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YOUNG, ALONE AND STRUGGLING TO GROW

– EXPERIENCES AMONG INDEPENDENT CHILD MIGRANTS AT THE URBAN DESTINATION OF KUMASI, GHANA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the individual and gendered experiences among young girls and boys who have migrated independently to the city of Kumasi in Ghana in search of work and better life opportunities. The research questions relate to their experiences of opportunities and constraints at destination; self-protection strategies that they employ to minimize negative effects of vulnerabilities and risks; and about their social navigation of youth transitions from dependence and childhood towards independence and adulthood. The study employed a case study design including the specific methods of individual interviews with eight girls and six boys, complemented by interviews with key informants, one focus group discussion with girl migrants and literature review. Findings include insights into gender differences in relation to all research questions, as well as emerging patterns. Migration may represent a survival strategy motivated by self-protection, but it may also be a way of realizing future aspirations regarding marriage, education, professional skills, and contributing to the family's overall wellbeing.

Key words: independent child migrants, youth transitions, vulnerability, self-protection.

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Photo on cover: field documentation in Kumasi, February 2011.

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List of Acronyms

APPLE	Association of People for Practical Life Education
ECWC	Empowerment Center for Women and Children
GNCRC	Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child
JSS	Junior Secondary School
Kayayei	*Women head porters*
KMA	Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly
LIMO	Liberty Movement Organization
MFCS	Muslim Family Counseling Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SCDF	Street Children's Development Foundation
Susu collector	*Traditional saving system of informal bankers*
UNCRC	United Nation's Convention for the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Problem

"I came to work and get money, and go back. Everybody is coming here, so I decided to come myself after seeing what everybody brings back home."[1] 16-year-old Nadia is one among many children who have migrated independently from their rural homes to the city of Kumasi in Ghana. Her decision and actual migration demonstrates her role as a social agent. However, the migration puts her in vulnerable situations, especially at destination where she is working hard to earn money while being alone without her family's protection.

Nadia's statement highlights that she was inspired to migrate by community members who had migrated and returned with earnings, but it is likely that other motives where also underlining her decision. Commonly, poverty is driving young persons to migrate from rural to urban areas, and pushing them to the fringes of urban society where they are less likely to enjoy the fulfillment of their basic needs, such as access to education and health care (Kielland and Sanogo 2002; UNDP 2007). This can be seen at urban destinations in Ghana, where many independent child migrants become street children (Bøås and Hatløy 2008; Kwankye et al. 2009). Whether or not child migrants end up in the street, they can be categorized as vulnerable children; since they are exposed to harsh living conditions while being out of reach from their normal family support network (Bøås and Hatløy 2008:11). Furthermore, gender inequalities persist to negatively affect the everyday lives of girls and women (Yeboah 2010:46), also in the migration process where girls may be even more exposed to constraints and risks at destination (World Bank 2011:71f).

Nevertheless, it should be recognized that migration can bring both negative and positive effects, for example through increasing vulnerability but also providing a pathway out of poverty (Hashim 2006; Save the Children 2008). Common generalizations about the negative situations that independent child migrants might place themselves in need to be nuanced to leave room for understanding the multifaceted effects and children's views concerning migration (Punch 2007; Save the Children 2008). Children and young persons who are migrating independently represent a heterogeneous group with different backgrounds, motives, aspirations and experiences. In some

[1] The names of all research participants have been changed to protect their identity. The quotations in this thesis represent quotes such as translated to me.

cases they are victims of abuse and exploitation, but they are also individuals who have taken command of their life situation through taking decisions and actions (see, e.g. Young 2004).

'Independent child migrants' refers to children who migrate independently of their parents, although the decision to move may not be solely an autonomous one, such as defined by Whitehead et al. (2007:4)[2]. Until recently the focus on independent child migrants has been rather absent from research, since it has traditionally been clustered together with family migration. These days, this social phenomenon has achieved growing importance at the national level in Ghana, for example through public attention concerning the harsh realities faced by young migrant girls working as head porters in the urban spheres (e.g. GCLS 2003; Kwankye et al. 2009). However, much attention has still been focused on child trafficking and fostering as features of child migration, and has subsequently failed to assess the vulnerabilities attached to the migration process itself (Hashim 2006).

Ghana has a long tradition of internal migration, and one of the current dominant features is migration from regions in the north towards urban centres in the south, particularly to Accra-Tema, Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi (see map in Appendix I), in search of work (Kwankye et al. 2007:4; Ungruhe 2010). This study is situated in Kumasi, the second largest city in Ghana and equally an urban pole of attraction.

1.2 Aim and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the individual and gendered experiences among young girls and boys who have been moving independently to Kumasi in search of work and better life opportunities. This thesis aims at contributing to an academic documentation of a complex area in need of more nuanced understanding. In this regard, this thesis aims to broaden the traditional research focus[3] through applying a child-centered approach (see, e.g. Hashim 2006; Punch 2007; Thorsen 2008; and Young 2008), which holds the perspective of children and young persons as social agents who are involved in taking decisions

[2] "We recognise that the decision to move may or may not be an autonomous one, the children may or may not make their journeys in the company of known adults or other children, and at their destinations they may or may not be living with other family members or kin." (Whitehead et al. 2007:4)

[3] For example, as naturally included in family migration; children as passive and vulnerable, e.g. as victims of child trafficking; and focused on negative effects and outcomes of the migration.

and actions about their life course. This study shows that young migrant girls and boys are actors seeking opportunities on a playground with limiting boundaries in form of structural constraints.

In addition, this thesis aims to better understand how young migrants find themselves amidst the process of growing up and being in transit from childhood to adulthood. It is valuable to explore such experiences among young migrants of today, especially when noting the diverse and changing nature of the opportunities that are available and desired among young people, and that they might differ with gender**,** and in comparison to previous generations (Langevang 2008:2039). In this sense, I argue that young persons' migration to urban areas in Ghana can represent a multifaceted youth transition including leaving home, start a work and in some cases enter or exit school. Inspired by Punch's (2002) study on youth transitions from school to work in rural Bolivia, this thesis aims at understanding "the meanings young people attach to the opportunities and constraints with which they are faced when negotiating their … transition".

This thesis aims at exploring the following three research questions focused on the urban destination of Kumasi in Ghana:

1. How do young girls and boys who are migrating independently experience their opportunities and constraints at destination?
2. What protection strategies are available and employed by young girls and boys who are migrating independently to reduce their vulnerability and risks at destination?
3. How are young girls and boys who are migrating independently to Kumasi navigating their transit from childhood to adulthood?

Young migrants' experiences may differ with gender, and potential gender differences will be taken into account in regard of all three research questions. Gender and age are repeatedly being recognized (see, e.g. GCLS 2003; Hashim 2006; World Bank 2011; Yaqub 2009; Yeboah 2010) as determinants for children's experiences of opportunities and constraints both at the place of origin and at destination of migration. Girls are disadvantaged by the gender hierarchy granting them limited power and control over resources and their sexuality; and as a result they may become vulnerable and socially excluded (UNDP 2007:8). By taking into account the gender factor, the research is employing an 'ideological perspective' and gender dimensions are included in the analysis (Creswell 1998:78).

The findings could potentially contribute to general lessons about interactions between independent child migration, youth transitions and social protection. It is especially valuable to bring together different strands of theory to one analytical framework that could help explaining the interconnections between, for example, children's motives for migrating and the vulnerabilities they experience at destination. Their experiences are likely to hold resemblance to the ones among young migrants in other settings as well as with the ones among street children in urban spheres.

2. Research Context

2.1 Development in Ghana

Before Ghana was declared independent from the colonial power of the United Kingdom in 1957, as the first independent nation in the Sub Saharan Africa, the country was portrayed as a model colony with significant development (PRSP 2006:ii). Despite a decrease in general poverty levels in the 1990s, particular geographical areas and population groups have experienced intensification of poverty including increasing vulnerability and social exclusion. (ibid.:1). The historical North-South divide has put populations in the North at risk of social exclusion (UNDP 2007:4). Poverty along with limited economic opportunities is especially prevalent in the underdeveloped northern Ghana (the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions), where remarkably low rates of school enrolment, adult literacy and access to health care can be observed (Harsch 2008; PRSP 2006). While the agricultural sector is the main basis of Ghana's economy and employment opportunities (PRSP 2006:23), small-scale farmers, and especially women, are particularly exposed to poverty (ibid.:1). Urbanization is a feature of today's Ghana (Yeboah 2008:62), and much of the urbanization growth is concentrated in the two largest cities, Accra and Kumasi (Owusu 2005, cited in Yeboah 2008:62). Today's population of 22.2 million is concentrated in the Greater Accra, Ashanti and Eastern regions (GLSS 2008:4). The high urbanization rate is stemming from an urban bias that is resulting in rural-urban migration (Yeboah 2008:62).

Concerning social development, patriarchal gender relations have throughout history favored men in decision-making, and in access to and control over resources. Discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender, age and other factors is sometimes leading to social exclusion. (UNDP 2007:5f) At community and individual level, harmful cultural practices are persisting and influencing

negatively on the lives of girls and women, especially in the North where these practices have an impact on access to school, health care and natural resources (Harsch 2008); and among harmful practices that are still widespread and especially targeting girls are female genital cutting, and early[4] and forced marriage. Even at the national level, gender differences can be observed in cultural customs. The average first age of marriage in Ghana is 21.1 years among females, which is about four years earlier than the 25.4 years among males (GLSS 2008:8).

2.2 Rural-to-Urban Migration Patterns

Ghana has a long history of internal migration, including rural-urban migration from the North towards the south (Anarfi et al. 2003; Kwankye et al. 2007; Kwankye et al. 2009). The high rate of rural to urban migration is further reflecting the disheartened conditions in rural communities (Kunfaa 1999:8). The higher levels of poverty in the North creates a spatial dichotomy 'pushing' people away (World Bank 2011), simultaneously as labor opportunities and economic growth act as 'pull' factors for migrants towards urban centres in the South (Anarfi et al. 2003; Kwankye et al. 2009). Significant income differentiation between rural and urban areas due to urban-biased policies on the macro-economic level has resulted in persons taking the decision to migrate based on expectations of higher incomes at destination (Anarfi et al. 2003:15f). The migratory patterns have been evolving over time, and they have historically been strongly related to the supply of economic opportunities. For example, much seasonal migration into the cocoa industry ran to a halt in 1970s and 1980s due to decreases in job opportunities, and many of these seasonal migrants from the North moved into the urban informal sectors or into neighboring countries (ibid.:13f). Historically, young male adults have represented the largest bulk of internal migrants, but since the 1970s, increasing number of families have engaged, and more recently independent women and children (Kwankye et al. 2009:33).

