

Conditions and Identities of Young Migrant Workers in the City: An
Ethnographic study of ‘Street Children’ in Kumasi, Ghana.

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Dedication

To my parents, Mr. Emmanuel Kofi Tawiah and Mrs. Beatrice Barnes and to all my siblings, God richly bless you all for your support both in prayers and in kind.

Secondly, to my academic supervisor, Margit Ystanes, your feedback and advice have really made this work a success.

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List of Abbreviations

CAS: Catholic Action for Street Children

CEDEP: Center for Development of People

CSC: Consortium for Street Children

NGO's: Non-Governmental Organizations

SCP: Street children's Project

SWD: Social Welfare Department

UN: United Nations

UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

Abstract

Earlier studies on ‘streetism’ or ‘street children’ have often focused exclusively on the economic causes and impacts. Economic considerations have often assumed a more prominent position in explaining why children decide to leave their family home to seek for a livelihood on the street, while socio-cultural dimensions recede to the background. An approach uncovering the life-worlds of children involved in streetism, their socio-cultural and economic backgrounds and diverse combination of motivations that drive children with certain identities into the practice, seldom feature prominently in anthropological research. A research approach that illuminates the concept of ‘childhood’ in particular sociocultural contexts provide promising avenues for a rich analysis of why particular children are often involved in streetism. Drawing on a six-month long ethnographic fieldwork, my study examines the life-worlds of street children in Ghana’s second largest city, Kumasi. The extensive ethnographic approach helped me to follow up on the daily routines and life-worlds of children during the six month long fieldwork, a task which would have been impossible to achieve if I had done only short term observations and interviews. Furthermore, my study interrogates the concept of ‘childhood’ in Ghana, explores the socio-economic identity of street children in Kumasi, and then illuminates diverse motivations that drive the children to the ‘street’. The term ‘street’ is often used to denote stays outside of parental homes or where the lives of children are not properly supervised and monitored. I used the findings of my study to demonstrate the complexities involved regarding this conventional definition of who can be considered as a street child.

In this thesis, I argue that a complex combination of factors (both social and economic) operate in tandem to explain why children from certain socio-economic and cultural backgrounds become susceptible to situations that compels them to make a living outside of their parental homes, or places of abode without proper supervision or social upbringing. In addition, my study elucidates on the numerous economic activities the children often engage in on the street.

Using James and Prout (1997) Social Theory of Childhood, I demonstrate in the thesis that street children should not be seen as passive, incomplete and incompetent but rather active in terms of the determination and construction of their own lives vis-a-vis those around them and the society at large. Also, the life-worlds of the children have been explored using Granovetter’s Social Network Theory (1983). Using these two broad theoretical perspectives,

I argue that street children in Kumasi have created their own institutions that ensure their survival on the street. Also, the great majority of street children are girls. In addition to this, I show that migration has led to changes in economic roles by girls as these girls are the breadwinners and substantially contribute to the survival of their siblings back home, while the boys primarily provide for themselves. Moreover, I show in this thesis that, social factors often precede economic ones for being on the street and that the 'family' serves as the root cause to the streetism phenomenon. Finally, I argue that some of the children migrate to the street for prestige. The euphoria attached to travelling to the city to also be labelled as 'have been to the city before' prompt some children to move to the street.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Migyimah is a fifteen year old boy from the town Walewale in the northern Ghana. He has been on the street for two years. In a conversation with Migyimah about how he perceives street children and street life, he noted that,

Many people perceive me as a bad boy who has run away from home to the street. In fact, not me alone, but almost all the street children here. But you see, this is not always the case. They may be right because of the 'bad' activities some of our colleagues engage in such as pick-pocketing and all that. However, I am on the street here to earn a living. Some children and the rest of the society unlike me were lucky to have had or still have someone to cater for them and they also live in their home or that of their parents. We do not have that. We are unfortunate to find ourselves outside our parental home and yet are able to survive on the street. Some of the rest of the society can't withstand what we face on the street. It is just that we need a bit more of hard work and other surviving strategies. They always forget that all hands are not equal. How will the rest of the society for instance carry their goods if we, the street children are not here to do it for them. So you see, we all (referring to street children and the rest of the society) are important.

Adzisa (16), also from the town Bole-Bamboi in the northern Ghana has been on the street for four years. She arrived in Kumasi after her parents separated. She is the first born among five siblings. A colleague of Adzisa told her to come to the city as she will get work to do, earn some money to cater for herself and her siblings back home. Unfortunately for Adzisa, her colleague lived in Accra, the capital of Ghana but she happens to find herself in Kumasi, the second largest city in Ghana. She didn't know anyone in Kumasi. However, she met a girl selling sachet water (popularly called 'pure water' in Ghana) on the street. The girl helped her find work and also to be 'stable' on the street. After four years on the street, she has still not been to her hometown but has frequently been sending money home to cater for the younger siblings. Adzisa always told me 'I am more happy here (referring to the street) than with my parent' and has no intention of leaving the street.

Migyimah and Adzisa were the first two among the many children I interacted with during my fieldwork period in Kumasi. They narrated their story about when and why they got involved in streetism. Preliminary interactions with Migyimah and Adzisa in fact provided me a fair idea about the phenomenon of street children. It can be inferred from the excerpts above for example that, there is a certain societal perception of the street children phenomenon on the one hand, the different characters often associated with the children involved in the act and the diverse motivation driving the children to the street on the other hand. The excerpts reveal one more crucial issue: whereas Migyimah seeks to earn a living on the street through a genuine or legitimate means, others however, do so by applying 'illegal' strategies such as pick pocketing for their livelihood. Still, others are compelled to make a living through streetism as a result of certain structural problems such as poor parental care and upbringing (like the case of Adzisa in the second excerpt). Moreover, the children's daily activities on the street require numerous surviving strategies and hard work. In addition, Migyimah's narration also draws attention to the agency and a sense of pride in being able to survive alone outside his parental home and also be of service to society. The two excerpts presented above therefore illustrate the complexities in the issue of streetism.

The phenomenon of street children, analysis of causes, impacts and identities of the children involved is thus not so simple as often represented in the literature: rather it involves diverse motivations, different societal perceptions, socio-economic and cultural issues. For example, the first use of the term 'street children' can be traced to the work of Henry Mayhew (1951) entitled '*London Labour and the London Poor*'. Before it became universally used in 1979 when the United Nations also mentioned it in its annual child report (Williams 1993), children in street situation (street children) were referred to as 'runaway', 'abandoned' and 'homeless' children (Williams 1993). The usage of the term 'street children' thus had a negative connotation. However, the excerpts presented earlier shows that the conventional usage of the term conceals many crucial issues, i.e. - diverse motivations and socio-economic and cultural underpinnings are either ignored or made less relevant. My work is therefore saying something more interesting that it is not always consisting of cohorts of bad people, but also children who are there genuinely to earn a living and that societal structural arrangement expose them to such vulnerable situations. Due to such a problematic conceptualization of what street children do, their identities and their economic conditions, researchers, governmental and non-governmental bodies have made several efforts to define and categorize who can be considered a street child. For instance, NGO's, researchers and

governmental agencies define street children as children who are inadequately catered for and provided by responsible parents and other caretakers, spend a significant amount of time outside their parental care and find their place in the street as their source of livelihood (United Nations, 2006; UNICEF, 2006). Ghana's Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment also defines a street child as

'a person under the age of eighteen who works in the street regularly for economic gain. These children include those who regularly spend significant proportions of their time in the streets and those for whom the street is their home' (MMDE, 2004).

The term 'streetism' is therefore a concept often used to describe poor parental care or upbringing and children who face such challenges are referred to as 'street children'. Moreover, it is interesting that despite the negative connotations associated with the term, the children are common in many urban centres of the developing world, including Ghana. These urban centres have become not only places of abode for the children but also places where they generate their source of livelihood as they spend their time out of the home of their parents. In a study by Le Roux and Smith (1998), the authors maintained that the street children phenomenon is an alarming and escalating world-wide problem. The conditions these children are often exposed to such as maltreatment, imprisonment and even sometimes being killed make the situation depressing. Also, in a report by the United Nations on "*The State of the world's children in 2005 under "childhood under threat"*", the report revealed that about a billion children are found on the street. Situating it in Ghana, the former President, Professor Evans John Atta-Mills, in his 2010 state of the nation's address mentioned that "street children in the urban centres in Ghana is not acceptable and cannot be tolerated" (Ghana Government, 2011). This statement does not only reflect the growing presence of children in Ghana's cities, but also shows the extent of 'vulnerability', neglect and rejection in the society. The street children phenomenon is therefore a growing concern in many developing countries and has become one of the biggest problems in many countries, especially in Africa (Mwansa et. al., 1994). Some studies in Ghana further state that the situation is even becoming worse (Boakye-Boaten, 2008; Baah, 2007).

Moreover, the prevalence of the street children phenomenon is evident in the number of organizations and NGO's who are working to address this social problem. For example, according to UNICEF (2002), two categories of street children exist. They are '*Children of the street*' and '*children on the street*'. '*Children on the street*' are children who do not live

permanently in the street. They return to their parents' home after the day's activity on the street. *Children on the street* mostly have contact with their families and contribute to the livelihood income of their family through the money earned on the street. *Children of the street* on the other hand are children for whom the street is their permanent home. They sleep and do everything on the street for their livelihood. Street children in Kumasi include both categories UNICEF portrays in their studies. However, the great majority fall under the categorization of *children of the street*.

In Ghana, similarly, two main types of street children have been identified (CAS, 2003; CSC, 2003). Namely, children who live on the street but still have contact with family members (classified as *the urban poor*) and children who live and work outside the home of their parents on the street (classified as '*typical street children*'). I argue that, the two main categorizations of street children in Ghana do not always reflect in the reality of street children in Kumasi. For example, children they identify and classify as 'typical street children' as living and working outside their parental home without having any contact with their families is quite problematic (not always the case). My study revealed several children who live permanently on the street but still maintain some contacts with their families either through phone calls or sending money to them for the upkeep of their younger siblings. This is reflective even in the case of Adzisa in the second excerpt. The activities of this category of street children suggest that the involvement of children in the act could be part of the entire household livelihood or economic survival strategies of their families. Street children in my case I will argue are children who are found outside their parental homes, and who live and/or work on the 'street' for their livelihood and may or may not have contact with their family members or siblings. (My study also makes reference to children who are 18 years and below in categorizing who a street child is).

From this, one can therefore argue that the phenomenon of street children encapsulates a diverse combination of motivations and societal factors which are worth investigating. In this thesis, I contextualize the issue of streetism by illuminating certain societal factors, social practices, diverse motivations and identities of street children that provide a holistic understanding of the street children phenomenon. My study therefore focuses on Kumasi which is one of the hubs of young migrants in Ghana.

Given the different problematic conceptualizations of street children, the overarching objective of my study is to examine the life-worlds of street children in Kumasi. Also, it

explores the livelihood strategies and social practices of children in street situation which further identifies weaknesses in the pre-existing literature. Moreover, there are certain crucial questions my study will attempt to answer. First of all, who can be considered as a street child in Kumasi? What factors make the children to move outside their parental homes to the street? Why do children with particular socioeconomic background are often involved in streetism? And how at all do they survive on the street? In this thesis therefore, I will attempt to address such issues as I discuss the life-worlds of street children in Kumasi.

Main Argument

Having discussed the different problematic conceptualizations of the street children phenomenon, the overarching objective of my study and certain crucial questions my study attempts to answer, it is therefore necessarily to also present an overview of the findings of my study. As earlier on stated in my introduction, the situation of Migyimah and Adzisa is not different from many children outside their parental home in Kumasi. In this thesis, as I continue to discuss the life-worlds of street children in Kumasi, I also talk about four crucial findings my study revealed and hence my contribution to existing knowledge on the phenomenon of street children. As will be shown in this thesis, firstly, I argue that although the majority of research previously conducted on street children show more boys than girls to be in street situation and that boys are normally considered as breadwinners contributing to the survival of their families, my study shows that majority of street children in Kumasi are girls. Furthermore, they are the breadwinners and substantially contribute to the survival of their siblings back home, while the boys primarily provide for themselves. In addition to this, I will show that migration has led to changes in economic roles by girls. Secondly, majority of studies conducted on streetism propose economic factors as being the major cause that compel children to move outside their parental homes to the street. However, as I will show in this thesis, social factors often precede it and that the ‘family’ serves as the root cause to the streetism phenomenon. Thirdly, I argue that some of the children migrate to the street for prestige. The ‘prestige’ that the children gain from coming to the street raises their status among their equals as the children will normally say ‘*my friends will know that I have also travelled to the city*’. The euphoria surrounding travelling to the city and be also labelled as ‘have been to the city before’ makes them to move outside their parent’s home to the street. Finally, I argue in this thesis that street children in Kumasi seem very organized, have created

institutions on the street that keep them moving despite the conditions the 'street' offer them. They are also able to cater for themselves economically, physically and emotionally on the street than with their families.

Theoretical framework

In attempting to explain the life-worlds of street children in Kumasi and also to answer the study's overarching questions, my work dwells on some theoretical frameworks that can help explain the street children phenomenon; namely, James and Prout (1997) social construction of childhood and Granovetter's theory of social networks. I chose these two conceptual frameworks in that James and Prout (1997) social construction of childhood will introduce how childhood should be perceived, what is expected of a child and what society deems 'normal' to be the behaviour of a child as Granovetter's (1983) theory of social network will deal with moving from home and arriving to the street, what next? It further elaborates on how the children cope with street life right from entering and arriving to the street to their daily activities on the street. However, Granovetter's (1983) theory of social network will be of major concern in my thesis as it will help examine and explain the life-world of children on the street especially activities relating to their economic lives.

James and Prout (1997) new social studies of childhood

Childhood has been viewed and studied in several different ways. According to James and Prout (1997), the phenomenon of childhood is something which is socially and culturally constructed. Seeing 'childhood' as culturally and socially constructed means that the way we conceptualize children is shaped by social and cultural processes and that different conceptualizations therefore exist in different societies. Not only are children part of society, but they are active actors within it (James and Prout, 1997, pp. 8). James and Prout (1997) explained that before the 1990's, children were seen as passive, incomplete, incompetent and natural beings (1997: X). Children as result could not do anything without the help of an adult. However, children they argued should be perceived as active actors in the construction of social processes and that make them independent. The authors then noted that one should therefore study children in their own right, independent in that respect and irrespective of

adults' perspective about them in cultural and social process as they go by their daily activities into adulthood (1997, pp. 8). Children as a result should not be viewed as a 'defective form of adult' in their being (James and Prout 1998:6) but rather active in terms of determination and the construction of their own lives vis-a-vis the rest of the society.

Stemming from their argument, a starting point in my thesis will be to see street children, their environment and adults (that is the public in my case) as complementary in terms of their interactions and participation in societal activities. However, each person's world should be studied differently from the other. Again, James and Prout (1997) theory of childhood provides a conceptual lens for my study in that, I find that, including children as social agents rather than passive victims brings out the challenges they face and the strategies they employ in their daily activities. Unfortunately, anthropologists have a bad habit of overlooking children during fieldwork and for the subsequent analysis. The children have therefore created their own social organizations, partnerships and groups that help them to go by their daily activities. The friendship, relationships and partnership they have created renders the children independent as James and Prout argues. In fact more independent to the extent that they are able to ensure their upkeep and survival on the street and even send money home to their siblings. I therefore agree with James and Prout that children should not be viewed as a 'defective form of adult' in their being (James and Prout 1998:6) but rather active in terms of determination and the construction of their own lives. The street children have created their own 'culture', are active actors in their environment and the society at large as they seek for a livelihood independently of any adult's help or that of their parents.

Granovetter's (1983) theory of social network

Social network according to Mitchell (1996b) is "a specific set of linkages among defined set of persons within additional property that the characteristics of these linkages as a whole may be used to interpret the social behaviour of the person's involved" (cited in Laumann 1973:7). This concept and theory is largely used in various endeavours of our lives. Migrants, specifically children rely on social networks for their survival. The children rely on these networks in getting information, finding accommodation, getting jobs and engaging in several economic activities. Social networks as a result help migrants and for that matter the street children to get social, physical and psychological support in their day to day activities. Right

from deciding to migrate, migrating, getting to the destination area, how to survive and their life-world on the street in entirety relies on social networks.

According to Granovetter (1983), two types of social network ties exist. They are the 'strong ties' and the 'weak ties'. The author uses these two ideas of 'strong and weak ties' to show how at any point in time individuals associate themselves depending on the environment they find themselves in order to survive. Individuals with some sort of weak ties according to Granovetter are those we have informal acquaintances with, such as, our colleagues, neighbours, friends, classmates, group members, playmates and perhaps some ethnic group members. Strong tie groups constitute individuals we have kin-based relationships with; for example our brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, cousins, nephews, in laws and our nieces (Granovetter, 1983, 1995). Information flow within these two categories all has some strength and weakness depending on one's situation and relationships. Granovetter argues that acquisition of information however, is more efficient among individuals with weak ties as compared to those with strong ties. He further postulates that, it is not that individuals with strong ties are denied access to information, but they may be limited in information flow due to the closely-knit nature of their relationship. These Strong tie network members are more efficient and effective when it comes to information within their immediate kin group, but not outside the group. For example

“information that closely-knit people are likely to share is information that they are privy or are already known information. They keep sharing information that one already has (1974 pp. 52-53 cited in Granovetter 1983, pp. 5)”.

The author therefore concluded that due to the widening nature of the weak tie network, for example, you may meet someone for the first time, create some connectivity with the person, the person may also have a friend that may also have another friend. That friend may also know someone and the chain continues. This widening nature of the weak tie, make it stronger in relevant and vital information being shared among the group. That is information is likely to spread faster and effective in this group than strong tie groups or the closely knit kin based one (Granovetter, 1983; 202). Also he argues that

individuals with few weak ties will be deprived of information from distant parts of the social system and will be confined to the provincial news and views of their close friends. This deprivation will not only insulate them from the latest ideas and fashions but may put them in a disadvantaged position in the labour market, where

advancement can depend, as I have documented elsewhere (1974), on knowing about appropriate job openings at just the right time (pp. 2).

As earlier on stated, Granovetter's (1983) theory of social network is the major conceptual framework that my thesis dwells on. Right from the children's cause to migrate to finally establishing a life for themselves in the city, as well as their life-world on the street is associated with social network playing a crucial role in their activities. As will be seen later on in the thesis especially in chapter five, weak ties play a crucial role in the children's everyday experiences on the street. Majority, in fact, almost all the children were one way or the other motivated and helped by weak ties relations to arrive on the street. Again, friends and colleagues mostly helped in their arriving to the street. Furthermore, upon arriving in the city, informal acquaintances or new people (boys and girls) they meet help them to survive on the street. In the case of job search, a necessity for surviving in the street situation, informal acquaintances were the best people to help the children. These friends and new people they meet on the street further help them to survive on the street. When danger befell them, their friends and colleagues were always the best people to help them out.

Moreover, it can be deduced from Granovetter's (1983) theory that depending on the situation and the context, strong or weak tie may apply. However, in my case, the case of street children, I argue that weak ties are more efficient in everyday aspect of the children being outside their parental home for survival. According to Granovetter, the amount of time spent in interaction, emotional intensity, intimacy and reciprocal services are the conditions one can use in measuring the strength of a tie. However, one must note that these four dimensions interrelate and connect with role relations. They do not operate in a direct or direction.

