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, and clothes. During the individual interview, participant 1 argued that "*street life is not merely something that someone tells someone else to follow. Rather, the street physical environment also determines or teaches the behavior to a greater extent.*" From the child's account, the physical environments in itself

sometimes force a child to learn the street behaviors. For instance, in the street, one of the reasons why children get addict is due to a physical system of adaptation, according to study participants. The weather is unpredictable and changes repeatedly. So, children frequently learn by observing what their peers do, i.e. drink, chew, and smoke to bear with the physical hardship of the weather.

Peer influences are the most important way of learning street subculture or socializing with other children. Since everybody is doing the same thing to cope the same street made problem, children, in general, and new entrants, in particular, learn from others. Simply by seeing. During the fieldwork, participant 1 said: *“new entrants see what we are doing in the group and that is also essential for their very survival in the street. Otherwise, they will face loneliness and the group will send them back to keep and maintain the group solidarity.”* In the street, children, work, beg, gather together to play and watch movies in local cinemas and sleep, as their routine daily life. Therefore, learning and doing what other peer children do is essential to the new entrants to survive.

It was mentioned in the previous chapter (section 6.4.3), leaders of the street group play important roles in recruiting, guiding, training, and bringing up new entrants to adapt to the street subculture and system to maintain group solidarity even if sometimes the process could be exploitative. Nonetheless, new entrants have no choices than accepting the process. Newly arrived children are expected to learn street children’s subculture, i.e. attitudes, norms, values, slung. Furthermore, if a new entrant wants to stay with the group or in peer friendship, they are expected to do and act according to what the leader and the group told them to do. For instance, they could ask to beg and buy drugs and other stuff. If newcomers refuse to do, the leader and the group will send them out. Therefore, newly arrived children are expected to obey and follow the instructions they are given by the leader since it is the common value of all children within the group. Learning street behavior from leaders and other peers by obeying and following the instructions that the group expects, helps the new entrants to develop a strong social attachment to the group.

7.5 Norms and Values

One aspect of the street children’s subculture is their set of norms and values. They are important in keeping street solidarity among children. In the street, children’s common values such as sharing, caring, protecting one another could determine their street survival in the absence of primary caregivers or guardians, who were traditionally responsible for the provision of care and

protection. Street children's friendship and group norms and values are also important to build the social capital. Therefore, obedience and adherence to norms and values could determine the social relationships and collective identities among children. Whenever children come to join street groups or form peer friendship, they have to conform to norms and rules as well as defend the values and beliefs of the street community that are socially approved within the subculture of the streets in order to avoid unacceptably. This confirms with Putnam's (1993) discussion of social capital in that norms and values facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

In the street, in fact, norms and values are not formal rather they are oral. During the individual interview, children commonly said: *"we do not have any norms and values."* As discussed in chapter six (section 6.1) this is partly due to the informality of street norms and values. It is also related to children's view of norms and values as something that affects their freedom. This suggests that they are reluctant to norms and values because it symbolizes an adult/mainstream society/home life, and impedes their sense of freedom. However, field observation and the children's account corroborate that, in their daily life there are several common values, which they adhere to keep their solidarity, social relationships, and friendship. Sometimes older children, even if they were leaders, do not adhere to the norms and values of the groups they are governing. This was very common when they use heavy drugs and fighting and hit younger children. However, this does not mean that they can always avoid group punishments for deviating from the norms and values. So, when someone including the leader, is found guilty of a mistake or in doubt of norms and values, the group collectively decides the punishment and sometimes excludes the child from the system of friendship.

Street norms and values are the results of children's own street experiences. For instance, gambling is not allowed. Of course, they are used to doing it before. But during fieldwork, from study observations and children's own account, it was noted that they do not allow gambling within the group as well as in their settings. This is because of the problems that they have seen when they and other children were gambling. During the group discussion, participant 1 said:

"We have seen what gambling has done. We used to play even giving our clothes, shoes, all money that we have. That is why we do not allow gambling in the group because we have seen when people fighting and injuring their friends and others for the sake of the money they lost while playing."

This is in a way a safety strategy, employed in order to keep the balance in the group, avoid fighting and the loss of material goods. They also forbid using *mastish* (glue sniffing) and using Hashish. This is also because of the adverse effects they have witnessed. During the individual interview with participant 1, he said: *“You can imagine what glue sniffing can do to the human body if it can stick to skin. You know, we have seen two friends dying of this problem.”* Apart from the health effect of sniffing glue, it also exposes and attracts children to be under the police surveillances. It also proves that they are not amoral as often portrayed by outsiders, but have strong morals and consciousness of what they should and should not do.

