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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Richard D. Darby entitled "Debating Development Help: NGO Fieldworker Perspectives on Street and Urban Poor Children in Ghana." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Anthropology.

Janice Harper, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Rebecca Klenk, Hector N. Qirko

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Rebecca Klenk

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Linda Painter
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(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

Debating Development Help:
NGO Fieldworker Perspectives on Street and Urban
Poor Children in Ghana

A Thesis Presented for
the Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Richard D. Darby
December 2006

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ABSTRACT

This ethnographic investigation of the non-governmental organization (NGO) Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) questions the cultural appropriateness of its policies and practices. By situating CAS in a historical context of colonialism and structural adjustment reforms, I show how it is responsive to a legitimating environment that consists of private donors, international finance institutions, and the Ghanaian government, all of which put pressure on CAS to specifically target “street children” and to adopt a policy of choice that places primary responsibility for development on the individual child. I argue that the legitimating environment is neoliberal in orientation, especially with respect to who is identified as a recipient of aid and what type of aid the recipient should receive, and which is further connected to a global transformation in representation from the street child as innocent victim to one who is more like an adult and so responsible for his or her own choices. Through an analysis of the perspectives of CAS’s own fieldworkers, I argue that the conceptualization of street children as “miniature adults” promotes policies that help only more advantaged street children, masks social inequalities, and does not include children’s support networks in a formulation of aid. Based on my findings, I recommend a more participatory approach that includes fieldworkers’ ideas and perspectives in the design and implementation of CAS policies.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

International concern over the desperate situation of urban poor children has increased over the last two decades, particularly around the apparent rise in the number of street children. This global concern peaked in 1993 when a massacre of street children by off-duty police officers around a church (Candelaria) in Rio de Janeiro was widely publicized (Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman 1998). Since that time, many social scientists and child advocates have focused their attention on defining the qualities of the street child (Ennew 1994; Glauser 1997; Hecht 1998; Lucchini 1997), developing effective methodologies to meet their expressed needs (Swart 1990; Ennew 1994, 2003;), locating root causes (Aptekar 1988), and clarifying and enacting related public advocacy goals (Morrow and Richards 1996; Boyden et al. 1998; Earls and Carlson 1999; Montgomery 2001).

Concurrent with growing awareness and research have been the spread and growth of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have increasingly focused their attention on street children in the developing world (e.g., Volpi 2003). At first, a large number of these NGOs focused their energies on ensuring that children had adequate provisions, such as food, shelter, and clothing. However, over the past decade, the thinking on how to best care for street children has changed. Current approaches are now based on the assumption that the giving of provisions, such as food, shelter, and money, are unearned "hand-outs," which induce unproductive dependencies that discourage street children from leaving the streets and impose an adult-centered view on what children need (Panter-Brick 2002). At their worst, provisions are believed to entice homebound children to leave their rural domiciles and families because they know that they will be cared for once in the street (e.g., Volpi 2003; Shanahan 2001, 2003).

Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS), an NGO operating in Accra, Ghana, is one such organization that adopts this perspective on aid to street

children. Providing children with basic needs is seen by CAS to create relations of dependency in which children would come to CAS for the sole purpose of getting shelter and food. Instead, CAS offers an alternative to children who live on the street by providing an educational and living stipend for those who have shown to CAS that they are willing to leave behind a street lifestyle.

CAS's policy on helping children illuminates what Korten (1983) identifies as a paradox inherent in self-help concepts of social development. Self-help is based on the idea that to truly help someone, that someone must first be willing to help herself. Contemporary development is based on this notion, and its goals are aimed at creating self-sustainability among recipients (beneficiaries) of aid (Ellerman 2005). The problem is constructed as that of how to provide help without creating the conditions for dependency. If help is freely supplied, then there is no motivation for the recipient to help herself. She becomes stuck in a cycle of dependency. However, if help comes with conditions, then a recipient's motivations are substituted by the giver's motivations. As Ellerman (2005) explains, help that is freely given "overrides" self-help, while help that comes with conditions "undercuts" self-help. The paradox lies in the fact that a giver can provide aid with and without conditions, but in the end, relations of dependency are still reproduced due to the act of supplying aid.

CAS resolves this paradox by supplying partial aid to beneficiaries so as to elicit responses deemed appropriate, and then picking out for total aid those who more regularly exhibit appropriate responses. Children who come to CAS only to watch television, get health checkups, wash clothes, and play games do not receive provisional aid, such as food, money, shelter, and clothing. However, children who regularly come to CAS, obey rules, and exhibit a willingness to leave the street are eligible for total aid, which entails provisioning of all basic needs—including money—in addition to an education in a marketable trade.

In this thesis I describe in more detail how CAS organizes its practices around this particular formulation of self-help. I aim to show how this narrative is shared, expressed, and contested by administrative and fieldwork staff at CAS. I

show how CAS's formulation is connected to Ghanaian struggles for independence and changing notions of development and childhood. The most salient ideology that solidifies concepts of development and childhood for CAS is "neoliberalism," which is an economic policy that promotes personal freedom and choice over big government and social service expenditures (Harvey 2005). As will be shown, a neoliberal narrative on development and childhood renders the provisioning of food, money, and shelter as developmentally stunting for children, while the encouragement of a child's inner motivations for change is viewed as the more appropriate mechanism for limiting waste of services and encouraging a child's autonomy. At the center of the neoliberal narrative is the street child, who by virtue of his relationship to the street, is seen more as a miniature adult than an innocent child victim of economic reform.

However, this neoliberal narrative on the street child as miniature adult is contested by fieldworkers whose daily work puts them in close contact with street children and the people with whom they interact. Indeed, analysis of fieldworker perspectives provides an alternative perspective on street children, which sees them not as street children per se, but innocents who are victimized and exploited by the streets. In fact, fieldworkers envision the street as a corrupting and stunting force that has an effect on all children who associate with it. Therefore, fieldworker perceptions of street children and the street challenge the neoliberal narrative of what it means to be a street child.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

Development refers to the processes of change that occur as a result of capitalist expansion (i.e., industrial development and development of natural resources) and the intentions of national governments and international organizations to more positively direct change so as to improve standards of living (Cohen and Shenton 1996; Schech and Haggis 2000). The activities of non-governmental organizations working with street children are a development issue because the presence of street children in many urban districts of Africa

are linked to development processes affecting rural families and communities (Ennew 2003).

In thinking of CAS's activities in Accra as a process of directed change, I am informed by literature on the anthropology of development. Anthropology of development emphasizes cultural aspects of development by looking at how culturally-informed assumptions influence the conception and implementation of development projects and how, in turn, the so-called "beneficiaries" of development internalize, and shape, the development process. Moreover, this is a critical perspective in that it views intentions of some key international development practitioners (e.g., the World Bank) as a continuation of European colonization of the so-called "Third World." As Escobar describes, the anthropology of development "centers analysis on the institutional apparatus, the links to power established by expert knowledge, the ethnographic analysis and critique of modernist constructs, and the possibility of contributing to the political projects of the subaltern"¹ (Escobar 1997:505).

This study is not just a cultural critique of CAS policies and activities but is also inspired by what Gardner and Lewis (1996:3) call "crafting an alternative practice" that addresses the dilemmas that non-governmental organizations face in working with, and for, street children.² The dilemma of critical importance to this study is the extent to which CAS members illuminate national and international narratives on development in the context of their own observations of local realities, while at the same time trying to be a positive force for change in the lives of the children that they aspire to serve. As will be shown throughout this thesis, national and international narratives on development are not fully compatible with the observed realities of children living and working in the streets of Accra. In addressing this dilemma, I emphasize the ideas and perspectives of

¹ Subaltern is used in postcolonial theory to refer to marginalized groups and lower classes. The current use of the term describes people who do not have a voice in political and cultural affairs due to their social status (see for example, Spivak 1988).

² In the United States, this perspective is called development anthropology. This branch of anthropology focuses on the application of culturally informed methods to the design, implementation, and evaluation of development programs for directed change, particularly in poor nations (Grillo 1997; Edelman and Haugerud 2005).

CAS fieldworkers whose daily work puts them in close contact with street children and the environments in which they live. Through an analysis of fieldworkers' views, I make suggestions that can potentially contribute to making CAS's policies and practices more culturally appropriate.

Another perspective influencing this analysis is the view of childhood as an unstable concept. On one hand, beyond the scope of this study, childhood consists of a category capturing real biological differences between age groups (e.g., infants, children, adolescents, adults, and seniors). On the other hand, childhood consists of the meanings that people give it, which go beyond biological differences. The view that accounts for the varying meanings that people give to childhood sees childhood as a social construct, the perceptions of which are dependent on social, economic, and cultural conditions (James and Prout 1997). In Western society, for example, children are seen to endure many changes while growing up, and due to this, are at risk of falling into a state of chaos and decay (Qvortrup 1997). Responsible adults must direct, guide, and protect their children's development. Conversely, Miescher (2005) characterizes Asante childhoods in Ghana as a time of work and learning to work in which children maintain the family. As Hecht (1998) has summarized of children living in many "Third World" societies, children can be seen as nurturers of the family and be valued for their contribution to the family, as opposed to in middle-class Western society where children are generally nurtured by the family and mostly valued for their psychological worth.

In sum, this study explores the connections between narratives on development and childhood in an analysis of a non-governmental organization with strong ties to northern European countries. This study treats development and childhood as unstable concepts that are constantly negotiated by CAS in its efforts to legitimize for Western audiences its policies and practices with respect to the target population. An understanding of the cultural processes (i.e., development) and ideas (i.e., notions of childhood) that shape fieldworker and

administrative views of street children are crucial for designing more efficacious ways of supporting street children.

METHODS

In June and July of 2004 I conducted an ethnographic investigation of CAS activities, Monday through Friday from 8 to 4PM. I also visited, dined, and went to markets with various staff after hours and on weekends. During the hours when CAS was open, I registered 90 hours of observation time in the field (where street children live and work), 90 hours of time observing CAS activities within other departments (e.g., education), and the remaining CAS time observing and talking to personnel, street children, and volunteers. I also logged several hours of research time by talking with staff when CAS was closed.

Although ethnographic fieldwork typically takes from one to two years, due in part to the necessity to build rapport with key informants, the reality is that for many ethnographers a long-term commitment is not practical. "Rapid assessment" procedures are often used to obtain as much applicable ethnographic data as possible within a short period of time (see Bernard 2006; Handwerker 2001; Chambers 1997). The types of methods deployed are varied and can consist of standardized quantitative interviews, focused interviews based on a predetermined set of issues, and a collection of vignettes and narratives that give insight into the informant's worldview. According to Bernard (2006), the point is to have a clear and focused research question and a limited set of defined variables that will serve as a guide when time is short. Although this type of focused research falls short of providing a comprehensive picture of a particular worldview, rapid assessment targets a slice of that worldview by intensively focusing on a specific set of cultural variables and exploring them using the same types of ethnographic methods employed in a full-scale ethnography. The difference is one of scale and focus.

For Handwerker (2001), quick ethnography can be effectively accomplished by limiting the study to no more than five focus variables. I

identified three before going into the field: 1) the set of organizational assumptions that identify a street child from other children living in similar circumstances; 2) the set of risks and needs believed to be associated with a child living and working in the street; 3) the design of program activities that follow as a logical consequence of a particular characterization of a street child and the set of risks and needs that arise as a result of that particular characterization.

Following Handwerker, I focused my research around three key variables, but also used participant-observation to build rapport amongst CAS staff so as to access a more informal level of experience. To be a participant-observer, I had to engage in two seemingly oxymoronic aims. I had to build rapport with informants through active participation while at the same time maintaining a measure of objectivity. What makes this type of research problematic is that the act of observation precludes full participation in activities and vice versa. For example, there was a noticeable difference in the openness of communication with fieldworkers when I had a notebook or a tape recorder. Fieldworkers were guarded and cited primarily company policy when asked to explain work-related issues. However, when I relied on my memory and put down the pen and tape recorder, fieldworkers spoke more freely about informal aspects of their work, although without proper documentation devices some data were inevitably lost. My participant-observation activities were further limited by the focused nature of my research and the fact that I had only two months to conduct ethnographic research. To lessen the effects of these limitations I visited four CAS worker homes, met their families, and went to lunch and dinner at least three times per week.

I relied primarily on seven (out of eight total) fieldworkers whose job it was to meet children in the streets and invite them to CAS's House of Refuge. The fieldworkers came from a variety of regions within Ghana, had completed secondary school (equivalent to high school in the U.S.), and were all affiliated with a Christian Protestant denomination. Most had acquired training in social

work at a trade school or university. They all spoke English but were fluent in many of the local languages spoken by street and working children, such as Twi, Ga, and Ewe. Though I interacted with the children in support of CAS personnel, the fieldworkers' representations of the children and their environments are the subjects of this study. Monday through Friday I would arrive at CAS at 8:30AM and accompany a fieldworker into the "field" where he or she met children. These places were typically large markets in and around the capital of Accra.

When not accompanying fieldworkers into the street, I observed the activities of other CAS departments (Administration, Education, Demonstration, Sponsorship, and Hopeland³), though to a more limited degree. While at CAS, I became particularly interested in the administrative department because I noticed tension among it, Sponsorship, and the Fieldwork departments, especially around the questions of "who is a street child?" and "what does he need?" The director of CAS is a white male, approximately in his 50s, from Holland who is also a member of the Catholic Brothers FIC and associates regularly with the Catholic Archdiocese of Accra. He does not speak any of the local Ghanaian languages but interacts on a regular basis with other staff, volunteers and visitors. The other administrative staff are Ghanaian and exhibit the same diversity as members in the fieldwork department.

The three main sites of ethnographic investigation were the House of Refuge, the mini-refuges, and "the field." The House of Refuge is CAS's main center, where children are exposed to trades and English literacy. There are also showers, bathrooms, a place to wash clothes, lockers for personal items, entertainment, and sports activities. All children who visit are registered. At the receptionist's desk, a large notebook contains the name, age, area of origin, and current place of residence of each child that visits the House of Refuge. The information is recorded for funding and outreach purposes, and the statistics are

³ Children who have regularly attended CAS activities and demonstrated a strong interest to learn a trade can go to Hopeland farms where they participate in agricultural activities. Children must work on the farm for six months in order to be eligible for a sponsorship, which consists of a stipend for housing, food, and an apprenticeship.

reported in CAS's quarterly newsletters and annual publications that are sent to its donors⁴. There are also seven mini-refuges located throughout Accra and the neighboring town of Tema where children can play games and learn about CAS activities. These mini-refuges are set up so that children who live too far from the refuge can take advantage of similar services provided at the House of Refuge. The "field" in this study refers mainly to the places where street and working children are known to live and work. These places are typically large outdoor markets, though occasionally the term refers to structures (i.e., homes and businesses) located in illegal squatter settlements, such as Agboghloshie.

I used three techniques: interviews to gather qualitative data: interviews, "native" photography, and jottings-to-fieldnote documentation. For this study, seven fieldworkers, two demonstration department instructors, a teacher in the education department, two volunteers, and two administrative personnel signed the informed consent form and participated in semi-structured interviews. More informal interviews were conducted with personnel in the Sponsorship and Hopeland departments.

Russell Bernard (1994, 2006) identifies a "continuum of interview situations" that is based on the amount of control that the researcher has over the responses of his informants. At one end of the continuum is informal interviewing, followed by unstructured, semi-structured, and formal interviewing. I employed informal and semi-structured interview techniques. Informal interviewing is characterized by "lack of structure and control" (Bernard 1994:209). The interviewer in this instance talks to his informants and tries to remember the gist of conversations throughout the day. I used this form of interviewing primarily at the beginning of my field research to gain rapport and to build a list of topics that I wished to explore in more depth. I would often make notes of these informal conversations immediately afterward and at the end of

⁴ As of CAS's December 2004 newsletter, over 5000 children have visited the House of Refuge. They are reported to be coming from the southern regions of Ghana (Eastern, Central, and Asante). 205 children have received a full sponsorship, although some of the children have since dropped from the program and returned to the street.

the day, I would include these conversations in the writing of fieldnotes (see below). The second type of interviewing technique I used was semi-structured. A time and place was set to hold an interview. During the interview, questions progressed from an *interview guide* that consisted of a list of topical probes and open-ended questions.⁵ I conducted between 16 and 17 hours of semi-structured interviews, each of which averaged about one-half hour. Some individuals, particularly fieldworkers, were interviewed more than once; however I conducted a two-hour interview with the CAS director, a one-hour interview with the assistant director, and a 45-minute interview with an administrator/instructor of the Demonstration department. These interviews were recorded, as per the consultant's consent, using a hand-held recorder.

I also recorded my observations of activities at the House of Refuge, the mini-refuges, and in the field using the jottings-to-fieldnote method (Emerson et al. 1995). Before each day in the field, I composed a list of topics to be investigated.⁶ These topics I would write at the top of a notebook that I kept in my pocket. When I observed or heard content relevant to these topics I would make jottings on my tablet. Jottings consisted of mnemonic devices that served to trigger my memory of what had occurred and what had been said. These jottings facilitated the construction of fieldnotes, or the "written record of...observations and experiences" made in the field (Emerson et al. 1995:1).

The act of producing fieldnotes, however, is not an objective enterprise. It is a record of "inscribed experience" that is conditioned upon the particular biases and limited experiences of the researcher (Emerson et al. 1995). In this instance, I was an American white male college student among Ghanaian staff, a Dutch administrator, and volunteers from northern Europe. I had never been to Ghana before nor had I actually met a street child or anyone who worked with one. Likewise, I was extremely limited in how I observed their realities.

⁵ See Appendix B and C.

⁶ See Appendix D for an example of a topic list.

My fieldnotes inscribe my experience of an observed reality. Having an appreciation of this beforehand I deployed “native photography” to allow for greater participation of my key informants given the short amount of time that I had to work with them; it also served as a way to cross check analytical constructs developed from an analysis of interview and observational data. Following Pink’s (2001) description of “native photography,” I provided disposable cameras to four fieldworkers and asked them to take pictures of what they thought was important about their work. The pictures were then developed at a local business. These photographs served to facilitate interviews and provided a basis for discerning differences among the fieldworkers’ viewpoints.

Interviews, fieldnotes, and photographs served as my primary data. However, there were still a lot of missing pieces, particularly in regard to organizational structure, policies, history, and external pressures from governments and donors. While at CAS, I retrieved programmatic materials, such as donor reports, newsletters, research reports, and internal documents (e.g., departmental evaluations, donor memoranda, and progress notes). I also used CAS promotional materials (website and videos) as well as donor spots (commercials) as data. All of these materials were gathered by permission from the CAS director.

Thematic analysis of fieldnotes, photographs, transcriptions of interviews, promotional materials, and internal agency documentation proceeded by a process called “coding” (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Emerson et al.1995).⁷ Though coding is typically an inductive process in which theoretical suppositions are put aside, I used my three focus variables (mentioned above) as my primary codes, or themes. In doing so, I was able to organize my data around these three variables, pursue inter-relationships between data sets, and develop new analytical categories for more in-depth interpretation.

After organizing data around my focus variables, I “open coded” my fieldnotes and wrote memos highlighting thematic connections between them.

⁷ See Appendix E for a list and explanation of codes.

After much reflection I discerned a striking thematic pattern in the fieldworkers' perceptions of street children and their environments. I identified two thematic categories of child representation (child as miniature-adult and child as innocent victim) that varied between two locations (CAS's House of Refuge [HOR]/mini-refuges and the street). This pattern served as a working "proposition" (or hypothesis) for the analysis of photographic, interview, and promotional materials.

SUBJECT POSITION

The ideas and perspectives of CAS's fieldworkers heavily influenced my perceptions of CAS's practices. Day in and day out, they met the children where they lived and where they worked. Some had strong ties to the children, while others were more distant. What they had in common were strong views on who is in need of help, the environments in which the poor live, and what it means to help those in need. Indeed, I had the strongest rapport with the fieldworkers, and many of their views became my own. Therefore, fieldworkers' perspectives on helping children informed my evaluation of CAS's practices. The following shows how my dual role as volunteer and researcher affected what I observed and how my own sense of morality drew my attention away from the official view of help to the more informal and contested aspects of helping children. A more detailed discussion on ethics is located in the appendix.

I first got involved with CAS by stumbling upon the Street Child Africa website.⁸ I read the descriptions of street children and learned about the different programs that assist them in Zimbabwe and Ghana. CAS's activities stood out: they conducted extensive research determining the reasons why children come to the street, who they are, where they come from, and what types of supports they need. CAS's approach seemed interesting, so I contacted them to receive more information. I then got in touch with the administrator of CAS

⁸ <http://www.streetchildafrica.org.uk/>

and asked him if I could conduct an ethnographic study over a two-month period. He agreed.

In order to conduct research at CAS I had to also become a volunteer. This meant that I had to participate in a program that was supposed to orient me to all the departments of CAS. It was due to my status as a volunteer that I was able to integrate well with CAS staff. In particular, I was able to meet my primary informant, Kwame. As a volunteer I had to abide by certain expectations:⁹ 1) Volunteers must support staff in helping the children; 2) Volunteers must be at work regularly and on time; 3) Volunteers must be oriented to all programs, how they are organized, and how they are implemented; 4) While working, volunteers must use their own personal funds in ways deemed appropriate by supervisors and staff. While the street children were not my research subjects, the requirement that I interact with the children in a supportive role allowed me to see first-hand how CAS workers interacted with the children and provided excellent cues for debriefing. The second expectation did not condition my work, though it did force me to stick to a schedule. The third expectation provided me with a feel of the other departments and a sense of how the fieldwork department related to the others. The fourth volunteer expectation refers to CAS's policy of prohibiting volunteers from giving money or food to children within the confines of CAS property and fieldwork. CAS believed that giving money or food to the children conflicted with the overall mission of developing within the child a sense of independence and a sincere desire to learn and grow.

The policy against giving food and money to children violated my own assumptions on moral behavior regarding children in seemingly desperate situations. Fieldworkers and volunteers echoed this sense that CAS's policies were wrong. My fieldnotes document a discussion with a fieldworker who praised one Dutch volunteer for rebelling against CAS by taking all the children out to a local restaurant to feed them. She was admonished by a threat that if

⁹ These expectations are listed in CAS's information book for volunteers. These books are handed out on the day of the volunteer's arrival.

she continued such behavior she would be sent home. With this cautionary tale in mind, I sought a compromise so that I could respect my hosts and my own sense of ethical behavior. Instead of giving to the children within CAS premises and on CAS time, I gave money and food to children, whenever possible, outside of CAS's Refuge and mini-refuges and when not accompanied by CAS staff in the city. While this may be seen as compromising a reasonable sense of objectivity, these actions seemed at the time to correspond to the requirements of building rapport with my primary informants, the fieldworkers. In doing so, I positioned myself within the organizational politics of CAS.

ORGANIZATION OF THESIS AND THE PROGRESSION OF ARGUMENTS

CAS's explicit mission is to "assist those children who *choose* to get off the street, and to create general awareness about the plight of street children ages zero to eighteen who live in the street...not supported by anyone" (CAS 2003:5; my emphasis). The aim of this study is to describe how current political-economic processes and a global sense of childhood disappearance legitimates CAS's emphasis on individual *choice*. As will be shown, CAS has employed a self-help narrative that reworks a conception of street children as vulnerable victims and transforms them into capable workers who require opportunities for education and work. However, the implementation of self-help policies masks the structural inequalities that create the conditions through which children leave their homes and makes invisible other groups of children living in similar circumstances. In addition, CAS's policies may conflict with Western perceptions of children as innocents who are seen to be too immature to make their own decisions and in need of protection from what is often perceived as the polluting influences of adults (Postman 1982). Thus, the social development paradox, with respect to supporting street children, is further complicated by the pitting of a self-help narrative against culturally-constructed notions of childhood innocence.

This thesis describes how an NGO is organized around a program of development self-help, presents staff assessments of this program, and then

offers a new way of thinking about street children and streetness by drawing from the perspectives of those who work more closely with street children and their peers. In this introduction, I have described a perspective that sees development and childhood as unstable concepts that are constantly being challenged and reworked. CAS is seen therefore as on the forefront where changing notions of development and childhood have dramatic impacts on policies and practices. I have also described the methods through which I have collected and analyzed data and provided a brief discussion of my dual roles as researcher and volunteer. These dual roles can be seen to condition what data were collected and how these data were interpreted.

In the following chapter, I describe the wider political and economic setting through which CAS and its practices emerge. I show how the struggle by Ghana for independence from outside control is an ongoing struggle that CAS must negotiate. This chapter also shows how colonialism and development have created the environment through which street children take to the street to make a living.

Chapter 3 provides a literature review of current development ideology, which I argue makes the line invisible between adults and children—especially those children living in the “Third World.” Because children are increasingly being seen as adults, the expectations placed upon them change as children become responsible for their own care and development. Seeing the child as a miniature adult masks wider structural inequalities that affect families and children in the rural countryside and children and families living in urban shanties. In addition, the miniature adult hides other types of children from view who may also be in need of services.

In Chapter 4, I present data that demonstrate how CAS's policies, practices and representations of street children contain within them a presumption of street children as miniature adults. I discuss how the construction of the street child as a miniature adult emphasizes her abilities to survive and make choices. In doing so, I show how the emphasis on individual

choice interacts with ideas of modernity and progress. Rural children are seen as backward and street children are viewed as potentially modern and capable. I argue that a conception of the street child as miniature adult masks structural inequalities and renders invisible other categories of children who may also be in need of support.

In Chapter 5, I introduce fieldworker perspectives on street children, their environment and peers, and CAS's practices. I argue that an analysis of fieldworker perspectives challenges current conceptions of the street child and what it means to help them. On one hand, street children are portrayed as independent survivors who have chosen to leave their homes and families in rural communities in the hopes of improving their lives. On the other hand, fieldworkers show street children living in destitute situations, living violent lives, begging for food, and resorting to delinquency for survival. As such, fieldworkers conflate the categories of street and urban poor children (living in slums), portraying all poor children of Accra as innocent victims who need help and support. The fieldworker views challenge CAS's existing practice of supporting only a few individual street children from the multitudes of poor children living in the city. I show that fieldworker views offer clues to an alternative policy that can challenge normative aspects of the free market paradigm on helping the poor.

The concluding chapter clarifies what I perceive as "limiting ideologies and representations" that constrain CAS's overall objective to support children where they work and live. By identifying these constraints and taking more seriously the people who work with street children, CAS can improve its practices. In particular, fieldworker perspectives show that all children who work on the street are affected by it, and they should be viewed in relation to their degree of dependence on the street (i.e., *streetness*). Thus, *streetness* itself should be assessed as a continuum rather than a set of essentialized categories.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

This chapter describes the wider political and economic setting through which CAS's particular brand of development help emerges. It describes CAS's mission and policy and situates them in a context of Ghana's continuing struggle for independence from the West. In particular, I argue that CAS's policy on provisioning is a result of historically shaped pressures imposed upon it by the politics of help in Ghana. I also present a history of CAS and tie this history to the civilizing mission of the colonial period and more recent development initiatives. I present Miescher's (2005) argument that colonialism created two rural childhoods ("missionary" and "traditional") in Ghana and then show how street children can be seen as a particular formation of "traditional" childhoods. I then discuss how development policies and initiatives after Ghana's independence in 1957 intensified poverty in rural farming districts and depleted fund, making Ghana unable to buoy those most vulnerable to economic changes. CAS helps to fill this void by promising to "support the street child"¹⁰ in the places where he or she works and lives.