Having explained this and situating it in my case, as earlier on stated, the great majority of children rely on weak ties in doing everything on the street. For instance, upon arriving to the street, individuals they are not very much connected with, in Granovetter's vocabulary, weak tie people, are mostly the first people majority of the children, in fact, almost all the children consult. As even elaborated in the case of Adzisa from my introductory excerpts, it was a friend who told her to move to the city as she will find a job to cater for herself and the rest of her siblings. Moreover, upon arriving to the street, it was the person she first met who helped her to be stable on the street as she argues and further helped her in securing a job. This situation holds for almost all the children on the street as my study revealed. Furthermore, as will be shown later in this thesis, information flow about job openings and the general street

life activities are all provided by acquaintances/friends/ or new people they meet on the street and other people they don't have familial connections with. I therefore note that although the tie is a weak one, however, it is strong in terms of the flow of new information on the street and how to generally survive on the street. New friends give new information, and old friends talk about old things. This was even reflective in my case on how data was gathered as old friends talked about old stuffs and since in a new relationship, for someone to impress you, they give you more information, new acquaintances really gave more details about their life. Through such acquaintances especially the weak ties, I argue that, the street children's social, economic, emotional and psychological needs are to some extent satisfied on the street.

Outline of chapters

With my introduction, main argument and theoretical framework all forming part of chapter one, the chapter will continue to discuss why I chose Kumasi as my field site. In addition, the chapter explores the phenomenon of street children from the Ghanaian perspective, causes of streetism in Kumasi, migration flow in Kumasi and for that matter Ghana, and the methodology I used in gaining a holistic understanding about the life-worlds of street children in Kumasi. The chapter two of my thesis discusses the notion of childhood, how childhood was perceived decades ago and how contemporary, children are viewed. It also elaborates on what is expected of a child and the diverse social responsibilities they have within specific societies and cultures. Moreover, it explores the socialization processes of children especially in Ghana whereby involving children in various working activities as children engage in hard work to support their families is seen as 'normal' compared to the universally held view of childhood characterized with play, going to school, not involving in any hard work and enjoying parental care and protection. The notion of childhood from the perspective of the street children has also been examined.

Chapter three further explores the role of the family in ensuring the safety and survival of the children. It also throws more light on the responsibilities of parents in providing the basic needs for their children and how certain practices in the family cause children to move outside their parental home.

Chapter four discusses the reasons why children move to the street, the concept of home from the perspective of the children, what they know about home and what they now consider as

their home. It further introduces the children's identity as 'street children' and concludes with some metaphors on the street that show the identity of the children in street situation and how they go by street life.

Chapter five explores the economic life of the street children, how they survive on the street and how they go by their daily activities to earn a livelihood on the street.

Chapter six is the final chapter. The chapter discusses and concludes my findings with reference to my major arguments and contribution to existing knowledge. The possibility for a future research is also mentioned.

Why Kumasi as field site?

Kumasi is the administrative and commercial capital city of the Ashanti region of Ghana and it is the largest second city after Accra, Ghana's capital city. Kumasi has a population of about two million people (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). The city is located in the transnational forest zone of the country with its area being 250 square kilometers and it is located north west of Accra, about 270 kilometers apart.

Geographically, Kumasi is located at the central part of Ghana, and due to its strategic location, the city serves as a route that connects the other regions of Ghana, particularly the major food production settlements. Hence, serves as the hub of economic activities in the Ashanti region (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012; Korboe et. al., 1999). Migrants within and outside the country therefore take advantage of its central location to undertake numerous economic activities. Out of the ten regions in Ghana, Ashanti is the region with the highest population and the most number of street children (Street Kid News, 2007).

With the national and regional estimated population growth rate of 2.4% and 2.6% respectively, the city is the fastest growing one with 5.4% of estimated annual growth rate (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). With such a population growth rate, many parts of the city have been characterized with poor living conditions. People as a result live in 'compound houses' (multifamily) households (Whittington et. al. 1993). With its greenery layout and beautiful trees, it is no surprise that the city is called the 'Garden City of Africa'.

Kumasi has a rich culture and a proud history: the Asante Kingdom¹. In 1699, the king of the Asante in collaboration with the Asanteman Council made Kumasi the capital of the Ashanti region. The Asante Kingdom became stronger and more powerful as it now took over from the Denkyira's² after defeating them in a war in the same year (Wilks 1975). However, in 1874, the city rapidly opened up for economic activities. Kumasi as a result became a central point that linked other coastal regions for the transportation of goods and services. The British realizing this constructed railway lines to link these cities. After the construction of the Sekondi to Kumasi railway line in 1903, and the railway line from Accra to Kumasi in 1905, there was a boom in economic activities to the extent that the security of the safe trade was a major concern to the British officials. (Wilks, 1975; McCaskie, 1986).

With the expansion of trading across the region to other regions and serving as a commercial centre for major economic activities, in 1919-1929, Kumasi benefited from the Guggisberg³ development plan. To boost commercial activities in Kumasi, warehouses and several other markets were constructed. Kumasi Central Market and Kejetia Market were constructed during this period. The Central Market is one of the biggest and largest in Africa and as a result the informal sector of the city dominates in terms of business and economic activities. Kumasi therefore became the hub for the distribution of goods and services to other parts of the country, (Korboe et. al., 1999). With the expansion of both social and economic activities in the region, Kumasi attracted people from other parts of Ghana primarily to earn a living from the diverse economic activities and recreational facilities.

¹ The Asante kingdom or empire sprung up in the 17th century in Kumasi, Gold Coast now Ghana. The city was one of the Gold mining regions in Ghana which attracted Europeans to trade with them. The kingdom grew and became stronger as a result of the trade that existed between the Asante people and the Europeans. It was during this period that developmental projects and economic or trade routes and centres sprung up leading to the expansion of the city for major economic activities. The city now holds as one of Ghana's most vibrant and busy centre for major trading activities.

² Like the Asante's, the Denkyira's were also a powerful kingdom of the Akan people in the 17th Century. They also traded in gold with the Europeans.

³ Sir Gordon Guggisberg was one of the colonial governors in Gold Coast, now Ghana during the period of 1919 -1927 who brought a lot of developmental projects and infrastructural development in Ghana. His partnership for developmental projects in the country made him to build several roads and railway lines that mostly linked to harbours and major economic areas in the country of which Kumasi benefited a lot. This has also contributed a lot to the city constituting a major economic or market centre in the country.

Life in Kumasi

The majority of the people who migrate to or live in Kumasi are unemployed, unskilled, petty traders, hawkers and porters, children, low wage workers, elderly and refugees from outside Ghana. Not only are the identities of these people categorized as poor but also the situation of coming to find greener pastures in Kumasi are at stake as some of the major centres for economic activities such as the Kejetia Market are under rehabilitation. This has resulted in the relocation of economic and trading activities to other parts of the city like the Central Market, Railways, Asafo Market and Roman Hill. The situation has led to an increase in congestion at not only pavements but also lorry stations (Korboe and Diaw, 1999).

Street children in Focus; the Ghanaian perspective

I cannot give you an accurate number of street children even at the center here. Their numbers are overwhelming. We try to mark them every day but even with that it is also problematic. We have new ones arriving at the center every day. And with even the already registered children, not all of them come to the center every day. I learnt some of them have even travelled to Accra to continue their work there but we still have their names here. I therefore cannot even estimate their numbers here at the center.

(A volunteer at the street children's project told me)

The mobility of street children makes it difficult for their exact numbers to be established (UNICEF, 2006). Several studies have been conducted in different countries about street children but only estimates are given about street children in such studies. People often attribute this to the increasing number of new arrivals to the street, urbanization and global growth in population (Panter-Brick, 2002 pp. 153; Reale, 2008 pp.6; UNICEF, 2006 pp. 40-41).

Street children in Ghana are found in almost all the major towns in the country with almost half of their total number in Accra and Kumasi (Street Kid News, 2007), the two largest cities in the country. Like other countries where there has been an attempt by researchers to count and estimate the number of children on the streets, the situation is not different in Ghana. Governmental and non-governmental agencies, as well as individual researchers have attempted to quote the number of children found in the country. Researchers argue that

Kumasi outnumbers Accra in the number of street children found in these places (Street Kids News, 2007, Boakye-Boaten, 2008 pp. 77).

In 1999, Beauchemin, under the sponsorship of both UNICEF and CAS⁴, conducted a research on street children in Accra, Ghana. At the end of the study, he found out that there are 15,000 children who live and work in the streets of Accra alone. Before Beauchemin received the sponsorship from CAS and UNICEF, CAS themselves in 1996 had conducted a headcount of street children in Accra. The non-governmental organization found out that, statistically, about 10401 street children live in Accra. Beauchemin 1999 dwelling on the previously conducted research by CAS in 1996 and his research in 1999, therefore concluded that, there has been an increase in the number of children who have migrated outside their parental homes to Accra.

A recent headcount was again conducted by CAS in 2006. This time, their aim was not only to estimate the number of street children but also to look at the general life-worlds of street children who live in Accra. The study found that 21,143 children engage in diverse economic related activities on the streets of Accra to earn a living; suggesting still an increase in number of children on the street.

These estimations show that the number of street children is increasing, not only in Kumasi as will be shown below, but rather it has become a national issue. In almost all the major urban settlements in Ghana, there is an increase in the number of children who are found on the street. (Boakye-Boaten, 2006). Not only does the number of street children increase every day in Ghana, but globally, the phenomenon is on the rise (Munyakho, 1992; Ennew, 1994; Hetch, 1998, UNICEF, 2006)

Although the majority of studies on street children in Ghana have mostly been conducted in Accra, nationwide, Street Kid News, (2007) argues that about 50,000 street children (children between the ages of 10 and 18 although some are less or beyond the age) are said to be living in Ghana with the majority living in Kumasi, Ghana's second largest city (Street Kid News, 2007). Moreover, in 2007, Baah found out that 23,000 porters live and roam in Kumasi. According to him, this number increases each day on the street.

⁴ Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) is a non-governmental organization in Accra, the capital of Ghana which was established in 1993 to find out who street children are, where they come from and what they do on the street. The organization still runs with the mission of helping children out of the street and to give them a stable living condition.

It is possible therefore to establish the fact that, day in day out, there are a number of children moving out of their parental homes to seek for a livelihood in the street. The increasing new arrivals to the street and their mobility make it difficult to give exact number of street children in Ghana as the volunteer at the project center made it clear in my introduction to this section that even at the centre, the number of street children there cannot be accurately estimated.

In 2001, UNICEF conducted a survey in Zimbabwe. The survey found that more boys than girls exist on the street. Also, the children expressed negative feelings about life on the street as the researchers argued that the children noted feeling hopeless with no future as life on the street is tough. Moreover, it was observed by UNICEF that, the children on the street had no health facilities, water and shelter on the street (UNICEF, 2001a). In the same year, UNICEF again conducted another research in Zambia, specifically Lusaka and maintained again that more boys than girls are found on the street. They therefore concluded that, generally, boys outnumber girls in the street situation. Not only has research by UNICEF concluded that more boys exist on the street than girls, other authors like Gurgel et al. 2004; Geber, 1990, came to a common conclusion in their survey as UNICEF. In addition, in a study by Gurgel et al., (2004) in Brazil, the authors explored the characteristics of street children to see whether they share similar characteristics with other street children elsewhere. Their study revealed that there exist similar characteristics as boys being more than girls on the street and that the children also attend school.

Interestingly, the situation is the reverse in my case and for that matter Ghana as a whole as I would argue. More girls were found on the street than boys. The reason mostly given by authors (for example Geber, 1990), cultural and social anthropologists as reasons for more boys being on the street than girls reside in the view that men or boys are supposed to cater for their family as such needs money to cater for these needs whereas girls do the household chores to support their husbands which indirectly make them reluctant to migrate. However, I argue that the situation seem contradictory to my findings. The great majority of the girls who were on the street mentioned that their motive of being on the street is to get money to cater for their siblings at their place of origin (as will be shown later in the thesis), a situation which is supposed to be the main focus of boys on the street as argued by some researchers. The great majority of the boys on the street, however, noted that, they rather need money to cater for themselves.

Causes of streetism in Kumasi

Iddrisu is one of the many children I encountered at the street children's project in Kumasi. She has been on the street for three years. When asked in an interview about how and why Iddrisu came to the street, this was her response.

My mum was a petty trader. She used to sell gari, sugar, groundnut etcetera in front of our house to cater for us because my dad wasn't working. But when she died, my dad could not continue it alone. At times, the whole day we could eat nothing. My dad always said he does not have money to cater for us. That was very disturbing so I decided to leave home to cater for myself elsewhere. That was how I migrated to Kumasi.

The story of Iddrisu tells us more right from the beginning to the end of her narration that she lived in a family where they earned and lived on petty trading; an economic activity with very little income in Ghana. Upon the collapse of the business, she had nowhere to seek for a living than to decide to move out of home to cater for herself. All the children in the streets of Kumasi like Iddrisu, moved to the street for a variety of reasons. In Kumasi, my study revealed that although some of the street children are native to Kumasi, however, the great majority of them are migrants. This section of my thesis therefore deals with the causes of streetism in Ghana but emphasis is placed on Kumasi where I undertook my research.

With the number of street children increasing every day in the cities in Ghana, CAS and UNICEF (1999) decided to undertake an ethnographic study about why children leave home to the street. In their report entitled 'The Exodus: The growing migration of children from Ghana's rural areas to the urban centres', the two institutions which based their research primarily on the life stories and the interviews conducted with the children concluded that, breakdown of the nuclear family, large family size, poor infrastructure in the rural areas, and the harsh economic conditions in the rural area which is predominantly an agricultural environment, compelled the children to migrate to the city. This they classified as one of the major push factor (refer to chapter four for details). Among the pull factors found-out were the income levels found at the destination area and urbanization experiences. (CAS and UNICEF, 1999).

Furthermore, Boakye-Boaten (2006) explored the causes of street children with his respondents being both the street children themselves and the rest of the society. Boakye – Boaten found out that the causes of streetism in Ghana can be classified into two major

categories, that is, the macro and the micro causes. For the macro causes, he argued that cultural practices, poverty, urbanization, rural urban disparities, and structural adjustment programmes cause children to migrate out of their parental homes to the street. Also, single parenthood, unemployment, family breakdown, and physical and sexual abuse serves as the micro causes of street children in Ghana. Out of the two categories, his study concluded that micro factors frequently cause children to migrate more than the macro factors. Breaking it down, he further observed that out of the factors under the micro level, family breakdown (dysfunctional families) and poverty were significant factors that made children to move to the street. My study revealed similar findings as that of Boakye-Boaten. However, more emphasis is placed on the dysfunction of the family in my case as one of the major factor that lead the children to the street as the children noted.

A similar study was conducted by CAS and UNICEF in 1999. Their study showed that parental divorce and poverty account more to letting children migrate away from home. Neglect by parents, abuse, death of a parent or both parents, and violence further amount as reasons children migrated from home. At this point, let me hasten to add, that my research revealed similar findings elaborated by the researchers and scholars above that, the major cause of the streetism phenomenon in Kumasi actually starts with the family. The majority of the children in my study stated, breakdown of the family, parent's separation, death of a parent, inability of parents to cater for them and general hardship in the family as reasons for migrating to the street. Others however also cited social, cultural and economic reasons such as to support family, continue their education, for prestige, to work, abuse and neglect and force marriage as reasons for moving from home.

Moreover, Punch (2002) realized in her study that children saw migration to the cities as a form of 'rite of passage'; a passage from childhood to adulthood as they adopt a socially and economically independent lifestyle to cater for themselves. Again, my study showed similar situation but a bit more interesting. Some of the children mentioned moving to the street for prestige. The 'prestige' that the children gain from coming to the street raises their status among their equals as they argue that their friends will know that they have also travelled to the city. The curiosity to also be labelled as 'have been to the city before' in my findings contributes to the children's decision to move outside their parent's home to the street.

Outside the African setting and in a study by Camacho in the Philippines, the author addressed the issue of how family and personal goals are intertwined (2007:64) as migrants

find a way to support their family back home. The same result was true for a research conducted in Ghana by Hashim (2006:26) as well as my findings too.

Migration flow in Ghana

If a child does not travel, 'it' will not gain experience

(A popular adage in northern Ghana told by a volunteer at the SCP's centre)

I open this section with an adage of northern Ghana illustrating why people, especially children are often involved in the migration stream. Since majority of the children I interacted with were migrants, it is therefore necessary to address some migration issues. This adage above therefore provides an entry point for the discussions of societal factors that prompt migration in Ghana.

I will limit myself to internal migration in Ghana and how it has increased the number of children on the street. I will specifically look at movement to the two largest cities in the country: Accra and Kumasi. This is to get an overview of how people move from their place of origin to their destination areas and how the number keeps rising on the street.

Before I talk about internal migration in Ghana, let me first clarify what the volunteer meant by the proverb above. Sociologically, it is believed in Ghana particularly among the northern part of the country that, one's cosmology or worldview is limited in relation to the world outside. One has partial view about life unless one travels or lives outside from his home or hometown. People who travel experience various forms of life with varying ramifications which makes them well 'baked' and mature for life. For instance, until one travels, one doesn't know hardship or how catering for your own self feels like. For example, in the case of street children, the condition of sleeping in the street and engaging in all sort of money-making activities to earn a livelihood outside their parental homes points to the fact that the children are independent in terms of managing their own lives. Hence, matured enough to make decisions of their own whether good or bad and hence should be seen as an independent body as that of an adult. Exposure to various forms of social actions and one's ability to sail through such situations unblemished helps them to understand how the world is. Such things make people believe the urgency of the individual as an agent to move out of one's setting for 'real life' elsewhere. In the case of street children, the children move to the street to experience the 'world'. As they find themselves outside their parental home, they adopt and

learn strategies on how to cater for themselves. The ability to go through all these hardships and still survive makes the person matured to face the world. These experiences they get as they travel make them able to withstand anything throughout their lives. Interestingly, my study further revealed some sort of class distinction as playing a crucial role to this effect. Based on my findings, I would say that the great majority of children who tend to ‘venture out into the world’ to cater for themselves in this way on the street were ‘poor’ children as compared to children from so-called ‘affluent homes’. Some of the children from ‘affluent home’ (in fact, very few) in my case, notwithstanding, migrated for ‘prestige’ and also ‘to see the world’. Such children return home after some time on the street.

Internal migration has increased in Ghana. Non-Governmental Organizations, Governmental bodies and others have researched the reasons of the “mass movement” of people from all over the country, especially, the northern sector which comprises the three regions in the northern part of Ghana, namely, Upper East, Northern and the Upper West regions to the southern sector which also comprise of the other seven regions in the country, namely, the Ashanti, Volta, Central, Brong Ahafo, Eastern, Greater Accra and the Western regions. Out of the seven regions in the southern sectors, researchers argue that it is the Ashanti and Greater Accra regions that attract a large number of migrants in the country with Kumasi further attracting more people than Accra, the capital of Ghana.