Group participants further said: *“in the streets, each can make their own money. But if someone needs help, everyone is expected to help or share everything.”* As mentioned in the previous two chapters, children commonly experience hunger and attacks due to their very presence on the streets. Therefore, involving oneself in provisions and protecting is not only important, but it is also a must to survive on the streets by keeping group solidarity. From the above evidence, street subculture and related norms and values are the direct reflections of their daily life experiences.

Therefore, whenever members fail to live accordingly, there is a consequence, a punishment. The punishment varies from the simple knee downing to intentionally leave the child to sleep while others are eating to total exclusion from the friendship and group system. For simple cases like fighting, insulting group members, children could face kneeling down for some minute. The punishment can also be ignoring to sleep while others are eating or having the meal. But they do not take extreme and harsh punishment, as they said: *“since they are brothers and sisters.”* During the individual interview, participant 2 said:

“Personally, I have been punished. One day for deceiving friends fifty ETB after working together. They were suspicious about it. The next day they left me without waking up and I ended up using that money for buying lunch. But after the punishment, I willfully have resigned from holding group money. Because anytime some money lacks your friends consider as you did it.”

But most often the rules of the group can be seen practically implemented and become serious on newcomers. This has an intention of keeping group solidarity. Therefore, when new entrant children come to join the group, they should obey orders from others if they are going to stay.

7.6 Solidarity among street children

In the street, solidarity among children is the most important aspect of their collective street life related to their street subculture. It is also an important cement that puts children together. In line with Bayertz's (1999) definition, this study understood solidarity as mutual promises or agreement, to be found in people who are connected to each other by specific common things such as a shared lifestyle, shared feelings, interests. Bayertz's definition of solidarity also emphasizes on the inner cement holding a society or a group together. Solidarity in the street children life can be expressed most importantly, by their collective identity and expression of street subculture in their street setting in contrast to the dominant societal cultural norms and values (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014). Aptekar and Stoecklin further discuss that the subculture of street children as a collective self-identification that is the mutual construction of shared values, ways of communication one another, and also a code of friendship. The use of peculiar word or languages and expressions and adherence to the subculture norms and values can be an essential component to establish solidarity among or within the groups. As discussed in the previous chapter, children in a group often come together to defend themselves collectively from outsiders that might be unfavorable to all, such as particularly broader police abuses and detentions their collective codes of communication and friendship. Aptekar and Stoecklin also discussed solidarity among children as an important tool to help in keeping the persistence of street subculture through nurturing or socializing the newly arriving children to the street life environment. The socialization process can be helpful in facilitating the assimilation and integration of the newly arrived children to the street subculture (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014). Solidarity among children in the street environment can be expressed in many different ways. The following sections discuss street children's subculture in which solidarity could be expressed and maintained.

7.6.1 Drug use and peer influence

In the street life, one of the most important aspects of group subculture that cannot be avoided from the discussion is children's connection to drug abuses. Despite the difference in the types of drugs consumed in different settings, on the street, everyone is an addict at least to one. This is because the children's daily social routines expose them to drug use. In the street, all types of drugs, including both legal and illegal, such as *khat*, *ganja* (marijuana), *Arqe* (liqueur), *Ashish*, cigarette, sniffing glue, are frequently used by children. Drug use is about seeking enjoyment,

reinforcing solidarity and creating a sense of belonging and status within the group as part of the street subculture. So, since everyone does have an addiction at least to one of the above-mentioned types of drug, in the street life, one cannot be different. During the individual interview, participant 1 said: *“by the way it is a must on the street. So that you can see what we do and follow accordingly to look alike.”* From the participant 1’s account, in some cases, it could be a must for children to copy what their peers do. This is partly because of the punishments a child receives when refusing to act accordingly. Mostly, children who had street experiences abuses new entrants verbally, mocking and teasing them for the first few days of street life. Thus, to avoid or, at least, minimize the risk of not being accepted into the group, these new entrants involve themselves in drug use to look their peers alike. In part, drug use could also be the result of new entrants’ views towards their peers who use drugs. This to mean that for a while, children may consider their peers as a person to be imitated when they see them doing drugs. This was commonly mentioned by study participants, when they start to speak, smoke, chew *chat*, sniffs glue like children who have street experience, often they start to think themselves as they are smart. While explaining how a participant started smoking and using other drugs, participant 10 said:

“Some older children used to send me to buy them tobacco. One day after I bought the cigarette for one guy and he gave me two ETB and then I wanted to do the same thing as he did. I smoked during that day for the first time and started bleeding and but then afterward I started to feel myself like my peers in advance since no one can mock or tease me for not smoking.”