2.3 Childhood in Ghana

Ghana's 1998 Children's Act defines a child as a person below the age of 18 years, and a young person is defined as a person 18-20 years of age. About 31 percent of the country's population comprise of children 5-17 years of age (CLSG 2008:7).

[4] According to Hashim's (2006:23) field study in the Upper East region, a girl is of marriageable age when she is about 15 years.

Concerning children's education, the abolishment of school fees has led to a substantial increase in school enrolment[5]; and 75 percent of the school-aged children are attending primary school, with no substantial differences when disaggregated by sex (MICS 2006:78ff). The attendance rate is 87 percent and 84 percent in the Greater Accra and Ashanti regions respectively, while the lowest attendance rate of 55 percent can be observed in the Northern region (ibid.:81). Child labour poses a constraint for children's education, along with negative parental attitudes towards girls' education (Harsch 2008). According to Hashim (2006:6), children start doing light work tasks, such as taking care of siblings, doing household chores, and guarding crops or livestock, already from the early age of four or five years of age. By the age of 14, children are often able to work on terms similar to that of adults, and they are expected to provide certain items (such as soap) for themselves and to start taking responsibility for their transit into adulthood (e.g. girls should buy items necessary for their marriage) (ibid.). About 39 percent of the children aged 5-17 years are estimated to be economically active (GCLS 2003). Ghana's 1998 Children's Act prohibits children's involvement in exploitative labour, referring to labour depriving the child of its health, education or development. The Children's Act puts the minimum legal age of employment to 15 years, while night work[6] and certain types of potentially dangerous and harmful work is not allowed before 18 years of age. In addition, the legal minimum age for children's involvement in light work[7] is set to 13 years and children above the age of 14 years are allowed to engage in apprenticeship. The porterage of heavy loads, which is one of the main activities among child migrants in Kumasi, is defined as hazardous and hence unlawful child labour.

3. Methods

As recognized by UNICEF, qualitative research approaches can contribute to improved understanding of experiences in terms of social, physical and cultural nature (Aitken and Herman 2009:1). This study qualifies as a case study with an overall goal to understand the social phenomenon of young persons migrating independently to an urban destination. As motivated by Yin (2003:2), the case study method is suitable when aiming to understand a contemporary and

[5] School enrolment is officially compulsory in Ghana from the level of kindergarten to primary school, junior secondary school and lastly senior secondary school. In total, there are 14 grades of compulsory schooling, until the age of 15-17 years. (MICS 2006:78)

[6] Night work refers to work between the hours of eight o'clock in the evening and six o'clock in the morning (Children's Act 1998).

[7] Light work refers to work that is not harmful to the development or health, and that is not affecting the school attendance and the in-school learning capacity (Children's Act 1998).

complex social phenomenon. Individuals' stories are the primary units of analysis, and together they form a single-case study (ibid.:22f).

3.1 Data Collection and Sampling

Multiple methods for data collection and sources of information were attended to facilitate an expanded understanding and generate complementary insights. Semi-structured interviews with young girls and boys who have migrated independently to the city of Kumasi represent the primary fieldwork method. Complementary sources of information comprise of semi-structured interviews and informal meetings with key informants, one focus group discussion with young migrants, and literature review. The empirical data collection took place in the urban spheres of Kumasi, Accra-Tema and Ashaiman, Ghana, between December 2010 and February 2011.

By applying a bottom-up approach, the interviewing of young migrants was prioritized since they hold the subjective information regarding their experiences. I invited key informants to participate by purpose of maintaining a general understanding of the topic. Interviews were conducted through a mixed procedure of purposive and snowball sampling. I relied upon the purposive sampling due to its strategic nature, which ensures that participants are relevant to the topic. The snowball sampling was suitable based on the fact that I had a very limited time frame to locate participants, and hence, had to immediately follow-up contacts and social tracks. (Bryman 2008:458f). Initially, I met with gatekeepers such as the Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child (GNCRC), whom subsequently directed me to the local NGOs of the Association of People for Practical Life Education (APPLE) and Liberty Movement Organization (LIMO) in Accra-Tema and Ashaiman, and with the Muslim Family Counseling Service (MFCS) and the Empowerment Center for Women and Children (ECWC) in Kumasi. Further, I got in contact with the Street Children's Project and the Street Children's Development Foundation (SCDF) in Kumasi (see Appendix IV for Presentation of Gatekeepers).

Semi-structured interviews with young migrants

Semi-structured interviewing method depends on oral communication; hence, it has advantages in situations of limited literacy levels among participants (Bryman 2008:456). Interviewing guides (see Appendix III) provided for temporary structure but was being used in a flexible manner to collect subjective information. I believe a less structured interview holds potential to empower

participants to influence the research in terms of choice of topic and information given (Aitken and Herman 2009:34).

The individual participants are young girls and boys who have taken the decision to move away from their families and who are facing everyday struggles in the fast moving city of Kumasi in Ghana. 14 individual interviews (see Appendix II) with young migrants were conducted; among them, eight were girls aged 14-17 years and six were boys aged 15-20 years. It so happened that it was easier to locate girls in the slum areas and when visiting the local gatekeepers' activities, while the boys where invited to participate upon meeting them in the street and outside a micro savings office**.** Girl migrants in Kumasi seemed to be generally younger than boys, although this might be representative only in the migrant groups I got in contact with. To briefly describe their common and individual characteristics, they have all been migrating below the age of 18; and eight out of the 14 participants originate from rural areas in the Northern region, while two participants originate from other parts of the Ashanti region and there is one participant respectively originating from the Upper East, Upper West, Greater Accra and Brong-Ahafo regions. They engage in different types of work; the girls work as head porters, seller of rice and stew, seller of ice water, and assistant to a woman selling rice and stew; and the boys work as seller of plastic sachets, shoeshine boys, driver's mates, and apprentice.

The young participants were located in major transport stations (Kejetia Lorry Station), market places (Kejetia market and Central market) and slum areas (Bombay and Racecourse) and through gatekeepers' project activities. The timing and locations of data collection were chosen to attain comfortability and a sense of security for the participants, which I believe contributed to more sincere answers (compare to Aitken and Herman 2009:36). All participants were experiencing poverty; both in their rural home and at destination, hence they often had to work long hours and had little free time to devote to participation in the fieldwork. I found windows of opportunities for interviews during their resting time in the middle of the day or in the evenings of weekdays, as well as Sundays. No compensation was given in cash, since this would only have complicated the independency and trustworthiness of me as a researcher. However, in all instances I provided some drinks and snacks at the end of their participation, and in many cases this resulted in additional informal small talk.

All individual interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed to allow for intensive analysis of the respondents' answers (Bryman 2008:451). The recordings also allowed for me as a researcher to concentrate on the verbal and physical interactions during fieldwork. Since none of the young participants spoke English to a satisfying level, I was interviewing through translators. I got assistance in this matter by several different persons; men and women who were familiar with the topic of youth migration and street children. This means that the quotations in this thesis are not word by word accounts made by the research participants, but translated versions of their accounts. I tried to be careful in my choice of translators, and they were in all instances well aware of the topic and could have a meaningful discussion with the participants after my interviews concerning possible solutions to the participants' concerns and questions (such as how to get support to go back to school or engage in skills training).

Key informants and focus group discussion

Additional interviews and informal meetings were conducted with key informants from NGOs and service providers who are working directly with child migrants. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with NGO staff, and one with a medical doctor at a hospital (see Appendix II).

One focus group discussion was conducted with girls in a secondary school in the migrant-dense area of Ashaiman in the Greater Accra region. This group discussion focused on views and definitions of growing up, leaving childhood and entering adulthood. Focus group discussions allow for more interaction among the participants (Aitken and Herman 2009:34). When a research topic is regarded as sensitive, group discussion hold potential to contribute to an empowering climate in which participants can share their views and experiences, and in which they can create meaningful collective views and definitions. (Bryman 2008:473ff). The participants were girls 17-18 years of age who had moved away from home either to work, to go to school or due to family fragmentation. Three out of four participants combined schooling with work.

3.2 Methodological Considerations

Based on Bryman (2008:31f) in regard of the criteria of reliability, the concepts used within the scope of this thesis and the results are carefully and consistently defined and examined. Furthermore, the study is based upon, and aims to build upon, previous knowledge on the topic (ibid.). Concerning external validity, I try to explicitly describe the research process, and the

theoretical framework was designed before the start of field data collection while the findings are consequently reconnected with the framework (Yin 2003:35). The criteria of validity is adhered to through the inclusion of multiple units of analysis, accessed through different gatekeepers, ensuring more than one source of information and crosschecking (ibid.). Since the primary focus of this thesis is the individual experiences, the subjectivity of the data is natural. Through analytical generalization, findings of the study hold potential to generate broader conclusions in connection to theories (ibid.:37f), such as described under research aim.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

Considering ethics, I have strived after a research process that is accountable, reflexive and interactive (Scheyvens and Leslie 2000:128f). I was working in an unfamiliar setting with sensitive questions, hence I needed to rely upon social contacts to trace potential participants and ensure research ethics (Bryman 2008:458f). I have carefully been informing all participants of the objective of this research and how their answers will be used. The voluntariness of their participation has been stressed and I have expressed my commitment to assure the privacy and confidentiality of young participants, hence their real names have not been used anywhere in this thesis (Aitken and Herman 2009:11). Additionally, oral informed consents were given by all participants concerning the voluntary nature of the participation and the agreement on audio recording on condition of confidentiality.

Through maintaining respect for the individual capabilities and autonomy, I have avoided disempowering the participants (ibid.:8). I have actively chosen to include persons who can speak for themselves, and consequently I have been narrowing the target group to the older categories of child migrants. The research process in itself might be an empowering experience for participants, particularly when they are encouraged to reflect on experiences and how to manage difficulties (Opie 1992, cited in Scheyvens, Scheyvens and Murray 2003:191). As acknowledged by Aitken and Herman (2009:8), research that is involving children living independently in developing countries create difficulties in balancing responsibility and respect on the part of the researcher. The child-centered focus in qualitative research align well with independent children's rights in a number of ways; for example through focusing on what children feels about what they can do and what they can be, based on their current experiences (Jones and Sumner 2007).

4. Literature Review

4.1 Independent Child Migration

Many authors have been discussing what factors on individual, household, community and national level that may influence people's decisions to migrate within Ghana. Anarfi et al. (2003:24) identify three strands of research focusing on child migration in Ghana, more specifically on trafficking, street children and fostering. This research tradition fail to recognize that children and young persons can exercise agency through taking decisions and actions concerning their life course, such as emphasized by other scholars (see, e.g. Punch 2002; Thorsen 2005; Young 2004).