According to some authors (Cleveland, 1991; Beals and Menezes, 1970; Hart, 1971), the movement of people from the northern part of Ghana to its southern regions has long existed since pre-colonial times. However, for the last decade, the movement has increased tremendously (Abdul-Korah, 2004). With respect to colonialism playing a role in the current movement of people to the south, it has been noted that majority of the developmental projects, plans and policies that could enable a person to achieve his or her basic needs are intensified in the southern part of the country depriving the northern section of such services. That is, inequalities exist regionally mostly favouring the South compared to the North in terms of infrastructure, employment opportunities and socio-economic developments, (Cadwell, 1969; Abdul-Korah, 2004). In a study by Dickson in 1968 about how people started moving from the north to the south, Dickson found out that young men especially were convinced by the colonial government on the bigger opportunities that await them should they come to the south. These young men were persuaded to come and work in the mining and agricultural sectors in the South, an opportunity they would not get should they live in the north. Comparing the cost and benefits analysis by these young men, the author argues that

the young men had no option but to migrate in search of these jobs to better their standard of living and even to cater for their family back home. People who moved to the South were used as labourers to work in expanding the many cocoa farms and the mining companies that existed in the region (Songsore, 2011). It can therefore be inferred that there are more developmental projects in the cities and this attracts people (see also Abdul-Korah, 2004; Nabila, 1975; Anarfi and Kwankye, 2005; Lentz, 2006).

Liebenow (1986) further argues that, there exist two types of migrants in the country, specifically to the urban centres. They are the 'situational urbanites' and the 'committed urbanites.' The situational urbanites he defines as the type of migrants who migrate purposely to seek for a job in the cities. On the other hand, committed urbanites he describes as individuals who migrate to help increase their status. For instance, such people move to the city to acquire money to help educate younger siblings', marries, build a house, and buy a car etcetera. As soon as they achieve their purpose, they are likely to return to their place of origin after gaining a sizable amount of money that could cater for their family and siblings. They are again likely to return to the city once they run out of money. In my case, I agree with Liebenow (1986) that the street children can be found in both categories. Some of the children help their siblings back home, a condition for being on the street thereby falling under the 'committed urbanites' category whereas some of them are also there to cater for themselves and hence need jobs that could help them get money for their livelihood. The great majority of street children in Kumasi, however, fall under the 'situational urbanites'.

Furthermore, in a current study by Gough et al., (2013), the authors observed that, several factors have amounted to children (that is children below the age of 18) also deciding to migrate to the cities for a livelihood (see also Kwankye and Tagoe, 2009). The authors found out that the increase in unemployment at their place of origin, lack of infrastructure, differences in income and other socially related issues like separation by parents, compel the children to migrate in search of jobs or other income generating activities to do in the south. Some of my respondents also mentioned similar reasons for being on the street. Again, emphasis in my case was placed more on the social factors by my respondents. However, as they enter the city, my study revealed that their attention shifts to economic reasons which will enable them acquire money to survive in their new environment (see also Anarfi and Kwankye, 2009).

Methodology

To provide a holistic understanding about how the life-worlds of ‘street children’ in Kumasi was conceptualized and researched, I will in this section discuss the general approach and strategies employed to sample persons considered ‘street children’. I will also discuss the methods I used and the ethical issues I considered in gathering data.

How it started

My motivation for studying the life-worlds of ‘street children’ as part of my master degree arose from my previous experience under my undergraduate studies where I delved into the night life of ‘street children’ in Accra. The ‘hardened’ life style of the children on the street at night during my undergraduate studies prompted some sort of curiosity to further research not only into their night activities but also their daily activities and how in totality they live their life on the street.

From my previous experience, I knew life on the street is based on trust and relationships. No one on the street is willing to talk to a stranger. Trust must therefore be established before the children can tell someone anything about their life. Also, how to approach the street children for them to even accept and talk to you is a whole challenge on itself. In view of this, upon arriving in Ghana for my data gathering, I first visited the Sociology Department at the University of Ghana. I introduced myself and the scope of the research project to the Head of Department. Upon reading the introductory letter from my supervisor, he promised to provide the necessary support for the project. He then introduced me to the Director at the Centre for Migration Studies at the University of Ghana that had just finalized a similar project on street children and migration. The director also assured me of the necessary help I would need in the course of the data gathering and gave me some articles about my research area to read.

Entering the field

From there, I continued my journey to Kumasi, the field site, and visited the Social Welfare Department (SWD)⁵. The Ashanti Regional Director of SWD further introduced me to the

⁵ The Department of Social Welfare is the Government Statutory Agency that has the mandate to regulate the operations and welfare of children’s homes in Ghana. The Department operates in three core programmes: Community Care; Child Rights, Protection and Promotion; and Justice Administration.

Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) and the Street Children Project (SCP), who are currently running a project on street children in Kumasi. The director for CEDEP gave me an overview of their project and generally, the view of streetism in Kumasi on my first visit. Paying visits to these relevant organizations were intended to familiarize myself with the issues of streetism in Kumasi and gain rich insights about the research topic. In fact, these organizations were useful to me as they were used as an entry point to gaining access to the street children in Kumasi.

My project used participant observation as the main method of gathering data. Bernard Russell (2011, pp. 266) notes that participant observation helps the researcher to understand the meaning of his/her observations. As a result, I did more of observations, informal discussions and also conducted interviews to answer the study's overarching questions. Meaning, participant observation was more or less like 'observation', 'hanging around' and 'conversation' in my case. I used informal discussions and interviews to explore the following themes: coping strategies for street children, the motivation for engaging in acts associated with streetism, the migration history of the children, family background of street children as well as the risks associated with streetism. Depending on who I interviewed in the course of the fieldwork, I varied my style of questioning according to the ages of the children for them to better understand me. Leslie and Donovan (2003) argues that, in conducting research, the researcher should develop a sort of awareness especially in determining when people are bored or fed up with their questions to avoid the respondents in giving 'false' information. I was therefore particular about when I conducted my interviews especially when the children were working. In such instances, I did more of observation. With respect to how I did my fieldwork, how I spent my days, how I wrote my field notes, how I interacted with the children, and so on will be outlined more in details through the rest of the chapter.

Knocking on institutional doors: fieldwork in CEDEP and SCP

As part of the process of gathering data and getting access to the street children, I conducted my research along with two institutions; CEDEP and SCP. CEDEP is an institution that was first established in Kumasi to assist children out of the street. They train children to acquire some basic skills that could earn them a living for life. I even got the opportunity to talk to two of them, one being a banker and the other a journalist narrating their life while on the

street and how they feel today in their current status. SCP is also a non-governmental institution which is committed to addressing and reaching out to the needs of street children. Not only do they help in bringing children out of the street, but also, the center serves as an avenue where the children come to get some basic needs like shelter, taking of bath, and visiting the lavatory. The Centre also has a day care to cater for the children of the ‘street children’ (to be discussed later in this thesis since the ‘street mothers’ in this sense are still part of the category of street children in my work. They are children less than 18 years who through teenage pregnancy gave birth while living on the street).

I chose these two institutions in the sense that CEDEP had just finalized a project on street children whereas SCP had a project running for street children. These two institutions were useful for several reasons. CEDEP, because they have already gathered a network of experience from their previous work on street children in Kumasi which helped in getting basic information about what has been going on over the years as far as street children are concerned and probably to also know some basic concepts or findings around my project. With CEDEP serving as a stepping stone to knowing what has been going on over the years with streetism, SCP actually gave me the first hand opportunity to experience the field through the internship opportunity they offered me as a volunteer in their center. In view of this, I actually met informants for my data gathering through SCP. Also, they gave me the opportunity to reflect and compare whether what was on paper actually reflected the ‘true life situation’ of the children on the street.

Street Children Project (SCP)

The Street Children Project-Kumasi, under the auspices of the Catholic Archdiocese of Kumasi was established in 2005 to help vulnerable children on the streets of Kumasi. The project does not only address the problems of the children on the streets but also try to make sure that children do not spend their childhood on the street. The project stretches out to the children on the street to offer them options in life by sending them to school, involving others in vocational training like sewing, carpentry, masonry and building construction activities. As a sign of commitment towards achieving their goal of children not spending their childhood on the street, in 2007, there was a reshape of their policies and plans to include more children on the street. Previously, their activities mainly targeted children who engage in head portorage. In the advent of reaching out to more children in street situation, their policies and

plans included not only the head portage children but also shoe shine boys, young sex workers (aged between 12 and 18), street mothers and their children (aged between 12 and 18) as well as young kids or babies in the process of becoming ‘street children’; that is, children mostly born in the street who aged between 1 and 6. Furthermore, one of their basic aims is to reunite children on the street to their families. Such children are further catered for by the project after the reunification to their families.

In ensuring that the vision and aim of the project materializes, the project has volunteers who go out to the street every day to educate the children about the opportunities the drop in center have for them. The volunteers try as much as possible to get close to the children on the street to listen to their story. They ask children about why they moved from their parental home to the street. The project therefore tries to satisfy the child’s needs so as to let him or her move from the street. Follow ups are also made on weekly basis to know the condition of the children.

My first day at SCP

As earlier on stated, the director for Social Welfare Department (SWD) in Kumasi introduced me to SCP as they were currently running a project on street children of which he thought they could be of great help to me in getting enough information for my project. He therefore endorsed the introductory letter from my supervisor to be given to the director at the center since they are under his department. I proceeded to visit the director of SCP. The director of SCP assured me a place at the center if I could only serve as a volunteer where I would go out with other staff and afterwards register new street children who will come to the center after our visit to the street. I felt this was a good opportunity for me to get close to the street children, know them better and vice versa, gain trust and go deep into their life-worlds. The offer was therefore accepted. This was on a Monday, 7th September, 2015. I was told to start work the following Monday, 14th September, 2015. Earlier, on I was told that the center opens at 8 am but the center actually opens at 6:30 am for the staff. On Monday, 14th September, 2015, I went to the center around 6 am to observe the street children before the center opens to the public at 8am. Surprisingly, even at 6am, a lot of children were gathered in front of the center. They have already forms queues waiting for the center to open. Girls were sitting on the head pans whereas boys sat on the floor. They hit each other and run after each other as they play. Some were also singing and clapping their hands. Others seem quiet. Some

of them are also sleeping in their head pans. At 7 am, there is a meeting for all staff. In the meeting, each staff will tell the house what he or she did throughout the whole week. The number of children you spoke to and the number you registered. How you followed up on them and so forth. I was introduced to the staff and was then charged with the duty of visiting the street during weekdays from 8 am to 10am after which I will be at the front desk to register new children who visits the center.

I therefore gained access to my first group of street children (children on the streets who are less than 18 years but between the ages of 4-17) through the Street Children Project. I was introduced by the staff to the children as a researcher and a volunteer so as to create a familiarity between the children and myself, gain their trust and hence to facilitate subsequent interviews with the children. They agreed.

Serving as a volunteer and a desk worker really helped because as a volunteer, it created a familiarity between the children and me. As a front desk person, it gave me the opportunity to know the age range of the children to actually know the right people to interview and so forth since the registration form contained details of their age, their migration history, where they are mostly found, their sleeping place and the activity they engage in on the street. Information provided on the form was not taken as it was, but the children were later on asked again after trust was gained. This is something I did for ethical reasons, because when I was registering the children as I volunteer, they were not asked whether or not they wanted to be part of my study and probably did not know that the study was my reason for performing this job.

As a way of getting a general overview of where street children are mostly found in the city although I had a proposed setting previously in my proposal; I asked the children to draw the map of Kumasi for me and indicate which area that street children are mostly found. I did this to enable me get to know where they can mostly be located and also to create some familiarity with the place where their daily and night activities mostly unfold. In child related research, Punch (2000) addresses the necessity for reflexivity in methods not only used to generate and analyse data but also the role the researcher will use to gather data. Although they were not able to draw the map, they could tell me where they are mostly found. Even though I had suggested a setting in my proposal, it was necessarily to change my setting after allowing the children to tell me which area they are mostly found. I asked why they are mostly found there and I realized that the previously planned site where I assumed they were mostly found, was under construction and that economic and their daily life activities have therefore moved to

Railways, Central market and Asafo market, the new area for major economic activities, Bombe and Aboabo, their ‘sleeping places’.

While serving as a volunteer at the Street Children Project, I went to the street with the staff for a month and two weeks of which I was frequently introduced to new ones I have not met before and the reason for being with the institute. During my last week with the institute, I went to the street again with other volunteers. Immediately one girl saw us coming, she quickly run to me,

“... this is the new staff I was talking about Lukaya, he has been coming to the street for some time. Meet Lukaya, Augustine, one of my friends. Hello Lukaya, I said, hope everything is fine. Yes, she responded with some smiles. Looking around, I could see smiles on the faces of the other street children around”.

I could feel at this point that they no longer see me as a stranger. From the above conversation, it is very clear that rapport was being established and trust was gradually being gained. During these periods, I observed their daily activities/routines: where they sleep and how they go by their activities on the street. I also interviewed some of the children as well about their motivation for taking to the street. Since relying on the organization’s sample and categorizations for my research would introduce valid threats into the analysis of my findings, after a month and two weeks, I decided to go to the street alone for the subsequent interviews and observations because, I had already established rapport with the street children. The next Monday, I was on the street again. This time round, alone. I did not have to go and hang around but went straight to the street children since at this point I already know most of them and could call them by their names.

This made my subsequent visits very easy because they welcomed me among them even others whom I have not met and encountered. At this point I was able to access their life-world through in-depth interviews and observations.

Traversing the field- Producing data in the street and at the centre

Doing research on the street and with an institution is faced with a lot of challenges. First of all, the street is an area where people are constantly on the move. Secondly, there are so many things happening at a time on the street. For instance, one child is hunting for a coin on the street, another is trying to convince someone to carry the load, two street children are fighting over carrying a load, one is also catering for her daughter and two children are responding to a

call to carry a man's load by running. In fact, there is a whole lot of movements in the field. Also, while some of the children at the center are watching television, others are playing. Others too are taking their bath. Whereas some are eating, others too are asleep. The children run and make noise a lot at the center. No wonder the director told me this is not a quiet zone and that I should try and cope with any child if I want to draw the children closer to me. Because of their constant movements, there were times some of the children I knew most never came to the centre. It also took days or even weeks to see others I met on the street myself. This was a bit challenging especially in doing follow ups on previously conducted interviews. However, this was not always the case especially with those I had better connections with both at the centre and on the street. Surprisingly, the children themselves came to me especially at the centre for continuation of our conversation which really helped me a lot. In such cases, I jotted the previous conversation down and so it was easier to pick it up from where we stopped. There were times I intentionally started the whole conversation again just to find out the information previously provided were correct. Even though their constant movement somehow prevented the flow in data gathering, it however reflects how life on the street is. So, in fact, the movements, interruptions and so on, were also useful information for my understanding of these children's' life-worlds. Also, depending on the situation especially where their economic activities unfold, I avoided interviews and focused on observation. I however followed the observation with an interview when they were less busy or visited the centre.

Ethical considerations

While the epistemological basis for concepts in every research is important, ethical dilemmas in every stage of the research process should be taken equally seriously. In this regard, first and foremost my research was subjected to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) code of ethics as well as the Norwegian code of ethics for children which mostly dwells on informed consent, conflict of interest and anonymity and confidentiality. In a child centred research like mine, according to the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2008), even though a child may not be legally competent to give consent, researchers should gain informed consent. Moreover, in "*ethical issues*" by Scheyvens *et al.*, (2003), the authors describe a variety of good practices the researcher should remember. These include informed consent, conflict of interest and anonymity and confidentiality (Scheyvens *et al.*, 2003;pp 142). With respect to informed consent, the potential respondent

must freely and with full understanding of the research agree to be part of the research. This was carefully done in my case. I ensured that the children had full understanding of my research and agreed to be part of the research and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. In this case, verbal consent was sort from the children before conducting the study. With respect to conflict of interest, Scheyvens et al., 2003, argue that, the researcher must not let their views and opinions interfere with that of the respondents in the research process and the analysis of data. I therefore listened to the stories of the street children as it was, observed carefully their actions and activities and did not interrupt in what they were telling me. However, when some of my respondents were driving the issues to personal matters, for instance, so are you married? Do you have a girl friend? and so forth, I developed a way of putting them on track as to what ever information they were providing me as far as my research objectives are concerned, as avoided such an interference. For example, I would say, ‘ah hah, so you were telling me this and that’ just to keep the both of us focused on the reason of conducting the interview. Furthermore, I assured the children to keep their identity private so that they will not be personally be identifiable in any output that my work will produce. I also assured them of confidentiality since they were willing to entrust private information to me (see also Scheyvens *et al.*, 2003;pp 146). In line with general ethical requirement for social research, all names (for children, volunteers and adult) used in my work are fictitious.

Chapter 2 Childhood from a historical and comparative perspective

The notion and history of childhood

Ways of conceptualizing 'childhood' have been given attention as a result of globalization and how today's societies and development have changed the idea and role of 'children'. How children were perceived decades ago is not the same way as we see them in contemporary world. Activities such as hawking, prostitution and so forth which were the sole preserve of adults now constitute the livelihood portfolio of children and thus their daily living, thereby making it difficult to categorize who actually is a child and what constitute childhood. However, as I will show in the example below, at least in Europe children have long been engaged in such activities. Indeed, the notion of 'childhood' is difficult to conceptualize based on social responsibilities. According to Jenks (1996), "after centuries of debate and practice, we have still not achieved any consensus over the issue of childhood" (cited in Boakye, 2010 pp. 105). Mead and Wolfenstein (1954) further argue that the notion of 'childhood' had been relegated to the background even though there has been the idea of childhood under any historic period that we have had record of. In *the London labour and the London poor*, Mayhew (1861) for instance was astonished to see an eight year old girl engaging in street vending and this prompted him to question the identity of the 'poor' girl. According to Mayhew, he perceived a child to be playing with toys, friends or going to park with parents to have fun. However, to his dismay, the girl on the street too had a different impression about the characteristic of childhood Mayhew had in mind. In other words, working and living on the street for survival as a 'poor' girl was normal to the eight year old street girl as she lacked proper parental care. This was completely different from Mayhew's world view about childhood and societal responsibilities. Mayhew may be right based on the notion about the societal responsibilities of and characteristics of a child. However, he may have forgotten that these characteristics are defined by the cultural context and the environment one might find him or herself in (James and Prout, 1997). That is Mayhew may have been influenced by his social class and the western thinking within which he find himself. The notion of 'childhood' should therefore be understood in specific social and cultural contexts. It is in this regard that Jenks (1996) argued that "childhood is not a brief physical inhibition of a Lilliputian world owned and ruled by others, childhood is rather a historical and cultural experience and its meaning, its interpretations and its interests reside within such contexts" (pp. 61).

The ‘universalization’ of childhood therefore is a slippery exercise to do. However, I will provide at this point a trajectory of how the concept of ‘childhood’ has been defined over time. This is intended to provide a rich insight into the notion of childhood and then juxtapose it to how children in the Ghanaian setting are perceived. I will focus on Aries (1962) and DeMause (1974) notion of childhood and parent-child relationship respectively to explain how the notion of childhood has been defined in different eras.