CAS MISSION AND POLICY

The largest NGO working with street children in Ghana is Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS). CAS registered as a Ghanaian NGO as of 1995, though it receives neither funding from the state nor much community involvement or support. It is an autonomous NGO whose administration makes sole policy and personnel decisions independent of any government, church or other non-governmental agency. It does not receive local support, rather most of its funding comes from international NGOs, both religious and secular, located in northern Europe (e.g., CORDAID [Holland], Stichteng Street Child [Germany], and Street Child Africa [England]). Moreover, technical expertise often comes

¹⁰ "Support the Street Child" is CAS's logo.

from volunteers associated with these organizations. CAS also has increased its attempts to appeal directly to individuals sympathetic to the plight of street children in Africa.

CAS's explicit mission is to interact with street children so they can be understood and supported, to assist those children who choose to get off the street, and to create general awareness about the plight of children up to the age of eighteen who "live in the street...not supported by anyone" (CAS 2003:8). CAS provides counseling services, rudimentary literacy and health education, promotes social responsibility, and provides daily refuge for children during the work-week where they can sleep, watch television, interact with other children in a positive way through directed activities, learn via the internet, and wash clothes. More importantly, CAS provides sponsorships for select children who consistently abide by the rules and expectations set forth by the CAS administration.

CAS is made up of six departments coordinated by a central administration: Fieldwork, House of Refuge, Education, Demonstration, Hopeland, and Sponsorship. These departments correspond to five voluntary stages that children go through in order to receive full sponsorship. In stage one, children meet with fieldworkers in the street where they are informed about CAS's services and are invited to visit the House of Refuge or any one of the five mini-refuges located throughout the Accra metropolis. In stage two, children visit the House of Refuge and are introduced to CAS staff and activities. In stage three children voluntarily attend a morning education class and participate in a variety of activities, including sports, drama, and music. During this stage, CAS staff assess participating children's attitude and level of participation. Children also attend demonstration activities during stage three in which they are exposed to trades. Although I did not collect data on the extent to which demonstrated activities were congruent with gender norms, I did observe that boys watched male instructors carve wood and make ceramics while girls watched female

instructors make necklaces from beads and tie and dye clothing.¹¹ Children who have been assessed to demonstrate consistent attendance, “appropriate” behavior and attitude, and a commitment to learn a trade are offered admission into stage four. These children, twenty boys and twenty girls, go to live at Hopeland Training Center where they begin literacy, trade, and health education. At Hopeland, children also earn their keep by attending to animals, such as chickens and pigs, and doing chores on Hopeland’s farm. Children who are admitted into the fifth stage, sponsorship, have demonstrated at Hopeland that they can take care of themselves by earning money to buy their own food and clothes as well as getting along with their peers, respecting staff, and keeping themselves and their clothes clean. After six to nine months at Hopeland, children are eligible for sponsorship. If sponsored, children are given an apprenticeship or educational stipend along with monies for housing and food.

According to CAS staff and my own observations, children are primarily interested in the sponsorship program and the process by which they can earn a skill. But these sponsorships are limited and not freely given; children must earn them. At stage two, children must pay for their own bus fare to get to CAS or walk. Children often sacrifice productive work hours to attend CAS activities in order to prove that they are serious. Children must also obey CAS rules, such as no fighting, cursing, or inappropriate touching. At stage four, children must participate in daily farm chores, attend classes, and contribute money toward the purchase of food and supplies.

For street children, it is an up-hill battle for employability. Coupled with the social stigma of being a “street child” are high unemployment rates that curtail opportunities (Shanahan 2003). CAS (2003) indicates that there are not enough job opportunities for the number of children who wish to be sponsored. As such, CAS has had to create job opportunities for them. Adjusting to these difficulties, CAS secured funds and contracts with other businesses to provide educational

¹¹ I did not collect data on the extent to which these demonstrated crafts are congruent with gender norms.

and job opportunities explicitly for street children. For instance, CAS and one of their donors has negotiated a contract with Togo Golden Farms to supply labor to an operation that will make juice from the peels and heads of pineapples. Interested “ex-street children” will leave Accra for the Volta region to work in the factories while other children will sell the juice as local vendors. CAS will organize the operation, purchase the machinery, and share fifty percent of the profits with Togo Golden Farms.¹²

Again, CAS does not provide food, shelter or money to street children until the child is granted admission into stage four (Hopeland). The provisioning of food and shelter is seen as making street children dependent and thereby discouraging a desire to get off the street. CAS (2003) states that it does not want to attract street children with “gifts” because these would encourage the children for the wrong reasons. I often heard the adage; “It’s better to lead a horse to water than to give him drink.” In some sense, while viewed as innocents in need of protection, the children must earn their right to be protected through the demonstration of adult-like characteristics, such as responsibility, punctuality, orderly appearance and behavior, and cleanliness.

CAS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: GHANA’S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

The act of helping is often a pretense for political, economic and cultural intervention that undercuts or overrides autonomy (Ellerman 2005). Indeed, there is much political will for autonomy in Ghana (Nugent 1995), and CAS, a foreign-funded NGO, must not be seen as creating relations of dependency for Ghanaian children. Rather, CAS’s mission and policies are oriented around creating within the child a sense of self-motivation to leave the street for a more

¹² Article 32 of the International Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC), of which Ghana is a signatory, grants a child the right to work so long as the work performed does not infringe on his or her physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development.

productive existence.¹³ In the following section, I describe a historical context that can be seen as shaping CAS's formulation of help. I show how European colonial powers struggled with each other in their efforts to carve up Ghanaian resources for their own advantage. Competition for resources led to further encroachments into the interior and created the need to civilize native groups. Not only were resources developed but people too. The latter was called the "civilizing mission" in which missionaries were brought in to help Ghanaian people by inculcating in them Western ways of thinking, behavior, style, and commerce. As such, Ghanaian peoples, under colonial regimes, were made politically, economically, and culturally dependent. However, this same "civilizing mission" would create the means through which Ghanaians struggled, and continue to struggle, for their independence from colonial control.

What began as a race for the creation of capital among European nations along what was known as the Gold Coast in the fifteenth century ended up as a struggle for independence and prosperity (Gocking 2005). The first wave of colonialism in West Africa began with the Portuguese "discovery," in 1471, of the Gold Coast (what is now known as Ghana). The Portuguese built forts and castles as trade ports for the exportation of gold, slaves, timber and other raw materials. In 1642, the Dutch became the Portuguese' chief competitors who eventually would dismantle the Portuguese' coastal trade monopoly in the region. Dutch companies built strong relationships with the Akan Empire while the British formed alliances mainly with coastal peoples, such as the Fante and the Ga. In the nineteenth century, Great Britain consolidated its influence in the territory by buying out the Dutch.

In the latter half of the 19th century, Britain's world economic dominance unraveled as a result of the Long Depression (1873-1896). Balance of trade deficits grew and markets shrank as production surpluses created the need for new markets. These problems were compounded by the industrial emergence of

¹³ A more detailed analysis of how CAS practices are shaped by the politics of help is presented in Chapter 4.

Germany and the United States. In building their industrial infrastructure, the United States and Germany sought opportunities to open new markets for finished goods and cheap investment opportunities that would take advantage of cheap labor, limited competition, and abundant raw materials. All of these circumstances led to furthering what Pakenham (1991) calls the “Scramble for Africa” wherein competing European claims over African territories intensified, and greater exertions were made to control the African territories more directly.

As world market demand increased for Ghanaian resources such as cocoa, timber, and spices, so too did the promotion of European exploration into the hinterlands. This created the necessity for increased commerce with rural people who practiced sustainable agriculture. It therefore became necessary to inculcate the African farmer with the values of an “African entrepreneur” (Gocking 2005). Christianity would play a key role. The coastal areas served as bastions of European influence and civilization, which increasingly spread to rural areas. Beginning with the Portuguese, Catholicism and Protestantism spread from local converts who made their way into the interior to convert Muslims and animists. The abolition of slavery by the British increased missionary zeal, due to the seeming “incompatibility of slave trading and proselytizing” (Gocking 2005). As a result, missionary churches, such as the Basel Ministries of Germany, established churches and reform schools in the hinterlands. As Gocking (2005:77) notes, rather than the “Bible and the Plough,” the need for capital created a need for the “school book and the store” to make rural people more oriented to the business practices of the European businessmen. Thus, the spread and intensification of the trade economy and introduction of missionary schools during the colonial period created an African subject to be remade through the influence of Christianity, Western civilization, and commerce.

During the early nineteenth century, an urban professional class emerged, made mostly of Asante¹⁴ people, to plant the seed for the eventual demise of

¹⁴ The Asante, or Akan, are Ghana's dominant ethnic group and make up about 40 percent of Ghana's population (Nugent 1996).

formal colonial control of the Gold Coast (Gocking 2005; Miescher 2005; Nugent 1996). The newly created elite class of educated Africans who occupied high positions in the colonial administration grew discontent as boom conditions in the early 1920s produced no significant improvement to the lives of their fellow countrymen (Gocking 2005). This, coupled with disputes over land and the emergent pseudoscientific racism that claimed the African was intellectually inferior to the European, led to the formation of colonial opposition groups (e.g., the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society) and the rise of charismatic leaders (Nugent 1996; Boafo-Arthur 1999). After a series of major “cocoa hold ups” in which Gold Coast farmers tried to force a rise in prices by with-holding their crops, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People’s Party (CPP) seized the opportunity and made quick strides to make the Gold Coast an independent nation; in 1957, the newly born Republic of Ghana became the first West African nation to obtain independent status.

However, Nkrumah and the CPP did not bring prosperity or political stability, though perhaps their policies were not given a chance to show sustained success. In 1966, a military coup led by General Kotoka unseated the CPP to be replaced by the National Liberation Council (NLC). Three months later, the government agreed to the mostly Western and foreign-funded International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) terms (conditionalities) for a standby credit (a loan that is given in stages, dependent on the beneficiaries demonstrated adherence to conditionalities)¹⁵. From 1969 until 1983, a pattern of military coups and popular elections were staged on the politics of adjustment reforms. For example, the Progress Party (elected three years after the NLC coup in 1966) was overthrown by General Acheampong in 1972 for allegedly “permitting excessive international influence and of failure to take more radical action to suspend payment on the much publicized debt to international lenders” (Frimpong-Ansah 1971:108). Thus, 15 years after independence, much of

¹⁵ It is widely conjectured that the U.S. CIA plotted with the NDC to overthrow Nkrumah, seeing him as a authoritarian dictator whose potential communist leanings threatened the security and marketability of the region (see Stockwell 1978 and Seymour 1980).

Ghana was left underdeveloped, and a majority of its people still lived in abject poverty (Boafo-Arthur 1999).

In 1981, Rawlings seized power for the second time. Despite his initial socialist leanings and faced with growing poverty and a crippled economy, he made an abrupt U-turn and, like Nkrumah before him, turned to international financial institutions, such as the IMF and World Bank, for financial assistance. Ghana has stayed on this course ever since. To receive loans, the Rawlings government (PNDC) agreed to a series of structural adjustment policies (SAPs) under the IMF-sponsored Economic Recovery Program (ERP). The ERP was geared toward shrinking government and liberalizing trade with the West; this entailed decreasing taxes in the private sector to stimulate production, expanding the fiscal base by reducing public sector expenditures, instituting user fees for education and healthcare services, reallocation of domestic resources (e.g., agricultural foodstuffs) to more productive sectors (such as cocoa farms, timber, and mining), and the reduction in the role of the state in setting prices and controlling imports (Duncan and Howell 1992; Pearce 1992).

This brief section on Ghana's historical relations with the West shows that it has struggled to assert its autonomy. However, along with the national desire to alleviate poverty and develop resources has come the need to solicit loans from international lenders. Indeed, in an effort to reduce debts, Ghana recently applied for status as a Heavily Indebted Poor Country, which came with a new set of conditions to which Ghana had to agree in order for debts to be forgiven.¹⁶ The civilizing mission and economic recovery reforms are types of help that fall under Ellerman's (2005) typology of help that undercuts, and help that overrides, self-help. The civilizing mission is a framework of help that sought to imbue Western European values and norms in Africans so that they could be made free from "savagery" and able to participate more readily in plans for economic and social restructuring. This framework undercut self-help by attempting to replace the local economies and cultures of Ghana. Economic recovery overrides self-

¹⁶ Source: <http://www.jubileeusa.org/>

help by placing conditionalities on loans designed to shape the behavior of the Ghanaian people and its forms of governance. In both cases, help is externally provided toward means and ends that are ethnocentrically formulated by outsiders. CAS, in the same way, maneuvers within these historically-shaped poles of helping and applies foreign aid toward objectives that are not developed by Ghanaians. In the following sections, I present a history of how CAS came into being, describe how the creation of CAS led to the discovery of street children, and then argue further that the category “street children” is more a product of Ghana’s relationship with the West than the diverse realities of children who work and live in the city streets of Accra.

CAS AND THE DISCOVERY OF STREET CHILDREN IN GHANA

Most of what is known about street children in Ghana comes from research conducted by CAS. In 1991, a French priest surveyed the streets of Ghana and noticed the large numbers of children working and “idling about” in the streets of Accra. He informed the Department of Social Work at the University of Legon of what he saw as “appalling circumstances” and convinced them to conduct a survey on street children in Ghana using definitions outlined by UNICEF (CAS 1993:3). The department of social work utilized the typology outlined by UNICEF (1987) to differentiate street children from poor, working children. Children “*of the street*” refers to those children who live, work and sleep in the street, while children “*in the street*” refers to those children who are engaged in street activities but have regular contacts with their families and have a place of residence. Lead researchers, Van Ham et al. (1992), sought to describe the lives and circumstances of children *of the street* rather than children *in the street*.

From the results of the study, a committee formed by members of the Catholic Brothers FIC¹⁷ and the White Fathers¹⁸ set out to interact with street

¹⁷ For information on Catholic Brothers FIC visit <http://www.Brothers-FIC.org>.

¹⁸ For information on White Fathers visit <http://ae086.dial.pipex.com>.

children in Accra so that they could formulate an approach that could best help them. The Catholic missionaries saw street children as a new and tragic phenomenon in Ghana. With their study and observations, they formed a committee to appeal to the state legislature. According to Jos van Dinther, now director of CAS, they faced “strong resistance” from public officials, who stood up and proclaimed angrily, “we don’t have any street children here.” From this point, the committee set out to further investigate the street child phenomenon in Ghana to acquire more evidence so as to prove that there was indeed a problem with Ghana’s children, especially children migrating from the rural hinterlands of Ghana. In 1992, Jos van Dinther investigated the vocational and technical education in south Ghana alongside qualitative and quantitative research describing the origins, causes and lifestyles of street children (reported in CAS 2003). The conclusions reached by these studies indicated a severe lack of rudimentary education, unsanitary living conditions, and exploitative work practices for children “of the street”. Using these reports, the committee set out to attract funds from international donor agencies (e.g. UNICEF) to map out the emergent problem in southern Ghana. Further, their ultimate goal was to develop appropriate interventions for returning to children a “stable living situation” by offering vocational sponsorships.

In 1993, CAS was officially formed, and the House of Refuge was purchased. In 1994, CAS was Ecclesiastically approved,¹⁹ and in the following year, CAS was recognized by the state as a Ghanaian NGO, receiving a certificate of social welfare. Since that time, CAS has sponsored over 200 children, provided social services to hundreds more, published reports, started mini-refuges for children in outlying areas, and attracted numerous sponsors and volunteers from primarily Holland, Germany, and England. CAS staff have also attended several conferences and forums on street children.

¹⁹ Ecclesiastically approved means that the Vatican and the Catholic Archdiocese in Accra support CAS’s policies and practices.

As of 2004, CAS estimated that there were 20,000 “unsupported street children” living and working in and around the Accra metropolis of Ghana (CAS 2004:1). Most are newcomers to the city, coming from economically depressed rural areas in and around Ghana. According to CAS (2003:5), “A street child is a child who lives in the streets (age group 0-18 yrs). S(he) is often not well dressed, lean and not well mannered.” Most male children perform menial jobs, such as a porter, gutter sweeper, shoe shiner, and driver’s mate, though many children, both boys and girls, can be seen “hawking”, or soliciting, goods to pedestrians. While girls can be seen working during the day as sellers, hawkers, or kiosk attendants, at night, many young girls solicit sex around large outdoor markets and bus stations. In fact, a CAS newsletter (December 2004) indicates that over 80 percent of both girls and boys engage in prostitution. As a result, CAS has stepped up its educational efforts to teach children about the risks of HIV-AIDs and what they can do to protect themselves from contracting the disease, including abstinence and condom use.

Though it does not say this explicitly, CAS works mostly with street boys. Though I do not have statistics that indicate how many boys are helped relative to girls, my own observations record a striking disproportionate number of boys who visit CAS and its mini-refuges. CAS staff are well aware of this and indicate that they have difficulty “reaching” girls because they are either prostitutes or Muslim *kayayees*.²⁰ Girl prostitutes are characterized as “unreachable” because they make more money than street boys, so much so that they apparently do not need support. Moreover, young prostitutes cannot come to CAS due to the fact that they work at night and sleep during the day. At Hopeland, the director informed me for example that girls runaway after only a few weeks because prostitution is easier and more lucrative than farm labor. Muslim *kayayees* are also characterized as “unreachable” by CAS staff. These girls come from the Northern Islamic regions to the cities in search of money and products to make a

²⁰ CAS's March 2005 newsletter reveals anecdotal evidence that prostitution is rampant among boys and states that it is currently investigating the number of occurrences.

dowry so that they can marry once they return home. A fieldworker, Mary, informed me that their work with *kayayees* is made more difficult by the fact that Muslims generally do not like Catholics because they believe that Catholics are only interested in converting them. And because CAS has "Catholic" in its title, *kayayees* think that it is a Catholic missionary organization. These issues affect who CAS helps, therefore, in order to extend CAS's services to *kayayees* and child prostitutes, further research is needed to explore the ways in which CAS can accommodate those who are precluded from supports on the basis of gender.

GHANAIAN STREET CHILDREN IN ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The previous section shows that CAS was instrumental in drawing compassionate attention to street children who work and live in Accra's city streets. The history of "street children" in Ghana appears to have begun with CAS; however, the presence of children working and living in the streets of African cities precedes the early 1990s. The following presents ethnographic material that situates the existence of rural Ghanaian children in the city streets in a context of historically shaped social inequalities.

The efforts by Europeans colonists to civilize the African farmer altered the childhoods of many rural African children and created the social context through which rural children migrated to the city. Some recent ethnographic accounts (Miescher 2005; Kilbride et al.2000; Hecht 1998; Grier 1994) suggest that colonialism precipitated the migration of unaccompanied children to cities by dismembering the extended family. In *Street Children in Kenya*, for example, Kilbride et al. (2000) argue that colonial administrators and missionaries in Kenya altered the family structure through the institution of taxes and wage labor. For example, to coerce rural subsistence farmers to work for wages, a "hut tax" was introduced which forced many rural villagers to abandon year-round subsistence activities for wage work in order to pay the tax. As a result, children, once valued for their labor on the farm, were devalued as their labor became superfluous.

According to Kilbride et al. (2000) this created the social option through which rural children would leave their family and home in search of work in the city.

The presence of “street children” in Africa is not a recent phenomenon. As Grier (1994) has argued, Zimbabwean children had been running away in numbers from plantations since the 1920s, which continued through the 1950s. As a result of colonial practices that led to land dispossession and growing rural poverty, many Zimbabwean children were forced to earn a living by going to work for plantations. The exploitative conditions on many of these plantations and the shame placed on children who returned home created a situation through which children would run away to urban centers looking for work. And in Kenya, Kilbride et al. (2001) report that plantations often used child labor for tea and coffee picking, which subjected children to brutal conditions and often led many of them to run away. In Ghana, Miescher too indicates that children in search of status have been coming to the streets in search of education and employment since the British opened up the hinterlands for resource extraction (Miescher 2005).

Ethnographic descriptions of childhood in Ghana before colonialism are nearly absent; Rattray (1923), however, gives some clues through his reconstruction of “traditional” child-rearing practices based on life history interviews he had conducted with Asante men. In Asante society (Ghana’s largest ethnic group) before colonialism, a child had responsibilities to his mother, father, and maternal uncle. Children belonged to their *abusua* (matrilineage) and were under the authority of the mother’s brother. However, the father-child relationship tended to be more intimate. He writes that young children were daily “undergoing unconscious instruction, mostly by a process of imitation of their elders” (1923:96). The bringing up of a boy fell on the father. The child learned from him social etiquette, dangers of oaths, and sexual matters like masturbation and adultery sanctions. The system of child rearing then was governed by notions of reciprocity and duty in exchange for “rights of use” (i.e., labor).

Within Asante societies, according to Miescher's (2005) life histories of Ghanaian men, *adwuma* (work) is the central experience of childhood. *Adwuma* is the currency through which rewards and recognition are given to children. As small children, boys stayed with their mothers, but when they got older they associated more with their fathers by learning gendered skills. Hunting was the most significant activity that sons performed alongside their fathers. For many, hunting of game, like elephants for ivory, was a way of gaining "big man" status, and naturally, fathers served as role models for success in their communities. A son who helped his father was often rewarded with the right to eat with him. Maternal uncles played a larger role in children's lives when fathers had fewer means of support for children. Working and learning often took place within the *abusua* in which the uncle played a crucial role by taking interest in the child's life and making demands on his labor. According to Miescher (2005), the notion of a carefree childhood, with much attention paid on a child's development, was distinctly absent. Children learned from observation and not from direct training. Instead, after the age of six, boys and girls moved into worlds of work and play that were increasingly separated yet consistently the province of their families.

As indicated by Rabinow (1977:21) in his discussion of colonial protectorates in Africa, colonial administrations created "two civilizations" by developing African cities in the image of European cities while leaving rural communities as traditional societies "living epochs apart, alongside each other." In what is now Ghana, European-based missionary churches were instrumental in splitting rural villages into two parts: a traditional section consisting of the chief's palace, markets, banks, and store, and the missionary outpost with large houses, a church and school (Miescher 2005).

Miescher (2005) indicates that there was a distinct divide between children living in the traditional section and those children living in and around the missionary outposts. For those families living within the confines of the missionary outpost, Christian missionaries not only supervised the adults but also supervised their children and would intervene in their rearing practices. The

most significant change was the limitation of children's work, often noted as the single most defining characteristic of childhood among Asante children (Rattray 1923; Forte 1950; Allman and Tasjian 2000). In its place, missionaries promoted an idealized notion of childhood. Children were treated as in need of individual attention and adult protection. Miescher provides a quote from a mission's administrator in Abetifi admonishing parents to "not regard their children as playthings to serve their pleasure, nor as a means of income" (Miescher 2005:62). In this sense, missionaries asserted a view of childhood that distinguished it from adulthood and created a sense of adult kin as potential corrupting and exploitative influences on the innocence of children—a cultural construct indicative of Western Europe (James and Prout 1997, James 1993; see also Aries 1962 and Jenkins 1998).

Miescher (2005) provides an excellent example for how childhood was altered by colonial influence. In Abetifi, a former Akan settlement located on the Kwawu ridge in what is now the Eastern region, a pietistic organization from Switzerland, with strong ties to Germany, created the "Christian Quarters" in 1876. The Basel Mission, as it was called, was instrumental in encouraging local chiefs with breaking from the Asante empire (a long-time enemy of the British empire in Ghana) by emphasizing the Mission's values over that of the Asante and establishing trade relationships between local chiefs and the British Empire. In effect, the Basel Mission helped to incorporate Abetifi into the British Colony. It also served to inculcate the values of Western life. The Basel Mission made a deliberate effort to separate converts from non-converts by offering plots and twenty-six pounds to the converted. The land and money however came with conditions: the converted had to abide by the *Gemeindeordnung*, which is a set of rules that intervened in every aspect of daily life. Through these rules, the Basel Mission reshaped the values, ideas, and social relations of local people by setting expectations contrary to traditional Asante practices. For example, husbands and wives had to live in separate quarters. polygamy was forbidden, and fathers could not eat with their children. Moreover, instead of the typical

practice of children learning by observation from their families, children were now to receive formal education from European instructors in schools. According to Miescher (2005), this rule had the effect of separating children from the traditions, customs, and local knowledge of their community.

In many parts of Ghana before colonialism, children learned from their fathers the skills necessary to make a living (Rattray 1923). These apprenticeships also freed children from the “use rights” of his matrilineage.²¹ As Rattray (1923) has shown, the Asante father would pass his trade on to his son, often without his maternal uncle’s permission. Should the son not follow his father’s instruction, or if his father was poor, then the uncle had more influence over the child’s profession and upbringing. Through these apprenticeships arranged by the father, children could learn farming techniques and other trades, such as pottery, goldsmithing, weaving, and wood-carving.

Bartle (1978) has shown that within Asante communities the migration of family members is a common occurrence and that even though family members are spread out across Ghana, they maintain their family associations by periodically returning home to attend such cultural practices as festivals and funerals. In fact, Bartle found that social organization in cities mirrored matrilineal descent groups in which distant relatives from extended families lived in proximity to one another and shared common resources. Families stayed in their “traditional” kinship groups and merely “farmed” the city while maintaining their local identities. Other ethnographies of West Africa show that while immigrants to the city maintain much of their “traditional” identities, they do lose some aspects as they adjust to urban life. In an ethnography of Fulani immigrants to Accra, Oppong (2002) shows that traditional Koranic practices have been suppressed in the younger generations by compulsory, secular education.²²

²¹ As is typical of ethnography of this period, descriptions of girl's activities and relationships are missing.

²² For more information on ethnicity and West African migration patterns, see Caldwell (1969) and the more contemporary study, Cordell et al. (1998).

In the same way, Miescher (2005) shows that the apprenticeship system was modified as the increased demand for wages led many fathers away from rural farms in search for jobs in the cities. Instead, Asante fathers started paying for someone else to mentor their children, which often took place in Ghana's two largest cities, Accra and Kumasi. According to Miescher, the practice of fathers bringing boys to cities to learn a trade, or paying for apprenticeships, became widespread, particularly among converted families and then later to fathers everywhere (see also Beauchemin 1999). The city provided the training ground for children in non-traditional jobs like carpentry, bricklaying, tailoring, shoemaking and motor mechanics. According to Miescher this moved the younger generation from agriculture to self-employment, and from "peasant to artisan" (2005:50). More importantly, the labor market and the change in fatherhood resulted in the increased presence of young rural boys in Ghana's cities.