Adding to this discussion, Yaqub (2009:45f) describes two main ways that a child can migrate independently from rural to urban areas; more particularly, outside their kinship network and in connection to labour opportunities, often encouraged by peers and following adult migrant flows. In this view, several studies, such as Bøås and Hatløy (2008) and Kwankye et al. (2009) present young migrants as actively seeking involvement in economic activities as survival strategies in situations where there are few other alternatives available, for example when education is no longer an option. Although much research identifies poverty as the dominant underlying reason behind a child's decision to migrate independently, the motive is often mixed with other social and cultural factors and hence not solely economic (Punch 2007). In the view of Thorsen (2008), there are linkages between poverty, migration and education that also should be explored.

Another recent research focus puts emphasis on the transition from childhood to adulthood as a motive for migration (see, e.g. Hashim 2006; Kwankye et al. 2009; Punch 2007; Thorsen 2005). In a study conducted by Kwankye et al. (2009) on child migrants at urban destinations in Ghana, money and independence were identified as their goals for migrating.

Several scholars (Hashim 2006; Kwankye et al. 2009; Yeboah and Appiah-Yeboah 2009) have engaged in documenting the ways many unskilled children and young persons move independently, or together with their families, from agricultural communities to the urban poles in Ghana where they engage in unqualified work. One typical example of such work within the informal sector that has captured much research attention is female adolescents who engage in

head porterage of goods, commonly called 'kayayei'[8], around transport hubs and marketplaces (see, e.g. Kwankye et al. 2009; Opare 2003; Yeboah and Appiah-Yeboah 2009). The occupation of head porterage for commercial use stems from male migrants from the Sahelian countries in the region, and today, it represents a major form of transportation of goods for everyday purposes among farming households in Ghana (Kwankye et al. 2009:11). According to Yeboah's (2010:44) research in Accra, many porters are young women belonging to the category of urban poor, and their survival strategies expose them to increased vulnerability at destination. Other than the focus on kayayeis, the work of street children have been covered in several studies, but they often fail to differentiate migrant street children. For example, the 2003 Ghana Child Labour Survey acknowledges that the informal sector in Ghana is underdeveloped and as a consequence street boys find unskilled occupations such as driver's mates[9] and truck pushers (GCLS 2003:120f) while other occupations include shoe shining, petty trading, garbage collecting and car window washing (Bøås and Hatløy's 2008:12).

4.2 Gender and Migration

According to the World Bank (2011:71f), the motives for migration differ with gender; while work related motives are the main motives among both men and women, marriage is the second most popular motive for women's migration. A number of studies (see, e.g. Hashim 2006:15; Opare 2003; Yeboah 2008:143) have found that young girls are sometimes expected to contribute to their own marriage, both in terms of materials and in terms of skills that can allow them to earn an independent income; and as a consequence they migrate towards urban work.

Several scholars (e.g. Anarfi et al. 2003; Jayati 2009) have found that, gender discrimination based on social norms and traditions is influencing the migration process. Girls and women often find limited employment opportunities (Save the Children 2008; Yaqub 2009), more so than boys and men (Yeboah 2010:46). The persistence of gender inequalities affect a range of elements in everyday life of women; and vulnerability is increasing and livelihoods severely affected by limitations in access to resources, services and education (ibid.).

[8] 'Kayayei' as a term is stemming from the word 'Kaya', meaning luggage and load in Hausa language, and the word 'Yoo' meaning woman in Ga language. A kayayoo is a woman carrying other people's loads on the head for a fee. Kayayei is the plural form, meaning women head porters. (Opare 2003:34)

[9] Driver's mates are working as driver's assistants within public transports.

5. Theoretical Framework

This thesis is theoretically based on the child-centered approach, while arguing that young migrants are social agents in transit from childhood via youth to adulthood. Migration theory provides background understanding of the transitions these young persons are going through, such as their reasons for migrating and what structural constraints and opportunities they experience in the process. Furthermore, conceptual discussion of social vulnerability and protection strategies provides understanding of how young migrants deal with risks that they encounter at destination.

5.1 Child-Centered Approach

The child-centered approach sees children as social agents of change embedded in socioeconomic structures and contexts that influence their actions (i.e. Hashim 2006; Lieten 2008; Punch 2007; Thorsen 2008; Young 2004). The approach is useful for viewing young migrants as agents experiencing and dealing with structural constraints in their daily life.

In the view of Lieten (2008:137), autonomous individuals negotiate their agency and lives within frameworks of social, economic, cultural and political structures, with dimensions based on age, gender, class and ethnicity. Likewise, Graue and Walsh (1998:14) describe contexts as social constructions, such as gender, socioeconomic status and ethnic identities, which influence on children's relations with others. By being aware of these contexts for children's experiences, we can maintain a deeper understanding of their individual and general concerns (ibid.). Structures often interconnect in constraining and influencing young persons' agency (Punch 2002:126). Moreover, precarious living conditions, such as lack of access to quality education and poor access to basic services, act as limitations in children's agency (Lieten 2008:136).

Children's work can be argued as agency since it can alleviate their family from poverty. In this way, children hold great potential to be active contributors to the wellbeing of their families and communities, even under poor conditions. (ibid.:136f). Negative forms of child labour may be a consequence of conditions (such as poverty) that children have very limited capability to change, and thus children's agency may result in short-term solutions (ibid.:145). The child-centered approach is closely related to ideas of the rights of the child, and their realization are in some cases

severely hampered by oppressive structural constraints that are important to consider when deciding on child protection strategies (ibid.:140f).

5.2 Migration Theory

Migration theory contributes to a general understanding of child migratory patterns by conceptualizing it (Langevang and Gough 2009:743). Persons engage in migration because of reasons on individual, family and community level. In an economic view, the migration result in both costs and returns at the individual level. Costs includes both immediate financial costs relating to traveling and housing arrangements, as well as psychic costs relating to leaving home (McKenzie 2007:4f). Returns depend on incomes at destination, which is determined by available job opportunities (Todaro 1969). In Todaro's view, the decision to migrate is principally based on the expectations of income differential between rural and urban areas, and the chances of finding an urban employment. In the first stage of rural to urban migration, unskilled rural migrants find themselves in the urban traditional sector, which is referring to unemployment, underemployment and irregular employment, including small-scale trades and services (ibid.:139). At the household level, migration can represent a coping strategy when a family encounters financial distress, while at the community level, migration might result in more young persons leaving, due to the establishment of social migrant networks and a culture of migration (McKenzie 2007:6).

The migratory process of independent child migrants could be split into four dimensions that together form the full understanding of the phenomenon, such as presented by Yaqub (2009:35):

1. **How is children's independent migration decided and organised?**
2. **What motives might children have for migrating independently?**
3. **How do children migrate independently?**
4. **What are the children's situations at destination?**

Regarding the decision and organization, children are in command of or involved in the decision-making process to a varying degree; sometimes they are taking the full decision and organizing the move on their own. To fully understand this dimension, it is important to look at the decision-making process; the organization and financing of the move; housing arrangements at destination; and children's intended activities at destination (ibid.). By understanding decisions and who is the decision-maker, we can differentiate migration from trafficking (ibid.:39). Considering motives, migration often is a balancing act between families' livelihoods strategies and individual goals. In

the view of Yaqub, there are three sets of motives, namely a) income-generation, family roles and intrahousehold relations, b) accumulation of assets and human capital when aiming at future (such as part of life transitions); and c) self-protection (ibid.:40). Examining the actual move, child migration can take place either within or outside the kinship network, with the latter category being more in connection to labour opportunities and adult migration flows (ibid.:46f). Concerning the fourth dimension, children's and young persons' experiences at destination are shaped by a number of elements, such as access to housing and security, healthcare, education and skills training, safe employment, and social support; and their choices and responses to their situation are much guided by these needs (ibid.:53). The first three dimensions together determine their situations at destinations (ibid.:55). Although this thesis is focusing on the fourth dimension, the other dimensions are integrated in the analysis on the basis of their inseparability.

5.3 Vulnerability and Social Protection

Social protection is a key concern among children at risk, such as independent child migrants. The definition of protection is commonly based on the United Nation's Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC), Article 19, which says "State Parties shall protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse." The UNCRC identifies the Government as being the primary responsible, however, the term could also be understood in a wider meaning. Within the scope of social vulnerability, a range of human protection strategies can be identified; ranging from the strengthening of people's wellbeing, people's own efforts to protect themselves (self-protection), and access to social protection by the government and civil society (Cannon et al. 2005:5f). For instance, children may be inclined to use migration as a self-protection strategy upon experiencing shocks such as illness or death in their family, domestic violence, hunger or abandonment (Yaqub 2009:44f).

The notion of 'vulnerability' should be understood as a cycle of multidimensional nature capturing a person's exposure to shock or risk and the ability to manage it, as well as the likelihood of being poor in the future (Sabates Wheeler and Haddad 2005:5). As such, vulnerability should be understood as different from poverty, marginalization or disadvantage. The three concepts of poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion are interrelated and hold common as well as distinguishing characteristics. In terms of differences, poverty measures a current status, while vulnerability is indicating a predictability; such as what may happen to an identified group of people if they are targeted by a certain condition of risk, disaster or emergency (Cannon et al.

2005:5f). Poverty represents a multi-dimensional measurement of human wellbeing, which in turn can have a negative impact on vulnerability (UNDP 2007:14f).

Likewise, social exclusion relates to disadvantage rather than poverty, while it may be described as a result of individual, structural and cultural processes (Jones 2009:135). Social exclusion may be a result of life course shocks, but being born into poverty may also put a person in severe disadvantage, leading to deprivation in economic, political and social spheres (UNDP 2007:14f). Some people may experience poverty but not exclusion, while other become poor due to exclusion from the job market and as a consequence vulnerable (ibid.). The exclusion of disadvantaged groups of people from active participation in the different arenas of their society decreases their resistance against exploitation and risks (PRSP 2006:1).

Due to social inequalities, risks are not uniformly distributed in society, and social and cultural resources determine the ways people tackle and negotiate risks (Beck 1992, cited in Thomson et al. 2002:338). Young people's experiences of risk vary with gender and social class, for example, young men in a risky environment are often associated with the risk of unemployment, while young women are associated with the risk of teenage pregnancy (see, e.g. Jones 2009:101f). Structures of social stratification result in youth poverty, which expresses itself for example through unemployment and homelessness. The stratification is multidimensional and disadvantage is structured based on social class, gender, age and ethnicity. In particular, gender implications seem to interact with those of social class. (Jones 2009:120)

Nevertheless, a risk or its impact can be reduced by a combination of chance and the use of individual skill (Thomson et al. 2002:338). The term 'resilience' can describe a person's ability to adapt and transform even when faced by imminent risks and hardships (ibid.:136f). A child or young person who is facing risks and hardships may show resilience and can to some extent express agency, although it may be limited and directed towards short-term solutions.