Aries (1962) argue that it is inaccurate to say that children have been viewed the same by society in the passage of time. He further notes that historically, children were perceived as invisible beings. Invisible in the sense that they were not regarded in society. However, in the Middle Ages, childhood did not exist and as a result of that, children were seen as the same as anyone else. This does not simply mean that children did not exist during this era per se, but rather attention and care were not given to children in terms of age and more importantly, basic needs. One’s position and identity in a society was therefore not determined by physical maturity or age. Nevertheless, Aries (1962) argues that over time there was a trifling identification for children especially in the medieval era. There was no recognition for children as they had no understanding for childhood. This position was maintained by Aries based on an art work as he further postulates that no initiation rite or education was held for children within this period to initiate them into adulthood or teach them on how to be responsible adults. Boakye-Boaten (2010, pp. 106) also adds that “children after certain stage were considered as miniature adults”. In the 14th and 16th centuries, considered as the Protestant reformation and the Renaissance era in Europe, although there was not much evidence of the notion of childhood, art work and paintings however made scholars to argue that it was a period where children gathered with adults for relaxation and for the purpose of livelihood activities. However, in the 17th and 18th centuries, the notion of childhood was gaining prominence. It was an era when children moved from an ‘unseen’ and ‘unidentifiable’ status to ‘identifiable’ ones. It was also a period when parents began to place value on their children and hence teach them on religious and spiritual responsibilities (Boakye, 2010). Aries (1962) notes that this was a period where there were no class boundaries. Children with different social classes played together. All the benefits associated with the status of being a ‘child’ such as love, protection, care, playing games etc. was therefore not only enjoyed by upper class children but rather spread throughout the society.

Although the relationship between parents and children has existed from ancient times to the present times, however, these relationships differ with respect to the era a child finds him or

herself. According to DeMause (1974), six kinds of parents –child relationship has existed over time.

The first relationship that existed between parent and children was between the 4th century to the Middle Age era. During this era, only legitimate children had the freedom and the right to live. A legitimate child here refers to a child born from a recognized marriage. Children born outside wed lock or unrecognized marriage was considered ‘illegitimate’ and thus did not have the right to live as a child. This was followed by the 13th century period. During this era DeMause argued that, parents gave out their children to be cared for by others (baby-sitters and relatives). Parents consequently abandoned their children to babysitters and foster parents to cater for them. These foster parents (baby sitters and relatives) were not only mandated to cater for the physical needs of the children but also to emotionally develop them as their biological parents emotionally abandoned their children at home (DeMause, 1974). Furthermore, from the 14th century to the early Mercantilist Europe (i.e. the 17th century), value was beginning to be placed on childhood. In this period, parents were advised to be in charge of the upbringing of their children because it was a time where children were beginning to learn certain behavioural traits and adapt to a particular way of life. That is children were considered as clay that can be moulded into any shape by their parents. These position statements seem to suggest that the foster parents (baby-sitters and relatives) were not up to the task. This period was again followed by an era which DeMause calls the ‘intrusive mode’ where aside parents physically taking the responsibility of moulding their children, they must also be able to exercise control over the child’s will. That is parents at the beginning of the 18th century were advised to instil control and self-discipline over their children’s behaviour or way of life. The fifth stage of DeMause’s parent-child relation was what he classified as the socialization mode. This was the period between 18th century to mid-20th century (late Mercantilist era to the capitalist period). During the socialization period children were taught to adhere to norms and values and directed towards the ‘acceptable’ way of living in a society. Fathers during this period played a vital role in instilling in their children good morals and behaviour as ‘heads’ of their respective families.

The final stage of DeMause’s parent-child perception and the notion of childhood existed in the mid-20th century where it was noted that children knows what they want (their needs) and as such are the best people to teach their parents about their needs in each stage of their life. Parents were therefore to accept whatever their child(ren) tell(s) them. It was prohibited to for a parent to yell at or strike at a child. Children were apologized to by parents who yelled

and struck them. That is, children were not allowed to be disciplined. This is a period DeMause classified as the 'helping mode'. It was a period where parent played with their children, responded to their daily needs and tolerated their children's actions. Parents also spent much time with their children at this era particularly in the first six years of the child's life. Bodily expressions and emotions by the children were fully observed, interpreted and reacted upon by parents to ensure they give the child what he or she wants. According to DeMause, these approach "results in a child who is gentle, sincere, never depressed, ever irritative or group oriented, strong-willed and unintimidated by authority" (pp. 54).

This changing periods of what constitute a child particularly in the European setting is also the case in Africa and for that matter Ghana. However, the environments within which the processes unfold make the phenomenon too complex to be universalized. For instance, in a study by Okuma-Nyström and Kiwako (2003), although the authors did not provide how childhood has been perceived in historic periods, they however provide crucial conclusions that explain how children were viewed decades ago and in today's world in the African context. The authors found that, decades ago, community members and parents all played a role in ensuring the upbringing of a child as compared to the contemporary world where parents alone must ensure the survival of their children. Parents are also to instil discipline in their children as noted above in DeMause's argument. However, their study revealed that parents are no longer able to exercise control over their children today as majority of their respondents mentioned that children of today are difficult to train comparatively to decades ago (pp. 7). It can further be inferred from their study that in connection to DeMause's final stage of parent –child perception that, the children now know better in terms of what they need than their parents and as such try to teach their parents about their needs at any point in their lives. Failure for parents to respond to their needs leads to the children finding an alternative source to cater for themselves as the street become one of their final destination.

Definition of a child

There have been different definitions of childhood. While some classify childhood by age and legal terms (Smolin, 2013, Makwinja, 2010, UNCRC, 1989), others treat childhood by focusing on the socialization process of the child (Boakye, 2010, Abotchie, 2008). That is others view childhood to be socially and culturally constructed (James and Prout, 1997). According to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), a child is

every human being below the age of 18 years. Furthermore, Tucker (1977) defined childhood as ‘a period when the individual learns about the total adult environment that he or she has been born into, and when he/she prepares himself/herself for his/her own place within it (pp. 101)’. In other words, a child is an individual who is undeveloped; however, he or she is in the process of developing (Schapiro, 1999). Schapiro (1999) further notes that the ‘not yet’ developed nature of the child gives adults the obligation to provide for the child the needed care, protection, love and education. Other scholars in the western world have argued that childhood is a period for relaxing, learning and playing (Khan, 2010, Bass, 2004, Mayhew 1861). Meaning, childhood is a period where one is not supposed to engage in any ‘hard’ activity. These definitions are mostly cited in the literature and discussions that pertain to the Western world. However, the African context is completely different. African notion of childhood is not necessarily based on age but how a child is socialized to adapt to a conventionalized way of life in the society. According to Boateng (2009), childhood in the African perspective is a period where children learn participative skills from adults, (ibid). In addition, Salm and Falola (2002) argue that children are expected to contribute their quota to the family’s subsistence. While at age 4-5, a child is expected to help the adult by caring for young livestock, running errands and cleaning for example, at age 7-13, the child is said to have developed to cater for himself, livestock and able to engage in any adult task. Also, Hashim (2005) who conducted research in the Northern part of Ghana about children noted that children at the age of 14 engage in almost all activities that adults engage in. Rwezaura who also conducted research in Tanzania about childhood argued that ‘children in Tanzania are assigned roles as they grow up, with increasing responsibility being assigned depending on the evidence of maturity’ (quoted in Kaime, 2005, pp 76). This means that, notions of childhood in the western world as categorizing the period for playing, relaxing and learning may not hold in the African perspective, hence, agreeing with the idea of childhood to be socially and culturally constructed. Afua (2008, pp 399), summarizes it all,

to describe childhood according to age which is in line with the Western view of childhood, may be treated as an imposed notion in other societies, especially African societies which do not define childhood mainly by age” but focuses on socialization. As socialization involves teaching a child the way of life of a particular people and training a child to conform to a particular culture, it can therefore be deduced that in the African perspective involving children in various working activities may be seen as nothing wrong as children must also contribute to the family’s subsistence.

Childhood in the Ghanaian perspective

In this section, I discuss the notion of childhood in the Ghanaian perspective to show how children are perceived and the kind of role they are supposed to play in society. This is intended to show later in my thesis that although children on the street may have ‘deviated’ from the universally held view of childhood, the environment within which they find themselves in, the social role and responsibilities they play and engage in are towards first of all their own survival, and secondly to contribute to their family’s subsistence especially the girls on the street; cultural beliefs that make up an ideal child in the Ghanaian society.

The continuous existence of every society depends on its ability to inculcate into new members its customary ‘way of doing things’. According to Onwauchi (1972 pp. 242) as cited in Boakye (2010),

the indigenous African societies educated their children through the on-going process of life in their traditional customs and values. Through their traditional tales and myths, the elders teach the children the moral ethical codes of behaviours and social relationship. Through certain religious rituals and practices, communal attainments of spiritual ideas were established. These spiritual ideals lay the foundation for the respect which indigenous Africans have their political institutions; the love, respect and obedience which the children must show their parents and elders.

The above quote also buttress how culture and socialization play a role in shaping the behaviour of children in a particular society. In Ghana, ritual and spiritual constituents determine how a child is perceived and treated with the necessary need, care and protection. Children are perceived to be reincarnated beings. That is individuals who on earth lived a worthy and good life, have died and because of the good deeds they showed while on earth have been given the opportunity to live again. In this regard, members in a society not only show respect to children but also bear the obligation of socializing and protecting the children (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). The socialization and protection process of a child in Ghana bring to light the gendered roles that parents play to ensuring they fully integrates into a society. Fathers are seen as ‘bread winners’ and mothers play the role as a ‘bread processor’. That is while fathers provide protection and money for basic needs, mothers process the raw products into consumable goods and also take care of the children.

I will at this point provide some empirical examples about how childhood is perceived in some societies in Ghana. I will focus on Fortes (1957) cited in Boakye (2010) in explaining the notion of childhood among the Tallensi people of Ghana. In attempting to understand the socialization process in Ghana, I will then follow my argument by dwelling on Chris Abotchie's (2008) notion of traditional modes of socialization in the structure of traditional Ghanaian society in explaining the socialization and childhood processes in Ghana. As it would be shown later in my thesis that the socialization of a child starts with the immediate family (nuclear family) and at the same time, the root cause of streetism also starts with the family.

In Ghanaian societies, a child is born into the extended family and the society as a whole. Meaning, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles and members in the lineage all play a role in the socialization process of the child. According to Fortes (1957), it is a tradition among the Tallensi people that after three years (where a child is said to have completed the waning process in Tallensi), children are then allowed to play, follow older siblings and communicate with them. During this period, the child is taught how to speak and identify things and as well allowed to express his or her thoughts verbally, (Fortes, 1957).

Fortes (1957), divides the socialization process of a child among the Tallensi people of Ghana into two stages; babyhood and childhood. Babyhood involves the period of birth to when the child is one year old (Fortes 1957 cited in Boakye, 2010 pp. 108). Moreover, age 4-8 is considered as the period of 'childhood' (Fortes, 1957). This is a period of growth where the child is considered free to move and play. It is also the period where the child observes and learns how activities in the society are carried out as he or she tries to take part in the daily activities in the community. Also, it is the time where parents exert authority and instil discipline in the child (Boakye, 2010). It is believed that by age 8-9, a child must be able to conform to societal norms and values as the child is considered to have acquired some sense as this stage. Children are again given tasks to perform based on his or her gender at this stage of development in his or her life. That is, division of labour sets in at this stage. Mothers train girls on household chores while boys are trained on manual aspect of the labour process (Boakye, 2010 pp. 109). It is worth-noting that although Fortes (1957) on the Tallensi people of Ghana in explaining childhood, his findings I argue, applies generally to how childhood is seen in Ghana.

Furthermore, every society is governed by some laid down norms or learned behavioural traits that ensure that its member comply with to be acceptable member in the community. These behavioural traits become the way of life of the people. In order to ensure the continuous existence of the laws and norms of a society, new members must be thought the norms to give them recognition and be identified as members of the society. The means through which the norms of a culture are transmitted has been referred to as socialization. (Abotchie, 2008). The socialization process enables an individual to adapt the way of life of a people or the way people 'do the things they do' to survive in such a society.

It is the responsibility of the family to teach the new born baby the rules and norms governing a society, that is, what is 'doable' and 'undoable' in a society. This however, shapes the behaviour of the child and makes the child to be acceptable by the larger public (society). According to Abotchie (2008), one of the basic goals of socialization involves teaching and making children to be aware of their social roles in society. For instance, a child is supposed to run errands for the mother and father. A boy is also supposed to accompany his father to the farm in a farming community whereas a girl is supposed to help the mother in the house hold chores such as cooking, sweeping, fetching water and washing (ibid). Another goal of socialization is to inculcate in the child how to attain or achieve his ideal self; that is the person he or she wants to be. Children who as a result do not get proper parental care and upbringing as they are denied their basic needs look for an alternative source of survival and the 'street' become one of their final destination.

Parents who cannot cater for their children may also send them to family members or siblings to cater for them. That is fosterage also plays a crucial role in the upbringing of a child. It includes the provision of the needed materials and support (spiritual) for the growth of the child. Kilbride and Kilbride (1994) who conducted research among the Kenya's noted that "a child born out of wedlock will live with his mother's parents, usually permanently. At the death of one or both parents, a child may move to live with his mother's parents, usually permanently. At the death of one or both parents, a child may move to live with relatives (uncles, aunt etc.) after the funeral. A child is sent to a 'more prosperous' relative but will visit his or her parents regularly and will eventually return to them. If living alone, one can request a child from a sister to alleviate loneliness or to live in the house while the resident is away at work, on night or periodically absent" (pp. 28). This is also true in the case of Ghana.

Moreover, people whom children are sent to live with normally have some vocational training or skills, farms etcetera. In the course of bringing the children up, they also teach the children the skills in order to live with as their source of livelihood should the children grow up (Abotchie, 2008). Also, depending on the gender of the child, he or she is taught a particular skill or role. For instance, in Ghanaian society, boys are socialized or taught on how to farm and fish, an activity that can be identified with their father or males in the society. Girls on the other hand identify and perform tasks associated with their mothers or females such as cleaning, cooking and washing. That is girls were taught to identify themselves with domestic chores. Among certain cultures, boys are made to achieve a daily target on the farm in order to be identified as 'to have come of age as a man' (Abotchie, 2008).

It can therefore be inferred from this section that, childhood in Ghana involves a child playing his or her role in the family and the society at large and that engaging in any activity (hard work activities such as carrying load, hawking on the street, etcetera) is seen as normal as the children are expected to also contribute their quota to the family.

Having established the fact that engaging in any hard working activity in Ghana is seen as 'normal' especially in contributing to the sustenance of the family, and in the case of the street children for their own survival, street children see childhood as a stage for shaping their 'future'. A child on the street must therefore be able to work to acquire money for his or her sustenance. The excerpts below shows how childhood is perceived among street children

For me, as a child on the street, I need some stuff that can sustain me in the future. I need to buy some utensils and clothes that will help me move on in life when I become an adult (12 year old girl, Rahimatu from the northern region of Ghana)

Even though I don't have anyone to cater for me, I am trying my best as a child to get enough money to cater for my needs in the future. All my friends are doing the same thing so that we don't struggle when we become adults (Kwantiga (15), also from the northern region of Ghana)

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided the trajectory and explored the notion of childhood by comparing how childhood is viewed in Europe, Africa (Ghana) and from the perspective of the street children themselves. I have shown that although the European notion of childhood characterizes the period for play, going to school, not involving in any kind of hard work and enjoying parental care and protection, that of Ghana ensures that children contribute their part to the survival of the family. As such engaging in numerous working activities on the street is seen as 'normal'. On the part of the street children, I have enumerated that; they see childhood as a stage for shaping their 'future'. A child on the street must therefore be able to work to acquire money for his or her sustenance. A stage they also argue involves hard work to secure their 'future' since they have no one to cater for them.

Chapter 3 Musa's Story

The Ghanaian family systems in view

'My father threw me out from home'; the beginning of Musa's narration.

As I revisited my fieldwork notes, I came across the statement 'my father threw me out from home' by one of my respondents, Musa. Before reading further, I started asking myself questions, why? What happened? And why his father? Even though I had known Musa in my fieldwork, the statement really made me curious to revisit his story. I realized that it was the first response he gave before narrating his story when asked why he was on the street. One would therefore ask, what was his story?

Musa's story

Musa is a 17 year old boy from the town Nakpanduri in the northern region of Ghana. He is the second born among seven siblings. He was thrown out from home to the street when he was 14 years old. According to Musa, when his mother was alive, she was the one providing for the family through yam selling. His father was also supporting the mother in the business. His father had no economic business on his own. When the mother died, the father couldn't continue with the business. Before then, his father used to have a small farm of which they depended on. The father therefore had no choice than to go back to his small farm land. This was what the whole family was depending on for a livelihood. It was not enough for us Musa noted. We could not eat at times the whole day. It was very bad he said. Musa's father therefore told him to go and stay with one of his sister's in Sunyani; the capital town of the Brong Ahafo region in Ghana. Musa refused because his older brother was earlier on sent to the same person of which he run away as a result of maltreatment. According to Musa, as at then, they had no idea about the where about of his brother. Musa further noted that, as his father knows it is his responsibility to cater for them, and out of frustration because of his inability to provide for their basic needs, the father threw him out from home to find a job to fend for himself, as he (the father) also cater for the other siblings.

Embedded in Musa's story are a whole lot of issues I will consider in this chapter. His story is illustrative of several crucial ideas as far as the family institution in Ghana is concerned and also the role the family at times plays in some of the children being on the street. From his story, it is a bit difficult to conceptualize what actually a family is and the responsibility of parents. Moreover, it makes it possible to question whether the family institution or its structures are indeed the ones responsible for providing the basic needs of its members as many works portray. From the excerpt, it can be deduced that ideally, the 'family setting' or perhaps 'our parent's home' is the right place for a child to live as reflected in his first statement 'my father threw me out from home'. The question is, what then at all is a family? and which people are involved? According to Burgess and Lock (1953, pp 7-8), the family refers to "a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single household; interacting and inter-communicating with each other in their respective social roles as husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister, and creating and maintaining a common culture". The family therefore consists of individuals either related by blood or legal ties. In Ghana, two basic types of families have been identified; the nuclear family and the extended family (Abotchie, 2008). The nuclear family basically consists of the father, mother and children whereas the extended family system includes external relations from both the matrilineal and the patrilineal descent system. These include the lineage; a corporate group, a collection of families which are either matrilineal or patrilineal, (Abotchie, 2008) and headed by a lineage head (*abusua panin* in Akan) who steers the affairs of the family. These two types of families is however reflective in the excerpt above. It can be inferred from Musa's statement that he used to live with the mother, father and siblings which is particular of the nuclear family system explained above. However, upon the death of the mother and when things became tough for the father in providing for their basic needs, he was asked to go and stay with the aunty, which he refused. This also indicates an extended family relation at play. Moreover, the excerpt suggest a system of agency where members in the family system, whether nuclear or extended are responsible for catering for the needs of children. It can therefore be said that, the general welfare of the family is the responsibility of any 'adult' member (grandparents, uncles, mothers, sisters, brothers, siblings) in the family. They are responsible for ensuring the safety and welfare of the children in the family. According to Nukunya (1992, pp 47), the extended family system in Ghana is also a system of shared rights and obligations. That is the extended family serves as social security in ensuring the welfare of its members (Therborn, 2006 pp. 13). It is in this respect that Musa's father was able to tell him to go and stay with the aunty in Sunyani to

cater for him. It can therefore be argued that the way people behave and act are shaped by the social and cultural practices within which they find themselves as noted in James and Prout (1997) theory I use in this thesis.

Furthermore, in Ghana, parents who cannot cater for their children send them to family members or siblings to cater for them. That is fosterage plays a crucial role in the upbringing of a child. It includes the provision of the needed materials and support (spiritual) for the growth of the child. Kilbride and Kilbride (1994) who conducted research in Kenya noted that

“a child born out of wedlock will live with his mother’s parents, usually permanently. At the death of one or both parents, a child may move to live with his mother’s parents, usually permanently. At the death of one or both parents, a child may move to live with relatives (uncles, aunt etc.) after the funeral. A child is sent to a ‘more prosperous’ relative but will visit his or her parents regularly and will eventually return to them. If living alone, one can request a child from a sister to alleviate loneliness or to live in the house while the resident is away at work, on night or periodically absent ” (pp. 28).