Meyer (2004:92) states that in Ghana "modernity is the context of everyday life" in which African traditions mix and mingle freely with Western ("modern") cultural forms in the media, the workplace, and in the home. The apprenticeship system is one way in which "traditional" rural practices collide with the urban class system that categorizes people based on their vocation. The apprenticeship distinguished youth by occupation, status, and type of education. The mission children, formally educated, were to inherit more prestigious jobs as clerks, police persons, and teachers, while rural migrant children were to inherit more technical jobs, such carpenter, bricklayer, and petty trader.

Between WWI and WWII, childhood for Asante children changed. Through the missions and changing economy, children were introduced to commodities and dreams of economic activities in urban centers, particularly in Ghana's coastal capital, Accra. This bears witness to the larger socioeconomic transformations unfolding across Ghana (as described earlier) in which poorer children, adjusting to these changes, innovated new ways for claiming status in an increasingly monetized society. One innovation became the act of a child

leaving his rural home in order to make a living by participating in the informal sector of the economy.

Children of converts had a decided advantage in the new economy of Ghana after World War I, as migration and urbanization increased along the coast. Young men of the old section hoped that through wage labor in cities and mines they could accumulate wealth and return home as “big men” (men of high social and economic status). However, the children living in the traditional section were pigeon-holed into occupations of lesser value and prestige, such as farming, whereas children formally educated in mission schools had greater advantages in the cities, as they formed the emergent professional class in Ghana by holding jobs as clerks, ministers, policemen, bureaucrats, educators, and social workers (Gocking 2005; Nugent 1996).²³

An analysis of why children come to the streets to make a home and a living is important because it illuminates how development practitioners can slow the tide of migratory children in addition to providing culturally appropriate supports to those children who are already there. However, this analysis is limited to generalities, and more fine-grained research is needed to discover why children migrate across a variety of social axes (e.g., ethnicity, class, and gender) and localities. This review of the ethnographic literature on Ghana and street children shows that colonialism continues to have an effect on rural childhoods in Ghana and creates the context through which children come to the urban streets.

CAS AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT

The developments occurring after independence from formal colonial rule further ruptured rural family and community ties to children. Dependency

²³ Nugent (1996) indicates that there is much “tribalism” in Ghana in which the ruling political party will privilege the ethnic group that has majority representation. The Asante (Akan) are the dominant ethnic group, making up about 40 percent of the country, and enjoy greater representation in government. Likewise, the Akan have had greater access to education and job opportunities (Nugent 1996).

continued after colonialism, the effects of which have created the reasons why children come to the streets unattended by parents. Dependency also deepened the vulnerabilities of children living and working in the urban areas of Ghana, particularly in the capital city of Accra. CAS emerges at the intersection of dependency (established during colonialism and extended through structural adjustment) and divergent childhoods.

During Dr. Nkrumah and his party's rule, many development goals were achieved due to the income provided by Ghana's cocoa export sales. Some of these were the creation of jobs in the public sector, increased levels of medical and educational facilities, improved road and industrial facilities, and the construction of the Tema harbor and the building of the Akosombo dam (Boafo-Arthur 1999; Frimpong-Ansah 1991). Many of the state's resources were also spent on pan-African struggles against colonialism and what was perceived as the neocolonial interventions of International Financial Institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF, in the economy. This, however, did not stop Nkrumah in 1965 from asking the IMF and the World Bank for financial assistance. At Nkrumah's request, the two institutions sent missions to Ghana; officials prescribed what amounted to financial stabilizing measures that would substantially reduce government expenditures on agricultural subsidies, public services, and state employees (Boafo-Arthur 1999; Nkrumah 1965). Seeing this as an assault on Ghana's sovereignty, Nkrumah refused by claiming that the IMF was a new form of colonialism in which independent African states "enjoyed all the outward trappings of international sovereignty...[but] in reality their economic systems, and thus their political policy, [were] directed from the outside" (Nkrumah 1965:17).

The effects on Ghanaians were pronounced: an IFAD (1988) special mission report estimated that the proportion of rural poor increased from 43 percent in 1970 to 54 percent in 1986, whereas a later IFAD report (1988) showed a greater increase in the number of urban people falling below the poverty line, from an average of between 30 and 35 percent in the late 1970s to

a range of 45 to 50 percent in mid-1980s. For rural people, there was also an increase in poverty ranging from 60-65 percent in the late 1970s to between 67 and 72 percent in the mid-1980s (IFAD 1988). There are also indications of declining health, education, and real earnings over this same period (see Sowa 2002).

By the end of the 1980s, however, the West cited Ghana as an “economic miracle” and a testament to the success of free market policies as indicated by a revived output in annual growth from 1984 to 1989 and a budget that showed surpluses for the first time since Ghana became a nation²⁴ (Sowa 2002). Moreover, Ghana’s roads had improved, GDP increased, and the electricity grid had expanded and become more reliable. Ghana also restructured its tax system, reduced the federal deficit, raised the minimum wage (though not at the same rate as inflation), and increased demand and supply in some of its productive sectors (Pearce 1992). However, by the mid-1990s, it was clear that the “trickle-down” economic theory that the ERP was based upon had not filtered down to most Ghanaians, especially to the majority of people living in rural areas. According to the most recent Ghana Living Standard Survey (1999),²⁵ 40% of Ghanaians live under the poverty line and 26.8% are listed as “very poor.” Though there have been improvements in poverty thresholds since adjustment, poverty distributions have dramatically affected people in the rural areas, where removal of farm subsidies and increases in competition from cheap imports have sharply diminished farmers’ standard of living. However, Sowa (2002) indicates that poverty in urban areas, as well as rural-coastal and rural-forest localities, fell during the first decade of structural adjustment, because the adjustment policies benefited the tradable sector (e.g., cocoa, timber, gold, and bauxite). However, data for export farmers and food farmers show that they were still among the most poor at 37.4% and 38.9% respectively (GLSS 1992). The rural-savannah continued to be the poorest zone in the country with more than half its population

²⁴ Though as Sowa (2002) indicates, this surplus budget was composed primarily of foreign aid.

²⁵ The next GLSS survey is due sometime in November of 2006.

classified as poor and more than a third being classified as “very poor” in 1992. And in the most recent GLSS (1999), the total poor in the rural-savannah climbed from 57.5% in 1992 to 59.3% in 1999.

Indeed there are many shortfalls attributed to adjustment, such as disproportionate decreases in poverty (particularly in the rural savannah), growth of the debt burden,²⁶ and the institution of user fees for education and healthcare, which excludes the most poor from receiving services (Sowa 2002). The overall result is the decline in the rural agricultural sector since the ERP, especially for the majority of smallholder farmers in rural parts of Ghana (Hutchful 2002). For rural children, there is not much short-term benefit from farming, as land is often inherited only when parents die (Beauchemin 1999). In some areas, there is no possibility for inheriting land. In the Eastern Region, only 54% of farmers own the land they cultivate. Furthermore, the percentage of farmland is being confiscated by a government land reclamation project (Beauchemin 1999). In the Asante region over fifty percent of the population live in rural areas and produce consumer food products, such as maize, plantains, and cassava, which have increasingly seen a decline in prices as a result of the importation of cheap foreign imports (Sowa 2002). In the Central region, half the land has been given to rubber and palm-oil producers, making it difficult for smallholder farmers to produce enough crops to make a living (Beauchemin 1999). In addition, most of the evergreen forests have been removed due to timber extraction, leaving much of the region as arid grasslands. As a result, this has led to environmental degradation and desertification as well as the spread of diseases (e.g., Saint Paul's), which have destroyed coconut crops and left families unable to care for their young (Beauchemin 1999). And with structural adjustment came extreme price instabilities and rampant inflation, which decreased the price on agricultural goods, such as maize, tomatoes and the like (Hutchful 2002). Cuts in farm subsidies have also forced farmers to reduce the amount of fertilizers and

²⁶ As of 2001, Ghana was listed as a Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) with the sum of domestic and foreign debt exceeding total revenue (IMF and World Bank 2001).

insecticides they use, resulting in decreased crop yields and profits (Pearce 1992). Corresponding to these changes in the Central, Eastern and Asante regions of Ghana is a greater proportion of children coming to the street unattended than other areas of Ghana (CAS 2003).

The economic sector most accommodating to migrant children is the informal sector, which is the market income category wherein income and income generation are “unregulated by the institutions of society, in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated” (Portes et al. 2004). In Ghana, according to World Bank estimates, this sector makes up 38.4% of the entire economy (Schneider 2002). The prevalence of the informal sector is due to increased demand for cheap petty services and consumer items that has risen as a result of the liberalization of markets (removal of trade barriers), which flooded Ghana with consumer goods (Hutchful 2002:124-127). It is this transformation that has created demand in cities for cheap, non-skilled laborers. According to the Ghanaian Statistical Service (2003), 39% of all children ages 5 to 17 work in the informal sector.

As a result of these developments, many adults leave their farms for the city in search of wages or markets in which to sell petty goods and services, while some children abandon their homes and families to participate in similar informal sector activities, such as petty trading, prostitution, and hawking, in order to make a living. In fact, according to CAS (1999), the majority of children who immigrate to the city come from rural farm communities in the Asante (28%), Central (16%), and Eastern regions (22%) of Ghana to participate in the informal sector. Additionally, UNICEF (1987:104) supports this assertion by stating that immediately after the ERP was enacted, there arose “evidence of increasing intensity of child labour” and what is called “child pawning” in which children are recruited from rural areas by distant urban “relatives” in the city for domestic service in order to reduce the living costs of poor households. UNICEF reported that levels of child labor in Ghana had increased markedly from those that had existed “twenty or even ten years ago” (1987:106). In 2002, the International

Labor Organization (ILO) reported that 246 million children worldwide—one in every six children aged five to seventeen—are involved in some form of child labor. According to the ILO (2002:25), “the preponderance of child labour in the informal economy, beyond the reach of most formal institutions in countries at all levels of income, represent one of the principal challenges to its effective abolition.” Indeed, when one visits Accra, the first thing noticed is the many boys and girls, some as young as five, who sell all manner of things in the street.

The second phase of the ERP (1987-1991) concentrated on revitalizing social services. The strategy for doing so was indicated in the 1989 World Bank publication, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*, which shows a general consensus advocating for participatory capacity building, which is the promotion of human development in basic health, education and technical skills (see also Vandelloo 1997). The medium through which development was to be made was through work, as evidenced by the World Bank’s *World Development Report* 1990 in which it states that “improvements in the quality of life for the poor” can be gained by “the productive use of the poor’s most abundant asset—labor” and the increased capacity of the poor “to take advantage of primary education, health care, and family planning” (iii). Offering seed money and technical expertise to non-governmental organizations conforming to this general consensus became a major strategy utilized by the World Bank and the IMF in Ghana (Hutchful 2002). As Fisher (1997) indicates, NGOs were envisioned as “silver bullets” capable of hitting any social development target. As mentioned above, the Director of CAS indicated that over 50 NGOs were working with street children as of 1993 when the World Bank offered seed money to organizations that met their development criteria. In fact, the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare lists 19 NGOs operating in Accra alone.

Ghana’s development goals kept the door open for continued foreign control of public policy and the economy. Through structural adjustment loans, foreign investors were able to dictate the terms of trade, inflation rates, and

expenditures on social services. The latter category under adjustment has been cut dramatically, which has paved the way for foreign-funded NGOs to fill the vacuum left by depleted entitlement allocations. The regions hit most hard by adjustment are the mostly rural farming regions from which “street children” originate. As argued earlier in this chapter, these children follow the standard set by more privileged children in that they come to the cities to learn a trade so as to make a living. In short, they come to the city in search of a better life than is possible in the rural farming villages.

In sum, I have drawn from the conflict between autonomy and dependency in Ghana to situate the NGO of this study and street children in a larger social and historical context. I have described the European struggle for Ghana’s resources and how this led to the mission to “civilize” rural Ghana. This civilizing mission created in many areas—particularly the Asante and Eastern regions from which a majority of street children emigrate—two distinct childhoods, one associated with the Church and the other associated with traditional life (Miescher 2005). After Ghana claimed independence (1957) and austerity measures (SALs) were firmly entrenched (1982), the poverty of rural villagers intensified and the informal sector boomed. These conditions exacerbated a situation where “traditional” children already followed the more privileged “missionary” children to the cities in search of trades and an income. At the time of the second round of austerity measures (ERP 2) emphasizing poverty eradication and social improvements, a host of European-sponsored NGOs were created in Ghana to identify vulnerable populations and develop their potential for successful integration into the economy.

The street child can therefore be seen as a product of the historical and cultural convergence of colonialism, development, and childhood in Ghana. As such, the "street child" can be understood in relation to the effects of global political, economic and cultural trends on local realities. By placing the "street child" as resulting from something, then other categories of children similarly affected can be understood as needing support. In the following chapter I

conceptualize these convergences by discussing relevant development and childhood literature. In doing so, I hope to reveal the limits of helping only children who are rendered visible by the mere fact that they are identified as "street children."

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis makes four general arguments with respect to vulnerable populations of children. First, the current development orientation conceptualizes particularly poor children who live in the “Third World” as miniature adults. Second, this conceptualization depicts the child as having the same individual rights and responsibilities as citizens, and because of this, children are expected to make choices with respect to their own development. Third, seeing children as miniature adults with rights and responsibilities masks the social context through which children come to the streets to make a living. Finally, an over-emphasis on the capabilities of street children masks their vulnerabilities and the vulnerabilities of other groups of children living in similar circumstances. In this chapter, I situate these arguments within relevant literature on development and childhood.

In the first part I present a critique on self-help and participation concepts by discussing their inherent contradictions. Development self-help is limited because some forms of help must be supplied to motivate beneficiaries for some desired objective. External help, however, competes with the dual aim of creating beneficiary autonomy. Thus, a problem exists in development today that asks, “How can help be supplied without creating a situation of dependency?”

The second part of this chapter focuses on the concept of childhood, how it varies, how it is used in the ideological construction of the street child, and how development programs that work with street children are informed by it. I identify two poles of conceptions of childhood: one is the innocent and nurtured child, and the other is the capable and nurturing miniature adult. I argue that the innocent child perspective leads to a sense that childhood throughout the world is disappearing because so many children are seen to be absent a family and a home. This notion informs a sense of the street child as the ultimate childhood outsider, and because the child is without a childhood, he is more like an adult—albeit a dysfunctional child who did not benefit from the developmental space

given to children in the West. I argue that this conception of the street child correlates with the rise of neoliberal narratives on social welfare and can be read into policies that are advocated by the World Bank as “promising practices and approaches.” I now turn to the notion of development self-help.

DEVELOPMENT

Development Self-Help

CAS’s policy of helping children to help themselves is congruent with Ellerman’s (2005) concept of autonomy-respecting help and Amartya Sen’s notion of Development as Freedom (1999). In fact, these concepts—at least in part—are reiterations of development planning that emerged after World War II, as evidenced by Truman’s “Point Four” program in 1949 promoting Third World development through a doctrine of “helping underdeveloped nations to help themselves.” The logic of this statement is generally expressed in proverbial form: “If you give people fish, you feed them for a day, but if you teach them how to fish, then they can feed themselves for a lifetime.”

This Chinese proverb is an expression of the core value of the development industry—not to build wealth but to enhance capabilities and know-how for people to meet their own needs (Ellerman 2005). Self-help, as it is called, is a theory on the relationship between “helpers” (e.g., NGOs, the World Bank) and beneficiaries of help (“doers”), such as between an NGO and street children (Ellerman 2005). The problem with development aid, however, has always been what Korten (1983) calls the “paradox of social development.” If the goal of development is to induce autonomy, then some means of help must be supplied to induce this. However, supplying the means through which one helps themselves is a contradiction and undermines an individual’s effort toward autonomous development. In other words, as Ellerman (2005:4) states, “The problem is how can the helpers ‘supply’ help that actually furthers rather than overrides or undercuts the goals of the doers [beneficiaries] helping themselves.” Framed within a relationship of helper and helped, giving a provision, such as

money, to a street child is a form of “unhelpful help” (i.e., help that promotes dependency). From Ellerman’s point of view, giving money to a street child could be construed as undercutting the child’s motivation to be independent thereby creating a dependency-inducing relationship and/or teaching the child a sense of helplessness.

Another form of unhelpful help identified by Ellerman is help that *overrides* self-help. IFI’s (International Finance Institutions) social engineering policies of the 1970s and 1980s that imposed structural adjustment conditionalities on development loans are notorious examples. Structural adjustment loans were administered and serviced by IFIs so as to stabilize the economy and ensure growth with a consequent positive impact on poverty reduction in developing countries (Sowa 2002). These loans, however, were only given if the beneficiary agreed to terms. Duncan and Howell (1992) indicate that conditionalities typically involved decreasing taxes in the private sector to stimulate production, eliminating tariffs on imports, expanding the fiscal base by reducing public sector expenditures, instituting user fees for education and healthcare services, reallocating domestic resources to more productive sectors, and reducing the role of the state in setting prices and controlling imports. Ellerman (2005:9) writes of structural adjustment loans (SALs): “The helpers supply a set of instructions or conditionalities about what the doers [beneficiaries] should be doing, and they supply the external carrots and stick ‘motivations’ to follow the blueprint as various forms of aid override that doer’s own motivation.” This creates a dependency relationship in which IFIs become organizationally obligated to service the loans and provide technological assistance to benefiting countries, thus replacing the motivation of the recipients with that of their own (Ellerman 2005).

Though development aid often undermines or overrides self-help, development has moved beyond a “meeting basic needs” approach and state-planned development models to building grassroots organizing (Edwards and Hulme 1995). The primary difference between the two is the direction in which

aid is organized and directed. State-planned development is top-down in that it is typically planned, implemented and evaluated by experts who are not beneficiaries. On the other hand, development that is organized and directed by beneficiaries (or with their involvement) is called a bottom-up strategy, which emphasizes the term “participation.” Participatory approaches to development aid has resulted from the demise of the Bretton Woods IFIs (World Bank, IMF, GATT/WTO) control on capital movements and the growing evidence that state-planned development projects were not working (Edelman and Haugerud 2005). As such, a rival theory of free-market capitalism emerged that de-emphasized state-planned development initiatives in favor of a more individualistic open-market approach that resulted in an intensification of transnational flows of culture and capital (Appadurai 1996; Ferguson 1997). Graeber (2002) calls this process “neoliberal globalization.”

The decline of the nation state’s role in development planning and subsequent globalization of free-market capitalism (neoliberalism) created the political space for the increase in number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have undertaken a wide range of alternative development activities rooted in a participatory framework—implementing grass-roots organization and sustainable development, promotion of human rights and social justice, protesting environmental degradation, and pursuing objectives often ignored by the government and larger multi-lateral and bilateral development organizations (Edwards and Hulme 1995) This corresponds to the World Bank’s stated strategy to institute a policy of improving development through “grassroots” NGOs (Fisher 1997). The 1989 World Bank publication, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*, is a notable example of a general consensus that pays lip service to participatory capacity building through a network of NGOs, which emphasizes human development in basic health, education and technical skills.

In Ghana as elsewhere during the early nineties, the World Bank organized interventions on behalf of street children working in the streets of

Accra. The Bank offered seed money for any organization willing to initiate “capacity building” for street children (Jos van Dinther interview, July 21, 2004). As a result, over fifty NGOs came into existence in Accra alone. The World Bank-NGO connection indicates the role that NGOs would have in development planning: they remove the “obstacles” inhibiting truly developmental initiatives by sharing resources and knowledge with local people, employing “bottom-up” strategies, assisting locals to better help themselves, and building capacities for local organizations (Fisher 1997).

Development aid is oriented toward helping individuals and nations to help themselves. Without self-help, aid is thought to be wasted; therefore the objective of aid is somehow to supply help without creating relations in which aid must always be given. In other words, aid must lead toward sustainable improvement. In this section, I have indicated two poles of self-help: aid directed from the top-down versus aid directed from the bottom-up, and aid that depends on conditions versus aid that is freely given. These poles help to conceptualize the current environment of aid. In Ghana today, development leans toward a program of self-help that is conditional and externally orchestrated. This current environment has led to the creation of CAS and the shaping of its policies for helping children.

Debating the Right Way to Help

But development aid, whether employing a participatory framework or not, imposes external interventions and controls on people in the developing world for the economic benefit of industrialized nations in the West. For example, Hancock (1992) critiques the ways in which the development industry ignorantly (and sometimes corruptly) conducts development projects without consideration for local cultural perspectives and pragmatics, and as a result, many development projects have unnecessarily wasted resources and lives. Hancock (1992:2) asks the daring question “How helpful is foreign aid and who is it helping?” Hancock shows that the development industry’s aid success is more

rooted in belief than fact. As he states, “the notion that increased aid from the North will result in improved conditions in the South is thus treated as though it were a self-evident truth. If this logic were to hold then one could expect that there to be a much greater transfer of aid from the North to the South” (1992:188). According to Hancock, from 1985 to 1990, the South transferred over \$30 billion in serviceable debts compared to a transfer of around 60 billion a year on official development aid. But as Hancock points out, the money spent on official development aid often was found to be “profoundly dangerous to the poor and inimical to their interests...by [sponsoring projects] that have devastated the environment and ruined lives...and legitimized brutal tyrannies” (1992:189).

Rather than dismissing the objectives of development altogether, Cernea (1985) developed a methodology for correcting some of the errors and excesses of developmental aid. In a World Bank sponsored book, *Putting People First* (1985), Cernea argues that many of the failures of development can be attributed to the lack of inclusion of beneficiaries in planning, implementation, and assessment of development projects. He asserts, based on the idea of “putting people first,” that beneficiary participation is the most basic and vital aspect of development. As he states of failures of agricultural development schemes, “[many projects] have often languished, not because of a lack of external finance, but because of the society’s inability to absorb it effectively and the planners’ inability to define an efficient social strategy for development” (1985:6). However, “putting people first” does not mean simply handing over control and resources to beneficiaries but a program of directed change accomplished through what he calls “social engineering,” which requires discovering “various points of entry” through which beneficiary involvement could be implanted into a development project in order to augment the project’s effectiveness. Otherwise, Cernea asserts, “participation will remain an ideology without a social technology” (1985:7).

Though popular participation was one of the first approaches for including locals in development projects, it did not address the wider cultural system, or

social context, through which development projects emerge. Indeed, “participation” was seen by Rahnema (1992) as a new lexical tool of the development industry to solicit local support for preconceived development projects. According to Sachs (1992:5), for example, “development,” as imagined and implemented by its practitioners, employs a “system of knowledge” that “wields power by directing people’s attention; it carves out and highlights a certain reality, casting into oblivion other ways of relating to the world around us.” The development idea, “participation,” presumes that if beneficiaries (e.g., street children) just change their behaviors then development can more readily occur. This however ignores wider structural inequalities and a history of colonialism. Rahnema (1992), writing in the *Development Dictionary*, argues that “participation” functions to legitimize development objectives regardless of the potentially hazardous effects on the population or environment. Rahnema writes, “[Participation is] perceived as one of the many ‘resources’ needed to keep the *economy* alive. To participate is thus reduced to the act of partaking in the objectives of the economy, and the societal arrangement related to it” (1992:120, his emphasis). Popular participation has also enabled what has been called “socializing the costs of development” by divesting more of the responsibility and resources to the “beneficiaries” under participatory rubric. By manufacturing consent amongst local peoples to sign on to development projects, development strategists “create a bridge between the Establishment and its target populations (Rahnema 1992:121).”

But the development story is not simply about winners and losers or developers and their victims. Grillo (1997) critiques the likes of Escobar, Sachs, Rahnema, and Hancock: “There is a tendency...to see development as a monolithic enterprise, heavily controlled from the top, convinced of the superiority of its own wisdom and impervious to local knowledge, or indeed common-sense experience, a single gaze or voice which is all-powerful and beyond influence” (Grillo 1997:20). Grillo calls this the “Myth of Development,” which “...pervades much critical writing...[and] proposes that there are ‘developers’ and ‘victims of

development'...or as "Escobar adds 'resisters of development', but there is no other way" (1997: 20-21). Grillo argues that this view treats development as a unified discourse, which denies "diversity within the community of 'professional developers'...as between them and other stakeholders or 'players'" (Grillo 1997:21). For example, *the* development discourse ignores how NGOs are able to foster alternative visions of development, which often places them at odds with donor agencies (see Woost 1997). Moreover, rather than a singular monolithic discourse that dominates and replaces all other systems of knowledge and identity, Klenk (2004) shows that rural women of Uttarakhand contested a dominant representation of themselves as "backward" and "helpless" by combining a variety of discourses in unexpected and creative ways.

Rather than conceptualizing participation as a means for social engineering, Chambers (1997) sees participation as a core value necessary for removing "embedded errors" in the development process, which he sees as stemming from a neglect of "local realities." As such, he identifies personal, professional and institutional obstacles that inhibit learning during the initial phases of development planning. These include what he calls systematic errors, which sustain mistakes in conceptualizing the developmental needs and desires of people. One is due to the employment of unproven or poorly tested hypotheses that lead to deductive approaches to development. In effect, learning is inhibited by the vagaries of "scientific expertise." To illustrate, in the 1950s it was believed that protein deficiency was the major cause of malnourishment; in the 1960s, malnutrition became identified with lack of calories. Errors also occur because of cultural biases and assumptions. For example, Chambers identifies a widespread belief that poor people—and the increase of poor people—are bad for the environment. In this he cites UNICEF's 1994 *The State of the World's Children*, which he argues promoted a universal diagnosis of an inverse relationship between the health of the physical environment and the increase in the population of poor children.

The primary remedy for correcting “embedded errors,” he argues, is found in the *empowerment* of the “poor, weak, and vulnerable to express their realities, to plan and to act,” and the implementation of development that takes seriously the expressed realities and desires of intended beneficiaries (Chambers 1997:103). In meeting this objective, Chambers promotes participatory rural appraisal methods (PRA), the essence of which is a specific learning methodology that empowers local people (rather than merely soliciting support) through means which “enable rural people to share, enhance, and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act” and to “monitor and evaluate” the meeting of goals that they define (Chambers 1997:104).

“Participation,” however, is still a relational concept in that it is dependent on the ways in which the developer chooses to define it, whether it is an international lending institution (e.g., World Bank), a government, a non-governmental organization, or an individual. Uphoff (1985), a contributor to *Putting People First*, admitted as such when he stated, “We can mean many things by participation. But what is important is the involvement of beneficiaries in the design, implementation, and evaluation of a particular project as well as the relevance of the kind of participation to the goals of the project” (Uphoff 1985:376-377). But what goes unquestioned by Cernea, Chambers, and Uphoff is the choosing of “beneficiaries” and the constructed nature of the “beneficiaries” as distinct from other possible groups (who may be non-beneficiaries). For example, Ennew (1994) and Panter-Brick (2000, 2002) have argued that street children are symbols of the most destitute and most needy subjects of society. As such, they have enjoyed an “outpouring” of assistance from non-governmental organizations and their donors from around the world. As a result, many other groups, such as children living in the urban slums of Accra, are overlooked. Street children, as Ennew (1994) has indicated, have taken aid away from possibly more needy groups and have such “hijacked the urban agenda.” It is possible then that the choosing of the participants may have more to do with the cultural assumptions of the project organizer. How one decides

the relevance of a particular kind of participation, and who should do so are also unclear.

