Youth Development and Navigation of Young People in Ghana

Master Thesis

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Abstract
This thesis investigates how different institutions in Ghana perceive youth development and how this influences the navigation of young people in Ghanaian society. The investigation is conducted on the foundation of Carol Bacchi’s approach to policy analysis. This approach is founded on the belief that policies represent problems rather than solutions. Her approach is combined with a mapping of institutions that are influential in reference to youth development and the social structures present in Ghanaian society. Combined these chapters form the analytical framework of this thesis. The analysis finds that the influential institutions in Ghana acknowledge the challenges facing the youth. However, they all conduct a top-down approach that does not provide sustainable solutions for the young Ghanaians to follow. Due to stigma related to the position of young people in Ghana, which the influential institutions contribute to, the youth is locked in a stagnant state of becoming yet never arriving.
List of abbreviations

AU - African Union

AFDB – The African Development Bank

AYC – African Youth Charter

AHSG - The African Heads of State and Government

ACB – The African Central Bank

AYFC – The African Youth and Governance Conference

CDD – Ghana – Ghana Center for Democratic Development

ESCC - The Economic, Social and Cultural Councils

ECOWAS - The Economic Community of West African States

IMF – The International Monetary Fund

ICT - Information and communication technologies

MDG’s - Millennium Development Goals

NGO – Non Governmental organization

NYP - The National Youth Policy (NYP)

OAU – The Organisation for African Unity

PAP - The Pan-African Parliament

PAC - The Pan-African Court of Justice
PRC - The Executive Council, the Permanent Representative Committee

PSC - The Peace and Security Council

UN - The United Nations

UNDP – The United Nations Development Program

UN ECOSOC - The United Nations Economic and Social Council

YBF – The Youth Bridge Foundation

WYR – The World Youth Report

WB - World Bank

WPAY - The World Programme of Action for Youth
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Introduction

There seems to be an increased focus on young people in development today. Expressions like ‘the lost generation’, ‘youth bulge’ and ‘demographic bomb’ indicate that young people pose a threat or at least a challenge for socio-economic development. The world’s population is growing and the demographic proportions are changing. Worldwide, the number of young people has increased from 461 million in 1950 to 1.21 billion in 2010 and by 2050, the young population is estimated to reach 1.25 billion (United Nations Youth Report 2011: 49). The so-called youth bulge has created challenges in reference to job creation, insufficient educational opportunities, instability, poverty, unstable and dangerous jobs etc. Youth unemployment is higher than ever before and exceeds unemployment of other age groups by far (United Nations Youth Report 2011: 15). The global youth unemployment reached 12.6 %, almost 3 times higher than the global adult unemployment rate at 4.8 % (WYR 2011). Consequently, young people constitute a large part of the world’s poor with 152 million young workers living in households and with incomes below the poverty line of 1.25 US dollars per day (WYR 2011).

The term youth development refers to the suggested approaches for improvement of the conditions facing young people by ensuring sustainable development of the young generation. Even though youth development is a worldwide concern, the largest challenges are seen in the developing world, where 87% of the world's young population is situated. Africa is the continent with the highest percentage of young people and in 3 generations 41% of the world's youthful population will be African (MO Ibrahim Foundation 2012). At the same time, almost half of the worlds out-of-school children live in Sub Saharan Africa, which could place some challenges for the future development of the continent.

There is discussions of whether the African youth is a threat or a potential for the

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1 The UN defines young people as persons between the age of 15-24.
future of Africa. The argument is that the large young population can be a potential if it obtains the skills and opportunities to contribute to the socio-economic development in their countries and the continent as a whole. By 2035, Africa’s labor force will be bigger than China's and by 2050, 25% of the labor force in the world will be African, which will make it the continent with lowest dependency rate in the world (MO Ibrahim Foundation 2012). Therefore, one might argue that if the African countries are able to reap the potential of the African youth by creating meaningful occupation for them, it could lead to an economic boom like seen in East Asian Economies (MO Ibrahim Foundation 2012). Nonetheless, Africa does not create the needed amount of jobs to employ the 10-12 million young people entering the labor market each year (AfDB 2012: 5). Thus, it is argued that if young people do not get to explore their potential and opportunities, they can pose a threat in terms of violence and political instability, as seen during the Arab Spring in North Africa.

Young African’s today have better access to education and are more literate than prior generations but they do not gain the skills needed to survive in the labor market (WYR 2011). Consequently there is a generation of young people who gain a degree that is not useful in practice. Even though the youth in Africa is more educated than their parents, they are also more unemployed (MO Ibrahim Foundation 2012: 51). Thus, a high education does not increase the chances of accessing work. The African Development Bank states that: ”[i]n most African countries those with the highest education levels tend to take longer to search for a job and have higher unemployment rates than those who are less well educated” (AfDB 2012: 9). As a result, many young Africans choose to leave their country to search for employment elsewhere. In Ghana, 50% of young people with a tertiary education emigrate or are forced into the informal sector, which constitutes over 80% of total employment in sub-Saharan Africa (MO Ibrahim Foundation 2012: 49). Still, Ghana is not among the African countries with the biggest challenges concerning youth development. The country has done great developmental improvements over the last years and is one of
Africa's ten largest economies (MO Ibrahim Foundation 2012: 40). However, Ghana is also a country with a median age of 22 years and has difficulty reaping the potential of the country’s youth, which constitute 35% of the total population (MO Ibrahim Foundation 2012: 4-5). I find it interesting to focus on a country, which is seen as one of the countries that is experiencing socio-economic progress. The country is not immensely plagued by violence, civil war or political instability and the literacy rate and trust in democracy is high (MO Ibrahim Foundation 2012: 26). What is then the reason for the lack of opportunities for young people in Ghanaian society?

Through personal experience from travels and internships in the country, I have seen the struggles and frustration of the young population. Similarly with an increased focus on the role of young people in development the notion of youth seems to have become a political issue and policies are made both internationally and nationally towards youth development. These policies claim that young people are the key to sustainable development. One could therefore, question why the challenges facing young people are still severe. Perhaps the approaches in youth development are not affective or the needs of the youth are not considered. Maybe the young Ghanaians are lacking initiatives or possibly, external factors influence the approaches in youth development.

In this thesis, I wish to investigate the different approaches towards youth development in Ghana and through the policies by influential actors in society question how they perceive the notion of youth development. Why do we see so many challenges in the young population, who is responsible and does ultimately decide these perceptions? Why are the many initiatives towards the youth in Ghana not significantly effective and are the young Ghanaians themselves not doing enough for their own empowerment and participation in society? To answer these questions, I first outline the actors that might be influential in society, as they are the ones that have the mandate to decide the dominant perceptions of youth development in Ghana.
The theoretical foundation of this thesis notes that one must consider actors outside the policy to comprehend the message of the policy. Therefore, besides investigating the role and perceptions by the creators of the analyzed policies, namely African Union (AU), the Ghanaian government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), other actors must also be included to present a holistic picture of Ghanaian society. Ghana, like most African countries, has various non-state actors. Consequently the role and perceptions of traditional authorities and religious institutions will also be included. Hereafter it is interesting to compare how these approaches correspond with the navigation of young Ghanaians in society and to discuss if they might be influenced by the perceptions presented in the policies, which is ultimately significant for the socio-economic development in Ghana. This leads me to the following research question:

**Research question**

“How do different institutions in Ghana perceive youth development and how does that influence the navigation of young people in Ghanaian society?”

**Methodology**

To answer this question the thesis is founded on theory by Carol Bacchi, which provides me with tools to scrutinize structures in society through policy analysis. Before the policies from different institutions are analyzed, the thesis will outline a mapping chapter to describe the different influential actors in Ghanaian society. The mapping chapter will investigate the institutions on their own premises to understand their position in society and in reference to the youth. It will be discussed what the institutions are capable of and which power they hold. It is also important to outline the actors, who form opinions in Ghana to understand the perceptions of youth development and what the approaches suggested in the policies are based on. It must

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2 Carole Bacchi is Professor in politics at the university of Adelaide.
be noted that these actors are chosen through my understanding of who the influential actors in Ghanaian society are in reference to youth development. The theory by Bacchi combined with the knowledge attained through the mapping chapter will provide an analytical framework that will function as a method to analyze policies by the influential institutions in Ghana. These policies are chosen through my personal conviction of a connection between the local, the national and the international level in developmental strategies supported by the points of Bacchi to look at structures outside the policy to comprehend the message. Therefore the approach to comprehend these policies and structures in society will evidently be characterized by the beliefs of Bacchi as will the knowledge produced in this thesis. Hence utilizing another theory with another focus might have given a different result. The perceptions of youth development found in this thesis cannot provide findings of perceptions on youth of the whole population in Ghana but it can provide tendencies based on the material used to analyze the perceptions of youth development in the country. Moreover the material used in this thesis does not allow me to go into details about the diverse groups within the category of youth, such as gender, geographical placement, age, and social position etc. Rather the material enables me to find general tendencies in the approach towards youth development in Ghana to lastly enable me to discuss how the presented perceptions of youth development can possibly influence the navigation of young people in society. This is done with point of departure in different field studies with focus on young people in Ghana. Since I base my knowledge of the navigation of youth on studies conducted by others, I will work with an edited material, which might leave out points that I would consider as essential. On the other hand, the various fieldwork studies can give me a more diverse insights to strategies of young people in society that I could have gotten from my own fieldwork. Moreover due to the time limit of my thesis, the field work I would have conducted could not have been as long-term and detailed, as the ones I am using in this thesis, which could have influenced my findings in another way. By
including various field studies, I hope to outline tendencies of how young Ghanaians navigate in society. It must be noted that no matter which approach I would have taken, I could not have come with a representative answer to how all young people in Ghana navigate in society. However, my material does allow me to describe the tendencies in youth development in Ghana and examples of how this affects the navigation of young people in society. This comparison is important because the choices of the young Ghanaians will ultimately have an influence on the future development of the country. Hence, no matter how the approaches to youth development function, they will have an impact on the future development in Ghana.

**Composition of the thesis**

This thesis is divided into 4 main sections. Besides this introduction which contains my approach, problem statement, method and theoretical foundation by Bacchi, there are 3 remaining sections which can be divided under the following subjects:

2. Who are the influential institutions in Ghana?

3. How do these institutions perceive youth development?

4. How do young Ghanaians relate to these perceptions?

5. The concluding section, which presents my findings

The **second section** outlines a mapping chapter of the most influential institutions in Ghana. These include the African Union (AU) and its connection to the United Nations (UN), the government of Ghana, two different NGO’s with international recognition, traditional authorities and religious institutions. The section investigates how these institutions are related and outlines their position and capacity in society and in relation to the youth.
The third section describes the analytical framework through which the policies will be analyzed. This approach is based on the theory by Bacchi, combined with the findings in the mapping chapter and will divide the approach to the analysis into different themes. Hereafter, a comparative analysis is conducted through these themes to answer how the influential institutions in Ghana perceive youth development.

The forth section answers how young Ghanaians relate to these perceptions. This is done by discussing how the perceptions on youth development found in the analysis, might influence the choices young people take to navigate in society. Moreover the section looks at tendencies in strategies of young Ghanaians, which are based on field work by various researchers, all conducted on young people in Ghana.

Lastly the fifth and concluding section recapitulates the points throughout the thesis and answers the research question.

The Theoretical Foundation
The following chapter presents the theoretical foundation of this thesis based on the approach to policy analysis by Carol Bacchi\(^3\). This approach helps me to answer the research question in regards to how different institutions in Ghana perceive youth development and how this perception might influence the navigation of young people in society. Bacchi describes which key factors to be aware of when analyzing policies and how it can uncover the perceptions of the people targeted in addition to how this might affect these people’s self-perception and their perception of society at large. Thus, in reference to this thesis it assists me in scrutinizing perceptions of youth development in Ghana and the influence this perception has on young Ghanaians. Bacchi’s points have been divided into the themes below and will function as the

\(^3\) Carol Bacchi is a professor in politics at the University of Adelaide
Problem representation

Bacchi challenges the idea that policies are the best approach to deal with problems in society, as she argues that policies actually represent problems rather than solutions (Bacchi 2009: 1). Alternatively instead of focusing on problem solving in policy, Bacchi focuses on problem questioning, as she perceives this as a way to investigate how proposals for change represent problems (Bacchi 2009: preface). She claims that creating policies is part of problem production rather than problem solving and that this is a central part of governing processes (Bacchi 2009: introduction). This manipulation is not done intentionally but is embedded in the whole notion of policies, as they make proposals for change and therefore implicitly indicate that something must be fixed. It is crucial to explore these “hidden problems” to understand what a policy represents as the problem. Bacchi refers to this as problem representation (Bacchi 2009: introduction xii). Since the policies constitute problems, they also present them in a certain way, which selects what is determined to be significant and what is not. This usually results in a simplification or twist of the conditions in society. Hence, when analyzing policies, it is important to reflect on what is left out and not being told instead of what is actually written. When this approach to policy analysis is used it can display how we are being governed and thereby question the problems presumed to exist in society, instead of merely accepting them. Bacchi underlines that the problems represented in policies control our everyday lives, meaning that we are actually governed through problem representations rather than policies (Bacchi 2009: 263). The argument is that policies should not simply be perceived as a positive initiative and a solution to problems in society. All policies are written with a certain agenda, which enhance some things and exclude others. Therefore, when investigating how influential institutions in Ghana perceive youth development the emphasis must be on how the policies place
responsibility for the situation and who is presented as the problem solvers. Moreover, it must be considered if the problem representation is in line with the situation in Ghana or the policies make use of simplifications and existing assumptions in society. By placing the focus here, it will be easier to understand the actual opinion of the influential institutions in Ghana towards youth development and how they intend to govern.

