Resources for Thriving among Female porters in Accra

A Qualitative study of Migrants from Northern Ghana to Greater Accra Region. A Salutogenic Approach

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List of Abbreviations

WHO: World Health Organization

SOC: Sense of Coherence

GRRs: Generalized Resistant Resources

NSD: Norwegian Social Science Data Services

GHS: Ghana Health Service

NGO: Non-Government Organization

AGREDS: Assemblies of God Relief and Developmental Services

Abstract

Migration of people has become a common economic activity that individuals depend on to improve their status. Women in the Northern part of Ghana have found migration and working as female porters in the Greater Accra Region as a viable source of livelihood because of their poor socio-economic status. This source of livelihood is wrought with so many difficulties. Despite this, some of the women who migrate are able to thrive. In this study, thriving has come to encompass the process and ability to adjust to unfavorable situations and still enjoy some level of happiness. Thriving female porters have developed means of enjoying well-being in the face of mental, physical and social problems they encounter. Since some of these women living in Accra have been able to thrive, this study has set out to find out the resources for health and well-being among them. This will provide a different perspective to research on internal migration in Ghana that is focused on the stressors and resources. It will also provide practical guidelines on how the lives of future female porters in Accra can be improved.

A phenomenological study involving eight face to face interviews, two group interviews and personal observation was used. The interview participants were women between the ages of twenty to twenty-five from the Upper east, Upper west and Northern regions. These women have lived and worked an average of a year or more in Accra. The women chosen for this study work as female porters and this involve carrying wares on their head for a fee. A semi-structured interview guide was used and was modified throughout the field visit in June 2011. There were two levels of analysis, a within-case analysis and cross case analysis using thematic coding. The cross-case analysis allowed for a comparison between the women in order to identify those who were thriving and those not thriving. Data from only the eight face to face interviews were reported in this study.

The results indicated that there are certain resources necessary for thriving and the effectiveness of these resources for combating stress is dependent on how well the resources are managed. Resources include financial security, social support and religious belief. A positive perception of one's life experience has also been identified as important if the resources will be useful in combating stress. Acculturative stress was dealt with by employing separation strategies and understanding the need for efficiency in their new environment. The Sense of coherence scale could not be used to measure the level of the women's sense of coherence so no conclusion could be drawn regarding it.

Implications of this study for the practice of health promotion include the fact that the resource-oriented approach is practicable and should be used in interventions. Female porters can actually thrive in the South if necessary utilities and resources are put in place by government and other concerned civil institutions.

Chapter One

1.0 Introduction

Studies of migration are typically concerned with problems of adjustment. Yet some migrants cope well with the stress of adjustment, and this study sought to illuminate the coping resources available to thriving or well-adjusted female porters from Northern Ghana, living in the capital, Greater Accra.

Migration is a widespread phenomenon characterized by movement of people both within and across borders. The commonly cited reasons for migration are to improve one's personal, social and economic situation (1). Some 175 million people live in countries different from the one in which they were born (2). The 2009 Human Development Report also estimated that there are about 740 million internal migrants (3). There are two main forms of migration and these are international and internal migration. International migration refers to the movement of persons across national borders whilst internal migration is restricted by national borders (4). Urbanization has been an increased cause for migration in developing countries (5). Research has also shown that two-fifths of internal migration is fuelled by rural-urban migration (5).

Migration is a common phenomenon in Ghana with at least one migrant (both internal and international) living in 43 percent of all households in 2005/2006 (6). Internal migration is estimated to be at about 50 percent of the Ghanaian population (7). In other words, half of the Ghanaian population lives in cities other than the one in which they were born. The pattern of internal migration in Ghana has continually been a movement of people from the North (which includes Northern, Upper East and Upper West Region) to the South (Central, Ashanti and Greater Accra region). This study focuses on the migration of people from the three regions that form the Northern part of Ghana to the Greater Accra Region. Internal migration has resulted from a spatial dichotomy of an underdeveloped North and a relatively developed South (8). This spatial dichotomy is due to pre-colonial and post colonial policies that made the North a labor reserve for the South (9). The establishment of infrastructures in the South to the neglect of the Northern parts also increased the dichotomy (9).

Migration in Ghana is prompted by imbalances in resource endowment, income levels, access to facilities and services (6). The perception of greater availability of socio-economic opportunities in the South has also sustained the continuous migration from the North to

South (6). Previous literature have focused on male adult migrants but recent trends presents a predominantly female and child migration from the North to the South (8). The Ghana Living Standard Survey 5 (GLSS5) reported that the proportion of women migrating to the south (47%) is more than men (37%) (10). The contemporary trend is characterized by an all year round independent migration of children and women (8).

In addition, some studies discussed reasons why children migrate, the extent of familial influence in the decision to migrate and coping strategies adopted by these child migrants (8, 11). Other studies noted that the lack of education, poverty and socio-cultural factors accounted for some of the reasons why young female adolescents migrate to the South (12, 13). Most of these women work as female porters locally called *kayayei*. This work is characterized by carrying wares on the head for a fee (13). The activities of female porters have consequences at both the personal and societal level. On the personal level, there is a problem of shelter, feeding, mental and physical health risk (11). With respect to mental health, these young female migrants are prone to acculturative stress. Acculturative stress is a response by people to life events as a result of intercultural contact (14). Acculturative stress could result from the tendency for people from the Northern region to carry with them 'identity tags' as northerners that separates them from people of other regions (9). This is worsened by the adoption of coping strategies that reinforce their inequality (9). The use of identity tags and coping strategies that reinforce their inequality tends to promote discrimination against the Northerners living in the South. On the level of the society, these migrants have increased the number of slums, congestion and child labor in the country (12).

With some of these inherent hazards associated with migration and even more life as a female porter, there is a need for a health promotion perspective on how these women thrive and live healthier lives. Thriving in this study has come to encompass the process and ability to adjust to unfavorable situations and still enjoy some level of happiness.

Health promotion and migration research on face value seem to have very little in common. But a closer look at the aim of health promotion and the major concerns of migration has shown that migration is an area of great concern for health promotion experts. According to the Ottawa charter, health promotion should be concerned with enabling people live healthy lives (15). This has made it necessary to investigate into thriving among migrants. Health promotion is primarily concerned with focusing on the resources necessary to promote health and not just disease prevention. This is particularly important in this study on internal

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migrants where previous researches have focused more on risk factors rather than resources. This focus on resources is the core aim of salutogenic model (will be explained in details later) which has been adopted as a framework for this study.

A health promotion perspective on thriving among female porters in Accra is necessary. This is because previous studies have neglected the total well-being of these women and have focused on their economic and physical problems. Since health should encompass physical, mental and social well-being (15), a holistic approach that focuses on resources is necessary to understand how these women thrive.

An important aspect of this holistic approach is the issue of mental health promotion. Mental health has been an area of neglect not only among female porters but other studies in developing countries. Studies have shown that mental health is an important aspect of health and health promotion (16, 17). That is why this study purposes to find out how female porters in Accra thrive both mentally and physically.

This thesis focuses on female porters from Northern Ghana living and working in Accra. Questions examined include the resources for thriving among female porters as well as the generalized resistant resources used to handle acculturative stress. There was also a focus on how resources are managed in the face of stressors to produce well-being and the influence of generalized resistant resources on the sense of coherence of female porters.

Chapter 2 begins with an introduction of the theoretical framework of Salutogenesis and review of relevant literature on North-South migration, salutogenesis and acculturation. Chapter 3 describes the context and case of the study which is Ghana followed by the research questions. The methodology chapter which is the fourth chapter will include a description of the participants, data collection procedures and data analysis. Chapter 5 follows with an overview of the findings of the study. This is closely related to the 6th chapter on discussion of the results presented in chapter 5. This chapter concludes with other methodological considerations, implications of the study and the recommendations for future research. The last chapter which is the conclusion is the summary of the thesis and other concluding remarks.

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Chapter Two

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2.0 Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Salutogenesis

The term salutogenesis was coined by the late medical sociologist Aaron Antonovsky (18). It stems from the words salus (from Latin, health) and genesis (from Greek, origin) meaning origin of health (19). He used the metaphor of the river of life to explain a person's health status. It is erroneous to view health and disease as dichotomous (18). Health and disease are on a continuum and everyone at every point in time is at different points of this continuum. The question now is what makes people move towards the health-end of this continuum. The factor that draws people close to the health end of the continuum is salutary factors (18). This led to coining of the term salutogenesis, the origins of health (18). This approach towards health focuses on the resources for health and health-promoting processes (19).

Health promoting processes are all inclusive involving everyone despite their position on the continuum (18). This implies that since we are all in this river of life, it is expedient that one focuses on the factors for health (salutary factors) and not just the reduction of risk factors.

There are two main concepts that form the bedrock of the salutogenic model, Sense of Coherence (SOC) and Generalized Resistance Resources (GRR). GRRs refer to the "property of a person, collective or a situation which as evidence or logic indicated facilitated successful coping with the inherent stressors of human existence" (18 p.15). Examples of GRR include materials, knowledge, religion, cultural stability (20, 21). People adopt several resources that enable them to cope in the face of stressors (18). These resources are the GRRs and they 'make sense' because each person develops a generalized orientation towards the world. This orientation enables a person to assess, understand and find meaning in a situation in order to move in a health promoting direction (20). These GRRs foster a repeated life experience that enables an individual to see the world as 'making sense' (18). This ability to make sense of the world is what is called the Sense of Coherence. It is defined as

"*as a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that (1) the stimuli deriving from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable and explicable; (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by the stimuli; and (3) these*

demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement. This orientation makes the world manageable, comprehensible and meaningful". Antonovsky 1987cited in (22 p.241)

The three major components of SOC are comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. Comprehensibility refers to how structured, predictable and explicable a person's world is. Manageability emphasizes the extent to which a person is able to mobilize and manage his or her perceived resources. Meaningfulness on the other hand refers to whether a challenge is worth it emotionally and worthy of investment and engagement (23). When confronted with a stressor, a strong SOC facilitates the movement towards health. Figure 1 below will be used to illustrate the salutogenic framework.

Figure 1: Salutogenic Model
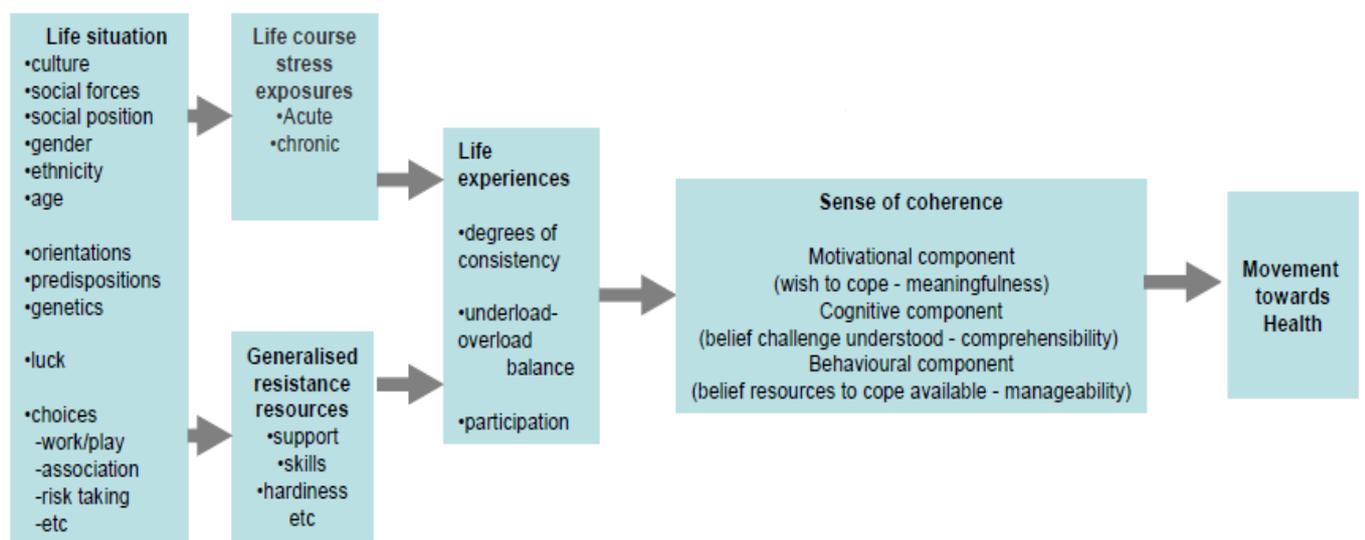
Source: Mittelmark (MB) (24) based on Antonovsky 1996

2.1.1 Life situation
Life situation refers to the unique context, environment and disposition that every individual is born with. In Antonovsky's metaphor of health in the river of life he described that everyone is born into this river but with different abilities to swim. Some individuals are born at a point in the river where the river flows gently. Others are born close to the water-fall where survival is quite hard (19). Those born where the river flows gently have the needed resources and the prerequisites of a good life available to them. Others who are born close to

the edge of falling are faced with greater struggles in order to survive (19). But everyone is exposed to some measure of risk and varying amounts of resources at their disposal.

This unique life situation is defined by one's gender, culture, genetics, choices and association e.t.c. Some of these factors are predetermined, for example gender and genes are predetermined and an individual has no control over them. Others are a consequence of choice and at times luck. Our life situation is very important because it predisposes us to both stressors and resources that we need to survive.

2.1.2 Life course stress exposures

Over the course of one's life, there are numerous stressors that will be encountered. Stressors are "problematic negative events in the life of people" (22 p.240). Stressors could either be chronic stressors which are long term such as a terminal illness or an acute stressor which is short term. Individuals are exposed to these stressors as a result of the life situation they find themselves. In the metaphor of health in the river of life, every individual born into this river is faced with risk and these risks are the stressors that threaten our well-being.

2.1.3 Generalized Resistance Resources

As stated earlier, GRRs are the resources that one has and uses to cope in the face of stressors. A GRR is a physical, biochemical, material, cognitive, (…) macro socio-cultural characteristic of an individual, primary group, sub-cultural, society that is effective in avoiding and combating a wide of variety of stressors and thus preventing tension from being transformed into stress (25). They usually exist prior to the experience of stressors but are employed when it's necessary.

2.1.4 Life experiences

Throughout life, we encounter life events comprising of both stressors and the need to manage stressors with available resources. These form the basis of an individual's life experiences. According to the salutogenic model, an individual can experience an under-load, overload or balance in life. Each of these life experiences has an effect on the health of the individual.

An under load of stressors over resources results when one's life experience predisposes them to more resources and less risk of stressors. This is possible when an individual is born into the river with the assets for a good life. An overload on the other hand is as a result of excessive stressors. Using the metaphor of health in the river of life, some people are born

close to the waterfall and so are exposed to a great number of stressors. These people have limited resources that become insufficient to take care of the stressors.

Some individuals also experience balance when the resources available to them equal the stressors that they are faced with. A balance of resources and stressors will move the individual towards the health end of the health/disease continuum. Participation is primarily concerned with the extent to which the individuals feel that they are making a meaningful contribution to their environment (19). This can be in the in the form of decision-making or influencing community activities and policies. Meaningful participation is also important for health.