Enter Neoliberalism

Self-help narratives that emphasize beneficiary “participation” are germane to an economic philosophy called neoliberalism—a global socio-cultural system that articulates a certain version of “help.” Neoliberalism is an ideology that asserts that free, unregulated markets, trade, and capital will produce the “best possible good” for society. This entails limiting government spending, reducing taxes, and lifting tariffs on imports (Harvey 2005). Harvey states,

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political-economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is that it creates and preserves an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. (2005:1)

In terms of social policy, neoliberalism stands in stark contrast to the traditional “welfare state” where the implementation of neoliberal policies have dismantled social welfare both literally and ideologically—literally in the form of cutting social services and figuratively in the form of reshaping the identity of traditional recipients of governmental services. The social good is ensured by “maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions, and it seeks to bring all human *action* into the domain of the market” (Harvey 2005:2, his emphasis).

David Moore indicates two main phases of international political-economy after World War II. The first period he calls international Keynesianism and state-mediated capitalism, which envisioned limited state intervention in the economy with welfarist tendencies in Western Europe and the United States. After this period a new hegemony began during the 1970s, which he calls “neo-liberal, deregulated capitalism” and “remains with us today” (Moore 1995:2). This period

is marked by “flexible production and footloose capital in which the market reigns supreme” (ibid:2).

The inception of neoliberalism began with the re-establishment of international monetary stability and the creation of the Bretton Woods IFIs (i.e., World Bank, IMF, and GATT/WTO). The primary goal of these IFIs, among other things, was to anchor currencies to the U.S. dollar (Harvey 2005). Though neoliberalism was an undercurrent that had strong supporters worldwide, it was a minority view that competed with the Keynesian inspired interventions of the state over the market (Harvey 2005). However, alleged failures of state-guided export economies in the 1980s and 1990s coupled with the alleged difficulty to maintain the welfare system led to what is called the “Washington Consensus” (Holmes 2006). This consensus was made up of U.S. and British foreign policy goals. Among these policies were efforts to deregulate markets and corporate activities, and the modification of IFI policies to retrieve outstanding debts from developing countries at increased rates of interest. To pay for these loans, however, developing countries were compelled to take out even more loans—but at a further cost. These loans were called structural adjustment loans (SALs), which meant that in order to receive them, recipient nations had to agree to certain conditions. These conditionalities consisted of the following: reduction in social spending (food, health, and other basic services), deregulation of environmental controls on multinational corporations, ending government subsidies to local industries, and a reduction of tariffs on imports (Harvey 2005).

Within the neoliberal consensus is a view of the individual as a *doer* rather than a passive *recipient*. The doer is one who makes rational choices amongst alternatives unencumbered by the state. For example, Kingfisher and Goldsmith (2001) examined the role of “neoliberalism” in shaping current welfare-to-work reform (workfare) and the identities of single mothers in the United States and New Zealand. They argue that welfare-to-work policies are based on a neoliberal narrative that portrays single women with children as independent and degendered workers who seek opportunities. This is in contrast to her previous

portrayal as a single mother, dependent and vulnerable in need of services. Responding to this narrative, policy makers in both New Zealand and the United States have made cuts to social welfare programs to empower people by cutting off welfare “strings.” As a result, rather than being given provisions like food stamps or healthcare subsidies, women are provided “opportunities” for education and work. Inherent to this is a view of the doer as one who makes rational choices. Consequentially, the poor single mother receives no government subsidies and must work long hours to meet her and her children's needs while somehow being around to raise them.

The global nature of neoliberalism according to Graeber (2002:1224) is based on a notion of “freedom as choice” that is the “most totalizing framework in world history—the market—on just about everything” (2002:1224). The imposition of “freedom as choice” on the poor unburdens the state from its previous social welfare responsibilities and places it on the backs of the poor. As the individual has the freedom of unlimited gain, he or she also has the freedom for unlimited want. Within what is called the neoliberal narrative, handouts are seen to obstruct individual gain and want, whereas the proper role of the state is envisioned to simply “create and preserve” markets of opportunity. Thus, within the “neoliberal narrative” is a conception of the individual as an *entrepreneur* who maximizes his or her opportunities for market integration. To help this individual requires the training and skills necessary for his or her active participation in the market.

The above section connects the prevalent brand of self-help utilized in Ghana and CAS to neoliberalism, seen in this study as a value system that privileges the individual over society by deregulating markets and cutting government expenditures that are viewed as forms of unhelpful help. Thus, neoliberalism can be seen as what Lister calls a legitimating environment, or a social context made up of a number of audiences and shareholders who share “taken-for-granted scripts, rules and classifications [that] are the stuff of which institutions are made” (2002:178-179). The legitimating environment not only

constructs a notion of appropriate practice but also defines the characteristics of the targeted population. As such, street children are characterized not as innocents in need of adult protection but as individuals who are capable and responsible for meeting their own needs. Likewise, NGOs deemed legitimate by such organizations as the World Bank make policies designed to encourage children to seek out their *own* potential.

CHILDHOOD

The following unpacks the meanings that are often assumed about the targeted population, street children. I present the literature that explores the meanings associated with Western forms of childhood and how these meanings serve as the basis for constructing a view of the street child as missing a home and family and therefore the most at risk for poor health. I then discuss how childhood is envisioned as disappearing throughout the world, rendering street children in particular as blank slates for development initiatives. Within this context, I explore the relationship of neoliberalism to what the World Bank identifies as “promising practices and approaches” with respect to street children. As such, I argue that a neoliberal conceptualization of help remakes the street child into a miniature adult, which has strong implications for who is given aid and how aid is to be administered.

The Meaning of Childhood

Hecht (1998) indicates two views of childhood that form a continuum where on one end childhood is seen as immutable and universal, and on the other, childhood is seen as socially contextual and variant over time and space. The former is typical of the view held by developmental psychologists (James and Prout 1997). For example, Jean Piaget, founder of developmental psychology, related actions and behavior of children to hierarchical, genetically-based development stages that all children, everywhere, go through (Piaget and Inhelder 1969/2000). James and Prout (1997) take a different tack by indicating

the relative nature of childhood across cultures: they argue that childhood is a social construction “distinct from biological immaturity...neither natural nor universal feature of human groups but appears as a specific structural and cultural component in many societies” (1997:8). As any human development textbook would show, children mature in a more or less predictable pattern. However, as Qvortrup (1997) warns, without consideration of the ways in which culture shapes the meanings of childhood, children will be reduced to “human becomings.” A more current (biocultural) approach recognizes biological differences *and* the ways in which a particular population will assign meanings to these differences.

In European and North American middle-class society (referred to in this thesis as “Western”), children are portrayed and treated as innocents—too young to cope with adult realities. The “innocent child” in Western discourse inserts a wedge (i.e., childhood) between adults and children that makes taboo the mixing of the two. However, as Ariès’ (1962) work attests, differentiating between adulthood and childhood was not common in eighteenth century Europe. For example, speaking of the diary of Henry IV’s physician, Heroard, Ariès states that the modern reader would be “astonished” by the sexual liberties taken with children by adults in the beginning of the seventeenth century (1962:42). By the end of eighteenth century, a “great movement” was underway, led by moralists and Jesuit clergy, to set a boundary indicating the differences between children and adults. Led by elites who conceptualized children as “sweet,” “simple,” and a source of amusement and relaxation for adults (and affecting lower class mothers who “coddled” their children), moralist pedagogues expanded a view of adults’ polluting influences on children—who “treat them in an idolatrous manner” (1962:44). Through widespread institutionalization of education, the amusement of the child yielded to a sense that children were God’s fragile creatures in need of protection and reformation. It is this point, he argues, that under the banner of childhood innocence, the child, in both mind and body, was subjected to

discipline and control practices exercised first by an emergent educational establishment and then adopted *en-masse* by the family.

The significance of Ariès seminal work relates to how childhood can be contextualised by subjecting it to historical analysis. Childhood is an unstable concept, and as Ariès shows, a recent historical invention of the Western world. More contemporary literature builds on Ariès work by looking outside the West to how other societies have constructed, and continue to construct, their own notions of childhood. For example, Hecht (1998) argues in his analysis of street children in northeast Brazil that childhood is not an intrinsic category but a social context formed out of historical processes. From a complex history of colonial social relations there arose two overarching childhoods: one rich and one poor. He notes that in Brazilian middle-class to elite society children are nurtured by their families in that they are protected from adult vices and the responsibilities of making a living. Children are given the space and the time to play and to learn in an environment set off from the working worlds of adults. On the other hand, children of the working classes "nurture" the family by sharing the responsibility for its maintenance. This includes working for money or staying home to take care of younger siblings while parents work (Hecht 1998).

Nurturing childhoods stand in stark contrast to the middle class and elite childhoods depicted in Western discourse in which children are developed through the protection of the home and freedom from work (James 1993; Qvortrup 1997). As such, parents hold the responsibility to meet all the children's needs. This view has been articulated by Hecht (1998), Jenkins (1998), James (1993), Prout (1997), Qvortrup (1997) and others as a cultural myth that informs how people think, and act toward, children. The following identifies more specific cultural constructs that inform a sense of a healthy childhood and presents a discussion on how street children can be seen in relation to these ideas.

How Nurtured Childhoods Inform a Notion of the “Street Child”

Jenkins (1998:8) addresses what he perceives as a “myth of childhood innocence” in Western society: “Too often, our culture imagines childhood as a utopian space, separate from adult cares and worries, free from sexuality, outside social division, closer to nature and the primitive world... more just, pure, and innocent, and in the end, waiting to be corrupted or protected by adults.” The innocent child informs a sense of street children as vulnerable and *in need of* (adult) *help*—i.e., adult protection and provision. Moss et al. (2000:245) critique this conception as such by stating that the street child is “classified as coming from an abnormal family and is constructed, through the language used, as deficient (having a need), weak (being needy), and a subject of charity.” As a consequence, street children are conceptualized (by the aid industry in particular) as lacking a childhood, or as Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman (1998) say of street children, “childhood outsiders.” Seen as lying at the farthest point from a nurtured childhood, street children garner much attention in the form of research and resources. However, according to Ennew (1994:25), a leading scholar in anthropological studies on children and childhood, street children are more myth than reality and have “hijacked the urban agenda.”

Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman (1998) indicate that children living in the street appear to Westerners and elites in the developing world as trespassers in public domains, and as such, “out of place.” Indeed, street children can be seen to exhibit a drastically different childhood when they are juxtaposed against the nurtured child, prompting such contradictory emotions as fear and anger, and compassion and pity. Worldwide disputes over policies to help street children manifest these emotions in competing ideas on street child definitions, how to identify a street child, and how to help a street child (Panter-Brick 2000; Ennew 1994). For example, UNICEF at one time claimed that there are over 20 million street children in the world. To arrive at this estimate, UNICEF conflated all children who work in the street with all children who work *and* live in the street

(Volpi 2003). In South Africa alone, Donald and Swart-Kruger (1994) reported more than one million children “on the street,” a number which included children who work on farms. Indeed, the street child is defined by what he or she lacks: a home and family. And this conception of the street child informs who is, and who is not, a street child.

Glauser (1997) contends that the Western notion of home is the primary basis for the construction of the street child. In his deconstruction of the “street child,” the street is a place of danger and corruption, endangering and making dangerous children who inhabit it. As Ennew and Swart-Kruger (2003:4) state, “[Home] is the basis of the assumption that street children must be living antisocial, immoral, chaotic lives and are thus necessarily a public order problem.” The negative image of street life based on the ideology of home had led to an overwhelming tendency for social welfare programs and state and local governments to advocate for their removal to juvenile detention or placement centers, which separates children from their support networks in the street while their experience is regarded as bad or worthless (Ennew and Swart-Kruger 2003). Other reactions are politicians and communities that denied street children’s existence despite evidence to the contrary (Shanahan 2003). The stereotyping of street children as homeless led Glauser to conclude that homelessness is a myth that supports interventions based on returning childhood to them by reinstating play, education, and growth.

The street child is also seen in relation to the nuclear family. In fact, street children are often characterized as having no family or victims of “eroding family values” (Panter-Brick 2002; e.g., Beauchemin 1999; CAS 2003). Current research, however, refutes an assertion that street children are completely severed from their families. La Fontaine (1990), for instance, argues that the family-less notion of the street child is informed by the nuclear family, though it bears little resemblance to the variety of kinship arrangements both past and present. Street children come from various family types and homes including those with no kin or affines (Swart 1987; Espínola 1988) while many live with

stepparents or female-headed households (e.g., Hecht 1998). Related to this, therefore, is a belief that street children are cut-off from adult influence and support. However, as shown by van Ham et al. (1992), street children in Accra formed relationships with local fishermen who gave them food, money and advice.

Constructing the street child on the basis of what she lacks—a childhood, home, and family—can potentially mask the harsh realities of urban poor children who must work to support the family and often go without vital necessities. In fact, Panter-Brick has argued that an unfounded “street child as most-at-risk discourse” (2002:160) permeates the aid industry. Some recent studies challenge the “myth of the street child” by comparing health profiles (growth status, morbidity, and psychological stress) of street children versus their more “home-based” peers (Dobrowolska and Panter-Brick 1998; Gross et al. 1996; Panter-Brick 1996, 2001; Wright et al. 1993). Panter-Brick and Dobrowolska (1998) have shown that in Ethiopia growth statuses were higher and stress levels were lower for both “street-working children”²⁷ and street-living children (homeless) relative to rural home-based children. However, in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Wright et al. (1993) show that “street-living children”²⁸ enjoyed better physical and nutritional health statuses than those who worked. Moreover, Gross et al. (1996) support a strong argument that both street-living and street-working children had better health outcomes than the universally advocated “stay at home and be healthy” village and city children, as evidenced by higher average heights and weights and lower prevalence of stunting and wasting (indicative of higher rates of morbidity). This conclusion is echoed in the Panter-Brick et al. (1996) study of street-living children in Nepal. She and her colleagues show that homeless children exhibited fewer signs of growth impairment than either rural children or street-working (squatter) children. Moreover, they suggest that homeless children had a greater habituation to

²⁷ Street-working children relate to what Hecht (1998) calls nurturing children. Although these children have a home and a family, they bear responsibility for its maintenance.

²⁸ Street children.

stress than all other groups as indicated by decreased temporal variance of cortisol levels (a stress hormone) relative to their peers. As these studies suggest, the at-risk discourse is more based on notions of the ideal lifestyle of childhoods of children living in the West than with the realities of poverty located within various cultural contexts of the “Third World.” Moreover, these studies implicitly acknowledge that street children are in the streets because they are developmentally and nutritionally better off there than if they were living in homes.

To my knowledge, similar studies have not been conducted in Ghana, which corresponds to what Ennew (2003) has indicated as a general lack in the use of control groups for assessing health indicators for street children relative to their peers. In fact, other than age, there is a general lack of data that compare even urban and rural children²⁹ There is an implicit assertion in discourses on Ghanaian street children that they are the “most at risk” simply because they lack what other children are said to have. For instance, Ghana’s Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare proposed a Policy Framework on Street Children in which working children were described as potentially becoming street children by virtue of what their working in the street, while “abandoned children” were described as being “completely without a home or a family,” “unfortunate,” and “rarely successful” in being “rehabilitated” (1997:1). The document seems to say that the further a child is away from a home and a family (and therefore a childhood), the more destitute his or her situation becomes. Not only does the Ghanaian government lack statistics to support this claim, CAS and UNICEF also fail to present data to indicate that street children are most at risk. In one example, CAS indicates that a significant number of boys and girls engage in prostitution, putting them at risk for HIV-AIDS,³⁰ however, in a CAS newsletter (June 2004), CAS reports that it does not know of a case where a street child has

²⁹ However, see GSS 2003.

³⁰ UNICEF (2003) reports that 24 thousand children, ages 0-14, have been diagnosed with HIV, which is the lowest in West Africa. Data can be accessed at http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ghana_statistics.html.

contracted the virus. But in subsequent newsletters, CAS reports on new programs for targeting street children at-risk for HIV, leading the reader to assume that HIV is a significant and current problem among street children.

UNICEF's statistics on Ghanaian children generally show that they are not doing well. For example, UNICEF (2004) reports that the mortality rate (11%) for children under 5 is ranked 42nd out of 192 nations, infant mortality rate is 68/1000, the percent of infants with low birth weight is at 16%, 22% of children are moderately underweight, 5% of children are severely underweight, 30% of children show signs of stunting, and 7% of children show signs of wasting.

The nurtured and innocent childhood is not a biological universal, rather it is a value-laden ideology that informs parents, communities and governments as to how to raise children. This ideology is found predominantly in the West but is prevalent among the elite classes in the “Third World.” The nurturing child concept, through notions of home and family, constructs its street children as the most-at-risk for poor health. However, data are noticeably absent and do not support a claim that street children are more worse off than poor working children who have “families” and “homes” in Ghana. As I have indicated, the consequence for perpetuating an unsubstantiated claim is that it may hide other truths, such as the structural reasons why children work and live in the street. Another consequence, as will be discussed below, is that the myth of the innocent child contributes to a global sense that childhoods are disappearing.

Disappearing Childhoods

As described in Chapter 2, colonialism created the conditions for divergent childhoods in Ghana—a privileged childhood distinguished by formal education and adult protection, and a childhood of the poor farmer distinguished by lack of education and relative independence. Due to the entrenchment of development programs in the 1980s, rural poverty intensified and farmers increasingly left their homes in search for wage work in the cities. Children were left unattended and without the skills necessary to make a living. As such, children started coming to

the streets in search of a better life. However, their rural presence is “out of place” in the modern city of Accra, imbuing in public officials and foreign visitors a sense that there is something wrong with Ghana’s children. This sense was recently expressed by Autobi, the President of the University of Legon, in response to widespread beliefs of the mistreatment of Ghanaian youth by corrupt politicians. He stated, “It is imperative to submit that the youth are usually exploited for dysfunctional activities...The youth are our future and they must at all times behave in an orderly manner, so that no charlatan will attempt to misuse them for unorthodox ends” (*Graphic Ghana* 2005).

Scheper-Hughes and Sargent (1998) argue that there is a global sense of missing childhoods in which children are regarded more as adults than children, with all its expectations, responsibilities, and punishments. In England, Holland, and the United States, for instance, the media warn of an “ascendant job culture” (i.e., delinquent youth culture) and “roving street gangs,” while religious and social activists express fears of children exploited by sexual images on television, condoms that “have given [teenagers] an exaggerated sense of safety and prompted more...[teens] to move sex outside of marriage,”³¹ and strange and often violent child-rearing practices imported by immigrating foreigners.³²

Though the notion of childhood varies across ethnic, race, class, and gender lines, there is surprising consistency of what is meant by it in the Western world (James and Prout 1997). This uniformity of meaning contributes to the growing sense that has emerged in recent times that childhood is disappearing. Postman, in his book *The Disappearance of Childhood* (1982), discusses the idea of childhood as “one of the great inventions of the Renaissance” that like all “social artifacts...its existence is not inevitable” (1982:xii). The “dazzling speed” by which childhood is disappearing in the Western world is so prevalent that “few

³¹ Focus on the Family, www.family.org/cforum/fosi/abstinence.

³² The sense that foreigners are corrupting local youths was recently expressed in a BBC article entitled, “Exorcisms are part of our Culture,” posted by BBC World Edition (2005). The article described an indictment of three Angolan immigrants charged with ritually torturing a young British girl. The three Angolan immigrants believed the girl to be possessed by an evil spirit, “ndoki,” known to prey on young children.

need much convincing” (1982:xii). According to Postman, the “Age of Television” (1950s onward) precipitated the disappearance of the invisible line that had once separated adults from children. Before television, the slow and demanding process of becoming literate reinforced a distinction between children and adults, as adults controlled certain forms of information deemed shameful by a “moral majority.” As children advanced through grades, new “secrets” are revealed as the child matures and is deemed ready for such knowledge. However, this all would change once unregulated television images invaded the home and school and exposed “shameful secrets” to children before they were revealed by adults. Television makes no distinction between the adult and the child and relies on a continuous supply of novel and interesting information to maintain ratings. “Thus, television must make use of every existing taboo in the culture”, which renders for consumption such secrets as incest, violence, homosexuality, and mental illness (1982:82). Postman stated, “What was once shameful may become a “social problem” or a “political issue” or a “psychological phenomenon,” but in the process it must lose its dark and fugitive character as well as some of its moral force (1982:87). In sum, Postman theorized that the loss of childhood is a result of technology, which replaced adults as the primary socializing instruments for children.

While Postman’s argument rests on technological determinism for explaining the disappearance of childhood, Field (1995) shows how the technologies of education have resulted in a “loss of childhood” in safe and prosperous societies. In her study of school-aged children in Japan, she reveals a national narrative of competitive capitalism that has been incorporated by the school system and the family. This has made for children “education as endless labor.” Education, however, is not considered an act of labor; child labor laws do not protect children from parents who coerce their children to attend cram schools that run from 5PM to 9PM after regular school, which ends at 3PM. There is no redress for children suffering from high rates of blood cholesterol, ulcers, blood pressure, and diabetes as a result of the endless pressures of

schooling and test taking (Field 1995). Moreover, education has become a form of abuse and endless source of stress as evidenced by increased rates of violent attacks against pupils, rising student suicide rates, and a general increase in bullying behavior.

Scheper-Hughes and Sargent in *Small Wars* (1998) analyze the cultural effects of global economic and political restructuring on the appearance of disappearing childhoods in the developing world. For example, Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman connect what they call “Brazil’s failed economic development model” to the appearance of homeless and abandoned children on Brazil’s urban landscape. These children who appear on the street are considered trespassers by elites in Brazil who share a view of childhood similar to that in the West (Hecht 1998). As such, they exhibit a missing childhood evoking in elites ambivalent emotions of fear, anger, and pity. Hecht (1998) explains the nature of childhood for *favela* children.

The Western middle-class assertion that childhood is a natural and innocent state, created and protected by responsible adults, underlies a sense that childhood is disappearing throughout the world (Aries 1962; Postman 1982). The fact that so many children in the “Third World” do not exhibit the qualities of the innocent child informs a sense that these children do not have a childhood. As such, children are perceived as fast becoming like adults as the line between the child and the adult is blurred by technology, adult expectations, crime, and poverty. The following identifies a notion of disappearing (innocent) childhoods as creating the ideological space through which a neoliberal social welfare narrative has changed the discourse on street children from innocent, vulnerable children in need of a family and home to an able-bodied, adult-like child who is endowed with the capabilities to make responsible choices within her own environments.

Neoliberalism and “Promising Practices and Approaches”

UNICEF and CAS (1999:5) provide a description of the life of a street child: “Street children lack love and compassion. They are being denied their childhood and have matured far beyond their years.” This characterization is guided by a universal vision of a “safe, happy, and protected childhood,” wherein children neither engage in wage work nor suffer (Boyden 1990:186; see also Aries 1962; Postman 1982). Street children are seen as childhood outsiders, and, because they lack the vulnerability and passivity indicative of a universal sense of childhood, they have prematurely become like adults (Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998). Thinking of the street child as a sort of miniature adult is a product of the intersection of current development strategies and discourses on children’s rights as citizens. Neoliberalism focuses on the individual and the choices he makes. This corresponds with current rights rhetoric that emphasize the rights of the individual. If street children are to be seen as without a childhood with no possibility of returning a home and family to them, then what is left is the rights and responsibilities guaranteed to all citizens. The goal is then to channel the children’s existing capabilities to greater productivity in the marketplace.

How to channel children’s productivity has endured some debate. Ever since the Candelaria massacre of street children in 1993 in Rio de Janeiro in which off-duty vigilante police officers shot and killed sleeping street children there has been a tremendous outpouring of aid and research targeted at street children (see Ennew 1994; Panter-Brick 2002; Volpi 2003). Two general approaches to directing aid and expertise correspond to Ellerman’s (2005) twin notions of development self-help. Aid that seeks to supply children’s basic needs generally is directed toward removing children from the street and placing them in shelters or returning them to their families. This is widely considered indicative of an adult-centered approach (van Beers 1996). This approach assumes that adults know better than children what they need, thus making children’s views and

perspectives irrelevant. The child-centered approach on the other hand endeavors to take into account children's voices and perceptions of reality—e.g., conceptions of home, family, and childhood (van Beers 1996; Panter-Brick 2002). The approach advocates for children's rights to protection, provision, and participation³³ through negotiations between adults and children as to how best to ensure that these rights are acquired. Participation is crucial to this endeavor: helpers (adults) must identify the child's motivations and channel these toward productive ends (e.g., healthcare, education, and job skills). However, this type of help potentially overrides self-help. By seeking to find the child's motivations, enticements are offered as behavioral modifiers to engineer a child's initiative toward whatever end is deemed appropriate.

Today, there is a general consensus within the aid community, conceived as "promising practices and approaches," that children can serve as agents of change and are capable of participation (Volpi 2003; Panter-Brick 2002; Morrow and Richards 1996; Ennew 1994). The World Bank, UNICEF, and a multitude of NGOs promote the child-centered-approach in that these institutions advocate to "work *with* children rather than *for* them, thus giving prime importance to child participation" (Panter-Brick 2002:156; emphasis added). But what is it that street children are participating in? In a recent World Bank report (Volpi 2002), a summary is given of what it deems as NGOs who implement "promising practices and approaches." NGOs lauded by the World Bank emphasize a child's choice to leave the street and expand opportunities for children who desire to leave the street. The World Bank, however, did not invite NGOs that emphasize what it calls "charity-based programs" that concentrate on meeting basic needs. For example, The World Bank stated: "Goodwill alone cannot guarantee a positive, lasting impact on the lives of children. Focusing only on assistance is just as ineffective and can even make the problem worse, by increasing the child's dependence on charity and destroying its incentive to leave the street" (Volpi

³³ As per the contractual agreement among signatories to the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child (1991) of which Ghana is a member party.

2002:28). The report states further that development is primarily the child's responsibility: "[They] cannot be forced to leave the street. Several established programs that have had a positive impact begin with a phased-in transition to allow children to gradually change their lifestyle *if they wish*" (Volpi 2002:7, emphasis added). As such, the World Bank gave preference "to development oriented initiatives, aimed at increasing children's opportunities to be integrated into... the labor market (2002:8)."