**Looking beyond the state**

Bacchi argues that the cultural, historical, national and international context of a policy is essential to understand its approach and problem representation. Therefore, it is important to question a policy’s genesis, sources and functionality. This consideration can be beneficial to expose how governing takes place and the effect it has on those who are governed (Bacchi 2009: introduction). Thus, when analyzing the perceptions of youth development by influential institutions in Ghana these factors must be considered before initiating the policy analysis. Consequently, the cultural context and a presentation of the genesis and capacity of the different influential institutions in relation to youth development in Ghana are included in form of the mapping chapter. This will provide a holistic analysis of the policies and their perceptions of youth development as well as expose how order is maintained, how society is managed and what it means for different groups of people (Bacchi 2009: 25). Bacchi emphasizes that the state is an important player when understanding policy but it is not the only player. Factors beyond the state must be included to identify other players influencing governance, as these also influence how a policy is received and understood (Bacchi 2009: introduction xx). Bacchi is inspired by Foucault in reference to different forms of rule and how he uses the term governmentality to address them. The thought of government is not what goes in people’s heads but rather the forms of thinking that is necessary in particular ways of governing in order for it to work (Bacchi 2009: 265). Bacchi focuses on the contested nature of problems and how some policies are perceived as being the answer (Bacchi
2009: 265-266). The term governance must therefore be understood as societal structures rather than solely government. In a Ghanaian context, this also affects the latitude of the state in reference to various non-official actors such as religious institutions and traditional authorities because these actors also have an impact on how a policy is received. Moreover their governing processes also represent problems.

**Power relations and genealogy in policy**
Bacchi believes that all policies are written from a certain discourse and therefore signalize values, presuppositions, assumptions and associated signs. Her understanding of discourse is inspired by Michel Foucault. She believes that to comprehend discourses one must interrogate basic and fundamental worldviews or what Foucault (1973) refers to as episteme (Bacchi 2009: 9). The aim is to uncover the thought that lies behind a specific problem representation. Thus, focus must be on the things that are left unquestioned and taken for granted, including epistemological and ontological assumptions (Bacchi 2009: 5). Bacchi refers to these as conceptual logics (Bacchi 2009: 7). Conceptual logics are the assumptions present in society that enable a particular problem representation to be accepted and left unquestioned. Bacchi perceives conceptual logics as influential to our understanding of the world and thereby places herself within a poststructuralist thinking (Bacchi 2009: 35). Discourses often hold a truth status and therefore have the power to make things happen, which makes it essential to identify and interrogate them. (Bacchi 2009: 35). Hence, when analyzing policies from influential institutions in Ghana, it is essential to place them in the context through which they are generated. This will expose the assumptions in the international community and Ghanaian society respectively, which enable the presented problems in reference to youth development to be accepted. Power relations are essential in policy. Bacchi draws attention to different
factors that can expose discursive formations in society. She refers to these as binaries, key concepts, categories and genealogy and state that critically scrutinizing these can help identify the underlying conceptual logics present in a policy. (Bacchi 2009: 35).

Binaries can be seen as opposites or an A/non A relationship. Implicit in binaries is that one side is more privileged and important than the other. Moreover binaries often simplify complex relationships, which makes them essential to be aware of when analyzing policy (Bacchi 2009: 7). Considering the binaries present in problem representation can uncover the conceptual logics policies are built on.

Moreover focus should be on how key concepts in policy often are shaped by ‘dominant classes’ or holders of power and particular professions in society (Bacchi 2009: 60). This can be challenging as some key concepts are so deeply founded in the culture, history and governmental practice in society that it is difficult to identify them. Bacchi exemplifies this with concepts such as democracy, liberty, equality, youth, unemployment etc. (Bacchi 2009: 8). While this might be the case in a Western context, these concepts are not necessarily the same in Ghana. This will be elaborated further in the mapping chapter later in the thesis.

Key concepts often build on categories of those who are to be approached in the designing policy, thus young people in Ghana. The mission is to not accept these categories as given but to understand how they contribute to the problem representation (Bacchi 2009: 9). Bacchi states that the creation of categories has a significant effect on the way governing takes place and how people perceive themselves and others. Thus, in a Ghanaian context, young people’s self-perception and perception of others is influenced by the category they are placed in, which possibly also influence the choices they make.
The geneology of policy usually predicts its substance and how a problem is represented. Bacchi takes inspiration from Foucaults genealogical theory, interrogating how problems came to take a certain form. The focus here is on the process of how something has been created (Bacchi 2009: 265). By uncovering the processes that have produced a problem representation, one becomes capable of understanding how things could have been different (Bacchi: 43). Power plays an essential role here, as it is the most powerful that have the privilege to determine what is the correct problem representation (Bacchi 2009: 11). Reflection must be made on how and where this representation of the ‘problem’ is produced, spread and defended and therefore also consider the issues that are silenced, by reflecting on how the ‘problem’ could be thought about differently (Bacchi 2009: 13). Hence when analyzing the policies by influential institutions in Ghana, it must be questioned how the policies have taken form and which power relations in society that make the problem representations present in the policies acceptable.

The outcome of the policies

Bacchi’s approach to policy analysis is founded on the belief that we are governed through problem representations. Policies are prescriptive texts because they tell people how to behave. Therefore policies and their methods of implementation in reference to problem representation must be scrutinized (Bacchi 2009: 34). Accordingly, to answer the research question through Bacchi’s approach, consideration of how policies towards youth development are implemented must be included. Moreover the changes and stagnation that might occur as an effect of a certain problem representation must be considered in addition to who benefits from this representation of the problem and who might suffer because of it. Here it is important to be aware of the conceptual logics and power structures that are present in society. Bacchi states that one must examine how responsibility of the problem is
placed, as it will affect those so targeted and the perceptions from society about those who are to blame.

Bacchi’s approach to policy analysis has provided me with the tools to scrutinize the perceptions of youth development by different institutions in Ghana. Moreover, the approach has emphasized which societal structures should be considered prior to initiating the policy analysis, as governmental structures do not just refer to government but also other political logics. It is essential to consider the genesis and external relations influencing the policies as well as the cultural context in which the policy has been created. Hence, an investigation of the societal structures in Ghana and the actors capable of influencing the conceptual logics in society must be investigated to obtain a holistic policy analysis of the perceptions towards youth development. Moreover, this examination enables me to discover binaries, key concepts, and categories to understand the tendencies behind the problem representation.

For this reason, a mapping chapter of the Ghanaian context is presented prior to the policy analysis. Here, the most influential institutions towards youth development are presented as well as their internal relations and capabilities in society.
Mapping of relevant institutions in Ghana
The following chapter presents influential institutions and societal structures in Ghana. According to Bacchi’s approach, the genesis, power relations and cultural understanding must be scrutinized to understand and analyze policy and societal structures. This understanding is actually a part of the analysis, as it is essential to outline in order to conduct a holistic policy analysis.

Awareness of the power structures between the influential institutions in Ghana in relation to those who has the right to express and create opinions in society is therefore included. The different institutions are outlined on their own premises in order to scrutinize their capacity and position in society. It is important to understand the role of these institutions, as they are influential in relation to the conceptual logics and perceptions in society. These perceptions influence general opinions in society but also the approach towards young Ghanaians and youth development. The chapter begins by discussing Africa’s position in global politics and the relation between the UN and the AU as well as the ideology behind the AU. This is done to understand the genesis, capacity and relationship to external actors of the AU. It will assist in outlining the perceptions in the policies in addition to how they might influence the choices of the youth. Hereafter the relation between the AU and the government of Ghana in addition to the capacity of the Ghanaian state is discussed. This is done to understand the role of the state in a Ghanaian context and how it functions in relation to non-official authorities. Lastly these authorities including, NGO’s, traditional and religious institutions are presented. This will provide a complete picture of the structures in society and also present which other actors influence perceptions in youth development beside from the state. Moreover the different presentations create an understanding of which governmental structures enable the perceptions in youth development and where young Ghanaians are positioned in society. Consequently, the findings in the following chapter combined with the approach to policy analysis by Bacchi, will be the foundation of the analytical framework through which the
perceptions of youth development are scrutinized.

**Africa’s position in global politics**

The African continent has reached independence from colonial powers but Africa’s position in global politics still seem to be dependent on external actors. Dunn\(^4\) argues that Africa holds a central position in international relations (Dunn 2001: 3). However, there exist a tendency of placing Africa in the global periphery and only consider the continent when it is acted upon by external powers (Dunn 2001: 1-2). Engel and Olsen\(^5\) describe how Africa is actually placed in a role between marginalization and globalization because it is politically marginalized but a large part of the global trade system (Engel & Olsen 2005: 1). Hence, it is external powers that determine Africa’s international position (Engel & Olsen 2005: 16). Especially the OECD countries and international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) determine Africa’s position in global politics (Engel & Olsen 2005: 15). Dunn states that the relation between the West and Africa, places the continent in a position where a majority of the information focuses on human suffering and the challenges facing the continent rather than acknowledging Africa as a player on the global political scene (Dunn 2001: 2). This is possibly due to the West’s dependency on Africa in order to define itself, which has been argued by numerous post-colonial scholars such as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha (Dunn 2001: 3). Even after colonization, the West does not seem to acknowledge non-Western perceptions of politics for as valuable as their own. Dunn emphasizes that this is because they rest upon a marginalization of African and other non-Western perceptions of the world (Dunn 2001: 3). Moreover it is argued that external influential powers in Africa continue to create developmental approaches “(...) aimed at reproducing Western economic, political and cultural

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\(^{4}\) Kevin C. Dunn is Associate Professor in Department of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York, USA.

\(^{5}\) Engel is an associate professor in politics in Africa at the institute of African studies, University of Leipzig

Olsen is head of department of European studies at the Danish institute for international studies in Copenhagen
ideals” (Dunn 2001: 2). Dunn perceives it as Western arrogance to think that there are no other ways to progress and develop than the Western way (Dunn 2001: 62). He argues that the West is blinded to see alternative models to the Western state-centric model, which makes it difficult to accept non-Western structures. The point is that even though Africa makes initiatives in reference to global politics it is out of their hands to change their position in the world. Engel and Olsen write: “(...) African states cannot change their global position because of structural factors in world capitalism” (Engel & Olsen 2005: 5).

Dunn argues that for Africa to hold a respected and influential position in international relations they must be in line with Western ideals. African politics is often marginalized and perceived as meaningless because it is measured through Western criteria for a successful approach (Dunn 2001: 4). However, it does not seem possible to simply copy the concept of a Western state to an African context due to differences in societal structures in addition to the history behind the African state. Malaquias emphasizes that:

“African states did not emerge as a result of a long period of social, economic, political, scientific, and religious development determined by Africans. Rather, the modern African state is a colonial imposition created to serve Western, not African, interests”. (Malaquias 2001: 13)

Malaquias further argues that this is the reason why most African states are not equal participants in the international system but rather remain marginalized and outside the center of power and wealth on the international scene (Malaquias 2001: 13). He believes that the Western state-centric approach has continued after colonization because colonial powers chose African elitists, which had more in common with the colonial state-centric model and thinking than regular Africans, as their predecessors (Malaquias 2001: 15). However, Dunn argues that even though this is the case, we
must get away from the image of the First World dominant West and the powerless Africans. African elites, even though inspired by the Western concept of the state, have also influenced the construction of the African state today (Dunn 2001: 60). Regardless of the reason, Africa is still a continent that is highly dependent on external powers to reach influence and be accepted on the global scene. The OECD countries and international organizations have great influence on the continent and many African states depend on their financial support. Furthermore, these external actors play an immense role in reference to moral, ethics and bureaucratic interest in Africa (Engel & Olsen 2005: 9).

Due to the large dependency on international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and WB (World Bank), some African states have lost their sovereign decision-making power (Dunn 2001: 51). Economically, the WB is a much bigger player in Africa than the UN (Olsen 2005: 154). However, leading powers in the world have little interest in Africa and therefore leave most African issues to the UN (Olsen 2005: 142). The UN does not have the same financial impact in Africa as earlier and has reduced its foreign aid with 50% between 1986 and 2001 (Olsen 2005: 153). The budget of the UN is dependent on its member states and the immense reduction is related to the decreasing interest in Africa after the Cold War (Olsen 2005: 153). Nonetheless, the UN still plays a major role in forming the ideas and policies of international development (Olsen 2005: 153-154). The role of the UN has changed. Initially United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided advisory and support services to African governments. Today, it has expanded to also be a caretaker of issues such as human development, capacity building, good governance and democracy, environmental and health issues (Olsen 2005: 154).

It has been made clear that international organizations play an immense role in determining Africa’s position in the world and that especially the UN has immense influence in reference to developmental initiatives on the continent. Therefore it is
relevant to consider the connection between the UN and the AU. It is important to be aware of this connection when analyzing the policies towards youth development from institutions collaborating with the UN. Therefore the following section further elaborates on the role of the UN in the world and how the worldwide organization is connected to the AU. Moreover the establishment, purpose and values of the AU will be outlined.

**The relation between the United Nations and the African Union**
The United Nations has since its establishment in 1945 been the leading organization concerning international affairs and development in the world. When the UN was established only a few of the African states had reached independence but today the AU collaborates with the UN on a variety of African and international issues. The organization holds a permanent observer role of the UN General assembly where African states constitute more than 25% making them an important voting bloc (Welz 2013: 429). This position does not automatically result in coordinated and unified decision-making, as experience shows that the African member states to the UN have challenges synchronizing their position (Welz 2013:427). However African states are increasingly considered when they are able to reach agreement and speak with one voice, which is one reason for the creation of the AU.