5.4 Youth Transitions Theory

The notion of 'youth' refers to a social construction that describes the life course in the intersection between childhood and adulthood (Jones 2009:1f). Furthermore, it should be understood as a relational concept, hence, youth should be understood in relation to adulthood (Langevang 2008; Punch 2002).

The concept of ‘youth transition’ refers to a life stage including diverse trajectories, concerning education, work, and in family and housing situations (Punch 2002; Roberts 2000; Thomson et al. 2002). The transition could be seen as a process, in which a young person shifts between different stages in life. In this process, young people are anticipated to mature socially and economically, for example through acquiring skills and knowledge, and establishing a job career (Langevang 2008:2040ff). Hereby, youth transitions include shifting away from dependence and childhood towards independence and adulthood.

Initially, research on youth transitions focused on the ideas of ‘life stages’ and ‘life cycles’ assuming linearity and uniformity (Jones 2009:86f). In the 1970s, the ‘life course’ perspective developed on the idea that the youth transition is marked by life events and that we should aim at understanding the determinants for the timing of significant social events (e.g. entry into the labour market and age at marriage) (as presented by Modell and Hareven 1978, Marini 1988, cited in Jones 2009:87). Moreover, this perspective sought to explain the life story of individuals as socially structured and influenced by age (Jones 2009:87). In this respect, Thomson et al. (2002), developed an approach centered at ‘critical moments’, referring to sequences of moments or events that are especially significant for moving between life stages. Nevertheless, a critique against the focus on life events is that it disregards the unlinear nature (Johnson-Hanks 2002) of the social processes that young people are placed within (Jones 2009:88f). Today, much research on youth transitions have developed into being more holistic and socially integrating, for example through exploring intergenerational and family relations (ibid.).

The concept of ‘vital conjunctures’ as presented by Johnson-Hanks (2002:871), refers to socially constructed windows of opportunities that emerge at certain times of potential life transformation, such as important actions, including migration. The concept may provide a base for understanding the way young people navigate their future aspirations depending on their specific individual contexts and constrained by structural expectations (ibid.). Another idea is that of ‘social navigation’ proposed by Vigh (2006:51ff), which refers to young persons’ mobilization towards immediate and imagined ‘life chances’ and social becoming. Migration may enhance young persons’ possibilities to actively construct new future opportunities and choices (Punch 2007:4).

Agency vs. structure

The 'social navigation' idea aims at understanding the interaction between agency and structure through exploring how agents seek to portray and actualize their life course by purpose of increasing their life chances in unstable, time-bound and spatial social contexts (Vigh 2006). In this sense, the notion of 'bounded agency' (Evans 2002) refers to constraints in individual agency among young people. This concept was developed to examine and explain experiences of individual agency among young persons aged 18-25 years in the areas of their personal life, education and employment (ibid.:498). Thomson et al. (2002) came up with the idea of a continuum of degrees of agency, ranging from the presence of agency when a person can make a choice to the absence of agency when a person relies on fate (Thomson et al. 2002:340). A young persons' response when encountering a critical moment is influenced by structural positions, including access to social and economic resources (ibid.:349f).

On the topic of interaction between structure and agency, Punch (2002:126) has identified among others the following structural constraints that youth negotiate: gender, geographic location, economic resources, lack of education opportunities, family background and attitudes, birth order, and social network. Punch (2002:125) argues work decisions among young persons are rather complex since they involve choosing between whom to work for (e.g. own family or others), where to live (e.g. at home or away from home), and where to work (e.g. rural or urban environment). Young persons need to balance family demands with personal ambitions, and in addition, incorporate circumstances of school, home and work. Hence, all these different life contexts are interweaved and should be understood as interrelated (ibid.:130).

Dependence, independence and interdependence

As already mentioned, there has been a shift away from viewing youth transitions as linear and unitary, to viewing the transitions as comprising of a range of interrelated elements. For example, a young person can become economically independent while still staying unmarried in the parental home (Jones 2009:95f). In this respect, it is important to explore how young people define independence and adulthood in their specific contexts.

In the view of Thomson et al. (2002:338), children and young persons are particularly vulnerable to decision-making powers, since they experience limited autonomy and reliance on others for their security and social support. Children's and young persons' forming of personal identities is

influenced by a socially constructed 'intergenerational contract', but this contract is not stagnant and hence constantly renegotiated.

The concept of 'negotiated interdependence' can serve a useful framework for examining young migrants agency within structural limitations; while they strive after fulfilling both their individual aims and their family's needs (Punch 2002:123). This concept is based on the idea that young people move back and forth between relative dependence and autonomy (ibid.:124). It has been argued that the relationships between children and parents are more interdependent in developing countries because of realities that often make children economic agents and contributors to the household survival from an early age (Boyden et al. 1998, cited in Punch 2002:124). As Punch (2002:124) puts it: "the notion of 'youth transition' from dependent child to independent adult is problematic since young people negotiate and renegotiate their interdependence with their parents and siblings throughout the life-course."

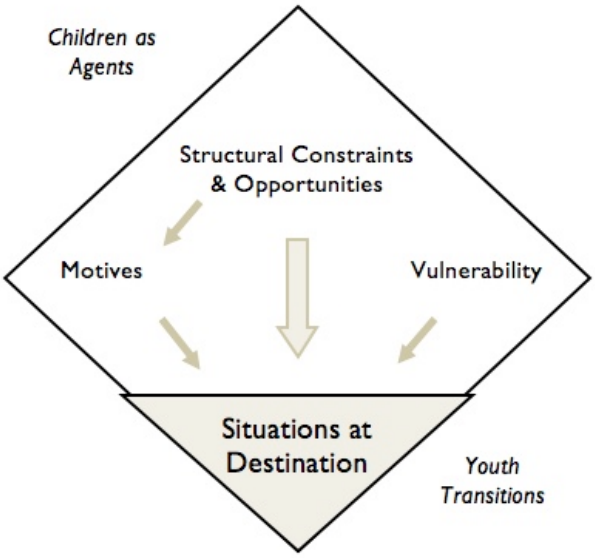
The transition from childhood to adulthood may contribute to or even result in young persons' migration (e.g. Hashim 2006; Punch 2007). Migration might even be a strategy for a young person to pursue an individual desire of being independent, earning money and get life experience, and at the same time a way to satisfy the family's material and social expectations (Thorsen 2005:17).

Gendered transitions

Gender plays a significant role in the course of youth transitions. Traditionally, girls and women have moved between stages of transitions earlier than boys and men, for example through leaving home, and starting relationships earlier (Jones and Wallace 1992, Jones 1995, cited in Jones 2009:93). Another traditional feature can be found in responsibilities and ways to independence; while men commonly were expected to carry the responsibility of breadwinners, women who encountered few work opportunities saw marriage as the key to independence (Pollert 1981, Wallace 1987, cited in Jones 2009:93). Until today, gender influences individual decisions to change life course. According to Roberts (2000:19), divisions based on gender, social class and ethnicity among young people widen, deepen and are combined particularly during the transitions from education to entering employment and related to family.

5.5 From Theory to Analysis

The following model of analysis was constructed by purpose of illustrating the interlinkages between the different strands of theory for the purpose of the analysis.



Source: Author's construct, April, 2011.

The model should be seen as a construct explaining potential relationships between the different ideas that combined form a holistic theoretical framework. Theories concerning youth transitions and children as agents (child-centered approach) are constantly present as overarching perspectives for understanding the migration process and the young migrants' experiences. The first research question aims to explore the migrants' motives, opportunities and constraints, which in turn influence and are influenced by children's agency. Exploring subjective experiences is important for understanding individual situations at destination. The second research question concerns vulnerability, risks and the self-protection strategies that young migrants' have at hand for minimizing potential negative impact on their current situation. The third research question uses youth transition theory, relating to both child-centered approach and migration theory, in explaining how young migrants actively negotiate individual, family and social expectations, needs, responsibilities and interests in the process of shifting from childhood towards adulthood.

6. Analysis

Previous research implies that young girls and boys migrate independently for a variety of reasons, including escaping from poverty and towards expectations of finding work. Patterns surface but there is room for better understanding and recognizing the individual and gendered experiences. In this study, eight girls (Nadia, Fozia, Adira, Ashia, Raja, Bahira, Sara, and Saba) and six boys (Ramin, Isam, Rohan, Enam, Ismail, and Gido) have participated through sharing their own personal experiences. They arrived in Kumasi between three days and three years ago; it is for the first time for seven of them, while the other seven have been home once or several times.

This analysis starts off with a description of the present study area. It is followed by analysis of the migration process, which is focused on motives for migrating and opportunities and constraints at destination (RQ 1). The third section discusses social vulnerability, risks and self-protection strategies (RQ 2), which is followed by analysis of how the young participants navigate their youth transitions, and especially the moves between dependence, independence and interdependence (RQ 3).

6.1 Case Study Area: Kumasi

Kumasi is the capital of the Ashanti region and an urban pole of attraction strategically situated in the middle zone of Ghana (GLSS 2008:51). The region was the centre of the old Ashanti Empire and its population benefited from significant socio-economic development in the 1980s, which consequently attracted increasing number of migrants to Kumasi from the underdeveloped North (Nabila 1986, cited in Anarfi et al. 2003:16). A rural-urban divide in terms of development can partly explain the high rate of young persons involving in migration. A key informant from an NGO working directly with child migrants highlights the alarming situation.

> "Children are also looking for opportunities, so they are drawn to cities like Kumasi. They are attracted by opportunities. The situation is quite alarming. /…/ They come and they are in the street and they engage in all forms of menial and dangerous jobs just to survive. They do not have any form of protection, because they do not have any family or relatives at home [in the city] who can help if they fall into trouble. They are on their own /…/", Key informant 1.

6.2 The Migration Process: Motives, Opportunities and Constraints

The young migrants are actors seeking opportunities on a playground with limiting boundaries made up of structural constraints. It is important to understand how they individually regard opportunities and constraints, and also when aiming to find patterns and general lessons. Moving from rural to urban setting represent one way of negotiating with various structural constraints that participants of this study have experienced.

One dimension of independent child migration concerns the motives for migrating (Yaqub 2009), and these often comprise of a balancing act between the family's livelihoods strategy and individual goals. In the present study, all young participants say that they took the decision to migrate on their own, which can further confirm the child-centered approach seeing children as agents of change, such as in decision-making. But it is important to note that their families in all cases but one were informed, agreed and supported their decision, and that the opposite would probably have had implications. Sometimes, parents supported their child's decision by contributing economically to their travel expenses.