2.1.5 Sense of Coherence and health

The second major concept of the salutogenic model is the Sense of Coherence. An individual's life course stress exposures, GRRs and life experiences are important in developing a strong SOC. Life experiences that result in some degree of consistency and a balance between stressors and resources is likely to yield a strong SOC. This consistency in life experiences contributes to meaning and makes life more comprehensible. The GRRs provide the prerequisites for the development of SOC. At least four GRRs have to be at one's disposal in order to facilitate the development of a strong SOC (19). SOC is not only considered as a GRR but is also shaped by an individual's GRR because it is a way of thinking and taking action as a human being that gives direction to life (19). It can also be seen as a coping resource and not a coping strategy which provides the ability to choose from different strategies for solving different problems or to manage life events (26).

 The three dimensions of SOC combine to give an inner trust and confidence to identify necessary resources. These three dimensions affect our ability to use and reuse resources to produce health (19). The meaningful component has been identified as the most important of the three components. This is because it is the driving force for life (19). It also enables the individual to impose structure and search for resources which will strengthen the other two components (comprehensibility and manageability) (19). Importantly, it is not the content of what gives meaning but rather the fact that one believes that such meaning exists (19).

The SOC scale was designed to measure the strength of an individual's SOC. Antonovsky developed the orientation to life questionnaire to measure SOC and it consists of 29 items measuring different dimensions of health (19). A later version of the SOC scale (SOC 13) was introduced in 1987 (19). The SOC scale is one general factor with three dimensions,

comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness and they all interact (19). Even though Antonovsky proposed that the SOC scale was a uni-dimensional research seems to show that it is rather multidimensional (27).

A review by Eriksson and Lindström (28) showed that there have been a number of revisions in the SOC scale. There have been 15 different versions of the SOC scale but across these studies the SOC scale has proved to be a valid instrument for measuring health.

Other theories that are related to the salutogenic model include resilience, internal locus of control, empowerment, learned optimism e.t.c (19). All these theories have an assets approach as the major theme or part of their major theme in their description of health.

This next section is a review of the relevant literature based on the research questions which explores concepts such as stressors, GRRs, acculturative stress and SOC. Recent studies on the subject matter and highlighting of research gaps will be the focus of this section. Research that has focused on the migration of individuals from the North to the Southern part of Ghana have highlighted the stressors and coping strategies of internal migrants.

2.2 Coping resources adopted by female porters in Accra

Coping resources have been referred to as survival strategies in some studies (12), coping strategies in others (29). It is a broad concept encompassing the means by which people deal with stressors using either preexisting assets or assets acquired in the face of difficulties. In salutogenic terms, these preexisting resources are called GRRs.

A number of studies that have discussed how female porters in Accra cope have begun by highlighting the stressors female porters are exposed to. Internal migration was wrought with both disadvantages and advantages (30). Although this study focused entirely on child migrants some relevant disadvantages of migration were highlighted (30). For example, the theme of economic hardship, expressed as the receipt of low remuneration for labor rendered by the children is evident in other studies. Economic hardship and other stressors such as verbal abuse, open-shelter related risks, problems of safety and health were found in other studies (12, 31). Economic hardship was expressed as an under payment for services rendered by female porters. Verbal abuse was from both relatives and non-relatives in Hashim (30). But among female porters in another study it was mainly from customers who needed the services of these porters (13).

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Other identified risk factors include urban environmental risk, social exclusion and perception of migrant as human encumberment (32). Urban environmental risk refers to poor living conditions such as poor sanitation, inadequate sewage system, overcrowding e.t.c. Urban environmental risks was also discussed in a different study although the term urban environmental risk was not used (13). Social exclusion and human encumberment largely pertained to the perception that these migrants were a nuisance to the city and should therefore be excluded from social amenities. These hazardous conditions make the migrant quite unsafe and prone to experience stress. Economic exclusion which is similar to social exclusion involved female porters feeling like they had limited access to economic opportunities necessary for their well-being (31).

Most of the female porters in Accra are usually married and within child bearing ages resulting in increased sexual activities. As a result of their poor economic situation, they are not able to acquire the necessary care needed in cases of pregnancy or birth. Reproductive health risk, lack of antenatal and post natal care and coping with child care are other risk factors that have been identified (33). These risk factors are unique because they do not only affect the porters themselves but also their offspring. There is also a high level of child neglect among female porters (33).

Apart from the literature on stressors and risk factors, some studies have also investigated into how female porters cope. Comparatively, there is more information on stressors than on coping among female porters. In order to deal with financial constraints most female porters rely heavily on social networks (12, 34). They obtain loans and credit from friends in times when they do not earn enough to take care of themselves. They also engage in collective saving schemes locally called 'susu' in order to deal with financial difficulties that might arise (12). In addition these women cut down on food consumption in order to save more money (29, 31). Although this is supposed to be a coping strategy, it has adverse effects on their health because they are deprived of the adequate nutrients for health.

Using the livelihood framework, physical strength was identified as an important asset of female porters (31). Due to their low-level of education, employment in the public sector was quite impossible. This made it necessary for female porters to find a form of livelihood that did not require knowledge but an asset they already had which was their physical strength. It was found that child migrants usually sleep in groups in order to ensure their safety (29). This group sleeping arrangements protect them from thieves that might want steal or even rape

them. Learning a trade, access to information and income were found to be determinants for migrants to remain in their current destination despite stressors they are faced with (32). These factors also serve as coping resources because if female porters have knowledge of a trade or income they will be able to deal with their economic problems.

As mentioned earlier, GRR is a term that is closely related to coping resources. Outside the scope of North-South migration, one study showed that certain GRRs were necessary for the formation of a high SOC among men and women (35). These factors include quality of relationship with partners, social support, quality of work and childhood living conditions (35). Social support and relationships were also found to be important resources in previous studies on North-south migration.

In conclusion, most of the coping strategies were basically used to cater for economic stress because that was the major stressor of female porters in Accra. Coping resources such as social networks could be described as GRRs and other resources such as learning a trade and group sleeping arrangements as acquired coping strategies adopted after migration. These studies have focused on coping with economic stress to the neglect of resources for thriving and general well-being. The focus of this research is to provide a more holistic perspective into understanding how female porters cope and thrive.

2.3 Acculturative stress

"The meeting of new cultures and the resulting changes are what has come to be collectively known as acculturation" (1 p.1). The meeting of people is not an uncommon phenomenon and even more through migration both within and across borders. Acculturation occurs in culturally plural societies (36). Ghana is a good example of such a society. There are 6 main ethnic groups in Ghana that differ along both religious and cultural lines. The language, culture and facial appearance of the people from Northern Ghana is quite different from the South. There are other cultural differences such as living arrangements, life style and even marriage patterns (37, 38). During internal migration there is likelihood that acculturation will occur.

Different people adopt different acculturation strategies (36). Acculturation strategies include assimilation, which involves loss of cultural identity in order to seek daily interaction with other cultures. It is contrasted with integration where one maintains his or her original culture and still enjoys daily interaction within the new culture (36). Separation results from the need to hold onto an original cultural identity and rejecting interaction with the new culture (36).

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Marginalization and separation as acculturation strategies share one similarity. Both marginalization and separation involves rejecting any social interaction with the new culture. But they also differ in the sense that marginalization involves rejection of one's previous cultural identity but separation does not (36).

When people encounter difficulty during the acculturation process then acculturative stress ensues (14, 39). Acculturative stress is a response by people to life events as a result of intercultural contact (14). This response might include depression and anxiety. The type of acculturation strategy adopted affects a person's adaptation process and in the long run well-being (40). Other studies have sought to provide evidence on the link between acculturation and mental health (41). Social networks have been found to play a substantial role in reducing psychosocial vulnerability (41). Social cohesion and religion were also mentioned as important coping resources (41). This finding was replicated in another study that indicated that religion and social support affected self reported physical health during acculturation (42).

There is a link between immigration and health (43). During migration people are exposed to changes in their original way of life, physical and social environment (43). Research has also shown that immigrant women are exposed to a "double jeopardy" (43). This double jeopardy includes combining family responsibilities with economic needs, general health vulnerabilities and acculturative stress (43). Women are also responsible for passing their cultural identity to their children (43). This in the long run makes them involved not only in their acculturation but also their children's (43). Despite the enormous research in acculturation, little has been done in the area of acculturative stress during internal migration in Ghana. This might be due to the erroneous assumption that Ghana is a fairly homogenous society or maybe because female porters in Accra are short-term migrants. Nevertheless some evidence base is still necessary on the pattern and occurrence of acculturative stress among female porters and how they deal with it.

2.4 Sense of Coherence in the context of migration

The key concepts of the salutogenic model were clarified using a review of 25 years of scientific evidence of salutogenic research (20). The life orientation questionnaire (SOC) seems to have consensual validity and is also cross-culturally applicable (20). There is another similar theoretical literature also based on reviews of previous salutogenic research (44). These theoretical literatures provide evidence that enable the consolidation of this model as a

theory to guide health promotion (19, 20, and 44). Although very relevant, these theoretical literatures have various research gaps. Some of these gaps include how best the SOC explains overall health, and the applicability of SOC over a wider range of populations. As a paper on salutogenesis very little information was provided on the GRRs.

Other studies on SOC have explored the relationship between immigration and resilience (45), SOC and mortality (46), SOC and mental health recovery (47). SOC was discussed as a protective factor for family members of people suffering from mental illness (48). This study is similar to Ehrensaft & Tousignant (45) because they both associate SOC with resilience and noted that developing meaning out of chaos was necessary for coping. SOC was also identified to be related to coping strategies among women with premature delivery (49). Most of these studies except Wainwright et al. (46) identified the importance of SOC for both emotional and mental health. Few studies have been able to show the relationship between SOC and physical health. In addition, these studies discuss SOC as a coping mechanism which in a way concurs with Antonovsky's original idea although they seem to be limiting the scope of this component. Antonovsky intended it to be a globalised orientation towards the world that should be able to explain overall health and not only mental health or simply a coping mechanism.

 SOC can explain quality of life and health in general (50). People living with congenital diseases describe themselves as having a better quality of life than the general population because of the presence of a high SOC (50). They continued to say that there is a reciprocal relationship between SOC and GRR (50). This is quite innovative because it explains how GRRs shape SOC to produce health. Consistent exposures to stressors help in the development of GRRs and in turn SOC (50). SOC on the other hand enables the individual to mobilize his or her resources to deal with stressors.

Another study did not only explore SOC but some resources that could directly or indirectly affect the relationship between a mother and a child's SOC (51). This study provides evidence on the importance of SOC and some of the family dynamics that might affect the development of a high SOC.

2.5 Conclusion

In the search for papers on SOC in Ghana, none was found. Most of the studies reviewed here were conducted in Western societies and a few in Asia and other developing countries. There is a gap on SOC and health in places like Ghana.

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The above review has highlighted major research conducted in relation to health among female porters in Accra. Based on the review it is obvious that there are still some research gaps and unanswered questions. These gaps include holistic research (that focuses on both mental and physical health) into thriving among female porters, the effect of GRRs on SOC among them and resources for acculturative stress. These gaps will be addressed by this study's research questions.

Chapter Three

3.0 The Context

3.1 Ghana

Ghana was the first African country to obtain independence from the British Colony in March 1957. It is part of West Africa and it borders with Togo to the East, Cote d'Ivoire to the West and Burkina Faso to the North (52) (refer to map in appendix I). Ghana has a total land area of 87,853 square miles and 238,535 kilometer square. Ghana is one of the lead producers and exporters of cocoa, although bauxite, timber and gold are competing economic activities (9). Ghana has 10 administrative regions which include Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Central, Eastern, Upper East, Upper West, Northern, Volta, Western Regions and Greater Accra Region.

Ghana's economic situation has been a cause for concern over several decades. Despite the huge resource endowment the economy has been developing at a very slow pace. There has been some improvements in the gross domestic product since economic reforms were put in place in 1983 (52). There has also been the introduction of a National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), school feeding programs and National Youth Employment Program (NYEP) by the government (52). These programs were put in place in order to improve the general living conditions (52). Despite some of these improvements a number of Ghanaians still live below the poverty line with immense inequality between the North and South of Ghana. This has created the context for both internal and international migration (52).

3.2 Northern Ghana

The Northern part of Ghana although the largest in the country is the least developed economically and in terms of infrastructure. It covers the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions. The origin of this inequality between the Northern parts and the Southern parts includes geography and pre-colonial relationship between kingdom and tribes (9). It is also as a result of the policies of the colonial dispensation and post-colonial dispensation (9). With respect to geography there is lower rainfall, savannah vegetation and remote inaccessible location of much of the Northern parts. The policy of the colonial dispensation ensured that the North was a labor reserve for the South and this resulted in little or no development of the Northern parts. This was reinforced by a post colonial dispensation that refused to break such trend (9).

This state of poor development of the Northern region has accounted for the constant migration of men, women and children to the South in order to look for work. Migrants' destination includes the Ashanti region mainly Kumasi, Western region that is Sekondi-Takoradi and the Greater Accra Region. Increasing numbers of migrants are now being found in the capital city of Accra. This pattern of migration stem from the pre-colonial period where there was a cyclical movement of people from the North to South and subsequent return during their single growing season (53). This pattern of migration continued into the post colonial period and this trend has continued for a number of reasons. These reasons include urban-biased policies, increased population growth in places like the Upper East region and depressed social conditions in the place of origin (53).

3.3 Porters in Accra

The business of head carriage has been in existence since the pre-colonial period. Head porterage was historically a women's activity where rural women in Ghana engaged in head load carriage in their agricultural activities (54). This was done in order to ensure survival of their household (54). This has translated into the modern day business of porterage popularly known as kayayei. The current congestion in Accra, the unplanned buildings and presence of petty traders along the road side has made the work of head porters very useful in Accra (51). Although men also engage in this business, it has become a predominantly female economic activity. It has also been used as a stepping stone for more desirable trades such as dress-making or hairdressing (55).

Female porters in Accra live in low standard accommodations usually found in market places and slums making them vulnerable to health risk. One slum (Agbobloshie) and one market place (Tema Station) was chosen as the site of the study. As a result of their low-economic status and poor housing conditions these women are also the target of city guards who feel that they are a nuisance to the society (34). It is in light of these conditions that some women struggle to make use of the few resources available to them in order to thrive.

3.4 Research Questions

In this research, three major perspectives are considered in understanding thriving among female porters. These perspectives are North-South migration in Ghana, salutogenesis and acculturative stress. These perspectives form the bedrock of the research questions to be answered in this study. These questions include:

1.   What are the generalized resistance resources used by female porters in Accra?

2.	How do the stressors that female porters are faced with interact with resources in order to enhance thriving?

3.	What generalized resistance resources are used to cope with acculturative stress?

4.	How do female porters in Accra use their generalized resistant resources to make sense of the world?

Chapter Four

4.0 Methods

This section presents a description into the rationale and procedures adopted in the process of both data collection and data analysis. It begins with a brief note on the phenomenological approach chosen followed by other intricacies of qualitative research design.