The African Union was established on July 9, 2002 and is an intergovernmental organization that consists of 54 African states, only with the exception of Morocco. Its vision is to unify the sub-regional institutions on the continent in order to establish greater social, economic and political collaboration among African states. The aim is that these conditions will lead to less war and conflict between African states. Furthermore the AU wishes to be more included on the international scene in relation to the international market and negotiations on e.g. finance, debt relief and trade (Tieku 2004: 249). The ideal of the AU is to promote democracy, good governance and human rights. The objective of the union is to supply the political and socio-
economic framework for the position of Africa in the world and preserve and improve the issues that concern the African people. These also include developmental initiatives. The AU addresses a wide range of the challenges facing the continent. These include health issues such as combating the HIV/AIDS and malaria epidemics, improvement of governance in an attempt to eliminate undemocratic states on the continent, better living conditions in general, combating poverty, improving the educational status, maintaining peace and stability etc. These are all issues that influence youth development. The AU has made initiatives such as the African Youth Charter and the African youth decade (2009-2018). The AU wishes to improve unity between the African states and maintain internal peace and security within and between the states\textsuperscript{6}. There is not a common foreign affair policy on the continent but many of the policies by member states are often coordinated through the AU. This is a way for the AU to nurture African interests and provide African solutions to African problems (Lehmann 2008:9)

The AU is the successor to the Organisation for African Unity (OAU), which was also an organization based on Pan-African ideals (Tieku 2004: 252). The OAU was established May 25, 1963 but gained a bad reputation internationally and was in international media referred to as a 'dictators club' (Tieku 2004: 255). It rarely reached any actual results and did nothing to improve Africa's developmental challenges and human rights problems (Sarkin 2009: 177). OAU failed to ever establish a strong foundation for constructive continental institutional structures. This was mainly due to external factors such as the Cold War and ideas of modernization but also due to a widespread tendency by the African elite to nurture it's own interest before considering society as a whole (Tieku 2004: 252). Many African state leaders considered the OAU to be a social event or an arena for inconsequential discussion

\textsuperscript{6}http://www.academymodelun.org/african-union-au.html
forum rather than an organization with serious negotiations (Tieku 2004: 252). Therefore only half attempts of real political impact and creation of an African policy framework was made. Ultimately, this led to the wish to change agenda by influential leaders\(^7\) on the continent.

African leaders agreed to create a new continental organization that could handle Africa's international relations in a more progressive and serious way. There was a desire to create a greater platform for African interest in the world than was possible on the weak foundation of the 1963 OAU due to Africa’s even more marginal position in the world at the time (Ezulwini consensus 2005:8). The AU is much more ambitious than the OAU was and wishes to be a united political and economic unit throughout the whole continent (Wall 2002: 467). The Union functions through 17 main institutions, the key ones being the African Heads of State and Government (AHSG), the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the Pan-African Court of Justice (PAC), the Executive Council, the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC), the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the Economic, Social and Cultural Councils (ESCC), the Investment Bank, the African Central Bank and the Monetary Fund (Tieku 2004: 250). Additionally unlike the OAU, the AU has actual power and requirements to the member states. An example is in reference to security. The AU has a right to intervene in member states without consent to regain peace and order and hinder genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity etc. This was not a possibility for OAU, which did not believe in violation of juridical sovereignty under any circumstances (Tieku 2204: 250). This power has made the AU more respected on the continent and gained the organization much more credibility and acknowledgement than its predecessor (Tieku 2004: 267). Moreover it is an indication of willingness from African states to cooperate and find solutions to their conflicts internally on the

\(^7\)Tieku argues that the foreign policies of now former presidents, Mbeki of South African and Obasanjo of Nigeria lead to the creation of the AU. (Tieku 2004: 253)
continent. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a collaborative organization to the AU and the African organization with most experience in peace-keeping missions. They have solved many conflicts on the continent without immediate support from the UN (Lehmann/FES 2008: 6).

There is a wish from African countries to solve these issues alone, as they do not rely on the UN Security Council to maintain peace on the continent\(^8\). However the AU and UN do collaborate on security issues. Peace keeping is one of the most significant challenges in the relation between AU and UN because it remains an ongoing issue. Since 1948, 40 out of the UN's 63 peace-keeping observer nations have been African (Lehmann/FES 2008: 4). The challenge for the AU is that they wish to conduct their own security policies and operations but to realize them they must rely on support from the UN. This is the case with many of the objectives of the AU also in relation to youth development. Even though the AU is a large intergovernmental institution that represents over 1 billion people, it does not have the economy to realize its vision without external support. Moreover, there are great differences in the economic capacities of the African states, as over half of the continents economy is accounted for by South Africa and the Mediterranean littoral states (Wall 2002: 468). The economic challenges also influence the connection between the UN and the AU in relation to developmental issues. The UN supports numerous development initiatives in Africa through the AU. The major areas of collaboration between the two organisations are to assist AU institutions in their capacity to deal with emerging challenges in Africa (UN 2011: 2). This support implies technical resources, capacity building and advisory assistance in relation to institutions and programmes within the AU. The UN inter alia supports programmes on youth and social development ana initiatives that reinforce peace and security and good governance (UN 2011: 5).Consequently the support from the UN influences the

focus of the initiatives performed by the AU. In reference to development this e.g. means a greater focus on not only the role of civil society but also non-governmental organizations (NGO's) to gain responsibility for stability, security and development. The AU is advised to cooperate on the development issues on the continent, as each country is linked to other African states and sustainable development therefore requires a continental approach (Tieku 2004: 257). The close collaboration and advisory services from the UN to the AU explains why the two organizations hold the same goals and values in reference to development. An example is the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), a list of 8 goals created by the UN in 2000 to be reached worldwide by 2015. The UN does not determine national economic policies and all nations have the right to make their own national development policy. However they are more likely to be supported by the UN if the policies are in line with the MDG's (Lehmann/FES 2008: 4). Consequently in most incidences it would be beneficial for African states to consider the nexus between the MDG's and the countries poverty level, growth and employment.

The creation of the organization is built on the idea of a united Africa that works for solutions to African problems and improve Africa's position as a respected partner according to trade, investment and responsibility for development. However these goals are difficult to reach without the support of the UN. With this support, follow certain restrictions and demands on programmes and policies performed by the AU. Hence, the gesticulations of the AU has limits, as it can only reach the international position it aims for by finding support from other more influential players on the international scene to approve its position (Welz 2013: 437). The dilemma is that this approval challenges the self-determination the AU strives for. Even though Africans appreciate democracy above any other form of governmental system, member states of the AU are skeptical towards simply transferring the Western liberal model of democracy and development to an African context (FES/Lehmann 2008: 8). On
September 26, 2013, the President of Ghana, Mr. John Dramani Mahama, expressed at the UN general assembly that:

“Often the Western world wrongly assumes that we in Africa do not know our worth. We do. It’s not sympathy we want; it’s partnership, the ability to stand on our own feet. It’s not handouts we’re in search of; its opportunities. We have already shown that with time and the right opportunity, Africa can make it.”

This is a clear indication of African nations wish to be in charge of their own development. The goal is to do this as a unified Africa that can handle its own challenges through a strong continental collaboration. The AU knows that a unified Africa will be taken more seriously on the internal scene. However one must recognize that severe changes must be made on a national level of many African nations to become beneficial for their populations and pursue the wish to be a functional and progressive continental institution. (Lehmann/FES 2008: 6). The AU tries to get the member states to follow certain guidelines produced by the AU. Nonetheless these guidelines seem to be influenced by recommendations and criteria of the UN in order to obtain the necessary support the AU is dependent on to uphold international approval and recognition. These initiatives are to be implemented through the African states, which all maintain various non-official actors. Therefore, it is essential to question if the African states have the capacities necessary to tackle the developmental challenges the continent is facing. Moreover, it is relevant to consider which other actors are influential in an African context. The following section will discuss the capacity of the Ghanaian state to scrutinize its role in reference to youth development.

Capacity of the state of Ghana
Ghana is a member state of the AU and therefore follows many of the development initiatives taken by the organization. Since these initiatives are supposed to be organized through the African governments, it is essential to understand the functionality of the state in Ghana and the capability of the Ghanaian government. Moreover investigation of where the state is placed in society and which other powerful factors dominate in Ghana is relevant to include. First, the sovereignty of the African and specifically Ghanaian state will be discussed. Hereafter the other factors that influence the state with focus on the cultural context and traditional and religious institutions will be outlined. The state of Ghana is recognized both nationally and internationally\(^{10}\). Simultaneously Ghanaian society consists of many non-official actors. The question is if these actors influence the sovereignty of the state and what determines this sovereignty. This is relevant as it determines the capacity of the state both in general but also in relation to the approach towards youth development.

In Africanists literature there exist numerous discussions about the functionality and sovereignty of the African state. The different viewpoints will be discussed below. Jackson and Rosberg are influenced by Weber's\(^ {11}\) definition of a sovereign state, thus that it is determined by the state's monopoly of violence. Therefore they argue that most states in Africa actually do not count as 'real' states but survive on their international recognition (Jackson & Rosberg 1982: 2). They call this recognition juridical statehood as it is based on law and acknowledgement of territory and the independence of the state. Such recognition can only be given by external actors (Jackson & Rosberg 1982: 13). Contrary to this is the empirical statehood, which Jackson and Rosberg find most important in determining a state. Empirical statehood

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\(^{10}\) Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs: http://um.dk/da/danida/det-goer-vi/aarsberetning2010/landekapitler/ghana/

\(^{11}\) Max Weber was a German economist and sociologists who is one of the founding fathers of state theory
is based on the capacity to uphold monopoly of violence and the states capacity in general. Jackson and Rosberg's argument on monopoly of violence is less relevant in the case of the Republic of Ghana, as it has never experienced a civil war and the last coup occurred in 1982\textsuperscript{12}, thus the state has been able to uphold the monopoly of violence for decades. However, it is also emphasized that a functional state must be built on a political community with a common culture (Jackson & Rosberg 1982: 5), which is rarely the case in an African context. The Republic of Ghana consists of a wide variety of ethnic, sub-ethnic and religious groups (Addai & Agyeman & Ghartey 2011: 77) and does not meet the criteria for a successful state according to Jackson and Rosberg. Moreover the argument is that African states, which do not uphold empirical statehood persist due to support from the international community, an ideology of pan-Africanism and a reluctance from non-African actors to intervene in African affairs (Jackson & Rosberg 1982: 18). In fact Jackson and Rosberg view states that cannot uphold empirical statehood by their definition as extremely weak and underdeveloped, as they are too dependent on foreign assistance to combat the challenges they are faced with. They therefore claim that these territories cannot be perceived as real states. The illusion of a state is upheld by their juridical statehood determined by reliance on neighbour states and other external actors to accept their juridical sovereignty (Jackson & Rosberg 1982: 21).

Jackson and Rosberg have been heavily criticised for their understanding of 'the African state' mainly because they tend to measure the African states through a Western model and declare them weak or failed when they do not fit. Hagmann and Péclard\textsuperscript{13} are among the critiques, as they believe that Jackson and Rosberg are too normative in their perception of African states. Moreover caution must be taken to

\textsuperscript{13}Hagmann is a Swiss political scientist for the Department of Society and Globalisation at Roskilde University

Péclard is a senior researcher at the Swiss Peace Foundation (swisspeace) in Bern and lecturer in political science at the University of Basel
not get fixed on the concept of what in the West is perceived as a state, because it will influence the ability to comprehend the structures within the African state. Instead other factors than the state must be considered in order to comprehend how a state functions (Hagmann & Péclard 2010: 544). This is especially important in an African context where non-state actors such as chiefs and local elites often influence what by Western eyes is understood as the states area. Consequently Hagmann and Péclard are more interested in analyzing the local, national and transnational actors that influence the state through negotiation, disputes and bricolage (Hagmann & Péclard 2010: 544). They call for a bottom-up approach instead of a top-down approach in the understanding of states, which will lead to awareness of what the state actually consists of instead of what it is missing by Western standards.

The Cameroonian social scientist Mbembe agrees with this notion, as he sees a tendency to only focus on what Africa is missing instead of what it is actually made of. He writes:

"While we now feel we know nearly everything that African states, societies, and economies are not, we still know absolutely nothing about what they actually are.” (Mbembe 2001: 9).

