Research Report
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Research Report on Children's Independent Migration from Northeastern to Central Ghana

IMAN M. HASHIM

Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation & Poverty
University of Sussex
Falmer, Brighton BN1 9SJ
United Kingdom
E-mail: iman_h@yahoo.com

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INTRODUCTION

This report discusses the findings of research carried out in Ghana with independent child migrants[1] and the parents of child migrants. The research was carried out between May and July of 2004 and aimed to build on research conducted with children in 2000-2001 in a farming village in the north-east of Ghana (see Hashim 2004)[2]. One of the findings of the earlier research was that relatively large numbers of children from the village were living and/or working outside the village without their parents. For instance, at the time of a survey on migration in March 2001 it was found that, out of a population of 447 children (257 boys and 190 girls[3]), some 77 children (41 girls and 36 boys) had migrated out of the village without their parents. This represented 15% of the child population and half of the 96 households in the village reported having a migrant child. Forty-eight children (18 boys and 30 girls) were also living in the village away from their immediate family. A survey of under 18 year-olds found also that a further 17 children (9 boys and 8 girls) had in the past been independent child migrants, and of course this is likely to be much higher since only those under the age of 18 were surveyed (ibid.).

In contrast to the manner in which independent child migration is generally presented in the policy literature as primarily a negative phenomenon (either because it is the outcome of disastrous situations, such as poverty, war and famine, or because it is assumed to result in the increasing vulnerability of children to economic exploitation, dangerous working conditions or abuse) (see Hashim 2003) the earlier research found that children were frequently positive about their migratory experiences as this afforded them the opportunity to develop important relationships or skills, and/or to earn an income over which they had a relative degree of autonomy over (Hashim 2004). However, the issue of migration was an unexpected outcome of the initial fieldwork. As a result only some children who had migrated into the village and some of those who had returned were interviewed in 2000-2001. The purpose of this research was to build on what was found then in two ways. Firstly, the aim was to explore in greater detail the nature of the processes involved in migration. This entails looking at meant both the social

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated the definition of a child used in this report includes individuals aged 0 to 17. The term 'independent child migrants' is used to refer broadly to any child who migrates independently of their parents. The decision to move may or may not be an autonomous one; they may or may not make their journeys in the company of known adults or other children (Whitehead and Hashim 2005).

[2] This research aimed to explore the lived experiences of children in a specific context. It illustrates how children spend their time; the work that they do and their experiences of education. It explores the role that children play in households' livelihoods strategies, the nature of inter-generational relations, the negotiations and decision-making processes associated with boys' and girls' various activities, the different strategies children, themselves, adopt in improving their livelihoods, and the variations in these on the basis of age and gender.

[3] This sex ratio discrepancy will be discussed in further detail later in the report.

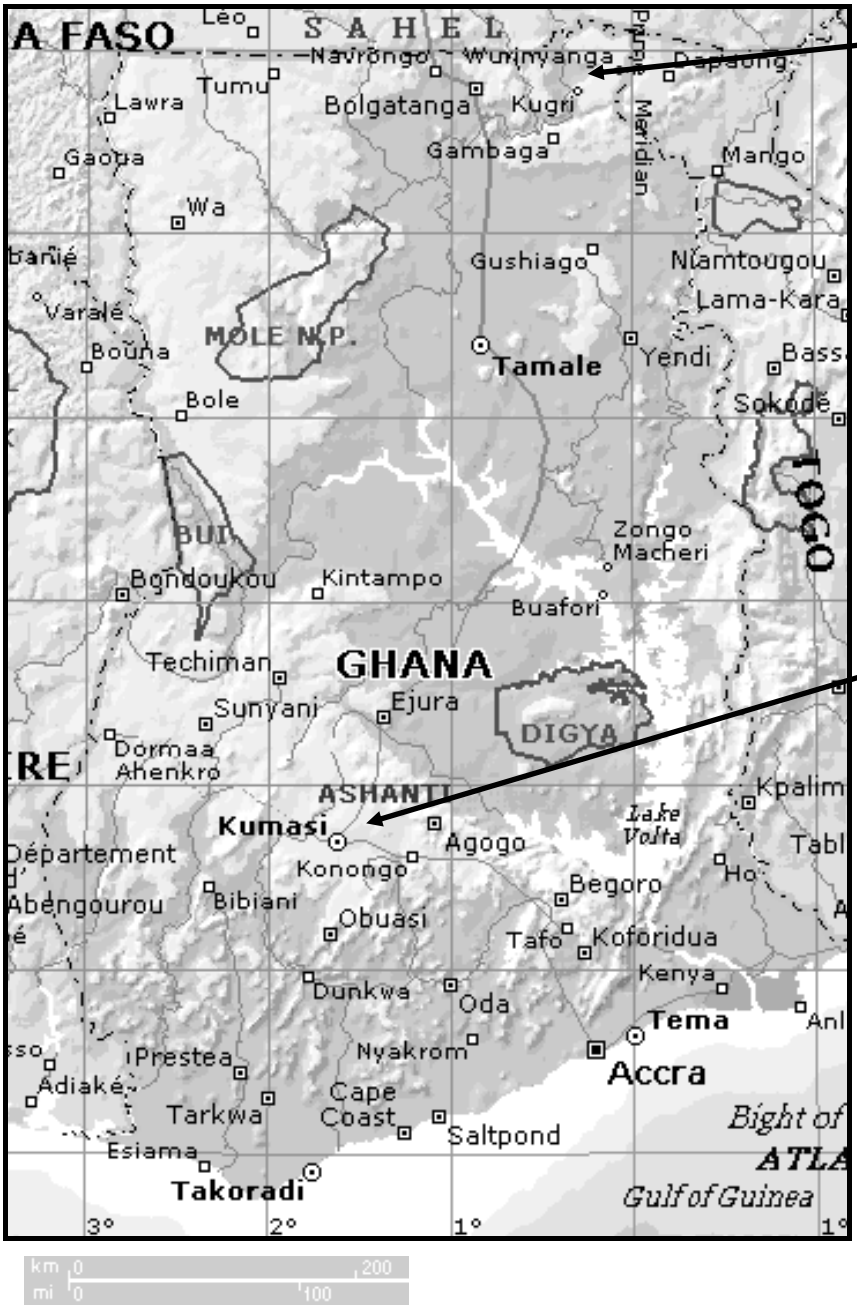
networks that come into play in the movement of children and also the household negotiations that are involved in children's movements. The second purpose of the research was to broaden the scope of the children considered, to include children who were at the time living as independent migrants. Thus, fieldwork was carried out in several sites; in the village in which the initial fieldwork was carried out in 2000-2001 and in the places where children had migrated to and were currently living as independent child migrants.

The report is organised as follows. The next section will provide information regarding the area from which the migrant children originate, and in particular the village in which the interviews with the parents of child migrants and return migrants were conducted. Although not all the current migrant children interviewed originate from this village it is broadly characteristic of the area from which all the children interviewed originate. The following section will provide details of the manner in which the research was carried out, including some of the methodological and ethical issues that emerged. The next section will provide a broad summary of all the findings of the research. The final section will discuss aspects of the research which are of particular consequence. It should be noted that the principal aim of this report is to make the available the general findings of this research, since very little research is conducted with children who migrate independently. Two important aspects of the findings of the research are analysed and discussed in detail in forthcoming working papers. The first of these focuses on the inter-linkages between migration and education (Hashim 2005a), while the second paper will consider more broadly the positive and negative aspects for children of their migration and situate this within an examination of the general way in which children's independent migration is discussed in the literature (Hashim 2005b).

THE ORIGINATING DISTRICT

The originating area of the children interviewed is the Bawku East District of the Upper East Region in the very north-eastern corner of Ghana (see the map below). The area is relatively inaccessible, being poorly serviced by all-weather roads and having as the main access route only a partially tarred road between the district capital, Bawku, and the regional capital, Bolgatanga. Only twenty percent of the population of Bawku East District is urban (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) 2002: 50). The primary economic activity is farming, but this is limited agriculturally, as, in addition to its relative inaccessibility, it is located in the Sudan savannah, which is characterised by a single and short rainy season, and has increasing soil infertility (cf. Awambila 1997, Devereux 1992, Dietz and Millar 1999).

Figure 1: Map of Ghana



(Source: http://www.expedia.com)

Historically, the area has had little investment in infrastructure or services. This under-investment began during the colonial period, when the British colonial administration pursued a policy of under-developing the north, promoting its role largely as a labour reserve for the south. It continues post-independence because this informal division between north and south has become part of the national culture (Whitehead 1996: 32). These factors contribute to the area having the highest concentrations of poor in Ghana. According to a recent World Bank study, ninety percent of the population in the Upper East Region is now poor and almost eighty percent is extremely poor (Canagarajah and Pörtner 2002: 22). Moreover despite the Ghanaian

economy having grown in recent years "the people of the two upper regions and especially the food crop farmers have not shared any of the improvement and are actually worse off than in the beginning of the decade" (ibid)[4]. Other indicators point to the degree of under-development and poverty in the area. Literacy rates, for instance, are amongst the poorest in Ghana, the level of illiteracy being seventy-eight percent in the Upper East (GSS 2002: 7), under-nutrition in children under five is the highest in the Upper East (GSS and World Bank 1998: 38) and children in the Upper East and Upper West have less access to primary schools than other regions (ibid. 24).

The village in the north-east in which fieldwork was carried out in 2000-2001 and in 2004 can be characterised as a farming village, although there are a small number of individuals, such as the teachers, for whom farming is a secondary, not primary, occupation. Agricultural production is primarily of food crops and is a mixture of cash-cropping and subsistence crops, the aim being to produce sufficient food for a year's consumption and sell enough crops for cash necessities. With the exception of the dry-season gardens, cultivation is rain-fed and largely non-mechanised. As a result, farming is labour intensive, requiring input from all able-bodied household members. This is reflected in the relatively large average household sizes, the mean being nine individuals in a household in 2000-2001. Households are large both because polygamy is practised and because households are not always based on a conjugal core of one man and his wife or wives, but on a complex extended family household.

The social organisation of farming is quite complex, being subject to divisions of labour according to age, gender and status hierarchies. Production and consumption are organised around the household. Although farming is gendered to the extent that some tasks are more likely to be done by males and some by females, both male and female labour is essential for growing the main crops. All household members are obliged to work under the direction of the household head in the 'compound farm' to produce the millet and maize necessary for domestic consumption for the year. In practice, he is then responsible for distributing the staple to the adult married women in the household (since households do not eat out of a 'common pot') and purchase any additional staple needed if production is not sufficient for consumption needs.

There is, in addition, further hierarchies regarding access to household labour. The household head can call on all household members' (dependants') labour, senior household members can

[4] See Whitehead (2004) for a discussion of the nature of this poverty and the kinds of poverty traps rural households in this area face.

call on their juniors (juniors including women, provided they are not their mothers or equivalents). Access to the labour of others, therefore, is based on seniority and gender, and '[a]t this level of technology, and without absolute land scarcity in the region, an important determinant of successful rural livelihood is command over labour' (Whitehead 1981: 94).

Dependants' obligation to work for the household in this way brings with it rights over access to the subsistence crops that are produced and the provision of the bride-wealth cattle that is paid to the bride's male agnates, a significant factor in the household head's relations with junior males. Thus, the role and responsibility of the household head is a significant one, and there is a dominant ideology that the burden of responsibility for household members' welfare is primarily his to bear. Whitehead's work in the same area demonstrates that insufficient access to labour is correlated to poverty, and thus demographic characteristics have a relation to household poverty, but what is more important in determining levels of poverty is the management of human resources within the household and having the socio-economic resources to successfully do so (Whitehead 1996: 290-7).

In addition to their communal work, most individuals also work on individual or 'private' farms for personal profit or consumption. The ability to farm privately, however, is dependent on permission from the household head for the time to do so and often for the necessary resources, such as land and other inputs. Thus, while household members are expected to contribute to production for a common household fund under the direction of the *landlord*, they also have the opportunity (albeit unequal) to pursue the means to earn a private income, usually through the production of crops for sale.

Women's obligations are demanding, given both the nature of labour hierarchies in this context and the arduousness of reproductive tasks. In addition to their roles in farming, they are responsible for processing foodstuffs and for providing soup ingredients, either through production or from the market. They are also responsible for other reproductive tasks, such as childcare, water collection, cooking (including acquiring the necessary utensils to do so) and cleaning. Access to girls' labour, therefore, is extremely significant.

From a very young age children too are encouraged and expected to contribute to the household's subsistence. From the age of four or five they are helping with tasks such as caring for their siblings and running errands. Between seven and thirteen, they gradually begin engaging in almost all those tasks that adults are carrying out, although in a more limited sense in terms of work occupying their time and the extent to which they have the physical capacity to

achieve as much as an adult. By the age of fourteen they are carrying out all those tasks that adults of their gender are able and expected to do. The system of private farming also extends to children, so that they too are expected to provide for themselves those personal items that are seen as the responsibility of the individual. As a result, from about the age of ten children are given their own small plot of land to begin to start farming for themselves, in the same manner in which adults farm private farms; frequently with the help of their mother.

Consequently, in Tempane Natinga work is seen as an age-appropriate behaviour for children and this is not merely related to the necessity of children's labour for subsistence or for teaching children the skills required to secure their livelihoods as adults, but is a process of enculturation into their roles in the domestic economy and wider community. Central to this is the understanding of their roles in the production of food for the common fund, in the production of cash crops and in the reproductive labour necessary to secure the household's subsistence. However, because the domestic economy includes the pursuit of private endeavours, this also involves the adoption of a sense of self-reliance. This process is not a conflict-free one. From a very young age, inducements and sanctions are used to encourage children to adopt their roles. As children begin to do so, the nature of conflict and negotiations change, since children need to ensure that their obligations to their seniors are fulfilled, while also pursuing their own livelihood activities, whereas their seniors need to harness children's labour to secure subsistence, while providing children with the time and means for pursuing their own endeavours.

The reliance on unpredictable rainfall, coupled with highly depleted soil fertility and increasing demands on land in the face of a growing population has meant that it is difficult to secure subsistence, particularly without agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and/or bullock ploughs. Consequently, many individuals engage in some degree of trading and/or artisan production. There is also a small local labour market and the historical roots of migration in colonial policy has continued as a dominant experience for most households, with over 68 percent of households reporting one or more adult male migrants in March 2001 (Hashim 2004: 68).

Although there are degrees of variation in relative wealth, the majority of the population is very poor. For example, a wealth-ranking exercise indicated that in 2000-2001 half the households in Tempane Natinga fall into what can be described as a poor and insecure category, producing insufficient food and/or cash-crops, and having little assets or other income sources to fall back on should the rains fail or a crisis occur to push them into the destitute category

(ibid.). Overall the population experiences poor health and nutrition, and low rates of literacy and educational enrolment[5].