4.1 Phenomenological study design

A phenomenological study involving group interviews, observations and individual face to face interview was used. A qualitative research involves exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social situation or human problem (56). This approach involves emerging questions and data collection procedures within the participants setting. Data analysis is usually inductive that is forming general themes from particular reports by the participants (57). This approach was chosen to enable the researcher gather in-depth information on the life of these women as porters. It also enabled the researcher to observe the participants within their natural setting so that a holistic explanation could be provided on the experiences of these women. The open-ended approach allowed these women to tell their story as it was. In this study, the qualitative approach was particularly useful because the advantage of flexibility. This advantage was used to refine some previously stated methodological issues.

A phenomenological study was particularly chosen because "it describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (57 p.57). Phenomenologist generally focus on describing what participants have in common when experiencing a phenomenon. According to the philosophical tradition of phenomenology a person's lived experiences are affected by their subjective interpretation (58). This approach requires that we set aside our take-for-granted orientation and study a social action from the point of view of its members (59). In this study, the researcher was interested in finding out how these women interpret their lived experiences and how all these influenced their well-being.

One of the methods of data collection used in a phenomenological approach is a face to face interview. An interview is a conversation directed towards a researcher's need for data (60). An interview in the research parlance involves exploring the accounts of participants and comparing these with the theoretical understanding of underlying structures (60). Face to face

interviews were used to gather information on each participant's unique life experience. An important aspect of a phenomenological study is the subjective interpretation of individual players despite their shared social situation. A Group interview is any interview where the researcher simultaneously gathers data from more than one participant (60). Group interview was also used to elicit data in a group setting. This was done for two reasons; first it was relatively easier to collect more data in a group setting. Secondly, most of the participants formed what is called "naturally existing groups" (60). The participants who were found in such groups preferred to be interviewed as a group rather than individually. Observations were also used because it allowed the researcher to record mundane and unremarkable (to participants) features of everyday life that interviewees thought were not worth commenting on (60). Observational strategies also help to put behavior and phenomenon into their proper context of occurrence. These three methods combined enabled the researcher to gather a holistic data on the phenomenon of study.

4.2 Timeline for project

This master thesis project began in February 2011, when the process of writing the research proposal begun. This was followed by data collection from June to August. Transcription and analysis followed in the month of September. The write-up and the completion of the thesis spanned the period of September 2011 to May 2012.

4.3 Subjectivity

One of the important ingredients of the scientific method is the need to be objective. In qualitative research this is a challenge since the aim is to understand the world from the point of view of the players. Despite this, qualitative researchers endeavor to reduce subjectivity and ensure accurate and objective reporting of data. It is the role of the researcher to publish findings that are accurate and representative of the field of inquiry as much as possible (61). Since the researcher is the main instrument of data collection, there is a tendency for personal views and previous inclinations to affect the research.

In phenomenological research it is important for the researcher to bracket earlier preconceptions whilst analyzing data (57, 58). Bracketing involves describing personal experiences with the phenomenon (57). This is done with the aim of setting these experiences aside (though not totally possible) so that the focus can be directed to the participants of the study (57). The researcher's awareness of her personal orientations and the ability to declare them openly helped to reduce subjectivity in this study

4.4 Ethical considerations

In every research the researcher does not only study the lives of people but also makes inquiries into their personal lives. This would give rise to a number of ethical considerations and dilemmas that have to be dealt with (62). In this study on female porters in Accra, there were a number of ethical issues to be dealt with. First of all, before leaving for field work the researcher had to receive ethical clearance from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). This institution approved the data collection process and field visit to Ghana. On arriving in Ghana, the researcher had to apply to the Ghana Health Service (GHS) for ethical clearance. Although they are more concerned with bio-medical research, they were also authorized to provide ethical clearance for other health researches. The researcher obtained ethical clearance from GHS and then commenced with research.

At the beginning of every interview, it was important to seek the consent of the participant. In qualitative research, informed consent requires that the researcher explains the aims and purpose of the study to the participant (61). The study was explained to the women who participated in the study. These women were also allowed to ask for clarification of questions they did not understand. A consent form was provided where participants thumb printed as evidence of consent. As a result of their low-level of education some women refused to thumbprint but rather insisted on providing oral consent. Other women were also apprehensive when they saw the digital recorder but the researcher explained the reason for using the recorder and consent was sought. One issue that kept arising was that most of these women wondered if we were (the researcher and an assistant) from an NGO who were there to write their names and take them to school. Some potential participants even ran off because they thought we were from the government and were there to report them. It was therefore necessary to thoroughly explain that we were students doing a research and not there to harm them. Considering their socio-economic status it was also important to let them know that we were not there to provide financial support to them.

 The consequences of the data collection process on the participants were very important (61). Although the study did not provide any direct benefit other than reflecting on their experiences, these women were assured that the research report will help other people in similar situation. One potential harmful consequence was the occupation of participant's time during business hour. A number of them complained that they needed to go and look for work. This resulted in the interview being cut short and postponed to the next day.

Participants were also assured that their identity will be held in confidentiality. As a result little information concerning their identity was sought for. In addition, only pseudonyms were used in reporting the result of the study. Finally, an important ethical issue is reporting accurate data. This is particularly essential during transcription, analysis and data interpretation. The researcher had to endeavor to report findings without distorting or falsifying the information being reported. In the case of this study, transcription from Twi[1] to English was very thorough to ensure that no data was lost or misinterpreted.

4.4 Participants and Sampling strategy

A purposive sampling technique was used to identify potential participants. This technique involves the selection of individuals and sites for a study because they purposefully inform the understanding of a research question (57). The researcher originally proposed to use an NGO called Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services-AGREDS (http://www.agreds.org/home.htm) as the first point of call. After several failed attempts at getting the NGO to act as gate keepers and help with identifying participants the researcher went into the field to find potential participants on her own. It was not possible to access AGREDs due to the short period allocated for data collection.

A preliminary visit to the two proposed research sites resulted in the researcher making some changes in the choice of sample. These changes included changing the research sites from Nima[2] to Agbogbloshie[3] and Tema station[4]. The original research site (Nima) was changed because the potential participants found there were quite apprehensive and unwilling to be interviewed. The second change that was made was the criterion for choosing the sample. The proposed sample was supposed to be women who were porters but no more in this business. The sample was changed to women still working as porters and has been involved in such work for a relatively long period of time. These changes were made because of the difficulty associated with identifying porters who are no longer in the head carriage business. With this backdrop of sampling choice, the length of stay in the South was used as an important criterion for choosing participants.

The participants selected must have lived in the Accra for over a year to be chosen to be part of the study. Few participants who did not meet this criterion were also chosen so that a

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[1] One of the local languages spoken in the southern part of Ghana.
[2] This is one of the places in Accra commonly known for migrant settlement from the North.
[3] This place is also a market in Accra where most of the migrants from the north settle.
[4] Another Bus station and market where migrants from the North live and work.

comparative analysis could be done among these two groups of women. The women chosen for the study were between the ages of 20-25 years. Some of the women did not know their age but guessed they fell within the above stated range. Using the technique of purposive sampling, the researcher identified women who were currently working as porters to participate in this research. These women were part of two group interviews and eight face to face interviews. The group interview was made up of three women each. Five of the women in the individual interview had lived in the Accra for over year whilst the remaining three women have been there for an average of six months.

4.5 Data collection

As stated earlier a preliminary visit was made to the two mentioned sites for the study. During this visit, the researcher tried to find a suitable gate keeper. Two women who had lived in Agbogbloshie for a long time and knew a couple of female porters agreed to be our gatekeepers. These women participated in a pilot study in order for the researcher to ascertain the suitability of the interview guide for the participants. The information from the pilot study was not included in the analysis. Two group interviews were conducted and eight individual face to face interviews. There are different types of group interviews. But for the purpose of this research a group interview consisted of three research participants from whom the researcher gathered data simultaneously. This was done for two purposes: first to gather enough information within a limited time. Secondly, these women move in groups and are influenced by the action of other women in their group. In the context of this research, a female porter is likely to participate in a study if her fellow porter agreed to it. There was one group interview at Agbogbloshie and another one at Tema station. Three face to face interviews were conducted at Agbobloshie and five at Tema station. It was relatively easy to find participants in Tema station through the technique of snow balling.

The interview guide was solely open-ended and this allowed the women to express themselves in a manner that elicited enough data. During the group interview it was easy for the women to derail from the topic so it was necessary to always try to bring them back to the subject at hand.

Each interview except the pilot interview was recorded with a digital recorder. Before each interview the participants were informed and authorized the recording. This was particularly important because the researcher found out that these women had had encounters where people came and wrote their names with the promise of bringing them money. It was

therefore necessary to clarify that we were just researchers who were not there to write their names with the promise of money or sending them to school. Each interview lasted between thirty to forty-five minutes. There was only one principal researcher that is the author and an assistant who assisted with translation. During the interview the principal researcher took down notes in addition to tape recording.

The interviews were conducted in the local language Twi and the transcription was done in English. The transcription was done by the principal researcher because she understood the local language although she could not write it. Some visits to the sites were purposefully for observation in order for the researcher to understand the context within which data arose. These observations, note taking and recorded interviews provided a triangulation of data.

Rapport was created by telling the female porters of the researcher's life experience as a migrant and also general interest in their lives as porters. During the process of data collection some of the participants were quite tired getting to the end of the interview and this might have had some effect on their responses. But the rapport created at the onset of data collection made them quite willing to provide accurate answers to the interview questions. The data provided was quite exhaustive because the researcher felt saturation had been reached by the time of conducting the 6th interview.

Most interviews were done based on prior appointment. On meeting a potential participant the researcher arranges with the participant to come back at a time that was convenient for the participant. The group interviews on the other hand were done when a group of women sitting together all qualify to be part of the study. This kind of group is called a natural group (56)

The SOC questionnaire was difficult for the women to relate to. A lot of practical examples were needed for them to comprehend what the questions were demanding. In the long run the data from the SOC scale could not be used.

4.6 Analysis

Data analysis is one of the very crucial stages involved in research. This is because enormous amount of data is gathered and the researcher has to decide on a suitable method of analysis that will ensure that accurate information is reported. The method of analysis varies on a continuum on the extent to which the researcher seeks to preserve the original data as with narrative research or engage in intensive interpretation as with grounded theory (57, 63). Qualitative research is an iterative process of data collection, data analysis and report writing.

These processes do not flow simultaneously but rather are interrelated steps in the research process (57). There are different methods of analysis but for the purpose of this study the thematic coding analysis by Creswell 2007 was used. The researcher considered using phenomenological analysis but did not. This is because given the purpose of the research, the questions and the time frame, a phenomenological analysis was inadequate. Despite this some tenets of the phenomenological method of analysis will be included.

 The first step in analysis is to organize and properly manage data collected (56). After each interview the researcher transcribed the interviews conducted that day and stored it in a folder. At the end of the interview process all the data had been thoroughly transcribed from the native language to English and then type written. It was very important for the researcher to ensure that the transcribed data actually reflected the original data collected. The data was then stored in different files according to date, venue and time of interview. No information on names was provided in order to protect the anonymity of the participants.

Transcription was then followed by reading the data several times until the researcher had a good understanding of the content of the interview. This process began whilst on the field and it informed other interviews that were yet to be conducted. During the process of reading and assimilating the transcribed data, a memo was kept where thoughts and reflections were noted. These reflections later informed the coding process. A process of open coding was used where large chunks of data were grouped into similar categories. This phase of the analysis allowed the researcher to see any upcoming patterns in the data being collected.

These categories flowed naturally into codes that were used to describe the data. There were eighteen codes that emerged from the interview. There were other codes that emerged from observation and informal interactions during the field visits. Codes from observation and informal interaction were important because they helped in providing a structural description of the context of the phenomenon being studied (64). During this period frequent discussion with my supervisor was very useful because he assisted me in providing a structure for the analysis process. The codes covered three main aspects of the research questions which were stressors, resources and interaction of in order to enhance thriving. These codes were developed during the within-case analysis[5]. Within-case analysis involves finding possible patterns and codes from all the interviews as one case (Personal communication with Prof.

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[5] Within case analysis is the way we narrow information in the method of thematic coding analysis in order to form the basic themes of this study.

Mittelmark). With-in case analysis allowed the researcher not only to discover patterns but also to present each participant as a unique case. A follow up of a cross-case analysis[6] was also conducted by comparing the two groups of participants that emerged from the within-case analysis (personal communication with Prof Mittelmark). The groups that emerged were divided into women who reported to be happy and thriving and those that did not. The codes were developed having in mind the research questions and previous literature. But the researcher tried to minimize the influence of previous findings on the analysis.

The codes allowed for describing and classification of the data gathered. The researcher then grouped the codes that were common to those thriving and those common to those not thriving. Finally, the codes that were common to both groups were also grouped together. These set of codes were grouped under different sub-themes which have been clearly presented in the results section. These codes were presented under the cross-case analysis accompanied by a comparison of thriving female porters with those not thriving across these codes. The sub-themes were determined based on the research questions. Codes were grouped under each research question's sub-theme based on its ability to provide answer to that question.

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[6] This type of analysis was necessary to show the specific resources for thriving.

Chapter Five

5.0 Results

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to use the Salutogenic model in explaining how female porters in Accra in vulnerable situations cope and also thrive. As mentioned earlier, the analysis of this report's findings was done on two levels. The first part of this chapter represents the results of the within-case analysis. These findings are presented as an in-depth description of the life of each participant with quotes that provide evidence for the descriptions cited. The second part of this chapter will then continue with a cross-case analysis of the women in the study. This section will be a comparison between women who were thriving and those who were not based on their self reports on questions of well-being. The findings of only the eight face to face interviews will be presented for analytical purposes. All information was translated from the local language to English. All the names used in this study are pseudonyms so that the identity of participants can be kept confidential.

5.1 Results of Within-case analysis

Fuseina, a Northerner from Sissala[7] had lived in Accra for little over a year. She is married and has a son. Fuseina is the fourth of three other wives and was married off against her will. She presently lives in Accra at the yam market in Agbogbloshie. She did not know her age because of her lack of education but believed she was between the ages of 20-25. Her first experience as a migrant was when she moved to stay with her sister at Agege[8]. Fuseina assisted her sister with caring for her baby whilst her sister gave her money to feed and take care of her own baby.

According to Fuseina, her move to Accra was motivated by two factors; one was the need for money to buy clothes, pans and cooking utensils. Secondly, she migrated because she was the fourth of three other wives and was not so excited about being at home. In other words, she did not like her position as a fourth wife. Despite this, she admitted it was her home it was her home and she would someday return. She also needed to migrate because her parents were sick and needed extra money for their medical care.

"I came here for clothes, pans and cooking utensils. I am here to get work and get money to buy those things I need".

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[7] It is part of the Northern region
[8] It is a place in Accra where very few migrants from the North tend to settle upon migration to the South.

"I will like to come back to the south, I like it here, my husband has three other wives, I am the fourth and my mother married me off".