> "I decided myself to come here to work as a kayayoo. I told my parents before leaving and they agreed that I should go", Adira, 15.

> "I decided myself, and when I decided I did not inform my family. Only my friends knew that I was coming to Kumasi", Enam, 18.

During the study, poverty and unfortunate family circumstances clearly emerge as motives for young people to migrate. All participants witness about difficulties, insecure living conditions, lack of opportunities, death of parents and family fragmentation or inability of parents to care for them as common reasons for their decision. They come from diverse family backgrounds and four out of 14 participants are orphans. Under such difficult circumstances, migration may pose a survival strategy motivated by self-protection.

> "I was living together with my parents but they died. So I moved /…/ to live with my brother. But it wasn't going well at my brother's place so I decided to come down here", Saba, 16.

> "My father was not around and I don't know where he is. Actually, I don't know my father at all. My mother and sisters and brothers are in Accra. My mother sells body cream on the pavement in the

streets, and she hawks around. Life was difficult so I decided to come to Kumasi to do something about it", Enam, 18.

"My main worry is that I dropped out of school, because of poverty and the death of my father. /…/ Because of that I was compelled to come here", Sara, 16.

Two of the participants say that their fathers had, or have, more than one wife. Polygamous marriage is widely practiced in the northern regions, and in some instances lead to negligence, conflicts or various degrees of family fragmentation (UNDP 2007:64; Yeboah 2008:143). It is interesting to note one tradition in Ghana making children belong to their father, and in accordance they stay in the father's household even in case of divorce or if the father dies and the mother remarries (Hashim 2006:21), such as it happened to Raja and Ismail.

"When my father remarried he was no more interested in my mother, so they got divorced. He moved to Accra to stay with his new wife. My mother also went to Accra but she is no longer staying with my father", Raja, 15.

"My mother and father got divorced, and currently my mother is in /…/ My father is staying at /…/ sort of at the far end of Kumasi. /…/ I am living together with my uncle [the father's brother]. My father is sick; he had a stroke. When they [parents] divorced, my father took me away from my mother, he took me to my grandmother", Ismail, 19.

Poverty and lack of opportunities in the places of origin act as push factors simultaneously as expectations concerning urban employment and incomes act as pull factors. In order to improve the realities faced by many migrant children and youth in Ghana at their urban destination, there is a need to put more attention on the realities in their rural places of origin (for more discussion on this, see Todaro 1969). Three of the participants stress that they would have preferred to stay at their places of origin if it would have been possible to find better employment and make an income there. There also seem to be differences in the type and availability of job opportunities depending on gender.

"There is no job at home, so this is the only place where I can work and get some money and do what I need to do. So I am OK [with being in Kumasi], since it is to get money to satisfy my needs. If there had been some really good job [back home] I would have preferred it over there, to be there and work", Gido, 18.

"If only there would be a better work back in the North, I would not have been here", Fozia, 17.

> "Back home there is only three things that a girl can do. If she is not going to school, she can only learn how to do hairdressing or /…/ While the work for boys are many. The work [in Kumasi] is very tedious. But in the North I could only help in the house", Adira, 15.

> "I was normally not farming, just sometimes helping out in the farming times when we took the crops. I normally went to collect firewood for the cooking and took care of the house", Nadia, 16.

In terms of work decisions among youth, these involve choosing between working for the family or for others, staying at home or move, and working in rural or urban spheres (Punch 2002:125). Eight of the participants come from families that are full-time or part-time involved in small-scale farming. The idea presented by Todaro (1969) concerning expectations of higher incomes in Kumasi may in many cases prove to be true, at least when taking into account the lack of employment opportunities in the places of origin.

> "Here it is better than in the North, because there it is very difficult. Here, if only you work hard you can make money and buy something to eat and buy clothes. There it is not like that, because there you will have nothing to do and stay at home, and that will make you think a lot", Ashia, 19.

> "Life in Kumasi it is kind of if you don't have anything to do, then it is very difficult for you to live in Kumasi. But if you aren't lazy and you work hard, then you can do it and manage. If you find work you can manage and get something out of it", Saba, 16.

> "I came to work and get money and go back", Nadia, 16.

At the urban destination, the participants tell about daily incomes ranging between none and 10 cedis[10] (6.7 USD) a day. The incomes appear to fluctuate a lot among girls working as kayayeis, and they witness about having days when they cannot find any work. Also, when they find work the amount of earnings range from as little as 1.50 to 10 cedis (1 to 6.7 USD) at its best. In total, four of the participants experience days when they earn no money at all.

> "I am not getting enough [money], not as expected. I thought that when I come here it would be easier to get money, but it is really harder", Bahira, 14.

[10] Ghanaian Cedi (GHS) is the local currency. At the time of fieldwork, 1,50 cedis were equivalent to 1 USD.

> "It is not constant. There are days when you can get money, lets say 2-5 cedis (1.3-3.3 USD), there are even days when you can't get anything. When there are days you can't get anything you come here and you sleep the whole day and then go back home", Raja, 15.

Drawing from interview findings, the ones earning the least seem to be both the girls and the boys who are assisting another adult, through working as assistants or driver's mates or being apprentice. The ones earning the most appears to be the boys who are working on their own, as shoe shine boys and seller of plastic bags, among whom it is not rare to earn 10 cedis a day. On the topic of work remuneration, as has been illustrated gender differences are sometimes working in favor of male participants (for more discussion on this topic see, e.g. Hashim 2006).

Young girls and boys want to improve their life situations and become 'someone', and several scholars (e.g. Punch 2002; Ungruhe 2010) present the idea that return migrants bringing home and showing off material and financial gains experience growing social status and inspire other persons to migrate. Likewise, some of the participants seem to have been inspired by peers who returned with such 'symbols of success', and their stories witness about the importance of material gains and growing social status for both the decision to migrate and to return back to their places of origin. In the case of Raja, she appears to feel pressure in terms of performance and success.

> "Everybody is coming here, so I decided to come myself after seeing what everybody brings back home", Nadia, 16.

> "It is necessary that you buy quite a bit of the items. Because if you go back and you don't have these items, you are laughed at, they will laugh at you that you couldn't get anything. So I need to buy a lot of utensils before going back", Raja, 15.

In terms of education opportunities, these appear to be very limited both in rural and urban locations. Rohan migrated to earn money for his own education and has since been able to continue in primary school with the financial support from the Street Children's Project. Also, Isam has completed Junior Secondary School (JSS) and wants to continue his education, which may be possible with financial support. In the case of Isam, despite the fact that long time has passed since he stopped school, he still dreams about continuing. He seems very depressed when telling about his father who used to work as a medical doctor, and tells that he once dreamt about becoming like him. However, in Ghana you need to go through the formal system to learn how to

read and write, and if you have failed to complete the JSS levels it is very difficult to find another solution (Key informant 1), such as in the case of Ismail.

> "I like school and I would like to get education. Therefore I became a shoeshine boy to support myself. But it is not easy. /…/ I was not happy about not going to school, that was my problem. My father was also worried that I did not go to school. So now when I am going to school my father is very happy", Rohan, 15.

> "My father was the one who was sponsoring my education, when he got sick I had to stop school because there was nobody to finance my education. By then I was in Class 5 [in primary school], about 10 years ago", Ismail, 19.

Gender differences can be observed in terms of attitudes towards education. Three out of six boys seem eager to invest time and money in education, and they also seem to have benefited from parental support to start school early. In contrast, Rohan tells about his five sisters, among whom several have either never been to school or dropped out early to get married. At least four of the girls participating in this study either never went to school or dropped out, and they now argue that they are too old to continue schooling. Nadia tells that she never went to school because her father did not support her schooling initially, and now she lacks the time and motivation for it. Sara dropped out of school when she was supposed to enter JSS about three years ago, due to poverty and the death of her father. Lack of education affect their daily life, and a majority of the girls appear to not even know simple mathematics.

> "I have never been to school. I am too big, so I can't go to school", Fozia, 17.

Concerning accumulation of human capital and planning for the future, nine out of 14 participants migrated with hopes of learning a professional skill. For example, 20-year-old Ramin wanted to learn ICT so that he can start a business in the future, but since it costs money to learn it in his hometown in the Northern region, he decided to become an apprentice in Kumasi. Now, Ramin is staying with a master whom he says teaches him the job in exchange for his work contribution. One boy wants to learn how to do electrical installations and another one how to repair mobile phones and other electronics. Another five girls desire to earn enough money to afford learning a professional skill such as tailoring or hairdressing before returning back to the North.

> "I am here to work and get enough money to go and learn some vocation. I want to learn hairdressing. I want to learn the hairdressing here before I go back home to set something up", Saba, 16.

All participants regard their work situation as temporary, such as has been highlighted by their long-term desires to learn professional skills and return back home. Despite the difficulties they experiencing, they are actively deciding to stay at destination until they have reached their goals about earning money and advancing towards future aspirations. In this aspect, Thorsen (2008:4) supports the idea that child migrants may value opportunities of independence at destination so high that they choose to stay although they are experiencing hard times. The participants confirm that their work tasks are difficult and often physically demanding, in line with findings from the studies by Kwankye et al. (2007) and Yeboah and Appiah-Yeboah (2009). For example, Nadia, Raja, and Fozia are working as kayayeis, and they confirm the difficult and physically demanding work tasks.

> "Work is not good because it is tedious. So when she has enough money she will not come back. /…/ The work is difficult because the load sometimes is too heavy and too many but you have to carry", Fozia, 17.

> "What you get is too small. It is hard work, there is a lot of work and you are tired, but you do not have any other option so you have to go", Raja, 15.

It is not only the work with head porterage that appears to be difficult, for example, Saba assists a woman who is cooking and selling rice and stew by the Racecourse market area. She gets 2 cedis (1.3 USD) a day and food in exchange for mainly doing the dishes. Also, the three boys working as driver's mates also think their work tasks are demanding and difficult.

> "The work is very difficult, because apart from the chores that I am doing, I have to help with cooking the food and then when people buy the food you have to go around and collect the dishes. When somebody buys some food and take it some distance, you have to go to the other place to collect the dishes", Saba, 16.

> "It [the work] is good but difficult. It is good in the sense that you can get money. Everyday is a lot of hard work. When you are a mate you have to be sitting by the door, you have to open and close it, so it is tirering. From 5 or 6 in the morning until around 5 in the afternoon, sometimes longer", Enam, 18.