Development aid seeks to empower the individual to improve his or her life. For development programs targeting street children, "participation" is conceived as helping the child to acquire a skill-set necessary to integrate into the formal economy. This view of participation creates a neoliberal legitimizing context of appropriate action wherein individual choice and expanding opportunities are emphasized, whereas provisions are seen to be debilitating. As such, the World Bank praises NGOs who ascribe to a notion of the child as endowed with the capacity, similar to adults, to reshape her future. The task of development then is to steer those children, deemed outside childhood and endowed with the right to choose, on to a path of development and economic integration.

CONCLUSION

The above section has outlined an emergent view of the street child as a "rights bearing" citizen, a view that has formed out of a global sense of disappearing childhoods. The absent or abandoned childhood contrasts with the nurtured and innocent child located in Western discourses on childhood. As Earls and Carlson (1999:72) argue, "the entire concept of childhood has been reconstructed... Children are citizens...[T]he idea that they are simply immature creatures whose needs must be met by parents or other charitably inclined adults is becoming obsolete. As citizens, children have rights that entitle them to the resources required to protect and promote their development." Furthermore,

children are viewed as agents of change and capable of participation (Panter-Brick 2002).

The child-centered approach stresses that children should be empowered by making them part of a dialogue for effecting change in their lives. While promoting child participation is a good thing, a neoliberal agenda has altered the discourse on children's rights to achieve two things: 1) it further removes a demarcation line between children and adults by emphasizing individual choice and because street children are seen as miniature adults 2) it subjects street children to a program of conditional self-help. As will be demonstrated by an analysis of CAS fieldworkers' perspectives on street children, removing the line between adults and children puts the responsibility for self-motivation directly on children of the poor, who already lack the supports (e.g., food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare) that more privileged groups of children enjoy.

The innocent child concept is informed by neoliberalism and so leads to a reconceptualization of street children as miniature adults who are capable and responsible for directing their own futures. In the following chapter, I show how this leads to CAS's particular approach on helping street children.

CHAPTER 4: CAS MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter I present data that demonstrate how CAS's policies, practices and representations of street children contain within them a conceptual model of street children as miniature adults. In discussion, I connect this data to CAS's negotiation of national and international narratives on social development. CAS depicts street children as miniature adults as this image conforms to a neoliberal model of social development that emphasizes individual responsibility and choice. I also show how the emphasis on individual choice interacts with ideas of modernity and progress. The values of choice and individualism intersect with modernity and progress as rural children are seen as backward and street children are viewed as potentially modern and capable. I argue that the latter characterization legitimates CAS's practices and overrides conceptions of the child as innocent by rendering her amenable to a program of conditional aid.

CAS's market-based approach to helping street children is a product of its struggle to gain legitimacy among donors and potential donors in an environment increasingly skeptical of NGOs operating in the "Third World" (Fisher 1997). As Lister (2002) argues, if an NGO does not have legitimacy, then it will not have donors to support it. Sogge (1999) in fact suggests that foreign-funded NGOs operating in the "Third World" are experiencing a "crisis of legitimacy" that in recent years has cast doubt on their accountability, representativeness, and the right to be involved in policy formulation and implementation. Indeed, the status of NGO as the new panacea to cure the ills of development stagnation has come under sharp critique in recent years (Edwards and Hulme 1995).

Lister (2002) indicates that the ways in which NGOs acquire legitimacy is poorly theorized in literature on development, where legitimacy is only assessed *vis a vis* technical measures that include legal compliance, duly constituted internal authority, consistency between professed mission and actual behavior,

accountability to government and target populations, performance, and efficiency. This technical approach, according to Lister, “masks deeper questions” like legitimacy for whom, for what, and how it is to be created. To answer these questions, Lister presents legitimacy as a social construct that is shaped by a “legitimizing environment.” Rather than assuming a universal definition of legitimacy, she argues that legitimacy comes from a socially constructed environment that is not just “norms and values but taken-for-granted scripts, rules and classifications [that] are the stuff of which institutions are made” (Lister 2002:178). Legitimizing environments are not uniform; they relate to a number of audiences, stakeholders, and constituencies, both internal and external.

Normative aspects of legitimacy are based on the congruence between the ideals and “mental models” of the stakeholders (donors) and the agency (Dowling and Pfeffer 1975). CAS’s stakeholders are student volunteers from northern Europe, private supporters, and secular and religious donor agencies, such as UNICEF and CORDAID. Dowling and Pfeffer (1975) indicate that organizations identify with certain symbols in order to enhance their legitimacy within the demands of their stakeholders. Using this concept of legitimacy, I analyze the conceptualization of individual choice and participation by unpacking the underlying norms, values, and “taken-for-granted scripts,” such as those relating to progress and modernity, through thematic analysis of CAS materials. I conclude by discussing how a neoliberal legitimating context has created the conditions through which street children are conceived as miniature adults and as such, they can engage fully in the market through the use of their most valuable asset, labor.

THE STREET CHILD AS MINIATURE ADULT

Thematic analysis of CAS’s website and everyday activities reveals a pervasive mentality that emphasizes the child’s abilities to make choices in seeking out his own means for acquiring help. CAS’s website and program

activities are predominately organized around a conception of the street child as a rights-bearing citizen who actively pursues his own potential. In pursuit of his potential, opportunities are made available in which the street child is presumed to be able to make informed, rational *choices* about his future. This mentality is based on a perception of the street child as a miniature adult.

Thematic analysis of pictures on CAS's website reveals a pattern of the child independently learning (see table 1). On CAS's website there are 48 pictures that contain children within them. Of these pictures, only four (8%) contain an instructor within the frame. Conversely, a majority of the 48 pictures (52%) show children actively learning or performing a skill without the direct intervention of CAS staff (see figures 1 and 2).³⁴ The absence of adults in the frame depicts children as "doers" who learn and grow independently.

The emphasis on children individually learning structures program activities as well. For example, in CAS's education and demonstration departments I document a program of indirect teaching in which children are encouraged to participate at their own pace and educational level. They join in any group they wish and more often seem to ignore direct attempts at teaching. Hence, more motivated children seem to learn, while less motivated children either do not show up for class or simply play during the lessons. CAS provides educational opportunities, such as literacy or craft-making, but it is the child's right to participate or not.

Everyday activities are also structured by an emphasis on the child making choices. For example, the act of giving something freely to the child is seen as inhibiting her right to live her life as she chooses. On my first day of fieldwork, for instance, I contemplated giving a street child who helped me with my bags a *dash* (or tip). Before I gave the child the *dash*, I asked a staff member if giving a *dash* was okay while on CAS property. He admonished me by saying that "CAS does not provide food...We rely on educating children rather than

³⁴ Source for figures 1 and 2: <http://www.cas-ghana.com/>

Table 1: CAS Website

n=48	HOR/Mini-Refuges	Street
Learning (adults out of frame)	21 ^{*1} (44%) ^{*2}	0
Posing	6 (12.5%)	1 (2%)
Learning (adults in frame)	4 (8%)	0
Playing	3 (6%)	1 (2%)
Talking with staff	2 (4%)	0
Standing still (not posing)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Sleeping (day)	1 (2%)	0
Sleeping (night)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Working	1 (2%)	1 (2%)

Table 1: Thematic analysis of visual representations of street children on CAS's website (August 2006). Column headings indicate location; rows indicate what children were doing in the picture.

^{*1} Number of incidents.

^{*2} Percent of total (n=48).



Figure 1: Children learning with instructor outside frame



Figure 2: Child actively engaged in a skilled trade

giving handouts. To give a *dash* discourages learning". In response I asked, "Is education then CAS's central goal here?" He replied with a twist on an old adage: "It's better to teach a horse how to get water than to give him drink" (fieldnote; June 2, 2004).

CAS does not base its activities on a belief that street children are helpless dependents; rather CAS shows that they are active agents in their own environment who can learn independently and participate in activities at the level that they see fit. Street children are rendered as miniature adults as they are offered literacy and trades classes and shown to freely and independently participate in these activities.

LEGITIMATE WAYS OF HELPING CHILDREN IN GHANA

CAS's depiction of street children as miniature adults is congruent with a global neoliberal legitimating environment that includes the Ghanaian government, the World Bank and the IMF. These institutions espouse a formulation of help that asserts that the best way to help people is to create markets of opportunity and develop people's skills so as to be able to take advantage of the opportunities created by a market free of government control (Harvey 2005). In an analysis of my observations of a rival NGO, an interview with CAS's director, CAS-sponsored publications, and fieldnotes I show that CAS's policy of sponsoring only those street children who show an interest can be seen as a response to the political pressures put upon it by the Ghanaian government.

As CAS expects children to prove themselves by making adjustments, so too do the government and ILIs expect the citizens of Ghana to adjust to their economic recovery programs. Before 1982, Ghana had resisted open-market policies of structural adjustment reforms in favor of protecting local industries and laborers from market forces that threatened local farmers with the importation of cheaper goods (Hutchful 2002). Ghana also resisted the conditionalities that came attached to structural adjustment loans, such as the reduction of

government expenditures through cuts to social services and public employees and the implementation of user fees in health and education (Hutchful 2002). However, in the 1980s Ghana was faced with a growing trade deficit, bloated bureaucracy, increasing population and poverty, droughts, and a massive influx of immigrants and returning refugees from Nigeria (Pearce 2002). As such, the Rawlings and subsequent administrations gave up some of Ghana's autonomy to stave off further political, economic, and social decline. Herein lay two competing narratives for addressing social development, charity versus conditional aid, which are intertwined with notions of centralized government planning versus the "invisible hand" of the market, and notions of sovereignty and dependency. The following paragraphs describe CAS's approach to helping street children as a product of its ongoing efforts to balance competing ideas and narratives.

A brief analysis of a rival NGO working with street children in Accra illuminates the legitimating environment in which CAS operates. Safe Haven is staffed and funded by a Pentecostal church in England and is not recognized by the Ghanaian government. Like the nationalist government of the past, this NGO feeds and shelters the children without expectation to recoup costs.³⁵ Safe Haven is also paternalistic and adult-centered in that adult staff decide what the children need and requires them to obey rules, such as meeting nightly curfews and attending religious activities. As such, Safe Haven can be seen to employ a charity-based model that is similar to the Nkrumah government's efforts to subsidize the poor by supplying food, shelter, healthcare, and education for all, though without the overt religious orientation.

Safe Haven's approach does not conform to CAS's free market approach and is deemed illegitimate by CAS's administration. In a semi-structured interview, I asked CAS's director why CAS does not employ a similar approach:

You see the first years we had a similar approach. We also thought we should feed them, we should get them out of the street very quickly, and things like

³⁵ In fact, my visits to this NGO often found that the same children who visited CAS during the day, seek shelter with this NGO at night.

that. We had even a social worker who accompanied street children back to the village. Sometimes the man was gone for two weeks for one particular child. But [he] couldn't find the parents, because the child lied to him where the parents were. For the very reason he left home [was that] there was a problem at home, and he didn't want to reveal where that problem was. So, after half a year, we said, "this is not a good approach, because we spent a lot of money, manpower" and what did we achieve? Nothing. So we had the same approach as many of these organizations. And after some time we said, "No, this should be different." They should take the initiative, they should decide to leave the streets. If they don't decide, we cannot do anything. (Director interview; July 20, 2004)

The neoliberal narrative emphasizing individual choice is clearly recognizable in this passage. CAS had at one time had an approach similar to that of Safe Haven: to protect the children by feeding them and sheltering them. According to CAS's director, Safe Haven's approach did not fit into the "common sense" of the market: too much money invested with too little return on the investment.

CAS appears to organize its policies and practices so that it does not look as if it lures street children to the city by giving "gifts." According to an interview with CAS's director, the Ghanaian government has difficulty in recognizing the street child population. At first, CAS observations of street children in Ghana were met with opposition, which prompted CAS staff, in conjunction with UNICEF, to conduct social surveys like the Exodus (1999) to map out the "problem" and provide hard evidence as to the fact that children were coming unaccompanied to the street. This research prompted the government to draft the "Street Children in Ghana: Policy Framework" in 1995, which sets forth a number of economic initiatives designed to better integrate street children into the Ghanaian economy.³⁶ Based on this, CAS stands to meet its objectives to

³⁶ Though, according to Shanahan (2001:15), the policy framework has yet to be implemented and "has no teeth."

support the street child with greater efficiency if the local government is behind its policies and practices.

Indeed, public officials express a wariness of CAS activities in that its mere presence is thought to create the conditions for dependency. As recorded in a July 15th fieldnote, an Accra Municipal Authority (AMA) official explained that NGOs like CAS entice children to leave their homes in rural communities because it offers services, such as education and healthcare, which Ghana's local communities often do not provide. I asked the Director about this accusation, and he responded, "Politicians believe that CAS programs harbor an urban bias in that they only sponsor capacity building measures in the city" (Director interview; July 20, 2004). Elsewhere, Shanahan, co-founder of CAS, alleged that local elites accuse CAS of transferring authority from the household to the NGO, which in effect makes CAS a quasi-parent to the child (Shanahan 2003). He reports that politicians often call him "the priest who has brought criminals to the area" (Shanahan 2001:12).

The flipside of the state's fear of NGOs is CAS's distrust of the state and society. Indeed, my fieldnotes show a common anti-national theme at CAS in which "traditions" (and state legislators clinging to them) are seen to hamper social development goals. Rural families are portrayed as resisting policies that are seen to be good for them. I note in my fieldnotes several instances where CAS staff, administration, and volunteers state that "the problem with Ghana is with the Ghanaians themselves." In my July 19th fieldnote (2004) I write that the assistant director in the Demonstration department said, "Ghanaians are too dependent on outsiders to do things for them." In fact, there was a newspaper article pinned up in the break room by a Dutch volunteer nurse that condemned Ghanaians for pitying themselves: It states, "Ghanaians would rather sigh than work to get out of difficult situations." This attitude is further echoed in the justification provided by the Director for why Ghanaians have not been more involved in the development of programs. He states, "It is very difficult for Ghanaians to accept something new if they don't feel it is their own" Director

interview; July 20, 2004). One reason often cited by administrators is that Ghana's government and society hold too closely to evaporating Ghanaian traditions, such as the extended family and the apprenticeship system. According to George, the assistant director: "Public officials appeal to the past to correct social problems, hoping that children and their families will be fixed by a return to the values of the extended family" (George interview: July 23, 2004). Additionally, CAS notes that Ghana's apprenticeship system and the economic role children serve in their families is neither safe nor productive (CAS 2003).

CAS is not simply a reflection of the Ghanaian government's objectives nor Ghanaian society in general. Any given organization's approach will vary dependent upon who is its donors, the political climate, the history of the organization, and the idiosyncrasies of the organization's administrators (Hamada and Sibley 1994). Thus, any depiction of a grassroots NGO as a slave to an international development organization, government, or network of donors ignores the ways in which organizations maneuver within legitimating environments. For example, in an ethnographic study of local grassroots NGOs working with street children in Mexico City, Magazine (2003) shows that grassroots NGOs will accept parts of a neoliberal narrative like their distrust of paternalistic institutions (e.g., government bureaucracy) that often undermine independence, and reject other parts like the belief that a free market is the remedy for street children. He further indicates that grassroots NGOs negotiate both national and international narratives, such as a national sovereignty narrative advocating for independence and an international free market narrative advocating global market integration, in their efforts to empower families and communities who seek to overcome the more harmful effects of structural adjustment (2003). In a way, organizations must decide for themselves the costs and benefits of adopting particular aspects of a narrative, as each will confer advantages and disadvantages to the organization and the people it claims to serve. As I have shown, CAS balances competing notions of social development where on one hand it adopts a government-sponsored free market approach

and, on the other, resists more nationalistic tendencies that appear rooted in Ghana's traditions.

The tension between the state and foreign-funded NGOs operating in Ghana corresponds to what Hutchful (2002) calls the "NGOization" of Ghana, which has led to fear by the Ghanaian government that NGOs are becoming too independent and, like other forms of colonial control, are a threat to national sovereignty. However, legitimacy is complicated for foreign-funded NGOs because they must apply a policy orientation (neoliberalism) that undermines national sovereignty, which is exactly the perception that CAS resists.

LEGITIMACY AND PROGRESS

Another aspect of legitimacy with which CAS must contend is the notion of progress. As the Director indicated to me, "Donors want to see that children are making *progress*" (Director interview; July 20, 2004, emphasis added). The notion of progress harkens back to the Enlightenment ideal that the natural and social condition of society can be improved through human intervention (Schech and Haggis 2000). Enlightenment thinkers envisioned progress as giving "autonomy to human purpose and proposing the prospect of unlimited improvement through unaided human effort" (Cohen and Shenton 1995:31). The idea of "progressive development" soon appeared in the nineteenth century as a moral justification for colonization, seen by many in Europe as a natural and inevitable evolution of the human race (Schech and Haggis 2000:32). According to Cowen and Shenton (1995), it was through this process that individual prosperity became inseparable from the prosperity and growth of all. The following vignette from my fieldnotes reveals the importance of showing progress for attracting donors.

From Decline to Progress

Arriving back at the Refuge from the field on June 21, 2004, I went to my typical eating spot only to notice a film crew from Holland. There were five men

and one woman present: all white and tall juxtaposed against the relatively small, dark-skinned street children. Given the environment, the film crew stuck out like “sore thumbs.” A younger guy with short blond hair was wearing very short, red shorts and a t-shirt too small for him. Another man, middle-aged, tall and pot-bellied with frazzled, curly gray hair and seemingly perturbed, made several attempts to hold the attention of a group of “street children” to stay together while smiling and supporting their props. The children held up a banner that stated, “Catholic Action for Street Children: Support the Street Child” while bouncing three big world globes from child to child. “Why the globes”, I asked. He stated, “We are all one people.”

When we arrived back at the Refuge, I conversed with the director of the film project. He is a fundraiser from CORDAID,³⁷ a Dutch sponsor that provides the salaries for CAS’s fieldworkers. He stated that of his priorities one is to “prevent the artistic camera people from staging the tragic... Negative images are out... People are tired of seeing this. We try to show the positive, like what CAS is doing.” As a fundraiser for the Lever Corporation, his last job, he grew wary of selling consumer goods. He expressed a sense of fulfillment and “giving back” in that now he can use his abilities for more beneficial ends. He indicated that promoting products for the Lever Corporation is no different from promoting street children. His main objective is to utilize his marketing skills to portray an image that people in Holland want to see so that they will want to contribute to CORDAID. In an environment that he notes as sated in corruption and mistrust, people want to see that there are (and will be) concrete results from their donations. He says that the problem with NGOs today is that they are stuck relying on the traditional “brands” (avenues of support)—i.e., the church. The church relies on tragic images to solicit donations from typical donors like the World Bank or UNICEF. He reported that in the modern, secular world, the

³⁷ This passage recounts a conversation that I had with a fundraiser who was visiting CAS to make a thirty-second commercial soliciting support for street children. The commercial was to be aired at half-time for a soccer match in Holland. The quoted material is pulled directly from my notes of the conversation.

church and its influence and its causes are receding, and they no longer garner the support they used to. He stated, "We now have to work in the modern world, a speeding world replete with fast food; everything fast, fast... We are competing for the consumer's attention and what they want to see. We have about five seconds." Towards this end, the fundraiser created a film that competed with other media for the attention and money of the everyday consumer. Thus, by marketing images to citizens as consumers and giving them what they want to see, they are more willing to donate to charitable organizations. From his perspective, consumers in Holland want to see progress. He stated, "CAS is run like a business. It is a private charity that must survive by the rules of marketing. It has to compete for scarce funds from such agencies as UNICEF and the World Bank" (fieldnotes; June 21, 2004).

Progress means different things to different people. The "Latin American model on street children" in the 1980s, as discussed by Ennew (2003), imagined progress as removing street children from debilitating environments and putting them in homes and detention centers. Today, as Panter-Brick (2002) contends, children have a right to be in the street, especially when society has failed to guarantee rights to an education and access to healthcare. There is now an emphasis on depicting children in a more favorable light by de-emphasizing risks and needs and emphasizing what aspects make certain individual children more resilient under difficult circumstances (e.g., Boyden 2000). The focus is clearly on the individual street child, as indicated by the CORDAID sponsor who stated that "traditional brands of support" are declining. Rather, "progress" seems to be moving toward connecting individuals to other individuals.³⁸ In this way, street children are more exposed to consumers in the West, envisioned as the new horizon of aid for street children. And as such, the street children must be remade in the fashion of progress that consumers want to see.

³⁸ In CAS's June 2004 newsletter, they report on the current upgrades to their internet systems and solicit further donations so that children will be able to reach out to children in similar situations as well as to interested individuals in donor countries.

From Backwardness to Modernity

Progress shapes the means through which CAS legitimates its practices; However, backwardness is reflected in notions of progress. CAS depicts street children as coming from families and communities that are traditional, dysfunctional, and unable to cope with modern culture and economy. As such, street children are envisioned as coming from environments that fail to ensure their rights, thus they are remade as potential agents of modernity and future investments in the economy. I indicate in this section two features of street children that make them appear traditional and backward: they come from rural locales, and they appear dirty.

In a report published by CAS and UNICEF in 1999, causes of child rural-to-urban migration are attributed to traditions. The report indicates that in the Western Region of Ghana, “dead-beat dads” are considered typical of matrilineality and the “free note” system (Beauchemin 1999). Because land is distributed through the mother’s line, the authors of the report argue, men feel no “responsibility for their children.” However, this interpretation of the consequences of a matrilineal kinship system contradicts the common anthropological assertion that in matrilineal societies, a sister’s brother is responsible for her children (see Kottak 2004). In fact, Miescher indicates that Asante fathers serve the function as role models and have the responsibility of teaching their children a trade, whereas mother’s brothers are more like caretakers who provide for the children what they need while also putting them to work. The report also claims that men can divorce women at will while women are complacent, having little knowledge of their rights. In the Northern region of Ghana, the *Exodus* reports a tradition of polygamy that has resulted in the rise of unwanted children and the subsequent emigration of children from the area. The dowry tradition in Muslim communities in the North allegedly leads many girls to abandon their homes to seek jobs in the cities so as to accrue enough wealth for a sufficient dowry. Specific reference is made in the report to neglectful and uncaring families. While in many cases these cultural practices do indeed

contribute to children inadequately sheltered, no mention is ever made of the global policies that have made these “traditions” so seemingly incompatible with modernity.

CAS is ambivalent on the issue of family reunification as a reformative intervention for street children. On one hand, they state that reunion with family is the “best possible solution to the street child’s problems.” On the other, CAS in an April newsletter (CAS 1995:8) depicts the family as inappropriately equipped to deal with the problems of the modern world: “We are shocked by the life stories of street children. What they have experienced is more than most of us can imagine. The majority of the children registered are from broken homes. Some of them can never return to their families but should not remain in the streets.” In fact, CAS (2003) indicates that family problems are the number one reason for children leaving the home, despite other claims linking poverty to child homelessness (see table 2). In other words, family problems are not situated in a wider context. While child homelessness may indicate problems at home (e.g., family abuse or “too many children at home”) as causes for their migration, the structural (i.e., political and economic) conditions may be largely invisible and indefinable for children lacking access to information and literacy skills.

A further characterization of the street child as backward is a depiction of his appearance as dirty and naked. CAS’s logo depicts bare footprints with a moniker underneath it stating, “Support the Street Child” (see figure 3).³⁹ When entering both the mini-refuge and the Refuge, children become “street children” in the act of taking off their shoes and walking to the table to be registered. While staff and volunteers keep their shoes on, to be granted entrance children must remove their “*m’pabuas*” to prevent the spread of dirt. When preparing to leave, the street child is asked to sweep out tracked in dirt (see figure 4).⁴⁰

The bare feet of the street child are central to a representation of the backwards hinterlands juxtaposed against an urban landscape. The act of

³⁹ Personal photograph.

⁴⁰ Personal photograph.

Table 2: Reason for Child Urban Migration (CAS 2003)

Reasons	Problem Category	Percent (of children polled)
Family neglect	Social	29
Single parent family	Social	16
Truancy	Social	12
Violence at home	Social	9
Excess children	Social	6
Orphaned	Social	5
Sickness of family member	Social	3
Peer group pressure	Social	3
Sexual Violence at Home	Social	2
Born in the street	Social	1
Poverty	Economic	11
Left behind due to parent migration	Economic	3

Source: CAS (2003)

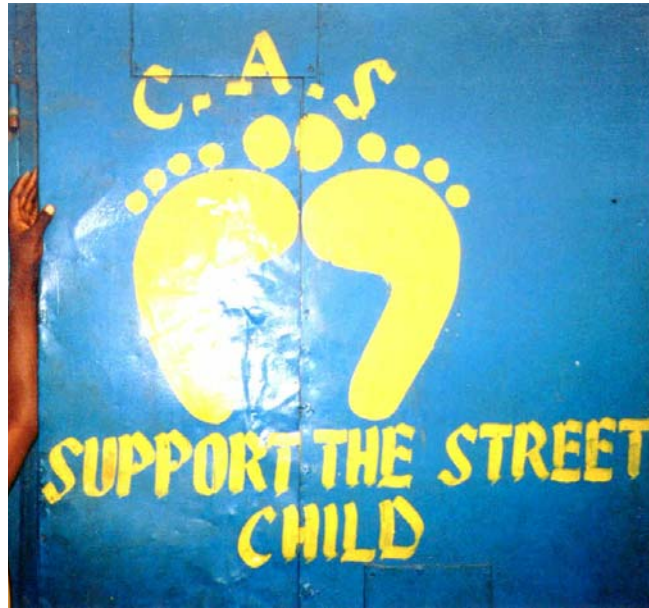


Figure 3: CAS moniker on door of Agbogloshie mini-refuge



Figure 4: Children taking off their shoes before entering the mini-refuge

making the child take off his or her shoes can be interpreted as a continuation of a colonial legacy in which the colonialists, in their attempts to modernize the African, covered up African “nakedness.” As the Comaroff’s have indicated (1997:220), “...the very idea of fashion affirmed the modernist assumption that identity was something apart from one’s person; something to be produced, purchased, possessed; something that had continually to be ‘put on’ and ‘shown off’.” The native body is the terrain in which the battle of selfhood is to be fought. “Nakedness” evokes a sense of African “degeneracy and disorder, the wild and the wanton, dirt and contagion” (1997:22). CAS in its rendering of the street child as a backwards, barefoot Other claims ownership over it. Consider the following quote from a CAS publication, “Your children are not your property...they come through you but not from you, and although they are with you, they do not belong to you...you may try to be like them but dare not to make them like you, then life is not going backwards and does not remain yesterday” (2003:21).

Childhood is a medium through which children fulfill the symbolic demands of society (Jenkins 1998). In a sense, CAS reinvents the street child from an image of the rural, backward child, to an image of the potentially modern, and capable adult. Street children are like experiments in a social development scheme that directs the future of Ghana. Since street children are perceived as having needs that are unmet, they are symbolically tied to the country’s inability to sustain development and progress. CAS’s legitimating interest lies in depicting children as belonging to the future, rather than “indictments of some body, parent, institution, or nation” (ct. in Jenkins 1998:9).