"My parents once had money but they are sick in the hospital in Kumasi[9] , this is why I am here"

As a porter from the North, Fuseina's typical day began at 8am. She wakes up to carry customer's wares on her head. She noted that the job was not easy especially with a child in the picture. Her day ends between 6pm to 7pm irrespective of the earning made in that day. Fuseina also mentioned that one constant problem she had to deal with aside the money issue was the health of her child. The poor living arrangements exposed her child to mosquitoes resulting in frequent illness.

"I am a porter, I wake up at 8am, when you carry the load your head aches, and I also carry a child so it's not easy. I help people who call me to carry a sack and they will give me 50 pesewa; if there are two of them I will get 1 cedi[10] ".

"Mosquitoes bite me and my child and it makes me worried"

Fuseina felt that there was no peculiar difference between life in the North and in Accra. She actually liked being in Accra and felt she was being treated well. On the other hand, there were times she felt cheated but had to accept it just because she was in dire need of money. As a result of being in Accra for some time, she had been able to learn the Twi language and was therefore able to communicate. Apart from this she was happy with the fact that those around her from Accra could not understand her language. This was a source of strength for her.

Fuseina was generally happy with life as a migrant from the North living in Accra. She believed God helped her at times and not that alone but her ability to work will bring her good fortune. Although some unfavorable circumstances resulted in her migration, she acknowledges it as her choice and one that she does not regret.

"I am fine, I get what I want. I like this place; I like what I can get from here. I love God, he will help me, and I pray to Allah, he helps me at times"

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[9] This is one of the biggest cities in Ghana and it is found in the Ashanti region. It is the second highest destination area for migrants after Accra.
[10] 1 cedis is 0.6 US dollars

Leila was a 22 year old Dagomba[11] woman who is married with a son. Her husband brews beer and they both live together in Accra. She had lived in Accra for 2years. She used to grow groundnut in the North prior to her migration. She had also been able to find for herself a permanent job in Accra. According to Leila, upon her arrival in Accra she realized that it was necessary to travel to be sensible. Her migration to the South was not only to look for money but to acquire some exposure and be more sensible. Leila although uneducated wanted her child to go to school. She even mentioned that her son was already enrolled in a school in Accra.

"When I came here, I know that if you are in the North and you did not travel then you are not sensible. I came to look for money and be sensible. I have also sent my child to school, I did not go to school but I want my child to go to school"

Leila describes her day as one that begins with her praying and calling unto God to make her day successful. Since she has someone she works for, she does not have to look for customers but rather just to report to work. Typically, she helps her employer carry the daily wares for sale to a stall in the market where they would be sold. Just before the day ends she has to also remove the peel off the groundnuts. Leila felt that after sometime it was necessary for a person to change and adapt to the present environmental conditions one finds himself or herself. This includes knowing what those you work for expect of you and doing exactly so.

"I pray and call God, then I come and do my work and return home. After carrying the loads then we remove groundnuts. I have someone I work for, when she calls you to work for her and she sees your attitude to work is good then she gives you a permanent job."

As a migrant, Leila felt that Accra was quite different from the North. As compared to Accra, in the North everything was free. She felt that her cultural background resulted in her being discriminated against. She explained that there was a need to be submissive and respectful to be able to cope in Accra. Leila also felt that most of the stereotypes and discriminatory acts were as a result of the behavior of some Northerners.

"North is very different from Accra, you are free to do anything. But here you are required to be obedient for people to help you. People treat us wrongly because of where we come from."

"Obedience will make living here easier. When you are obedient even though you are treated badly you will stay".

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[11] One of the ethnic groups in the Northern region.

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Leila migrated with some money which she used to begin her previous vocation (selling eggs). She decided to work as a porter because she felt it brought more money. Leila believed that if she prayed everything will be okay. She had also settled very well into her new society and had a National health Insurance card for her son in case of any ailment. Reflecting on her experiences, she was quite happy that she migrated. Although she would return home sometime soon she was happy with her life as a migrant. She recounted that

"I am happy, I have everything I need. I have a husband and a child in school that's why I am happy. If you pray nothing else matters"

Bashira was a porter from Sissala and she had lived in Accra for three months. She had previously migrated to Sunyani[12] to live with an Uncle. During her stay in Sunyani she was able to learn the Twi language and engage in some economic activity. She also had a son who was almost two years old. Bashira was not sure of her own age. She did not live with her husband in Accra.

Just like other migrants, Bashira was also in Accra because she needed money. As far as she was concerned, there were better economic opportunities in Accra. She felt that working as a porter was too tedious. Bashira did not have anyone she worked for so had to rely on customers calling her when they needed her help. She complained that there were days she would walk around for hours without any income. Apart from struggling to find customers, she had friends who would call her at times to join them in their work for a fee. She wished she had a more constant source of income.

"I came to look for money, there is money in the north, but I cannot get some. What you can do to get money here in Accra, you cannot do it to get money in the North. The job is not good but what can you do. At times you walk around for a long time till evening and you cannot get even 2 cedi"[13].

"At times I help my friend to remove groundnuts when brought in sacks. If I had a permanent job I would be happy"

One major problem that Bashira had to contend with was the constant illness of her two year old son. His frequent illness made her worried and prevented her from working. She also had

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[12] Sunyani is part of the Brong-Ahafo Region.

[13] 2 cedi is equivalent to 1.18 U.S dollars

to spend most of her income on drugs and medication for the child. As far as she was concerned all she needed was money to return home and take the child back to his father to look after him. She was quite fed up with her current situation. The presence of her son also prevented her from waking up early to look for potential customers. She usually waits for the day to break properly although she was usually disturbed by the noise of other women in the room.

"I have not been able to work for two weeks because my child is sick. If I have the money I will just return home because the father can look after the child if he was not sick. I do not have anyone to help me or money to buy cloth to carry my child to the hospital"

Bashira was not happy about her condition and that of her son. She obtained a meager income from helping her friends and this was not enough to take care of her. Looking back at her experience, she felt that nothing good had happened to her since she migrated. She also believed that her stay in Accra was short lived.

"I am not happy, my child is sick and I do not have money, when my child is well then I can say that I am happy. When I help my friends to remove groundnuts then I get money from them. Sometimes there is no groundnut to remove so I do not get money".

Rashida worked at Novotel car park but sleeps at Tema station. She is from Wale-wale[14] in the North and was 20 years of age. She lived with her son in Accra whilst her husband resided in the North. She had lived in Accra for six months and also in Kumasi for a year. In Kumasi, She worked for a food vendor that sold cooked rice. She also began working as a porter in Kumasi before coming to Accra to continue.

Rashida migrated to Kumasi first then Accra because she needed money to look after herself and her child. Just like other migrants she felt that there was food and shelter at home but the need for an extra income caused her to migrate. Rashida also thought that there were better opportunities in Accra as compared to Kumasi. She migrated without having any family relation or acquaintance in Accra. As a result of this she had to struggle to find a job both in Kumasi and in Accra.

"I want money that is why I came here. There is money in the North but its difficult for me to get some, I have food and shelter at home but because I want money, I cannot stay at home.

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[14] Wale-wale is one of the towns in the Northern Region.

I knew no one in Kumasi and even in Accra, no one helped me"

Rashida lives in Tema station and will usually wake up to look for customers who had wares for her to carry. There are days when Rashida will not get any income and she reported that there was nothing she could do about it. As far as she was concerned her experience in Accra was not a pleasant one but she has not returned because she still needs to make some money. Rashida did not mention any specific negative experience but complained that a lot of unpleasant things had happened to her.

"I live at Tema Station; I sleep where the car parks, under the sheds. We use to live in Novotel car park but we were driven from there so we now live in Tema station. When I wake up, I go and look for load to carry but today I did not get anything. When I do not get work to do I just sit there without doing anything.

"I am suffering in Accra all because I need money. I have experienced some bad things".

When asked if she was happy, Rashida without hesitation said yes but on further probing she admitted that she was not happy. The main reason why she was not happy was because she had not gotten the money she needed to become a tailor or hairdresser. A combination of her negative experience and perception of her condition resulted in her concluding that she was not happy. Rashida did not mention any cultural or social problems but was more bothered about the difficult economic situation.

"I am really not happy because I do not have the money I want to become a hairdresser or tailor"

Mariama was a 25 year old porter who was about 5 months pregnant at the time of the interview. Her husband worked as a mechanic and lived in the North whilst she lived in Accra. She is also from Wale-wale and has been in Accra for a year although she had returned home once to visit the family. She was very eloquent in the Twi language. She lived in Tema station with other women from her hometown.

Mariama had no previous occupation before migrating to Accra. She wakes up in the morning and prays that God will help her to get money. She worked as a head porter in Accra and has to compete with other women with whom she stands with on the road looking for customers. The income she obtains is dependent on the benevolence of the customer and her bargaining

power. Mariama did not like where she slept, she complained about the weather, the living conditions and health risks.

"When I wake up I pray that God will help me to get money every morning. At times we get money at times we do not. We stand in groups and when someone calls for kayayei then we all run to get the load and carry for a fee. The customer will then say how much they want to pay and we bargain for an increase".

"I sleep in Tema station, where we sleep is uncomfortable, it's not like a house, when the rains come you have to get up".

As a migrant, Mariama relied on friends and other people from her home town who had already settled in Accra to make it easy for her to acquaint herself with the new environment. She also mentioned that she had a brother in Accra who helped to safe guard her earnings after her first experience of theft. Social ties were quite important for her after her arrival in the South. Mariama had also had some bad experiences which included her money being stolen. This experience also brought other painful memories such as the loss of her father. She felt that if her father was alive she would not have to work but rather go to school.

"As soon as you come people from your home town will welcome you to come and join them. Somebody stole the money I had made (200 cedi[15]), it really hurt me when my money was stolen, I cried".

"When I sleep, I cry and remember my dad"

Mariama was not happy; she regretted migrating to Accra. She complained that there were too many thieves, poor living conditions and still no money to return home. Although she acknowledged it was her choice to migrate, she actually wished she did not come. She also added that if her father were alive she would be happier.

"No one asked me to come, I decided to come. I have nothing and I am not happy; if my father were alive I will be happy because I will not have to work for money rather I will go to school". "I regret coming here; I wish I did not come here, if I get money I will return home"

Aisha was also married and had a 1 year old son and from Wale-wale just like the other women in Tema station. She had lived in Accra for two years and worked as a porter. She was once a tailor in the North but abandoned it because she felt that it did not bring enough

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[15] 200 Ghanaian cedi is equivalent to 112 U.S dollar.

money. Just before migrating she had no job and she felt that she needed money to buy necessary accessories as a newly married woman. Aisha left the North in order to go and work in Accra to get more money. She felt that she will get more money in Accra as compared to the North.

"Money is the reason I left my hometown to this place. After marriage, I was not doing any work. I was a tailor in the North and I left it to come here and get money. The job of a tailor brings money but it's not enough that's why I left it to come here, I will get money here".

Aisha was able to bring some money from home to buy the instrument (head pans[16]) needed to work as a porter. She usually has to wake up in the morning and carry her baby at her back whilst looking for customers. Aisha also mentioned that it was quite expensive to live in Accra because she had to pay for food to eat and a place to bath. She did not think there was much difference between the life in the North and the South. She was also quite satisfied with the way she was treated in Accra. She did not feel any form of discrimination. She also indicated that she had been in Accra for that long because she is still trying to work and get money.

"I bought the pan with money I had from home. There is no difference between Accra and Wale-wale. People do not insult me or shout at me"

There was no doubt that Aisha was happy. Although, she had similar problems like other porters she did not complain so much about it. She said she had not gotten all the money she needed but she was happy. She believed that God had helped her and He will help her to get the money she needed. She did not have any negative experience and if there was any problem such as her son falling ill all she will do is to take him to the hospital. She was happy she migrated and will come back if she had the chance.

"God has helped me, because I can say that God has helped me to get money and he does. I have no one here, but I came to meet people from my home town here. I am fine, I am happy; I came here for the money and that makes me happy. I am glad I came to Accra"

Alima was also married but not living with her husband in Accra. She had a son who was two years old who was living in the North with his father. She said she left her husband to come to Accra to make money. Alima explained that the times they cannot work on the farms are the

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[16] Head pans are big round bowls in which porters place customer's luggage for a fee. This bowl makes it easier for them more luggages at once so that they can bargain for a better price.

times they migrate. She also felt that you could get money in the North by engaging a trade but there was more money in Accra. Interestingly, Alima had lived in Accra for 3 years and according to her she has been able to save up some money.

Alima described her job as one that requires her to carry wares on her head for a living. Although she has to go out and look for customers she also believed that God could bring customers her way. This did not take away the fact that you could walk around all day without earning any income. She usually starts her day at 4am with prayers but if there is business at that time she will abandon the prayers and go for it. Even though she had no permanent job, she had some shop owners who on a frequent basis needed her help in setting up their wares for sale for the day. As a result of her long stay in Accra, she also had some customers who will call her ahead of time informing her that they will need her services when they arrived at the bus station. It was important to work well and please the customers so that next time they will call on you.

"I carry load on my head for a living, we get up and carry the pans on our head and walk around looking for business. If God will bring money your way then you will get customers; at times too you will suffer and get nothing".

"I do not have anyone I work for but at times you can help the shop owners to carry their load and prepare for the days sales. People call me from Ashiaman or Tema[17] that they are coming so I should get ready to carry their load for them. If you carry someone's load today and you do it well, tomorrow they will call you when they need your help"

She was not excluded when it came to discrimination and harsh treatment from people in Accra. She explained that people in Accra act the way they do because it's their land and they the Northerners are foreigners. One way she deals with the discrimination is by concentrating on the reason she migrated (the money). She also decided to ignore what is going on around her. She described her experience in the following words:

"Accra is different from my hometown. In my hometown no one can shout on me because of money. But because of the money I do not mind them, they shout on us because of where we come from and also because we came to meet them here, this is their town. At times they tell us not to sleep here, they do it to us all the time, and they do not like us. I focus on the money and separate myself from my surrounding, I do not mind them."

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[17] Ashiama and Tema are residences in the city of Accra.

Alima acknowledged that she was happy although she would be happier when she gets all the money she needed. Looking back at her experience, she was quite satisfied with all that had happened to her. She intimated that friends were there to assist her upon her arrival, her ability to speak the Twi language was also very useful and life was not so bad after all. In her own words:

"I have friends and others from my hometown that has assisted me. I brought my own money to buy the pan. The language prevents me from being cheated. I am fine, I am quite happy. I have not gotten all I want. I will be fully happy when I get what I want. I am happy that I came given all that has happened to me"

Selinah was one of the youngest migrants in the study. She had her first migration experience when she was thirteen years old and at the time of the study she was twenty years old. Within this seven-year period she had returned home a couple of times but has spent most of her time in Accra. She migrated when her father died because she felt that it will be difficult for her mother to look after her and all her siblings. She decided to migrate without her mother's consent. She was the only porter who was not married at the time of the interview.

"I was thirteen years old the first time I migrated. My father was dead and we the children were too many for our mother to take care of and also buy a sewing machine for me that is why I came here to work. I did not tell my mother before coming, if I had told my mother she would not have allowed me to come and I will not be able to buy the sewing machine".