This is also true in the case of Ghana as even reflected in Musa’s story.

Moreover, why did Musa’s father tell him to go and stay with his aunty (his father’s sister) and not (his mother’s sister). This expression also finds itself in the different kinds of kinship systems that exist in Ghana. For example, according to the report by UNDP in 2007, three kinship descent systems exist as the family systems in Ghana, (UNDP; 2007, pp 60). They are patrilineal, matrilineal and the double descent system with patrilineal and matrilineal being the two major ones. Matrilineal descent system is a type of descent system where children trace their descent through their mother’s line. This is typical among the Akans, Asante, Akyem, Akuapim, Kwahu, Ahanta and Fantes in Ghana, (UNICEF 2009, pp 2, Kyeremanteng 1996). In this system of descent, residential pattern are either matriloca⁶ or patriloca⁷ (UNICEF 2009, pp 4). Children in the matrilineal descent system do not inherit from their fathers but rather their uncles (Kyeremanteng, 1996, Mbiti, 1994). Fathers in this regard also accumulate wealth and properties for their nephews. However, this is not always the case in Ghana. With the help of the interstate succession law in Ghana, fathers are now able to live a

⁶ Matriloca residence or uxoriolocality is a form of residential pattern in which a couple resides with or near the wife’s parents (house).

⁷ Patriloca residence or Virilocality is also a type of residential system in which married couple resides with or near the husband’s parent (house).

will or entrust properties to their children. In Ghanaian societies, children who are ‘unlucky’ in getting uncles who are not financially sound to cater for them therefore leave home to fend for themselves. It is therefore the prayer of every child to get a ‘rich’ uncle to cater for his or her needs. Uncles may also fall on other relatives in the extended family to help cater for the nephew. This is one of the major reason why Ghanaian people say a child is born to the family (extended family) and not only to the biological parents. The use of ‘father’, ‘mother’ etc. therefore overlaps in Ghanaian societies also. For example, the use of ‘father’ may not necessarily mean ‘the biological father’ of the child but may also transcend to uncles and other male relatives in the extended family system who also ensure the upkeep and survival of the child. Individuals who are bound by legal ties may also refer to the one catering for their upkeep and survival as their ‘father’. Father in this sense is contextual depending on which tie a person is associated to in a particular family, I argue. According to La Ferrara’s (2007) study in Ghana, fathers are free to allocate their properties to their children, however, they must first adhere to customary norms which firmly requires positive portions of his property to be allotted to the matrikin (ibid).

Patrilineal descent system is also a type of descent system in which children trace their descent through their father line. According to UNICEF (2009, pp 2), this is also typical among the Ga’s, Northerner’s, Krobo’s, Ewe’s and the Larteh’s. Individuals in this type of descent system usually live with their other relatives in the ‘extended family’ house. With the northerner’s falling in this category, it is no surprise that Musa was told by his father to go and stay with his sister, indicating the kind of descent system he fall under being patrilineal.

Furthermore, the double descent system is a type of descent system in which an individual belong to both his mother and family descent group. The double descent system is also typical among the Efutu’s, Mo, and Lo- Da-gaaba of the people in Ghana, (UNDP, 2007 pp 60, UNICEF, 2009, pp 2). Residential pattern according to UNICEF, (2009, pp 4) are either patrilocal or matrilocal, that is either with a paternal kin or maternal kin.

Moreover, the fact that Musa’s father was able to tell him to go and find job to do to cater for himself is illustrative of the fact that childhood is not only shaped by social and cultural processes but also children are active participants within society as discussed also in chapter two. This support the conceptual framework of James and Prout (1997) I use in this thesis. According to James and Prout (1997, pp. 8) not only should ‘childhood’ be seen as culturally and socially constructed and that different conceptualizations therefore exist in different

societies, however, children are also active actors within it. We should therefore not see children as passive, incomplete, incompetent and natural beings (1997: X) but rather active actors in the construction of their social processes and that make them independent as the father told him to go and fend for himself.

Again, of importance in the excerpt above is the large family size that constitutes a Ghanaian family. Family size thus play role in the economic and social activities of its members. As it can be seen in the excerpt, Musa has six siblings. It is believed in Ghana that having a lot of children is key to cultivating a large farm and having a helping hand when it comes to house hold chores. Also, parents, especially mothers are accorded respect for having many children. A mother who is able to give birth to a tenth child is hailed and celebrated at and a special occasion is held for the celebration. This is particularly the case in the northern region where Musa comes from which is an agricultural production economy in Ghana. Notwithstanding, childlessness is the worst thing that will ever happen to a couple. Women however suffer most particularly if her descent system is matrilineal where she is expected to give birth to support the matrilineal system.

Finally, another important issue that reflects in the excerpt is single parenting. In 2006, Boakye-Boaten conducted a study in Ghana. As earlier on stated in chapter one, his study identified several factors that lead to children moving from home to the street. The author found out that single parenthood was one of the major factors that lead children to the street. He further argued that the dysfunction of the family which may either be caused by divorce or single parenting causes children to seek for livelihood on the street. Adding to this, he postulates that ‘the family has failed to be a safe haven for some children’ (pp. 212). Also, in 2009, Sorre conducted an ethnographic study in Kenya about street children. Of 324 respondents he interviewed, 273 noted being on the street as a result of single parenthood. Sorre concluded that, indeed, in Kenya also, single parenthood constitutes a major factor to children being on the street. Kilbride and Kibrice (1990 pp. 222) further agree that, the phenomenon of divorce which finally leads to single parenting do not actually affect the parents involved, but rather the children. In order to live, some children finally resort to the street as their alternative.

Similarly, Kopoka (2000) notes that, the inability of some families to cater for their children is due to poverty which may finally lead single parenting and subsequently leading the children to the street for a livelihood. In Ghana, single parenting has been identified as a major cause

to the streetism phenomenon. For example, as seen in the excerpt above, it was after the death of Musa's mother that the father told him to move from home to seek for survival because he was not economically sound to cater for all the children. I therefore agree with Kopoka (2000) that, the inability of some parents to provide the basic needs for their children is as a result of poverty. As such, children may take to the street for a living. Furthermore, I agree with Orme and Seipel (2007) findings that children have no option than to find their place on the street as a result of the death of a parent, poverty or neglect on the part of parents as even reflected in Musa's story above. I therefore agree again that, the streetism phenomenon actually starts with the family and the children resort to the street as an alternative to seeking for a survival.

Conclusion

The family institutions in Ghana have been examined in this chapter. I have talked about the conceptualization of what a family is, and the responsibilities of parents in providing for the basic needs of their children. The nuclear and extended family systems have been discussed as the two main types of family systems that exist in Ghana. Also, the different kinds of descent systems in Ghana being patrilineal, matrilineal and double descent systems have been explored in this chapter. I have shown that it is the responsibility of both the nuclear and the extended families in providing for the welfare of a child. Moreover, depending on the type of descent system one finds him or herself, one is entitled to some basic rights and provision of welfare and safety from its members. Basically, I have argued that the inability of some families to cater for its members, especially children subsequently lead them to the street for a livelihood.

Chapter 4 Becoming a street child and the identity of ‘Poor’

In this chapter, I discuss the reasons for the children migrating to the street. I also describe the concept of ‘home’ from the perspective of the children. What they know about ‘home’ and what they now consider as their home. Also, I have dealt with their identities as ‘street children’ and finalized the chapter with some metaphors on the street: perceptions of their identity as street children.

Introduction

Brijuu is a thirteen-year-old girl. She comes from the town Savulugu in the northern part of Ghana. I got to know about Brijuu when we met at a street children project centre where she was coming to take a short rest. I had the impression that the centre was her usual resting place whenever all her colleagues were on the street working. I observed her for some time at the street children project center, what might have been the cause for her coming to the street. From the way she behaved, you could tell she arrived on the street not long ago. She looked reserved, lonely, and not playing like other children. She only talked with one girl (perhaps her only friend). I decided to approach her to listen to her story. Here is what Brijuu had to say during a personal interview

“I moved from home to the street a month ago. Back home in my former place of residence, I always felt hungry. My mum and my dad have divorced. The reason, I don’t know. I was staying with my mum before I came here. I always saw her asking for money from her friends to buy food for us to eat. The day she doesn’t get money, we don’t eat. Things were very hard for us so I decided to come here to get some money to cater for myself. I learnt this place is better than my former place of residence. That was what those who had been on the street before told me when they came ‘home’. But since I arrived, things have not been easy as I anticipated. The girl you see me playing with was the first person I contacted when I first came to the street and she has promised to get me a job. At the moment she is the one feeding me. That is why you always see me alone here. I am hoping to get my job soon. Whatever be the situation, I don’t want to go back home. I think even without a job I am better off here than home”

Kansangah is also a 15 year old boy who comes from the northern region. I got to know Kansangah during a personal interview with the street children where a boy introduced him as a friend on the street to me. Kansangah was also observed sleeping in front of a kiosk since I started my fieldwork. It seemed that was his sleeping place. One day, I went to his sleeping place (in front of a kiosk) only to find him 'sleeping while standing'. It was raining and his sleeping place would be almost wet. Kansangah was shivering, an indication that he was feeling very cold but he had no place to sleep for the night.

The above excerpt and the conversation with Kansangah kept reflecting in my memory any time I revisited my fieldwork notes that what must have been the cause for children to leave 'home'; (often described as a place where one enjoys proper parental care and control and where one's needs are catered for) to the street. What factors led them to the street? Why the street? and not any other place?

Literature on street children shows that, children often migrate from one place to another as a result of both 'push' and 'pull' factors. For example, it is often argued that the children migrate purposely in search of better lives elsewhere (Zaami, 2010; Baah, 2007). These opportunities mostly reflect in the place of origin not being able to provide the migrants with their basic needs, hence the motivation to move to a place where they can acquire such needs for their economic survival (Panter Brick 2002, Cohen 1996).

Lee's (1996) Push and Pull Model

According to Lee (1996), certain factors compel people to move from their place of abode or one's place of origin to another new place (the place of destination). These factors are the pull and push factors. The 'pull factors' are the irresistible attractions or opportunities found in the destination area whereas the 'push factors' are the prevailing conditions in the place of origin that prompt their exit. In my case, I argue that the pull factors are factors that can be situated in Kumasi, whereas the push factors are related to the migrants' former place of residence/abode. According to Lee, the 'push factors' make people feel uncomfortable to stay in their environment whereas the pull factors serve as a magnet that attract people to their destination area (Cohen 1996). Common 'push factors' include poor or no education, few job opportunities, family breakdown and etcetera whereas 'pull factors' refers to good roads and health centres, job opportunities, good educational facilities and so forth. When the pull

factors outweigh that of the push factors, Lee argues, emigration is often the inevitable outcome.

Lee's (1996) notion of pull and push factors provide a relevant conceptual lens for my study. The children often made reference to conditions prevailing in their place of origin and the destination place (Kumasi) as factors driving their decision to migrate. There are however, some exceptions to the 'push-pull' dichotomy conceptualized by Lee as my study revealed. Some of the children mentioned factors that do not fall within Lee's category of the migration model. In short, the children's motivation to migrate was not solely or always driven by so-called pull factors in Kumasi outweighing the push factors from the children's place of origin but sometimes migrations to the city attracts social prestige or self-esteem. This was particularly among children from the northern part of Ghana. According to some of the children, this gives them a new identity as 'an urban boy or girl' (civilized in this respect) and consequently gives them reverence among their colleagues upon return to their respective former place of residence. Such children mostly return to their former place of abode after some time on the street. However, acquaintances and friends they establish while on the street and the opportunities the street offers them makes it possible for such children to come back to the street after their return. Peers who have been on the street before also pull their colleagues to the street. A reflection also of Granovetter's theory I use in this thesis as and that friendships leads to children moving away from home to the street through information they give to them as in the case of Brijuu above who was influenced by a friend to come to the city as she will get work to do. I therefore argue that, the motivation to migrate is not solely reducible to the 'pull- push factors encapsulated by Lee's model.

Moving to the street: the case of street children in Kumasi

Several studies have discussed reasons why children move to the street (UNICEF, 2001, Badasu, 2004, Anarfi and Antwi, 1995, Hetch, 1998). Findings that emanates from such studies show both economic and non-economic factors, (Hetch, 1998, UNICEF, 2001, Aptekar and Abebe, 1997). However, economic factors are argued to outweigh the non-economic ones. This was also the case in Kumasi among street children. Poverty, divorce, forced marriage, deliberate run-away of children from home and abuse by parents or guardian, were among the factors mentioned as reasons for migrating. Majority of the children from the study cited poverty as a reason for moving to the street. The following excerpts shows some of their responses

We are 4 in the family. None of us goes to school because my parents always say they don't have money. They also tell me and my 'back born' (young siblings) that if we have any place to go that can help us cater for ourselves we can go but we shouldn't forget the younger ones. This went on for some time so I decided to leave home for this place. I have been here for 2 years. I have never been home since I came to this place but my parents know I am in Kumasi. I also send money home to cater for my younger siblings.

My mum was a petty trader. She used to sell gari, sugar, groundnut etcetera in front of our house to cater for us because my dad was not working. But when she died, my dad could not continue it alone. There were times we had no food to eat. My dad has already made us aware that he has no money to cater for us. That was very disturbing so I decided to leave home to cater for myself elsewhere. That was how I migrated to Kumasi.

Also, other children referred to their desire to get a job to earn income as the motivation for being the reason why they are on the street. Boys mostly noted this as their reason for migrating. Girls who gave such responses as their motivation for migrating emphasized that they wanted to get money in order to support their siblings back home (see also, Panter Brick, 2002, Pilon 2003).

Other factors that also emerged were forced marriages and abuse at the place of origin (Ansell and Young, 2002). Ramatu for instance noted that

"My mother has been telling me that man is my husband (referring to a man in their hometown). I also have been seeing the man bringing some food stuffs and other things including money to my parents. One evening, my mother called me and said tomorrow the man will come and take me to his house as he has done all the customarily rites to take me as his wife. I agreed and went to my room. I only knew the plan I had taken. I packed my stuffs when I realized they have gone to bed. At the break of dawn, I run away from home and took the first bus to Kumasi.

Few of the children noted that they are on the street to acquire money to cater further their education. Children who cited this as their reason for being on the street were those who have completed basic schools and would like to go to senior high school. More boys than girls gave this as their reason for coming to the street.

Furthermore, conflict between parents was another factor that prompted the children to migrate to the street (see also Iversen, 2002, Hashim, 2004, Panter Brick, 2002). Other children also cited the fear of being labeled as witches and wizards especially for ladies who failed to go through a particular ritual as a factor that made them to migrate. Divorce and death of a parent were also noted as a factor.

Street children see the street as an environment where they can acquire or attain their basic needs for survival. For others, it is an arena where they enjoy their privacy and also get money to cater for themselves and even other siblings back home.

Even though I did not specifically look at gender issues in my research, I observed that girls who migrated were quite older compared to boys. Older in the sense that they were mostly between the ages of 13 and 17 on their first migration to Kumasi. The age category for boys who migrated mostly fell below. Some were as young as 8 years on their first migration trip to the city. Girls who moved away from home attributed it to force marriage, abuse and the desire to support their family back home as earlier on stated. Boys on the other hand moved because they want to get money to cater for themselves.

I further observed that children migrated to Kumasi on seasonal occasions. For instance, getting to Christmas, the number of children on the street increased tremendously. Such children noted that they were on the street temporarily and that they will return to their hometown after Christmas. Girls were more than boys in this category.

On the street

Although it could be said that street children are children who finds themselves in the wrong place (Scheper Hughes and Hoffman 1998) or with Mary Douglas' terminology as 'matter out of place' (bringing to fore how they are viewed and perceived by others for instance as children no longer under the protection of their parents). However, the children adopt strategies to ensure their upkeep on the street. Whatever be the situation on the street, the children see the street as a substitute to their families. They see the city as a replacement to providing them with their basic needs and hence prefer to be on the street than stay in their 'ideal' homes. One boy noted that *'I don't have plans of leaving this place, it is my new home and I get everything I need here'*.

Over half of the child migrants noted they have never ever regretted migrating to the street. Such children argue that they get everything they need on the street, hence, they is no need to think of another place to be providing them with what they want. Children, who have jobs and get good income argued in this perspective. On the other hand, others said they have regretted coming to the street. Among those were children who arrived on the street not long ago and as such do not have jobs on the street. Also, those who anticipated getting enough money but are not earning as expected, said they have regretted migrating from home. Others also see the jobs on the street to be difficult. General hardship conditions on the street were also cited as a major factor for their regret.

Even though I agree with Hoffman and Scheper Hughes (1998) that street children are simply poor children in the 'wrong place' or in the words of Connolly and Ennew (1996) as 'children out of place' I further argue that the children see the street rather as a 'better place' to be than their 'ideal' home (a place considered as the 'right place' where one is under the protection and care of his parents.). The children see the street as a place where they enjoy their freedom and get everything they need for their survival. Scholars argue that no one migrates without a reason and that anyone who migrates hopes that his or place of destination will offer him or her better opportunity than his place of origin. In addition, in an ethnographic study by Hashim (2011) in the upper east region of Ghana, Tempane Natinga, Hashim observed that the children do not only migrate but are positive and hopeful that their new place will offer them better opportunities to earn good income which will enable them cater for themselves. Also in a study by Panter Brick (2000) on street children, the author concluded that children who migrate to the streets are not better off living with their families despite what home or the domestic ideologies offer them. They prefer to be on the street to staying with their families, a condition many childhood studies maintain is a 'deviation' to the universal notion of the 'Ideal' child. Like Brijuu and other street children in Kumasi, as reflected in my discussion above, they have no plans of leaving the street as they consider the place to be providing them with everything they need as compared to that of their 'ideal' homes.

Connecting the disconnects in the 'streetism' literature

Several articles and books on street children talks about economic factors as being the major cause for children migrating to the street to seek for a living. Only a few cite environmental and social factors (see Hashim, 2011). There is no doubt to that point of view. However, I go

further and rather argue based on my ethnographic data that, a combination of factors (both social and economic) move children from their families to the street. It was observed in every first encounter with a street child that, they mentioned money as being the major factor for letting them to migrate. However, upon establishing good relationship and trust with the children, certain factors were found to be the root cause which prompted their movement. For instance, the first day I met Kukua was at the street children's project centre. She told me she came to the street to earn some money to cater for herself. In this case, Kukua's reason for coming to the street is money (economic). However, upon being at the centre for a month (where trust has been established with Kukua), Kukua told me

“Brother Augustine, let me tell you the truth, the reason why I came to the street is not necessarily because of money. My parents are divorced and anytime I go to my father, he will say go to your mother. When I go to my mother she will say go to your father. I felt rejected by both and decided to leave home to the street”.

In the case of Kukua above, although she was not wrong to have said she was on the street because of money since she needs it to survive on the street, however, the root cause for her leaving home is the rejection by both parents. This was found among several children who first mentioned economic reason as the cause for their movement but later on confirmed the social aspect of it. My argument therefore is, a combination of factors (in the case of Kukua, divorce by parents, and money to cater for herself) make children to migrate to the street.