In summary, the participants experience opportunities at destination, or aspire for future windows of opportunities. They all witness about structural constraints such as poverty, limited opportunities for education and work, poor living conditions, and limited advancement towards the desired future, if they had stayed in their places of origin. Furthermore, family fragmentation may play a crucial role since children who experiences the death, sickness or separation of parents, may actively choose to migrate as a survival strategy motivated by self-protection. In these cases, staying behind in the place of origin would potentially put them in even worse situations than at destination (compare to Punch 2007). Their short-term objective for migrating is to find work and earn money. However, they experience limited work opportunities of irregular nature. Their work earnings fluctuate significantly, and the ones who appear to be the most successful are boys who are working on their own, while the ones the least successful are both girls and boys who are assisting another adult. The earning of incomes could be interpreted as a means to realize aspirations for future opportunities, such as to acquire assets and human capital. For example, the common desire to earn enough money to continue schooling; or to learn a professional skill that can enhance their possibilities of making a better living in their places of origin; or to acquire materials to show off to gain social status. Gender differences can be observed in the way boys appear to be more eager to invest time and money in schooling; what type of work opportunities they find and the rate of incomes; and what type of professional skill they desire to learn.

6.3 Risks, Vulnerability and Self-Protection Strategies

The migration process includes many risks, dangers and insecurities that make young boys and girls vulnerable (Hashim 2006). Young migrants are confronted with these risks either at their work place or at the place they stay, and often in both spheres.

At destination, many independent child migrants end up without proper housing arrangements (Kwankye et al. 2007; Yeboah and Appiah-Yeboah 2009:3), or in some instances they can afford staying in slums[11], such as the Bombay and Racecourse slum areas in Kumasi (Key informant 1). Young migrants at urban destination can be categorized in four groups depending on their living arrangements; the ones staying with relatives; sharing and contributing to rents of kiosks; living as squatters in uncompleted buildings; and, the most vulnerable group sleeping in the streets (see

[11] In this context, 'slum' refers to poor quality and informal housing with low human living conditions. Slum areas are often heavily populated urban areas with specific physical and social characteristics, such as lack of access to safe water and sanitation, electricity and other basic services. Rapid and massive migration from rural to urban areas, growing urban poverty and inequality, and insecure tenure contribute to slums existence. (UN-Habitat 2007)

Yeboah and Appiah-Yeboah 2009:3, on porters in Accra). The participants in this study can be categorized in all groups, but gender differences emerge; since six out of eight of the girls share rented kiosks in slum areas, while three out of six of the boys are sleeping in the streets. As already has been mentioned, being a migrant is sometimes translated into being a migrant street child at destination, even though this may just be temporarily seeing as they are likely to be embedded in family structures in the place of origin and upon return (ibid.:2).

> "They come here and they do not have any family or relatives to depend on. So they will go to take care of themselves, and the first place that they go is to the street. Basically, the street here refers to lorry parks, markets, and the streets. Many times they meet other children and they engage in various acts to survive…", Key informant 1.

Three girls are expressing dissatisfaction over their housing arrangements, because of those reasons given that it is crowded, and that they have to pay rent. The boys without proper housing arrangements also express some concerns, but mostly related to having a sense of insecurity, lack of money to find a place to stay, and being exposed to harsh weather.

> "We don't have much problems, the only problem is where we are sleeping. It is not that conducive and we are also charged every day for sleeping there", Bahira, 14.

> "I sleep on the pavement up there [by Kejetia lorry park], in front of stores. I would like to stay somewhere. I wish I could have gotten enough money to get a place to stay, but it is difficult because if you get money you have to send something back home. So you never get enough to get a place to rent", Gido, 18.

The girls living in rented structures appear to have a sense of security because of the 'senior men' who are looking after them. This refers to informal community leaders within the slum area boundaries. The sense of security among the girls is contrasting to the frequent sense of insecurity mentioned by the boys who are sleeping in the streets.

> "Because of these older guys nobody can come and hurt us", Ashia, 19.

> "I don't feel safe here. I want to get enough money to go back home to my family. [Don't feel safe] because of where we are sleeping, and if you are sleeping people might come and take your belongings and pick your pockets for your money. And on other days when it is also cold, some days especially during the cold season, it is not safe to be out there", Enam, 18.

In fact, the lack of proper housing arrangements exposes children and young persons to major risks that differ along gender lines. For example, boys are at risk of getting involved in criminal activities, while girls are at risk of being sexually abused, violated and harassed. According to Key informant 1, it is common with early pregnancy and early childbirth among the child migrants who suddenly find themselves in the street at destination where they are being solely responsible for themselves. Girls migrating to cities in Ghana tend to be younger in age than boys, and at destination, these young girls and women encounter risks related to both living and working situations (World Bank 2011:71f).

At least four participants have been victim of theft at destination, and several of them feel unsafe outdoors during nighttime. The participants identify several self-protection strategies employed to minimize these risks, and one of them is to stay indoors and lock the door after dark.

> "It is not all that safe, because if you forget to lock your door somebody will come and take something out of the room. It happened one time /…/", Ashia, 19.

> "It is scary and dangerous moving here alone at night [in the Racecourse slum]. So when you want to move somewhere at night you have to move together with other people, and with my sisters. When you are here [indoors], nobody will come and disturb you. But outside when you are alone, you could even get raped or killed if you are alone out there", Saba, 16.

As another way of preventing theft and pick-pocketing, seven of the participants admit to use the Susu saving system[12] to secure savings on a daily basis. On average, the girls appear to save about 1-2 cedis a day, while the boys save about 2-6 cedis a day. The only person saying he is not using the susu system is Isam who says he is saving as much as 5 cedis (3.3 USD) each day with a friend. The incidence that Ismail recently experienced shows an example of what could be the tragic consequence of not using the saving scheme properly, but also the importance of having friends and a social network in such situations

> "Just last week I went to take the money I had been saving, 150 GHS (100 USD). I wanted to send the money to my mother, so I went to the station to give it to the driver; I put it in an envelope that I would sent to my mother in the village. When I could not find any car at the station I put the money in my pocket, so that I could go and send it the following day. But when I was sleeping in the car, somebody

[12] According to UNDP (2007:84), the 'susu' is a traditional saving scheme that Ghanaians commonly rely on. Yeboah (2008:164) adds that the susu collectors are informal bankers who provide money security to market women, and they often do so by receiving a fixed daily amount which is paid back at the end of the month excluding a small service fee.

came and took the money away from me. Since that day I have not been myself and could not even work, so I was just moving around and my friend was supporting me and buying food", Ismail, 19.

As already mentioned in connection to opportunities and constraints at destination, the participants experience difficulties such as limited work opportunities and irregular daily earnings. Days without income create vulnerability since everything in the city costs money; such as buying food, using the bathroom and shower, and paying the rent if they have housing arrangements.[13]

"The work is difficult and sometimes it is very irregular; you do not get regularity, sometimes the money among the drivers are not enough, and then the drivers say the money is not up to what they should pay to the car owners and say 'wait until tomorrow then I will pay you'. Sometimes this continues for some days. So the earnings are irregular. At other times, you get break-downs and have to send the car to the mechanics, then you maybe get only 1 cedi (0.67 USD) to go and buy food and that is all", Ismail, 19.

"The work is good because I get money from it. But it is also bad because there are days when I won't get any [money]. /…/ I have to buy water as well, and to get to the toilet, everything costs money", Nadia, 16.

One self-protection strategy to guard against unreliable daily incomes that seems to be rather common among girls is to have a boyfriend in Kumasi, such as witnessed by several of the girls.

"He comes here to visit me, we just met here in Kumasi. He is a mechanic apprentice, and he is kind of a northerner but his family is living here in Kumasi near where my other relatives are staying. So he is staying with his family here. He supports me when I am in need of anything, then he will provide it for me. He is a good person and if he wishes to stay together in the future there is no problem, then we will stay together, and I would consider marrying him", Saba, 16.

"He is also working, as a truck pusher. We met in Kumasi and he also comes from the Northern region but not from the same town. /…/ He supports me with food every day", Nadia, 16.

"We met here. He is also working, with cutting meat as a butcher in the Central market. He earns more money and sometimes buys things such as food [for me]. I stay in a wooden house that he has constructed. I hope to marry him", Ashia, 19.

[13] The girls sharing kiosks pay 1 cedi (0.7 USD) in rent per week. On average, the girls and boys tend to use 1-2 cedis (0.7-1.3 USD) for personal use each day. They have to pay approximately 0.3 cedi for using a public bathroom and 0.15 for a toilet. In addition, one girl working as a porter witness about some days having to pay 0.5 cedi (0.3 USD) in taxes to the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA) in the marketplace.

Enam and Key informant 1 have their opinions concerning this strategy.

> "I think girls who are around are even safer, because sometimes they take guys who pick them up and they have places to sleep in. I am not interested in a relationship here, I am only interested in getting enough money", Enam, 18.

> "Being alone, for example if you are a girl, taking a boyfriend sometimes can be protective. Nobody will harm you because they know that your boyfriend is bigger and stronger and can come and defend you /…/ On a day when they [the girls] do not get anything [money to buy food], they can go to their boyfriend for support", Key informant 1.

However, taking boyfriends in the city is not without problems or potential negative sides. Raja has seen the potential downside of taking a boyfriend. She herself abstains from sex, because she is afraid and anyway judges herself to be too young to practice it.

> "There is a boy who usually comes, I don't like it but he comes to my place. He is the one who likes me. He is working with collecting scrap metals and he also comes from the Northern region. The boys here, it is not that they like you but they just want to have sex with you. So when they say that they love you and you agree, they will be having sex with you. When you get pregnant they will tell you that it is not theirs, and they will run away and leave you", Raja, 15.

The boyfriends can become part of a social support network, and equally, boys and girls tend to rely upon other social relations to secure their living in the city.

> "I have to other relatives [in Kumasi] /…/ When I am in need, most of the times when I am off work like this, I go there and they give me food", Saba, 16.

Other risks that the migrants may encounter at destination concern health hazards, and according to Key informant 2 who is frequently providing health care services to young migrants and street children, common health issues include malaria, skin diseases, worm infestation and respiration tract infections. He also testify that many of these children do not seek immediate medical care but rather wait until their status gets serious; for example, malaria cases may have reached a complicate stage. Also, he has observed a tendency to self-medicate, since practically all drugs can be found cheaper in the local pharmacy. Upon asking one of the girls about what they do if

somebody among them gets ill at destination, the answer witness that seeking health care is not always an option.

> "We will all give small money and send the person back home if it gets serious", Adira, 15.