METHODS, METHODOLOGY AND ETHICAL ISSUES

The initial research in 2000-2001 indicated that decision-making around migration in this context is a complex one, and one that might involve inter-generational conflict, as this entails balancing the requirement for labour within a household (which might include either encouraging a child to migrate to reduce dependency ratios or to not migrate in order to secure a child's labour) alongside a simultaneous, and possibly increasing, desire and need for young people and/or a household to earn a cash-income (see Hashim 2003).

The gender of both parents and children were also found to be significant to decision-making processes. Boys are considered to be vital because of their role in farming and thus might be encouraged not to migrate because of this or alternatively may be more able to negotiate the opportunity to migrate on the promise of eventual return. Girls, on the other hand, are often less valued, except by their mothers who rely heavily on their labour. However, since husbands and wives operate separate incomes and incur disproportionate amounts of child-care costs, and men, in theory, are responsible for a greater part of this, they may withdraw support for a daughter. Mothers, as a result, may have an incentive to either allow or encourage their daughters to migrate and girls to be pushed into doing so, in the face of reduced support from their parents[6].

Within the sending village, therefore, through the use of semi-structured interviews[7] the aim was to explore the negotiations surrounding the decision to migrate, with a particular emphasis on the impact of gender and age on this, and the social networks (if any) utilised to facilitate migration. In addition, the aim was to identify the location of children living at the time as independent migrants in order to trace and interview them. Key questions for these interviews related to exploring the reasons for migration, the extent to which this was a child's own welfare-maximising opportunity or the degree of compulsion involved, children's experiences of migration, and the reasons for the variations between children's experiences, including the impact of children's age and gender.

In the sending village a total of twenty parents were interviewed regarding their children's

[5] Some 54% of men and 81% of adult women had never attended school, while 41% of boys and 35% of girls were not enrolled in school at the time of the 2000-2001 fieldwork (Hashim 2004: 67 & 139).
[6] As will be raised later, there is, in addition, an inherent contradiction in this since there were also fears about girls' 'honour' and the dangers of their becoming pregnant, which tended to restrict the movement of older girls.
[7] The aide-memoires for the semi-structured interviews are reproduced in the appendix.

migration. These consisted of five mothers of girls, five mothers of boys, five fathers of girls and five fathers of boys. A further ten interviews were carried out with return migrant children or migrants who were children at the time of their migration. Having completed those interviews, with my translator I then travelled south to the capital of the Ashanti region, Kumasi, where I based myself for one month, moving out from there to over thirty different communities within a 100 km radius, interviewing thirty boys and thirty girls in eighteen different locations.

I concentrated on interviewing children in the rural sector living with relatives, as most of the little research that has been done on child migrants tends to focus on those working for an employer or non-related person and in the urban sector. However, in order to capture potential differences in experience arising from rural or urban location and on whether a child was living with and/or working for a related or non-related individual, interviews were also carried out with children who fell into these categories. In all, nineteen boys and nineteen girls living with a relative, and/or in a rural area, were interviewed, along with eleven girls and eleven boys that fell into the urban and/or non-related categories.

As has already been indicated, the initial plan was to trace migrant children from Tempane Natinga to the south of Ghana in order to interview them. However, for a number of reasons that will be discussed next, this was found to be practically impossible in most cases. Instead I concentrated on interviewing principally children of the Kusasi ethnic group (the numerically dominant ethnic group of the area), primarily from the same district in which I first worked. In total over ninety semi-structured interviews were conducted, as well as a number of informal ones.

The primary difficulty I encountered in carrying out the research relates to accessing children. As stated earlier, although the initial plan was to trace children migrating from the village in which I worked in 2000-2001 I found this impossible in all but five cases. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, reflecting the shift in adult migration patterns (Anarfi et al 2003) some children had migrated to rural Côte d'Ivoire, rather than the cocoa-growing areas of Ghana[8]. Secondly, parents rarely knew where exactly their children were, and this was because, as with children, should they need to travel to a certain place or to ask for a child's return they would utilise the same social networks; social networks that were not available to me. Thirdly, parents tended to specify the nearest settlement, such as Sankore, when in fact the children were living deep in the bush, in much smaller settlements, making it impossible to easily locate them.

[8] According to one study of children engaged in agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire 38.2% are Ghanaian, 24.5% Burkinabe, 23.7% Malian and 17.3% other African children (Francavilla and Lyon 2002).

Fourthly, sometimes children adopted Ashanti names or had moved on from the original place and had either not informed their parents or the news had not yet got back to their parents.

These were all significant reasons why I found it almost impossible to trace children. However, it is my belief that there were other reasons why I was unable to trace some children, and this relates to the general problems I had in accessing migrant children in some locations. In some communities I would arrive and have all possible assistance provided to me. Travelling with a Kusasi translator and speaking the language (Kusaal) a little assisted me in gaining people's trust and confidence. However, in other places there was open hostility or fear. For example, I had arranged with one Kusasi man to return a few days later to be guided to a village where many Kusasi migrants lived. However, on returning at the appointed time he informed me that villagers had told him '*not to get involved with such things as all this talk of child trafficking*[9] *could get them in trouble'*. Similarly, on two occasions, I had community members asking me if I was planning to remove the children. The following extract from my diary illustrates some of the types of difficulties I encountered.

Diary Extract 16 June 2004

We met a very informative and interesting man today. He's originally from Bawku town but has been there for thirteen years doing his kola nut[10] business. He says there are plenty of Kusasi boys and girls who come for work. He seems to be the contact point, he says because both parents in Bawku and the Ashanti trust him. In fact there was one young teenager from Bawku who had just arrived and was waiting to talk to him about work opportunities – he looked quite anxious. The contact told us that he finds them work and negotiates their pay for them. There seems to be someone else looking out for the Tempane-Garu children so he will liaise with him to find us children to interview after prayers on Friday. His openness suggested there is nothing illicit about it all.

Diary Extract 18 June 2004

The contact had dodged and I was told that the children were cowards and did not want to be interviewed. I find that hard to believe, Kusasi children just don't not follow instructions from seniors[11], particularly those who have placed them in work. They may have been influenced by all the reports on TV, particularly as when child labour day was reported it focussed on children's labour in cocoa production. … Our contact had been very open initially, so I think the man who spoke on his behalf might have influenced him not to cooperate.

[9] The terms commonly used to refer to 'child trafficking' was either *biis zuub* which literally translates to 'child stolen' or *biis bodigir* translating to 'child lost'.

[10] This is a bitter nut chewed for its slightly stimulative effects. It is also used for ritual and religious purposes.

[11] The extent to which juniors follow seniors' instruction cannot be underestimated (cf. Obeng 1998) consequently strenuous efforts were made to ensure that a child was not effectively coerced into participating.

This type of incident occurred on a number of separate occasions, and it is possible that it was not a coincidence that this was around a period when the issue of 'child trafficking' was receiving a lot of attention in the media[12].

On the whole I found that the best way to access children was to either go through existing contacts, particularly those of my translator, or through influential community members, either the local Kusasi chief or educated Kusasi individuals, such as the medical assistant in one community and a teacher in another, who often expressed a concern about child migrants and were eager to provide assistance and mobilise the community. Thus, for the most part my strategy for accessing children involved a visit to a town or village (particularly ones where my translator had contacts) and finding the *Zongo* or 'Stranger Place' where most migrants to the town or village settled. There I would seek out the Kusasi chief[13] to explain the purpose of the research and seek his permission and assistance. While initially the plan had been to move to different communities and spend some time in each rather than base myself in one place it soon became clear that this would not be practical, particularly as in most communities I was asked to return at a future date to carry out interviews, and therefore, needed to be fairly centrally based. It is for this reason that I based myself in Kumasi town and moved out from there on a daily basis to other villages and towns.

While this strategy enabled me eventually to interview over sixty children, it also raised both methodological and ethical problems, as, having to rely on others meant that to some extent there was a bias in the selection process, and that I lost some degree of control over the research process. As a result there were on occasion misunderstandings about the aims of the research, either causing anxieties of the type I have just discussed or wasting the time of individuals who had been asked to attend a meeting but did not fulfil the independent child migrant criteria. I also believe there might have been expectations raised regarding immediate benefits to the participants. In fact, I discarded five interviews as unreliable because I believe that expectations regarding immediate financial remuneration had influenced the interviewees' responses[14].

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[12] For example, I recorded several references to the issue of trafficking and/or child slavery on Ghana Television's evening news bulletin while in Kumasi. There also was an advertising campaign against child trafficking being regularly aired on both the television and the radio, and one of the leading newspapers had articles on trafficking three times in June (Boyle 2004, Moffat 2004, Quaicoe 2004).

[13] Pre-colonially, the Kusasi political system was non-centralised and non-hierarchical, relations being regulated through clan and lineage membership. The colonial government introduced chiefs and headsmen, with a hierarchy in which all chiefs of a district owed allegiance to a paramount chief (Whitehead 1996: 47). The system of chieftancy extended to those areas where large numbers of migrants had settled.

[14] It is, of course, very difficult to ascertain whether or not these interviews were genuine as my assessment of

Other ethical issues I encountered related to interviews resulting in children having to recount distressing experiences. I suspended two interviews with children as a result of the obvious distress it was causing them and then spent some time with them trying to comfort them and establish what I could do to assist. On two other occasions, too, children became distressed, but when I wanted to suspend the interviews each insisted on continuing as they wished to recount their experiences.

By far the most serious ethical issue relates to those children who complained of abuse and/or overwork. The question of what one does as a social researcher in such instances, particularly when one has guaranteed confidentiality, is an extremely difficult one. I encountered sixteen such cases. Fortunately in some cases (6) the children had managed to escape their situation, but in ten cases they were still in difficult circumstances. On the advice of my translator and a Ghanaian friend and fellow researcher, it was agreed that the best route to take was to raise these issues with the responsible chief, since children's welfare falls under his responsibility. My aim then was to try to first establish what the child desired. In four cases despite their circumstances they did not wish to be removed because the situation in their home village was even worse or because they wished to earn money. In two cases the children asked us to raise the issue with the chief, in one case the child stated she would speak to her mother when she returned home, as she was due to shortly, and in three cases my colleague agreed to find alternative living arrangements for the child.

Despite this, it has to be said that the issue of ethics when one is working with children, particularly children in difficult circumstances, and in a country where one is not, at the very least, a short-term resident, is a hugely difficult area, and one I do not feel I have resolved to my satisfaction.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Independent Child Migrants' Ages

The ages of the individuals interviewed varied from eight to twenty three years of age, and from the ages of eight to seventeen at the time they migrated. As illustrated in Figure 2 below, the average age at the time of being interviewed was 15.4, the average age at the time of migration

their reliability was based on my knowledge of the Kusasi, and my judgements regarding whether stories added up. For example, on one occasion two older teenaged boys I interviewed claimed to have been independent migrants for three years, however neither spoke Kusaal very well, leading me to suspect that they had migrated with their parents as very young children. Similarly, on one occasion it became apparent that a young man was either incorrect or untruthful about his age as it became clear during the interview that to be under the age of eighteen when he first migrated he would have had to have started primary school at the age of two. In such circumstances I felt it best to err on the side of caution, and not include these interviews.

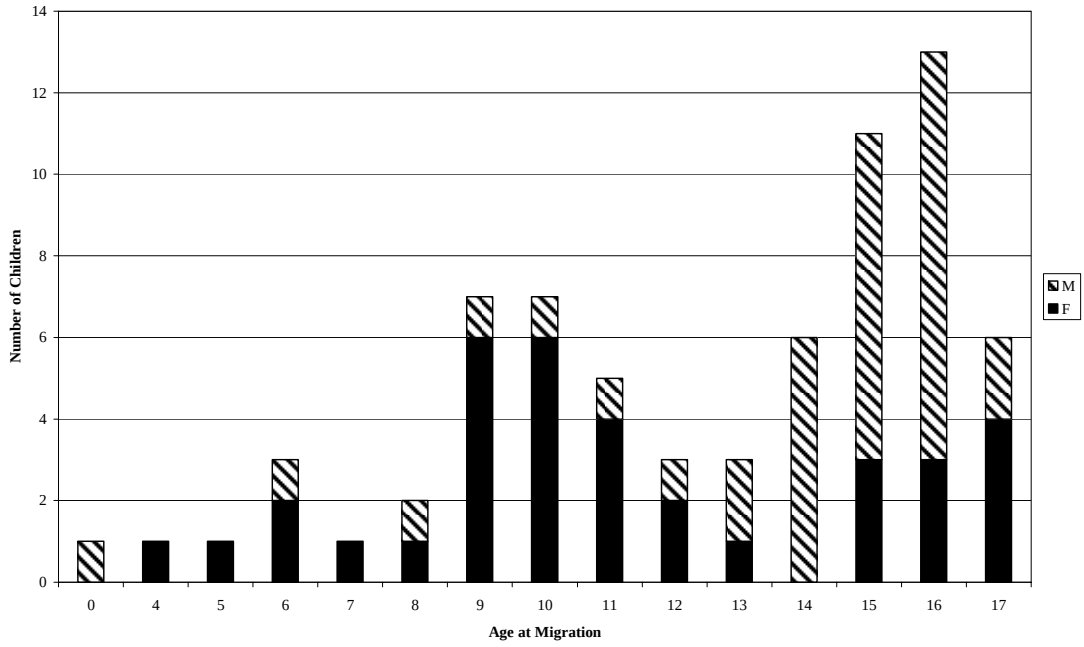
was 12.3, the average time children had been migrants for was 3 years and the average length of time return child migrants had been away was 3.8 years[15].

Figure 2: Average Age and Length of Migration

	Females (Years)	Males (Years)	All Children (Years)
Average age when interviewed	14.2	16.6	15.4
Average age when first migrated	11.1	13.6	12.5
Average length of time as current migrants	2.9	3	2.9
Average length of time as migrant of return migrants	3.8	3.8	3.8

What Figure 2 also illustrates is that although the boys and girls in this research had been away on average for the same length of time, the girls tended to begin migrating at an earlier age than boys. The earlier age at which the girls migrated is even more evident from Figure 3, which illustrates the ages at which boys and girls first moved to another household.

Figure 3: Age at Migration by Gender[16]



Reasons for Migration

Overall, the reasons given by parents for children's migration can be divided into three broad categories: to help a relative, to search for work, and for educational purposes, formal and informal[17] (Figure 4). In addition, parents often added other comments to their explanations of

[15] Only the ages of those children interviewed have been used as my earlier research revealed that the age parents gave for their children were frequently inaccurate and therefore could not be relied on.
[16] The boy who left at age zero was in fact adopted at birth, as shall be discussed later.
[17] This does not necessarily only include children that were in school or apprenticeships. It also includes children

why children had migrated, such as, in the case of girls the need for them to find money to '*buy their things for marriage*'.