Street Children's Project Centre: analysing street children's identity

Not even a day passed by without children arriving at the street children project's centre. Before the centre opens at 08:30 (from Monday to Friday), one can find the street children already gathered at the entrance of the centre. Not only do they share jokes, but they also form queues to enable them get access to the centre based on their position in the queue. The first in the queue is the first person to get his/her name registered to take his/her bath. Others who have arrived first but do not see their friend or siblings around usually use stones to represent them in the queue. This normally leads to misunderstanding among them, but as they will say *fighting is normal and part of us, we fight now and play in the next minute*. Even on holidays, you will see them gathered in front of the centre playing and relaxing. They are always shouting and running after each other. No wonder the administrator told me if you want a peace of mind here, then I'm sorry, in our first meeting. The children come to the centre to get

their names registered so as to use the facilities at the place. They lack water, toilet place, a resting place, a playing ground etc. and use the centre for such basic needs. At the centre is also a day care for the street children's children. The day centre has three staffs that take care of the children of the street mothers as they by their daily activities on the street. The kids outnumber the staff making all volunteers to partake in taking care of them. I was part of this. The other volunteers used to tease me as they always say, 'an academician baby sitter'. New children were registered every day. Meaning, there were always new arrivals to the street. Both new and old street children get their names registered on a system. The system marks and records the number of children who come to the centre every day. Averagely, they range around 40 to 50 every day. In taking their particulars and bio data, the children are asked several questions including why they moved to the street. There were 6 volunteers including myself before I started my data collection. The volunteers go out every day to convince the children to come to the centre. Once they arrive at the centre, the volunteers engage them in a conversation as they listen to their story. A volunteer is therefore expected to keep track of the child till he or she decides to move out of the street. Two volunteers joined later on. Among the two was a white lady from Germany, Louisa. When the children realized there has been a white lady at the centre, their numbers doubled, perhaps because of curiosity. Instead of 40 to 50 children averagely a day, the centre had 80 to 100 children. It was also a good opportunity for me to do more interviews to know why they were on the street. The centre also has a vocational school and some training centres for children who wish to learn a trade. Basically, the children came to the centre to bath, watch television, play, relax, drink water, sleep and also to visit the lavatory.

Now, the question is why talk about what goes on at the center? The reason for my reflection on the children's movement to the centre is not only to show what the centre offer them, but also to agree with other scholars that 'street' children are children who are deprived, abandoned and neglected, so to speak and also have lost their childhood (Connolly and Ennew, 1996) given them an identity as 'poor' and 'vulnerable' according to UNICEF (2002).

Public Perceptions of street children

Hey! Give me way, what is that. Are you going or coming. Look at his dirty clothes and his slippers.

Take good care of your bag Kuukua, the people (referring to some street boys) are here. The least mistake you do, they will cut your bag and take all your money.

I won't pay that amount, didn't you tell me you will collect this amount and that the place is far. The place is even not far and you are still crying for more money. I don't have any more money for you... you cheat!

These were normal words on the street that people levelled on street children as I walk along the market places during observations. The great majority of the public have a 'bad' image of the street children as even seen in Migyimah's story in my introduction. They see the children as stubborn and bad individuals, who have run away from their parents to the street, hence lack the necessary good upbringing of a child from their parents. In the second excerpt for instance, I observed that the children (three boys) were just sleeping in front of a store (perhaps tired from their economic activity and was taking a rest) but because of the 'identity' being on the street offer them, they are identified as thieves. Some authors argue that, the 'identity' of children on the street as vagabond, etc. is something that would be difficult to erase as our society see the street as a place contrary to where an 'ideal' child should be. They further argue that an ideal child should be innocent, live with the parents, play around with toys, family and friends and attend school (see also Mayhew, 1861). Contrary to such characteristics, a child is said to have been deprived of his or her childhood (Leigh Tierney, 1997). According to some authors (Scheper Hughes and Hoffman 1998: 358, Connolly and Ennew, 1996), although there are some children who walk and roam around in our vicinities without any supervision from an adult (their parents), the moment they move into the street, they become street children, and their identity suddenly changes (Golubović, 2011). The public see children on the street differently from other children. Whereas some see them as children who need to be integrated back with their families, on the contrary, others see them as children who intentionally have run away from and as such should suffer the consequences there of. During my observation as I walk in the street, these were the opinions of some men on the street.

I pity them. They have no proper clothes, no sandals... I don't even know where they sleep. At times I put myself in their shoes. Something just has to be done to move them out of the street.

So where are their parents? Don't they care about their children? This is very sad my brother (referring to me).

These children (referring to the street children), I hate them. They are just a burden to society. They don't do any good thing here. They can steal your money, dupe you... I just don't like them.

Two different conflicting views about street children. However, my study revealed that majority of the public see the street children as 'poor children' seeking for survival, again bringing out the identity of street children as 'poor'.

Going beyond the limit: Identity crises on the street

Ideas on identity, its formation and its construction remain problematic. Whereas previously identified with people who share the same history (Toon van Meijl, 2008), the term has now undergone changes in its meaning for several decades (Sokefeld, 1999). In an ethnographic study conducted by Sporton and Valentine in 2007, the scholars explored ways in which young Somali's identities and affiliations are constructed. They concluded that, indeed, identity formation and practices do not just happen in a vacuum; rather, we construct them through social practices in different spaces⁸. These social practices make identity construction to be regarded as a process (Mead 1934, Duszak, 2002) and not naturally given (Golubović, 2011). Adding to the view that identity should be seen as a process, Jenkins (2004) goes further to argue that we attain our identity through our interactions and behaviour with others. His conclusion was that, it is therefore better to talk about 'identification' rather than identity since its formation is a process and not static or naturally given (Giddens 1991). Based on this, I also argue that street children construct their identity or perhaps their identifications through street life (what Bourdieu 1985 calls 'social field'), a place where they constantly interact with one another and go by their daily activities.

Furthermore, in the 1990's, Giddens (1991:52) set out to argue that, indeed, there is no doubt that our identity is constructed socially and that individuals play a role in shaping their 'identity', however, we are also trapped by the conventionalized way of doing things (ibid). This conventionalized way refers to the social structures that we find in our societies in

⁸ Different spaces according to Sporton and Valentine 2007, ranges from sites such as the home, our communities and even the nation at large. They further argue that families and communities especially play a role in the construction of our self.

shaping ourselves. According to Abotchie (2008), the social structures are the political, religious, educational, economic, health and the marriage and family institutions. These institutions are mutually dependent with the marriage and family institution serving as the baseline. Failure therefore of the marriage and family institutions in shaping us constructs our self or identity leads to an individual finding an alternative to his or her identity formation and the street become an alternative to such people especially children. Sandberg and Pedersen (2006) further emphasize that, although there are no institutions on the street, street children however construct their world (identity) through their everyday interactions. I however, have my reservations to this. First of all, I agree with Sandberg and Pedersen (2006) that street children construct their world or identity through their everyday interactions, but disagree with them based on my findings that street children have no institutions on the street. My study revealed that, street children in Kumasi have created institutions (based on relationships with others and other institutions and the friends they make and so forth) on the street that keep them moving and they seem very organized, despite the conditions the street offer them. Erikson (1950) concludes that based on one's social responsibilities and roles, an individual can possess several identities.

Conditions of their identity at the place of origin and destination

As earlier on stated, there are combinations of factors that push children to move to the city. Some of these factors are attributed to the fact that there is a break down in the family institution; an institution that is responsible for the upkeep and survival of children. The inability of parents to cater for their children gives the children an identity as 'poor' children who must strive hard to cater for him or her-self.

The street offers the children the opportunity to construct their identity (based on the discussions above). Considered as children without proper parental control, the children engage in a lot of activities for their survival. They therefore seek for jobs that could earn them money for their basic needs. My study revealed that migration first of all leads to an improvement of their identity as street children. That is their identity changes from earning no income or money to earning an income. They have also experience change and have better recognition when they go back to their hometown. However, because some anticipates the street to be offering them all the need, they see themselves as failures for not meeting their target or goal. The push and pull factors similarly bring about economic aspects of their life

which can lead to social issues and factors. That is social factors either by exclusiveness or inclusiveness. By exclusion, I mean the children are being excluded from the society because of their low skills whereas by inclusiveness, because society needs them for their daily activities, they accept them like that.

Moreover, it was common to know from the street children that their mothers and grandparents were once street children. In an ethnographic study by Clark 1982 on street children in Kenya, the researcher also noted that some of the children on the street were born out of parents who were also street children themselves. This was interesting to know, as there is a cycle at being on the street and creating a 'home' within their families on the street.

The notion of home; identity crises on the street

Ways of conceptualizing 'home' differs with respect to location and space (Allen et al., 1999). One's attachment to a place called 'home' gives him or her identity and a sense of belonging to a particular people or society (Winstanley, 2001). 'Home' has often been denoted 'universally' as a place where we live (Roth, 1991). In a study from 1999 on the concept of home, Valentine observed that the western notion of 'home' is characteristic of the everyday interaction of family relations in a particular place. This everyday routine and interactions of the family members gives them an identity to be residing in a place called 'home' (Winstanley, 2001, Ward, 1999, Sibley 1995) and it mostly comprise of the father, mother and child(ren), that is the nuclear family. Adding to this view, other scholars argue that it is a place where privacy should be of major concern (Young, 1997) and where people who reside in such a place have some form of security. This has often been portrayed in many literature and text book as the 'universally and acceptable' way to define a home. This in the African perspective is also true. However, here, emphasis is also placed on the extended family's residence as their 'home' especially in the Ghanaian context. People also refer to a place where they eat, bath etcetera, that is, where they enjoy their basic needs as their home even though they may not be biological relatives. It is common in Ghana for people to refer to a friend's house (where they have a place to sleep and get food to eat) as their home even though he or she may not be part of the family. Basically to the Ghanaian person, a home is where your basic needs are met.

Furthermore, other scholars argues that not only has the notion of home been related to a place or space where one live with his family but also a place where gender roles reflect how

one should behave or act in a society (Spain, 1992). That is, it is seen as a place in which members of a group (family members) all contribute to the survival and upbringing of its members. For instance, in a home, there should be a breadwinner (usually a man/husband) and a woman (wife/mother) who also plays her role by ensuring the upbringing of the children (younger ones) (Spain 1992, Allison 1990, Hasell and Peatross, 1990). Anything apart from this, some authors argue, does not fall within what they classify as an ‘ideal’ home.

The street; an ‘ideal home’ or not?

Indeed, a majority of the street children share the views of scholars and how society also perceives an ideal home as places where basically you live with people of familial tie especially your parents. However, they have a different perspective of what home is, they argued. According to some of the children, a home is not necessarily where you live with your parents or any familial tie, but any open space on the street that helps them to survive. It could be under a bridge, in front of a store, or the ‘street’ itself. That is, it is a place where they survive with or without their parents. Following the definition of the so called ‘universal’ definition of an ideal home, it could therefore be argued in the words of Scheper Hughes that indeed, they are children out of place. The children survive on the street with the help of other street children whom they see as their parents and siblings. One girl mentioned that “*my friends are my parents and my surrounding is the street*”. She further noted that the street is a place where she passes her night, get food to eat, bath and get protected in times of chaos. For the girl, the street is where she gets her basic needs being met and therefore considers the street as her home as argued earlier on by scholars that it is a place where one’s basic needs are met.

Furthermore, a boy stated that

“for here (referring to the street), I am safe. No beating, no hunger, no yelling at, I’m just safe. I have friends to talk to. We share ideas, walk together, talk together, in fact we do everything together. This place is better than my house back home”.

I observed that, the children do not see the street as their home in a form of physical space or place, but pay particular attention to their ‘condition’, hence defining the street as their home. From the excerpt, it could be deduced that the boy referring to the street as his home is not just a matter of home is his context being a physical location or staying with your parents, but

his emphasis is on the conditions that make him refer to the street as a home. A condition he never enjoyed when he was in what scholars refer to as an ‘ideal home’.

I therefore agree with Beazley who conducted an ethnographic study about street children in Indonesia and concluded that, “for children living on the street, home is no longer just one location or physical space... it has become more of a concept than a material space (2000:208)”, and further argue that particular attention is paid on the condition they find themselves in making the street as their home.

Metaphors on the street; Perceptions of their identity as street children

The ways we behave, act, think, and speak are full of metaphors. Metaphors are spread throughout our everyday interactions and actions (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, Sandor, 1986). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), ‘metaphor is pervasive not in everyday life just in language, but in thought and action (pp, 454) as it is an important vehicle for communicating between different domains.

Street children use metaphors in their daily activities. The way they go about their daily routines and interactions are full of metaphors. However, one needs to understand the children’s perspective on the street before you can understand their life-world. Dwelling on this, I agree with Sasu who argues that “you must get a full knowledge of the language in which one uses in communication, the context in which it exist as well as the conventions and values in which they are part of” (cited in Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). I also agree with Lakoff and Johnson (1980) that you cannot understand things as they are in a culture or a language directly, we always understand them in terms of something else and that we have to make bridges between different domains so as to understand each other. The connection between the language of the children and how they go about their daily activities can only be understood by a person who is identified to be ‘part of them’ or closer to them.

As earlier on stated, there are several metaphors that exist and enable the children to communicate better on the street. Below are some of the metaphors street children uses on the street.

If you want to be on the street, you must be a man. This expression was often heard on the street both during observation and interviews. However, it was during the interview I asked the children the meaning of the expression. It was interesting to know that this expression has

different meaning depending on the activity (job) that one engages in. 'you must be a man' according to those who engage in Kayayo; a dominant activity for the girls means that you must always be on the alert so that one do not hurry to carry a load you were in the best position to have carried. For instance 'a woman alighted from a car with some luggage. There was a street girl that was close to the woman' but from nowhere, one girl quickly run, overtook the girl close to the woman to carry the luggage. Immediately her colleague said, Berlinda, you must be a man and behave like one, what is that! If you do that you won't get money on the street. Be active."

Also, you must be a man according to those who offload and unload goods from big trucks means you must be strong enough. The same expression means you must be quick or swift for children who pick-pocket on the street. These expressions were better understood by children who were into the same kind of job activity. Although all these children find themselves in the street situation, their understanding of 'you must be a man' differs.

Furthermore, in a conversation with a boy in the morning about how he starts his day, the boy noted that 'because of the nature of his work on the street; pushing of truck, he always *'go high'* before he starts work. Going high means you must smoke 'weed' before you can do the job. It was observed that those who engage in truck pushing often load a lot of things or goods on the truck and push. A lot of energy is therefore required to help drag and push the truck. According to the boy, that is the reason why it is necessary for him to *go high* before he can work. "*When you go high you don't feel tired and you don't feel the pains instantly. Without the 'weed', you cannot do the work for more than 4 hours, trust me*", he said.

Moreover, during discussions with the children about street life, some mentioned that the street is satisfactory to them as they have no one to take good care of them. Others also noted that they get food and everything they need on the street as such it is a better place to be than their place of origin. Suddenly, one boy from the back exclaimed, *'they are telling lies, street life is a 'do or die affair and they know it'*. I approached the boy after the interview to tell me more about street life being a do or die affair. He said it is either you struggle for your life to get money to buy food or your friends help you else you go hungry and die. If you want to be on the street, then you must be prepared to struggle. Other children said this differently. For example, *hustle is our everyday path, it is like food to us* and you can't do without it. However, I observed that, although they go through all these struggles, they help one another on the street to keep them moving.

These metaphorical ways of speaking about street life by the children helps us to understand the situation on the street and their identity as street children. Their identity as children who do not have proper parental care, are vulnerable struggle to survive, and are just people at the wrong place according to Nancy Scheper Hughes.

Moreover, during one of my observations, I observed a street girl exchanging words with a man. According to the street girl the amount the man is supposed to give her for carrying her luggage as agreed on is not what the man is offering her. They agreed on GH3, however, the man is saying he will only pay for GH2 because it wasn't that distanced as the girl proposed. The 'street girl' then said, please hurry up and give me my money, time is money". Time is money in this context means the man is wasting her time.

'I'm going to my street' was another phrase that was used every day on the street. It means the person is going to where he undertakes his economic activity on the street. It also denotes the route they plough in their everyday activity. If one therefore wants to know where a street child is, just ask the person of his street and you can see him or her anytime at that destination.

Again, I'm going to my street as a metaphor used on the street is only understood by the street children themselves. Until you are told the meaning, you may have a different perspective or meaning about it. I therefore agree with Keesing (1985) that anthropologist should not take other people's metaphors for literal statement. (Cited in Andras Sandor 1986, pp. 102).

It was further observed that children who engage in prostitution have a way of saying it although others were plain in saying I engage in prostitution on the street. They normally say I work at the rails at night. Working at the rails at night is different from I work at the rails. I find out that during the day, the rails is a market area where people buy and sell. Children who engage in kayayo and other business on the street also say they work in the rails. Working at the rails is therefore different from working at the rails at night. Metaphors used on the street help the children in communicating better on the street and also help others to understand their life-worlds.

Conclusion

I have through this chapter discussed the diverse motivations that drive children to the street, its impacts and identities of the children involved. I have shown that their motivations are centred on socio-economic and cultural issues. I have therefore argued that a combination of

factors, basically, (social and economic) mostly cause the children to move to the street. However, social factors often precede the economic ones. Furthermore, I have shown that migration has led to changes in economic roles by girls as they become breadwinners to contribute to the survival of their families as the boys primarily provide for themselves. Migration has also led to improvement of the children's identity from earning nothing at home to gaining money on the street. In addition, I have enumerated that although the children have devised their own means of survival on the street, basically, street children are deprived, abandoned and neglected, giving them an identity as 'poor' and 'vulnerable'.

Chapter 5 The economic life of street children

'Agoo, agoo, agoo' the sound of Herbert, a 12 year old boy from the town Koforidua in the Eastern region of Ghana telling people in his local language to give him way as he carries heavy load of yam on his head to a car station.

Indeed, the street is a place where varieties of activities are undertaken to make a living. According to Kwankye and Tagoe (2009), in Ghana, the poor educational background and unsanitary living conditions of young migrants increase their vulnerability within the urban environment thereby limiting their options of livelihood opportunities. As a result, the children in the street have adopted several money-making strategies to survive in the cities. I agree with Kwankye and Tagoe as my study revealed similar situation in Kumasi. Street children in Kumasi engage in numerous activities to earn a living. The money-making activities the street children engage in differ according to age and gender. This means that while some economic activities are exclusively reserved for girls, some are meant for boys. Other activities such as Kayayoo⁹ however, involve both boys and girls but different approaches are used to carry out the same activity as will be shown later in this chapter. Children aged between 4 and 8 also have specific activities that they engage in on the street. Not only do the street children engage in 'socially acceptable' money-making economic activities (e.g. selling of sachet water), but also engage in illegal activities such as pick-pocketing and prostitution to survive on the street as will be shown later in this thesis. Depending on which activity a street child may engage in, the working slogan of the street children is that 'we must survive on the street as such anything that will yield us money to live is seen as acceptable and right in our sight' (interviews, 2015). Since the aim of every one who migrates to the street is to get into an activity that will get him or her something to 'earn a living', the question is, upon their arrival in the city, how do they identify the kind of economic activity that would give them a living?

In this chapter therefore, I will first establish the various coping methods and strategies through which children get work to do on the street. I will then follow this with the various economic activities they engage in on the street for their livelihood. The chapter will conclude with what the children use their money for on the street.

⁹ Kayayoo is a means of transporting goods from one place to another. The term is used in this context to refer to both girls and boys who participate in carrying loads either on their head or in a head pan from one place to another in the city.