Selinah had bought the sewing machine she needed but now wanted to be a hairdresser so she needed to continue to work as a porter in order to save up money for her newly desired occupation. She describes her chosen occupation as her choice because she did not like to farm or do any other job she thought was rather demeaning. She felt that the work of a porter brings her money to take care of herself and buy clothes for her siblings.

"I chose to do this job because it helps me; I can carry load on my head and from there buy clothes for myself and for my siblings. Not everyone likes to farm, as for me I do not like to farm. When you look for other jobs people behave unpleasantly towards you. As for the kayayei job, if you get money it's your business, if you do not it is also your business. Some people would want to remove their under clothing's for you to wash and jobs they are supposed to do they will give it to you"

Selinah felt that she got better as a porter because she became stronger and had some regular customers. There were some things she did not like about living in Accra. This included the high cost of living, poor living conditions and the cultural discrimination. She did not only have friends and acquaintances among people from her hometown but also indigenes of Accra. She said that it was easier to make money in the past but now it's quite difficult. It was therefore important to save for the days you do not get enough money. Selinah said she was fine and happy because she was not sick and was strong to work. On second thought she would be happier if she had money and was able to save.

"I have more strength now, I can carry more load now. It is better to live in my hometown than to live in Accra. I do not buy anything, if I am going to bath I do not pay, I do not have to pay to ease myself. I sleep outside and the rains disturb us. People shout on as if we are not humans all because we are from the North. I want money, so even when they shout on me I do not mind them"

"Those days there was a lot of money so the money you earn will assist you. Now you have to work and save to be able eat"

5.2 Results of cross-case analysis

The second part of this section is a comparison between those women who are happy and thriving and those that are not thriving and happy on the codes that were developed from the analysis.

5.2.1 Stressors

In order to understand why female porters required certain resources it is important to first highlight the stressors they encountered. Female porters who were thriving and those not thriving experienced economic, emotional, health, daily stressors and stressors from living arrangements. In addition they both experienced social and cultural stressor but the women who were not thriving also mentioned family problems as a major stressor in their lives. Below is a description of these stressors with quotes from participants of each group.

5.2.1.1 Economic Stressors

This refers to the financial difficulty involved in earning an income in the migrant's place of origin which has led to migration. After migrating some migrants found it even more difficult to earn sufficient income that would allow them to save and some day return home. Alima one of the women who was thriving described economic stressors with the following words:

"In the North there is corn, groundnut, there is work but we wait when the rain comes we return to work because without the rains we cannot get jobs to do. We therefore come to the South during the non-farming season."

For other women it was not just lack of money in the place of origin and difficulty in earning an income as a porter but also the conditions of the chosen occupation was quite unfavorable. These conditions were worsened by the presence of a child who due to frequent illness becomes a financial burden on the mother. The experience of Bashira who felt she was not thriving is described below:

"There is a hospital around, I take him there. All the money I get is used to pay hospital bills. If the child is not okay how can you return home?"

Both groups of women acknowledged the inherent difficulties associated with being a migrant who works as a porter. Apart from the unpredictable income, relying on the benevolence of customers, being cheated at times, these women still have to contend with health hazards associated with carrying these wares on their head.

5.2.1.2 Health and Emotional problems

Female porters experienced a variety of health problems, some are closely associated with their work others with their living arrangements. Most of the women complained of being exposed to mosquitoes. Of greatest concern to most of these women who were also mothers was the health of their children. A number of them complained that their children were frequently ill. This is the account of Bashira:

"Since I came my child has been falling sick. I am worried my child will cry and vomit all night"

On the emotional side, these women showed signs of learned helplessness in times when things are difficult. Most of them reported that they usually just sit and do nothing if there is no business coming their way. They will not return home even though the conditions are bad. They have rather learned to live with it. A common reaction to both women who are thriving and those not thriving is described as followed:

"When I do not get anything I just sit there without doing anything"-Rashida from the non thriving group

5.2.1.3 Daily hassles and living arrangements

The typical day of a porter is filled with a number of recurring hassles which they have to overcome to survive. For some of these women, having their children with them further

compounds the problem because they have to worry about themselves and their children. Daily hassles include earning enough to eat and safety. There is an also an additional problem of inadequate rest because of the need wake up early and work and at times sexual harassment. Mariama recounted that:

"somebody stole all the money that I have made, there are too many thieves here, when you put money in your pocket, thieves can either tear your dress or use medicine[18] to steal the money"

According to one participant her day was all about waking up early in the morning and trying to struggle to make ends meet. Every day was constant struggle.

"As soon as we wake up we start to look for job if we get we will go for it"-Alima

Closely related to the daily hassles that these women encountered is their living arrangement. There were two kinds of living arrangements encountered during the study. The first one was an organized shelter where people from the North lived. This shelter was found at the yam market and the participants interviewed at Agbogbloshie lived there. The major problem associated with this shelter was that it was overcrowded and there were a lot of mosquitoes.

"We are thirty in a room at the yam market, and we have to pay, we cannot even turn when sleeping and there are a lot of mosquitoes in the room"-Bashira

The other type of living arrangement was the bus station and on the streets. Most of the women interviewed at Tema station lived under a shed at the bus station. Crucial to these women was the weather and presence of thieves. They usually had to wake up when the rain sets in and wait for it to stop before they go back to bed. This experience is captured in the statements of Rashida and Mariama above.

5.2.1.4 Social and cultural stressors

As migrants from the Northern part of Ghana, these women are seen as inherently different from those living in the South. Female porters identified the cost of living in Accra as very high and a major social situation that differentiated life in the North from the South.

"We do not buy food or anything in our town, life is good but here we pay for everything including food, where to bath and where to sleep"-Selinah

Other social and cultural stressors include:

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[18] Medicine in this case refers to the use of witchcraft

a. Differential treatment: both groups of women discussed their experience with regards to how they are treated differently in Accra as compared to the North.

"People treat us rudely here but at home we are all equal"-Mariama.

Some women mentioned that they were frequently insulted by people in Accra.

"They treat us as if we are not humans-Fuseina;
"They shout on us as if we are not humans from the North-Selinah

b. Feeling cheated: this is both an economic and social issue since it is expressed mostly during their economic interaction. On the one hand it is a social issue because it deals with discrimination in daily interaction. On the other hand it is an economic problem because female porters are not able to gather the adequate earnings they need.

c. Limited freedom: some women noted that in Accra there is limited freedom to do what one desires.

d. Negative remarks: one major social issue encountered by these women is the constant verbal abuse they receive. These remarks are perpetuated by long held stereotypes. This includes having the perception that everyone from the North is necessarily hungry and that there is no food there.
"Some of us do not rent a place to live and then Southerners insult us that we do not have food in our town, we do not have money to go to school. But a lot of us go to school although it's not all of us that go to school "-Leila.

The major difference with regards to stressor is the presence of family stressors among the non-thriving group. Family stressors refer to previous problems in the family that has pushed female porters to migrate and is currently affecting their well-being. Thriving women could therefore be characterized as having a low level of interpersonal stress emanating from family members. The absence of this extra stressor tends to push the thriving women towards the state of well-being. Family stressors present itself in the form of the death of a family member particularly the bread winner of the home. Among the women who were not thriving, this does not only result economic hardship but also emotional pain as recounted by Mariama:

"My father died so I did not go to school, when I sleep I cry and remember my father"

Apart from this difference, the group of women who were thriving seemed to place less emphasis on the stressor as compared to those that were not thriving. In describing their daily experience and problems, most of the thriving female porters had accepted it as part of their lives and moved to the point of finding strategies to deal with them. Female porters that were not thriving were more preoccupied with the stressors and most were at the point where all they wanted was money to return home.

"If my child is better and I get a little money I will just return home"-Bashira

This contrasted with the account of Leila who was thriving-"*as for the work, you are happy because you will get the money you want. It is better than going to steal. So I am happy*"

Therefore, the ability of thriving female porters to place less emphasis on stressors served as a resource for thriving.

5.2.2 Resources adopted by Female Porters

To answer the research questions it was also important to compare the two groups of women on the resources utilized to cope with stressors. These resources included language, start up resources, financial security, religious belief and social support.

5.2.2.1 Language

As migrants from the North, it was important for female porters to learn one of the commonly spoken languages in Accra. This was in turn going to make their stay as porters easier. Most of the women were averagely fluent in the Twi language and could communicate with customers rather effectively. Both groups of women acknowledged that being able to speak the language was very useful to them. It was particularly important when bargaining for a more suitable fee from a customer. When a porter cannot speak the language she is perceived as new, naïve and usually prone to being cheated.

"When we carry someone's load and they ask how much they should pay; if you can speak the language you can bargain and it is easier to get a better price"

There was an interesting turn to the usefulness of language for one female porter. She explained that she was happy with the fact that she spoke a language that others around her did not understand.

"People cannot speak my language and its nice because you say things and others will not understand"-Fuseina

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There was no difference in the use of language as a resource for both female porters who were thriving and those that were not.

5.2.2.2 Start-up resources

Start up resources refers to assets or resources that migrants carry with them when migrating to Accra. These resources are taken into consideration because of previous information that incoming migrants might have received prior to their migration. These resources are supposed to make their transition smooth and make it easier for them to begin work and also to earn adequate income. The major start up resource mentioned by most of the female porters is money. Most of them migrate with a little capital so that they can buy the instrument (head pan) that will be used for carrying their wares. A few who did not migrate with such money had to depend on friends to lend them theirs until they are able to save up enough money to buy one. There were cases of female porters in both the thriving group and the non-thriving group who brought money to enable them buy the needed instrument.

"I came with money to buy the pan to carry the load"-Mariama

"I bought the pan with money I brought from home"-Aisha

5.2.2.3 Social support

Social support was identified as a very important resource in the lives of female porters. Its relevance is seen right from the decision to migrate and the tendency to migrate in pairs. Most of the female porters migrate with friends or siblings and others migrate upon getting information from friends in Accra about the benefits of working there. However, there were variations in how both groups of women utilized their social support. Among the female porters who were thriving there was a balance between social support and self-reliance. Although they depended on other migrants for information and support, they also expressed a relatively high level of self reliance in trying to survive. Self-reliance was displayed by finding alternative means of survival when there was no one to help. It was also displayed in their level of self-sufficiency. The presence of social support was necessary and equally important was the balance between social support and self reliance. This balance found among the thriving group of female porters served as an asset for health.

"I had no help but I had a sister in Agege, I helped her with her baby and she gave me money to feed my baby. I went to look for the kenkey[19] job myself. I knew only my sister upon my arrival. Nobody really assisted me"-Fuseina

On the other hand, female porters who were not thriving reported less reliance on the self and more on external support. There was a social support imbalance among these particular groups of women. As a result of this, coping was quite difficult when there was no external help or support.

"I lived with my brother in Sunyani for some time. At times I help my friend to remove groundnuts when brought in sacks. When I help my friends to remove groundnuts then I get money from my friends. Sometimes there is no groundnut to remove so I do not get money"- Bashira

5.2.2.4 Financial security

This refers to the consistency with which female porters could earn an income. Generally most of them depended on customers requesting their services when they need them and this could be very inconsistent. A few of them had a more stable source of income from either a permanent job or already established relationships with customers who frequently needed their help. Most of the women who were described as thriving fell under this category. With this security, they did not have to worry too much about getting an income because they were sure that some money will come their way before the day ends. Financial security which was only present among the thriving group was identified as a very important resource or assets to thrive.

"I work for someone so I have constant pay. When I carry the stuff for my employer she pays me, I do not have to go around looking for work"-Leila

"I have customers, at times they call me"-Alima

I have friends from Accra, when they call me to carry their load; they discuss with me and might even give me some extra money. I have people who will call me that they are coming so I should prepare to carry their load." –Selinah

The female porters who were not thriving just woke up everyday hoping that day will be their lucky day. Their income was unpredictable and there were days they had barely enough money to feed. They walk around daily hoping to find a generous customer.

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[19] Kenkey is local Ghanaian food made with corn. It is a staple food for those living in Accra.

"I stand on the road to look for job"-Rashida

"I walk around till I find a customer; I do not have any permanent employer. If I had a permanent job I will be happy"-Bashira

5.2.2.5 Religious Belief

As a religious group of people all the female porters expressed faith in some supreme being. Most Northerners are known to be Muslims and this was reflected in the participants' acknowledgement of their belief in Allah. A number of them described their typical day as beginning with a prayer to Allah hoping that He will take care of them. Both groups of women who were thriving and those not thriving expressed some degree of belief in a supreme being.

"*I pray and call God then I come and do my work*"-Leila

Female porters who were thriving did not only believe in God but also in His ability to control the things that happened in their lives. They believed that prayer and their belief in God would guarantee blessing for the day and more income during work. The porters who were thriving attributed control to a supernatural being. The ability to attribute control to an all powerful supreme being served as a buffer in the face of stressors and also a resource to thrive. On the other hand, porters that fell under the non-thriving group believed in God but did not attribute control to him. Leila who was thriving explained that:

"*If you pray nothing else matters*"

Aisha also explained that *"God has helped me, because I can say God helped me to get money and He does"*

Rashida believed God watches over her but did not so much mention God's ability to control the things that happened to her.

"*I pray and believe in God.*"

5.2.3 Interaction of resources and stressors to enable thriving

The last part of this section compares how the two categories of female porters perceive and respond to both their stressors and resources in the light of their experience as porters. This part of the results will help in understanding how resources interact with stressors to enable female porters to thrive.

5.2.3.1 Post decision dissonance

This theme is related to the term cognitive dissonance. The results of this study reveal a pattern where some women experienced remorse about their decision to migrate and others did not. Post decision dissonance refers to individuals wishing they had not made the choices they made in the past. Post decision dissonance was observed among some participants when they described their perception of their experience as migrants. Female porters that were not thriving were more likely to report a negative perception of their experience and show signs of regret. As a result of their preoccupation with stressors female porters who were not thriving were less likely to hope for a better future. The problems encountered in their daily life resulted in most of them just wishing to return home. Most of them reported that they wished they had not migrated to the South at all.

"I regret coming here, I wish I did not come here"-Mariama

"I will advice my friend that there is suffering here so they should not come"-Rashida

Thriving female porters had a positive perception of their experience despite the stressors that they were faced with. These women were less likely to experience a post decision dissonance and were quite satisfied with the results of their decision to migrate. In addition, thriving women believed in a better tomorrow even though today was not so good. Women who were thriving had a positive perception of their life experience and this served to foster their well-being.

The theme of adaptation and change highlights the mechanism and means by which female porters handled acculturative stress.

5.2.4 Resources and mechanism for coping with acculturative stress

When women from the North arrive newly in Accra and are faced with both cultural and economic stressors it becomes pertinent for them to readjust to their new environment. Female porters who said they were not happy did not report any adjustment strategy that they adopted in their new environment. Most of them were quite fed up and just wanted to return

home. Female porters who said they felt happy and satisfied with their present life had strategies which they adopted to survive. Most of the strategies were used in the face of acculturative stress when there was friction between the two cultures.

"When you come newly, you are different but after sometime you tend to change"-Leila.