Figure 4: Reasons Given by Parents for Children's Migration

Reason for Migration	Female	Males	All
Education	1	3	4
To help a relative	3	1	5
Work/Poverty	6	6	11
Totals	*10*	*10*	*20*

However, of those migrant children interviewed two other factors entered into their reasons for migration, as illustrated in Figure 5. The first was health, where a child had travelled either to earn money to cover the health expenses of a family member or for better medical treatment for themselves. The second reason given was neglect[18], where a child reported that they had moved (on occasion by running away) because they were not being cared for in their households in the north, frequently as a result of being orphaned. As one child put it to me, '*I lost my parents and in the family there was no one I could stay with in love and peace*'. Another child explained, '*Everybody in the house would call their children to eat but I had no one to call me*'.

Figure 5: Reasons Given by Children for their Migration[19]

Reason for Migration	Female	Males	All
Education	5 (2)	8 (1)	13 (3)
To help a relative	11 (3)	1	12 (3)
Health	2	3	5
Neglect	4	3	7
Work/Poverty	8	15 (4)	23 (4)
Totals	*30 (5)*	*30 (5)*	*60 (10)*

In fact, even if not given as the primary reason for their movement, becoming an orphan or losing one's father appeared to be instrumental in the movement of children to another household, twenty-five of the sixty current migrant children falling into this category[20].

Autonomy of Movement

The vast majority of current and returned child migrants (67) told me it was their choice to

who had gone in search of money to continue their education or training.

[18] Beauchemin (1998) in Ghana and Iversen (2002) in India also found that one migration trigger for children is family neglect or family abuse.

[19] Figures in bracket are the responses of return migrant children.

[20] Losing only one's mother did not appear to have the same affect.

move, although some said they felt compelled to do so because of the '*suffering*' at home[21]. However, younger children and some older girls tended to report choosing to move upon being asked to do so by an adult relation, while older boys and some older girls, from about the age of about fourteen upwards, tended to report that their migration was at their own initiation. In total two girls and one boy stated that they had not wished to move, but were compelled to do so by a relative.

Interestingly, almost all children told me that they could not return home without the permission of the person with whom they were staying, even on occasion if this was a person not related to them. One boy's response explains the reasoning behind this. '*I can't leave when I want, because I'm working for him and if he doesn't want me to go someplace I don't want to disrespect him*'. They also felt pressurised to come home on a request for their parents to return, '*I didn't want to come home but my father sent word to collect me because he was on his own here*'.

Parents too for the most part told me that they supported their children's choice to move[22]. As one mother put it, '*He helped us a lot with the father's funeral*[23]*, so it's good that he went*'. Similarly, one mother told me, '*First Vic*[24] *went to her uncle and when she came back she brought a sewing machine and clothing. And when Dinah went she came with bowls and clothing, and so I'm hoping it will be the same with Mary. If she could have got the items like Dinah and Vic. to marry maybe she would not have gone, but how is she going to get these things?*'. However, this mother also said that, '*In my day your daughter cannot just go like that. But now if you tell your daughter not to go she will say this one went and brought this and that and that one went and brought this and that so how can I not go'*, suggesting a degree of ambivalence towards children's migration. This point will be taken up later on.

Kinship and Social Networks Utilised in Children's Movement

The majority of current migrant children (32) had been collected by a range of relatives who they then stayed with or travelled with another relative to the relatives they were to stay with. A

[21] A study by Punch (2001) of migrant children in Bolivia emphasises, too, that many of the young people would rather stay at home in Bolivia, but lack of work or irrigation means that many from rural communities are forced to seek a living elsewhere.

[22] A study by Caouette (2001) on migrant children along the borders of China, Myanmar and Thailand found that parents actively encourage or support the migration of their children, seeing it as opening opportunities for a better future to them.

[23] In addition to a funeral immediately after death, it is customary to have a second funeral during the period just after the following harvest or the next. These are lively events, ideally involving much food, drink, music and dancing. They are also very costly occasions.

[24] The names of all the respondents have been changed to protect their identity.

further eleven, the majority of whom were boys, travelled alone but with directions to a relative, either then staying with them or moving on to some form of employment. Three travelled on a friend's advice and one with a friend. Five travelled with their employer who was not a relative and four travelled alone not knowing what work they would find. The final four were runaways and ended up being 'fostered' by non-related Kusasis.

The return child migrants reflected similar patterns with one child travelling with a neighbour, one boy alone, six (including all the girls) with a relative and two boys with directions to a relative. Although less reliable than the interviews with children (as shall be discussed later), it is also worth noting that parents' reported similar movement patterns for their migrant children. With the exception of one girl who had travelled with a neighbour, all the migrant girls had travelled with kin. Similarly, eight of the boys had travelled with kin, while two had travelled alone, one being a run-away, although believed to have travelled to his sister[25].

Children also often reported being assisted by a relative in other ways, for instance, by being given money for their travel costs. Children's mothers' male kin in particular were reported as helping in this way. Similarly, children who had travelled without drawing on familial or social networks would often utilise them to assist in finding work[26] (or alternative work if they had travelled with kin), for example by approaching the local Kusasi chief in their place of destination. One boy even followed a Kusasi man he met on the bus south. He initially worked for him before moving on to work for an Ashanti man, his contract being negotiated by the Kusasi man. The chiefs also often would be involved in negotiating children's contracts with future employers. Thus it is clear that kinship and social networks are very significant in both children's movements and in their finding work. The figure below lists the range of different relationships that were drawn upon in the movement of children and in their finding work.

[25] These results could be biased given what has been said about the selection procedure but especially given that I concentrated on children who were working for and/or living with a relative. Nonetheless, the research overall indicates that networks, particularly familial ones, were extremely important in the movement of children. This is evidenced in the number of children who were working for someone non-related but whom, nonetheless, reported that they had travelled and/or stayed with a relative first. The earlier research supports this too, as at least 38% of the migrant children reported during the migration survey were living with a family member; and this of course fails to capture the number who might have first travelled with or been assisted to travel by a relative (Hashim 2004: 110).

[26] Caouette (2001), Iversen (2002) and Punch (2001, 2002) also note the significance of social networks for the migrant children in their studies.

Figure 6: Social and Kinship Relations Utilised in Children's Migration

Networks	Females	Males	All
Half brother	-	1	1
Brother	7	4	11
Father's brother	5	8	13
Father's brother's son	-	4	4
Father's brother's daughter	3	-	3
Father's father's brother's son	1	-	1
Father's brother's son's wife	2	-	2
Father's sister	3	-	3
Father's sister's daughter	1	-	1
Father's sister's son	-	1	1
Father's brother's wife's brother's son	-	1	1
Mother's brother	5	7	12
Mother's half-brother's son	-	1	1
Mother's brother's son	-	3	3
Mother's mother	1	-	1
Mother's sister	1	-	1
Mother's father's brother	-	2	2
Mother's father's sister	2	-	2
Distant relation of mother's	-	1	1
Half sister	1	-	1
Sister	10	2	12
Sister's husband	-	1	1
Chief	2	4	6
Chief's wife	1	1	2
Neighbour	4	2	6
Classmate's sister's husband	-	1	1
Friend	1	5	6
Other	-	4	4
None	-	4	4

Children's Activities

Parents did not always know what work their children were doing or who children were working for. The interviews with children, however, indicated that with the exception of one boy who was only a student all children were engaged in some form of work, whether this was assisting in farming activities, the informal economy and/or household work.

What farming children were involved in varied slightly depending on where precisely children were located[27], but it mostly involved helping with cocoa farming, and farming food-crops such as cassava, yam, cocoa-yam and maize. Some children were also involved in farming rice, onions, carrots, tomatoes and leafy vegetables.

Those children currently or in the past involved in small enterprises and/or petty trading worked

[27] For example, in one village no cocoa farming was being undertaken, instead many more vegetables were being grown.

minding a kiosk/store (2), selling food items (5), selling kola nuts in the kola market (1), moulding concrete bricks (1), processing chickens (1), selling onions/vegetables (3), selling water (1), head-portering (3) working in a bar (1), shining shoes (1), cattle-herding (1), looking after sheep in the local market after school (1), processing *gari*[28] (1) and helping with *pito*[29] brewing[30].

Figure 7: Child Migrants' Work and Other Activities

Activity	Females	Males	All
Household work[31]	9	1	10
Farm-work	11	20	31
School	3	1	4
School and small enterprise	1	-	1
School and farm-work	1	3	4
Apprenticeship	3	4	7
Apprenticeship and farm-work	1	-	1
Small enterprise/petty trading	6	5	11
Loading buses at the transport park	-	1	1
Totals	*35*	*35*	*70*

In addition to this, many children also undertook some other and occasional petty income-generating work. For example, twelve of the older children (nine boys and three girls) reported occasionally going '*by-day*' (paid daily labour) to earn some money[32]. Some children also collected and sold firewood or re-harvested maize to sell. One older teenaged boy, in addition to farming for himself, had bought a camera and worked fairly regularly as a photographer. As is also clear from Figure 7, only nine children were attending school, five girls and four boys. As will be discussed later, a further eight children were apprentices; four girls and four boys.

Who Children Worked For

Most children had remained in the household to which they first moved, but ten of the sixty current migrants had lived with or worked for more than one individual, while three return

[28] Fried, grated cassava.
[29] Millet beer.
[30] To give an idea of the range of different activities children are engaged in I have included not only what children are currently doing, but what children reported doing in the past. This is why the numbers do not equate to that in the table.
[31] It should be noted that all the girls I interviewed reported doing some domestic work, consequently even if they are in the category of school, for instance, it can be assumed that they will be carrying out some household work. In the rural areas this could be very time-consuming as there was no pipe-borne water and girls were usually responsible for collecting water. However, even in the urban centres, although water collection might not involve pumping water, it could still involve collecting water in basins from a nearby pipe. It should also be noted that some boys who worked for a non-related person were also, on occasion expected to perform domestic work, such as collecting water. Boys tended to be embarrassed to tell me this, since it is not considered boys work and thus I have also not included this in the figures as it is likely to be under-reported.
[32] This is likely to be under-reported as it was often as an after-thought that children told me this.

migrants had worked for more than one person. For the most part it was only older boys in rural locations who worked for themselves, often also providing occasional labour for the households in which they lived as compensation for food and/or lodging. One girl was living with her sister and carrying out domestic work, while going '*by-day*' as often as she could find work. Two of the runaway children (one girl and one boy) had also worked for themselves as head-porters but, at the time that I interviewed them, they were 'fostered' by non-related Kusasis, and essentially working as 'house-helps'. Another girl continued to occasionally work as a head-porter, as well as being 'fostered'. The figure below illustrates who children were working for or had worked for.

Figure 8: Who Children Were Working or Had Worked For

	Females	Males	All Children
Brother	5	8	13
Father's brother	3	2	5
Father's brother's son	-	1	1
Father's brother's daughter	3	-	3
Father's father's brother's son,	1	-	1
Father's brother's wife	1	-	1
Father's sister	2	-	2
Father's sister's daughter	1	-	1
Mother's brother	3	1	4
Mother's brother's son	-	1	1
Mother's mother	1	-	1
Mother's sister	1	-	1
Sister	9	-	9
Sister's husband	-	1	1
Other non-related individual	11	14	25
Self	3	9	12
No-one	-	1	1

Children's Remuneration

All girls and many younger boys working for relatives were not paid. In fact, it was perceived as inappropriate to expect payment, as indicated in this quote from an interview with a young teenage girl, '*Because she is my sister she is not paying me*'. Boys also had the same attitude, '*I don't get paid because you can't be working for your brother and ask your brother to pay you*'. However children were sometimes given sums of money or less frequently an area of land to farm for themselves. In addition, in two cases two girls were having their apprenticeship fees paid for them by the relative they were working for and five girls and two boys were having their school costs covered. There was also a general expectation that when they were to return home the relative with whom they had been living would give them some money or clothing and, in the case of girls, buy them items such as sewing machines or pots and bowls. As one

father of a migrant child explained it to me, '*If a child is coming home and she has been staying with you, you should send her home happy*'. When I asked him what he meant by happy, he replied, '*If you compare it to a child you have picked as a labourer then you have to send her home with some clothing and some small money so she can buy her things*'. Similarly, another father stated, '*I would expect that she would come with something, because how can a child help you and you not give anything*'.

Migrant children also had the same belief. For example, the girl quoted above who was helping her sister, told me, '*Because she is my sister when I go home she will buy something to send me with*'. When I asked her what sort of item she might expect her sister to send her home with, she responded, '*A sewing machine or she will allow me to enter an apprenticeship*'. Sewing machines (which cost around ¢600,000[33]) were a common form of rewarding girls. In total, one return migrant and three current migrants had been bought sewing machines, while a further two girls were expecting to be given sewing machines. Six girls were hoping their relatives would pay for or help them pay for an apprenticeship. Older boys – i.e. those in their mid to late teens – were either given a share of the proceeds from the sale of crops or were frequently farming for themselves in addition to helping a relative.

Those children working for a non-relation were also not always paid, their residence being described by the adults in whose care they were as being due to their orphan status. Speaking to the children however, suggests that they were essentially house-helps. This was rare however, and involved the three young runaways mentioned above who had been 'fostered'.

Those children that were being remunerated could be paid derisory sums. The extract from an interview with a sixteen year-old girl who had been working for her employer for four months illustrates this. Her employer owned a small store and also sold food.

Interview Extract

Iman:	When do you start work?
Emina:	I start work at 4 am and close at 10 pm.
Iman:	Is this all selling in the shop?
Emina:	No, the household activities too.
Iman:	Can you describe your day for me?
Emina:	Early in the morning I will sweep the house and bring out the [shop] items, item by item, I will wash the children's school uniform and there is a man who comes and brings clothing for me to wash too. I will take out the refuse and fetch the water. Then when I close the shop I will bring the items back in … Where I sleep is not

[33] Sixteen thousand Ghanaian Cedi (¢) was worth roughly £1 between May and June 2005. It is worth noting, also, that the daily minimum wage was raised from ¢9,200 to ¢11,200 on 1 April 2004.

	comfortable because the items they are selling are put in the same place so there's not enough room.
Iman:	How much are you paid?
Emina:	¢5,000 per day. [At this point Emina began to cry][34]
…	
Iman:	Does your employer treat you differently than her children?
Emina:	Yes, because she thinks that I am working for money she gives me only ¢2,500 for breakfast and I won't eat until night, but for her children she will give [more].

On the other hand, boys could earn amounts that were comparatively little but far more than they would have been able to earn if they had remained at home, given what has been said above regarding the claims elders have on juniors' labour time, as well as the lack of opportunities for paid labour in the north and the very low level of incomes for farmers in the Upper East. As one boy put it to me, '*I've never had in my hand ¢250,000, so I was happy*'. Boys earnings could range from ¢200,000 to ¢800,000 per year, usually including food and accommodation[35]. They tended to be paid at the end of the year, and although two had reported problems with this system, most preferred it as '*that way it stays*', meaning children would not be tempted to squander the money[36].