He believes that this is the case because the West lacks interest in how African societies function already and only focus on how they should be changed because the West does not acknowledge any self but its own (Mbembe 2010:10)

Grovogui¹⁴, a political scientist from Guinea, further argues that the subjective understanding of sovereignty is determined according to dominant Western and Christian ideas. These ideas have compromised the ordering of civilization and wiped out alternative considerations of what a successful state is (Grovogui 2001: 40). He believes that this is also evident in relation to development, as Christianity seems to

¹⁴ Grovogui is a specialist from Guinea in international relations theory and political theory.
have overtaken the moral law of the world, which he refers to as *Jus Gentilis*. Hence both Grovogui and Mbembe are critical towards the implementation of a Western ideal of a state to an African context, which also does not seem to be a wish of the AU. Mbembe claims that the West has used the African continent as a place for experimentation from the slave trade to colonialisation and until today. He states that there still seems to be a lack of belief in Africa’s ability to govern itself (Mbembe 2001: 2). Mbembe point outs that Africa had its own structures and functionalities before it encountered the West:

“It is not true that Africa is an incomparable monster, a silent shadow and mute place of darkness, amounting to no more than a lacuna” (Mbembe 2001: 9)

Hagmann and Péclard agree with this perception but do agree with Jackson and Rosberg on certain criteria. They also make a distinction between empirical and juridical statehood and consider the empirical statehood as the 'correct' and most important one. Nonetheless they underline that the monopoly of violence described by Max Weber should be founded on “(...) a type of authority that is based on obedience and recognition rather than sheer physical force (...)” (Hagmann & Péclard 2010: 543). Hence Hagmann and Péclard focus on how authority is performed by the state and the non-state actors and the relation between power and domination within the state. Thus the power relation between those who govern and those who are being governed (Hagmann & Péclard 2010: 543). They call this a heuristic framework that is not state-centric or normative like the concepts of Jackson and Rosberg. The focus is on a sociological approach, which focuses on the relations between state and society rather than the structures within the state (Hagmann & Péclard 2010: 544). Hagmann and Péclard further claim that the concept of state is not solely a Western idea but something that has also been present in Africa both in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times (Hagmann & Peclard 2010: 542). One of the oldest and most organised states in Africa was actually the Ashanti Kingdom, which was centered on what is now the territory of Ghana (Malaquias 2001: 14).
Malaquias explains that the Ashanti empire had continuous battles against the British (1823-1896) because they did not wish to implement a Western state-centric model (Malaquias 2001: 14). He emphasizes that in pre-colonial times, Africa had a great variety of political systems but they were suppressed during colonialism and a state-centric approach with focus on sovereign political entities was imposed instead. Malaquias states that this implementation still haunts the African people, as it is a model that works well for Europe but have often lead to conflict in an African context. The model is not built on the wishes and aspirations of African people but rather represents European ideas (Malaquias 2001: 15). Consequently, he argues that the state-concept does not function in an African context because it is imposed by external actors. Engel and Olsen agree as they argue that the European state is based on a positive sovereignty, while the African state is based on a negative sovereignty. This is because the African states often lack (...) “the attributes usually associated with positive sovereignty, such as the provision of external and internal security for the populations of a given territory and the deliverance of a minimum of public goods” (Engel & Olsen 2005: 10). Moreover Engel and Olsen claim that the European state-formation initiated with first conquering a territory and then developing into nations, where the African states were established with decolonization on a territory conquered during colonization (Engel & Olsen 2005: 10). Dunn is also of the belief that state-centric approaches have large delimitations in understanding societal structures in Africa and in any other non-Western context. He writes that (...) “the crisis of the state is not uniquely African, but intrinsically linked to the concept of the state itself” (Dunn 2001: 49). Therefore, he calls for a need to include actors external to the state. Dunn underlines that even though the state does not hold hegemonic power in an African context, it cannot be ignored, as it plays an important role in African politics and international relations (Dunn 2001: 55)
The discussion portrays that there are different opinions towards the capacity of African states. According to the measures of Hagmann and Péclard, the Ghanaian state upholds juridical and empirical statehood even though it contains a range of ethnic and cultural diversity. There seems to be a broad agreement that inclusion of factors beyond the state is necessary to fully comprehend the functionality of the Ghanaian state and the structures in Ghanaian society. This will provide an understanding of how society functions in a bricolage of state and non-official actors. However, these actors do not necessarily challenge the sovereignty of the state like in a Western context. It is important to not compare the Ghanaian state to Western standards. The structure of the Ghanaian state is inspired by the West but it is functioning in a context that holds both pre-colonial and post-colonial elements. To comprehend the role of non-official actors in Ghana and how they influence the Ghanaian state and culture the following section will present influential non-official actors. These include traditional and religious institutions as well as NGO’s because they are all influential in reference to conceptual logics and perceptions in society. Consequently, they also influence the perceptions of youth development. Additionally scrutinizing their position and influence in society is an important factor when discussing their perceptions influence on young Ghanaians navigation in society.

**Non-state actors and cultural context in Ghana**

There are many non-state actors in Ghanaian society, as the country is a post-colonial state that still holds pre-colonial institutions. Donald writes about the post-colonial state:

“At one level, it comprised the colonial state, which included a variety of legal traditions, rules and administrative practices transplanted directly to the continent in
a manner recognizable to Europeans themselves. Below the state were dozens of other institutions that included the remnants of some former African states, village chieftaincies, trade networks, age grade orders, secret societies, Islamic orders, and lineage units, among others” (Donald 1996: 210)

Mamdani\(^{15}\) states that the colonial state is a historical formation that combined with the non-official actors creates a bifurcated state, which leaves the population wavering between the modern state and the traditional authorities (Mamdani 1996: 16) Traditional institutions refers to (...) “all those forms of social and political authority which have their historical origin in the pre-colonial states and societies, and which were incorporated by British colonial rule into what is now Ghana”. (Crook 2005: 1)

Traditional institutions play a significant role in Ghanaian society and cannot be ignored. However, their role in society varies according to ethnic and cultural difference within the country (Crook 2005: 1). One of the oldest and most highly widespread non-official actors in Ghanaian society are the chiefs. The whole country is ruled by various different chiefs who rule within hierarchies according to tribes and positions within the Chieftaincy. The chiefs are a large and acknowledged part of societal order in Ghana. They are even mentioned in the Constitution of Ghana from 1992:

“(…) “chief” means a person, who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queenmother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage” (Constitution of Ghana1992 paragraph 277).

\(^{15}\)Mahmood Mamdani is a Professor and Director of the Makerere Institute of Social Research at Makerere University (MISR), Kampala, Uganda, and the Herbert Lehman Professor of Government at Columbia University, New York.
The Chieftaincies are usually divided through ancient parameters such as a common ethnicity, language and culture. The traditional authorities hold political power and authority within certain geographical areas, known as the traditional state. This traditional state exercises power in areas within the official state (Appiah 2007:13). Thus, chieftancy is a highly political institution that cannot simply be perceived as a ‘civil society’ group (Crook 2005: 1). However the role of the chief varies between the tribes. It is a criterion that the Ashanti king must descent from a royal family and there is usually great competition with numerous candidates for the stool (Crook 2005: 1). Meanwhile Northern Ghana has a different system. They also have kinship but they are chosen according to patrilineal succession and practice rule over sub-chiefs and subjects (Crook 2005: 1). Furthermore, there are also parts of the country that did not have chiefs before they were imposed by the British as a way to keep order (Crook 2005: 2). After Ghana has reached independence the chiefs only hold a limited amount of the governmental and juridical roles they possessed during colonialism. Nonetheless, the chiefs continue to play a significant role in Ghanaian society and their position is guaranteed in reference to the 1992 Constitution (Crook 2005: 2). Typically the chiefs have influence in reference to family wealth, political representation of the community, peace and unity in the community, cultural leadership and control over land (Crook 2005: 2). The chiefs and other traditional leaders are an embodiment of traditions and cultural practices, which are still significant to many Ghanaians (Crook 2005: 2). The traditional institutions are founded on a culturally accepted and historically honored privilege to rule according to ownership of land, upholding law and order, protection of societal values etc. (Appiah 2007:14). They date back to before colonial times and justify their power on other criteria than the official state, as their rule is connected to a cultural and historical context that the official modern state in Ghana does not possess (Ray 1999 in Appiah 2007:14). Furthermore traditional authorities are more visible and
influential in especially rural areas than the official government is. A report made by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD) shows that 36000 towns and villages in Ghana are directly governed by Chiefs compared to only 1200, which are directly governed by a central government (CDD 2001:38 (Appiah 2007:14). This is a clear indication of the amount of power the traditional institutions have in society and consequently also the influence they have on conceptual logics and perceptions of youth development initiatives. The state is aware of this power and even though they are accepted in the Constitution, they are also banned from official political influence on the modern Ghanaian state: “A chief shall not take part in active party politics; and any chief wishing to do so and seeking election to Parliament shall abdicate his stool or skin” (Constitution of Ghana1992 paragraph 276, 1). Hence the official Ghana acknowledges the non-official authorities but do not wish that they obtain more power than they already have, perhaps in a realization of the large respect and influence of these traditional authorities certain places in society.

Some of the most influential chiefs in Ghana hold immense power and are able to influence politics on a national level and promote developmental change (Crook 2005: 5). It must be noted that many of the chiefs today are highly educated and business oriented and due to their position and authority in society their opinions are often more considered than a regular politicians (Crook 2005: 5). Therefore some chiefs also have an influence on the young people at a local level and function as patrons or even leaders for the young Ghanaians (Crook 2005: 4). Even though some chiefs seem to have a positive impact on the community, there are speculations of the chiefs accountability towards the community in reference to their incomes from sales of land and other possessions managed by the chiefs (Crook 2005: 3).

The Chiefs are usually old men, who own a significant amount of material goods. They gain respect as part of a royal family but also due to their age and possessions, as age and wisdom as well as respect and material wealth is understood to be
interrelated in Ghanaian society (Langevang 2008: 237). This is not only significant towards the chiefs. In general one must always respect the elders and not question their authority or opinions. Children are taught from a young age that their opinions are not of interest compared to the one of an adult. Since young people are not fully adults they are perceived as less knowledgeable and experienced. Consequently their ideas should not be considered as important. (Langevang 2008: 239) Langevang writes that as it now stands young people ”(...) are struggling to be taken seriously and are up against the dominant perception that young people ought to be recipients rather than generators of ideas” (Langevang 2008: 239).

Hence, the traditional institutions in Ghana hold a certain power both in relation to the state and in reference to the cultural and traditional perceptions. However, the institutions do not work directly with the concept of youth and youth development. To get a holistic picture of the relevant institutions in reference to youth development, the NGO’s cannot not be ignores. Therefore the following chapter will outline the role and position of NGO’s in Ghanaian society.

**NGO’s**

NGO’s play a significant role in reference to development in Ghanaian society and their role continues to expand (Lewis & Opoku Mensah 2006: 668). Thus, NGO’s must also be included when investigating the perceptions of youth development in Ghana and how it affects the navigation of the young Ghanaians.

NGO’s and civil society organizations, hereunder religious communities, are the main non-state institutions that interact with the youth in Ghana (Crook 2005: 1). The role of NGO’s has changed and they are now incorporated in development initiatives by states and international organizations because it is acknowledged that NGO’s are able to reach people ‘on the ground’ in a way that the state is not capable of. The
NGO’s utilized in this thesis apply policies inspired by international and national guidelines on the ground. Therefore, they are able to influence how the development initiatives are understood and received, to a larger extend than state officials (Merry 2006: 48). There is a tendency for NGO’s to overtake the role of the state in issues concerning health, education and social affairs, all areas usually considered a public responsibility. The influential NGO’s are often sponsored by external actors and therefore have greater resources at their disposal than the government (Engel & Olsen 2005: 12). Thus, the NGO’s are recipients of a significant amount of development assistance (Lewis & Kanji 2009: 184). With this assistance follow a certain influence on political standpoint and ideals. In order to create change, NGO’s are dependent on this support (Lewis & Opoku Mensah 2006: 674).

Simultaneously the approaches by NGO’s have changed so they fit into different conceptual frameworks or what one might call global development trends such as a ‘right based approach’ (Molyneux and Lazar, 2003 in Lewis & Opoku Mensah 2006: 668). The NGO’s included in this thesis both hold a special consultative status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) and therefore also must live up to certain standards and ideals. Hence, even though NGO’s are non-governmental actors, they are not independent institutions which can form their approaches without external influence. The NGO’s are thereby positioned between civil society on the ground and the certain standards that are the foundation of their survival due to financialdependency. However, the NGO’s still have a greater opportunity to interact with the young Ghanaians on the ground, than the government. It has been noted above that religious institutions are one of the largest influential factors in Ghanaian civil society. Thus, the next chapter will investigate their position and expose the most influential denominations in Ghana.

**Religions role in Ghana**

This chapter will present the role of religion in Ghanaian society. To comprehend the
structures in society, it is crucial to include religion in the context of Ghana because the religious communities are some of the most influential voices in civil society. They have the largest and most socially rooted and widely distributed membership base of all civil society organisations (Crook 2005: 1). After an outline of the general role of religion, the chapter will elaborate on two of the most influential denominations in Ghana today. These include Roman Catholicism, because it is the oldest and currently largest denomination in Ghana and the charismatics, because it is Ghana’s fastest growing denomination. Both denominations are Christian but are chosen to scrutinize the influence of religion for the majority of Ghanaians today and how it influences their choices and understanding of the world.

Religion plays a big role in Ghanaian society, as 99.7 percent of Ghanaians claim to practice a religion (Yirenkyi 2000: 336). Ghanaians commitment to religion is not a new tendency. The former Prime minister of Ghana, Kofi Abrefa Busia, stated in 1967 that religion saturates Ghanaian society and is the factor around which all other things are organized (Heaton & James & Oheneba-Sakyi 2009: 72). Moreover Ghanaian researchers Aboagye-Mensah (1994) and Yirenkyi (2000) have earlier found that (…) “religion is a primary factor shaping the Ghanaian culture, identity, and politics” (Heaton & James & Oheneba-Sakyi 2009:72). Religion in Ghana is not simply a private matter, it is the foundation for social network and the few who are not religious are often stigmatized and misunderstood. The role of religion influences how people perceive the world and the choices they make in reference to education, reproductive health, sexual behavior, marriage, political participation etc. (Addai & Agyeman & Ghartey 2011: 996).