There are several ways and strategies that street children use to identify themselves with a job on the street. My study revealed that the most common way of finding work is that new entrants are introduced by fellow children who are already on the street. For example, Ruby noted that

when I arrived from Savulugu in the northern region of Ghana to Kumasi, I didn't know what to do. The place looked different from my hometown. Many people, everybody is on the move, no one to talk to and even people are not willing to stop when you say hi or hello in order to ask them a question. I was confused. I therefore went near some children who were selling 'pure water (sachet water)' on the street. I realized they were speaking the same language I speak in my hometown, so I approached and greeted them in our language. They responded nicely. That gave me a little bit of relief. I told them I have just arrived from Savulugu and need a place to stay. They asked of my name and agreed to send me to where they sleep after they have finished selling their 'pure water'. After they finished selling, they took me to their place of sleep. That was the beginning of my street life. The following day, I was introduced as a relative to the man they go for 'pure water' from to sell and that I will be working with them. The man agreed and that was how I landed in the 'pure water' business on the street.

The excerpt above shows how already working children on the street helps new entrants to find job in the city. My study revealed this to be the simplest and easy way to start a life of making money on the street, though others find jobs through their own means. In connection with Granovetter's theory used above, it can be deduced again that, informal acquaintances or new friends, in the words of Granovetter (weak ties) that Ruby met actually helped her to get a job on the street.

Moreover, Prince noted that '*when I first came to Kumasi, my friend introduced me to their leader who then promised to get me a job. Some few days later, he got me a man who sells carpets to work with and that was how I got work to do on the street*'. Again, it can be inferred from Prince's statement that informal relations or weak ties are useful on the street in terms of job search and being stable on the street. My study further shows that new entrants report to their 'older' street members to help them find work. The adolescent street members do not engage in any activity in the street situation, but only search for work for the younger ones to do. But there are conditions attached to 'older' street members finding jobs for new

entrants to the street. Any child they help on the street divides their earnings into three and one-third goes to these adolescent street members. This was identified to be their source of income on the street. But this is only for the first six months the child will engage in that activity. After the six months, whatever the children earn is solely for themselves. This also reflected as part of the various institutions created on the street to keep the children moving as mentioned earlier on as one of my arguments to the survival of street children in Kumasi. Whatever the situation is, the children have created mechanisms that ensure their survival on the street, and this was found to be one of them. Furthermore, market women and men consult the 'older street children' to get them street kids to work with. The reason given to this is that, the street children constitute a category of cheap labour. It therefore gives the adolescent street members the opportunity to recommend and introduce other street children to them; another way street children get work to do on the street. All these support Granovetter's (1983) theory of social network where I argue that the acquaintances street children establish help them in every aspect of being on the street.

Having established some coping methods and strategies through which street children find work, the most economic activity street children engage in as my study revealed was Kayayoo; a dominant activity for the street girls and boys. In a study by Boakye Boaten (2006) in Ghana about street children, he also identified the same activity as the most engaged work by the children. This activity is also referred to as head portorage. Head portorage is a means of transporting goods from one place to another by carrying them on one's head. The head portorage activity or the 'kaya' business is derived from the Hausa word kaya which means 'load'. Individuals that carry out the activity are therefore called Kayayei. The activity was first introduced by the Malians where they used hand-push trucks to carry people's luggage from one place to another. However, as the city continues to populate and as individuals constantly moved from the rural areas to the cities, the activity became virtually impossible by using the hand pushed tracks because of traffic. As the traffic slowed down their movement, they adopted the alternative measure to carrying the load on their head to help beat traffic. This further attracted a lot of people to the cities as it created an avenue for people who do not have money to acquire the hand pushed tracks to use their head as the alternative for carrying loads for money. Street children were no exception. The major symbol that identifies a street child to be engaging in such an activity is the head pan. The head pan is used in carrying the load or items of people on the street. Boys also engage in this type of activities but the process of carrying out the activity differs. Whereas the girls always carry

the load on the head, the boys have two ways of doing it. They either carry it on their head as that of the girls or use trucks to carry the load. The boys' use the truck at areas where there is less traffic (open space). The truck can also take a lot of goods at the same time. The truck is made of wood with two wheels under it and a handle for them to hold and direct it. *Much strength and pressure is needed in order to push it. This is the main reason why the boys normally do this as the girls carry it on their head: Kukua noted.* This comparatively put the boys at a better position always in terms of the amount to be earned on the street.

There are so many strategies adopted by the children in doing the head portorage job. The excerpts below give an idea about the different ways of carrying out the activity.

The Kayayoo business is such that you must always be on an alert. We are many on the street so you must also be a good and fast runner to get a load to carry. We mostly look at the boot of moving cars coming to the station. As soon as we see that there is a load at the boot of the car, we follow the car to where it is going to stop. But because it is dangerous to follow the moving car, we mostly jump to the bumper at the back of the car and hold the door so we don't fall. When the car stops, we fight over the loads. If you are lucky to get one, then you carry it.

I also do the Kayayo business. But I don't move around or struggle with people on a load as my colleagues do. I stay at one of the car stations with other street children. The station book men give us numbers when you report at the station. The numbers are therefore used in carrying for people's load. That is when it is your turn then you go and carry the load.

From the excerpts, it is very clear that while some of the children struggle to carry people's load, others do not struggle for loads to carry. The children who do not struggle to search for a load to carry but stay at specific stations throughout the whole day for the business are the children who have stayed a bit longer on the street. Such children have gain trust with the station masters (people who preside over a particular car station) and book men (individuals who issue tickets to passenger to board vehicles) and who are well known by them. These street children only go for their station number¹⁰ in the morning and once it is your turn, you go and carry the load. I observed that people prefer to go for the street children who are

¹⁰ They are numbers on a tag that show the order of who first reported at the station and as such who should carry a load first.

attached to a particular station to carry their load because they know such children will not run away with their luggage or steal anything from their luggage. The street children also pay something to the bookmen after the day's work.

You will be removed from the group or they won't call you again to carry people's load if you don't give them their share, Fausty noted. We also have monthly dues that we pay to them. Even though we pay dues and other stuffs, I think it is better than other street children who run, chase cars or fight over a load to carry before they can get money. This way, it is a relaxed one to do, otherwise, the Kayayoo business is difficult even though in general, the load carrying is not an easy one.

Although the children interviewed talked about only the ways in which they find load to carry, they never talked about the dangers or risks associated with it. However, I personally observed that the children are at times beaten by drivers whenever they attempted to jump unto the bumper of the car and slow it down or break it in the process. Although some run away, others are severely beaten in the course of finding a load to carry.

The children also beg for money on the street to earn a living. A similar type of activity was noticed by Kopoka (2000) about Tanzanian street children. The author argues that begging is one of the strategies employed by street children to earn a living. The same is true in the case of street children in Kumasi. However, in my case, it was observed that age played a crucial role in the strategies used by the children in carrying out the activity. Children between the ages of 4 and 10 often stop passers-by for money. These children mostly hold the hand or attire of pedestrians until they are given money. With such children, I observed that their adult family members were close to where they beg for the arms to protect them from people who not willing to give these children anything, hold their hands and drag them along. Before they would cry or shout for help, their adult family members would have already been there to rescue them. People seem not to care as passers-by drag the street children since it is the only solution to avoid the children, a man noted. They see it to be normal on the street. This also shows that some of these street children live on the street with their adult family members/siblings. Children within this same age category also beg on the street with their siblings who are blind. These children hold the hand of their blind family members to traffic lights to beg for money. As the cars stop at traffic signal, they quickly rush to the cars to beg for money. Moreover, 'teenage' street children between the ages of 14 and 17 go into agreements with blind people to beg for money. With this type of partnership, the amount they earn on the

street according to the street children are divided into three. The blind person takes two-thirds of the amount whereas the one-third go to the street child. They also stand at traffic areas and beg passengers and passersby when the traffic stops the cars. According to the street children, although the rate for the sharing of the money is fixed, however, they at times cheat the blind people when sharing the money. *Blind people who do not trust us also send it to other people to share it for us, Raphael said.* According to the children, this type of job is difficult to find since trust must be established before they can go for begging with you. People therefore nowadays prefer to go with their family relations because they have tagged street children to be bad people.

Another interesting thing observed was the use of mobile phones by the street children. My study revealed that regular customers of the street children have their contacts and calls them to carry their things once they finish buying them in the market. Such customers also know the where-about of the children and go there to call them once their things are ready to be carried. Furthermore, children who have gained trust at certain stations are called by station bookmen by phone to hurry and carry the load of their customers. Some drivers also have the contact of the street children. Once they are about to arrive at the station, they call the children for them to wait and carry the luggage of the passengers. This is however a mutual benefit sort of activity as the children gives the drivers their 'share' of the money they will get from carrying the load. From my interviews with the children, this is the most easy and non-stressful part of the job because street children who are attached to a particular station don't compete with their fellow street children to carry someone's load. Also, being stationed at a particular car station makes the kayayoo business less risky and avoids fighting among other street children as they always fight to determine who should carry a particular luggage.

Some street children also direct and wash cars at major car parks in the city. I observed several children in how this activity is carried out. For instance, as I went to the place they direct and wash cars around 8:00am. I saw two boys directing vehicles to where there is space for them to park. Usually what they do is, the car you direct is the car you will wash. The first person therefore to see the vehicle and approach it to direct is the one to wash the car. As I continue to talk with the children about their job, one boy saw a Toyota highlander and quickly went to direct it. The man after packing the car gave the boy GHS¹¹ 20 or USD 5. He

¹¹ 4 GHS = 1 United State Dollars

was very happy. He knelt down and gave thanks to his God. He is running all over the place. I approached him and asked him why that extreme happiness. This was his response,

I have never seen such an amount for the past two years. Normally, if you wash a car they pay 1 Ghana Cedis and the maximum I have gotten since I came to the street is GHS 12 for the whole day. It may be due to our numbers here and we run shift so that each and every one of us will get something to buy food to eat. GHS 20 is like washing 20 cars. This is amazing, what a good man. I won't work again after washing this car. God has really sent an angel to bless me today.

My study found out that such an activity is less risky than others who have taking it upon themselves to direct cars at 'main roads'. Those people stand the risk of being knocked down by cars in the course of directing the cars either to move or stop. Several scholars have for example argued that, street children engage in numerous activities that put their life at risk. (Panter-Brick 2002; Hetch, 1998; Ennew, 1994). Notwithstanding, they get their source of income from traffic warding by the drivers and some passers-by.

Another economic activity some street children engage in is prostitution. Children who have migrated to the street just to earn something do any kind of job that will yield them money. However, they often forget about the risk that goes with it like sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy. All that they need is money to 'keep them going'. Early in the research, Karim, one of the street boys, told me there are some of the street children who engage in prostitution, particularly the girls, and that if I want to see them I should go to railways where they are mostly found. I therefore went on an observation the following day to see how they go by their activities in the evening. While walking along the rails, a girl said, *condom goes for GHS 5, and 'raw' (unprotected sex) is GHS 20.* 'Raw' is a Ghanaian term for having sexual intercourse without a condom. This means that the street children also engage in unprotected sexual acts for money. I therefore agree with scholars like Geber (1990), and Anarfi (1997) who researched about street children in Cape Town and Ghana respectively, that, children in street situation engage in sexually related activities in earning a living. In fact, during an interview with one girl, she said *we like the 'raw one' because that gives us enough money.* Meaning, they prefer to have unprotected sex than the protected ones because that is very lucrative. My study further revealed that the amount they charge for sex varies according to the time of the evening. Early evenings (around 7pm-9pm) are higher as compared to late evening (around 10pm -12am). The reason being that, it is during the 'early

evenings' that people normally come to pick them up for sex. Late evening prices are lower because during that time, it is difficult to find people on the street so they accept any amount to get money for the next day. The excerpts below also confirm how some street children engage in prostitution.

I have been seeing this friend with a lot of goods and other stuffs for the mother whenever she comes to our village. She is with new clothes and sandals always. One day I approached her to also send me to the city when she is going. She therefore promised to send me to the city without me paying for the fares and that all I needed is some small clothes to wear upon arrival. I was very happy. The next week, she told me to meet her at dawn to take the first bus that goes to the city. I met her and off we came to the city. When we arrived, she sent me to her sleeping place and told me I will be doing the same business as she does. She then said we will go in the evening. I asked myself, what work is it that we will go in the evening. I therefore gathered courage and approached her to find out of the job and she said she engage in prostitution. I was a bit surprised but she promised me I will be fine. I therefore agreed and started the business. At least now I have something money to buy food, Adwoa noted.

I am a sex worker to be sincere with you. It all started when a friend brought me to Kumasi but later on run to Accra to engage in her business there. I didn't have money to also go to Accra so I decided to stay in Kumasi. I had no work to do for money so one girl introduced me to this business. Since then I have been engaging in this activity and it will be 3 years in November, 2015 since I came to the street. I am happy about it because it gives me money to buy the things I need at least, Lily argued.

From the above excerpts, it is very clear that some street girls engage in prostitution to earn a living. Furthermore, it can deduced from the excerpts that the motivation to move from home to the street was through a weak tie relation as in Granovetter's (1983) theory I use in this thesis. Also, upon arriving to the city, the work the children find on the street is also as a result of a weak tie relationship. I therefore agree with Granovetter that, information flow are more efficient among individuals with weak ties and that the widening nature of the weak tie, make it stronger in relevant and vital information being shared among the group. That is information is likely to spread faster and effective in this group than strong tie groups or the

closely knit kin based one (Granovetter, 1983; 202). Furthermore, I argue that weak ties help street children to secure a job and as well help one another to be stable on the street.

Another source of income for the children is the selling of sachet water, popularly called ‘pure water’ in Ghana. Both boys and girls engage in this type of activity. But my study showed that more girls than boys engage in this kind of activity. The sachet water is sold mostly at traffic and market places. According to the children, usually what happens is that they go for the water from people (their suppliers) in and around the market at an additional cost from the retail price of which their suppliers bought it. The costs of transportation to their store and refrigerator for cooling the water have all been factored in the additional cost. The children therefore get their income after deducting the price at which they were giving from the sales made during the day. The more you sell, the better your chances of getting enough money. The excerpt below confirms the finding.

We do not buy it ourselves. I normally go for mine from a man. He supplies me with it. The normal price for the sachet pack is GHS 3. But because they put it in their own refrigerator, they add something to it and we normally pay GHS 5 to them. That means that I only get GHS 1 for the whole pack if I sell one of the sachet water for GHS 0.20. It is not good at all but at least it is better than me going to steal. As you can see we are also many selling pure water on the street. I therefore have to work hard to get more money and it's not easy.

The excerpt also confirms observation made about numerous people engaging in the ‘pure water’ selling business. As this activity is not illegal in Ghana, a lot of the Ghanaian populace also engages in this activity for a living and the street children are no exception. The activity has become commercial and everywhere on the street people sells pure water. Others put them in a flask cooler in front of their shops for people to buy. Some homes even sell them.

I sell pure water. I buy it for GHS 3 from the dealers and put it in a woman's shop at Roman hill. If I put it in her refrigerator, she charges me GHS 1. At first that I wasn't buying it myself, they were given it to me for GHS 5. I am now able to save that GHS 1 for my susu¹² every day.

¹² Susu is a form of savings with a micro finance or a bank where people (financial intermediaries) come to collect money from people in their place of work or home to deposit for them in their account. Normally the financial intermediaries are people from the micro finance or bank you save with and you can access your money at any time upon request. The account is called usually called Susu account.

This excerpt was from a seventeen year old girl, Eduful, who has been able to save from her earnings and now buy the pure water herself from the dealers. According to her, she only pay *GHS* 1 for putting it in people's refrigerator as compared to her colleagues who comparatively pay *GHS* 2 going for the sachet water from others who also bought it from the dealers. The excerpts also reveal that behind the children engaging in this activity, there are others who also manage their activities. These people mostly get a larger part of the profit than the street children. For example, from the excerpt, if a whole sachet pure water is *GHS* 3, and the children get it for *GHS* 5 from the suppliers, they get a profit of *GHS* 2 for putting it in their refrigerator. However, if the children sell the whole pack (30 pieces) with one going for *GHS* 0.20, they get *GHS* 6. They then pay the suppliers their *GHS* 5 leaving them with only *GHS* 1 as profit. However, if you have your own money and buy it from the dealers, you only pay *GHS* 1 for putting it in their refrigerator, and gets a profit of *GHS* 2 on a whole. The great majority of the street children who engage in this type of activity however, do not have their own money to buy from the dealers. My study found out that because the profit they get is always smaller, they normally use the money to cater for their food and their sleeping place leaving them with nothing the following day. This kind of activity is better and safe if it is not done in the traffic or along high streets. The children mostly run after cars as they try to get their things bought. They at times fall over while running to give the item to the buyer. In the case of a traffic light situation and along the road sides, cars knock and run over them as they fall. This makes their activity more risky. The excerpt below for example, summarizes it all;

the work on the street is not an easy one. We are at times knocked down by cars. Just two days ago, a friend was even sent to the Komfo Anokye hospital because she was knocked down by a 'trotro'¹³ car as she was running to give pure water to someone who was buying it in another 'trotro' car. Unfortunately she fell down and the car passed over her. This is the most risky part of our business. You can lose your life at any time but we still have to do it in order to survive.

Despite the risk involved in their activities on the street, street children still engage in activities that make them more vulnerable to lose their life. People (individuals and buyers) sometimes even take their money away. For example, Christabel told me,

¹³ Trotro are mini buses that ply a particular route in the city. They can also be fixed at a particular car station and passengers can board it anywhere along the route.

people think we (street children) are very bad. They (passengers) will never give you the money unless you give them the item they are buying especially in traffic. Some passengers take our money away when the traffic turns green and the car moves. People who are good drop the money on the floor for you to pick it up. Others also take it away.

This is another challenge that street children face on the street. The children therefore pay for the loss incurred from their profit. In the end, they spend the profit they gain on the street to cater for other expenses or loss incurred on the street leaving them with nothing. This therefore perpetuates their stay on the street as they are always in the struggle to get money to survive.

Hmmm, all is not well at all, not enough money today. People nowadays don't lose their money. I only have 80p from my hunt today as compared to my friend Zakari, who has GHS 10 from pick pocketing, Zakari pinches him.

Zakari, how did you make it? It's easy, but you have to be swift and a good runner. It is a do or die affair; if you are caught, you will be beaten severely. So I mostly do it in a crowded area where people are mostly packed among each other. It is easy to pick pocket in such a scene because everyone is touching the other and if you put your hand in their pocket, they don't really feel it. They mostly think and feel it's the same touching thing in the traffic but before they realized, they have lost some amount of money. I now become the owner of their lost money, (laughs).

The first excerpt brings to fore another source of economic activity of street children, coin hunting. I came to know of this economic activity during an interview with some of the children who said some of their colleagues also engage in hunting of coins on the street for their survival. This wouldn't have been noticed without the children telling me. They therefore introduced me to one of the children who engage in hunting coins on the street. His view is found in the first excerpt. Further observations were made to know how the activity, coin hunting, is carried out on the street. My study revealed that, such children have a magnet tied to a long stick. They hold the stick while lowering the edge that has the magnet in a gutter. They then pull and drag the magnet to and fro in the gutter with the help of the stick. The magnet therefore attracts any metallic substance including coins. This is one way of hunting for coins on the street. Another way is the children moving and going round the street

while keeping their eyes on the ground to see whether people have lost their money as they search for them. They as a result pick any money they find in their search on the street as their source of livelihood. Age also played a crucial role in this type of activity. My study revealed that children between the ages of 4 and 12 mostly engaged in coin hunting on the street. Only boys participated in this type of activity as well.