If they farmed for themselves, older boys could make up to ¢1.5 million per year, often living with relatives and assisting them occasionally as repayment for food and/or lodgings. Under these circumstances what would normally happen would be that an elder of the community would assist them in approaching the (usually Ashanti) owner of the land, and a rental fee would be arranged or the crops divided between the landowner and the farmer. As one eighteen year-old boy put it, '*The Ashanti man takes two and we take one; it is not good for us but what can we do?*'. This share-cropping system was the same for both adults and children.

Alternatively, if it was a cocoa farm, it was arranged that the proceeds of the sale of the cocoa sold would be split 50/50, as illustrated in the diary extract below.

[34] As discussed earlier a variety of strategies were adopted to assist children who were in difficulties and wished to be helped. In this case, Emina said she needed no help as she had decided to resign and was leaving her employer to return home within the next week or so.

[35] Payment in kind of this nature is also reported for the child migrants in research undertaken by Iversen (2002) in India and Punch (2001) in Argentina.

[36] Similar payment arrangements are reported by Castle and Diarra (2003) in Mali, Punch (2001) in Argentina and SCF Canada (2003) in Côte d'Ivoire.

Diary Extract 28 May 2004

He has been in Enche for six years farming cocoa and other crops - yam, cassava and cocoa yam. He pays ¢1.5-1.6 million to rent all the land and then splits the cocoa with the landowner 50/50. He didn't want to say what the profit was but from the sale of the food crops alone he paid the rent. He thinks he will be there another five years because he's just started a new farm [i.e. cleared the land and planted new cocoa trees]. His younger brother is there working with him.

Although most of the older boys were paid, the exception to this was the boys in the towns who were working as apprentices. In this case, they were paid only *chop*[37] money which could be as little as ¢4,000 every couple of days, but in the case of two boys was ¢10,000 per day[38].

Twelve children (eleven boys and one girl) reported that they had sent money or food home. Quite a few other boys said that if they returned home with money they would give some to their parents or would return with food. Certainly three of the return migrant boys reported that they used some of the money they had earned to assist relatives upon their return, one boy buying a goat for a funeral and giving some money to his father to buy onion seedlings, while another paid his father's medical costs and a third bought food.

Children's Treatment

In order to capture as fully as possible the potential problems children experienced two separate questions were asked of children. The first asked if children experienced specific problems, such as with food, accommodation or with the people they lived with/worked for. For the most part children did not report problems with food or with the people they stayed with, however sixteen told me that they were or had in the past experienced problems. These consisted of six boys and eight girls (two of the girls having had bad experiences in two different households). In seven cases this was at the hands of relatives while in nine it was by individuals who were not related Consequently being a relation did not appear to have any particular affect on the likelihood or not of being maltreated. Children's complaint included being overworked (5), not receiving sufficient food (6)[39], being verbally abused (4) and, in the worst cases, being beaten (5). Children who were selling items for an employer also occasionally reported that if they did not sell anything in a day they would not be given any *chop* money.

[37] This is an indigenous term that is used, among others, to refer to money to purchase food with outside the house.

[38] The whole issue of apprenticeships will be dealt with later on in the report.

[39] Boys working for themselves occasionally told me they had problems with food, but usually were able to resolve this by going '*by-day*', consequently they have not been included here.

The second question asked if they were treated the same as the children of the person in whose house they were living. Some insisted that it would not be possible to tell as they were not the direct daughter or son of a household member, and certainly there was a view that, '*you cannot discriminate because that is not seen as good if you are a Kusasi*'. Others, however, although not complaining of maltreatment, would suggest that they were not treated the same as the house children. Some said that they were expected to do more housework, while others suggested they missed an affective relationship. For example, one girl told me, '*They don't rock me like they rock their children*'. Others complained that they were not bought items such as clothing as frequently: '*My sister might buy clothing for her children but not for* me' or that if they were, the items were not as good, '*My thing will be small and theirs will be big, theirs will be beautiful and mine not*'.

This question, therefore, revealed a greater number of complaints as a further seven children stated that they were not treated as well as the house-children. However, they did not necessarily perceive this to be a problem, one older teenaged boy telling me, for example, that '*The place where I am staying now they are not treating me as their children, but because I'm a stranger anything small they give you, you have to appreciate it*'.

Children's Preferred Place of Residence

Despite this, like many of the other children, some of these children said they preferred to be in their current situation either because they were '*suffering*' more at home or '*wanted to earn money*'. In fact, as illustrated in Figure 9, children's preferences were fairly equally split between where they were and their home village.

Figure 9: Children's Preferred Place of Residence by Gender and Employer

Preferred Residence	Females			Males			All Children		
	Rel.	Other	Self	Rel.	Other	Self	Rel.	Other	Self
Home	8	3	-	2	4	7	10	7	7
Here	7	2	-	5	3	1	12	5	1
Both	5	1	-	2	-	-	7	1	-
Home if work, school or someone to care	1	2	-	-	2	-	1	4	-
Neither	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
Where there is money	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Left when young so no memory of home	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	3	-
Total	*21*	*9*	*-*	*10*	*11*	*9*	*31*	*20*	*9*

Although a few more children stated that they preferred home to where they were currently living, they usually qualified this with comments such as '*here is easier*', either because of the

ease with which they could get paid work or because of the fact that food was relatively easily available if they were in a rural area. This quote from an interview with Tofiq, one of the return migrant boys, reflects this ambiguity, '*Here there are difficulties but because it is my land I have to take it, while there I was enjoying*'. When I asked him what he meant by enjoying, he replied, '*I mean having money and plenty of food to eat*'.

This next quote from Lamissi, a teenaged girl who was working for a non-related person, reflects why those in such a position might prefer home; '*If you are in your own house staying with your mother you can ask if you want something. She can give you if she has and if she hasn't it won't disturb you. But if you are not at home anything you want you can't ask until the person thinks of it themselves and maybe gives it*'.

As is clear from the figures below, whether or not a child was living in an urban or rural environment did not appear to make a significant amount of difference in terms of where they preferred to be. However, it is my impression from the interviews with children in the urban areas that they experienced greater difficulties with both access to food, since their employers or the relatives they were living with were not growing food crops, and access to opportunities to earn some money, as most older rural-based children could at least go '*by-day*' to earn cash.

Having said this, the most likely category of children to prefer to be at home were girls living with a relative in a rural area (6) and boys working for themselves in a rural context (6). Interestingly though, those most likely to prefer being in their current place were also girls with a relative in a rural area (5) and boys with a relative in a rural area (4). With the exception of four girls in a rural context with a relative who preferred both places, all the other permutations of gender, employer and locale where zero, one or two.

Figure 10: Children's Preferred Place of Residence by Gender and Locale

Preferred Residence	Female		Male		All	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Home	4	7	3	10	7	17
Here	3	6	3	6	6	12
Both	1	5	1	1	2	6
Home if work, school or someone to care	2	1	2	-	4	1
Neither	-	-	-	1	-	1
Where there is money	-	-	1	-	1	-
Left when young so no memory of home	1	-	1	1	2	1
Total	*11*	*19*	*11*	*19*	*22*	*38*

Children's Reasons for Returning Home

Although the numbers are small, further light might be shed on the reason for children's preference if one considers the reasons why children returned home, as illustrated in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Children's Reasons for Returning Home

Reason for Return	Female	Males	All
Brother/father asked	-	3	3
Missing home	2	-	2
Could not find work/work finished	1	1	2
School	1	1	2
Fell ill	1	-	1
Total	*5*	*5*	*10*

What is clear from talking to these return migrants is that the preferences children express are subject to change as the circumstances they find themselves in change, and more significant is their ability to deal with these changes. For example, one teenaged girl had been reported as being very excited about migrating south during the first fieldwork. However, on interviewing her I discovered that she had been very disappointed by her experiences as she had been unable to find (paid) work. She had ended up simply living with her uncle and his family, helping his wife with her domestic work for eight months. It took her some weeks to persuade her uncle to pay for her to travel home as, '*My uncle wasn't happy because I was looking after the baby. My aunt also didn't want me to leave*'. Thus, while initially excited about migrating, she found herself increasingly frustrated at the lack of opportunities to earn money and then annoyed about being unable to extricate herself because she did not have the money for her bus-fare home.

Similarly, another fifteen year-old girl, Laadi, who had been a migrant in the south from a very young age had returned because she had missed her family. She however was now unhappy about being in Tempane Natinga, because, '*Here is not interesting for me, because there is nothing to do*'. Laadi had trained as a bread-maker but was unable to work because the nearest place which had ovens was Bawku, and the daily fare there and back would be more than any potential profits she might make. Instead she was trying to undertake a weaving apprenticeship in Garu[40], but had no money for the fees. Consequently, Laadi might be likely to end up migrating again.

[40] Garu is a rapidly urbanising village five kilometres east of Tempane Natinga and is the most important service area for the households in my research community.

Three of the return male migrants had had opposite experiences in that they had preferred the south and had not wanted to come home. However, because they had been asked by seniors, in two cases following the death or disability of a senior male household member, they had felt obliged to return. This is an important point that will be taken up in the discussion section of the report.

Differences between Parents' and Traced Children's Stories

As I stated earlier, I have not to a great extent relied on what parents told me of their children's movement, and this was because in the case of three of the traced children, their stories were at odds. In one case (Case One below) it would appear that it was the parents' embarrassment regarding the reason for their daughter's absence that led them to tell me a different story.

Case Study One: A Positive Spin?

Afifo is a 12-year-old girl whose father and mother had both told me had been moved to her uncle's in order that she might have a better education, since her uncle lived in a large town with better schools and with electricity. On tracing Afifo to her uncle's, however, she informed me that although she was attending school, she had in fact moved to cook and clean for her uncle as his wife was a full-time student.

She complained that she was shouted at a lot by her aunt. She also said, '*When I was at home I would eat in the morning and they would give me chop money, and when I came home they would give me food. Here it is not until I return home that I eat*'.

This family was one which I knew very well. Afifo was already living away from home in 2000-1 and her father often commented to me during my first fieldwork that it was at her insistence that she stayed with her uncle. Afifo's version of events when I traced her to her destination contradicts his claims. Potentially she was receiving a better education than she would have done had she remained in Tempane Natinga[41]. However, since she also had greater domestic responsibilities than she would have had, had she remained in Tempane Natinga, and as she complained about lack of food and verbal abuse, it is not possible to be certain that she was able to reap the benefits of a better school and physical environment.

The extensive campaigns mentioned earlier in the report might account for a positive spin being put on Afifo's absence and for why some parents were not in agreement about their children's movement, as illustrated by one mother who told me of a relative's request for her daughter: '*Her father was happy and he agreed, so I could not refuse*'. When I asked her then if she would not prefer Mary to go south, she responded, "*No, because in the Women's Fellowship meetings they tell you you should not let your children travel*".

However, the misinformation I was given could also have been related to the embarrassment felt regarding a child's lack of care in their parental home, as illustrated in Case Two.

[41] Students and teachers in the north generally thought that schools in the towns, particularly further south, were better equipped and staffed than those in Tempane Natinga

Case Study Two: The Effects of 'No One to Call Me'

Susie was an eleven year-old girl that I traced to Kumasi town. I had been told by her step-mother in Tempane Natinga that she had been collected by an aunt to help her with her beer-brewing business. However, on tracing Susie I was told by her aunt that she had been informed by a neighbour that she was not being properly cared for as Susie's father had died and her mother had married outside the village. In particular, the lack of attention to a skin condition Susie had was mentioned as an example of her neglect.

On interviewing Susie herself, she told me that, although her skin condition was not being treated, she preferred it in Kumasi as at home she was suffering. When I asked her how, she explained, '*When I wake up early I don't eat straightaway and I can sleep hungry*'.

Susie was also helping her aunt a little with her brewing, but said she worked in Kumasi a lot less than she had in Tempane Natinga.

The final case reveals further reasons why a parent might not be completely forthcoming about their child's absence.

Case Study Three: A Father's Shame and a Young Boy's Luck

After a huge amount of effort and detective work on the part of my translator, we eventually traced Elijah to a suburb of Kumasi town. His father in Tempane Natinga had told us that he had been collected as a young boy to look after the pigs in the agricultural station in Garu. The manager of the station had been sent south to open another station and had taken Elijah with him to continue his work there. When we did eventually trace Elijah we found him to be sitting at a computer playing music. He spoke excellent English and had just completed JSS and is hoping to become a doctor. We discovered that he had been with the same family since he was a new-born baby and essentially had been adopted. He did not know much of the circumstances of his adoption so we spoke to his brother (by adoption). It seems that Elijah's birth mother had died in childbirth and his father had run away, so his birth mother's mother had brought Elijah to the agricultural station because the manager's wife worked in family health. Being an elderly widow she told them that the child would be a burden for her so the family had adopted him as their own.

My translator believes the reason his birth father did not divulge this story, rather preferring to suggest that his son was taken as a labourer, was because the father was ashamed as his failure to pay for his wife's medical care led to her subsequent death.

Although the interviews with the two other children traced confirmed the information that their parents had given me, these three stories illustrate the importance of speaking to migrant children themselves rather than simply relying on what adults say about children's migration. These stories also illustrate that there are essentially positive and negative outcomes arising from children's mobility. The extent to which children are vulnerable to the inherent insecurities, risks and dangers attached to the process of migration itself will be considered in the next section, where the more significant findings of this research will be discussed briefly.

DISCUSSION OF SOME OF THE FINDINGS

Household Negotiations Surrounding Children's Movement

The relative ease with which I found children to interview and the high rates of migration from one village alone both testify to the extent of independent child migration in the area. For example, in one small settlement of just 200 people in the south, I was told that there were twenty independent male migrants under the age of eighteen and seven female[42]. Nor is this movement of children simply a north-south phenomenon. The case study of just one household in the north illustrates the extent to which children's movement between households is perceived as normal and necessary.

The Assambila Household – A Receiving Household in the North

This household is in the Bawku East District in north-eastern Ghana and is headed by a young man, Peter, aged 30. He is the most junior of five brothers, the other four brothers being migrants in the south of Ghana (3) and in Côte d'Ivoire (1). There are seven other households members consisting of Peter's mother (aged 70), wife (22), daughter (2), wife's sister (15), Brother No. 1's second born son (17), Brother No. 2's first born daughter (13) and Brother No. 3's first born son (14).

Peter is a farmer and has also worked off and on with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the area. He has completed senior secondary school (SSS), the only member of his family to have done so. His wife is a tailoring apprentice and also undertakes some petty trading in the local market.

His wife's sister has been living with them since their daughter was born and was brought to help her sister with child-care and her trading activities. She has never attended school.

Brother No 1's son has been living in this household since the early nineties. Peter explained that because he was taking responsibility for the care of their mother, his brothers had a responsibility to support him with this. For this reason Brother No. 1's son was brought to assist Peter with caring for the animals, to begin with, and his farm work later. He is currently in Primary 5 and Peter is considering placing him in vocational training because he is not '*academically gifted*' and has repeated classes many times. Prior to this Brother No. 1's first born son was living in this household and playing the same role between the ages of nine and sixteen. He was then collected by Brother No 3. Brother No 3 is farming in Côte d'Ivoire and trading in kola and other goods, travelling frequently through Ghana to Nigeria. As he travels a lot of the time he needed a trustworthy male to protect his goods while he travelled.