There are 3 main denominations in Ghana; Christianity, Islam and traditional indigenous religions and various subdivisions under these (Omenyo 2006 in Heaton & James & Oheneba-Sakyi 2009: 72). However Christianity is the largest denomination in the country and also the most influential one compared to e.g. Islam.
Nonetheless, as previously explained the traditional rituals and authorities are still very influential in Ghanaian society. Consequently even though Christianity and Islam have their own customs and rituals, these rituals and customs are often also deeply influenced by the traditional Ghanaian religion and culture (Heaton & James & Oheneba-Sakyi 2009:72). Examples are seen in relation to baptism of children, funerals and marriages, which are all greatly influenced by traditional customs. Many Ghanaians do not consider a marriage fully valid until a traditional ceremony has also been performed. (Heaton & James & Oheneba-Sakyi 2009: 73)

Islam seems to be a stereotyped religion in Ghana by the “dominant culture” influenced by Christianity, as a religion of people who are poor and marginal residing in the Northern part of Ghana, which is less developed than the South or as a religion of the foreigners who have migrated to the country. Even though most Muslims in Ghana live in the Northern part of the country, many Northerners have migrated to the urban centres in the South in a search for occupation. The Southern part of Ghana faces the Atlantic Ocean with greater possibility for trade and contains the two biggest cities in the country, namely the capital Accra and the second largest city Kumasi. Nevertheless investigations have shown that religion has an impact on an individuals’ socioeconomic situation, which is not only determined by where one is geographically situated. Christians seem to have a substantial advantage compared to Muslims and people practicing traditional religions in relation to e.g. education and health, which consequently influences the economic differences between religions in the country (Heaton & James & Oheneba-Sakyi 2009: 83). This might be related to a tendency in the Christian churches to preach the importance of education. However, a growing part of the Christian Ghanaian population practice their religion to an extent that affects their economic productivity, as they prioritize going to church above work and
education (Addai & Agyeman & Ghartey 2011: 75). An introduction to the two most influential denominations in Ghana will be outlined below:

The Roman Catholic Church

Roman Catholicism was brought to Ghana by the Portuguese and is the oldest Christian faith in the country (Obeng 1998:210). Records show that the first Africans converted to the Roman Catholic Church already in 1503. However the religion did not experience notable growth before it was spread by missionaries from the beginning of the 1880’s (Obeng 1998: 210). As a result the Roman Catholic Church is well represented all over Ghana, especially in the rural areas. Today, Roman Catholicism is the largest denomination in the country and has a broad membership base in all social layers but mostly within the middle class (Addai & Agyeman & Ghartey 2011: 75). Nevertheless the Roman Catholic Church is often seen as a church for the established and educated elite, as the Ashanti Royals and people in the business class in general also are members of the church.

Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church is run through a professional priesthood on a bureaucracy linked to the international organisation of Roman Catholics, which means that the religion is practised in a way that is correspondent with the Vatican in Rome. Therefore the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana as in any part of the world has to follow a certain rule-set and structure in their services, beliefs and values according to Roman Catholicism, which are determined outside the country. However the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana is one of the most active denominations in relation to expressing opinions on moral and political issues (Crook 2005: 1). Moreover even though the church has a rumour of being quite conservative, it has developed in terms of gender issues. Females are not allowed to become priests but women and girls are promoted in other areas and given more responsibilities within the service by taken on roles, earlier only maintained by male priests (Sackey 2001:}
Moreover the Church contributes to the local community by providing medical clinics and educational institutions. Nevertheless even though the church tries to participate and contribute with opinions to society, the Roman Catholic Church is at times undermined to the elitist image and accusations of partisanship. Perhaps due to this image, many Ghanaians have left Roman Catholicism for another denomination within the Christian faith e.g. due to reluctance from the church to worship in a manner that is inclusive of local culture and rituals (Heaton & James & Oheneba-Sakyi 2009:72-73). Some Christians have moved to or established new churches such as the African Independent Churches and later the Charismatic Churches. From 1993-2003 the non-Catholic or non-Protestant denominations experienced a rise in membership from 16.9% to 41% of the population (Heaton & James & Oheneba-Sakyi 2009: 73). The fast growing Charismatic churches bring a new approach within Christianity, which might be a reason for the immense growth.

**The Charismatic churches**
The Charismatic churches have been on the rise since the early 1980's and are the fastest growing denomination in Ghana. It is a movement, which is founded on inspiration from the Pentecostal Church and the African Independent Church. It is challenging to find data on the growth and spread of the Charismatic churches so one must settle with general estimates and numbers by the churches themselves. Gifford estimates that the top 5 Charismatic churches in Accra attract between 1600 and 13000 people to their Sunday service (Gifford 2004: 24-26)

The character of the churches varies greatly, as the denomination includes both small independent churches and mega churches that are run like big international corporations (Lauterbach 2008: 7). The great variation is caused by some churches'
international contact to churches mostly in the West or Nigeria. These are characterised as mega churches opposed to the small home grown Ghanaian churches founded by one single pastor or prophet (Crook 2005: 2). In theory, everyone can start up a church and Charismatic Churches are found all over the country, even in the most remote villages. They can usually be recognised, as they include the word ‘international’ in their name as this provide respect and credibility since ideas from the West are generally given more attention (Sackey 2001:44). The hierarchy within the church differentiates between churches but it is easier to reach a higher level in the Charismatic Church than the Roman Catholic Church, as one can e.g. start up an independent church. Nevertheless, hierarchies exist both between pastor and congregation and within the leadership of the churches (Lauterbach 2008: 22). The memberships vary as much as the churches themselves. The more successful churches usually attract urban dwellers who are educated and apart of the middle class, while the smaller branches are targeted at the lower paid, uneducated and rural dwellers (Crook 2005: 2). As a member of the Charismatic Church one must do more than simply attend the Sunday service. The churches are usually open all days of the week, including all-night prayers and various extensive activities. It is a lifestyle, through which one can become born again in Christ (Lauterbach 2008: 96).

The charismatic churches do not provide specific roles for women other than supporting their men. It is e.g. a great achievement to become a pastor’s wife but women are not the decisive part of the movement (Sackey 2001: 54).

The Charismatic movement differentiates between this world, which is full of temptations and unhealthy challenges created by the devil opposite to the world of God with eternal life after death. (Asamoah-Gyado 2005a: 135). They practice a strict understanding of the bible and the people who are born again tend to read it immensely every day (Sackey 2001: 52). Moreover they relying on prophesies, the ability to heal, speaking in tongues and baptism in the Holy Ghost (Sackey 2001: 42).
Even though the Charismatic movement is inspired by the African Independent Churches and has some Africanism in their form of worship in the examples’ enlisted above, it condemns the uses of the traditional African Independent Churches, as these are perceived as a kind of demonization. However the Church does include a lively service including music, dancing, interaction and singing in the local languages, which was first introduced by the African Independent Churches (Sackey 2001: 53). Different from the Roman Catholic Church, the Charismatic churches have less interest in the broader political and social issues. Many have an opportunistic relationship to government with focus on the individual advancement of the church members and a pursuit of the organisational goals of the church. (Crook 2005:4).

Many people of success have become a part of the Charismatic movement, which leads to an image of a link between success and studying the word of God, which also results in a tendency to prioritize Church services and bible study over work and education, as it is believed that God will provide (Sackey 2001: 56) The Charismatic Churches not only focus on the world of God in eternal life but also have focus on wealth, health and success in this life. (Lauterbach 2008: 85). Success and wealth is not considered a taboo but rather a blessing from God to those who are strong in faith (Gifford 1998: 39). The movement preaches that material things such as having a successful business or receiving a visa can be accomplished by becoming an anointed and strong believer. Through faith you can reach good health, wealth and success and ultimately change from ‘a nobody’ to ‘a somebody’ (Gifford 2004: 195) Hence the church offers promises to those who have little opportunities elsewhere in society. This materialisation within the religion also becomes evident when considering the movements strong believe in the effect of offering. The more you give to God through the church or pastor, the more God will give back to you, which results in many church members donating 10% of their income to the church or providing their pastor with gifts (Lauterbach 2008: 93). Personal misfortune is explained with lack of good Christian faith or the work of satanic forces or witchcraft (Crook 2005: 4).
The link the Charismatic movement makes between the spiritual and material wealth, might be what makes the Charismatic churches attractive to many, including large numbers of young people. Additionally the Charismatic Churches use original ways to reach out and especially catch young people e.g. through morning radio, where most radio stations provide morning services on the air with Charismatics pastors. Lauterbach states that one of the largest neo-Pentecostal/charismatic churches (CCC) in Kumasi has a congregation of 60% young people. In some churches, the pastor has taken over the role of the elders in reference to solving conflicts in the family and sustaining the well-being of not only the congregation but also within the family union. The pastors within the Charismatic churches have a certain status and authority and are belonging to the elite on a local level. This is not only based on their spiritual role but also as a political, social and public persona (Lauterbach 2008: 10). This new distribution of roles influences the relation and perception of authority in society at large, but especially in regard to the youth, as the pastors are the first and closest relation many of them have to authority (Lauterbach 2008: 145). The pastors or the church are for many young people a role model and very influential in the youth's perception of life and consequently their choices.

Hence, the religious institutions seem to be the main influence regarding moral and spiritual guidance and, for some Ghanaians, leadership in society. Therefore they must be considered when analysing the perceptions of youth development by influential institutions, as they compose a part of the societal structures that allow a certain presentation to cohere. Moreover the role of religion is essential to include when discussing the navigation of young Ghanaians in society.

Concluding points
The mapping chapter has provided an understanding of the cultural context and structures in Ghanaian society. It has outlined the role, genesis and position of
influential institutions both internationally, nationally and locally. This was done to comprehend the foundation behind the creation of conceptual logics in society, which are decisive for the perceptions of youth development. The findings in the chapter have shown that Africa is placed in the periphery in relation to global politics and only considered when acted upon. The AU wishes to be taken seriously on the international scene and believe that a unified Africa has a stronger voice than the states would have alone. However the AU is still not an independent institution and is closely linked to international institutions such as the UN, which influence the approach towards youth development within the AU and thereby also Ghana. It is important to be aware of these connections when analyzing the perceptions of youth development. Moreover the connection between official and non-official institutions in society must be considered. It has been outlined that even though the Ghanaian state is functional and sovereign, it is not the only decisive actor, as NGO’s, non-official traditional and religious institutions also have undeniable impact on perceptions in society. Hence, as emphasized by Bacchi, it is necessary to take a sociological approach rather than a state-centric approach to comprehend how governmental structures in Ghana function. While Bacchi’s approach is the foundation of my approach to scrutinize the perceptions of youth development by influential institutions in Ghana, the mapping chapter offers the content needed in order to conduct a holistic policy analysis. Thus a combination of Bacchi and the mapping chapter constitutes the analytical framework, which contains the guidelines of the analysis. Hence, the analytical framework is used to answer the first part of the research question, namely how different institutions in Ghana perceive youth development. Moreover, the findings of the mapping chapter will be considered to understand the navigation of young people in Ghana, which will be discussed in the fourth section of this thesis.
Analytical framework

The analytical framework provides the method used when conducting the policy analysis of the perceptions of youth development in Ghana. It is founded on the points from Bacchi’s approach to policy analysis. She argues for an understanding of power relations and social and cultural structures in the society where the policy is created. Therefore the findings in the chapter mapping relevant institutions in Ghana are included to provide a holistic and thorough policy analysis that will answer how influential institutions in Ghana perceive youth development. The analysis will be divided into the following sections.

First, the analysis will outline how the policies shape the concept of youth development and the challenges facing young people in Ghana an Africa at large. What is represented as the problem in this context and which approach or actors are placed as the problem solvers? Moreover how does this problem representation correspond with the current societal structures in Ghana in relation to youth development?

Second, when the problem representation has been drawn, the analysis will investigate which assumptions and presuppositions are present in society in order for this presentation of the problem to be accepted. Consideration of the factors that are left out or simplified are also be included. This will provide an impression of the actual opinion of the influential institutions in Ghana towards youth development and the approach they wish to make. To fully comprehend the aspects in society that enable this problem representation the cultural context and traditional and religious institutions in Ghana will be included.

Third, the power relations within the policies will be scrutinized. These include the binaries, conceptual logics, key concepts and categories present in the policies and
how they support the problem representation within the policies. To comprehend these, inclusion of the genesis and foundation of the policies is essential. These contain the motivation behind the policies, including the international and national factors that might have been influential in the process in addition to which interests are nurtured in the policies.

**Lastly,** the analysis outlines the possible effects of the problem representations in the policies. This is both in relation to how the policies might be implemented and the affect they have on those who are targeted in the policies. Therefore, the policies influence the way young people perceive themselves and others and how this might influence the choices of young people in Ghana.

**Perceptions of youth development**
Based on the guidelines of the analytical framework, the following chapter will present an analysis of the policy initiatives towards youth development taken by the African Union, the government of Ghana and local NGO’s respectively. These are the African Youth Charter (AYC) compiled by the AU, the National Youth Policy (NYP) created by the Ghanaian government, the Youth Manifesto by the NGO Youth Synergy Ghana and the Communique from the 5th African Youth and Governance Conference created by the NGO Youth Bridge Foundation (YBF). Moreover, the perceptions by traditional and religious institutions will be considered even though these institutions do not write policies. Instead, their perceptions of youth development will be based on the findings in the previous mapping chapter. The combined analysis of the various initiatives regarding the youth in Ghana enabled me to answer the first part of the research question namely: how different institutions in Ghana perceive youth development.
The perception of youth development by the African Union
According to the procedure outlined in the analytical framework, the following section will analyze the perception of youth development by the AU. This is done through their policy towards youth development, namely the African youth Charter.

Presentation of the African Youth Charter
The African Youth Charter is a political and legal document to support policies, programmes and actions for youth development in Africa. The Charter was endorsed at an African Union Head of States and Governments meeting in Banjul, Gambia in July 2006 and holds various rights, freedoms and duties of all young people in Africa. There are rights such as freedom of expression, movement, association, religion, access to health and education and non-discrimination (AYC 2006: 4). The charter focuses on youth empowerment and development at a continental, regional and national level and is meant as a guideline for member states to meet the challenges facing the African youth by recognizing the rights of every young person no matter ethnicity, religion, language, sex, political opinion, marginalized groups, indigenous origin etc. (AYC 2006: 3). Member states of the AU are encouraged to ratify the African Youth Charter by creating their own national policies to overcome the challenges facing the young people in their respective countries. The AU demands that these national policies are outlined by African governments based on interaction with the youth. Hereafter the policies are supposed to be followed by programmes of action that must be time bound and include an approach to implementation and evaluation strategies (AYC 2006: 7). On the basis of the African Youth Charter, the AU declared 2009-2018 the decade for youth development with hope of more African states effectively popularizing, ratifying and implementing the African Youth Charter. The idea behind the African Youth Charter is to empower young people at all levels of society to ensure sustainable development and a bright future for Africa.
The Charter indicates that the youth are Africa’s greatest resource and that only through investment in young Africans and an active and full inclusion and participation of the youth, can Africans surmount the challenges that lie ahead (AYC 2006: 1). According to the African Youth Charter the well-being of the youth is a responsibility of the member states. However other stakeholders such as the private sector, civil society and NGO’s and most importantly the youth themselves must collaborate and contribute in order to reach a sustainable development. The African Youth Charter encourages member states alongside civil society of each country to address the economic, social, educational, cultural and spiritual needs of the youth. This is believed to lead to national development and development of the continent as a whole (AYC 2006:1). It was described in the presentation of the that the idea is to represent and empower a United Africa. This agenda is emphasized throughout the African Youth Charter as the idea is to go beyond improvement on a national level. Through the approach in the African Youth Charter, the AU encourages member states to invest in the young Africans in order to improve Africa’s position in the world. The AU urges member states to acknowledge the role of the youth and youth organizations to help build the capacity, leadership, and responsibility of young people in Africa and provide access to information for them to enable their rightful place in society (AYC 2006: 2). State parties should encourage youth organizations to lead youth programmes and promote the right to development of the youth (AYC 2006: 5). Central to this approach is a prioritization of policies and programmes that invest in education, as the AU believe that this will prepare young people for responsible lives in free societies that promote peace, understanding, tolerance, dialogue, mutual respect and friendship among all nations and across all groupings of people (AYC 2006: 8).