The second excerpt also point to pick-pocketing as another source of livelihood strategy for street children. This form of activity is also mainly typical of street boys because of its nature; you must be brave, a good runner and the risk of being beaten when you are caught. According to one street girl, this is the main reason why she doesn't want to venture in such a business because she fears being beaten or losing her life by being beaten as her colleague was beaten to death some time ago. However, despite such fears, the children still do it for their upkeep on the street. Mahderehiwot (2014) also observed similar findings among street children in Addis Ababa. He argues that the children have adopted a strategy of pickpocketing on the street. Moreover, he notes that although the activity is an illegal one, his respondents maintained that it is the only way they could also survive on the street. A similar finding is also the case of street children in Kumasi as illustrated above. My study further revealed that children who engage in pick pocketing do it mostly in groups. Their 'adult' siblings or adult street members are always close to them. In a case where one of the children is caught, the older siblings adopt a strategy of first falling on the child and beat him. *But this type of beating is not a real beating. They assume to be beating you hard but in effect it is not any heavy blow or punch, Moses noted.* In this way, they avoid the public from severely beating their colleague. It is a way of narrowly escaping and deceiving the larger public from beating their colleague. The amount gained or earned from pick pocketing is therefore shared among the group after close of the day's activity. The boys who actually do the pick pocketing get the greater part of the share of the money. The reason being, that such boys stand at the risk of losing their life, getting in custody of the police or being beaten severely at times to death when their plans fail.

Good and 'Godly' people show compassion on us when they catch us. Such people at times even give us some money to buy food. But majority beat us, one boy said. During this interview, I observed that people at times give the street children money despite the children's involvement in engaging pick-pocketing (an illegal action). This gives the children hope to continue to engage in such an activity as the children never know when they will meet their 'saviour' to give them money. Although the street children know the risk involved in these

activities, they risk their lives for it because it is the only way they could get money to buy food to eat.

Some of the children who have been on the street for a long time have accumulated some money and do their own 'sort of businesses'. Such children buy items to sell on the street. These items include the selling of toffees and chewing gums, biscuits, pure water, clothes and fruits. My study revealed that those who engaged in such activities were children between the ages of 14 and 17. More girls than boys engage in this type of business.

While most of the girls engage in head portering and hawking, the boys on the street also offload and unload goods/items from big trucks into stores of people as their source of income. This was observed on several occasions on the street. Age plays an important role as to who should participate in this type of economic activity. My study showed that boys between the ages of 13 and 17 engage in this type of business. It was observed that because of the nature of the job, girls didn't want to do it. They think of the job demanding too much of energy and masculinity to do it. Water melon and yam were the most popular things the children offloaded and unloaded from and to the trucks respectively. They also offloaded cement, bags of rice and gallons of cooking oil. But the most popular ones were yam and water melon. The children mostly stand in a line form but with spaces in-between them from the car to the store or shop they are packing the things into. One of the children will also be on top of the truck where the goods are. They then throw it in that form from the top of the truck to the one in the store to pack them. The reverse is true when they are unloading it into the big trucks. With this type of economic activity also, the amount the children get is shared between them equally. However, with respect to the bag of rice and cement, the amount you get paid for is determined by the number of bags you are able to carry. According to the street boys, one bag goes for *GHS 0.50*. The children also struggle for the goods to carry which eventually leads to fighting. For example, one boy told me *we were all struggling for the load. I got there first before him so he hit me. It was painful so I hit him back and we fought. But this is normal*. After the children have finished fighting, I observed them playing after some few minutes. No wonder the boy said it is normal on the street. Street children despite their misunderstandings on the street still need their colleagues in order to survive.

Another money-making activity that the children engage in on the street is polythene bag selling. This activity is mostly done in the market arena where there is a lot of buying and selling. Actually, what happens is that the children target people who have bought an item. As

soon as they see that, they quickly run or approach you to sell the polythene bag to you to put your stuff in. An excerpt below confirms this activity on the street.

I sell polythene bags. What I do is to identify someone who is buying or has bought an item. Since people cannot just hold the item they have bought like that, but needs something to put it in and hold, it is a good opportunity for me to persuade them to buy it. At times what I do is that before the seller packages the item to give it to the customer, I am already there to put the items inside the polythene bag for him or her. It does not work always for me but majority of them work. That is what I use to survive on the street.

The children also have some sort of agreement with the market women who sell in the market. As soon as someone buys something, they call the children to sell the polythene bag to the person. In such an instance, the market women even add the price of the polythene bag to the items being bought and give the money to the children when the buyer leaves. Furthermore, both boys and girls engage in this type of activity. However, more boys than girls engage in the selling of the polythene bags on the street. One street girl said, *the reason why there are more boys than girls is that you need to persuade the customer to buy the polythene bag and the boys are better and good at that compare to we the girls.* As a matter of fact, I was approached by several boys trying to persuade me to buy their bag when I went to the market to buy some food even though I already had one. The boy told me;

please can I give you one of the polythene bags to put your things in. I can see yours is not strong enough to carry your food. Look at this one, very strong. Let me help you by packing it into my bag. I think it is better to do that because I don't want you to waist much time packing it again to another polythene bag when it get thorn or tear on you way, ok!

Before I realized, my food was already in a new polythene bag the boy was selling and I was asking him of the price of the bag. This actually confirmed the persuading side of the activity the street girl talked about as earlier on stated.

Moreover, I was in a car to the field site to gather data. The car got to the traffic light and stop. All of a sudden I saw a boy who quickly runs to the vehicle, holding something in his hand and poured water onto the wind screen of the car. He then washed the screen of the car and went to the mate for his money. Surprisingly, the driver's mate did not even ask the boy of the amount but just knew what to give to the boy. On another day the same thing happened.

In the course of my fieldwork, I learned that 'trotro' drivers never resisted the children cleaning the windscreen of their cars. However, some 'private' car drivers resisted the children from washing their wind screen. This they do by wiping off the water the street children first put on the wind screen before they wash it. The children also understand the language of the game. Once someone uses his or her wiper to clean the water they have poured onto the windscreen, then it means that person is not willing for the child to wash his or her car. The strategy the drivers therefore use to avoid the children from cleaning their wind screen is to constantly use their wiper to wipe the screen of their cars as soon as they see the children approaching their car. Those who do not know the situation normally also wipe their car screens when they realize that the children have poured water onto their wind screen and they are ready to wash it. However, some of the children at times still clean it even though the drivers resist them. The children therefore at times win the sympathy of the driver in the end since they cannot just see the child go like that for the work done. Also the fact that they are children on the street and as 'vulnerable' as they are, they still work or struggle on the street to get money to buy something to eat. This activity was mainly carried out by the boys on the street. It was also observed that because of the setting of their activity, that is in the traffic, some of the cars took their money away after they have finished washing the wind screen of the car and the traffic light turns green of which they are to move. Others also dropped the money on the ground for the children to pick it up. This was mostly done by the trotro cars. But this was found to be dangerous as the children sometimes forget that the cars are moving and only have their eyes fixed on the money on the floor. This makes their activity risky to undertake as some of the children confirmed that at times they get ridden over by some of the cars. I observed that because other rolls the glasses of their cars, they find it difficult to roll it down and drop the money when they are supposed to move in the traffic.

Although there is no doubt that some of the activities the children engage in are illegal and others are threats to their life, my findings presented above in terms of the activities the children engage in such as the selling of water, operating in susu accounts, the use of mobile phones in their everyday dealings and carrying loads from organized stations indicate that the street children are organized, and more importantly are part of the formal economy and society that we might think. Street children have often been categorized as people who are living completely on the outside of society and the formal economy, however, my study is showing quite a different story. For instance, the children move between informal and formal

activities and some are even able to bring home resources to their families in the home village as other also have susu accounts.

What's next after getting the money on the street?

Life on the street is not for free at all. I pay for where I sleep, where I take my bath, where I visit the toilet and as usual the food I eat. It is not easy at all. (What a boy said during an interview)

I don't eat three times a day (morning, afternoon and evening) because it is very expensive if I want to. I have a formation that keeps me going. My formation is 1-0-1 (one-zero-one). Meaning I eat in the morning, nothing in the afternoon and eat again in the evening. I don't have enough money to buy a three square meal. (a girl noted).

We pay for everything on the street, water, food, clothes, in fact everything. But at times we go to the catholic centre to take our bath and visit the toilet. But they only open in the morning from 9am to 4pm in the evening and only in week days. So after that period, we have to pay for water and everything again.

From the excerpts, it is amazing how the street children provide their upkeep and ensure their survival on the street with the little amount of money they get from their day's work even when others do not have money at all. The children employ various tactics to ensure their continuous existence on the street. They also help others who don't have money to get the basic necessities for the day.

The third excerpt above brings to bear how some of the street children rely on other institutions (non-governmental) for help when it comes to bathing and visiting the toilet. It is surprising to know that all the government institutions and projects that provide bore-holes and public toilets, require individuals including the street children to pay before accessing the facility despite their vulnerability. Street children in turn visit places where they can get those services for free, and the Street children Project, where I served as a volunteer was the major place the children come to make themselves comfortable. In such institutions, they do not pay for anything. It is not surprising that during the period where I served as a volunteer in the Street Children Project, I observed that the children come to wait in their numbers at the premises of the centre before it is even opened. They then rush to use the shower or visit the

toilet as soon as the center opens. I further observed that before the center closes at 4pm, the street children again come to take their last shower for the day. One girl noted that

for me and my friends we don't have money to pay for our bathing and the toilet. The center is there for us. That is why we are always here in the morning. We also come before 4pm to take our final shower for the day. We only pay to bath during the week ends when the center doesn't open. And even with that, at times we wait till Monday. Isn't it only two days (laughs and hit the friend). That is what all of us do if I may say.

At Aboabo, one of the major settings where the street children retire to sleep after the day's activities, it was observed that they sleep in wooden structures of which they pay daily to the structure owners. For those who sleep in the brick-liked structures, the amount to be paid determines where you pass the night (according to the children during an interview). Upstairs go for *GHS3* (0.80 USD) and the ground floor for *GHS1* (0.27 USD). The reason being that, those who sleep downstairs are likely to be beaten by rain drops compared to those who sleep upstairs. It was however observed that the ground floor is an open area and that they are likely to be beaten by the rain whereas the upstairs is an enclosed area, hence, the difference in price. One girl said that *I don't pay to sleep upstairs all the time. I only pay during the raining season where it rains every day. This way, I am able to save more.* This presupposes that depending on the season in the year, the children manage to go for the least price for their sleeping place, a strategic way to save money for the future. Also it was observed that the majority of those who slept upstairs were those with babies and “older” street children whereas those who slept downstairs/ground floor were mostly single and younger ones. However, those who sleep in the wooden structures pay *GHS 0.50* (0.13 USD) per night; (eight to ten people in a kiosk).

As earlier on noted, some of the street children also use the money they get from their job to pay the ‘elderly’ street members who search for jobs for them.

I don't keep my money at where I sleep, someone will take it. It is always with me. Have you seen this thing at my waist, I have my money in there and a lot of street children have it. That is where we keep our money.

I save my money with my elder sister on the street. When I finish the day's work, I send everything to her for her to keep for me. She gives me money to buy food and anything when I ask her of money.

From the above excerpt, it is obvious that the street children adopt a means of saving money for the future. The day's proceedings are not always consumed in a day. As some of the children noted that they came to the street to get money to support their siblings and family back home, they therefore save towards meeting that goal. They also use the money they have saved to help other street children who may need money for their survival. That is, they contribute to support one another on the street. Such money also comes from the ones they have already accumulated and saved.

Other children who work with individuals who have stores also take the opportunity to save with them. They mostly tell their employers to keep some of their salary for them, when they need they will come for it. This strategy enables the children to always have money to buy food to eat even when they don't work. This is not to say that others don't go hungry on the street. A street boy said that

the money I get every day from my work is small. I use it in the same day to buy food to eat, water to drink and bath and also pay for where I sleep. If I don't work even in a day, I go hungry because I don't have any money there. At times, my friends buy food for me and I also do same when they don't have money.

Conclusion

Street children engage in diverse money-making activities on the street. I have argued in this chapter that gender and age plays a crucial role in the kind of activity the children engage in. for instance, while coin hunting, pick-pocketing, windscreen washing are for boys, head portorage (kayayo), prostitution and water selling basically are for girls. I have further discussed that the great majority of the children, in fact, almost all, identify their jobs through friends they make on the street. Only few find their own jobs and even with that they still need the services of others to survive.

Chapter 6 Summary and Conclusion

The street children phenomenon have been addressed by several people and organizations in terms of how the children are able to cope with street life, the causes of the phenomenon, the various economic activities the children engage in, their attitude and their health issues.

The study has also involved the views of the public about how they see street children and street life in general. However, Migyimah and Adzisa's narration at the introductory chapter illustrate the complexities involved in the issues of streetism. It shows how the children live outside their parental homes and yet are still able to make use of the street to survive. For example, as seen in the case of Adzisa, she is on the street to cater for herself and that of his siblings. Also, Migyimah's narration speaks of agency and a sense of pride in being able to survive alone outside his parental home and also be of service to society. Street children as I argued in this thesis are children who are found outside their parental homes, and who live and/or work on the 'street' for their livelihood and may or may not have contact with their family members or siblings. (My study also made reference to children who are 18 years and below in categorizing who a street child is.)

Of particular interest in my thesis is also the diverse motivation that drive the children to the street; which is more of social problems and how I argued that the root cause to the phenomenon actually start with the family as reflected in Adzisa's case in chapter one and Musa's story in chapter three. I have also shown that the children have created their own institutions that ensure their survival on the street as seen in Adzisa's narration where the friend she first contacted actually helped her find a job to survive on the street.

Moreover, in chapter two, I discussed that although street children may be seen as having deviated from the universally held view of childhood characterized by play, spending quality time with parents, siblings and friends, the children however constitute a category of active participants within the society. For instance, Musa's story in Chapter three is illustrative of the fact that childhood is not only shaped by social and cultural processes, but also children are active participants within society. This was seen as his father told him to go and fend for himself after the death of his mother. Not only does this support my conceptual framework by James and Prout (1997) that children should be seen as active participants in society, but also support my argument that the root cause of the streetism phenomenon actually start with the family (the children's immediate environment). This positioning is also informed by the

environment within which they find themselves, particularly in Ghana where children have social roles and responsibilities to play towards the survival of the family. Childhood in Ghana therefore as I argued in this thesis is not determined by age but rather teaching a child the way of life of a particular people which involves children engaging in diverse working activities. As such, children's engagement in numerous hard working activities is seen as 'normal' in Ghanaian societies; a cultural ideology of an ideal Ghanaian child and street children are no exception.

Further discovery on the diverse motivations for moving to the street have also been explored in this thesis. Studies by (UNICEF, 2001; Badasu, 2004; Anarfi and Antwi, 1995, Hetch, 1998) have discussed reasons why children move to the street. Such studies show economic and non-economic factors. Although I agreed with these authors that the children migrate to the street as a result of economic reasons, poverty, urbanization, and rural urban disparities, I have further argued especially in chapter three and four that, the breakdown of the family (single parenthood, death of a parent or divorce as seen in the case of Musa in chapter three, and Adzisa in my introduction respectively), large family size and unemployment on the part of parents are actually the major reasons that made street children in Kumasi to move from home. My argument therefore was, a combination of factors (social and economic) therefore make children to migrate to the street and not solely reduced to economic factors as mostly portrayed in literature. However, social factors often precede the economic ones in moving children out of their parental homes to the street.

Moreover, my study showed that some children move to the street for prestige. The euphoria attached to also be seen as 'have been to the city before' contribute to the children moving away from their parental homes to the street. I have also shown in chapter four especially that some of the children move to the street in order to 'gain experience'. That is people who travel experience various forms of life with varying ramifications which make them well baked and mature for life. In effect, it makes the person to be independent as they learn strategies which make them able to withstand anything in life. Children who tend to venture into the world to cater for themselves in this way as my study revealed were 'poor' children bringing out their identity as 'poor'.

Of particular importance is also the project centre that plays a crucial role in the lives of the children on the streets in Kumasi. Even though the centre offers the children some of their

basic needs, it also illustrates that street children have also lost their childhood giving them an identity as poor, needy and vulnerable children (UNICEF, 2002).

Migration has also led to an improvement of the children's identity from earning nothing at home to getting money on the street. They have also experienced change and have better recognition when they go back home. In addition, I have elucidated that migration has led to changes in economic roles by girls. For instance, majority of the girls on the street now constitute a category of people who are the breadwinners and contribute to the survival of their siblings back home; as seen in the case of Adzisa, while the boys primarily provide for themselves.

In chapter five, I have explored the numerous money making activities the street children engage in for a living and how they find such opportunities as they make use of the streets to their benefits. I have further explained that the activities they engage in differ according to age and gender. This means that why some activities are for boys (coin hunting, windscreen washing, car washing, and pick-pocketing), others are for girls (head portorage, prostitution, sachet water selling etcetera). The kayayoo business and general hawking activities such as the selling on gum, sachet water however involves both boys and girls.

The great majority of the children, in fact, almost all, identify their jobs through friends they make on the street. Only few find their own jobs and even with that they still need the services of others to survive.

Within the lens of the new social theory of childhood by James and Prout (1997), I have enumerated the agency of childhood and argued that street children should be seen as not only part of the society but also active agents within it through the construction of their own social processes which make them independent in the society. In view of this, children should not be seen as passive, incomplete and incompetent but rather active in terms of determination and the construction of their own lives vis-a-vis those around them and the society at large.

Furthermore, using Granovetter's theory of social network, I have argued that weak ties (acquaintances and new friends street children make) enable them to survive on the street as seen in Adzisa's story at the introduction. They help each other and ensure their survival and safety on the street. Adolescent street members are also contacted in ensuring that new arrival to the street find jobs to survive. As explained in chapter four, even though I agreed with Hoffman and Scheper Hughes (1998) that street children are simply poor children in the

wrong place, or in the words of Connolly and Ennew (1996) as children out of place, I further argued that the children see the street as a better place to be than their ideal homes as they fulfil their basic needs there and enjoy their freedom as well.

My study has offered an empirical evidence of the street children phenomenon in Kumasi bringing to fore what actually leads to the phenomenon, what the street offer the children and their identity of being on the street. In order to provide a more holistic insight into the streetism phenomenon, in the future, I would on a broader range like to compare street children between different cities and also listen more to the perspectives of the public and the family on the phenomenon. There could be the possibility that the complexities of the phenomenon may have a different turn in another city and that people may perhaps have an alternative view and reaction to the streetism phenomenon. Also, it would be interesting for me to explore further in the future the changes in economic roles for girls.

Moreover, I would like to research into the various welfare systems and institutions that have a role in ensuring the welfare of children on the street and that of their families. This would be intended to gain rich insight into the various reforms mandated to identifying and providing support to children; more or less a substitute to the family, as my study revealed that the street children phenomenon actually starts with the family.

Finally, in this thesis therefore, I have clearly argued that street children in Kumasi however seem very organized, have created institutions on the street that keep them moving despite the conditions the 'street' offer them. As such, they are able to cater for themselves economically, physically and emotionally on the street than with their families.

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