Brother No. 2's daughter has been living with Peter since January 2004. She moved to this household in order to help her grandmother, who is becoming too old to collect water and carry out other domestic work. Prior to this she had lived with Brother No 1 for three years, because her parents, who had lived in the same village, had moved away, and she had wanted to remain a student in the school where she had begun her education. She is currently in Primary 3, having been moved back one year when she moved north because Primary 4 in the local school was full.

[42] This is likely to be an underestimation, since it was the village elder who told me this and he would be less likely to know of the presence of girls without their families than boys.

Brother No. 3's first born son suffers from epilepsy and was not responding to any 'conventional' treatment so his parents sent him to Peter in order to receive Kusasi 'traditional' treatment. He has been living in Peter's household since 2001. He has never attended school.

Peter himself has also been an independent child migrant. After his father died when he was a young teenager, Peter used to travel to his brother in the Western Region of Ghana during the school holidays to help him with his farming, usually returning with sufficient funds to cover his school costs and some of the costs of '*by-day'* labour to farm the farms his father had left and to care for his mother. His brothers continue to send money home occasionally.

Peter's wife, Christina, has also been an independent child migrant. She was collected by her aunt when she was about 11 years old to help her with domestic work. After one year, an Ashanti woman asked her aunt if she could take Christina as a housemaid and Christina lived and worked for her for about three years. She was rewarded with clothing, a sewing machine and some ¢300,000 (as Peter put it, '*Big money in those days*'). However, her aunt appropriated these things and Christina eventually returned to the north with very little show for her time in the south.

Although the older four brothers have all been absent for some years, the expectation is that they will eventually return and settle in the north.

The significance of this case study is to illustrate that, given the inter-dependent nature of rural livelihoods in this context the movement of individuals between households involves considerations at a number of levels.

As Whitehead and Kabeer point out:

> numerous studies have shown [that] farming households in these circumstances [of considerable agro-climatic difficulty and uncertainty] adopt risk averse or 'safety first' behaviour, including coping strategies to deal with external climatic shocks which compromise food supplies. These include cutting down consumption, eating gathered and hunted food, liquidating saving and stripping assets. Risk is also managed through crop diversification and diversification of livelihoods to include self-employment and wage labour in both farm and non-farm sector (Whitehead and Kabeer 2001: 8-9).

The migration of adults and children is one of these risk-averse strategies. The movement of individuals away from one household to another is a means by which the sending household redresses the balance of demands on scant resources and/or diversifies potential sources of income, or, alternatively, the means by which a labour-deficient household acquires labour.

These are not new claims. Theorists dealing with migration have long recognised the importance, for example, of migrant remittances for rural households' survival (cf. Cordell et al 1996, Hoddinott 1992). Moreover, the issue of fostering, where it is seen as 'a strategy that redistributes the costs and benefits of childbearing' (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994: 171), has similarly received attention in the literature (cf. Goody 1982, Locoh and Hertrich 1994). As Moore points out, sending children to live with relatives in town relieves the rural household of the responsibility of feeding, clothing and educating a child, while children migrating into rural

households contribute labour to the production activities of these households, thereby increasing chances of survival still further (Moore 1988: 97).

Thus, as the case study above illustrates, Peter's brothers felt obliged to 'compensate' him for taking on the responsibility and burden of staying at home, by providing him with access to their children's labour and occasionally money in order to ensure the functioning of the household; a household they intended, eventually, to return to. The brothers' sense of responsibility to their aging mother has resulted in one of their daughters being moved to help her with her domestic tasks[43]. The relative prosperity of the household enabled Peter to bring in his wife's sister to assist her with her income-generating activities and reproductive work. And Peter, too, has an obligation to his brothers' and is caring for his sickly nephew – despite, as he put it to me, his nephew doing '*nothing but sitting and eating*'. He is also paying his other nephew's school costs. These obligations and expectations were made explicit in one father's comment regarding his brother's responsibilities to his daughter who had been collected to care for her uncle's child; '*He didn't pick her as a labourer whereby he would be paying her. It's only a relationship. That means that he takes responsibility for her if there are problems, like with food*'.

The fact that Peter is the youngest brother is also of significance. It was commonly expressed to me that it was the youngest son's responsibility to remain in the familial house and he tended to have pressure placed on him to return home or to not leave home, in order that an elderly parent would not be left alone to farm. '*It is said that the last born will stay with the mother*'. For example, Tofiq, the youngest son of his mother whom I had known very well during the first fieldwork and who had migrated towards the end of that period, told me that he had returned home despite not wanting to after his father had died because his senior brother had asked him to. As mentioned earlier, three of the five return male migrants interviewed returned for this reason. In this way, boys and men are fulfilling their obligations to their seniors. In return though, their seniors would be expected to provide them with assistance and support, as in Peter's case.

The parents of children might not necessarily be pleased about releasing their child to a relative. However, the extended nature of kinship ties and the hierarchies associated with

[43] Another reason that parents in the south might wish their children to move back to the north, particularly if they have spent most of their life in the south is so that children can learn about their Kusasi culture. I encountered this during the first field-work and during this research one mother, whose daughter had been in the south for many years told me, " *Once she completes JSS 3 she will come home., because she is now grown up and she should learn our cultural practices*".

access to labour could result in precisely this. As one man put it, '*if your brother asks for your child you can't refuse because it's his child too*'. Similarly, one mother who did not appear overly happy about her daughter's movement to her husband's senior brother's household in the south told me, 'W*e discussed it, but if your seniors ask you can't refuse*'.

Providing a relation with the labour of a child could also be a means by which obligations between kin are reinforced. For example, one independent male migrant, Talata, who had been working for his sister's husband in the south informed me that, '*When I was here and working for him my father sent a message that because I am not in the house and he has no-one to help him farm my brother-in-law should help him*'. His brother-in-law responded by twice sending ¢200,000 to the migrant boy's father for two of the three years Talata worked with him[44].

Similarly, the children might not be choosing to move to another household, but they too recognise their obligations to kin. For example, when I asked Peter how his niece had felt about being moved to the area to assist her grandmother, particularly as she had spent all of her life in the south, he responded that she was pleased. Adults, in fact, commonly stated that children were happy to move, and this no doubt is a reflection of adults expectations regarding children's responsibilities and children's understanding of their obligations to kin and family. That is, as stated at the beginning of the report, it was not merely that children were expected to contribute to sustaining the household, but that this was part of their identity as a good child. A father for example told me, '*If you are a child somebody invites you to stay with him you will be happy*'. This explains why only three children stated that they had not wished to move. But even in these cases they did. '*I was at school but because of the shortage of food my father asked me to go to Kumasi[45] to get work. It was not my choice, my father persuaded me*'. Even those children who stated that they preferred home would not often consider returning home without permission to do so because of the recognition of their obligations to their seniors. In this sense, children's movement may be part of the inter-generational 'contract'[46], in that children are carrying out their continuing obligations to kin and family, merely in a different context. In other words, because of the long history of migration in this context, the family is

[44] This example will be returned to later in the report, when exploring the changes to the manner in which boys' are rewarded as they become older.

[45] Kumasi was used as a term to describe both Kumasi town and the surrounding rural areas where many migrated to in search of work.

[46] See Kabeer (2000a: 465-467) for a discussion of the heuristic advantages of conceptualising family interaction through the notion of 'contract', and Hashim (2004) for the application of the concept to analysis parent-child relations.

dispersed so that the movement of children between households can be a continuation of these social relations merely in another spatial locality.

In particular, this long-history of migration appears to be having an impact on girls' migration. As one man put it, '*The young men are causing the girls to go. The ones who stay in the south, their wives say bring me a small girl so they come home and collect someone. It's for this reason the girls go*'. That is, because migrant families tend to be younger and to not live in the extended family units that are found in the north, women rarely have a daughter or another girl in the household on whom they can call, which is especially important given that reproductive tasks are so time-consuming in this context. Girls would not be expected to farm extensively, but their reproductive work frees up women's time to carry out other livelihood and income-generating activities or, importantly, since this labour would otherwise have to be paid for, for farming. Thus, while farming labour could not so easily be acquired without compensating the individual (boy) and/or his family, reproductive labour could be acquired more easily. This is reflected in the high number of girls who were living away from their immediate kin and looking after a child[47]. Thus, the gender of a child is significant in the manner in which they experience migration, as is their age.

The Influence of Age and Gender

The research carried out in 2000-2001 discovered that in the 7-13 age category conflicts occur between seniors and juniors around getting children to work. This probably accounts for why it is that younger children were more likely to tell me that it was not their decision to migrate. This does not necessarily mean that they were not 'choosing' to migrate; merely that it is their elders who have made the decision on their behalf, and children are fulfilling their work obligations to seniors by doing so.

However, as children become older (the 14-18 year category) and emerge into a more differentiated world of work where their interests became more separated from that of their parents, there is conflict not around not doing work but around whom that work is done for. That is, as children get older they begin to seek out their own opportunities. Boys have more work opportunities available to them and a working role that is both more valued and that has a monetary value more easily placed upon it. However, boys are more embedded in the social, cultural and economic relations of the community connection with a place because of the patrilineal nature of residence, the practice of bride-wealth (since they are reliant on their elders

[47] This was also reflected in the first fieldwork, where sixteen of the forty-one migrant girls were said to have moved in order to care for a child.

for bride-wealth cattle) and the gendered nature of the work tasks. Boys' connection with a place thus involves investing labour as a long-term resource strategy, both economic, such as in farming, but also social and cultural, in terms of building the relations necessary to ensure the ability to secure their own and their households' livelihoods, since securing livelihoods in this context requires cooperation among many. The effect on familial relations is that both a boy and his agnatic group have a vested interest in maintaining good relations. This is also why it was much rarer for boys to be working for a relation who was not an agnatic relative (see Figure 8 above). As a result of the embeddedness of boys in the social, cultural and economic relations of the community, they may more easily negotiate permission to migrate (or compensation for not migrating), as well as more easily be persuaded to stay or to return. Depending on the household circumstances, males may also be encouraged to migrate both since there are greater income-generating opportunities for males, and because of the potentiality for securing a patronage relation with a receiving household through the provision of their labour.

Thus, while males migrate to begin with often to assist a family member, as they get older they begin to work for themselves or to be expected to be compensated more highly for the work they are carrying out by being given a cut of the proceeds from the crops. It is worth noting, too, that what they are likely to do as they get older is dependent on who they are working for – i.e. whether agnatic kin or someone else. A good example is Talata, mentioned earlier, who was working for his brother-in-law, who in turn was compensating Talata's father by sending him ¢200,000 for the first two years Talata worked. Talata continued to work for his brother-in-law for a further year, at which time he collected the money himself, and by the time I interviewed him he had been working for himself for one year. As he put it, '*He wasn't paying me enough so I told him I wanted to work for myself. He said it was my right, but he asked me to leave the room in his house where I was staying so that someone else could enter, so I came to this village to stay with my friend and farm*'. Taro, on the other hand, was working with his direct brother. When he first migrated he had been given by his brother to an Ashanti to work and was being paid ¢250,000 a year. Now that he was working for his brother he was getting ¢150,000 a year and he also told me that he sent ¢50,000 home every month. When I asked him why he was being paid less by his brother and how he could send ¢50,000 every month if he only got ¢150,000 a year, he told me that it was he and his brother who sent the money home because '*everything is for us*'. In other words, the ¢150,000 was an estimate of what his spending money was, while the sale of the proceeds of the crops was seen as belonging to

both he and his brother (relatively) equally. These patterns of who boys worked for and how they were rewarded was particularly evident among the older boys and young men I interviewed who were in their early teens when they first migrated but were now in their late teens or early twenties.

Females, on the other hand, are viewed as only temporary members of their households, since they invariably move to their husband's village on marriage, and one frequently heard the comment that '*girls do not belong to the household*'. The overall result is that girls are less embedded in the social, cultural and economic relations of their agnatic kin. Their work is, almost without exception, undervalued or simply unrecognised, by men (and boys). Any girl in any context can do girls' work, and they, as a result, can move or be moved around more easily. Moreover, girls' work is primarily domestic, which by its nature is on a different, shorter cycle, such that any woman or girl can do this work and it can be done in any setting, whether it be for their agnatic kin, husband or for migratory purposes. Consequently, their families may more readily release girls in the face of a request for a child's labour, or a request by a girl for permission to migrate. One father, for instance, said in English of his daughter's migration: '*I approved because she is a girl and so has to leave*'. Girls' lack of embeddedness also means though that girls have to be more resourceful in pursuing alternatives beyond agnatic kin. They have far less possibilities to pursue their own enterprises in the north or to earn significant amounts if they are able to do so. Consequently, they have significant motivation to migrate in pursuit of better opportunities.

This is reflected in the findings of Agarwal et al who looked at *kayayoos* (head porters) in Accra. They found many of these children to be migrants from the north, who see their migration:

> as a short-term activity which provides an opportunity for putting together a level of capital that would not be possible in the rural area. Being a *kayayoo* is seen as the short-term cost to be paid for a long-term gain – change to a better occupation, marriage, or the purchase of capital goods necessary for training for a better occupation" (Agarwal et al. 1997: 257).

Similarly, Casely-Hayford, who carried out work with the Dagomba in Ghana, found that 'in the last few years young girls and women have begun migrating to the cities on a seasonal and yearly basis to find work and improve their income. Girls interviewed stated that they went on "*kayayoo*", to "have their eyes opened" and also buy the necessary items for marriage' (Casely-Hayford 1999: 16 ff.). Although girls in my research area do not appear to be migrating as far as Accra, they do nonetheless, in many cases, appear to be migrating south in order to achieve

the same goals.

Moreover, it is not merely for economic reasons that girls might be encouraged to move. For example, having '*one's eyes opened*' was often referred to in discussions around migration, reflecting some of the stress in the literature on the appeals of the 'bright lights' of the city and migration as a rite of passage (cf. Castle and Diarra 2003). In addition, given the rules of exogamy that operate in this context, which prevent individuals from the same clan marrying, girls have an incentive to move elsewhere in search of a suitor, particularly if they do not wish this to be determined by their fathers[48].

Thus, as we have also seen, while some children were moved at the instigation of the households in which they were living, others moved of their own will. That is, the movement of children involves not merely livelihood strategies at the level of the household, but also at the level of the individual child. As children become older they themselves begin to adopt their own livelihood strategies and seek their own welfare-maximising opportunities. One of these strategies involves choosing to live in a different location to secure a different kind of patron, to obtain a training opportunity and/or to earn the income needed to purchase the items necessary for their progression into adulthood. This is unsurprising, given both that labour in this context is seen as an age-appropriate behaviour for children and that the area is a place where people have a long experience of migration, and hence knowledge of an alternative labour market.