Some of the adaptation strategies used by women who were thriving are outlined below.

    a. Understanding the need to obedient and respectful: one form of adaption strategy is the ability to be obedient in order to survive.

        "Here you are required to be obedient for people to help you, when you are obedient even though you are treated badly you will stay"-Leila

    b. Understanding the need for efficiency: one participant noted that efficiency at work will make life easier for the porter because you tend to find customers who are fond of you and will come back next time to request your services.

    c. Separation: some women simply ignore unfavorable remarks around them and just focus on work. This is a form of adaptation strategy adopted when the new person is not interested in incorporating the necessary attributes of the host society.

    "I concentrate on the money and separate myself from my surrounding; I do not mind them-Alima,

    "I want money so even when they shout on me, I do not care; I brought myself here to make money………...so I do not decide to return home since I have a purpose here"-Selinah

Thriving female porters were able to recognize the need for obedience, efficiency and separation in order to survive. Having these adaption strategies was very resourceful in enabling these women cope with acculturative stress and to thrive.

5.2.5 Length of stay in the South

This was not a reaction to stressors or a way of combining resources to thrive but rather an unexpected pattern observed from the data. Porters who had lived in Accra for a longer time were more likely to fall under the category of thriving. Comparatively, female porters who were not thriving had been in Accra for less than a year. This could imply that these women

tend to settle properly into their new society overtime. This might also imply that time is an asset in order for people to adapt. It does not necessarily mean that women who were not thriving at the end of the study will thrive over time. In this study the average number of years spent in Accra by women who were categorized as thriving was two years.

5.2.6 Sense of Coherence

The SOC scale could not be administered effectively and therefore no data was provided on it. During the interview, when respondents were asked some of the questions on the SOC scale, they could not relate to it. For example when asked do you feel you have control over the events that happen in your life, they did not understand what it meant to feel that one has control. Another question that was also difficult to relate to was whether they saw things in their right proportion. Even with the translation and provision of examples of what the question could mean in their everyday lives, the women's responses were still incoherent. The researcher therefore thought that it will be erroneous to present such data which had little or no validity. Although the women endeavored to answer the questions, the incoherence and inconsistent responses provided when asked the same question a second time made it impossible to use the information that was provided.

Chapter Six

6.0 Discussion

The general aim of this study was to use the Salutogenic model as a framework to study how female porters from Northern Ghana living in Accra thrive despite the difficulties encountered. This study specifically sought to describe how female porters in Accra manage their resources in the face of stressors and also develop a sense of coherence of their world. This study was also aimed at exploring specific resources for managing acculturative stress among female porters. The research questions to be addressed included first what were the generalized resistance resources used by female porters in Accra? Secondly, how do the stressors that female porters face interact with their resources in order to enhance thriving? Thirdly, what generalized resistance resources were used to cope with acculturative stress? Lastly, how does the generalized resistant resource employed by female porters in Accra help them to make sense of the world?

The Salutogenic model presented in the second chapter was used as a framework to answer the research questions. This framework served as a guide in interpreting the research findings. The research findings have shown that although female porters were exposed to a number stressors, they were also capable of coping using resources available to them. Below is a brief summary of the major findings of this study.

From the analysis of data gathered it was found out that some female porters were thriving whilst others were not. Although there were some differences in the factors that distinguished female porters who were thriving from those not thriving, these differences were slight. These differences were evident in the number and kind of stressors and also the coping resources adopted. The research questions will be answered taking into account the degree of differences and similarities between the two groups of women.

The first research question of this study was to find out the GRRs adopted by female porters in order to thrive. It is important to remember that a GRR is a type of coping resource that is preexisting prior to a person's encounter with stressors. There are also acquired coping resources that are adopted only in the face of stressors. The coping resources that were recounted by the women who were thriving included financial security, religious belief and balance between social support and self-reliance. On the one hand, financial security was an acquired coping resource. On the other hand, social support and the ability to strike a balance

between social support and self-reliance were GRRs. Religious belief was also identified as a GRR. These coping resources were not present among female porters who were not thriving.

Financial security was acquired in the face of economic stress by trying to establish a constant source of income. The GRR social support and also self-reliance was already present prior to migration. Female porters described their social networks as preexisting prior to migration and they also noted that they were aware of the fact that they could not rely solely on these networks.

Religious belief was a GRR common to both female porters that were thriving and those that were not but it was used differently across the two groups of women. Female porters who were thriving believed in God and also attributed control to him. They believed that there was a supernatural being who was capable of influencing the events of their life. They also believed that He was the source of good fortunes that came their way. Religious belief among the non-thriving female porters was just another GRR and they were less likely to attribute control to God. There were other acquired coping resources that were common to both women who were thriving and those that were not thriving. These included the knowledge of the southern language, having start-up resource and social support (without self-reliance). Thriving female porters had more GRRs than those who were not thriving, but the difference in acquired coping resource was minimal. This difference is the absence of financial security among the non-thriving female porters.

Apart from the GRRs and coping resources there was another pattern that was identified during data analysis. All the female porters experienced almost the same kind and number of stressors with the exception of family stressor that was peculiar to the porters who were not thriving.

In addition, from the interviews, female porters who were thriving tended to place less emphasis on the stressors. In discussing the impact of stressors on their lives, these women that were thriving did not only acknowledge the presence of stressors but also evaluated them as stressors they could handle. From their responses they made it clear that the obstacles they were faced with was one they could deal with. This is contrasted with the female porters who were not thriving, and felt overwhelmed by stressors. They were more preoccupied with stressors and were more likely to refer more often than not to the impact and presence of stressors and how debilitating it was to their well-being.

Time also revealed itself to be an unexpected asset. Although time is not a GRR or an acquired coping resource, the results of the study revealed that those who had lived in Accra for a longer period were more like to thrive. Time seemed to have a latent effect on other coping resources and not directly on the individual. This was because financial security and adaptation strategies seemed to be developing over the course of time. Female porters who were thriving and had stayed in Accra for a relatively longer period of time were able to cope better.

The second research question was directed towards describing how stressors interact with resources in order to enhance thriving. It was not enough to have resources but equally important was the way female porters managed their resources in the face of stressors in order to thrive. This study's findings revealed that female porter's perception of their life experience was associated with thriving. When asked to recount their perception of their experience with respect to the stressors and resources some female porters had a positive perception whilst others had a negative perception of their experience. Having a positive perception of the adequacy of one's resources and ability to handle the stressors was noted as important in fostering well-being. Female porters who had a positive perception of their experience as porters in Accra were more likely to thrive. On the other hand, those who were not thriving were not able to see their resources as adequate. They therefore could not manage it adequately to reduce the effect of stressors to enhance thriving.

Another way for female porters to manage resources in the face of stressors adequately is to have a proper understanding of the requirements of the stressors. In other words, for the interaction between resources and stressors to enhance thriving, female porters had to be able to make meaning of what the stressors they were faced with required. The importance of understanding the requirement of the stressors in the interaction between resources and stressors was evident in the way these women dealt with acculturative stress. Female porters who were thriving had developed an understanding of what was needed for them to succeed in the new culture. They understood the need to be obedient, efficient and for some of them it was important to engage in some separation. Separation in this case meant not mingling with the new culture. They also decided not to be bothered by the stressors emanating from the clash of new cultures but to just focus on their reason for migration.

The understanding of the demands of a new culture and separation also served as a coping resource for managing acculturative stress. Women who were not thriving acknowledged the presence of acculturative stress but had no strategy for coping with it.

The last research question was to investigate how resources help to make sense of the world. Using the sense of coherence scale it was impossible to gather any useful data on the sense of coherence of female porters. For this reason it was difficult to make any inferences on the influence of resources on SOC. The SOC scale might need some revision to make it applicable to the group under study. Very little conclusions could be made whether SOC there was a high or low SOC. Positive perception of their life experience and understanding the requirement of stressors are terms that might suggest a high SOC but cannot be equated to SOC.

This discussion section continues into considering the above highlighted findings in the light of existing literature on internal migration in Ghana, salutogenesis and acculturation. The research questions mentioned above will be discussed within the context of the existing literature on the subject of study.

6.1 North-South Migration in Ghana

Literature on internal migration in Ghana has predominantly focused on the phenomenon of North-South migration. Several studies have highlighted the continuous migration of individuals from colonial periods to post-colonial periods for economic purposes (9, 65). These previous studies have focused on issues such as direction of migration (North-South), reasons for migration, return migration, resettlement in the society of origin after migration and effect of migration on sending communities (66, 67). Studies relating directly to this present study have predominantly highlighted issues of child migration, female migration and livelihood strategies of female migrants (11, 12).

Migration has its inherent advantages but is also accompanied by some difficulties especially for the migrant which in this case are women (68). Female migration from the North to South is a rather well researched area with several studies highlighting the problems these women face during migration (30, 31, and 32). In accordance with previous literature, several stressors were found to be affecting the well-being of female porters. These stressors exists both prior to migration and after migration. The theme of economic stress ran across most studies (12). Economic stress posed as a major reason for migration in this study. The findings of this study have also shown that female porters are exposed to stressors from health

conditions, living conditions, and their daily working conditions. This finding concurs with previous studies on stressors faced by female migrants from the north (29, 69, and 70). The reoccurrence of stressors in different studies stand to show that they exist and they do affect the well-being of female porters

Verbal abuse resulting from the socio-cultural difference between the North and South also cuts across this study and previous literature (12). The only difference is that in previous studies verbal abuse was not necessarily categorized as a socio-cultural problem. Socio-cultural stress such as verbal abuse and differential treatment are not so much mentioned in previous studies. This is because in most migration studies, issues of social and cultural differences arise only with migration across borders. In addition there is a general tendency to focus on the economic and physical stressors without examining other forms of stressors that are not so apparent in their effect on for example mental health. For example, migrant-host conflicts are usually due to long held prejudices and stereotypes between the migrant and host communities (71). These two communities usually belong to different countries.

The literature on acculturation and acculturative stress has been found to be limited to international migration. Other socio-cultural stressors highlighted in this study also included limited freedom and the tendency to be cheated. It was quite interesting to find out that individuals can be exposed to acculturative stress even during internal migration. The limited research on this phenomenon makes it quite difficult to draw too many conclusions. At this point at least we know that the risks associated to migration is not limited to physical and economic but also mental health risk as a result of acculturative stressors. Studies have shown that there is a relationship between acculturation and mental health (43, 45). There is still a need for further research to be conducted on the extensiveness and prevalence of acculturative stress during internal migration and in this case Ghana.

Lastly, with respect stressors, this study provides a unique dimension to the effect of stressors on well-being of female porters in the Accra. Most of the studies reviewed in the previous chapter provided no information on the differences in stressors across the groups of individuals studied. A comparative analysis showed that female porters that were thriving had experienced a relatively less number of stressors. In addition, there was also a difference in the emphasis that these women placed on the stressors in their lives. This implies that well-being is affected not only by the number of stressors but the way the individual evaluates

these stressors. This finding was not replicated in any other study on female porters in Ghana but proves to be an interesting line of research for future researchers.

Another line of research found in studies of internal migration in Ghana is how female porters thrive and cope after migrating. Some resources were identified as very important for coping. These include knowledge of the Southern Language (Twi), start-up resources, social support and financial security. Previous literature has identified similar coping resource although the term resource was not used. Earning a stable income was identified as necessary for migrants to remain in the new society (6). Other studies also highlighted some of the factors that would affect the tendency of a migrant to remain in the South (32). Some of the factors mentioned included learning a trade, a porter's current income and knowledge of where to get necessary information (32). Current income and ability to have stable earnings correspond with financial security in this study. Other studies have also highlighted the importance of social networks for survival among female porters (31, 34). These social networks provide a source of income in difficult times for female porters. Other coping strategies that were highlighted by other studies include formation of sexual relationship for convenience, carving out of ethnic spaces and collective schemes to safe guard their incomes (12, 72). These coping strategies were not explicitly mentioned in this present study. Religious belief and social support accompanied by some self-reliance as resources for thriving were not found in other studies on north-south migration.

6.2 Salutogenesis

The Salutogenic framework presented in figure 1 was used to critically examine the results of this study with respect to GRRs, SOC and health/thriving.

 As mentioned earlier this study uses a salutogenic approach in explaining thriving among female porters. Every female porter tends to find herself in a unique life situation. These unique life situations include their gender, ethnicity, age, social position and others as has been clearly described in the results section. Each porter's life situation predisposes her to different kinds of stressors. These stressors could either be chronic or acute or even both. Examples of stressors include economic problems, health problems, and recurring family problems only to mention a few. Female porters carry with them or develop the necessary resources to cope and thrive.

6.2.1Generalized Resistance Resources

The coping resources mentioned in the preceding section enabled female porters to cope and survive as migrants. Some of them concurred with findings in previous studies others did not. In previous studies there was more focus on coping without recourse to specific resources that ensures successful thriving (29). As a result of the cross-case analysis that was carried out between female porters that were thriving and those not thriving certain resources were identified as essential for well-being. The resources for thriving were having financial security and securing a balance between social support and self-reliance. In addition, religious belief involving attribution to a supernatural being was also identified as a resource to enhance thriving.

In the salutogenic framework only GRRs were noted as important for health and there was no mention of other acquired coping resources. In this study both GRRs and acquired coping resources have been seen to be essential to enable thriving. As mentioned earlier, religious belief and balance between social support and self-reliance were identified as GRRs. Whilst financial security was an acquired coping resource adopted when faced with economic challenges as a female porter. This implies that not only GRRs are important but also the resources acquired when faced with stress in order to thrive.

Although religious belief has been identified as a GRR in this study and other studies and also in the Salutogenic framework, there is a dimension to it that affects individuals in different ways. Both female porters who were thriving and those not thriving held some form of belief in a supernatural being. Only the female porters that were thriving went further to attribute control to a supernatural being. The relationship between religion and health and is an on-going area of research. One study highlighted that there is an association between religion and health (73). It is important to note that their findings were inconclusive. Religion was also indentified as a GRR in the salutogenic framework but explanations on how it works was not discussed (25). In the light of this, research on female porters seems to provide some form of explanation on this relationship. The results of this study have shown that having the resource religious belief is not enough. What was found to be important is being able to adequately attribute the control of events to a supernatural being. This component of religious belief brought more meaning into the lives of women that were thriving. It also made them believe that the challenges they were faced with were not only meaningful but could be controlled.

6.2.2 Generalized Resistance Resources and Life course stressors

From the Salutogenic framework, it is evident that an under load, over load and balance between GRRs and stressors affects well-being. The findings of this study reflect a similar pattern where the female porters who were thriving were exposed to a lesser number of stressors. It means that they could have experienced an under load and the lesser number of stressors resulted in resources exceeding the stressors. It is also possible that there was a balance between the resources and stressors resulting in greater level of well-being for female porters that were thriving. The female porters who were not thriving on the other hand reported a slightly greater number of stressors and might have experienced an over load of stressors over resources.

In the salutogenic framework, consistency and meaningful participation was identified as an essential pathway to health. Participation was not evident in the data gathered but there was a measure of consistency. Consistency in the sense that, female porters overtime were better able to deal with their stressors. This is particularly evident among the women who were thriving who seemed to have developed consistent measures of tackling their life course stressors.