From the above participant 10’s account, new entrants’ behavior can be affected and even modified by their closest peer friends’ influence due to their presence and social interactions in the same street environment and children own view and response to children’s peer influences.

7.6.2 Clothing

In the street life, children are involved in many street activities such as carrying bags, begging or *shikela*, and sometimes stealing, to earn money. Street children often spend the money they earn immediate in accordance with the street made definitions of life, which is their subculture. Often these subcultural definitions of street life are understood in relation to the dominant cultural views of the mainstream society.

There is a view that argues street children could have enough money, but do not want to look clean wearing new and clean clothes. Of course, from observation and children's own account, it can be argued that the children have enough money to buy new clothes but they do not. This was because of street subculture, in part. Appearing clean and tidy violates the subcultural norms of the street, which values looking dirty and disheveled, or more generally dressing in counterculture clothing to stand out from the larger culture. The subcultural image of street life is focused on looking pitiful. This aimed at eliciting the sympathy of the public and perhaps action in making others improve their lives (Abebe 2008; Beazley 2003). This has its own subcultural value for street children. During the individual interview, participant 3 said: *"when people looking younger street children with dirty clothes, they feel sorry and give food and money."* So as one of the survival strategies, they do not like to look clean. Sometimes even if they have a new shirt or trouser, older children take it away from the younger children. For example, one as reciprocity for being part of the study, one of the study participants was given a new shirt as a gift, but in the next morning, participant 13 said: *"when I was asleep, older children were taken it away."*

Apart from keeping subcultural images, other children do not also accept the view that street children have enough money to buy new clothes. Since street life depends on people's charity, they will not regularly be able to get money.

"If we get some amount of money, we will spend it on our immediate needs rather than saving. You know... we may get some amount of money in the morning, but may not in the afternoon, and vice versa, so when you get, you should spend to survive in your immediate needs in the street both to your own and your friends as street the subculture."

This was what have been said by many of the study participants. From the above evidence, in the street, there is no regularly way to find one's means of survival. If the children found some amount of money, they could spend all at once to buy their immediate needs such as food, drug, watching movies, etc. Therefore, from children's own account this study argues that children street clothing style could be the result of both the influence of their street subculture, which emphasizes to look dirty and disheveled; and the irregularity of their income sources, which is dependent on peoples' charity and sometimes by the availability of street jobs.

7.6.3 Street Children's Language- 'Yewoff Quanqua'⁹

Language is one aspect of the street subculture that distinguishes the children from the other mainstream society's dominant culture. Among the street children, their language is called *yewoff quanqua*, which is used to say 'birds' language. This study concurs with Ursin's (2006) study among Brazilian street youths in that children in the street context have their own slang, which is sometimes difficult to understand for the outsiders. The way in which children use words or language is part and parcel of their subculture. Their language is crucial for subcultural production since it is through language that shared interpretations develop (Corsaro and Eder 1990). Corsaro and Eder discussed some activities of the language used in the street were insulting, teasing, storytelling, and gossip. In the street, when children come to do, play together and identify each other by their own peculiar stylish language as being a collective identity that varies them from the general population of the city. Many of the street children expressed joy of the fact that their language sometimes horrifies outsiders.

Some of the words that children used to communicate are taken from other languages, widely spoken in the country. For example, they use the word *medeqes*, it referred to the sleeping. The word *medeqes* were taken from the Tigregna language, one of the eighty lingual groups in Ethiopia, which also relates to the state of sleeping. Nevertheless, in the street, as Aptekar and Stoeklin (2014) argues that children modify the words to suit their own uses or pronunciation or communication. They further argued that it happens

'By reducing the number of syllables, by dropping a prefix or a suffix, or by giving or changing the word to their own meaning, making it different enough from the use of the public that it is beyond being easily understood by the general population'

(Aptekar and Stoeklin 2014. 9).

There are words or numbers that the mainstream society uses daily in the normal sense, for instance, *6*, or *22*, *ferefengo*, etc., but in the street, the same words are used by children as a code of communication among themselves. For instance, in the case of street language *6*, is used to say that *zim bel*, is used to say as 'be quiet' or 'shut up' and *22* is used to say *asamignatalew* or

⁹ Used to refer 'Bird language' or a secrete language used by street children in their attempt to hide their communication from outsiders.

asamignewalew, and it is often used to say 'I persuaded him or her'. '*Ferefengo*' is literally part of the car, 'bumper' but in the case of street children used to indicate an activity of washing a car.