As a result it was not merely adults that utilised networks to secure access to the necessary labour of a child or a child's welfare by placing them in an environment considered more adequate for their well-being. Children too drew extensively on social and kinship networks in securing their livelihoods. The case study below, for example, illustrates the range of kinship networks utilised by children in just one household in the south.

[48] NGOs workers working with street children in Accra told me that one of the reasons some girls left home was to escape arranged and/or polygamous marriages (pers. com. Bro. Jos van Dinther and Mrs. Vida Amoako, cf. CAS 2003, Payne 2004).

The Mbilla Household – A Receiving Household in the South

I got to know this household through meeting Suli in Tempane Natinga. The household is located in a suburb of Kumasi town and is headed by Suli's father's first sister, Habiba, aged 57. Although originally from Tempane Natinga, Suli is living is this household, and was only visiting Tempane Natinga for a funeral. He is aged 22. The other household members are, Suli's father's half-sister's son (Yacoubu aged 18), Suli's father's junior brother's son (Nasiru aged 17), Suli's father's second sister's son (Bukari aged 16), Suli's father's junior brother's daughter (Sharifa aged 15), Suli's father's third sister's daughter (Haleema aged 16), Suli's father's sister's husband's brother's son (Fatow aged 14) and Suli's direct brother (Mohamed aged 14). Haleema's and Bukari's mother were sisters married to the same man so they are half-brother and sister. Habiba's eldest son also lives in Kumasi but in another house. He supports this household's members in various ways.

Suli has been in Kumasi town for one year, and works trading onions. He graduated from Bawku Senior Secondary School in 2003 but did not pass all his subjects, so is trying to earn sufficient money to re-register and to take extra classes.

Yacoubu completed Junior Secondary School (JSS) but did not have enough money to continue. He moved to Kumasi in 2002 and is working as a tipper-truck mate and learning to drive. Because he is an apprentice he only gets chop money which can be up to ¢10,000 per day if there is work. He was found the work by his cousin, Habiba's son, who manages the truck for its owner.

Nasiru grew up in Binduri living with his father's brother who had no sons of his own. He completed JSS but there was '*no money to continue*'. Instead he moved to Kumasi in 2002 to look for work and now works with his senior brother (who lives in another house) selling onions. He earns ¢5,000 per day and twice a day is given ¢2,000 for chop.

Bukari has been in Kumasi for one and a half years. He was attending school but his father[49] fell sick so he travelled south to ask his cousin (Habiba's son) for money to treat his father and to pay his school fees; he was in JSS. His cousin was not able to find the money to lend him but instead, like Yacoubu, found him a job working as a tipper-truck mate.

Sharifa has been in this household for five years. She was brought here by her aunt (Habiba) when her father died in order to continue her education. Her school costs have all been covered by her cousin (Habiba's son) and she has just sat her JSS exams. If she passes she will move back north in order to attend senior secondary school in Bawku as the fees are much less in the north than the south.

Haleema has lived in Kumasi since she was four when her father died. At that time she was brought to her father's junior brother's son's household in another suburb of Kumasi where she lived until two years ago. Despite her cousin being a teacher, Haleema was never sent to school. For the last two years she has lived in this household '*because Sharifa is a student and her aunt needs someone to help her*'. For the past month she has also started selling vegetables for someone in a nearby market and is paid ¢5,000 per day and given ¢3,000 for chop.

Fatow has been in Kumasi three months. He came '*to search for money as there is no work at*

[49] In fact this is not his real father, as, as with his sister Haleema, their father died when he was young, but he remained in his father's house as his father's junior brother's son.

home' and he is working as a shoe-shine boy. On a good day he can earn ¢5,000.

Mohamed left the north two years ago. He was collected by an Islamic preacher who promised to enter him into a *karatoo* (a non-paying Islamic school). However, he only had lessons for two hours a day. The rest of the time he and the other fifteen or so male students were hired out by the preacher to carry out agricultural work. He managed to get a message home and his mother's brother, who was working in the south too, eventually collected him. He stayed with his maternal uncle for one month until his brother, Suli, collected him and brought him to this household. Now he sells onions with Suli. He states he is not paid '*because I am working for my brother*' but he is in fact given ¢7,000 a day to do with as he pleases, as well as chop money.

Thus, children such as Fatow as young as fourteen (and even younger, as we will see later) can actively seek to migrate to pursue an alternative livelihood. This potentially creates new dilemmas, though, as the requirement for labour within a household, alongside a simultaneous, and possibly increasing, desire and need for young people to earn a cash-income can come into conflict with one another. That is, as has been noted earlier, given the complexities of the domestic economy in this context, involving as it does relations of interdependence and independence, managing social relationships is of significance in ensuring collective and personal livelihoods. Seniors, particularly household heads, need to harness the labour of their juniors in order to secure the household's welfare, and consequently must provide them with the means to pursue individual endeavours, particularly in the face of competition from other potential patrons[50], and also with more opportunities for juniors to pursue more individualised forms of securing livelihood activities, such as through migration. Juniors, for their part, need to ensure that their obligations to their elders are fulfilled, not only because they too '*will eat'* but because it is from elders that they receive the support necessary for their private farms, while pursuing their own means of acquiring personal income or produce[51].

Parents may permit their children to migrate as part of their responsibilities to '*support*' their children, by allowing them to pursue their individual enterprises. Alternatively, as the following diary abstract illustrates parents, could be unhappy about their children's migration.

Diary Extract 26 May 2004

On coming back [from a visit to a son in the south] Abang found his youngest son, [aged 15], in Garu, about to travel south with his mother's sister. She owns a bar and had persuaded him to come with her for four months until his junior secondary school exam results are out. Abang

[50] Kabeer's research finds that, '[f]emale dependence was the other side of the coin to male responsibility and was, in principle, open to renegotiation in the event of men's abdication from their responsibility' (Kabeer 2000b 337). In the same way children pursue alternative patronage relations if they found their own seniors lacking.

[51] Hoddinott stresses the negotiability of these inter-generational relations when he states that by 'engaging in manipulative behavior, elderly parents can induce greater assistance with household tasks and monetary transfers' (Hoddinott 1992: 563)

was unhappy and he subsequently sent for the boy, who returned after one week. Abang told me, '*all the suffering for his education, he should be with me*'. Apparently he is concerned that if he allowed him to stay there he wouldn't be able to '*control*' him.

Parents often also recognised, however, that they could not necessarily prevent their children from travelling, either because their child wished to travel to earn money ('*I am not happy but I don't have to control. I don't have a job here to be supporting him')*, or because they had been unable to provide their children with an education or training '*because I had no money to send her to learn a handicraft I have to allow her to go*').

Older children often draw on such arguments to negotiate permission to travel, as illustrated in the interview with Emina from earlier.

Interview Extract

Emina:Some agreed and some didn't.
Iman: Who didn't agree?
Emina: My uncle.
Iman: Why not?
Emina: Some girls come south and find work and when they get money they don't go back.
Iman: So how did you persuade him?
Emina: I told him that if I didn't go I will suffer. You can't get it for me, my mother can't get it from me, so I have to go otherwise when I marry I will have nothing.

The worst case scenario was that children might actually run away. I heard of three such cases in Tempane Natinga in the brief time I was there and of the sixty independent child migrants, four children (three girls and one boy) were runaways, while one older fatherless boy told me that his mother knew of his plan to move south, but that he had '*dodged*'[52] his uncles, who had objected because they needed him to help with the farming.

However, parents were not always too troubled by this behaviour if it was a boy. As one father told me of his son, '*He didn't discuss it at first, he just dodged to Kumasi as he knew I wouldn't give permission because, look at me now, farming alone*'. He added, '*We did it ourselves*'. When I asked him what he meant by this, he told me, '*I myself dodged. I went there for five years, came home, married and went back for ten years. I came back because my father was old*'. His son too had eventually returned home with some monies before migrating again to undertake a vehicle fitting apprenticeship, paying for this by selling the cow his father had bought for him with the money he had earned when he first migrated.

[52] People frequently used the words 'collected' or 'picked' to refer to a child's movement at the instigation of another, while 'followed' tended to be used to refer to a child's initiation of the movement and 'dodged' was used when a child did not first seek permission.

This again reflects the fact that boys are embedded in the social relations of their village in a way that girls are not. That is, unless they choose to permanently live in the south, boys know it is to their agnatic kin that they will need to look for support in land and in inputs such as labour and seeds, not to mention their reliance on seniors to provide them with the cattle for their bride-price. Despite '*dodging*' therefore, they are perceived to be more likely to return.

It was a different matter with girls, however, even if they had not run away, but especially in those circumstances. One mother I interviewed was very upset because her daughter had travelled south with a neighbour and then moved on to work for another man. The neighbour said they did not know where she was but the mother had heard from two different sources that her daughter (who was about fifteen or sixteen[53]) had delivered a child. The mother told me that if they had money they would have sent their son to look for her.

In general parents expressed concerns about their daughters' migration. One father, for example, said of his thirteen year-old daughter who had travelled south with a brother, '*I don't want her to stay too long because it's not good. I've seen it in other people's children, they stay too long and there they spoil. By spoil I mean they can follow men there and when they come home they continue the same practices and then they fall pregnant*'. Several other parents referred to concerns about sexually transmitted diseases and 'immoral' behaviour in their concerns about daughters' movements to the south, as illustrated in the following two quotes. One woman told me, '*There are girls who have gone to Kumasi and don't want to work so they have sex with men and get HIV and come home to die. I personally know of two such girls from Nintabuksuk*'. While a man said, '*I have seen some girls travelling and their fathers don't know where they are. They sell cows to find them and when they find them they have delivered up to three* [children] *and they don't even know who the fathers are*'. In fact, one of the return migrant girls I interviewed had returned after giving birth to a child, which I was told was a matter of shame given that she was not married. This might also account for why some girls were runaways, although it is not clear if this is because they are pregnant and are ashamed to return or because they do not want to return.

In addition, some children who had had permission to travel were subsequently viewed as runaways, such as the girl whose parents had heard she had delivered a child. That is, they had either not been in touch with their parents for some time, or had not responded to their parents request that they return home. On the three occasions where I had uncovered this in

[53] Although I do not usually rely on parents estimations of children's ages, in this case I do know the child's age because she was well-known to me when I carried out the first research in 2000-2001.

Tempane Natinga, the families involved were extremely poor.

This might reflect the point made earlier regarding the importance of the social management of households. That is, the prevailing ideology was that household heads shouldered the burden of responsibility for ensuring the welfare of the household, central to which was producing sufficient staple and cash-crops, which in turn required good social management of household labour, both harnessing the labour of juniors on the one hand, while permitting them the space and resources with which to pursue their own endeavours on the other. Juniors, for their part, had to fulfil their obligations to the household head first and foremost, followed by other seniors, depending on where they were on the hierarchical ladder, before they could turn to their individual enterprises.

Both children and adults expressed the interdependence and negotiations involved in work relationships in this context (Hashim 2004). For instance, during the first fieldwork Eissah, a successful but elderly farmer, made apparent the need both to achieve balance and the long-term considerations involved in this when he told me, '*If a child is grown it is their responsibility to feed you. But you have to beg them because they can run away, but you cannot*'. When I asked him if he meant that it was a mutual relationship, he responded, '*Yes, exactly, because if a child wants something and I, as a parent, don't provide, they can run away. So I have to support them to ensure they don't run*' (ibid). Children '*running*' therefore might be evidence of their parents not supporting them sufficiently, not only because they might not have the means to but because they are not providing them with enough room to pursue their personal endeavours.

There are other indications too, that the escalating impoverishment of the area is increasing the likelihood of children heading south to work. As one boy told me, '*You want trousers to wear you can't get, you want food to eat you can't get, so you have to come here to work*'. In particular, other young people returning with consumer items[54], as well as the general poverty of the area, were 'blamed' for children's desire to migrate. '*The children migrate because if they see other children wearing nice clothes they will travel to get. Last year the onion seedlings were diseased, so they couldn't even grow their onions*[55]*. Also poverty from their parents means they can't get money for school or for their clothing. They will go to get and how can you stop them? And last year children even came home with maize for their parents, so that*

[54] A study by Beauchemin (1998) in Ghana also found that returned migrants inspired others to leave.
[55] Onions are a vital source of cash income for the households in Tempane Natinga, and while girls rarely grew them, many older boys did and relied on this income to "*buy their things*".

encourages others'.

Another factor that seems to be having a significant impact on migration is the apparent changes to marriage practices. I was told that a boy '*has to be up with his friends to demonstrate he can marry*'. A girl and her family will investigate if he has personal items, and how he acquired them because both need to be sure that he will be able to provide for her. '*A woman will not agree to marry unless you have your furniture - a good bed and living room furniture*'. There appeared competition among teenaged boys to ensure this, '*If you have nothing and your father can't provide meanwhile your colleagues have, you will surely have to drop from school in order to get your things by working*'.

In terms of changes for girls, there appears to be an increasingly expectation that women '*should bring something to the marriage*'[56]. By this, two things are meant. Firstly, that they are expected to bring with them some of the articles necessary for setting up one's own hearth, such as pots and basins. As one father explained of his daughter's migration, '*If the girl has got to a certain level she wants to buy the things in order to marry to support herself*'. When I asked him what sort of things he was referring to, he responded, '*Bowls, clothes and maybe a sewing machine*'. Similarly, when I expressed my surprise at the number of older teenaged girls I encountered in one village in the south, since they normally would have been married by that age, my translator's interpretation was that, '*They have not been able to marry because they haven't yet bought their things,* so *they are searching for money*'[57]. Moreover, I was told that due to the formalisation of marriage a girl arriving at her husband's household with her kitchen items is an indication that their parents accept the marriage.

The second expectation was that women should have their own income-generating activity, such as being a seamstress. Women who did could expect to make better marriages. However, girls have little possibilities to pursue their own enterprises in Tempane Natinga or to earn significant amounts if they are able to do so. Consequently, they have significant motivation to migrate in pursuit of better opportunities to earn money to buy their *trousseau* items and/or to undertake some vocational training.

It is worth noting that during my first fieldwork, I found the ratio of boys to girls to be 100 to 77 and part of this I believe was due to the under-reporting of migrant girls[58]. Fentiman et al report

[56] Whitehead (1996) notes similar changes in her work.

[57] These girls migration at what might otherwise be marrying age, might also reflect what was said earlier regarding girls migrating to find a suitable suitor.