In this section CAS is described and situated within a context of competing narratives that it negotiates in order to achieve status as a legitimate organization that aspires to support urban street children in Accra. CAS does this by projecting an image of the child as one who has chosen to leave the past behind so that he may embrace a future of meaningful work. As such, an image of the street child and the practices that follow from this image are transformed through notions of progress. The following section builds on the idea of progress by

highlighting CAS's efforts to empower children by providing them with opportunities to participate in activities.

From Helpless Children to Active Agents

At CAS, the main objective is to “empower the children” (CAS 2003:50) by making opportunities available to them. At the House of Refuge, instructors demonstrate skills that children can observe and ask questions about. The Education department holds voluntary classes in which children are free to participate at the level of their choosing. In the Sponsorship program, interested children are granted funding in formal schooling or apprenticeship training, where they choose among available careers, such as candlemaker, woodcarver, or any of the jobs that CAS has created for the employment of street children.

CAS views child empowerment and participation as signs of progress. A teacher in the education department, for instance, expressed to children in the classroom, “I know many of you are here because a friend is here” (June 7, 2004 fieldnote). He told the children that serious students will have an opportunity to enter Hopeland Farms, where they can further their education formally or by trade. In this instance, empowerment means the actions that CAS takes to solicit the active and serious participation of individual children. The teacher's message to the children was that learning means leaving the street behind.

Starting in the 1970s, culminating in the International Year of the Child in 1979, a social movement was underway to de-emphasize welfare-oriented, paternalistic child-saving campaigns in favor of more child-centered approaches (Kaufman and Rizzini 2002). As mentioned earlier in chapter 3, popular participation became the key buzzword in development and human rights discourses and eventually formed the basis of child welfare organizations' policies (Franklin 1995). But what does “participation” mean in this context? Like many other concepts discussed in this thesis, participation means different things dependent on the user and the social context. Hart (1992) describes a participation ladder, which lists the steps in child-participation programs from the

false rungs of manipulation, decoration, and tokenism to activities that are actually initiated by children, for children, with the support (but not control) of adults. However, as Ennew (1995:207-210) indicates, the majority of participation efforts in regards to street children are of the “tokenism” and “decoration” variety in which child participation, in reality, is a kind of theatrical performance that masks underlying adult control (see also Rahnema 1992). Indeed, CAS literally puts children on the stage to act out dramas depicting children learning, acting socially appropriate, and the like. More importantly, children are not involved in policy planning, rather participation is conceived as the child’s desire to participate in activities that are presumed to be in the child’s best interest.

Tokenism Versus Choice

The director indicated to me that when CAS first started, children were fed and focus was primarily on reuniting children with their families. He stated, “after half a year, we said, ‘this is not a good approach, because we spent a lot of money, manpower.’ And what did we achieve? Nothing” (Director interview; July 19, 2004). Rather, the emphasis is placed on the children who desire to come to them on their own terms. In other words, the child must first show his desire and ability to get off the street. The director stated further that “Our main aim (is to) befriend the street children...and be available to them. And then the children, they take the initiative. We tell them (that) we can help you get out of the street, but you have to take the initiative and come and learn. And that’s our approach” (Director interview; July 19, 2004).

But the overall goal of help is to integrate children into a market-based society. The first task is to get children to come to the Refuge and participate in CAS activities. To attract children to CAS, fieldworkers make an effort to get to know children in the street and then supply cards, which invite the street child to the House of Refuge. On these cards is a list of free services that CAS offers to the children: medical treatment, games, videos, toilet, and schooling.

However, rather than sponsoring children on the basis of exhibited need (e.g., health status, level of support, hunger), CAS supports children based on their demonstrated commitment to cast off a street lifestyle and participate in CAS activities. To do this, the street child must make the necessary sacrifices to get off the street. CAS is open from 8 until 5PM everyday, and the child must make every effort to get there by 9AM when the education department starts literacy classes and makes record of who is in attendance. This is problematic because CAS is open during the most productive time of day, and working children who wish to come have to sacrifice the most productive part of the day in order to attend CAS activities. Another obstacle is the fact that children have to make their own arrangements to get to CAS by either walking long miles or paying for a *tro-tro* (lorry bus). When at CAS, the children are expected to take an interest in skills demonstrations and other activities, such as physical education and life skills trainings.

I mentioned earlier that children must show a serious commitment in order to be considered for Hopeland. "Serious" is based on regular attendance and participation in CAS activities. The level of seriousness is based on the assessment of an admissions council made up of three workers from the Education, Demonstration and House of Refuge departments. The council meets once a month to discuss the eligibility of children for admission to Hopeland Farms. Eligibility is based on documentation provided by CAS workers in the various departments. When a child first starts coming to CAS, her information is taken down and her daily attendance recorded. Her behavior and degree of participation is observed. Staff members are instructed to assess a child's behavior and attitudes based on the following criteria: 1) desire to leave the streets; 2) duration and consistency of attendance; 3) ability to follow rules; 4) demonstration of proper hygiene; 5) demonstration of cordial relationships with both staff and peers; 6) willingness to run errands; 7) and demonstration of interest in literacy and skills training. Based on these staff questionnaires, the council evaluates whether or not a child is to be admitted.

Participation, as indicated by CAS's practice, meets Hart's tokenism classification of participation. CAS does not mean activities by children for children, rather participation is an arbitrary measure for a child's demonstrated eagerness to leave the street and acquire the coveted sponsorship. Indeed, this "participatory" approach is not based on a conception of the child as dependent but rather the child as a potentially capable miniature adult who pursues independence from street life and the often-cited "traditional" situations that he wishes to escape. Impoverished children who seek out services must demonstrate their eligibility for scarce sponsorship opportunities. Street children have a right to participate but only if they choose it. If they do not participate in activities then they are portrayed as having chosen to continue living on the street.

CAS's approach favors what some volunteers allege as a "survival of the fittest" strategy,⁴¹ where children who already have good social skills and education have a better chance at sponsorship than those who have poorer skills and education. Moreover, young children who demonstrate an eagerness to leave the street are not officially employable due to Ghanaian work-age laws. Under Ghana's Labour Decree of 1967 (NLCD 157),⁴² children are not permitted employment until the age of 16, believed to be the age when basic education has ended. A child however may only be employed in light duty by his immediate family in agricultural or domestic work. There are also proscriptions on "young persons" who are employed between the ages of 16 and 18.

PLAY AND WORK

This section describes how CAS's ideology of progress, empowerment and participation informs its practices with respect to helping street children. I indicate that CAS renders street children as without a culture. It also depicts

⁴¹ This was noted in my fieldnotes by three separate volunteers on July 12th, 14th, and 28th of 2004.

⁴² Source: CRC/C/3 Add.39 Date: December 1985

what street children do in the street as menial and stunting of their growth and development. In harmony with a neoliberal legitimating environment, CAS provides a remedy to their situation by offering the means through which children can cast off their streetness. CAS provides opportunities for development by orienting the goals of play and work as activities through which children can prove their desire to leave the street.

Play

CAS's programmatic representations of the street focus on the income-generating aspects of street life. Nine out of 48 pictures from CAS's website were taken of street children in the street.⁴³ These photographs depict children as working menial jobs or standing around with nothing to do. Of the pictures containing children working in the street, only one consisted of children playing. In this instance, however, the children were engaged in a concentrated game of foosball described as an instance where children gambled their earnings. As one member of CAS staff explained to me, "No, no, [foosball] is not work, they are gambling to make money" (Kofi interview; July 18, 2004).

Contrary to CAS's promotional and programmatic materials, I was struck by the world of play that children engaged in while in the street. Often while in the field I encountered groups of children playing games that local patrons had set out for them to play. In the street, children had access to foosball, table-tennis, video games, movies, and impromptu games of football, wrestling and the like. Indeed, children were quite playful in the street, though it often cost them a fee. In fact, fieldnotes indicate that businesses thrived on street children's economic activities. Some vendor's primary clientele were street children. In the street, video game stations, ping-pong and foosball tables, and theatres were set up to extract the incomes from street children. According to Kwame, a local theater owner denied access to urban poor children but allowed street children to

⁴³ <http://www.cas-ghana.com/>

watch movies for a fee. I asked the owner who his primary customers were: he indicated “street children.”

In the street, CAS depicts the child as having no culture: they are rural, chaotic, threatened, without an identity and lack a stable home and family. Through the child’s own initiative and with the support of CAS, a modern culture can be acquired through meaningful play and hard work. The CAS Director stated:

Ghanaians are now discovering that street children have no culture. That is the main discussion point in Ghana. Culture. Everything is culture. When you meet a Ghanaian, and he will tell you straight away, ‘Oh, this how we do it. This how we eat. This how we do this.’ Everything is culture. It is very high on the agenda. But they, they are not aware that street children have no culture. (Director interview; July 19, 2004)

Seen as not having a culture, CAS practices seem to indicate that its task is to socialize children. CAS and its donors envision the street child as a miniature adult who has learned the wrong culture (or is absent a culture) and must learn through activities, like their sports development program, to adopt the values, ideas, beliefs and practices of a modern, civilized society.

To socialize the street child, CAS attracts much aid from donors for specific activities designed to teach. The director informed me that this corresponds to a trend in which donors are increasingly providing funds that suit the particular interests of the donors. For instance, a CAS newsletter (CAS June 2004) reports on “sports development.” It states, “Over the years, we have realized the impact sports have played and continues to play in the realization of our over-all objectives: thus empower the street children to be able to re-integrate into the mainstream society. As a result, sports have featured prominently in our programs, because it attracts the children to the center in the first place” (2004:12).

Sports and drama activities are a result of donor initiatives. The Foundation of African Sports Development, Wild Geese and Equal Opportunity Fund were all supporters in a project to supply jerseys, footballs, volleyballs, and ping-pong sets to enhance their “sports development agenda.” Even though a current CAS newsletter (June 2005) reports that no street children in Accra have been diagnosed with HIV/AIDs, CAS frequently reports on the activities of the Interactive Theatre,⁴⁴ which is designed to teach children about HIV/AIDs through theatrical performances. Moreover, the children have access to educational board games donated by Dutch volunteers.

The main objective of play is to teach children how to act in a manner that deemed more socially acceptable. For example, CAS offers opportunities for children to get involved in dramas in which children can act out “appropriate” responses to negative stimulus in their environment. For example, my fieldnotes document a performance in which children acted out two responses to an incident involving another child offending the other. In the first scenario, the child pushes the other child and they start to fight. In the second scenario, the child pushes the other child, but the child instead of fighting walks away. The sports program is similar in orientation to the dramatic arts activities. For example, the athletic director would take the children out after one hour of class-work to play football or basketball. The trainer stated the following:

I work with the children to teach them self-confidence and to make choices for their future. When they are in the street, they play games but they are always quarreling, fighting. I tell them, “You must not do that, work cooperatively.” They are too independent. I tell them to work together and you can accomplish something. (CAS Worker; June 7, 2004)

After a game, the activities director would ask follow-up questions, such as “what did you learn from this activity?” and encourage the children to come up with ways in which they could perform better. In fact, the activities director would

⁴⁴ The Interactive Theatre is sponsored by Action-Aid Ghana and the British Council.

often become angry and exasperated, pulling children out of a game and scolding them to pass the ball and “use the team.”

Work

CAS’s depictions of children working in the street show children performing odd jobs. These are described as “hard work, “struggling,” and “menial.” Implicit in these descriptions of these jobs were that they are low-skilled and low paying, not affording the child the income to develop her skills. These jobs included transporting rubbish for local vendors, carrying goods on the head in busy streets and in crowded markets, driver’s mate, and shoeshine boy. All photos were day pictures and were primarily of boys, except for two “kayayees” who sold products from bowls they carried on their head. Two other pictures depicted three boys standing idly in front of a shop and another picture was of children sleeping on cardboard placed as padding between them and the concrete floors. Most of the shots were serendipitous in that children did not appear posed (i.e., not facing the camera or huddled in a group). However, two shots were of children smiling at the camera while performing a task (shoeshine and carrying garbage).

CAS describes child work in the Sponsorship and Hopeland departments as “developing the skills necessary for employment” (CAS 2003:19). “Child work” is an opportunity for children to learn the necessary skills to adapt to a changing economy, whereas “child labor” in the street is characterized as exploitative and lacking of a future (CAS December newsletter 2004). Within a working context children are doing something constructive, whether they are helping to carry someone’s suitcase or tending to farm chores. In an educational context, the child is shown immersed in the formal learning of math, literacy and trade skills. In fact, a recent newsletter (CAS December 2004) noted that street children are not typically forced into child labor. Children are seen to simply be taking advantage of the opportunities afforded to them while in the street. CAS admits that there are children who are forced into child labor, but these are not street

children. In demonstration of street child resiliency, CAS provides stories of industrious children who survive by selling water, living off a US dollar a day, while other children sleep under porches or industriously build forts to protect themselves from the elements. However, CAS shows that the opportunities that children have are limited in that they do not provide upward mobility. Rather than pointing to the structural reasons that create the conditions through which children must work in order to live, CAS states that “most of the street children have limited education that puts them in a situation where they do menial jobs, though shouldn’t be construed as forced labor, because they choose to do it” (CAS December 2004:7).

CAS consistently shows children working menial jobs in city streets, not immersed in play like “normal” children. This conforms to an idea of progress measured by the child’s demonstrated ability to help himself. Indeed, street children show progress by overcoming everyday stresses “to make ends meet.” By participating in learning activities and demonstrating a willingness to shed off any aspect of a street lifestyle, the child prepares himself for the skilled-labor workforce.

CAS’s notions of play and work correspond to what Stephens has called a child’s “first and foremost right to an international modernist culture” (1995:39). The street is depicted as a place in which traditional, rural lifeways delay a child’s development and efforts to become civilized. To be modern, the child must symbolically cast off the dirt of her rural mentality and adopt the manners and work ethic of a civilized society, not those of an alleged backwards, informal society. As such, the children have a right to choose to participate in education classes, dramatic performances, and sports activities.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have indicated that CAS, as a member of the international community, includes a set of ideas (progress, modernity, backwardness, participation, empowerment, play, and work) that identifies the street child as a

miniature adult and not separable from an adult world of work. The street child, I argue, is cast as Gronemeyer's *Homo laborans*: she is imbued with the abilities and desires—like that of adults—to make rational decisions, set goals, and assiduously work to achieve desired ends. In many ways (a more detailed discussion of which is beyond the scope of this thesis) the legal ground for this move has already been set. Article 32 of the International Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC) gives children the right to protection from work that threatens their health, education, physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. If work is viewed as promoting these rights, then child labor may be seen as beneficial under difficult circumstances (see Stephens 1995). Thus, the right to work is not just restricted to adults alone (Swift 1997). Here lies the main ideological thrust advocating for children's right to work—children are capable social actors.

I have also argued that CAS's depiction of street children as miniature adults is congruent with a neoliberal legitimating environment that is made up of the Ghanaian government, the World Bank, IMF, and CAS's donors. These institutions are seen to shape CAS's ideology on help. I have described this ideology as the creation of markets of opportunity that develop people's skills so that they may be able to take advantage of the opportunities available to them.

Another aspect of legitimacy is progress. I argue that an image of progress validates a view of street children as miniature adults. As stated previously, the child as miniature adult orientation is based on the conceptualization of a typically poor child that is hopelessly without a childhood and recast as a rights-bearing citizen who actively pursues his potential. While in the street, the street child is perceived as having the fundamental tools for progression into the modern, however he is stunted by his relationship to the street and his premature association with market activities. As such, the child's future is seen as dimmed by his engagement in petty trades and services. Therefore, progress entails providing empowering opportunities and choices through which a child can actively invest his energies. Furthermore, the miniature

adult and notions of progress permit CAS to select children who desire to continue their journey towards modernization by participating in the activities/opportunities that CAS provides for them. In this way, street children are donor friendly and good investments in Ghana's future.

Related to progress are CAS notions of empowerment and participation that form part of the legitimating lexicon, which validates a program of conditional self-help. At CAS, I frequently encountered practices that were considered by management to be "empowering." Instead of taking children away from the street and creating relations of dependency through "gifts," a child's own desires were assessed and directed by providing opportunities for him to observe skilled crafts, attend literacy classes, perform in dramatic plays, and participate in sports activities on a daily basis. For CAS, empowerment means identifying and promoting a child's desire to leave the street and adopt what CAS sees as a marketable trade. CAS justifies this practice by focusing on the child's strengths (resilience) rather than the political and economic climate that makes the child dependent on the street.

In the following chapter, I present fieldworkers' perspectives on street children: who they are, what they are like, and the environments in which they live. Drawing from these perspectives, I present a somewhat different view of the street child that sees him more as an innocent victim. A notion of the street is also presented as going beyond conceptions of the category, street children, to include other types of children living under difficult circumstances. Therefore, rather than focusing on what children can do, the attention is refocused to the everyday restraints that make all poor children dependent on the street. The fieldworker perspective that focuses on streetness rather than street children makes visible the wider political and economic climate that creates the conditions through which children come to the street.

CHAPTER 5: FIELDWORKER PERSPECTIVES

I don't have a mother whom I know,
I don't have a place which I can call my own,
Nobody cares for me whether I live or die,
A street child am I.
You say that I am dirty and not combed,
Not good to be seen,
You say that I am mean and wild with a violent look.

But I had to fight to live. I have to be strong to be alive.
I become wet to the skin in the heavy rains,
I sleep when I can on the street or under a market table.
I eat what they throw away from the shop stalls or I have to eat from the trash bin.

The police chase me with their brutal force and language, heavy punches or kicks
At bus stations or lorry stations you can find me.
But you will really see me when you care for me.
I don't have a mother whom I know,
I don't have a place which I can call my own,
Nobody cares whether I live or die,
A street child am I.

--*The Ghanaian Street Child* (CAS 2003)

The above quote indicates a clear conception of the street child as a forsaken victim who struggles merely to survive. Indeed, CAS's conception of the street child contains a representation depicting him both as an innocent victim ("Nobody cares for me whether I live or die") and as a miniature adult ("But I had to fight to live"). However, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, CAS does not perceive the street child as helpless but one who is strong, who does what he must do in the street in order to live. But the story does not end there. CAS management sees the street child as one who is without a childhood, a family and a home, and by virtue of what he lacks, the child is more like an adult who is solely responsible for the decisions that he makes. The street child therefore must learn how to earn a living that is seen as more dignified and promoting of healthy human development.

In the field (street), a different story of the street child emerges based on the ideas and perspectives of CAS's fieldworkers. The street child is portrayed not as one who rationally makes choices, but as one who is made helpless and vulnerable by the daily activities that she must do in order to live. The central

character of the fieldworkers' stories is the innocent victim. I argue that a view of the street child as innocent victim focuses more on children as special risk categories in need of a protective environment, without which children are subject to illiteracy, adult exploitation, drug addiction, and no future. This characterization places emphasis on the home and family as institutions that *all* children need. Their future development rests on what the family and society provides *for* them rather than what children could contribute to society in the form of meaningful work (i.e., skilled labor jobs). The following is a summary of data that shows that fieldworkers employed more a characterization of the street child as innocent victim than miniature adult.

I witnessed on three occasions fieldworkers telling a fictional story to children at one of the mini-refuges about a girl named Sarah who was lured from her village by a distant relative. Promised an education, Sarah worked hard everyday. After many months of arduous work and enduring much abuse, she realized that her urban relatives were only using her as a domestic slave. She then ran away to the street only to face worse hardship, such as abuse from cops, sexual assault, endless labor, and prostitution. The fieldworker then explained to the children that both her relatives and the street were exploiting her by violating her basic human rights. As a fieldworker explained to me, "The problem with street children is they have no sense of their rights as people" (Kwame interview; July 28, 2004).

Fieldworkers often took me and other volunteers to an illegal squatter settlement in Accra called Agbogbloshie. CAS did not define the children who lived and worked in this area as street children; they fall under the definition of urban poor children because they technically have a home and family. According to the seven fieldworkers interviewed, these children are in the street because the "homes" they live in are illegal. They do the same things and experience the same conditions as street children. The record of my perceptions focuses on the assault of the environment on the senses: choked gutters, open and overflowing sewers, drug dealers, prostitutes, and small groups of men suspiciously watching

my every move. The fieldworkers emphasized what children do in order to survive in Agbogloshie: young girls who sleep during the day and prostitute at night, boys who run drugs for gang leaders, and young children who perform menial jobs for just enough money to survive.

Coding of photographs taken by three separate fieldworkers reveals a similar pattern of children that I indicate is representative of the street child as innocent victim (see table 3). I categorized 90 percent of the fieldworker photographs (n=92) as indicative of the innocent child.⁴⁵ 55 percent of pictures were taken at night; of those 51 percent depicted children sleeping on cardboard boxes or on benches (see figure 5). Eight pictures showed children playing foosball and table-tennis, however fieldworkers described these pictures as “gambling games.” The majority of day shots (51%) showed children learning within either the House of Refuge or one of the mini-refuges; of these shots, 13 showed instructors actively teaching the children while only 7 depicted children learning on their own (see figure 6). Additionally, 12 out of 41 (29%) day shots depicted children working (see figure 7). Photographic interviews with fieldworkers emphasized that these children were working menial jobs for “small money” instead of going to school. The fieldworkers also chose to take pictures of children on the street (73) rather than at the House of Refuge or the mini-refuges (19).

The Sarah story is representative of fieldworkers’ conception of street children’s rights. Whereas the official view emphasized rights as something that street children assert through participation, play, and work, the fieldworkers interpreted rights as something taken away from the children. The hardship shown in the Sarah story depicts how children are lured to Accra, but when they get there, they are taken advantage of by their relatives. The home becomes an undesirable place, and children who flee the harsh conditions of domestic servitude, find their dignity and self-respect further diminished as they continue to

⁴⁵ Categorization of photographs was based on photographic content and interviews with the photographers regarding their viewpoint of the significance of the picture.

Table 3: Fieldworker Pictures

n=92	HOR/Mini-Refuges	Street (Day)	Street Night
Fighting	0	0	1 (1%)
Learning (adults in frame)	13 (14%)	0	0
Learning (adults out of frame)	7 (8%)	0	0
Playing	1 (1%)	0	8 (9%)
Posing	3 (3%)	0	4 (4%)
Relaxing	0	0	5 (6%)
Sleeping	1 (1%)	0	26 (29%)
Standing still	0	1 (1%)	4 (4%)
Working	1 (1%)	14 (15%)	3 (3%)

Table 2: Thematic analysis of 92 pictures taken by three fieldworkers in July 2004. Column headings indicate location; rows show what children were doing in the picture.



Figure 5: Children “sleeping rough”⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Kwame took this picture to explain how children are rewarded for their work by being granted permission by vendors to sleep in front of their shops. Kwame explained that these children cover up with the packaging to protect themselves from the wind and cold.



Figure 6: Child learning with help from instructor⁴⁷



Figure 7: Children working in the street⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Photograph taken by Kwame.

⁴⁸ Photograph taken by Ted.

work hard under duress of difficult and abusive circumstances.

The conditions that children find themselves once in the street are given vivid detail by the fieldworker. Although CAS works exclusively with those children up to the age of 18 “who live and work in the streets and have nobody to support them” (CAS 2003:4), it does not provide assistance to urban poor children who “have parents and a home, and are supported” (CAS 2003:4). The fieldworkers’ focus is not on who is a street or an urban poor child, rather their focus is on difficult circumstances that all children face while living and working in the street. Like the Sarah story, the children who live in illegal squatter settlements are subjected to the same conditions that have lured other children to live full-time in the street (see “Ted,” this chapter). As will be discussed in further detail below, the street is envisioned as having a negative effect on all children who live and work in it.

A view of the child as an innocent rests on the idea that he is dependent on family and home to meet his basic human needs (James and Prout 1997). The difference shown by fieldworkers is that street children rely more on the street than their parents to get food, shelter, education, healthcare, and the like. In either case, the child is considered dependent and vulnerable. Fieldworker photographs support this assertion and sharply contrasts with the miniature adult depicted in CAS’s programmatic and promotional materials. A majority of photographs taken by fieldworkers showed children sleeping rough on benches and on concrete slabs padded by cardboard boxes. Children did not play but rather gambled their earnings to help meet their need for cash. This innocent child contrasted further with the miniature adult in depictions of children in learning contexts. Whereas children are shown in programmatic and promotional materials as independently learning, the fieldworker’s photographs emphasize how dependent children are on the instructor within contexts of learning. Moreover, an emphasis was placed more on what children did during the day in the street rather than a simple focus on what children did while at CAS. During the day, children were shown working menial jobs, which was interpreted by

fieldworkers in photographic interviews as prohibiting children from going to school or attending CAS's activities.⁴⁹

In the following four sections, I present the views of five fieldworkers organized around four topics. Although many of these views were shared, many of them were not. The following therefore should not be read as a composite view of all the fieldworkers but as an attempt to make fieldworker perspectives more central in the discussion on how to help children working and living in the city streets. These perspectives offer potential for improving the practices of CAS as an organization that seeks to support street children

KWAME: SHOWING “US” THE REALITY OF THE WORKING CHILD

My own sense of childhood, sentimentally a nostalgic and innocent period, contrasts sharply with the childhood of the street child presented to me by my primary informant, Kwame. Kwame was often summoned by CAS to provide guided tours of the places where rural migrant children were known to live and work. He has worked for CAS for about five years and is regarded affectionately as “street father” in light of his relationship with the street and his good rapport with the children who work and/or live in it. He is in his mid-30s, and like many fieldworkers and street children, originally came from a small rural village in the southern regions of Ghana.

He began his life as a child of a rural farmer in a community comprised mostly of close kin. In many rural villages in the Asante territory, it is traditional for younger people to show respect by letting all the elders eat first, and then after they are finished, the younger people can eat. He reports that when he was about 16 he grew tired of the “traditional life” and “refused to eat last” (Kwame interview; July 28, 2004). He decided instead to take up residence with a Catholic priest from Holland who admitted him into a Catholic school. There he learned to read and write. Eventually he was admitted into a vocational school

⁴⁹ CAS is open Monday through Friday from 8AM until 5PM. The education department holds one literacy class a day, which runs from 9AM until 10AM.

for social work. He then moved to Accra and started working for the department of social welfare. Soon after his relocation to Accra, he fell on hard times: his wife left him, his son developed asthma, and his sister's husband died leaving him with the added responsibility of financially supporting her two small children. This forced him to send his son to live with relatives. To save money he moved out of his apartment and lived for a while in a vacant structure without a roof. He often characterized himself to me as a "street man." He now lives in a small one-room concrete structure with his son. He has no electricity or running water. During the time I spent with him, he had to make a decision on whether to send his son to school or treat his asthma.