Apart from their life experiences the phenomenon of post decision dissonance emerged as a factor that affects well-being. Post decision dissonance comes from the literature on cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance was propounded by Leon Festinger (74). Cognitive dissonance arises when an individual experiences some conflict between attitude and behavior or when a person holds two conflicting cognitions (74). The female porters who were thriving looked back at what had happened to them so far and were quite satisfied with their life experiences. For these women who were thriving they had a positive perception of their experiences. Despite the stressors and even the acknowledgement of not yet reaching their ultimate goal they still had a positive perception of what had happened so far. This positive perception of their experience led them to experience post decision consonance. That is experiencing some satisfaction with past decisions. This finding concurs with another study which identified positive appraisal of situations and positive cognitions as necessary protective factors for health (48).

On the other hand, female porters who were not thriving experienced the phenomenon of post decision dissonance. Post decision dissonance resulted from the negative perception of their life experience. These women in retrospection wished they had not migrated. The feeling of

regret and negative perception of previous experience could affect their emotional health and even well-being in general. From this study a person's positive perception of their life experience and a post decision consonance enabled thriving.

The understanding and ability for adaptation and change was another important resource. It was important because it affected how female porters dealt with acculturative stress in order to ensure well-being. Adaptation and change emerged as a third factor that separated those female porters who were thriving from the women that were not thriving. Research on acculturation has generally dealt with how people adapt to their cultures upon migration. Different people adopt different adaptation strategies (36). These adaptation strategies include assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. Separation is one acculturation strategy that makes the individual prone to stress (40). In this study, the separation-stress phenomenon was not so much evident. When faced with acculturative stress, female porters who were thriving developed their own methods of coping. Previous studies have shown that religion, social support and social cohesion were important in helping one to cope with acculturative stress (42). These resources were also found in this study but there were other factors that were important in enabling female porters thrive despite acculturative stress.

Resources for coping with acculturative stress are unique in the way they work. This is because they are not like other material resources but rather a mechanism for which available resources interact with stressors in order to enhance thriving. One of the factors that were identified as important in enabling female porters handle their stressors adequately was their understanding of the need for efficiency and obedience. In order to deal with the stress associated with making a living in a new society where one encountered a lot of discrimination, efficiency and obedience was very important. Female porters had to put in extra efforts at being efficient and carrying out orders even when it was unfavorable to them.

Separation was adopted by other female porters when faced with acculturative stress. One difference between the strategy of separation in this study and previous study is that separation seems to yield favorable results for the female porters who adopted this strategy. According to the female porters who were thriving separating themselves from the environment that caused them stress and focusing on their aim for migrating enabled them to overcome the stress. This difference could be as a result of the short-lived period with which female porters live in the South.

Literature on acculturative stress highlighted slightly different factors for coping and some of these have been mentioned earlier in this discussion. Although they were generally mentioned as resources for coping they have also been useful in dealing with acculturative stress. Understanding the need to be efficient, obedient and separation on the other hand were mentioned as specifically necessary if one was to succeed as a porter in the face of cultural stress and discrimination.

One asset or resource that emerged accidentally was the migrant's length of stay in the South. None of the studies reviewed identified time as an asset for thriving. Except for one study that noted that SOC develops overtime (18). This study's finding concurs with previous study on the relationship between time and well-being. Female porters overtime were able to better to understand their situation and utilize their resources in a way that optimized their well-being. But this finding on the length of time as an asset is inconclusive and a longitudinal study on the women who are not thriving will be necessary to provide more evidence.

6.2.3 Sense of Coherence

Previous studies have shown that SOC is very important for well-being especially mental health (18). SOC enables one to develop a generalized orientation towards the world and this orientation is shaped by the individual's GRR (18). There is a gap in research on how an individual's GRR shapes their SOC. A number of studies on SOC have mainly explored the relationship between SOC and mental health. Some studies explained that SOC was only useful in explaining some aspects of health especially mental health (44, 47). Sense of Coherence has also been found to correlate with physical and psychological health although the mechanism for this relationship has not been explained (75). Others have provided some explanation on how GRRs shape SOC (50). According to this study there is a reciprocal relationship between the two with the perceived presence of GRRs being very important (50). In the last research question the researcher sought to explain how GRRs actually interact with SOC to produce well-being.

From the salutogenic framework we learnt that, SOC is affected by the degree of consistency and balance a person derives from the pressure of stressors and the presence of resources. A high SOC which is necessary for well-being is dependent on how well the individual is able to cater for the stressors. Following the salutogenic framework, female porters will be able to thrive if they are able to derive some degree of consistency from their life experiences. Consistency is supposed to affect how the individual deals with stressors and also contribute

to the meaningful component of the SOC. A balance in their life experiences will enable them understand the challenges that they are faced with and believe that they can manage and also have the resources to cope with the challenges.

Since the SOC the scale was not used we cannot conclude any of the above assumptions. There is no information on whether the female porters had a low or high SOC. A plausible explanation could be that their life experiences, positive perception of their experience and the understanding of the need for adaption might have shaped the components of SOC (meaning and comprehensibility). In addition, thriving female porter's perception of their situation as less stressful and appraising them as less threatening to their well-being, also suggests a certain level of SOC. But based on the absence of data on the level of SOC of the women such conclusions will be made with caution. Despite this, the presence of more GRRs among the female porters that were thriving and their perceived ability to mobilize necessary resources (manageability) to cater for stressors might signify a high SOC and also help to explain why they thrived.

In summary, the salutogenic framework proved very relevant but it is important to note that the SOC construct which has been identified as core for well-being and health was not measured. Even without information on the strength of SOC some female porters were still identified as thriving. This implies that there might be other representations of SOC which occurred in a different way among the group studied. It could also imply that may be SOC is not so central to thriving although its relevance cannot be overstated. Although the SOC scale has been used around the world, the predominant countries where it was used were in Europe, some Asian countries with South Africa being the only African country mentioned (28). It is possible that the items on the scale are too ego-central for the participants that were involved as in the case of the study in China (28). Some items in the scale such as feelings of control, finding meaning in life, having clear purpose or goals, having mixed up feelings and viewing life events in their right proportion were quite unclear and might have been too ego-central for the female porters.

6.3 Methodological considerations

This section discusses issues of validity, reliability, generalizability and limitations of the present study. It opens up with a brief discussion on the role of the researcher during the study and how this might have influenced the quality and authenticity of the findings being presented. The researcher's role is peculiar in qualitative research because the researcher

himself or herself is an instrument for data collection (61). It is therefore important to delineate those characteristics of the researcher that might influence the research in any way. A checklist on some of the variables that could affect the research includes biases, values, and personal background such as gender, history, culture and socio-economic status (56).

6.3.1 The role of the researcher

The background of the author as a Ghanaian from the South probably had two major impact on the process of data collection. On the one hand, it was very easy for the participants to identify me as one of them since I was not a foreigner. Following this it was relatively easy to get into the field and approach female porters to be interviewed. On the other hand, my cultural background as a woman from the South resulted in some form of cultural distance. This was particularly important when I asked questions about what they considered defective in the South and differences both good and bad between life in the North and in the South. As a result of the rapport created at the onset of the interviews, the female porters to some extent were open about their experiences. But there were others who were still a bit hesitant.

In addition as a Ghanaian in the South, the researcher had had previous encounters with these women so therefore had a fair idea of their conditions. The researcher also had a fair understanding of the context and experience of the phenomenon being studied. With this in mind the researcher endeavored to ensure that this previous knowledge does not result in any form of biases. It rather served as a lens through which the accounts of these women were viewed. The researcher also tried to open up to any new information that disconfirmed previous assumptions.

There was a conflicting role that the author had to play. On the one hand, there was a need for full disclosure on the background of the researcher. On the other hand some information such as being a student in a foreign country had to be kept private. This was because based on previous researches and experience; these women tend to expect anyone from overseas to have the resources to improve their situation. The responsibility of full disclosure was also very keen in this study because these women represent an over-researched group. Most of them have had encounters with people who come as researchers, NGOs and government officials who make promises to them, writing down their names and taking pictures of them.

The influence of an asymmetrical relationship during the research process is crucial (61). With my position as a researcher, it was obvious that there was an asymmetrical relationship with respect to socio-economic status. The researcher acknowledged this difference and

endeavored to create an atmosphere where the participants felt free to express themselves during both the face to face interviews and the group interviews. There were some ethically challenging situations during the data collection. There were occasions where the researcher encountered a participant who had a sick child and had no money to buy food for the child. The researcher based on ethical responsibility had to reach out to assist the participant but this was done after the interview session.

Although the interviews were not conducted in English, the fluency of the author in the local language made transcribing both a challenge and a success.

6.3.2 Validity

The validity of an interpretation is the truth of that interpretation (60). Validity in research is the interpretation of an observation which has to do with whether the researcher is calling what is measured by the right name (76, 77). Qualitative researchers generally adopt some techniques for ensuring validity and these include triangulation, member checking or response validation, reporting of deviant cases just to mention a few (57, 60, 61).

A number of data sources were used during this research to ensure triangulation of data. These sources include data through observation, group interview, face to face interviews and previous research on current study. A combination of these ensures that analysis and information reported is backed up by different sources that provide similar evidence which in the long run increases the authenticity and validity of data provided. The data obtained through observation was quite useful because it did not only put the phenomenon within its context but it also provided physical evidence to back up the verbal account of the women.

During data collection, a process of response validation was adopted to verify responses that the participants gave. This was particularly important in this study because the language with which the interview was conducted was not the participants' native language and also the interview guide was in English. It was therefore necessary for the researcher to frequently check with the participants to ensure that the responses recorded is what they really meant. Translating the interview guide to the local language was carefully done by the researcher so that a question being asked is exactly what is intended to be asked.

In relation to transcription, the researcher had to listen to the recorder over and over again to make sure that accurate information was being transcribed. The author had the advantage of actually going back to previously interviewed participants to cross-check with them any

discrepancy discovered during the transcription. In order to increase the validity of these findings some preliminary analysis began on the field where the author began to review the data and map out relevant patterns that were discovered. This process made it possible for the author to follow up on unexpected patterns that were discovered. For example during this preliminary analysis it was discovered that people from the North although they share very strong social ties they are also divided among themselves by ethnic origins. A memo was also kept all through the period of data collection and analysis so that explanations for codes and relevant thoughts were recorded.

Although the researcher did not have any specific biases or prejudices that would have affected the interpretation, the researcher tried to still keep an open mind. This in turn enabled the author not to rule out deviant cases but to record and present them as part of the findings of the study. For example, women whose reports did not conform to the theoretical framework and did not necessarily reflect thriving were also reported.

Apart from all the above mentioned strategies that were adopted to ensure validity, the researcher had a prolonged engagement in the field coupled with rich thick description that accompanied the field notes. All the procedures and reports were also reviewed by the researcher's supervisor.

6.3.3 Reliability

This refers to the trustworthiness and consistency of research findings (61). The presence of just one principal researcher enabled some level of consistency in the procedures used in data collection and analysis. The rationale behind emerging codes was explicitly stated and their resulting theme was well defined. All through the process of analysis the codes and themes were presented to the researcher's supervisor to inquire if he would have developed similar codes. This process ensures a level of inter-coder reliability (57).

 Field notes convention is one of the ways to increase the reliability of a study (62). The researcher kept field notes during the entire process of data collection. These notes include information on observation, hunches, analysis and interpretation. Qualitative studies are often criticized for lack of reliability because of the flexibility in its procedures. With this in mind the researcher made it a point to document all the procedures and changes that went into the research process so that the study can not only be replicated but also assessed as reliable.

6.3.4 Generalizability

This term is used with care in a qualitative inquiry because the aim of this study is not to generalize (57). Generalizability refers to the extent to which findings from a study will apply to other populations or different contexts (60). There is a need for conceptual generalization (60). Conceptual generalization refers to developing concepts that influence the way of thinking in other situations or similar context. The findings of this study might not be generally applicable to other migrants. But some of the conceptual issues such as stressors and resources for coping can be used to explain how other migrants facing similar situations survive. The cross-case analysis which allowed for a comparison between both female porters who were thriving and those not thriving provided an explanatory base for understanding how well-being could differ across different individuals under similar conditions.

The sample size was quite small and therefore limits any form of statistical generalization but this was compensated for by the in-depth descriptions that each interview provided. Although we cannot generalize to other populations, the study still provides a good explanation of the issues covered. In addition, it generally adds to the literature on thriving and therefore when combined with previous findings on this subject can aid in some generalization.

6.3.5 Limitations

Every study has limitations and this study is no exception. Some critics might say that this study is limited in the extent to which it can be generalized. But since the aim of this study is not to generalize then it's not very applicable. Apart from that, more time in the field would have allowed the researcher to discover more cases of female porters who were thriving. In addition, the time limitation did not allow the researcher to get access to AGREDs. The researcher was not given the permission to interview the porters under the care of AGREDs. During the data collection most women were tired before the end of the interview and this might have affected their response. This is coupled with the fact that they were in a hurry to get back to work. These limitations were offset by the quality of the in depth interviews that were conducted.

The inability of the researcher to access specific participants that met the proposed criterion required a revision in the selection criteria. This limitation was overcome by the fact that qualitative researchers are allowed to be flexible. Also those selected were able to provide responses that adequately answered the research question.

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Other limitations of this study are reflected in the following unanswered questions. First is whether there is a third factor resulting in thriving and not only the generalized resistance resources. This question is quite unanswered because both thriving female porters and non-thriving female porters were only slightly different when it came to the coping resources available to them. This is a limitation of this study because it could not provide enough distinguishing factors between the thriving group and those not thriving. Are there alternative explanations for why these women were thriving and what these alternative explanations are? This problem of limited evidence on factors that clearly distinguishes those thriving and those not thriving is also reflected in the stressors that female porters were exposed to. One would expect that since there is minimal difference between the stressors, then both groups of women should not be too far from balance (that is balance between their stressors and GRRs).

Another limitation of this study is that there was no way of measuring whether there was an overload among the female porters who were not thriving. It was merely inferred from the number stressors reported. It would have been very useful to find out to what extent these women felt that their stressors exceeded their resources rather than inferences based on their subjective reports of well-being.

Lastly, on the limitation of the study was the effect of the length of time on thriving. As stated earlier, the short span of the research made it quite difficult to conclude that time served as an asset although this conclusion concurs with the Salutogenic framework. This is because only three months was spent in data collection and it could be that if data were collected over the period of perhaps a year more women would be part of the thriving group. It is also possible that there would be no difference.

As with all qualitative research and studies measuring quality of life and well-being, this study is limited by its subjective measurements of thriving. The accounts provided in this study reflect participant's subjective measure of their well-being and this can be biased. Also the interpretations of participant's responses were quite subjective although a critical method of analysis was used to strip away as much as possible any subjective interpretations that do not reflect reality. In the same regards, it was impossible to use the SOC scale to measure whether the participants had a high or low SOC. This might have been due to poor translation of interview questions or the questions on the SOC scale were culturally inapplicable. This cultural issue is questionable because SOC has been used across different countries and cultures including South Africa.