Moreover, there must be a focus on matching the educational system to the labor market in contemporary society e.g. by an acknowledgement of a shift to a
knowledge-based economy and therefore training of youth in information and communication technologies (ICT) (AYC 2006: 9). Member states are encouraged to, first and foremost, strive to solve African problems with African solutions, referring to solutions lead by African states instead of international initiatives. Again findings in the presentation of the AU are elaborated, as the AU emphasizes that they wish to be in charge of their own development. The AU underlines the importance of nurturing and maintaining African culture, values and indigenous knowledge. Even in a globalized world these values are important for the AU to preserve and pass on to young Africans (AYC 2006: 15). Nonetheless, member state must eliminate “customs and practices discriminatory to youth on the basis of gender, age or other status” (AYC 2006: 18). Thus, the AU wishes to portray a modern, independent and unified Africa in line with international agreements. They wish to place Africa in an influential position on the global scene while still acknowledging African heritage.

Problem representations and correspondence with societal circumstances
The African Youth Charter encourages member states to take action towards youth development and live up to the rights enshrined in the African Youth Charter. Thereby the AU acknowledges that more could be done to improve the conditions facing young people in Africa. The Charter states that young Africans should not be perceived as passive or lazy. Rather African governments should acknowledge the will of young Africans to actively participate at local, national, regional and international levels to determine their own development and development of society at large (AYC 2006: 2). Moreover, it is emphasized that even though the African governments are responsible for the creation and implementation of the national policies, they need assistance from other stakeholders. Therefore member states must develop and invest in improving the capability of the youth in order for them to position their rightful place in society and become useful for their countries (AYC 2006: 2). The African Youth Charter states that: “State parties shall undertake the
necessary steps, in accordance with their Constitutional processes and with the provisions of the present Charter, to adopt such legislative or other measures that may be necessary, to give effect to the provisions of the Charter” (AYC 2006: 4). It is here indicated that governments should provide opportunities for the growing young population on the continent. However, this demand is not further elaborated and the challenges within the African governments seem to be silenced. It is solely explained that they must lead by example of good governance and accountability in addition to respecting the rights, freedoms and duties enshrined in the Charter. Thus, the main focus is on the African youth and what they can do to improve their own livelihoods.

The large number of young people is not perceived as useful for their countries in the position where they are currently placed. They are presented to lack capacities and sense of responsibility for their own situation. This is evident, as the AU encourages them to contribute more to society through participation in elections, decision-making and governance (AYC 2006:18). However, one must question how the young people are expected to do this considering their position in society. The disadvantages this age-hierarchy can pose in reference to empowerment of young Africans are completely silenced in the African Youth Charter. The African Youth Charter emphasizes that there is a need to train the youth in reference to leadership, citizenship, governance, rights, responsibilities and other measures that will inspire them to participate in society including spiritual and cultural understanding and appreciation (AYC 2006: 6). Moreover, the African Youth Charter writes that young African must “(have full respect for parents and elders and assist them anytime in cases of need in the context of positive African values)” (AYC 2006: 18). The African Youth Charter presents the challenges facing the youth to be lack of educational, social and political competences as well as a lack of cultural and spiritual understanding and appreciation. The young Africans should take wider responsibility for the challenges they are facing, while still acknowledging that adults are more
capable, knowledgeable and responsible than them. Even as the African Youth Charter claims that young Africans have potential, they are also perceived as a challenge for Africa due to their lack capability and responsibility for their position in society. Hence, the AU believes that its member states should do more to improve matters regarding the African youth. Nonetheless, the African Youth Charter possess the youth’s lack of capacity, responsibility and respect for African culture and traditions as the main reason for the challenges they acknowledge young Africans are facing.

The structures in society that enable this problem representation
In reference to Bacchi it is essential to comprehend the structures in society that enable the problem representation presented by the AU. The chapter mapping influential institutions in Ghana presented the significance of age and status in an African context. The acceptance of the problem representation made in the African Youth Charter is founded on the same hierarchy. It is noteworthy that the African Youth Charter categories persons between the ages of 15-35 as youth (AYC 2006: 1) compared to the UN, which categories youth as persons between the ages of 15-24. As outlined by Bacchi, it is important to note that the whole concept of youth is a category that is socially constructed through its genealogy. There is no universal meaning, as the definition is decided by social, historical and cultural contexts (Bacchi 2009: 58). Nonetheless, the people categorised as “youth” are seen as less reliable and less responsible than adults (Wyn and White 1997:13 in Bacchi 2009: 58). This categorization allows society to treat the youth in a way that is not acceptable towards adults, as they are seen as still in need of developing skills before they fully reach adulthood. The choice to define people as young until the age of 35 indicates that in an African context persons are considered less capable and

This is probably because there is a link between wealth, establishment of family, employment and the reach of adulthood - all criteria that pose challenges for the African youth. Consequently, this conceptual logic is not questioned when the AU and African governments by place the young Africans below adults. It poses a dilemma how young Africans on one hand should take responsibility for the challenges their generation is facing and on the other should accept the position society places them in.

**Genesis and power relations within the policies**

The connection between the UN and AU presented is evident when scrutinizing the African Youth Charter. The AU clearly tries to live up to international conventions and charters by continuously referring to international agreements such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the MDG’s and the World Programme of Action for Youth all created by the UN (AYC 2006: 1). While the Charter is inspired by international guidelines, it also intends to cater to African values and by development of traditional and national identity, culture and pride (AYC 2006: 8). The African Youth Charter emphasizes the need to “(p)romote, preserve and respect African traditions and cultural heritage and pass on this legacy to future generations” (AYC 2006: 19). It is important that young people are up to date in reference to science and technology but there must be a nexus between contemporary youth culture and the traditional African culture (AYC 2006: 15). The African Youth Charter describes family as the most basic social institution but simultaneously uses a diplomatic and inclusive language that does not pose a certain lifestyle above another. It is recognized that there are various approaches to family depending on cultural and religious conviction (AYC 2006: 5). Here it must be remembered that AU have certain criteria to live up to, which is decided by external actors such as the UN.
Therefore the agenda proposed by the AU cannot interfere with the international agenda.

Possible effects of the policies
It is important to consider the effect of the African Youth Charter, as it is meant as a guideline for all member states of the AU and therefore meant to reach young people throughout the continent. Thus, the national youth policies from the African states are inspired to present a similar perception of youth development as the AU. The member states are therefore likely to focus on young Africans lack of capacity, training and respect in addition to how the youth themselves are responsible for their situation. Simultaneously they are less likely to focus on what the states themselves can do to empower and create possibilities for the youth. The AU wishes for the youth to be trained so they can contribute to the development of their countries and the continent as a whole, but the African Youth Charter present the responsibility for this improvement to be on the young Africans.

The perception of youth development by the government of Ghana
Based on the analytical framework, the following chapter scrutinizes the government of Ghana’s perception of youth development. This is done through an analysis of Ghana’s National Youth Policy.

Presentation of the National Youth Policy
Ghana made their National Youth Policy in 2010 one year after ratifying the African Youth Charter in 2009. The Policy works as the official policy concerning youth from the government of Ghana and must be renewed every 5 years (NYP 2010: 26). The link between the AU and the Ghanaian government becomes evident in the many similarities between the African Youth Charter and The National Youth Policy. In line with the Charter the idea behind the National Youth Policy is outlined to be improving opportunities and training of young Ghanaians. This should be done to
facilitate the measures needed for young people in Ghana to reach their full potential. In reference to the African Youth Charter the National Youth Policy implies that there needs to be an inclusion of young people when formulating policies that affect them. Therefore, young people should be included in matters of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national development plans, policies and poverty reduction strategies (NYP 2010: 2). The government of Ghana does not only declare to improve national conditions, as they also wish to demonstrate support of international conventions and charters (NYP 2010: 1). The National Youth Policy describes young people as essential in reaching development nationally and on the continent as a whole (NYP 2010:4). The National Youth Policy is thought as a guideline for stakeholders on youth development in Ghana and presents a wish to target all young people in the country. These include: rural and urban, male and female, adolescents and adults, physically challenged and able-bodied, educated and uneducated, in-school and out-of-school, organized and un-organized and skilled and unskilled. Moreover, the Policy states that education should be accessible to all, as the young people of Ghana must be mentored in order to develop into the citizens the country expect them to be (NYP 2010: 15). It promises that entrepreneurial development should be a part of school curricula and there should be a promotion of youth in agriculture, as this will contribute to the national development (NYP 2010: 12). The National Youth Policy describes investment in education as important for empowerment and sense of worth of the youth in addition to an asset for the nation of Ghana. Another noteworthy similarity with the African Youth Charter is the importance of preservation and strengthening of African traditional values, morals and cultures. Furthermore, the young people are encouraged to develop a so-called national and African identity and pride in order to maintain these values for future generations. The National Youth Policy states that young Ghanaians are the future leaders of the country and must therefore learn values such as honesty, self-reliance, integrity and equality in order for them to turn into responsible adults with a sense of
leadership and participation. The government of Ghana takes on the responsibility of passing on these values to young Ghanaians through to leading by example. Even though, the National Youth Policy should be implemented through the state, it states that it relies on other stakeholders to enable the proposed approach. These include the private sector, the parents, NGO’s, civil society organizations, non-profit making institutions and other community-based organizations and religious organizations (NYP 2010: 23-25). These organizations are expected to help support national initiatives and create opportunities for the young people in Ghana to become partners in development.

**Problem representations and correspondence with societal circumstances**

The National Youth Policy acknowledges the many challenges facing young people in Ghana such as poverty, social exclusion and economic marginalization. The Ghanaian government claims that young people are an asset for national and continental development and believe that these challenges can be overcome through training of the capacity and knowledge of the youth (NYP 2010:3).

It is emphasized that there is a need for support from the international community and other stakeholders such as NGO’s, civil society, private sector and religious establishments to combat the challenges. Nonetheless, the Policy does not elaborate further on how exactly these measures should be implemented in society. Even though the Policy was published in 2010 and is thought to be renewed every 5 years, an action plan has still not been made. Even so, the government of Ghana states that the rights of Ghanaians enlisted in the country’s constitution from 1992, also include the rights of the youth. It is important that these rights, additionally to the rights enlisted in any treaty or convention to which Ghana is signatory, are respected and upheld by all stakeholders in connection with young people in Ghana (NYP 2010: 20). With rights follow responsibilities and the National Youth Policy underlines that
even though they are the institution behind the policy, they cannot create change with a non-enterprising youth (NYP 2010: 20). The Ghanaian government positions itself as a government that takes responsible choices to improve the conditions facing the youth and inviting young Ghanaians to participate in society. On the other hand, they believe that young Ghanaians lack knowledge and self-initiative, which hinders their progress. Like in the African Youth Charter the problem is represented to be the youth's lack of knowledge, capability and responsibility. Thereby the main responsibility for the challenges facing young Ghanaians is placed on the youth themselves. The Republic of Ghana is founded on the national motto: freedom and justice\textsuperscript{17} and the National Youth Policy states that young Ghanaians’ must learn to respect these values, which include democratic rights, good work ethics and human rights. Since it is described as something young people should learn, the government indicates that these are values that young people in Ghana do currently not possess. The call for good work ethics can be understood as a reference to the large youth unemployment and the need for the youth to take responsibility to change their own situation rather than only expecting the government to find solutions for them. Furthermore, the National Youth Policy repeatedly emphasizes the importance of knowledge and respect for African culture and values, which signalizes a lack of respect and knowledge of the traditional African values. It has been outlined in that the government of Ghana acknowledges that non-official institutions have an immense influence in society. This is evident in the National Youth Policy, as it mentions traditional and religious institutions as essential for a sustainable youth development (NYP 2010: 22). Moreover, The Ghanaian government urges these actors to “(...) provide the correct moral compass to guide them (young Ghanaians red) in leading responsible youth and adult lives” (NYP 2010: 22). Moreover they must “(...) provide religious and moral upbringing to the youth in the best traditions of Ghanaian culture” (NYP 2010: 23). Thus, it is indicated that young Ghanaians are
in need of moral and religious guidance and do not live their lives in a respectable manner towards moral and religion. It is noteworthy, how the government calls on non-official actors in society to help raise young Ghanaians. The religious and moral guidance probably refers to an encouragement for young Ghanaians to lead a decent lifestyle where they attend church and keep away from alcohol and sex before marriage. This is further elaborated, as the National Youth Policy call on religious institutions to promote the sacredness of family unity and a strong nuclear as well as extended family (NYP 2010: 23). This statement, unlike the African Youth Charter, disregards alternative lifestyles to the nuclear family founded on religious beliefs. As earlier stated it is a matter of course that Ghanaians attend church and people who are non-religious are misunderstood and sometimes marginalized.