Kwame identified the street child as a deficient, innocent child in need of many things: sleep, money, food, education. The street child was needy, abused, exploited, and without a future. She was a prostitute paying an illegal shanty family to sleep on a wooden floor after a hard night's work. They were a gang of thieves struggling, quarreling, and fighting for survival. And their oppressors were a society that denied their existence, a society that abused, taunted, and had sex with them, a society that extracted wealth from them, and exploited them for their cheap labor. In short, Kwame presented the street child as an innocent victim.

Kwame showed me children of all ages who worked menial jobs, lacked formal education, and slept in public spaces. Many of the children working in the street are eight to twelve years old. Both girls and boys carry large bowls or boxes on their heads, selling such things as ice cream, water, biscuits and the like. He showed many children standing in the middle of congested highways selling goods to drivers and people in buses.⁵⁰ Some of the children work on buses and assist the driver by collecting change. There are also children who provide services, such as shoe shining and carrying loads for customers. I was also introduced to the children who come to the mini-refuges. Kwame explained

⁵⁰ In showing me these things, Kwame told me several stories where working children got either hurt or killed by an automobile.

that many children can not afford the added costs of education (e.g., school uniforms and textbooks) due to the implementation of educational user fees introduced in the late 1980s as part of ERP policies.

Kwame typically took volunteers through alleyways and business corridors to show the extractive environments in which children live. According to Kwame, children earn roughly \$2 USD (18,000 cedis) per day. But in the street, nothing is free. Kwame's photographs that contained no children in them focused on the business activities that profit from the street and urban poor child's existence. Three photographs show a meat market where Kwame explains children wait with wheelbarrows to carry purchases for vendors. Rather than being paid for this work, the children rely on *dashes* (tips). These dashes are then spent on activities of daily living and entertainment. There are only a few places where children can get free food; they must earn money and then buy it. In fact, one vendor sets up shop right in front of CAS and sells food and candy primarily to children who visit.⁵¹ CAS is also visited by vendors who sell fruit during the peak hours (1PM) of child attendance. Kwame also took shots of bathroom stalls, which charged 200 cedis for one use, and showers that charged 600 cedis (see figures 8 and 9). He explained that this practice took advantage of local ordinances that penalized people for urinating in public. Anyone caught or turned in for urinating in public could be charged 5000 cedis. Children also have difficulty in finding places to sleep at night and often have to get someone's permission in order to sleep in a particular spot. In order to receive permission, according to Kwame, the children have to run errands for a patron or agree to keep watch over a store. Makeshift movie houses were also available for children's entertainment, and according to the owner of one movie house, children who do not go to school are his primary patrons. He charged 1000 cedis per viewing. There are foosball, ping-pong, and game stations set up all around the markets where children work. These games charge anywhere from 100 to 200 cedis per play.

⁵¹ Most CAS employees and volunteers do not eat her food because it is of poor quality.

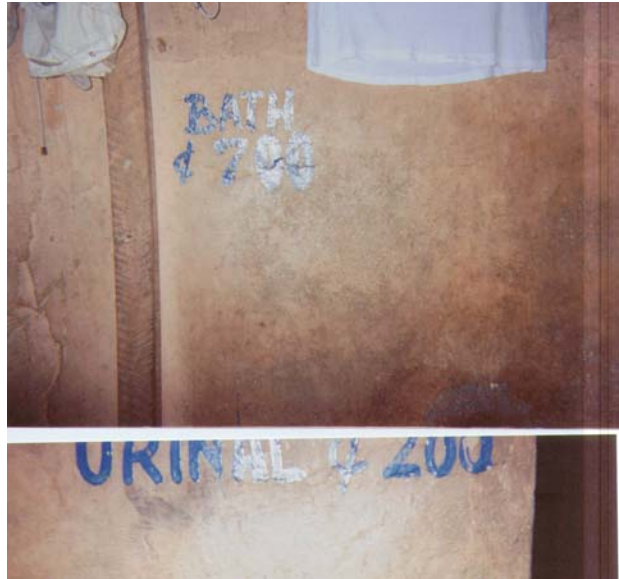


Figure 8: Composite photograph of bathroom and shower stalls



Figure 9: Vendors selling food in front of House of Refuge

Kwame made claims about street children and their environment. He indicated that street children were underage workers who performed menial jobs that provided them with no basis for a future. Rather than depicting children as “doers” in their environment, Kwame depicted street children as victimized by opportunistic vendors who took advantage of their condition, rendering their participation in activities to promote their own development impossible. Street children’s working and living environment is further elaborated upon in the following section.

KOFI AND MARY: THE STREET AS (INFORMAL) MARKET AND THE STREET MENTALITY

When fieldworkers refer to the street, they are often talking about large open-air markets. In these markets, there are a lot of unregulated, untaxed activities. Most of these activities are legal, such as selling produce and shining shoes, but a few activities are illegal, such as drug trafficking and prostitution. Around some of these markets are illegal settlements (see figure 10), often fraught with environmental pollution and crime (COHRE 2004). Fieldworkers seek out street children in these open-air markets, where they are known to work, play, and sleep. These open-air markets are called Kwame Nkrumah Circle, Odorkor, Ashaiman, Agbogbloshie/Konkomba (AKMS), and Kaneshie.

Two fieldworkers, Kofi and Mary, perceived these open-air markets as stunting the development of all children who sustain themselves there. Kofi is Akan (Asante), and like many of the street children, comes from the Central region. He received his Associates degree in social work and has worked for CAS for about two years. Like Kwame, he is in his early 30s and hopes to one day save up enough money to afford a house so as to one day attract a wife. He told me that in Ghana, in order to become a “big man” and get married, one must first own a home. Mary, on the other hand, is a single mother who holds a



Figure 10: The illegal settlement and market of Agbogbloshie⁵²

⁵² Personal photograph.

Bachelors degree from the University of Legon, Ghana's premier university. She comes from Ho, the capital of the Volta region, and is of Ewe ethnicity.⁵³

For Kofi and Mary, the "street" is characterized as a corrupting force that negatively affects children. Kofi expressed his antipathy toward the street:

The situation for (street) children is very bad: how they earn their life and there's nobody working on them, nobody's taking care of them. They take their own way of life (by) helping themselves. And by looking at this position of the child—thirteen, fourteen, fifteen years old, struggling for food, to work, to play games. They shouldn't be there getting such work, but at least maybe they will think ahead about what they can do to help themselves (by) taking a future by maybe going to school or learning a vocation or they can do to help themselves (by) taking a future by maybe going to school or learning a vocation or maybe somebody can guide them to develop their own life. (Kofi interview; July 13, 2004)

Though the street may provide children an income, a repeated theme expressed by Kofi and Mary is that the child in the street lacks a future. For Kofi, to truly help the child, he must be educated so as to improve his chances. Moreover, Kofi indicated that a defining characteristic of the Ghanaian street child is that he does not go to school. When asked from a picture whether the children depicted were street children he stated, "Nobody's going to school. They are from the Asante region and are with their older brother. I think they say that they must sell things for the brother, so he can save money to help them go to school. But the money he saves, they will chop (i.e., spend or eat)."

When Kofi spoke of the street, he referred to it as a place that is dirty, chaotic, and dangerous. In the street, people are said to survive hand-to-mouth, eking out a living by resorting to thievery, violence, begging and illegal trading. Children of the street are perceived to live meaningless existences without a future in which they develop a street mentality. Kofi stated:

⁵³ Though ethnicity is an important topic and certainly a factor conditioning the thoughts and perspectives of fieldworkers, its complexities are beyond the scope of this study.

People shout at them. I hope you have been seeing how people treat those on the street. They know your name but they call you “Hey! Come here.” All they do is survive. Survival of the fittest: work hard to get money to buy food to eat and clothing. They don’t save money for future or for their retirement. No street person ever thinks of that. They think that if they can get enough they can open a store, buy things, and they stay there and make money. They just hope they can get some of it to start a business. But they don’t believe they can go to school or learn literacy...Often they define themselves as hopeless, and they have to make due with the situation. (Kofi interview; July 13, 2004)

Mary repeated this logic in her characterization of what the street does to children who abandon their homes for the city:

Maybe at home the street child does not fight or steal, but as soon as he gets to the street he is going to learn it from his peers. And soon the child will be aggressive, always fighting, quarreling, using vulgar words—even starting to steal. That is how he can survive; if he is hungry he has to. Maybe steal from somebody to buy something or food to eat. (Mary interview; June 16, 2004)

Hecht (1998) notes that the street is a place where a child can make a living and earn a place in the family. It can be a refuge from the crime of the slum or the poverty and stagnation of the rural village. This is also a view echoed by CAS in their depiction of the places where street children originate. Like Kwame, however, Kofi and Mary do not see the street as a place of freedom and play; rather they see the street as an extractive environment and add to this notion by indicating what the streets mean to them. They conceptualize the street as a free market environment unregulated by the government.⁵⁴

Kofi and Mary show that the street is no place for children. There, people are engaged in all sorts of criminal activities. They are aggressive and show no

⁵⁴ As Hutchful (2002) has shown, Ghana’s effort to liberalize trade has created the conditions through which the informal market has grown exponentially since the original ERP.

interest in the development of children. Like CAS's official view, Kofi characterizes the street as a place where children struggle to develop without much assistance (e.g., "Nobody's working on them"). However, contrary to CAS's official view of self-help, Kofi expressed mixed feelings as to how children are to help themselves (e.g., "maybe [they] will think ahead about what [they] can do to help themselves...or maybe somebody can guide them to develop their own life). The point that he emphasized time and again is that children have to struggle to make a living in the informal markets. Speaking as such, the street engrains in the child a "street mentality." And if imagined as the informal market, street children are learning to live an unregulated existence outside the order of formal society.

TED: THE STREET CHILD VERSUS THE URBAN POOR CHILD

The street child is constructed on the basis of his disconnection from the family and home. For most street children, they come from the "hinterlands" to the street without their family. For the urban poor child, however, he comes to the street with his parents. The urban poor child goes to the street to augment his family's income while the street child works solely for himself (Shanahan 2001, 2003; CAS 2003). As Ted indicated of urban poor children, "At the end of the day, they are not street kids, because they have a home to sleep" (Ted interview; July 2, 2004).

Like Mary, Ted earned his B.A. degree in social work at the University of Legon. He is one of the original members of the research team that helped to start S-AID—a sister NGO to CAS that works explicitly with "street mothers" and their babies.⁵⁵ Ted left CAS in the mid-1990s to work for the department of social welfare, but his job was cut due to the government's efforts to reduce the number of public employees. He is from Accra and describes his relationship with street children as a "special kinship," which arises from his growing up without a mother or father and always shifting residences.

⁵⁵ For more information on S-AID, go to <http://www.streetchildafrica.com>.

The Agbogbloshie Konkomba Market Shanty (AKMS), described by Ted as “Sodom and Gomorrah,” is perhaps the largest informal settlement in Ghana, with population statistics as high as 30,000 (COHRE 2004). It is situated on the left bank of the Odaw River, in the upper reaches of the Korle Lagoon in Accra. In May of 2002, the Accra Municipal Authority (AMA) served the residents of AKMS with an eviction notice. The community responded with an appeal to the High Court for an injunction to prohibit the AMA from enacting the eviction. On July 24, 2002, the High Court rejected the community’s request, and gave the AMA the authority to evict. Henceforth, the settlement is termed illegal and all residents and businesses have been ordered to leave. As of this writing, the eviction has not been enforced.

According to Ted, AKMS is an expansion of the street that shares many of the same characteristics of street children, such as its rugged autonomy. As cited by COHRE, AKMS challenges the tribal land ownership system. First, individuals and families form informal communities in AKMS and are a mix of many different ethnic backgrounds. As such, tribal affiliations do not organize the community. Rather, people who wish to live there must pay those who lay claim to the land. Although the AMA technically owns AKMS, the Ga, Gbese and Korle stools⁵⁶ claim ownership to it. In order to stay in AKMS, residents must see one of six *de facto* caretakers. As of 1996, a resident had to pay sixty thousand cedis (around \$80 USD) for the space and an additional sixty thousand cedis for a wooden structure.

A description of children who work and live in AKMS challenges CAS’s rigid policy to work exclusively with typical street children. To survive, Ted revealed that people individually make a living by participating in informal market activities. And like street children, people in AKMS live in cramped quarters and “sleep rough” on wooden and sometimes even dirt floors. Many residents endure violence and are sometimes abused by local police. As Ted stated, “frequent

⁵⁶ The Ga, Gbese, and Korle are ethnic groups indigenous to the Accra region. The stools are elected commissions that represent, and wield informal power, over these groups (see Gocking 2005 for more information).

bloody fights make the place very unsafe” (Ted interview; August 2, 2004). Many illegal activities characterize AKMS, such as prostitution, robbery, and child employment. Moreover, it is notoriously unhealthy and environmentally unsound (COHRE 2004; CAS 1996). Ted attested to this fact by showing me little children picking through garbage to find food and play things. In fact, in 1996 CAS and UNICEF conducted a survey and found that many mothers leave their children by themselves in order to make a living. Nutritionally, they found that some children never had health checks or immunizations (18%). They also concluded that children are not breastfed properly, because the mothers cannot breast feed when they are too busy working. The children of these mothers are what CAS calls “second generation” street children.⁵⁷

For all fieldworkers, the street is depicted as a negative environment for street children that has an effect on all those who come to it. Ted articulated this view in the following characterization of the street as a polluting influence:

Personally, I don't like dealing with definitions. At the end of the day, the streets affects all children: the urban poor and the street child. So, as long as they are on the streets, the street is going to do things to them. Let me give you an example, there's one boy who comes to the refuge. I know the family very well. He hangs out...literally on the streets. And then goes back. At the end of the day, he is on the street...The only difference between the urban poor child and the street child is that one goes back home and has a place to put his head. But street children do not. (Ted interview; August 3, 2004)

Even children who have shelter in the AKMS market are “in the street,” according to Mary. She indicated that families are “street families” that can be “sacked” (removed) at any time by local authorities. Because of this fact, Mary reasons that children are not living in “homes.” She stated:

The father, the mother, they are all on the streets, and so they birth the child on the street. So, in this case,

⁵⁷ From the results of this survey, the Catholic Archdiocese of Accra was able to convince donors to support the NGO, S-AID.

the child is born on the street and they meet all sort of life on the street. From the first day he's born, he's exposed to all the street hazards...The whole area is a street environment. There are no homes over there. Anybody living there is living on the street. They are not living in homes. (Mary interview; June 16, 2004)

In this example, it is clear that a simple conception of the home and family is incomplete and leaves many children living in difficult circumstances out of CAS's street child equation. Though a child may be living with his family in a shelter, it does not keep the street out. Ted further stated of the street's corrupting influence:

That place (AKMS) is not good for human existence. But because of the war they came and built these structures and raised kids...The parents live in these illegal structures and the government is trying to move them out; the parents are not trying to succumb...These children are street children because they do everything on the streets...Their parents are street people because they live this way also...The place is not designed for human habitation. It is only a market...The children are very vulnerable; they are exposed to a lot of risks...such as drugs...and the little girls who are exposed to sex work. (Ted interview; August 3, 2004)

For the street child, staying at "home" may not be an option. For instance, Kwame often translated children's stories about why they are in the street: Some children were introduced to the street by friends who enticed them with appeals to personal freedom and escaping the hardships of rural life. Others have come to the street because of divorce in the family or a stepfather that is abusive. However, the urban poor child lives in a "home" that is precarious. As Kwame indicated in reference to the urban poor child,

So they have a kind of home, but in the end even they all sleep on the bench not in a room. I think those kids even need help like the street children, because one day he will do a wrong thing and they will beat him or punish him, and (if he decides) not to stay in

the house, he will walk the streets. (Kwame interview; July 24, 2004)

This quote broaches the subject of the demand by poor families for child labor required to sustain the home in Ghana. Fieldworkers often indicated that the urban poor child living in the AKMS market had to work to “earn his bread.” The family’s relationship with the child is sometimes purely economic and care is often a cold calculation. If the child no longer fulfills her domestic function or finds herself out of favor, the family will often abandon her. In the now famous study, *Death Without Weeping* (1987), Scheper-Hughes lays bare the difficult choices that slum mothers must make. By force of economic circumstances, the *favela* mother often had to choose which of her children would live and which would die.

Kwame often spoke of urban poor children’s mothers as “business women” who feed the children on the basis of how much the child has earned selling. In speaking of a child who is pictured sweeping the porch in front of a shanty, Kwame stated, “I say one day he will find work too hard for himself, and he will decide not to continue. Then that will be the end of his life in that house” (Kwame interview; June 29, 2004). In this sense, the street child is one who has fled situations of strenuous work and discipline, where he has had little choice. Kwame further stated of the limitations on the child’s ability to choose something better for him or herself:

I can say they have to perform for the authorities. In the end they have a share, and you know they also had no choice, because they work according to the conditions of the person they are staying with. So they cannot say, ‘I’m tired.’ The (authority) will say ‘Hey! You have to work hard before you get food. Do this! Do that! before you can even eat!’ (Kwame interview; June 29, 2004)

Looking at a picture of a child selling candies in the street, Kwame told me of a story when a child was sent out to get something. The boy asked his father, “Why? I’m tired.” In anger the father beat the boy. According to Kwame,

situations like this are common and that choosing street life is often a decision between abuse and exploitation *within* the family and home, or abuse and exploitation in the street.

Though AKMS is representative of many shanties in Accra, the fact that the government has labeled it an “illegal settlement” supports an image of the homes and families there as being in the street because they are illegal. The illegal elements of the market are then brought to the fore. As CAS’s survey report on the AKMS market states, “As with all shanty towns everything is illegal...This makes every building, wooden, tin or block made, illegal” (1996:3). CAS implies in this that the residents of AKMS are illegal as well. When fires ravaged the community, for instance, it is owed to the “illegal way electricity has been connected by the careless nature of some of the inhabitants” (1996:5), rather than the refusal of the government to set up electricity grids like it has elsewhere (see COHRE 2004).

Indeed, this example of the AKMS market poses a problem for CAS. On one hand are typical street children who have traditionally been depicted as children most at risk. They are perceived in reference to the “home” and “family.” The urban poor are thought to be better off because they have a family and a home where they can get support and be provided an education. However, as fieldworkers indicate, this is not always the case. In the AKMS market, all children are exposed to the vices of the informal market—e.g., illegal trading of sex and drugs, child labor, under-age drinking, and exposure to “night life.” All of these prevent children from going to school and learning skills that can provide for what CAS and fieldworkers see as a better life through incorporation into the legal formal sector of the market. It seems that the over-riding factor that distinguishes the fieldworker’s depiction of the street child from CAS management is that fieldworkers see the child as acted on by a criminal environment whereas CAS’s management sees the child as an active participant who chooses to live in that environment.

JUSTICE: IDENTIFYING AND COUNTING STREET CHILDREN

Justice, an Akan fieldworker from the Central Region, was perhaps the most difficult to get to know. He was often guarded and measured in his responses and interactions with me. However, he would drop his guard when describing CAS's policy for identifying street children. Justice explained:

But the trend has changed because of financial difficulties, they have come to the street to sell water, carry loads, sell plastic bags just to augment their family's income. The government is trying to contravene this; there are policies now that children shouldn't work. And because of these problems there is nothing that they can do. Donors have to do something to help the family...I feel that since that trend has changed, we need to re-strategize to see how we can help more urban poor children...I feel like it is about time that we write to our donors to tell them that the trend has changed that there are a lot more of children on the street. But because of our policy, it is difficult to help them. But there's nothing we can do. But if our social survey convinces us that a child is in need of help, why not? We have to dive in and help. (Justice interview; July 26, 2004)

In the above quote, Justice disagrees with the classic view of the street child. He argues that there are a lot more children coming to Accra with their families and need support. Donors, however, only want to sponsor the stereotypical street child and puts pressure on CAS to support only these children.

Justice indicates that donors put pressure on CAS to count street children, and in order to count them, a stringent definition and criteria for identifying the street child is necessary. My fieldnotes indicate that much energy is allotted toward identifying and counting children. When fieldworkers first meet a child in the street, they must determine whether he is a street child based on CAS's strict definition. They ask the child where he works, her origins, where he sleeps, and his age, and they document the information on ledgers that they carry with them. If in doubt, they may ask the child's peers if he is indeed living in the street. When the child is determined a street child, the worker gives the child an

invitation card. This card serves as the basis for CAS's continuous headcount, where the total number of street children living in Accra is based on the total number of cards given out.

The problem of identifying and counting the street child is complicated by what Justice indicates as tension between the Sponsorship and Fieldwork departments. Members of the Fieldwork department say that Sponsorship holds to a classic view of the street child in order to reduce the number of children who seek sponsorship. In fact, Justice explained that Sponsorship and the House of Refuge admonishes the fieldwork department to stop bringing the urban poor into the Refuge. In this regard, fieldworkers' perspectives are suppressed.

Indeed, Justice brings to light the potential errors that arise from a strict definition of the street child. A strict definition affects who will be counted and who will not. In some sense, it would be beneficial for CAS to count the urban poor children of AKMS as street children so that the bigger number would promote more funding due to the appearance of a much larger problem. But as the Director has stated, there are too few funds to help out all children and that organizations have to limit who they will help. Donors require detailed records and descriptions of who they will assist. The urban poor child who is seen to be living with a family in a home does not qualify, as Kofi has indicated. Fieldworkers who work with the children most intimately do not like to differentiate between the urban poor child and the street child, but it is their job. In fact, most of the fieldworkers have indicated that the number of street children in Accra is far larger than the number given by CAS, especially if the children of the AKMS are included. Kofi, for instance, indicates that there are probably 50,000 children living in the streets of Accra.

Justice's critique reveals the limits of CAS's continuous headcount system for counting street children. Among many obvious problems with this scheme is the fact that children are not static and age out of CAS's defined child status. An individual that is counted as a street child at age sixteen, will two years later no longer be a street child (within CAS's definition). However, she still remains a

part of the continuous headcount. Moreover, what if the child returns home, how does CAS keep track of those children temporarily on the street? Street children are also cited by several CAS workers as often not telling the truth, because they think by calling themselves a street child they can get access to more services. There is also a problem of overlap: how does CAS ensure that children are not being recorded multiple times by different fieldworkers?

Other difficulties with identifying and counting street children involve discerning a street child simply by his outward appearance. Some street children may look dirty, because of the nature of their occupation, such as a porter or garbage hauler. "When someone sees a child who is dirty, they think 'he is a porter' and will say 'Come here! Fetch this, fetch that'" (Kofi interview; July 13, 2004). However, children who sell food must dress better because people will not buy food from someone who looks dirty, according to Kofi. Moreover, CAS fieldworkers only work in selected areas in Accra and have had difficulty in counting children in places close to where they operate. Also, not every child wishes to take the invitation card because, for whatever reason, they do not trust the fieldworker.

Seemingly, as this project and other projects have shown, identifying and counting street children is a difficult, perhaps even impossible, task (Hecht 1998; Ennew 1994, 2003; Panter-Brick 2000). But the rationale for identifying and counting street children is the same. For CAS to come into existence it had to identify a problem that was initially resisted by the Ghanaian government. CAS then had to map out the problem by qualifying the characteristics of street children and then counting their numbers. As of 1993, over 9000 children were counted, and by 2003, over 20,000 were counted. Justice indicated that the headcount is quite helpful in that it shows donors that the number of children is skyrocketing and they will be more prone to supply funding. However, the "skyrocketing" seems to have more to do with foreign expansion of the definition of "street children" than a real desire to assess needs as expressed by children who work and/or live in the street. When asked about the accuracy of the

headcount, Justice stated, “If the numbers were small, I don’t think they would be in a position to come to our aid” (Justice interview; July 26, 2004).

Visiting CAS are northern European volunteers who “witness the reality” through the lenses of Ghanaian fieldworkers, but these fieldworkers' views are suppressed and not made integral to CAS practices. Fieldworkers depict the vulnerabilities of children and the ways in which the streets restrain opportunities. For the fieldworker, the street is imagined as the informal market, which lacks governmental control wherein all manner of abusive and exploitative practices endanger children and limit the choices they make. However, local realities come in conflict with CAS’s depiction of the child as an able-bodied worker capable of making choices to leave the street. Indeed, many volunteers expressed to me their discontent with CAS over its policy not to feed and shelter the children, and volunteers also rejected CAS’s policy of selecting only those children motivated enough to leave the street. According to one volunteer who had worked at CAS for almost two years, CAS only gives sponsorships to advantaged children who make the necessary sacrifices to attend CAS. For example, this volunteer indicated that street children who work and live in the nearby Kaneshie market have a distinct advantage over those of AKMS because they could walk to CAS where others have to pay bus fare. Fieldworker views suggest leaving behind bounded notions of the street child in favor of assessing a child’s needs based on the degree of dependence on informal markets.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the lives of street children for the Westerner requires the translation and interpretation of the fieldworker. There are so many children who work in the streets that it is impossible for the untrained eye to differentiate a street child from an urban poor child. At the street level, outside the confines of CAS, the Western notion of the innocent child informs the “reality” of children for the foreign observer; they are all “abnormal” by virtue of their working in public spaces. The childhood that I experienced growing up, for example, consisted of

a mother and a father and two competitive brothers, a dog, and a home. Lack of shelter meant sharing a room with a sibling. Education and sports characterized my childhood experiences, with most memories located between bookends of pee-wee baseball and graduation from high school. For both street and urban poor children, childhood is interpreted by the fieldworker as one of vulnerability, unproductive work, and sometimes despair.

I have observed a consensus in the representations of street children by fieldworkers. The street child is portrayed not as one who freely chooses among available alternatives, but as one who is made helpless and vulnerable by the daily activities that he must do in order to live. This proscribes the child's involvement at CAS.

The central character of the fieldworkers' stories is the innocent victim. For Kwame, the child engages in menial labor so as to meet his own basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. From Kwame's perspective, it is difficult to see how a child can work and attend classes at the same time. For Kwame, the street takes away a child's right to an education by virtue of making the child responsible for his own future. Kofi and Mary envision the child's mentality as stunted by the informal market. Like the free market, the child is subjected to chaotic and criminal forces that he absorbs into his personality. And as Ted shows, not only are street children affected by the street, but all children who live hand-to-mouth in urban slums across Accra. Finally, Justice's account describes the difficulty in distinguishing between the urban poor and the street child. He argues, like other fieldworkers, that street children share the same difficulties as other children and their experiences are so diverse that it is a mere abstraction to differentiate between these two categories. As such, the identification of street children, which influences their number, is shaped more by donor pressures than the realities of children who work and live in the streets of Ghana. In sum, fieldworkers see street children as being acted upon by the environment whereas CAS makes children active participants in that environment. In the concluding

chapter, I draw from fieldworkers' perspectives to suggest ways through which CAS may shape a more participatory approach to supporting street children.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

Fieldworkers' views reveal how CAS blurs the boundaries between adults and children and, at the same time, drives a wedge between poor children on the basis of whether or not they have a "home" or a "family." I have suggested that this characterization is informed by Western notions of childhood. However, fieldworkers' perspectives go beyond the limited notions of childhood that CAS uses to construct the street child to show that the street, imagined as the informal market, has an effect on all children who work there. This implies that to support one group over the other is actually a matter of arbitrary demarcation more informed by socially constructed and culturally specific notions of childhood. According to fieldworkers, children are in the street to the extent that they depend on the informal market. However, if an organization were to employ a definition that accounts for the degree of association with the informal market, then perhaps the number of "street children" would grow exponentially, making it impossible to organize a program specifically targeting "street children."