Ursin's work in Brazil has shown exactly the same with the street children in Addis in terms of using of secret language, nicknames for different groups of people. As Ursin's work showed nicknaming shows the relationship they have with those groups (Ursin 2006). Unique words or expressions are often used to avoid the challenges of some groups like police officers and nighttime surveillances. For example, *wushaw*, or *zaphaw* is used to say 'the dog', referring the police officers and nighttime surveillances. Sometimes they use the sound as the way the dog barks, as a communication tool, to make it unknown to the surveillances and helping their street peers to escape from the places where the police approaching. They also use to insult or degrade others and use to mock if they did not like someone's presence in their setting and also to communicate one another without getting noticed by outsiders. The use of these codes of communications shows the importance of a street language for unifying power for the street group while also serving as a tool for isolating the children's street group from the mainstream society's dominant culture.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

The final chapter of the study presents the conclusions based on the study and forwards some recommendations.

8.2 Conclusion

In this study I have explored the social world of street children, focusing on their peer friendship, group life and their adherence to the street subculture as vital for survival. In absence of institutions traditionally considered as responsible for taking care of children, such as family, forming and reforming peer friendships and joining street groups are found indispensable to access the social capital or support that emanate from children's social relationships and participation to keep street survival. However, the amount and quality of accessing this social capital or support depends on the level of social relationships and participants' adherence to the basic essence of peer friendship and collective group life such as being loyal, supportive and demonstrate solidarity. This study has also found that peer friendship and collective group life is not a kind of support that one can provide to the other, rather it is embedded in reciprocity.

In contrast to the conventional views of street children as passive victims, the study has uncovered that children's peer friendship and group life does not only enables children to access support to survive, but also, provides space for the children to exercise freedom in forming their own street subculture outside adult control.

Children's street subculture can be understood both as a creative strategy used to adapt or survive in the city's physical and social environment' and as a resistance to the dominant societal pejorative view. In the street, to keep their survival within peer friendship and group life, children are expected to learn or socialize to street subculture including its norms, values, language, and other codes of communications to recognize one another and also to defend one another from outside attacks. Some of these values include principles of solidarity, reciprocity, sharing and caring, understanding of common street moods and modes of communications, and other unique attitudes essentials for surviving on the streets.

Furthermore, if a newly arrived child wants to stay with the group or in peer friendship, he is expected to do and act according to the street values. Refusal to do or act accordingly, leaves newly arrived children out of the friendship or group system. Therefore, newly arrived children are expected to obey and follow the instructions they are given by the friendship or group norms and values since it is the common value of the street children. Learning street behavior by obeying and following the instructions that the group or friendship expects, helps the new entrants to develop a strong social attachment to the group and also build their broad social capital.

However, unlike the conventional view of socialization which is unilineal, (i.e. from 'rational' adult to 'irrational' child), in the street the socialization process is not merely a process that someone teaches someone else. It is rather the children themselves, who play an important role in the process learning street peer subculture by initiating and entering into the social world of street children. Therefore, in the street, it is the physical and social environment, the group leaders and the more seasoned peers that play important roles in influencing the socialization processes and preparing new entrants to the new street life and maintaining solidarity in the children's street life.

8.3 Recommendations

This study makes the following recommendations based on the fieldwork experience.

In fact, with two months fieldwork together with many other related challenges (e.g. access problem, rainy weather condition, etc.), conducting a research on the street children's social world to understand their peer friendship, group life, and the subculture is wholly challenging to show the exact picture of the street children's social world. Therefore, I first recommend researchers and academicians to think of conducting ethnographic studies combining with child friendly methods to include the view of younger children and to use the present study as the initial reference to explore and contribute to the very few studies that address the issue of street children's peer friendship and subculture just to bring the unbiased picture of street children.

This study revealed that despite the presence of many organizations working on street children, they are not addressing the problem because of their misguided policies and strategies that advocate the long-held views of children and childhood, ignoring children's own views and contribution. Therefore, from my own short time fieldwork experience, if organizations, both

governmental and NGO's, 'really' wants to help or at least to minimize the problem of street children, I recommend them to set their conventional views of children and childhood aside, and give children a voice to know their real street social world, i.e. children's peer friendship, group life and subculture from children's own perspectives, and to form and reform policies and strategies in accordance with children's real street life and voices. To do so, agencies, organizations, and policymakers should start working with children by making the child participant as a stakeholder in forming and reforming policies and strategies rather than their mere attempts of achieving organizational objectives.

This study also revealed that one of the emerging and prevailing, though unrecognized social problem affecting the physical, social and psychological well-being of street children (boys) in Addis Ababa and other big cities of the country, is sexual abuse and exploitation (e.g. rape). Some groups of people, for example, the rich people of the city, Ethiopian diaspora's living abroad, etc. were identified as the common offender. Therefore, this study recommends researchers to further map this serious recurrent social problem as it has devastating effects on the lives of street children; and contribute for policymakers to adopt measures to tackle the problem and protect children.