Additionally, the nature of the work often force them into the middle of traffic in busy streets and consequently put them at risk of being victims in traffic accidents (Yeboah and Appiah-Yeboah 2009:4). However, only one of the research participants mentions the traffic at the work place being a problem, and Key informant 2, who is a medical doctor, has not seen many traffic injuries among children in his work. Extreme weather, such as high temperature, heavy rains and cold, seem to be more commonly regarded as a work environment problem.

In summary, young migrants confront many significant risks at destination that put them in vulnerable positions. There are big variations in the type of housing arrangements among the participants and gender differences can be observed; the majority of girls share rented kiosks in slum areas, while half of the boys have become street children. The lack of proper housing arrangements exposes child migrants to major risks that differ along gender lines. Due to high living costs in the city, irregular incomes pose a risk to their standard of living. They employ a number of self-protection strategies to reduce their vulnerability; for example, a strategy employed by girls to circumvent possible dangers of being outdoors during nighttime is to stay indoors and lock the door. Along the same lines, pick-pocketing appears to be common, and therefore, many girls and boys rely upon the Susu collectors to guard their money on a daily basis. High urban living costs combined with irregular incomes poses another risk. It appears to be common among girls to find a boyfriend, and social network, at destination who can provide them with material support and protection. It might be that girls are even safer than boys in Kumasi due to this strategy and the fact that they have places to stay at night, although there might be a potential downside to it.

6.4 Youth Transitions

In the view of four young girls who have migrated to the city of Ashaiman in the Greater Accra region, adulthood is associated with changes in physical appearance and functions, increase in knowledge and skills, and being able to take care of one-self. Even though they are all in the intersection between the legal age for being a child and an adult, they agree that they are still

children since they still lack some knowledge and skills to be able to care for themselves and live alone. However, they admit to have acquired certain survival skills that make them more independent, such as how to go out and sell in the local market place and how to count the correct change for buyers. (Focus Group Discussion)

Childhood is strongly associated with the notion of dependence, and the youth transition implies movements towards adulthood and its association with independence. As proposed by many scholars (e.g. Jones 2009; Langevang 2008; Punch 2002), this youth transition does increasingly not comprise of a linear and chronological sequence of events. All of the young participants in this study witness about major changes that they have experienced in association with their migration, both at the family level and personal level. For example, in the case of Gido, he admits that he has grown up and that he has learned how life is; the realities about life. He still thinks that when he looks at himself physically he is still a boy but that he thinks like an adult now, like a man. In this way, Gido can be argued to use migration as a strategy to pursue an individual desire of being independent, earning money and get life experience, and at the same time a way to satisfy the family's expectations, in line with the findings from Thorsen's (2005) study in Burkina Faso.

> "I learned to be more responsible and think more about life and the future. Once you are here, you also have to be very fast in thinking and making decisions, and you have to be making decisions on your own. Just to know that there is nobody, no relative or family member around, or somebody who protects you or stand up for you in one way or another. So you have to know that you live a life that is moderate and that you have to be careful so you don't get any problems while you are here", Gido, 18.

According to Key informant 1, the personal changes relate to changes in the environment and increase in personal responsibilities.

> "I think that mentally, they are growing up fast, because things move faster here and many of them experience sudden changes. Because all of a sudden you find yourself in this big city, everybody is moving around and everything is busy, and you see a lot of people that you don't know. So they [the child migrants] grow very fast. In terms of even responsibility, it becomes faster because when you are a child at that age if you are living with your natural relatives and family, somebody will be responsible for so many things that concern you. All of a sudden if you find yourself on the street, you will be responsible for yourself, and a lot of these children also get pregnant on the way, some even give birth very early and have to show that responsibility of being a mother", Key informant 1.

The notion of interdependence seems to be frequently illustrated throughout this study. The idea proposed by Punch (2002) that young people move in and out of dependence and independence, also emerges throughout this present study. For example, most of the participants in this present study views their migration as a temporary solution, while they imagine returning to their family within a certain amount of time. Upon return, it is likely that these young girls and boys will have to renegotiate their role and responsibilities within the household. In addition, while they have achieved some degree of independence in the city, they will probably at least to some degree return to a relationship of dependence with their parents upon return. Many young migrants become economic agents and contributors to the wellbeing of their parents and siblings. For example, Ismail was initially benefitting from economic support from his father to pursue his education. But these days, he is the one sending money to his parents whenever he has something to share. The wellbeing of family members is of concern to them and siblings and parents depend on them to send economic and economic contributions to the household. Even though many of them have experienced very limited education opportunities themselves, they still seem eager to support sisters and brothers to get education. For example, Sara uses her work earnings to help her younger sister who is in school back in the Northern region.

> "When we [together with brothers and sisters] work, we all contribute to paying the fees and other expenses for the schooling of my sister. Sometimes when she needs money, she calls and I have to send money, other times when I visit I will give something", Gido, 18.

> "I brought some soap and some clothes for my junior brothers and sisters, and some small food stuff which is different here from in the North. They are happy", Ashia, 19.

However, it is not always possible for them to secure the wellbeing of their family. For example, Rohan left his parents in the rural village together with his step-sister when the parents became aged and unable to work and care for their children. He used to support his parents financially when he was working, but since he started in school he has no extra income.

> "Father cannot go anywhere. My mother is a little bit stronger but she as well cannot work. One of my cousins is also sometimes working and occasionally he will go to buy some corn and sell it for them /…/ But all of my siblings have traveled, so none of them are at home and taking care of them [the parents]. Things are not ok with my parents. Sometimes I hear that my father is sick and I am worried about them. Before when I was working as a shoeshine boy I was helping them, but now when I am not working I am not sure they are taken care of. I am not sure my sister sends them things", Rohan, 15.

On the subject of parental support, they traditionally contributed to their children's marriage but today, many girls have to provide for themselves. As illustrated by Langevang's (2008) study, acquiring material items for marriage can be an important part of the youth transition. Four of the girls desire to prepare themselves for marriage, although it is unclear what meanings they attach to the marriage in terms of independence and dependence. In the case of Raja, her parents divorced and when her father remarried she stayed behind with his sister.

> "Normally when the mother is around she will buy these things for you, but since my parents are not around, nobody will buy these things for me", Raja, 15.

In some instances, they value the independence at destination so much that they actually do not want to return home where they might have to abide to family or community expectations concerning work, marriage and the way to live their life. Several of the girls would like to choose their husband themselves.

> "If I go back they will force me to go to work in the farm, even they will force me to marry", Sara, 16.

> "I don't have anybody that I want to marry, and I don't have any boyfriend. Don't know whether somebody will choose my husband. I want to go out there to find somebody on my own", Bahira, 14.

> "I don't know whom I will marry. But when I buy enough things and get a bit older, grandfather will normally call you and tell he has found a husband for you, and then I will get married. /…/ I want to choose my own husband, because when grandfather chooses for you it will normally be an older person and I don't like that. I want to find a younger person. I don't have any power to change that, I will have to do as my grandfather says", Raja, 15.

Even though they might value independence, Nadia expresses some thoughts about growing up and feeling insecure when your family is not around you. It is interesting to note that she have a sense of loosing her cultural behaviour at destination.

> "I don't have much experience of speaking. Back home I can learn how to really talk with people, but here nobody will teach. Culturally you need to talk in a certain way, so I am 'going out of culture'. When I go back home, my grandmother will teach me how to talk and hide myself from men, and how to behave and keep myself safe. But here in Kumasi nobody teaches me", Nadia, 16.

In summary, as part of the youth transitions during migration, young girls and boys obtain a sense of responsibility for their own life but also for their family. This is sometimes interpreted into making choices for their own development, acquiring independence and life experience, but also taking economic responsibility for the schooling of siblings and the wellbeing of their rural family. There is also a negative side to this, since they may lack the means to fulfil the same responsibilities. The increasing responsibility they carry for their families' wellbeing could also be translated into a form of relationship characterized by interdependence between child migrant and parents, and between child migrant and siblings. As has been highlighted, girls often take responsibility for preparing their own marriage, through affording materials and skills. Although these girls seem aware that the tradition denies them the right to choose a husband for themselves, they still have such desires. Lastly, being alone at destination sometimes make them feel insecure and loosing cultural behaviour.

7. Concluding Remarks

The views and experiences such as expressed by the young migrants participating in this study have shown to be diverse, but some significant patterns have also emerged. One aim of this thesis was to develop gendered understanding, and gender has indeed shown to have an impact on young persons motives for migrating, and what opportunities and constraints they experience in the process. Gender differences appear in terms of work opportunities and income rates, housing arrangements, vulnerability, and self-protection strategies employed. For instance, marriage is a frequent topic in interviews with girls, while boys appear more focused on earning money to continue formal or informal education. Reconnecting with the research questions, young girls and boys who are migrating independently seem to agree that their job opportunities at destination are significantly better than in their places of origin. They all feel that they can earn money to a satisfying level so that they will be able to return home and go on with their life in their chosen course. Almost all participants see their stay in Kumasi as of temporary nature, and they wish to return to their families as soon as possible. The young girls and boys find themselves in very vulnerable positions, since they are alone in the city with everyday experiences of hard working conditions and poor living circumstances. They employ a range of self-protection strategies, for example, girls find boyfriends while both boys and girls use the system of Susu collectors to guard their money on a daily basis. Concerning the young migrants' social navigation of youth transitions, they have an increasing sense of responsibility for their own life but also for their

family's wellbeing. This feeling seem to be almost forced upon them when they suddenly find themselves standing alone in the fast moving city with their family's and community's expectations in mind. Even though the migration may at first represent a survival strategy, it can evolve into also being a strategy to achieve more independence, money and life experience. In most cases, there tend to be more than one motive behind a young person's decision to migrate, for example, rural household poverty may interact with short-term goals of earning money and become more independent and with long-term goals focused on a brighter future (such as learning a professional skill and set up a business). The young girls and boys struggle with simultaneously supporting family needs (e.g. financial support to a sibling's schooling and their family's overall wellbeing), and with caring for themselves and their personal endeavors.

This study attempted to combine different strands of theory to provide a more holistic understanding of the experiences among children and young persons who are migrating from rural to urban areas in Ghana. Starting off a research project from the child-centered angle is very fruitful, and when examining vulnerability the focus arrives at self-protection strategies and children's own experiences. I would suggest future research project that are by far larger in scope and amount of field data to certify that findings are representative and diverse. Another interesting area for future research would be to make a multi-country study in the West African region where many of the neighboring countries have similar migration traditions to that of Ghana.