[58] While I believe that the migration of girls was under-reported during the fieldwork, two other factors are likely to account for this sex ratio discrepancy. Firstly, was that girls were reported as being older (the overall sex ratios

similar 'missing girls' in their research in Ghana, which they state indicates clearly that more school-aged girls than boys are migrating from their communities (Fentiman et al 1999: 333-4). Another factor might be, as Dahlström's research on young people's out-migration from rural areas in the Norway suggests, that high rates of migration by females 'has to be seen against the backdrop of a "male periphery" where rural life is defined in terms of male perspectives and activities, and where issues around the perceived constraints of rural life are strongly felt by young women' (Dahlström 1996 cited in Glendinning et al 2003: 132). Thus, while an entirely different context, her research suggests too that it is not simply the economic aspects of moving that must be considered when analysing young people's migration, but the extent of the feelings of embeddedness in place; or not as the case may be. As Schildkrout puts it when discussing children's migration, 'production of income is only one aspect of this complex behavioural system' (Schildkrout 1981: 83),

Migration and Education

The inter-linkages between migration and education will be the subject of a specific working paper that will discuss the issue in detail. However, the significance of the interconnection between these two means that it is also important to raise the issue in this report since the research found that one of the opportunities that migration affords to young people relates to the possibility for children to pursue both vocational training and formal education[59].

With regard to formal education, it is worth first noting that the education system in Ghana changed in 1987 to six years of primary school and three years of junior secondary school that, in theory[60], are free and compulsory. Following this, students who qualify by passing an exam can proceed into senior secondary schools. At this stage fees become payable. While these vary between schools – depending on the nature of the school (boarding or day-school) and the perceived desirability of the school – the fees are overall very costly and often unaffordable for poorer parents[61]. Students, who attain a high enough mark on taking the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination at the end of three years of senior secondary school may then

between all males and females was more equal) and secondly was that I discovered that girls were often forgotten during the household survey.

[59] See Piperno (2002) Orellana et al (2001) and Ping and Pieke (2003) for other discussions regarding the connections between migration and education.

[60] Education is only free and compulsory in theory, since many schools levee charges at the primary and junior secondary level, and it is rare that the compulsory nature of schooling is enforced.

[61] At the time of the first fieldwork the annual senior secondary school fees were C120,000. To illustrate how costly this is it is worth noting that, depending on the time of year, a bag of millet cost between C100,000 and C120,000, and seven bags of millet are sufficient for a year for a family of ten.

pursue a degree course at university, or a diploma course at some other tertiary institution (Ghana Ministry of Education (GME) 2000). Again these are very costly.

In addition to the relatively high costs associated with senior secondary schooling, it is the case that this coincides with the age at which children are expected to begin to take on greater responsibility for aspects of their own consumption[62]. It is probably for these two reasons that I encountered several junior secondary graduates who were working to earn money to assist in the payment of their senior secondary school fees. As one father put it to me, '*In the old days when you passed your* [JSS] *exams they would collect a cow and sell it so you could continue your education, but now no cows, no food, so* [children] *have to find the money*'. In addition, as in Peter's example in the case study above, there were a further three senior secondary school students I spoke with who travelled to brothers in the south for work during the school holidays in order to assist with their school costs.

One boy even moved not just to earn money to go back and continue his education, but actually continued his schooling in the south while working on weekends as a '*by-day*' labourer. He decided to stop schooling after junior secondary school however, because '*I'm getting small, small to support myself and my parents so it would be difficult for me to continue'*. I also encountered a number of young men, who being over eighteen at the time of their migration were not formally interviewed, who had completed their senior secondary schooling but, having failed to receive high enough grades to continue their education were working in order to earn the money to re-sit exams. Two of these young men told me that it was the poor quality of the schools and teaching in the north that had caused them to fail.

Children were also transferred between houses in order to secure their education if their own household was struggling to cope with the costs of education and even, as in the case of the twelve-year-old daughter of one of the teachers in Tempane Natinga, because she felt that the education in the village was lacking[63]. However, these children were also vulnerable if the house to which they then moved became unable to maintain these costs. For example, one return child migrant told me that she had been asked to move to her mother's brother to help his wife with her children and had been persuaded to do so because the school in their area was better. Although her uncle paid her school costs at the beginning, once his own children

[62] Many children accept that their parents are not in a position to pay everything needed to go to school and in Tempane Natinga a child's commitment to education was partially assessed by her or his willingness to work to cover some of the costs (Hashim 2004: 141).

[63] Similarly, one of the informal interviews I conducted was with a nineteen year-old male who had just moved from Bawku to his father's brother's household in the south, because he had failed his exams. His uncle, a teacher, was supporting him while he repeated senior secondary school from the start.

began attending school he told her parents he could no longer afford to cover her costs. Fortunately her elder brother agreed to pay her costs in Tempane Natinga. However, with each move (to the south and then back north) she was made to repeat a year, causing significant disruption to her education. Girls in general were more vulnerable to this because, unlike boys, they had less income-generating opportunities which would allow them to work whilst studying or during holidays in order to cover their school expenses (Hashim 2004).

Figure 12: Independent Child Migrants' Educational Background[64]

Children's Educational Background	Female	Male	All
No education	9 (1)	5 (1)	14 (2)
Dropped out in primary school before migration	13 (1)	9 (2)	22 (3)
Dropped out in junior secondary school before migration	-	4	4
Dropped out from senior secondary school before migration	-	1	1
Dropped out in primary school to migrate	2	1 (1)	3 (1)
Currently in primary school	3	2	5
Currently in junior secondary school	-	2	2
Completed junior secondary school	2 (3)	3	5 (3)
Currently in senior secondary school	1	3 (1)	4 (1)
Total	*30 (5)*	*30 (5)*	*60 (10)*

Only four children told me that they had dropped out of school to migrate (see Figure 12 above). In fact, being in vocational or formal education seemed to be the reason why some children were not collected by relatives, as indicated in this father's comment about his daughter's migration, '*If my daughter had her own handiwork my brother would not have ventured to even say she should follow him, but because she hadn't, he asked*'.

However, some children anticipated there would be difficulties with their school fees and decided to drop-out before then. For example, one boy told me, '*I dropped out of school in Primary Six to go. One of my brothers was in Bawku Senior Secondary School and because he was higher I realised that my father was not going to be able to pay for us all so I chose to drop out*'.[65] Another boy also decided to drop out when his father died and migrated south in order to earn the money to ensure that his siblings could continue schooling. As he put it, '*Because my father died I had to give up school at Primary Six, so I decided to come here and work to help my juniors in the house because the fees are very high*'. Similarly, Emina, in addition to travelling south to earn some money to enable her to continue her apprenticeship in the north,

[64] The numbers in brackets is for return migrants, those outside the bracket are for the current child migrants.
[65] Although there would be no fees payable until he reached senior secondary school, as has been mentioned levees are charged at the primary and junior secondary school level. Consequently, this boy predicted difficulties with these, given that his father would have to cover senior secondary fees for his brother.

had also sent money back to assist with her junior brother's school costs.

A more negative connection between migration and formal education appears to be indicated in some of the responses I received to the question regarding whether the migrant child was treated the same as the children in the house in which s/he was living. I was occasionally told they were treated differently because the house children were attending school and they were not. Unfortunately, as I had not included a specific question regarding this in the interviews, it is not possible to state how frequently this occurred, although I do know that this was the case with at least ten migrant children. Moreover, from speaking to adults in the south, it is undoubtedly the case that there was a higher appreciation of education in the south (and probably a greater ability to afford the direct costs of schooling). Consequently, it might be that children increasingly are being brought from the north to replace the labour lost in a southern household from sending a child to school[66].

Turning now to vocational education, as already stated some eight children were already apprentices. Apprenticeships encompass a broad range of experiences and arrangements, but in general they are the practice of learning a trade from someone experienced in a particular field or profession. The norm was that girls entered tailoring, tie-and-dye, hairdressing and catering-oriented apprenticeships, while boys trained as mechanics ('*vehicle fitting*'), carpenters and as assistants on trucks ('*lorry mates'*). Apprentices were required to pay a fee to the individual from whom they were learning. They also were not paid for their contribution to the enterprises' work, although they sometimes received *chop* money as a food allowance.

In addition to the eight children already undertaking apprenticeships, a further fourteen children (four boys and ten girls) were hoping to undertake an apprenticeship. In some cases, children had been explicitly told that they would be. '*They asked me to come and help them, and when they get money they will let me enter a vehicle fitting apprenticeship'*. In other cases, children were simply hoping to earn enough money to attend an apprenticeship or were hopeful that a relative would assist them with their apprenticeship fees. This was particularly the case for girls, both because, as stated earlier, girls had greater constraints on their income-generating opportunities and because vocational training was deemed more appropriate for girls, as is indicated in what Musa told me: '*If you have four boys, you send two to school and two will stay*

[66] Some studies do indicate that with the increasing enrolment of girls in schools as families get wealthier and in urban environments there is a growing demand for domestic workers as a result of the loss of family labour supply for domestic work (Andvig 2002, Beauchemin 1999, Innocenti Digest 1999). It might be that this is not simply restricted to domestic labour but all family-based labour, where there is unequal development of regions or particular areas in developing countries.

to care for animals and help you on the farm. That way you can care for those in school. If you have girls, you give them vocational training, such as sewing or hairdressing'.

Nonetheless, the costs of vocational training could be high. For example, I happened to be passing a school where a group of girls had just completed an exam on their vocational training course in catering. They told me they pay ¢300,000 a year in fees and have to buy all the inputs, such as cooking utensils, uniforms, ingredients and charcoal. Similarly, a return girl migrant told me that she had migrated to cover the costs of her weaving training in Garu. Although she had completed the training she could not pass out because she had paid only ¢180,000 and was required to pay a further ¢300,000 for the certificate and for the remainder of her training fee. The fees for boys' apprenticeships, often as vehicle fitters, could be as high as ¢1.5 million.

To summarise, families' inability, and sometimes unwillingness to cover educational costs and vocational costs, particularly for girls, and these costs coinciding with the time when there was an expectation that children should be more self-reliant, was a significant factor in the movement of boys and girls in their mid-teens. However, the linkages between formal and vocational education and migration appeared to have both positive and negative effects. On the one hand, the poor state of schooling in the north and the difficulties parents and children experienced in covering the costs of schooling was encouraging children to migrate or encouraging relatives in the south to request a child for household labour. On the other hand, migration afforded children the possibility of either acquiring an education or training[67], or securing it for younger siblings.

Assessing the Costs and Benefits of Children's Migration

The issues raised in this section will also be discussed in much greater detail in a forthcoming working paper (see Hashim 2005b). However again the significance of the impact of migration on children's welfare and the importance of the manner in which the issue is approached in the policy literature requires that attention is given to this aspect of children's migration here too.

There are two principal ways in which the children are perceived to leave home to live elsewhere in Africa. The first of these is through the institution of child fostering. According to Pilon (2003) the traditional causes of fostering vary widely, but they include illness, death, divorce, parents'

[67] This might also be seen as a negative, since training was often costly and, moreover, might be considered a disguised form of labour exploitation, since children were invariably working whilst training. There are also issues related to the merits of the apprenticeships pursued given the low future returns of such occupations, particularly in the north. These points are discussed more extensively in the forthcoming paper on the linkages between migration and education (Hashim 2005a).

separation, mutual help among family members, socialization or education and the strengthening of family ties. Although some authors have suggested that there are potential dangers involved in fostering (cf. Ansell and Young 2002), on the whole it is perceived as a benign phenomenon aimed at redistributing the costs and benefits of children (Isiugo-Abanihe 1994: 171)[68]. This is in contrast to the other main form in which children are believed to be moving in Africa (and elsewhere), through the apparently increasing occurrence of child trafficking. According to the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (often referred to as the Palermo Protocol), child trafficking is defined as the 'recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation' (UN 2001), and an intermediary who gives or receives payments (or expects to give or receive payments) can be considered a child trafficker if there is intent on the part of the intermediary to exploit the child.

To consider fostering: it is clear that there is some overlap between the definitions of fostering and that of independent child migration. This is particularly so since fostering is often portrayed as a decision between adults, while in fact several sources draw attention to the fact that children themselves may play a big part in the decision to do this (Andvig 2000). It is also frequently assumed to involve relatives and this in part accounts for the assumption that there are no risks or dangers involved for the children. However, it is worth bearing in mind that of the sixteen children who complained of maltreatment, seven experienced this at the hands of relatives. Moreover, if one considers those children who were moved not for their labour but because of their lack of care elsewhere – i.e. one of the main traditional causes of fostering –nine complained of their situation; six at the hands of relatives and three by non-related Kusasis. The remaining seven were working for a non-related individual, although one of them was living with her sister and it was her sister not her employer who was '*insulting*' her.

The aim of the research is not to make statistical claims but rather to explore with children their motivation for and experiences of migration. However, from what I was told, one might surmise that children who are fostered for household labour reasons may be less likely to be maltreated since their reason for moving is to assist a relation, while those children who had moved because of difficulties in a household might be resented by their new household who feel obliged to take on the child but begrudge the resources that need to be spent on the child. One child told me, for example, that her cousin with whom she was staying '*insulted*' her by saying,

[68] This is changing, however, as increasingly fostering is being associated with trafficking (cf. ILO 2002a: 3). According to the IOM, for example 'Traffickers are now exploiting this age-old tradition [of fostering] resulting in parents inadvertently but effectively selling their children' (IOM 2003).

'*No one asked you to come here*'. Similarly, another young teenaged girl explained that she had been brought by her senior father (father's senior brother) because, '*We were many so they were not taking care of us and we were not eating to satisfy or going to school*'. She said of her uncle and aunt: '*They normally tell me that when I was in Bawku I was not eating to satisfy and now I'm eating to satisfy so I should work*'.

It is also worth noting that eight of those children (four boys and four girls) who complained were orphans or had a deceased father. As O'Laughlin (1998) points out, children who have no father who bestows social recognition on them are disadvantaged in many ways, not least because they have no possibility of affiliation to a father's lineage. This is illustrated well in the extract of an interview with a twelve year-old girl.

Interview Extract

Djamilla:	When I first came here [south] I was staying at a village and they were punishing me so I ran away.
Iman:	Where did you go?
Djamilla:	Sakora-Mapong.
Iman:	Who were you staying with?
Djamilla:	A Kusasi but not a relative.
Iman:	How did you end up there?
Djamilla:	He saw me in my village and said that I was suffering so he brought me.
Iman:	How were you suffering?
Djamilla:	I wasn't getting food; I couldn't get clothing to wear because my parents aren't there [i.e. deceased].
Iman:	Did he tell you what you would be doing?
Djamilla:	No, he just said that I was suffering and I would be better coming to stay in his village, but the suffering there was worse.
Iman:	How?
Djamilla:	I will go early in the morning to fetch firewood, then I would fetch water and prepare food, but I wouldn't get enough to eat and I haven't seen him buy me anything for all this suffering.
Iman:	How long did you stay?
Djamilla:	One year and one month.
Iman:	And how did you leave?
Djamilla:	The woman I am staying with now used to come to the village to buy cassava and I was carrying the cassava for her and crying, and she asked me why I was crying so I told her the whole story and asked her if she could find me someone to work for. I just followed her straight away; I didn't know whether she would find me work or kill me.
Iman:	And how is she treating you?
Djamilla:	I am treated differently, because they are punishing me and also their children are attending school and I am not.