6.3.6 Implications of the study

Previous chapters and this chapter have sought to answer the research questions of this study, all having to do with porters' coping resources. Some resources were identified which corresponded to previous theory and literature in the subject and other new dimensions were discovered. One important implication of this study is the need to focus more on the GRRs and not only SOC. Although GRRs shape SOC, it is the GRRs that can be directly improved by interventions and not the SOC. Another implication is that the definition of GRRs needs to be expanded to include both already existing resources and those developed in the face of stressors because they have both proved to be very essential in dealing with stress.

This study corresponds to the assets approach towards health and its findings reinforce the importance of focusing on the resources for health. The results of this study have also shown that the assets approach towards health is not only practicable but very effective in promoting health. Interventions using the assets approach should not only be encouraged but planned taking into consideration the contexts for the intervention.

Health promotion is concerned with enabling people increase control over their health and to ensure complete physical and mental well-being (15). Knowledge of the resources for thriving will enable health promotion practitioners to capitalize on assets to promote health even in places of little or no resources. Understanding the different dimensions of health as one including both mental and physical health will also enable practitioners to include mental health as an important aspect of health when planning interventions. The WHO conference on healthy settings also highlighted the importance of promoting health in every setting where individuals live (78). Therefore, health promotion experts should not only be concerned with promoting health in popular areas such as the school, workplace but even in places such as migrant settlements where people also live and play.

The definition of health by the WHO puts health on the agenda of every sector and not just the health sector (15). Internal migration in Ghana and the resulting consequences of North-South migration has been considered as a prerogative of the government sector alone. Most strategies and policies have been planned out with the view that these migrants are a nuisance to the cities in which they dwell. For this reason most of the plans towards developing the North and repatriating the migrants back home have failed (79). Based on the research findings of this study more focus needs to be placed on developing the strengths and resources of these migrants. Therefore, instead of the government focusing mainly on developing the

North and sending these people back home some structures should be put place to develop the resources they already have whilst leaving in the South. Some NGOs such as AGREDs have already taken the lead but more can be done.

Following from the WHO principles, government can work to promote health in the everyday life of the migrants even before they return home. Shelters can be provided and vocational institutions to build on their resources can be established. But it's important to take it into consideration the counter effect which might be a continuous inflow of migrant from the North to the South. Steps need to be taken to discourage migration whilst making sure that those who have already migrated also thrive.

Based on the study's limitation there are many future directions for research. These include a longitudinal study that compares female porter's overtime in order to find out the lifelong resources that enables one to thrive. Other future directions could also be a mixed method study using the SOC scale and other quality of life scales whilst doing an in depth study of well-being among female porters. In addition, the SOC scale can be revised so that it can be useful in measuring SOC for people in different settings for example collectivist society such as Ghana. More research can be done on the direct link between GRRs, life experience and health instead of the excessive focus on SOC which is an abstract construct. Research on GRRs and life experiences tend to provide more concrete data to work with and plan interventions than just focusing on SOC. This does not undermine the importance of SOC for thriving but just a need to expand our scope in order to get a fuller picture of the factors for well-being.

Research on internal migration in Ghana has mainly focused on the stressors and problems encountered by these migrants. Migration studies in the future could focus more on the strengths and resources rather than just the stressors. Future research can also explore whether acculturative stress is a major problem in internal migration. How is it represented and what strategies are adopted for coping during internal migration? It will be interesting to see if there is any difference in the process of acculturation in cases of international migration and internal migration. Another question that future studies could address is the universality of adaptation strategies for acculturative stress.

Chapter Seven

7.0 Conclusions

With regards to the question of resources financial security, religious belief (with attribution) and social support backed up by a bit of self-reliance was identified as necessary for thriving. Secondly, in order to deal with acculturative stress, an understanding of the need for efficiency and obedience was important. Lastly, for resources to be managed effectively in the midst of stressors there was a need for a positive perception of one's life experience.

A lot of research has been done on female porters in Accra as a result of increased awareness of the dire circumstances they find themselves in. Apart from this growing interest in problems of internal migrants, new lines of research have also focused on coping and survival of female porters. This particular study is part of other researches that focuses on resources rather than stressors alone. This study has added to the frame of research that focuses on the use of resources and has also provided knowledge on the coping resources necessary for thriving of female porters in Accra.

The findings of this study showed that some female porters were thriving despite the stressors they were exposed to. Some coping resources were identified as very important for thriving. The salutogenic framework espouses that GRRs are very necessary if the individual's life experience would lead to well-being. This was confirmed in this study although there was little or no information on the SOC of female porters, their self-report of well-being was very useful in separating those that were thriving from those who were not. It is important to note that the differences between women who were thriving and those not thriving were slight. In of terms stressors, resources, and management of resources the two groups of porters did not differ so much. Despite this, it is still enlightening to have knowledge of the factors for thriving. This study has also contributed to the research on acculturation in a unique way. This is because most acculturation research is focused on international migration and mostly long term migrants. This study applies the ideas on acculturative stress to a different group of migrants whose experience as migrants might differ from migrants of international migration.

There is still room for more research on GRRs, SOC among several cultures and also acculturation. A more resource oriented approach and a health promotion perspective should be applied to migration research in Ghana.

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9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix I: Data Analysis table

Results of within-case analysis

Coding Frame	Codes		Basic Themes		Organising Themes	Global Themes
Stressors	1.	Economic	1.	Economic stressors	Stressors	Stressors/life situation
	2.	Need for material things	2.	daily Hassles		
	3.	daily hassles	3.	health and emotional problems		
	4.	Health problems				
	5.	Stressor from living conditions	4.	living arrangements		
	6.	Social and cultural stressors	5.	social and cultural stressors		
	7.	Family problems				
Resources	1.	Length of stay in the south	1.	Time	GRRs and acquired coping resources	GRRs
	2.	Belief	2.	Religious belief		
	3.	Financial capital	3.	Start-up resources		
	4.	Financial security				
	5.	Social ties	4.	Social support		
	6.	Social cohesiveness	5.	Language		
	7.	Physical strength	6.	Financial security		
	8.	Language				
Interaction of resources and	1.	Perception of experiences	Perception of experience and life		Post decision dissonance	Might be related to SOC

stressors	2. Perception of conditions in the south	situation	and consonance
Resources for acculturative stress	Adaptation and change: a. Need to obedient and respectful b. Efficiency c. separation	Adaptation and change	Management of acculturative stress
Thriving/Non -thriving			Health

Results of cross-case analysis

Basic themes	Thriving female porters	Non-thriving female porters
stressors	All stressors except family stressors	All stressors
Resources	1. Social support+self-reliance 2. Financial security 3. Religious belief+attribution 4. All other resources	Other resources with the exception of resources used by thriving female porters.
Interaction of resources and stressors	Positive perception of experience	Negative perception of experience
Management of Acculturative stress	Adaptation and change	No management of acculturative stress

9.2 Appendix II: Map of Ghana

Source: http://www.mapsofworld.com/ghana/ghana-political-map.html

9.3 Appendix III: Interview Guide

Please tell me your life story (detailed answers)

1. Why did you migrate?

2. What was your life like as a porter/kayaye?

3. How did you get to where you are now?

4. As a northerner, how is life in the south?

5. What are some of the best things about your move to the south?

6. What are some of the worst things about your move to the south?

7. What are some of the most important things that make it possible to do well in the South despite the challenges?

8. How would you describe your life now, all things considered?

9. If you had the chance to go back in time, would you have still moved to the south?
10. (regardless of answer, ask why)

11. What advice would you give to women from your home area, who are planning to move from the north to the south?

Please tell me about how you feel about your life (short answers)

1. Has it happened that people you have counted on have disappointed you?

2. Do you have the feeling that you don't really care much about what goes on around you?

3. Have you ever been quite surprised by the behavior of people you thought you knew well?

4. Do you have the feeling that you are being treated unfairly?

5. Until now, would you say your life had clear goals and purpose, or not?

6. Do you have the feeling that you are in a somewhat unfamiliar situation, and don't know quite what to do?

7. Some people tend to feel that they are unlucky in life, compared to other people; have you ever felt this way in the past? (If yes ask) Have you felt unlucky only once in awhile, or often?

8. Is doing the things you do every day mainly a source of pleasure and satisfaction, or mainly a source of pain and boredom?

9. Would you say that you tend to have very mixed up feelings and ideas, or not?

10. How often do you have feelings that you are not sure you can keep under control?

11. How often do you have the feeling that there is little meaning in the things you do in your daily life?

12. Does it happen now and again that you have very mixed up feelings inside that you would rather not feel?

13. Do you generally see things in their right proportion, or do you tend to over- or under-estimate the importance of things?

Closing questions

1. I am so thankful that you have taken the time to tell me about your life in the south, and something about your feelings about your life! Can you think of any questions I should have asked, in order to get a fair understanding of you and your situation?

2. Now we have come near to the end, and I wonder if you have any questions you would like to ask me?

9.4 Appendix IV: Information sheet

Information sheet: Explanation of the study for participants

I am a master's student at the University of Bergen studying health promotion. I am conducting a study with former female porters in Accra. The aim of the study is to understand how these women have managed, coped and have moved from their previous situation (head porters) to a better one.

I will conduct 15 individual interviews, each lasting up to about 45 minutes. There will be one focus group discussion for the women who would like to share their views in a group. The interview session will be audio taped only after taking the consent of the participants to go ahead to record their responses using the audio-tapes.

There is no risk or harm to the participants, either physically or mentally. The process of the interview will allow the women to reflect on their experiences, and the focus group will help them appreciate the fact that they are not alone in their situation.

The data collected will be published as part of my master's thesis but pseudonyms will be used when quoting participant's responses. In addition all data will be safely stored in a personal computer during data collection and analysis without the actual names or any identifiable characteristics. The stored data will be deleted six months after submitting my master's thesis.

All participants have a right to withdraw from the study at any time, and they may choose which of my questions to answer and which not to answer. There is no penalty for not participating, or for answering selected questions only.

The participants will not benefit directly from the study. However, I will do my best to publish my findings in academic journals and in popular media in Ghana, so that others may benefit from this research. This project will end on the 31st of May 2012.

Informed consent form

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of the Participant………………………………………….………….

Signature of the Participant…………………………………………………………….

Date……………………………………………….…
        (Day/month/year)

If illiterate:

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Thumb print of participant:

Print name of witness……………………………………………………………....

Signature of witness…………………………………………………………………

Date…………………………………
        (Day/month/year)

For written consent: statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered to the best of my ability. I confirm that that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of the consent form has been given to the participant.

Print name of the researcher/person taking

consent…………………………………..……………………

Signature of researcher/person taking

consent……………………………………………………………

Date……………………………….

(Day/month/year)

In case of any follow-up questions or queries, you can contact

PI: Angelina Wilson

Phone number: 233243833056/4745580281

Email address:angej2k @yahoo.com

Also

Mittelmark MB, Head of department, University of Bergen, Norway.

Email address: Maurice.Mittelmark@iuh.uib.no

Also

Sam Bugri, University of Development Studies, Tamale.

Email address: sbugri@yahoo.com

9.5 Appendix V: Ethical Clearance NSD

Maurice Mittelmark
HEMIL-senteret
Universitetet i Bergen
Christiesgt. 13
5015 BERGEN

Vår dato: 24.05.2011   Vår ref: 27103 / 3 / MSS   Deres dato: Deres ref:

KVITTERING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 27.04.2011. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

27103	*Health and Well-being among internal Migrants in Ghana. A Qualitative Study of former Female Porters from Northern Ghana to Greater Accra Region. A salutogenic Approach*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Bergen, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Maurice Mittelmark*
Student	*Angelina Wilson*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.05.2012, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen
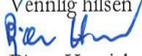
Bjørn Henrichsen   Marie Strand Schildmann

Kontaktperson: Marie Strand Schildmann tlf: 55 58 31 52
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Angelina Wilson, Fantoft studentboliger, 5075 BERGEN

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Formålet med prosjektet er, å gjennom den salutogene modellen, å forklare hvordan kvinner/interne migranter i Ghana mestrer sårbare situasjoner og lykkes.

Utvalget består av 15 kvinner/tidligere bærere. Utvalget rekrutteres fra to marked i Accra via personer som fungerer som bærere i dag.

Personvernombudet finner informasjonsskrivet tilfredsstillende, forutsatt at det påføres dato for prosjektslutt (31.05.2012), og ber om at revidert informasjonsskriv sendes oss innen det opprettes kontakt med utvalget. De som ikke har leseferdigheter vil få informasjonen formidlet muntlig. Ombudet minner om at informasjonen skal formidles på et språk som den enkelte forstår.

Datamaterialet innhentes gjennom personlig intervju, gruppeintervju og observasjon.

Det innhentes opplysninger om alder, hvor de migrerte fra, og hvor lenge de har oppholdt seg i sør. Videre innhentes opplysninger om hvordan en opplevde flukten, beskrivelser av relasjoner, følelsesliv, hvorvidt en vurderer seg selv som positiv eller negativ, hvordan man vurderer situasjoner, samt tanker om fremtiden.

Datamaterialet lagres på privat PC tilknyttet Internett. Ombudet forutsetter at dette er avklart og i tråd med retningslinjer for informasjonssikkerhet ved Universitetet i Bergen.

Lydopptak slettes etter at de er transkribert avidentifisert til PC.

Datamaterialet anonymiseres innen prosjektslutt 31.05.2012 ved at verken direkte eller indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger fremgår. Koblingsnøkkel og lydopptak slettes. Indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger fjernes, omskrives eller grovkategoriseres.

9.6 Appendix VI: Ethical Clearance GHS

GHANA HEALTH SERVICE ETHICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

In case of reply the
number and date of this
Letter should be quoted.

Research & Development Division
Ghana Health Service
P. O. Box MB 190
Accra

My Ref. :GHS-ERC: 3
Your Ref. No.

Tel: +233-0302-681109
Fax + 233-0302-685424
Email: Hannah.Frimpong@ghsmail.org

June 28 , 2011

ANGELINA WILSON, Principal Investigator

ETHICAL CLEARANCE – ID NO: GHS-ERC: 13/5/11

The Ghana Health Service Ethics Review Committee has reviewed and given approval for the implementation of your Study Protocol titled:

"Health and Well-being among Internal Migrants in Ghana: A Qualitative study of Former Female Porters from the Northern Region to the Greater Accra Region. A Salutogenic Approach"

This approval requires that you submit periodic review of the protocol to the Committee and a final full review to the Ethical Review Committee (ERC) on completion of the study. The ERC may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the study during and after implementation.

Please note that any modification of the project must be submitted to the ERC for review and approval before its implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the ERC within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

You are requested to submit a final report on the study to assure the ERC that the project was implemented as per approved protocol. You are also to inform the ERC and your mother organization before any publication of the research findings.

Please always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence in relation to this protocol

SIGNED...
PROFESSOR FRED BINKA
(GHS-ERC CHAIRMAN)

Cc: The Director, Research & Development Division, Ghana Health Service, Accra