CAS negotiates the boundaries between two conceptions of the street child: one as an innocent child and the other as a miniature adult. CAS relies on an image of the child as innocent in order to attract attention to the street child and to identify and count the apparent growing number of street children in Accra. If CAS legitimated its practices by appealing too much to a notion of the child as innocent victim, then the logical consequence to policy would be to feed and house all the children identified as "street children." Indeed, it is doubtful that CAS, the government, or any coalition could attract enough support for all the children who come unattended to the street. As such, depicting the child more as a miniature adult, who is responsible for his or her own choices and development, helps to limit the number of children whom CAS can fully support. Moreover, CAS limits the numbers that it can support by placing conditions on children who visit CAS. Children who work and live in the street are expected to

regularly attend and participate in CAS activities, express a desire to leave the street, and behave according to the rules. If a child is evaluated as being successful in these things then she is potentially eligible for the Sponsorship program. However, the assumption that informs this logic is that there are ample resources and markets for all children who decide to leave the streets.

Neoliberalism is described in this thesis as a sociocultural system that has influenced the meaning of development self-help circulating within the international aid community. Through a prism of neoliberal culture, street children in Accra, Ghana, are transformed from helpless innocent victims to miniature adults endowed with the capabilities to direct their own future. Indeed, the aid industry seeks to empower the poor through capacity building measures to improve the human capital of vulnerable populations. These measures focus on the child's right to choose and to participate, and not on the social, political, and economic environments that constrain their decisions and abilities to participate, in a dignified manner, in the communities in which they live. As Chambers (1997) argues, many of the failures of the development industry can be traced to top-down, ethnocentric policies that fail to incorporate the views and ideas of local people, where the people's whole reality is determined without their involvement. As a result, mothers, fathers and children go unsupported in a place like the AKMS and must eke out a living in urban ghettos and informal markets often without (legal) shelter, food, clean water, and electricity. As Justice indicates, while CAS and its donors are fixated on the most prominent and particular features of street children, the political-economy drops from view while the suffering of urban poor children and their families goes unheeded.

The most striking of CAS's top-down policies is the "either-or" discourse on helping contained within them: short-term assistance is considered as *charity* that assists "street children [by] giving them everything they need, which makes them complacent and dependent" or empowerment that crafts "active participants [who are] changing their own lives and leaving behind life in the street"

(Magazine 2003:245). A vignette from my fieldnotes challenges the cultural logics that sets charity against empowerment:

On my way to CAS every weekday morning, I encountered a variety of people begging for change. Migrant families from Niger, for instance, would send their children out to find people who looked wealthy. Children in tattered clothing would step in front of me holding out their hand without saying a word. The first time this happened, my reaction was to flee, but then I thought the better of it and took the children to an apple stand and purchased apples for them. The vendor smiled at me and then yelled something to the nearby merchants. To my chagrin, they all looked at me, hesitated, and started laughing. I then noticed that the children had not left and were still holding out their hands. One of the children even dropped the apple I gave him on the ground. Indeed, the children did not want apples, just a little change. Angry, I decided not to give them anything more, because I felt my charity betrayed.

My notion of helping Nigerian children was similar to Ellerman's notion of help that overrides aid. In my mind I thought I was giving freely to the children, but when they did not give me the desired response (humbly and gratefully taking the apples and then leaving), I became angry and decried that I would never give them anything again. I put conditions on help similar to the conditions (or at least in the same spirit of) foreign aid institutions (SALs) that have placed conditions on development loans to Ghana. Indeed, my giving was not charity; it was control. Nor was my giving to the children aimed at empowering them. I just wanted to see them eat. I did not think that a few apples could somehow make them active agents in their own lives. As such, giving was not a self-less act either (i.e., charity). Charitable help is empowering, but once help is given with conditions then it inherently becomes a selfish act. Indeed, this is a moral argument, but it also is pragmatic as the following vignette will show.

Michelle's incident with a burn victim in the Konkomba market would change my thinking on the subject of charity. On July 3rd, 2004, Michelle, a volunteer from California, had left for the AKMS with Mary and Tolerance to do

fieldwork. She reported that she walked with them through the markets where vendors and hawkers sold all manner of things and services. They approached the rubbish tip where street mothers and their babies are known to habitate. Nearby was a baby crèche that attended to the children of working mothers.

After spending about fifteen minutes doing fieldwork, Mary and Tolerance decided to turn back when a small panic-stricken child accosted the party. Mary and Tolerance spoke with the boy. He then ran off. Translating to Michelle, they told her that the boy claims that his mother had fallen into a vat of stew and was burned badly. Alarmed, the party left to see the mother.

When they arrived at the child's house, Michelle noted the living situation: "It smelled like shit. There was sewage spewing out the corner of the shack... There were children everywhere running around...digging in stuff. I think it was the husband. He was lying down in front. The mother was inside on a bench." Tolerance approached the lady first and asked her what had happened and invited her to come outside. Michelle reported that the lady took about five minutes to stand up, stumbled a few times, and walked to the doorway. She observed that the whole right side of her body was scalded. She was weak and could barely stand up and seemed to slur her words.

After they had all talked for some time, with a flip of the hand in the air, Tolerance abruptly turned from the woman as if there was nothing she could do about it. After they walked about 25 yards or so, Michelle asked Mary what they were going to do to help the lady. Tolerance intervened and said, "Nothing. We have no money for things like that... We only help street children." Angry at Tolerance's response, Michelle spoke back, "But we have to do something about this; She looks like she will die if she doesn't get medical attention." Tolerance smiled at her concern and emphasized, "*Let's go.*"

But Michelle refused and went back to the lady with Mary in tow. Mary translated in Twi for her: "We need to get you to a hospital now. Where is your husband?" When he presented himself, Michelle asked him, "Why haven't you taken her to a hospital?" He informed them that he had no money and had too

many children to care for. Michelle then insisted that they go to the hospital, and that she would pay for it. She asked the husband, "How much?" "Twenty dollars," he told her. She then hailed a taxi and ordered him to take the ailing woman directly to the hospital and not to turn around. They feared the husband would pocket the money, so they gave it directly to the taxi driver.

The next day, Michelle, Mary and I went to the hospital to check on the lady. She was diagnosed with first and second degree burns on about 25% of her body. She looked bad: she had bloody bandages all over her body from her face to her feet. Because she had had these burns for three days, they were badly infected. She reported to us that she was in a lot of pain. I thought to myself that if this woman had not received this money she would have died. The meaning of money was apparent.

From this vignette, two points can be made: first, CAS's policy of helping the typical street child discouraged the fieldworker from helping a child's mother. If the mother had died or was unable to work, what would have happened to her child? Would he have become a "typical street child" now eligible for support? As Kwame pointed out in regards to shanty parents and their children: "This is the situation: we shouldn't wait for them to come to the street before we call them street children" (Kwame interview; June 8, 2004). Kwame expressed a desire repeated to me several times in my interactions with him: include more children in the category of "street child" and more services can be brought to those who need them. Indeed, in our conversations together, he reported several instances similar to the one mentioned above, but alas he reported that his "hands were tied." Second, USD \$20 saved a woman's life and probably prevented her child from becoming a classically defined street child. With all the money that flows into CAS for reform programs promised to support the street child, survival needs go unmet and the structural inequalities that produce them go unchallenged.

CAS conforms to the discourse that street children have no childhood, and because of this, their reformation can only occur if the child chooses to leave the street. This now "empowered" miniature adult is one who participates in activities

that promote his progressive development towards an imagined adult society. By adopting the dress, attitude, skills, and behaviors of modern (adult) society, the child is presumed to assimilate a business culture by leaving the past behind. As CAS has indicated, “We aim to educate the child” in such a way that “returns their dignity to develop into respectful citizens of society” with the long term goals of socializing children “in such a manner that they can find suitable jobs and build up their future lives” (CAS 2003:9-10)

The miniature adult—child innocence duality distorts “empowerment” as a symbol of grass-roots advocacy for the disempowered. By making charity incongruent with empowerment goals, a long-term strategy for helping all of Ghana’s poor children is stymied. Instead of bounded categories of street child and urban poor child, the fieldworkers offer an innovative way for seeing poor children that is informed by their closer association with street children. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, there are many layers that filter what is known about street children, and what is known about them often conforms to normative depictions that distort the different experiences that children face across cultures. Rather, fieldworkers’ perspectives and insights show us that streetness is a matter of degree and not kind and that policies could be aimed at addressing the structural elements that make children dependent on illegal activities, such as child labor. Furthermore, restricting money, food, and shelter involves what some CAS workers and volunteers suggest as a “survival of the fittest” mentality that supports only those who have the charisma, ability, and industriousness that is necessary to get off the street. Helping the child to help herself could also mean giving her family the ability to break free from the environments that extract any income that she earns.

SUGGESTIONS

As was discussed in chapter 3, development projects suffer as a result of failing to include the voices and concerns of "beneficiaries" at all stages of the development process. Failure stems from the lack of local support. Engineering

local support is not an answer because it undermines beneficiaries' motivations to help themselves. Besides, social engineering presupposes a development program designed without local participation at the initial planning stages.

Chambers (1997) shows that it is "local realities" that count and that errors occur when they are ignored. He argues that to fix errors, development must empower local people by means which "enable...people to share, enhance, and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act" and to "monitor and evaluate" the meeting of goals that they define" (1997:104). But who are "they" that are supposed to be helped? I have shown that the target population itself is a cultural construction that confers meanings that inform who is to be helped and what kind of help should be supplied. If the targeted population does not match local realities, then those who exhibit a greater need for care and support may be left without help. "Embedded errors" can therefore be the consequences that a particular category of beneficiaries confers.

Other potential "embedded errors" identified in this thesis are CAS's use of empowerment and participation. As CAS uses it, empowerment means to provide opportunities to those who choose to leave the streets; participation in program activities is the means through which they can accomplish that goal. Applying Hart's (1992) "participation ladder," CAS's view of participation is a "false rung" because it means that the child must choose to participate in activities that CAS feels is good for him, not what activities he feels is good for himself. Moreover, applying Chamber's definition of empowerment, it is easy to see that CAS does not mean empowering children to think and to act, but to select only those who already have the means to help themselves.

However, an argument could be made that street children are developmentally too immature to know how to help themselves, or what they want is ultimately damaging to themselves or to others. Empowering street children by allowing them to fully participate in program design, implementation,

and evaluation could also be seen as limited or wholly disastrous.⁵⁸ Moreover, there may be limited willpower by donors to support a truly participatory initiative. One way to correct this is to broaden the range of local people who can participate in project design. I suggest a more participatory framework that incorporates the voices of fieldworkers who come from the same regions and are affected by the same political and economic processes as children who work and live in the city streets. This could include the following changes to CAS policy:

1) Develop an administrative process through which fieldworkers are able to develop and implement policies that they feel are more appropriate to local realities. Since CAS get funds that are targeted for specific smaller projects, such as sports activities or dramatic plays, CAS could solicit funds from donors who are interested in helping fieldworkers to meet the specific needs of people with whom they come in contact everyday. One suggestion could be to provide fieldworkers with discretionary funds that can be spent based on guidelines and reporting practices that they specify. Another suggestion could be to include in CAS's policies the fieldworker's view that street children are not so much agents in their environment, but rather they are acted on by it. The fact that the GSS (2003) recently reported that 39% of Ghana's children work in the informal sector gives support to the fieldworkers' perspectives that "street children" are in the street not because they choose it, but because they are forced into it. CAS, rather than focusing exclusively on a targeted population, could make greater efforts to contribute to public discourse on issues of child labor and migration by instituting efforts to campaign on behalf of street children by using CAS staff as spokespersons.

2) Fieldworkers' perspectives on economic realities seem to indicate that an exclusive focus on "street children" may exclude other children who may also express the same needs. Those who are included under the category of "street

⁵⁸ However, Hecht (1998) provides examples of street child organizations whose membership and administration are made solely of street children. Hecht indicates that these organizations have been successful in raising awareness and changing local laws that assist them in their daily struggles to improve their own lives.

children" might be expanded to include a more culturally appropriate definition of street children that incorporates those children who live in illegal squatter settlements for example. One way to work around the need to define a population could be to assess the level of "streetness," or the degree to which a child is dependent on the street, by identifying multiple axes of expressed needs to include basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, and medicine), emotional needs (e.g., self-expression and love), development needs (e.g., literacy and apprenticeships), and social needs (e.g., assistance with combating abuse or bringing a child in contact with other children of the same ethnicity). These needs could be developed by a treatment team in conjunction with the individual child to develop what could be called an individual service plan.

3) Empowerment can mean giving aid directly to support networks. As Cernea (1985:6) has argued, many development projects languish because society does not effectively "absorb" the project. Getting local people behind a project, as Chambers (1997) contends, makes it more likely to succeed. By extension, for the individual child (who could be seen as one separate project) to succeed, her support network in an aid package. For example, not mentioned in this thesis but accounted for by fieldworkers were classically defined street children who had strong relationships with powerful men and women in their environment and therefore had greater access to jobs, food, shelter and the like. There were also more unfortunate children who did not have these relationships. Moreover, many street children were said to go home on occasion while others were not. And some came to the street for a specific reason (e.g., girls in search of a dowry for marriage). Providing aid to a network that may already support a "street child" could therefore prove beneficial.

The above policy suggestions involve empowering fieldworkers by allowing them a more central role in the planning of CAS activities. An analysis of fieldworkers' perspectives shows that CAS's interpretation of participation and empowerment as personal responsibility masks larger social inequalities that create conditions through which urban poor children find themselves on the

street. CAS could reformulate its view of participation by realizing that empowering "lowers" can mean including their voices in project design and entrusting them to make key decisions about who and how someone is helped.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL ISSUES RAISED IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Full approval for fieldwork to be carried out in Accra, Ghana was granted to me by the University of Tennessee's Institutional Review Board regarding research with human subjects.⁵⁹ In accordance with its standards, all participation by CAS staff and volunteers was voluntary and confidential. To participate in this study, individuals first had to read and sign an informed consent statement that described the purpose of the study, methods used, foreseeable risks, potential benefits as well as a general description of the issues I wished to write about. Participants were assured that their views and opinions would be safeguarded and that every precaution would be made to protect them from administrative censure or loss of job. A confidentiality statement was therefore included in the informed consent form making explicit that all participants would be given pseudonyms, unless expressed otherwise, in any publications resulting from this research. Individuals could also decline to participate in the study at any time without penalty.

The fieldwork in this study is also compliant with the American Anthropological Association's Code of Ethics (1998).⁶⁰ The AAA Code of Ethics is intended to serve as an "ethical framework" for anthropological research. When conflicts arise, the anthropologist must make decisions that "make clear the assumptions, facts and issues on which those choices are based." The anthropologist therefore must address the "general contexts, priorities and relationships" between himself and his hosts and the "proper demands of good citizenship."

The AAA Code of Ethics states that anthropologists have ethical obligations to the people they study and with whom they work. In cultural relativist terms, this requires that the researcher understand the key informants' beliefs and activities as he or she makes sense of them. In addition,

⁵⁹ http://my.Tennessee.edu/portal/page?_pageid=43,45644&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

⁶⁰ <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm>

anthropological researchers are encouraged to consult actively with affected individuals or groups with the goal that these interactions be mutually beneficial. Although analysis presented in this research is critical, I am ultimately intending that it should be of benefit to the organization in the following ways: 1) It will help clarify CAS objectives 2) explore the cultural appropriateness of these objectives; 3) determine whether they are effective in achieving them; 4) and assess the social impacts of CAS's work.

APPENDIX B: FIELDWORKER INTERVIEW GUIDE

Probe 1: Fieldwork Description and Personal Fieldwork Style

1. How would you describe the work you do?
2. Describe your fieldwork style?
3. What most influenced your fieldwork style?
In what ways have personal experience affected your work?
What is your education level and how has it affected your work?
4. Describe your relationship with the public when you are working.
In what ways do your job responsibilities include raising public awareness?
Do people in the community typically help or hinder your working with street children?

Probe 2: Description of Street Children

1. Describe street children.
2. How do you know when a child is really a street child?
3. What are street children at risk for? What are their particular strengths and weaknesses?
3. How are street children perceived by the public?
4. Describe the children who live in Agbogloboshie?
Are children who live in Agbogloboshie street children? Why or why not?
5. How would you describe the children who live in Kaneshie?
Are children who live in Kaneshie street children? Why or why not?
6. Follow up to 4 and 5: What are the differences and/or similarities between urban poor children and street children?

Probe 3: Registration Process/Headcount

1. Describe how a child is registered with CAS.
Why are children registered?
How is this information used and who sees it?
Why is it important to know where street children originally come from?
3. Describe the process for counting street children.
4. Follow up to 3: Explain how the “continuous headcount” is done.
The most recent CAS newsletter (June 2004) states that counting methods are being improved. How so? Improved from what?
5. How does CAS ensure that all staff are counting street children in a similar manner?
6. Are the numbers of street children increasing?
Is CAS’s current headcount more or less than the numbers of children currently living on the street without a home and family?

Probe 4: Tension

1. There seems to be a lot of foreign involvement, the Dutch in particular, at CAS. Describe your feelings with respect to this?
2. Follow up to 1: You indicate that there is tension between Europeans and local Ghanaian staff, what explains this do you think?
3. In what ways are foreign visitors and volunteers a help or a burden to CAS?
4. Do you feel the administration listens to your concerns?
How are your observations and concerns recognized by CAS management?

Probe 5: Fieldworker Advocacy

1. Describe CAS's mission.
2. Do you agree or disagree with their mission?
3. How would you improve CAS and its mission?
4. When you come across a need in the community that lies outside of CAS's mission to work explicitly with street children, to what extent do you feel personally responsible to help?
5. In what ways do you think you can create awareness about street children and your work?
6. What kind of things would you like to communicate to donors and potential donors?

APPENDIX C: MANAGEMENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Probe 1: Attitude on other NGOs Working with Street Children

1. When in the street I have seen several other NGOs working to help street children. What do you think explains this?
2. Do you know of Safe Haven? What is your opinion of their approach?

Probe 2: CAS's Mission, Policies, and Practices

1. Why does CAS not feed and shelter the children at the Refuge?
2. Do you ever minister to the children? If so, what do you teach them?

Probe 3: Obstacles to Mission/Objectives

1. What are CAS's main objectives as you see them?
2. What are the major obstacles to meeting those objectives now and in the future?
3. Where do you see CAS in the next five years?
4. Do you ever feel that there are cultural conflicts at CAS? If so, what are they?
5. How do the state and local governments help or hinder CAS in meeting its objectives?

Probe 4: Role of Volunteers

1. What is the role of volunteers, visitors, and researchers?
2. Why does CAS take them on?
3. There seems to be a strong connection between CAS and Holland as evidenced by the number of Dutch volunteers. Could you explain?

Probe 5: Donors

1. Who are your donors and can you describe them?
2. I have heard that the traditional sources for funding are shrinking. How are donor markets changing and what is your opinion about these changes?
3. Follow-up to 1: Explain what sustainability means. How has CAS taken a sustainability approach especially with respect to Hopeland and the Demonstration departments?
4. What do donors want to know? What do you have to report to donors?
5. I see that the Demonstration department's instructors are hard at work producing large orders for customers. Who purchases these products?
 - What role do these products play in helping street children?
 - What role do customers play in sustaining CAS's activities?
 - Do other NGOs make purchases of CAS's products?
 - Describe how you market CAS's products? What is the marketing strategy?
6. What role do donors play in the development of CAS's programs?
 - Are conditions placed on their donations?
 - If so, what are these conditions?

7. I understand UNICEF is no longer a donor. Why?
8. To what extent, if at all, has STICHTENG affected the fieldwork department's activities? CORDAID?
9. What kinds of donors best work with CAS?
10. How do you attract donors?

Probe 6: Fieldwork Department

1. Describe the Fieldwork department's activities.
2. What is the role of the Fieldwork department with respect to meeting CAS's mission and objectives?
3. To what extent is the Fieldwork department involved in raising public awareness?
4. How much does the Fieldwork department influence what you know and what you advertise about street children?
What about the communities in which they live?
5. I understand that sometimes fieldworkers come across special needs within the community that lie outside of CAS's explicit mission. Could you tell me your feelings about having to make difficult choices with respect to who gets assistance and who does not?
What guides those decisions?
Do you have any examples of when you've had to make hard choices?
6. There seems to be disagreement between the Sponsorship and Fieldwork departments as to who should be considered a street child, especially those children living in the illegal structures of the Konkomba market. Why does CAS not work with these children?
7. Why is identifying and counting street children such an important aspect of CAS's activities?

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE LIST OF TOPICS

The following is a list of topics and specific questions that I aimed to explore while making observations in the Demonstration department on July 21, 2004. I made observations from 1PM to 5:30PM.

TOPIC 1

FUNDING:

- How does Demonstration attract funding to its programs?
- To what extent does the selling of crafts support the activities of the program?
- Who buys these crafts and in what venues?

TOPIC 2

CHILD PARTICIPATION

- Are children encouraged to participate?
- Do children get in the way while instructors are making crafts?
- Do children have a say in the design of a craft?
- What are children doing while observing the instructors?
- How engaging are the instructors?

TOPIC 3

VOLUNTEERS

- Who are the volunteers and visitors that are helping the instructors with the children?
- What are they doing?
- Do they seem to have a greater role in working with the children than the instructors?

TOPIC 4

STYLE OF CRAFTS AND THEIR MEANINGS

- Explore why instructors are making a particular craft. In particular, why are instructors making the "head in hands" figurine?
- Some of the figurines seem depressed, explore this. What are they trying to convey to a potential buyer?
- Ask instructor and department head what meanings they try to convey with the style of a particular craft?

TOPIC 5

LOCAL BAZAAR WHERE CRAFTS ARE SOLD

- Where are CAS's products located with respect to other products?
- How are these products packaged? Are they marketed as if street children made them?
- Purchase a CAS product and observe how the cashier reacts. How much does the cashier know about the product?

APPENDIX E: EXPLANATION OF CODES

The content of fieldnotes, photographs, transcriptions of interviews, promotional and program materials, and internal agency documents were organized around three focus variables (or primary codes). Focus variables dealt with how administrative and fieldwork staff define street and urban poor children, the risks believed to be associated with being in the street, and the interventions that CAS uses to meet the perceived needs of the street child in addition to the interventions that fieldworkers believe should be implemented.

Focus Variables:

- 1a. Characteristics of street children
- 1b. Characteristics of urban poor children
2. Risks associated with being in the street
3. Interventions utilized to meet children's needs

After organizing textual data⁶¹ around the three thematic categories mentioned above, I utilized a technique called "open coding" and discovered two patterns that varied across two spatial axes (House of Refuge/mini-refuges and Street). These patterns were coded as "Innocent Child" and "Miniature Adult" and are defined as follows:

Innocent Child:

A characterization of street children as innocents focuses on them as a special risk category in need of a protective environment, without which children are subject to illiteracy, adult exploitation, drug addiction, and "lack of a future." Emphasis is placed on the home and family as institutions that *all* children need. Their future development rests on what the family and society provides *for* them. The criteria for data to be described as "Innocent Child" are listed as "subcodes." They are defined as follows:

Lack of Education:

Focus on the children as illiterate and lacking the skills necessary for survival. Children need help in order to learn.

Exploited:

Focus on child as victim of adult exploitation.

- a. Sexual Exploitation: Children portrayed as being subjected to prostitution, rape, or sexual slavery.
- b. Labor Exploitation: Child portrayed as being utilized as a source for cheap/free labor.

⁶¹ Photographic data were similarly analyzed. Please refer to tables 2 and 3.

c. ADL (activities of daily living) exploitation: The child is portrayed as living in an extractive environment in which he or she must pay for all his or her ADL, such as hygiene, toilet, and recreation.

Lack of Family:

Focus on child as missing, disconnected from, or having strained relations with his or her family.

Future:

Focus on child as lacking prospects for a successful and happy life—i.e., the child's current lifestyle is portrayed as a "dead end." Images portray children standing around with descriptors such as "bored" or "tired."

Health:

Focus on child as sick or having more of a potential to get sick as a result of being in the street without a home or family. Examples are of two categories: environmental and behavioral.

a. "Environmental" emphasizes unhygienic, dirty and criminal (i.e., exposure to adult drug users and sellers) living conditions

b. "Behavioral" emphasizes those behaviors believed to place a child more at-risk for contracting a disease (e.g., AIDs) or becoming addicted to toxic substances (e.g., glue, marijuana.)

Hunger:

Focus on children's inadequate access to food.

Safety:

Focus on conditions and behaviors that put children more at-risk for injury. Examples are children fighting, and working in the middle of the street (putting them more at-risk to get hit by cars and buses).

Self-esteem:

Focus on children internalizing maltreatment. Focus on the effects of exploitation and abuse on children's self-esteem. Children are portrayed as feeling excluded from society, not capable of learning, internalizing feelings of inferiority, and failing to demonstrate a basic understanding of their human rights. Indicators of low self-esteem are children running and hiding from adults, or children not standing up for themselves when their rights are being violated.

Shelter:

Focus on children "sleeping rough." The child is portrayed as having difficulty in sleeping in which he or she has to sleep outside on concrete floors or on steps in public places, often without protection from the elements, such as wind and rain.

Miniature Adult:

A depiction of street children as Miniature Adults portrays them as rights-bearing citizens who actively pursue their own potential. Children negotiate their environments in the same ways as adults—i.e. through their sexuality, play, education, and work. Home and family are nurturing environments to the extent that they grant children their basic rights as equal participants in society. With the proper *opportunities*, children are portrayed as being able to make informed, rational *choices* about their future.

Choice:

Focus on child as making choices among available opportunities. For example, child chooses to get off the street by regularly attending CAS activities. A disruptive, neglectful child is one who chooses to stay on the street; a cooperative, punctual child is one who wants to leave the street.

Right to Identity:

Focus on child as having right to whatever lifestyle he or she chooses. Child is perceived as having a right to work and live in the street.

Productive Play:

Focus on child's ability to find worth and success through play. Examples are activities, such as football, "dance-offs", and dramatic plays.

Heroic Child:

Focus on child's resiliency in light of difficult circumstances. Children in difficult circumstances adapt survival strategies that can be used for successful integration into the formal economy. Examples include portrayals of children using craftiness to get food and shelter.

Education as Work:

Focus on child work (developmental) rather than child labor (exploitative). Work is portrayed as an opportunity for children to learn the necessary skills to adapt to a changing economy.

VITA

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