Iman:	How are they punishing you?
Djamilla:	I don't get enough food and they don't buy me what I need.

The trigger for Djamilla's migration was her neglect in her home village due to her orphaned status. As she expressed it, '*I don't get enough food to eat; I can't get clothing to wear or sandals. It is the will of God that I will suffer this way because my mother and father are not alive*'. This placed her in a vulnerable position to an unscrupulous individual who used her misfortune as an opportunity to acquire cheap domestic labour. Although her situation had somewhat improved following her move from the village to the town, her lack of social support reinforced her vulnerability to being taken advantage of again in the house to where she was being 'fostered'. Despite this, Djamilla was resisting efforts on the part of the people she is staying with to appropriate the little money she made from the head-portering she occasionally does. As she told me, '*When I go to work they want me to give the money to them and I always refuse. They say they've brought me here so I should give them and I told them they brought me here but you don't find me work and I don't go to school so I need this money to do an apprenticeship, but you people, you are still asking the money despite all this*'[69].

In summary, as has been noted, independent child migration is generally presented in the policy literature primarily as a negative phenomenon, either because it is the outcome of disastrous situations such as poverty, war and famine, or because it is assumed to result in the increasing vulnerability of children to economic exploitation, dangerous working conditions or abuse. As is clear from what has been discussed so far, most children were happy with the place and people they were living with and working for. Moreover, even when they found the work they were doing hard, they often still wanted to remain where they were either because of the rewards they reaped (or hoped to reap if they were working for a relative), or because the environment in which they were living was more conducive than conditions in their home village.

Nonetheless, as we have seen, sixteen of the children did complain of maltreatment and/or lack of food. Included among these were children 'fostered', often as a result of losing their father or parents. Traditionally, these sorts of crises were absorbed by the extended family network and fostering is a risk-coping mechanism in response to negative transitory, exogenous shocks (Akresh 2003). I found ample evidence that these family networks do still secure children's welfare through the institution of fostering. However, it is also obvious that in some cases

[69] This child is one of the ones whom my colleague arranged to find alternative accommodation for.

families cannot adequately absorb these shocks[70]. The results might either be that children are neglected or that they become susceptible to unscrupulous individuals who take advantage of children's vulnerability.

On the other hand, I also found children who were trafficked, according to the criteria of Palermo Protocol, but who were happy with their circumstances. Those children (particularly girls) who were working for an employer often preferred this to working for their own families, since they were remunerated for their work, while those working for a member of their family had simply to rely on the individuals' goodwill and good fortune.

I would agree with Castle and Diarra therefore, that considerable attention needs to be given to 'how children's work is viewed, and to what degree exploitation, non-payment and maltreatment usually associated with "trafficking", may also apply to the very many "regular" workers in households, markets and fields around the country' (Castle and Diarra 2003: 210). Rather than a narrow focus on 'trafficking' as the potential for harm, attention must be paid to the effects of migration on children's welfare, which

> will depend, inter alia, on what has been the trigger for migration, what kind of living situation they secure in their places of destination, whether they work or go to school, what kind of work they do, what kind of social support is in place for them, and whether they fall prey to the many hazards and dangers posed by intermediaries, bad employers, or bad working conditions and so on (Whitehead and Hashim 2005).

CONCLUSION

As has been noted, the area in which the research was carried out has a long history of migration from the north, having been established early on as a colonial labour reserve (Thomas 1973 cited in Whitehead 2004). This movement is also evident contemporaneously. This is to the extent that the 2000 Population and Housing Census found that the male to female ratio in the Bawku East District is 91.9 to every 100 (GSS 2002: 50), and this of course stresses the migration of men, while in fact many Kusasis are migrating as whole families. The same census, for instance, found that of the 379,007 Kusasis in Ghana, only 192,360 were residing in the Upper East Region (ibid. 23). Similarly, the Ghana Child Labour study found eleven percent of the children in households surveyed were no longer living in their place of birth and that forty-six percent of these children had migrated alone (GSS 2003: 46). Most importantly, it found that in five regions, including the Upper East, a much larger proportion

[70] This probably accounts for why it is that views are divided on the effects of fostering on children (cf. Akresh (2003), Andvig (2000), Ansell and Young (2002) Engle et al (1996), Pilon (2003).

than the national average of migrant children had been sent by parents[71] (ibid.).

This history of migration effectively means two things. First, that extended families are dispersed. Thus, in the face of a lack of labour either to carry out household work or for farming activities, relations rely on their families back home for a child to assist them. Second, there is a knowledge of an alternative labour market, which, given the lack of opportunities in the north, makes the cocoa-growing areas a very attractive alternative to young people. This is reflected in the ways in which children experience migration. That is, when young, children are often merely following their elders' decision to move them, usually in the face of a request for labour from a migrant relative or to be cared for elsewhere. Consequently young children rarely initiated their migration themselves. Nonetheless, they were often consulted in the process and chose to move in response to a request from an elder or because they felt their new home offered better opportunities, for example in schooling. As children become older, though, and begin to be expected to cater for themselves, they start to seek their own-welfare maximising opportunities, included among which is travelling to alternative places in search of these.

Gender is significant because of the gendered nature of work tasks and the value that is placed on these tasks. Boys' work is valued, both at home and elsewhere, and they have more work opportunities available to them and a working role that has a monetary value more easily placed upon it. Depending on household circumstances, males may also be encouraged to migrate, either for the possibility of remittances, of which some boys reported, or to secure patronage relationships with the receiving households. Boys' migration also potentially causes conflict because their labour for their households is very important for food and cash-crop production, but boys may also wish to migrate to earn an income which is for them, particularly as there appears to be increasing pressure on boys to have certain items, such as furniture, in order to marry. Thus, the negotiations around a boy's migration are complex, frequently involving long consultation with their elders, and occasionally resulting in boys '*dodging*' them and running south.

Females, on the other hand, carry out work that by its nature can be done anywhere, whether it be for agnatic kin, husband or for migratory purposes. They are also not considered to be members of their households in the same way as boys are since invariably they move to their husbands' communities upon marriage. They are less valued in general and have to be more

[71] My research suggests that the category 'sent by parents' may contain some children who wished to migrate and have persuaded their parents to let them do so. Nonetheless the point is to illustrate that a large number of children from this area are independent child migrants, irrespective of whether it was they or their parents who initiated their movement.

proactive than boys in seeking alternatives, particularly in terms of pursuing training opportunities. Consequently a girl's family may more readily release girls in the face of a request for a child's labour or girls may be encouraged to migrate in the face of lack of support from their families. For these reasons, girls appear to be migrating in larger numbers than boys. In addition, changes in marriage practices mean that girls are increasingly expected to '*bring something to the marriage'*, both in terms of having items such as bowls and pots, and in terms of bringing some form of income-generating possibility, either in the form of a skill such as tailoring or capital for a small enterprise. On the other hand, many adults expressed concerns that a girl who was in the south might not eventually return and settle nearby or might become pregnant out of wedlock, which generated a great deal of anxiety. Consequently, girls also have to negotiate different types of constraints on their movement when they are older. Thus, in different ways, migration is a very attractive option for children, while their age and gender provides them with different types of opportunities and constraints.

In summary, it is clear from this discussion that children's migration into and out of the area is an immensely complex activity, and one which is not necessarily rooted in economic reasons[72]. It might be for the purposes of learning a trade, to ensure the continuation of cultural traditions, to secure the welfare of the child or of an elderly relative, to acquire an education, to fulfil familial and kin obligations, to find a suitor, to reduce the dependency ratio of a household, to ensure adequate labour supply in a household or to earn an income, and so on. However, centrally, the movement of children between households is part of the manner in which rural households *and* individual children seek to secure their well-being.

Hence the second critical finding with respect to children's migration is that, although there are varying degrees of constraints and opportunities in operation depending on children's ages and gender, children do exercise agency when they move. It is this feature that appears to be the most under-appreciated in the policy literature[73]. Instead the emphasis tends to be on the degree of compulsion or coercion, which is assumed in international legislation for individuals under the age of eighteen[74]. This effectively disavows the central motivations for children's

[72] Kielland and Sanogo (2002) caution against the assumption that poverty is the root cause of child migration in Burkina Faso. They emphasise instead that there is a culture of migration in rural Burkina Faso, which similarly has high rates of adult migration.

[73] Indeed, children's independent migration figures little in the academic literature, Iversen (2002) and Punch (2001, 2002) being among the rare exceptions to this.

[74] This is because, according to the Palermo Protocol any 'recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation' (UN 2001) is considered 'trafficking', irrespective of whether a child has consented to this. Thus, while the Protocol distinguishes between smuggling and trafficking – where smuggling refers to the movement of individuals where the individual has consented and trafficking, involves the

migration in this context – when younger their sense of obligation to family and kin, and as they become older their need or desire for income. In particular, as they become older children in this context do see themselves as economic agents with a responsibility to contribute to their households and their individual livelihoods. Earning capacity is greater in the southern areas of Ghana and children seek work where opportunities are better.

This is not to say that children are not subject to unjust, abusive and harmful working conditions. Certainly, some of the children I spoke with had been maltreated and could be very poorly paid, if paid at all. However, in addition to the fact that children's movement between households might be a significant manner in which poor rural households attempt to secure their well-being, on the whole the children I spoke with were positive about their experiences, as this afforded them the opportunity to develop important skills or to earn an income that they had significant control over[75].

threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception or abuse of power – Article 3 of the Protocol makes it explicit that in the case of those under the age of eighteen the issue of consent is irrelevant (ILO 2002b, UN 2001).

[75] For a discussion of the policy implications of this and other research on independent child migrants see Whitehead and Hashim (2005)

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APPENDIX: AIDE MEMOIRES FOR INTERVIEWS

Interview Sheet for Parents of Current Migrant Children

1. What is your name?
2. What is your child's name?
3. How old is your child?
4. Where did your child go?
5. When did they go?
6. Why did they go?
7. Who decided that they should go?
8. Did you sit and discuss it before they went?
9. Was there anything or anyone influencing them to go?
10. Do you think it is good that they went?
11. Was their mother/father happy that they went?
12. Did they go with anyone else?
13. Who bought their ticket for them?
14. Who are they staying with?
15. Do you know what they are doing there?
16. (If for work) Do you know who they are working for?
17. Do you know if they are being paid?
18. Was this decided before they went?
19. Do you know how much they are being paid?
20. Who decided how much they should be paid?
21. Do they send money home?
22. Do they come home to visit?
23. How often do you hear news of them?
24. When do you think they will come home?
25. Who will decide when they come home?
26. Do you think they will bring anything back with them?
27. What do you think would have made them not go?
28. Do you know of any children who had problems when they migrated?
29. Do you give us permission to interview your child if we go to their area?
30. Do you know of any other children who have migrated to the south?

Interview Sheet for Return Migrants

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. When did you leave Tempane Natinga?
4. For what reason did you leave?
5. Who decided that you should leave?
6. (If someone else) Did you have any choice whether you went?
7. (If own decision) Did anyone influence your decision?
8. Did you discuss this with your parents before you left?
9. Did you discuss this with anyone else?
10. Did your parents agree that you should leave?
11. Did anyone help you to leave?
12. Who paid for your travel?
13. Did anyone travel with you?
14. Did you drop out of school to leave?
15. Are you going to school now?
16. (If no) Why not? Would you like to go to school?
17. (If yes) Who pays for your school expenses?
18. Were you doing any work there?
19. What sort of work were you doing?
20. How did you find this work?
21. How did you know there was work there?
22. How many hours per day were you working?
23. Was the work that you did different from the work at home?
24. Did you work more or less than the other children in the house?
25. Who were you working for?
26. Did you know before you left what work you would be doing?
27. Were you being paid for your work?
28. (If yes) Did you know before you left how much you would be paid?
29. Who decided how much you should be paid?
30. How much were you being paid?
31. Did you save any money?
32. Did you send money home?
33. (If no) Were you given anything else?
34. Did you have any problems with:

a) Food?
b) Health?
c) Where you stayed?
d) The people you stayed with?
e) Authorities?
f) Non-Kusasi people

35. Were you treated the same as the children of the person you were staying with/working for?
36. Do you know of other children from Tempane Natinga who had problems?
37. Did your parents know where you were?
38. How did they know?
39. Did you come home to visit them while you were away?
40. How often did you visit?
41. How long did you stay?
42. Who decided when you should come home?
43. Could you leave when you wanted?
44. Did you leave there because you wanted to come home or because you wanted to leave there?
45. How did your employer react when you left?
46. How did you pay to come home?
47. Do you prefer home or there?
48. Did you bring any money or anything else back with you when you came home?
49. (If yes) What did you spend this money on?
50. What are you doing now?
51. Did you have any difficulties when you returned home?
52. Is there anything that would have stopped you from going?
53. Will you try to go again?

Interview Sheet for Current Migrants

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where is your home?
4. Where is your father?
5. Where is your mother?
6. When did you come here?
7. For what reason did you come here?
8. Who decided that you should come here?
9. (If someone else) Did you have any choice whether you went?
10. (If own decision) Did anyone influence your decision?
11. Why did you/they decide you should come here?
12. Did you discuss this with your parents before you came?
13. Did you discuss this with anyone else before you came?
14. Did your parents agree that you should come?
15. Did anyone help you to come here?
16. Who paid for your travel to come here?
17. Did you travel with anyone?
18. Did you drop out of school to come here?
19. Are you going to school now?
20. (If no) Why not? Would you like to go to school?
21. (If yes) Who pays for your school expenses?
22. Are you doing any work here?
23. What sort of work are you doing?
24. How many hours per day are you working?
25. Is the work that you do here different from the work at home?
26. Do you work more or less than you did at home?
27. Who are you working for?
28. Did you know before you came here what work you would be doing?
29. Are you being paid for your work?
30. (If yes) Did you know before you came how much you would be paid?
31. Who agreed how much you should be paid?
32. How much are you being paid?
33. Have you saved any money?
34. Do you send money home?

35. How did you find this work?
36. How did you know there was work here?
37. Do you have any problems with:
    a) Food?
    b) Health?
    c) Where you stay?
    d) The people you stay with?
    e) Authorities?
    f) Non-Kusasi people?
54. Are you treated the same as the other children in the house?
55. Do your parents know where you are?
56. How do they know?
57. Have you been home to visit since you came?
58. How often do you go home?
59. How long do you think you will stay?
60. Who will decide when you go home for good?
61. Can you leave when you want?
62. How will you pay to go home?
63. Do you want to go home?
64. Do you prefer home or here?
65. Will you take any money or anything else back with you when you go home?
66. (If yes) What do you think you will spend this money on?
67. What will you do when you go home?
68. Is there anything that would have stopped you from coming?
69. Do you know of other Kusasi children who are here without their parents?
70. Do you know of other Kusasi children who are here without their parents who have had problems?