This also includes the responsibility to promote the sacredness of family unity and a strong nuclear as well as extended family (NYP 2010: 23). This indicates an understanding of a certain religion and family unity, which remains unquestioned.

It is indicated by the statements in the National Youth Policy that religion is a crucial part of a truly Ghanaian and good and morally responsible young person. The traditional guidance could be understood to include a preserved respect for traditional customs and age hierarchies. Hence, the Ghanaian youth is in a need to learn to take on more responsibilities and have respect for authorities including religious and traditional institutions in addition to acknowledging embracing the Ghanaian culture and heritage. It is indicated that by training the youth both in reference to educational and moral skills, the challenges facing young Ghanaians can be overcome. However, it is the responsibility of the youth themselves to make this happen. The National Youth Policy outlines that they have now done their part and that it is now up to the youth to make their contribution.
The structures in society that enable this problem representation

The reason for the problem representation posed by the Ghanaian government can be found through the conceptual logics that are unquestioned in Ghanaian society.

The National Youth Policy, inspired by The African Youth Charter, categorizes youth as persons between the ages of 15-35. The choice to not recognize Ghanaians as adults before the age of 35 can be seen as a method to keep young people in the category for as long as possible. This is due to the status related to age in Ghanaian culture and, which believes that the young people do not possess the same capacities as adults and must therefore be treated as such. Even though the National Youth Policy indicates that it wishes to empower and include the youth in all decision-making processes, the Ghanaian government does not need to give young people the same kind of respect as adults, as they are not considered as such until the age of 35.

The National Youth Policy indicates that young Ghanaians do not have the ability to fully comprehend which approaches should be taken to improve their situation. Therefore the youth must become independent through empowerment at all levels and be prepare themselves for the challenges that lie ahead (NYP 2010: 3). The government of Ghana assures to actively involve young people in productive activities for individual, community and national development in order to reach this goal. Thereby, through the problem representation in the National Youth Policy, the Ghanaian government invites the youth to participate but only on the conditions set by the government.

This poses a dilemma because on the one hand the Ghanaian government is expecting young people to improve their capability and live up to responsibilities in society and on the other, the government does not perceive the youth as persons who are capable of fully providing for themselves and take liable decisions. Even if young Ghanaians become highly capable, innovative and responsible, they will not receive the same respect as people who are senior to them, due to the structures present in Ghanaian
society (section XX). Consequently even though there is an acknowledgement of the marginalization of young people, it is not considered to be connected to the age hierarchies within Ghanaian culture. It does not seem to be a wish from the government of Ghana to change the status quo that helps feed the marginalization of young people in Ghana.

According to Bacchi, terms such as culture, values and morals are conceptual logics dominated by the elite. Consequently, the government and the other influential institutions in society are the ones that determine who live according to the wishes proposed in the National Youth Policy and how the young people targeted in the policy will be perceived. Hence, based on Bacchi’s approach, the problem representation in the National Youth Policy is likely to influence the perception of the challenges facing young Ghanaians. However, the problem representation in the National Youth Policy possesses various simplifications. There is little consideration or recognition of where the Ghanaian government itself should improve in order to combat the challenges facing the youth. Factors such as lack of job opportunities and demographic challenges seem to be overlooked. Moreover, the National Youth Policy addresses young Ghanaians as one homogeneous group with little consideration of the difference in challenges due to social status, gender and geographical placement. Instead the Ghanaian government outlines a simple solution to the challenges within youth development; an awakening of young Ghanaians combined with a little guidance from influential institutions in the country.

**Genesis and power relations within the policies**

It must be remembered that the National Youth Policy is created in reference to the demands that follow ratifying the African Youth Charter. This becomes evident as The National Youth Policy states that it wishes to live up to certain international standards and rely on international organizations to promote the youth agenda on the international scene (NYP 2010: 23). Nonetheless, the National Youth Policy defers
significantly from the African Youth Charter. It highlights the importance of preserving the Ghanaian culture and values at least at the same level as meeting international requirements. Moreover, the National Youth Policy acknowledges the role of non-official institutions in all layers of Ghanaian society and in matters concerning the youth. These are therefore included as a central part of the National Youth Policy.

The government of Ghana seems to present two different agendas, one attempt to follow the AU and international community, while the other is focused on domestic principles, such as inclusion of influential traditional and religious institutions. The National Youth Policy follows the guidelines of the AU in reference to an outlined wish to empower young Ghanaians, include them in matters that affect them and harness their immense potential for national development. Yet, these statements seem to hold more symbolic significance than a concrete action for change. As earlier stated the AU relies on funding in order to implement the developmental initiatives they strive for. This enables the AU to conduct their own approaches but simultaneously provide certain criteria and guidelines for the content of the policy. The Ghanaian government state through the National Youth Policy that it also relies on funding and support from international organizations.

Traditional Ghanaian values and religious guidance play a huge role in the National Youth Policy. This entails a respect for the elders and a profound pride and knowledge of Ghanaian culture and traditions. These values are also present in the African Youth Charter. However a noteworthy difference between the two approaches is that the National Youth Policy includes the influence of traditional and religious institutions to a much larger extend than the African Youth Charter. The Ghanaian government acknowledges these institutions’ undeniable influence on society and that effective implementation of the National Youth Policy is impossible without their assistance. This might be because the AU has a closer connection to the
UN than the government of Ghana. Consequently, the AU experience more restrictions towards their policies than the Ghanaian government.

**Possible effects of the policies**
It is important to consider how The National Youth Policy might be implemented in practice. The Policy is supposed to be followed up by an action plan that will elaborate on how the promises made in the National Youth Policy will be implemented in practice. This action plan is yet to be made and the National Youth Policy offer limited elaboration on how the proposed initiatives to empower young Ghanaians are expected to play out in practice. Since the action plan of how exactly the challenges facing the youth should be approached, is yet to be drafted, one can question the practical implications of the National Youth Policy. It provides the state with some kind of legitimacy but is vague on actual proposals for change of the status quo.

**The approach towards youth development by the NGO’s**
The perception of youth by influential local NGO's will now be elaborated. The perceptions are analysed on the basis of the youth manifesto from YES Ghana and the Communique from the 5th African Youth and Governance Conference (AYGC) arranged by Youth Bridge Foundation (YBF) in 2013. Both NGO's are working specifically with youth development and are internationally recognized in form of the special consultative status by United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC). Both documents are written with influences from the youth and written in a language, as is they have been created solely by young people with terms such as: 'we the youth'. However both approaches are created by the NGO’s.

**Presentation of the two policies**
YES Ghana has constituted a Youth Manifesto to present the needs and challenges of
the youth. The recommendations made in the manifesto are inspired by the findings of a prior year long project by YES Ghana called the 'voices of youth' project. It is a far reaching project that tries to include all the different groups of young people in Ghana. The project reached out to 300 youth advocates from both urban and rural areas, reaching all ten regions in the country through capacity building workshops (YES-Ghana 2012: 2). The 'Voices of the Youth' project was a platform for the youth from all over Ghana to articulate their concerns. Consequently, as an attempt to create actual change and policy input, the Youth Manifesto has been created. The youth manifesto is an attempt to pave the way for an increase in inclusion, empowerment and opportunities for the young people of Ghana (YES-Ghana 2012: foreword).

The manifesto is built on the importance of youth participation and is the first effort from young Ghanaians to collaborate and make recommendations and ideas for policies and programmes that can create change and improve the many challenges facing their everyday lives (YES-Ghana 2012: foreword).

The young people included in the project represent various young men and women of diverse ages and religious beliefs. Both policies follow the categorisation of youth by the AU, namely 15-25 years. Before the Youth Manifesto was written, a Youth Manifesto Coalition was created. The Coalition consisted of a nationwide network with 221 youth groups and 424,457 individuals, which all together reached a million young people (YES-Ghana 2012: preamble). This preparatory work is outlined as the basis for the recommendations presented in the Youth Manifesto. YES Ghana wishes to work for an increase in investment and attention towards putting youth issues on the development agenda in Ghana. The development objective of the Youth Manifesto is to increase attention on the challenges facing the youth and to empower young people in Ghana by recommending that they be part of the public decision-making processes that affect their lives. The Manifesto is the result of collaboration between young Ghanaians and YES Ghana with active support from representatives from civil society, the UN, international development agencies, the academia,
relevant government agencies and the media (YES-Ghana 2012: 2) Nevertheless it is underlined that the perspectives represented in the Youth Manifesto are the perspectives of the youth rather than the views or policies of technical partners or financial contributors. YES Ghana states that The Manifesto is a non-partisan document that considers internationally approved frameworks such as the World Programme of Action for Youth and the African Youth Charter.

The Communique from Youth Bridge Foundation is the result of the 5th African Youth and Governance Conference from 2013. The conference brings young Africans from 35 different African countries together to discuss how the challenges facing young people on the continent can be improved. The Communique claims that the African continent faces some demographic challenges but by harnessing young African’s potential it can lead to opportunities rather than challenges (YBF 2013: 1). However, in order for Africa to turn the challenges to opportunities, there is a need for collaboration between the governments and various stakeholders in society. These include NGO’s and private and public investments in areas concerning youth development, such as educational, health, economy and inclusive governance in general (YBF 2013: 2). The communique proposes that African governments should see the youth as equals and engage in dialogue about their needs and challenges. YBF claims that, even though the youth constitute 65% (YBF 2013:3) of the population in Africa they are continuously marginalised by the minority in power. Rather than considering the youth as recipients of development, they should be regarded as partners in their own development (YBF 2013:2). Nonetheless, the young people must also learn to take responsibility for their futures and make their governments accountable for creating policies that will lead to economic growth and opportunities for young people (2013: 2). Moreover the youth should try to organise and lead processes towards organising national youth parliament that should consider the issues of the youth (YBF 2013: 2).
Both YES Ghana and YBF state that youth participation plays a central role for youth empowerment. According to the NGO’s these measures will not only be beneficial for young people but also for national development. YES Ghana describes the link between the quality of the lives of the youth and the future of Ghana's economic and social development. They indicate the importance of a healthy and successful change from a protected childhood to an independent adulthood and that the young people get an opportunity to participate and benefit from the overall development in Ghana. The Youth Manifesto and Communique both state that government, ministries and agencies carry the ultimate responsibility for administering policies and programmes that affect the youth. To do this, the Youth Manifesto recommends development of tools to support data collection, opinion polls and other reporting systems on youth and the fulfilment of their rights and opportunities. The government must monitor the effect of the policies they propose. Even though a National Youth Policy has been created in Ghana, The Youth Manifesto expresses concern about the lack of attention on youth issues in the national development policy. YES Ghana encourages a creation of structures for effective youth participation, as they state that young people play a central role for economic, social and political development in Ghana. YES Ghana sees great potential in the youth if only given a change to contribute to society not only as future leaders, but as leaders of today (YES-Ghana 2012: preamble).

The NGO’s seem to consider diversity within the youth to a larger extend than the AU and government of Ghana. They state that attention must be given to how the challenges facing young Ghanaians such as poverty and marginalisation are even greater for young women, young people with disabilities and rural youth (YES Ghana 2012: 10) YES Ghana state that since girls and women compose 50% of the population, they should be entitled to the same rights and responsibilities as their male counterparts. The Manifesto writes that if gender equality is not met in every area of society such as access to education, healthcare and employment, Ghana's national development goals will not be achieved (YES-Ghana 2012: 14). YES Ghana
recommends that changes must be implemented in the school curriculum in order to meet the requirements of the labour-market today. This includes a greater knowledge of ICT and inclusion of environmental awareness in the curriculum in addition to training of teachers in the environmental aspects of their subjects.

Both NGO’s claim that there must be an increased focus on young people with disabilities. Similarly to young women and girls they face additional challenges such as stigmatisation for being different. They are often deprived of their basic human rights and have even more difficulty in seeking influence in public decision-making processes than the general young population. As a result, they rarely benefit from the socio-economic developments in Ghana, and are hindered from being key actors for social change and the battle against poverty. (YES-Ghana 2012: 15). YBF agrees and states that young people with disabilities should be allowed education and opportunities for access to the labour market on equal terms as the non-disabled youth (YBF 2013: 2). In line with the African Youth Charter and the National Youth policy, both approaches from the NGO’s place education as a key to youth development. Education is described as a basic need and a human right, which signalise the chance in the role of NGO’s in society (YES-Ghana 2012: 6). The fact that they are funded though international organisations become quite evident, as they seem focused to follow the guidelines by the UN and provide development initiatives and empowerment of young people, through a right based approach.

Problem representations and correspondence with societal circumstances
The two NGO’s seems to have the same perception of youth development. They believe that young people must be invited to participate in decision-making and hereby be empowered. YES Ghana believes that the youth through this kind of empowerment can become more responsible citizens in terms of knowledge about their rights and self-confidence. They believe that this will benefit society as a whole and enable young Ghanaians to take an active role in development issues, which will
facilitate local development and good governance (YES Ghana 2012: 29). The NGO’s criticise the tendency of generalising young people as one homogeneous group. Instead they recommend recognition of the diversity of young people and that they must be addressed in consideration of their different needs, abilities, challenges and backgrounds. Not only according to their geographical standpoint but also according to age and social status (YES Ghana 2012: foreword). Nevertheless, they divide the group to a larger extend than portrayed by the official Ghana in terms of abilities and responsibilities of young Ghanaians. Both NGO’s believe that unemployment and challenges in the educational system are some of the main factors in the challenges facing the youth. According to the Youth Manifesto unemployment of young people is 2 to 3 times higher than among the adult population, which YES Ghana believes is due to the youth's lack of experience, voice and the difficult transition from school to labour market (YES-Ghana 2012: 8).