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Appendix I: Map of Ghana

Appendix II: List of Research Participants

Interviews with Individual Children and Young Persons					
No. & Alias	**Interview date & place**	**Gender**	**Age (when migrating)**	**Type of work**	**Place of Origin**
01, Ramin	Jan 30, 2011, Bombay slum, Kumasi	Boy	20 (17)	Apprentice, ICT	Northern region
02, Nadia	Jan 30, Bombay slum, Kumasi	Girl	≈ 16*	Head porter	Northern region
03, Fozia	Jan 30, Bombay slum, Kumasi	Girl	≈ 17	Head porter	Northern region
04, Adira	Jan 30, Bombay slum, Kumasi	Girl	15	Head porter	Northern region
05, Ashia	Jan 30, Bombay slum, Kumasi	Girl	≈ 19	Selling rice and stew	Upper East region
06, Raja	Jan 31, Street Children's Project, Kumasi	Girl	≈ 15	Head porter	Northern region
07, Bahira	Jan 31, Street Children's Project, Kumasi	Girl	≈ 14	Head porter	Northern region
08, Sara	Feb 1, Street Children's Project, Kumasi	Girl	16	Selling ice-water	Northern region
09, Isam	Feb 1, Street Children's Project, Kumasi	Boy	16	Selling plastic bags	Ashanti region
10, Saba	Feb 2, Racecourse slum, Kumasi	Girl	16	Assisting a woman selling rice and stew	Upper West region
11, Rohan	Feb 3, Street Children's Project, Kumasi	Boy	15	Shoe-shine boy	Northern region
12, Enam	Feb 4, SCDF banking office, Kejetia market, Kumasi	Boy	18 (10-11)	Driver's mate	Accra
13, Ismail	Feb 4, SCDF banking office, Kejetia market, Kumasi	Boy	19 (16)	Driver's mate	Ashanti region
14, Gido	Feb 4, SCDF banking office, Kejetia market, Kumasi	Boy	18 (16)	Shoe-shine, sometimes driver's mate	Brong-Ahafo

Interviews with Key Informants & Focus Group Discussion		
No. & Alias	**Interview date & place**	**Profile**
Key informant 1	Feb 2, Kumasi	Working with local NGO specialized on street children and empowerment
Key informant 2	Feb 15, Tema	Medical doctor at hospital and collaborating with local NGOs
Key informant 3	Jan 25, Accra	Working with local NGO specialized on child trafficking
Focus group 1	Feb 22, Ashaiman	Girls aged 17-18 years who have migrated to Ashaiman

* Many of the girls are not aware of their real age, and therefore their age is estimation based on their own thoughts combined with their appearance.

Appendix III: Interview Guides

Semi-structured interview (child participant)

Intro:
Presentation of the interviewer and the research purpose.
Informed consent and the voluntary nature of the interview participation, such as the right to remain silent or end the interview at any time.
Ask for permission to record.

A. Socio-demographics:
1. Name; Gender**;** Age; Marital status; Children
2. Can you tell about yourself? Where do you come from? When did you come to Kumasi?
3. What family do you have back home? What do your parents do? What do your siblings do? How do you stay in contact with your family?
4. What family do you have in Kumasi?

B. The migration process
1. From where did you migrate?
2. Why did you come to Kumasi?
3. Who decided that you should come here? What did your parents say about your decision to migrate before you left? What do your parents say now?
4. Did you meet anyone at home that had been in Kumasi before deciding to migrate? How did this influence the decision?
5. How did you move to Kumasi? Did you contact anyone in Kumasi before moving here?

C. Education
1. Can you read and write?
2. Where did you learn to read and write? /Why not? Would you have liked to go to school?
3. Do you plan to get an education?

D. Work
1. What work do you do?
2. Why have you chosen to do this work? How did you find the work?
3. Can you describe a typical workday? Where do you work? How many hours per day and days per week do you work? When do you start and end?
4. Do you like your work? Why / Why not?
5. Have you been doing other types of work before?
6. Have you acquired any new skills in Kumasi?
7. How much money do you earn per workday? How much on a good / bad day?
8. How do you use your money? (E.g. spend it on housing, spend it on food, spend it on clothes and things, send it to family members, pay school fees, save it)
9. Do you save money? How? / Why not?
10. Do you send home money/items to your family?

E. Physical, psychological and general security
1. Where do you live in Kumasi and with whom? Do you pay any rent?
2. Where do you eat? How much does it cost?
3. Where do you use a bathroom? How much does it cost?
4. How is your health?
5. Have you ever been ill in Kumasi? What happened?
6. Do you feel safe in Kumasi? Why? / Why not?
7. Can you give some examples of problems concerning your safety?
8. Do you think that girls feel safer than boys? Why?

F. Opportunities at the urban destination

1. How are your opportunities regarding education in Kumasi and in comparison to at your place of origin?
2. How are your opportunities regarding work in Kumasi and in comparison to at your place of origin?
3. What opportunities do you think you have because of your work? (E.g. less poverty for oneself and/or family, go to school, better food/health)
4. Do you think girls and boys have the same opportunities in Kumasi? Can you give examples?

G. Youth transition
1. In what ways do you think your move to Kumasi changes you as an individual?
2. In what ways do you think your move to Kumasi influence your transition to become an independent adult?

H. Protection strategies
1. What problems do you face in Kumasi? When, Where and How?
2. How could the problem be solved? What can you do yourself to solve the problem?
3. Have you solved any problems before?
4. Do you think girls migrating to Kumasi face other problems than boys? Can you give examples?

I. Life aspirations
1. How is your life now compared to before you came to Kumasi?
2. What do you want to do in the future? (e.g. continue current job, another job, return home, go to school, marry, travel abroad, etc.) When do you think you can do this?
3. What do you think your parents expect you to do in the future?
4. In what ways do you think your work situation might change as you grow older?
5. Do you think that girls can do other things in their future than boys and vice-versa?

Focus Group Discussion (child participants)

Intro:
Presentation of the interviewer and the research purpose.
Informed consent and the voluntary nature of the interview participation, such as the right to remain silent or end the interview at any time.
Ask for permission to record

A. Presentation of the participants
Name; Gender; Age; Place of origin; Length of stay in Accra; Type of work in Accra, etc.

B. The migration process
1. Why did you come to Accra?
2. Who decided that you should come here?
3. What did your parents say about your decision to migrate before you left? What do your parents say now?

C. Meanings according to the young migrants
1. In your view, how would you define:
- Childhood
- Youth
- Adulthood
2. Can you give examples of important points in life as you grow up?
3. When and how do you become an independent adult?

D. Youth transition
1. In what ways do you think children may change as individuals through migration?
2. In what ways do you think your move to Accra influence your transition to become an independent adult?
3. Have you acquired any new skills after migrating?
4. How may your relationship with your family change with the move to Accra?

E. Opportunities at the migrants' destination
1. How are the child migrants' opportunities regarding education in Accra?
2. How are the child migrants' opportunities regarding work in Accra?
3. Do female and male child migrants have the same opportunities in Accra? Can you give examples?

F. Protection strategies

1. What everyday problems do child migrants face in Accra?
2. How could the problem be solved?
3. What can you do yourselves to solve the problem?
4. Do girls migrating to Accra face other problems than boys? Can you give examples?

Semi-structured interview (adult key informant)

Intro:

Presentation of the interviewer and the research purpose.
Ask for permission to record.

A. Presentation

1. Can you present yourself and your position?
2. How is your organization working for and with child migrants who are living and working in Accra?

B. Independent child migrants

1. Who are the "independent child migrants"?
2. Where do they come from and why do they come to Accra?
3. Where do they stay in Accra and what do they do?

C. Opportunities at the migrants' destination

1. How are the child migrants' opportunities regarding education in Accra and in comparison to in their place of origin?
2. How are the child migrants' opportunities regarding work in Accra and in comparison to in their place of origin?
3. Do female and male child migrants have the same opportunities in Accra? Can you give examples?

D. Youth transition

1. How are the child migrants dealing with their transition to adolescence and towards becoming independent adults?
2. How are the child migrants' relationships with their families changing with their move to Accra?

E. Protection strategies

1. What problems do the child migrants face in Accra?
2. How could the problem be solved?
3. Do girls migrating to Accra face other problems than boys? Can you give examples?
4. In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges in terms of social protection of young migrants in Ghana?

F. Support

1. What non-governmental organizations and initiatives can you mention that are working directly for and with child migrants?
2. What is the Government doing to improve the situation regarding social protection of young migrants in Ghana?

Appendix IV: Presentation of Gatekeepers

Muslim Family Counselling Services (MFSC)
MFSC was established as a NGO in 1990 to provide information and services within deprived communities in Ghana, concerning water and sanitation, population, reproductive health, income-generating activities and prevention of sexual transmittable infections. The organization's vision is "A well endowed society of men, women and children living in satisfied environment devoid of poverty and squalor". The mission is "to promote reproductive health, human rights, gender, population, prevention of STIs including HIV/AIDS, and provision of marketable skills to the vulnerable within deprived communities in Ghana". MFSC activities include information outreach concerning reproductive health to youth, HIV/AIDS education, and vocational training of street children.

Empowerment Centre for Women and Children (ECWC)
A women's group in the Asawasi area in Kumasi established ECWC as an NGO in 2005 under the directorship of Aminata Ibrahim. Its vision is "to see a society where women, men, children and orphans live in an environment free of diseases and ill health." In terms of activities, it campaigns against domestic violence and child labour, and for adolescent sexual and reproductive health right and information about STIs including HIV/AIDS. In addition, the NGO provides skills training, care and support to vulnerable women and children in deprived communities.

Street Children Project
The Catholic Archdiocese of Kumasi set up the Street Children Project in 2005. The project aims at addressing the problems of vulnerable children living on the streets in the city. Activities comprise of street workers patrolling the street both day and night, a day care centre for street workers, and two child nursery centres for children below school age belonging to working mothers in the Racecourse slum area.

Street Children Development Foundation (SCDF)
SCDF was established as an NGO in 1994 under the directorship of George Baffour. Activities comprise of the registering of street children under the government's National Health Insurance Scheme. In Kumasi, SCDF is running a micro savings and banking scheme for working street children in the central market area.

Liberty Movement Organization (LIMO)
LIMO was registered as a NGO in 2003 with the mission "To promote the rights and needs of the youth, advance and safeguard these rights and needs through empowerment and education, with special focus on the adolescent female children". LIMO's activities comprise of social outreach programs, peer education between youth, and support to orphans and vulnerable youth.

Association of People for Practical Life Education (APPLE)
APPLE is a grassroots NGO dedicated use a community approach to end child trafficking and child labour in fishing villages along the Lake Volta in Ghana. Activities include research projects, and search and rescue operations to free children who have been trapped in forced labour. Also, APPLE has conducted education efforts to raise public awareness about the risks of trafficking and support to alternative income solutions.