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Appendences

Appendix 1: Interview guide to street children (study participants)

Appendix 2: Group discussion guideline

Appendix 3: Interview guide to the Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affair

Appendix 1: Interview guide to street children (study participants)

How old are you?

For how long have you been on the street?

From where did you come?

What made you move to Addis Ababa?

Have you ever been left home and slept out-side before your first moment?

Do you had any awareness about street life prior to coming to the street? If yes

What did you know about street life before coming (joining) in to it?

What was your expectation before leaving home life?

How did you come to Addis Ababa?

With whom did you come?

How did you managed your first night?

Where did you go when you come first?

Whom do you met in your first arrival?

How did you know your first friend?

How your friend(s) did react when you first arrived to them?

How many friends do you have now?

Who are they?

For how long have they been your friends?

Have you ever lost a friend on the street?

Where do you spend your time?

With whom do you spend the time?

What do you usually do together with your friends?

How do you spend your time in the morning, afternoon, evening and hours of sleep?

What are the manifestations of your street children's peer relationship?

How do you react for outsiders who are not among the street children?

And/or how do you react for new street entrants when they come to you?

Do you have groups on the street?

How do you form group?

Do you have certain norm or rules and regulations concerning group life?

What kind of norm do you have?

Where and/or how did you learn these norms or from where did you get them?

How do you react when someone deviates from the group norm?

How do the reactions influence your (or others') behavior?

What kind of punishment do you have?

Have you ever been sanctioned? Or have you ever sanctioned another street peer?

Why?

How?

How did you (the group) develop this reaction?

In what matter do group members control the behavior?

Are there any situations that you feel that your friends control your behavior?

How do you accept and treat newbie at their first arrival to the group?

How do new comers learn your group life?

How do you react when outsiders attack your group member?

Has the way you react towards 'outsiders' changed since you arrived on the street?

Do you personally think that street life, peer friendship or group life have changed your behavior since you left home?

What kind of addiction do you have?

How did you learn addiction?

Is there anything that you have been forbidden from doing as a result of being in this group?

What kind of problems have you met in street life?

Or what kind of problems do you face in your day to day street life?

Where do you go for help?

Have your friends helped when you faced those problems? What did they do?

How do you feel for having your friends in street life?

How do friendship and to what extent, influence you in doing things or street behavior?

What do you do to survive in the street?

How much do you make money per day?

(Where or) how did you learn how to get by (food, money, sleep, hygiene)?

Do your friends help you in making the street life safer?

How your friends do helped you in your day to day street life?

What did you learned from your friends?

How do you feel know at the present moment?

How do you perceive street life?

Do you wish quit this life if you had the chance?

Appendix 2: Group discussion guideline

How do you form a group?

Do you have certain norms or rules and regulations concerning group life?

What kind of norms do you have?

Where and/or how did you learn these norms or from where did you get them?

How do you react when someone deviates from the group norm?

How do the reactions influence your (or others') behavior?

What kind of punishment do you have?

Have you ever been sanctioned? Or have you ever sanctioned another street peer?

Why?

How?

How did you (the group) develop this reaction?

In what manner do group members control the behavior?

Are there any situations that you feel that your friends control your behavior?

How do you accept and treat newbies at their first arrival to the group?

How do newcomers learn your group life?

How do you react when outsiders attack your group member?

What kind of problems do you face in your day-to-day street life?

Where do you go for help?

Where do you spend your time?

What do you usually do together with your friends?

How do you spend your time in the morning, afternoon, evening and hours of sleep?

Appendix 3: Interview guide to the Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs

How you [government] can define street children? Or

Who are the street children as part of your concern?

How do you describe children street life, their character, institutional image, the magnitude of the problem in number?

What do you think the major cause for the problem?

How the government is working to protecting children from family related violation of right, school punishments, and harmful cultural practices?

What activities the government is doing to, at least, minimize the number and cause of/for street children?

What do you think the major problems street children are facing in the street?

To what extent do you think the government is playing its role in promoting street children's participation, provision of basic necessities, and protecting street children's right? For example:

- In improving their own life
- In relation to drug control
- Violation of children's right by police, for example: detentions, hit, displacing, from sexual attack, and from the general public

For example: displacement of street children from some open spaces just to hide them from foreign visitors/international events

Do you think street children are beneficiaries from the overall development of the country?

To what extent, do you think, your activities like, for example, *El shaddai* Training Center, are effective in improving the street children overall problem?

Do you think your activities are based on the interest of street children?

Do you have any need/satisfaction assessment?