The NGO’s present the problem to be the government’s lack of initiative. They state that young Ghanaians have been overlooked especially in regards to the poverty reduction strategies in Ghana, as they claim that the poverty estimates of the youth is in reality significantly higher (YES-Ghana 2012: 6). They call for be a specific focus on youth poverty, as the youth are faced with different challenges than the general population. For the youth poverty is not only lack of financial stability. It is linked to a lack of choices and opportunities; the poor opportunity to participate effectively in society, the lack of access to school and medical clinics, the lack of capability to own land and thereby the possibility to be self-providing, the lack of access to the labour-market and credit etc. (YES-Ghana 2012: 6). They claim that the governments must provide better opportunities for the youth and invest in education and training of young people with focus on ICT so they are able to survive in modern society (YBF 2013: 3). Hence the government of Ghana must acknowledge that they are not providing efficient opportunities for young people to navigate and contribute to society and find solutions to the challenges facing young Ghanaians. E.g. the
government can no longer ignore the large number of young people who leave Ghana in search of better opportunities. The Youth Manifesto claims that young people make wrong and desperate choices due to their poor situation. They state that the higher crime-rate among young people is mainly caused by the difficulty young people face when trying to integrate into society, as this is often linked to social and economic difficulties which pose a dominant factor in the criminal behaviour (YES-Ghana 2012: 16). Moreover The Youth Manifesto states that it must be acknowledged that numerous young people choose to leave Ghana due to the difficulty of decent living in their country (YES-Ghana 2012: 11).

YBF and YES-Ghana do not deny that the youth themselves also must learn to take more responsibility for their situation. Nevertheless the NGO’s blame the lack of initiative by young Ghanaians on the lack of opportunities provided for young people by the state. It is emphasized that people have a responsibility for their own future and therefore must position themselves as trustworthy actors in the development process. However, progress is not possible without a hand out from the government and other key stakeholders such as civil society and the private sector, as the young people cannot create change and seek influence alone. Both YBF and YES-Ghana express that it is the responsibility of the stakeholders to act as gatekeepers and reach out and include the youth and youth organisations in matters that affect their lives instead of placing responsibility mainly on the youth themselves (YES-Ghana 2012: 29).

It is stated in the Youth Manifesto that the youth are engaged in their future but do not see the link between politics and their daily reality (YES-Ghana 2012: 20). Hence the youth wish to participate and contribute to their communities but know little about decision-making processes (YES-Ghana 2012: 20). Nonetheless The Youth Manifesto underlines that empowerment of young people is more than establishing an opportunity for young Ghanaians to influence policies. It is also a process of capacity
building for young people, which is evidently linked to the access to education, employment, health and other key resources. Thus, the NGO’s claim that young Ghanaians want to contribute to Ghanaian society but they lack training and knowledge and more importantly inclusion and empowerment strategies from the government of Ghana.

The structures in society that enables the problem representation
To certain extend the NGO’s challenge the problem representation in the African Youth Charter and National Youth Policy. They claim that the situation is caused by lack of capacity and initiative from the government rather than the youth. However, they acknowledge that the government cannot combat the challenges alone but must rely on various stakeholders. Civil society organisations are important as they are independent from the state and represent various different values and beliefs in society with the interest of defending citizens’ rights and directly providing goods and services (YES-Ghana 2012: 28). Moreover partnering with the private sector can help identify high-demand skills currently needed in the labour market. More young people are attending school and staying in school for longer periods, but the labour market will only take in more graduates if it has strong connections to the educational system (YES-Ghana 2012: 8). Lastly YES Ghana believes that in spite of changing family patterns, the parents/guardians play a vital role for young people’s social network. They are the educators of the youth and should respect the concerns and ideas of young people. Moreover, it is important that the parents are a part of youth development, as the youth often inherit beliefs and perceptions of the world from their parents. (YES 2012: 29). Hence the NGO’s state there is a need for parents and authorities to respect and listen to the concerns and standpoints of the youth rather than the opposite approach, which is the traditional Ghanaian perception.

Another difference from the policies by the AU and the government of Ghana is that the NGO’s hardly mention the influences from traditional and religious institutions in
their approaches. The Communique does not mention culture or traditions at all, while the Youth Manifesto briefly writes as an endnote that the Youth Manifesto has been outline in collaboration with various stakeholders, which also include “religious and traditional institutions” (YES-Ghana 2012: 30). Moreover the NGO’s have a larger focus on gender: The manifesto recommends that there must be created access for women in study areas that are traditionally only available to men (YES-Ghana 2012: 8). Moreover YES Ghana accuse the educational material today of not being gender neutral, which also affects the perception and understanding of gender (YES-Ghana 2012: 15). Hence, the NGO’s present a wish to move away from the traditional Ghanaian values and perceptions in order to create change, whereas the Ghanaian government believes that educating the youth through official education and awareness of traditional values will lead to sustainable youth development.

**Genesis and power relations within the policies**

Even though YES-Ghana and YBF are non-governmental organizations, they continue to refer to national and international state-led agreements. The Youth Manifesto emphasizes that full and informed inclusion and participation of young people is not only a recommendation of local NGO’s. It is a demand on a national, regional and international level in reference to the African Youth Charter, the Constitution of Ghana and United Nations World Programme on Youth (YES-Ghana 2012: 20). YBF state that AU must develop participatory monitoring measures to follow the effects of the policies concerning youth development and if they meet the targets and milestones enlisted by the AU themselves, when announcing this decade (2009-2018) the ”African Decade of the Youth” (YBF 2013: 3). Hence, the approaches from the NGO’s wish to make the AU and government of Ghana accountable to the promises they have made towards youth development. However their own initiatives to turn the challenges facing young people to opportunities differentiate marginally from the ones presented in the African Youth Charter and
National Youth Policy. This might be due to the connections of both NGO’s to the UN in their recognition by United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC). Even though the NGO’s are non-governmental, certain standards are implied in such recognition. This might influence the choice of the NGO’s to rely on a mainly state-led approach to the proposed development initiatives. It is noteworthy that the NGO’s pay so little attention to the traditional and religious institutions compared to the AU and government of Ghana. One reason might be that the eagerness to preserve a traditional approach to youth in the African Youth Charter and National Youth Policy work against the arguments of the NGO’s. Instead of focusing on the awareness of Ghanaian culture and moral training of young Ghanaians, YES-Ghana and YBF encourage for a change in the marginalisation of youth. Parents and influential institutions must learn to respect and listen to the wishes of young people, in order for them to be empowered and contribute to a sustainable national development.

Possible effects of the policies
It is important to consider the effect of the Youth Manifesto and Communique, as they are endorsed by NGO’s and therefore are approach that are more likely to be implemented directly on the ground. The approaches by the NGO’s claim to have been drafted in close collaboration with the youth. However even though the NGO’s perceive the problems within youth development to be caused by a lack of initiative by the government, they do not seem to contribute with innovative ideas to youth development. The responsibility is placed differently that in the African Youth Charter and National Youth Policy. However, the NGO’s do not seem to give much attention to the measures that will actually enable change on the ground. Their main objective seems to be focusing on accountability from the state and to live up to international standards due to their funding by the UN. Little attention is given to how actors external to the state influence youth development. It is noteworthy that the institutions that are vital for development on the ground seem to base their approach
on official documents from state-led institutions rather than take point of departure on the ground. Hence, they choose to work through a top-down instead of a bottom-up approach that takes point of departure in the young Ghanaians.

**Concluding points**
The analysis has now outlined the perceptions of youth development by influential institutions in Ghana. The institutions all state that young Ghanaians play an essential role in society. Moreover the policies by the AU, Ghanaian government and local NGO’s respectively claim to wish to empower the youth. Nonetheless especially the AU and the government of Ghana place the main responsibility of the challenges facing the young Ghanaians on the youth themselves. None of the approaches provide practical and tangible suggestions to what the institutions will do to improve the livelihood of young Ghanaians. The institutions seem to cater to their own interests before they consider the well-being of the youth. The AU is concerned with living up to international standards, while the government of Ghana wishes to follow the AU and simultaneously sustain the status quo in reference to cultural understandings of power structures and hierarchies in society. The NGO’s wish to represent the young Ghanaians but must please external actors before they can consider the youth. Therefore the NGO’s seem to base their approaches towards youth development on official documents rather than on the young Ghanaians. Thus, they are also taking a top-down approach towards youth development instead of bottom-up approach. Hence, the perceptions of youth development by influential institutions in Ghana do not provide sustainable approaches for the youth to follow.

**Navigation of young people in Ghanaian society**
The following chapter will investigate how the perceptions of youth development by influential institutions in Ghana influence the navigation of young people in
Ghanaian society. Since the empirical data is not based on my own research, the investigation is based on fieldwork by other researchers concerning young people in Ghana. These studies concern young upcoming pentecostal pastors (Lauterbach 2008 & Lauterbach 2010), young people’s search for a football career (Esson 2013), the movement of young people in Ghanaian society (Langevang & Gough 2009), youth bases (Langevang 2008), the struggles of the youth (Langevang 2008), negotiations of livelihood (Jones & Chant 2008) and challenges facing the youth (Jones & Chant 2009).

Through these studies, the tendencies in strategies of young people in Ghana will be outlined. These strategies do not represent the strategies of every young Ghanaian but are examples of the alternative strategies young Ghanaians make. It is significant to draw attention to these strategies because they represent tendencies of how young people attempt to progress in a society with various challenges facing the youth and little hope in ‘mainstream solutions’. Moreover since the analysis has shown that none of the policies provide useful and sustainable strategies for young Ghanaians to follow, it will be discussed how the strategies young Ghanaians do take are influenced by their marginalized position in society.

The significance of young people's position in society
Before scrutinizing different strategies of young Ghanaians, it is relevant to discuss how the categorization of youth affects the opportunities for young people and the choices they make. It is important to remember that the concept of youth is a social construction determined by cultural, historical and social contexts (Christiansen, Utas, Vigh 2006: 9). Consequently neither its meaning nor existence should be taken for granted or considered as fixed or stable. Rather the factors that determine the category should be scrutinized to comprehend what being categorized as youth entails and which societal structures this imply. The movement from childhood to adulthood is not just a generational change in life but a shift in reference to power, authority and
social worth (Christiansen, Utas, Vigh 2006: 11). Bayart (1993) states that “(g)enerational positions such as childhood, youth and adulthood are not neutral or natural but rather part of the struggle for influence and authority within almost every society” (Christiansen, Utas, Vigh 2006: 11). Therefore simply defining young people as persons between the ages of 15-35 isolates the youth category from the socially determined factors, which influence this generational positioning (Christiansen, Utas, Vigh 2006: 18). The youth are perceived as less capable and knowledgeable than adults, which in terms of empowerment and participation in society can leave the youth in a marginalized position. Furthermore, the socially constructed terms that determine persons as youth can change in relation to the context which it is used. Thus, a person might be referred to as a child in one situation and as an adult in the next, depending on the situation and relationship and purpose (Christiansen, Utas, Vigh 2006: 12). This is also seen in the perceptions towards youth development by influential institutions in Ghana, where young Ghanaians are blamed for not taking responsible choices as adults, while simultaneously being expected to be submissive to their seniors as children. Vigh argues that it is significant to scrutinize how young people are positioned in society but equally important to investigate how they position themselves and create strategies as a result of this. They state that “(...) (y)outh is both a social position, which is internally and externally shaped and constructed, as well as part of a larger societal and generational process, a state of becoming” (Christiansen, Utas, Vigh 2006: 10). Thus, it is interesting to scrutinize the measures young Ghanaians take in the transitional process of becoming in relation to the opportunities available to them.

The opportunities available to young people in Ghana
All the policies have suggested that the solution to the challenges facing the youth include education and training. However, as enlisted in the introduction it is difficult
to attain success through these measures due to the lack of job opportunities, especially facing the young educated population. Therefore many young Ghanaians are unemployed and if they attain a job they often end up in positions in the informal sector, which do not fit their educational background and are either unpaid or poorly paid (Langevang & Gough 2009: 745). The high unemployment and lack of opportunities for young people in Ghanaian society has led to a loss of faith in advancement through education. Even through the various policies concerning youth development portray education and training as the way to combat the challenges facing the youth, young Ghanaians do not believe in the connection between education, employment and development (Esson 2013: 85). A large number of young people in Ghana come from families that cannot afford advancement beyond primary education, which makes progression through education impossible (Esson 2013: 86). Even the young people that do attain a tertiary education are not able to find employment due to the lack of jobs. Hence, the approaches suggested by influential institutions in Ghana regarding youth development do not create sustainable solutions for the youth to follow in practice.

The field studies considered in this thesis portrays a young Ghanaian population that wishes to be able to provide for themselves and take responsible choices. Unfortunately most of them feel stuck in a \"social and physical immobility\" (Langevang og Gough 2009: 749) due to the marginalization connected to their position in society. Therefore, young Ghanaians are stuck in a marginal and unprogressive position in society and remain \"(…) forever in a state of becoming, yet never arriving\" (Esson 2013: 85).

Despite their heterogeneity they are all in a search of economic independence, social acceptance and respect from family and society at large. Young people wish \"(…) to escape confining structures and navigate economic, social and political turmoil\"
(Christiansen, Utas, Vigh 2006: 9). They are in search of becoming ‘a somebody’ (Langevang & Gough 2009: 744) (Lauterbach 2008: 2). The determination of a somebody and a respected adult in Ghanaian society depends on marital status, establishment of family, an independent household and for men the ability to provide for one’s family and a respectable and well-paid job while women gain respect through taken care of the household and raising a family (Langevang & Gough 2009: 745). There is especially a pressure on young Ghanaian men to become ‘real men’ and provide for themselves and their families. A young man explains about a Ghanaian proverb that: “‘what shows you’re a man is your pockets’, it isn’t what shows you’re a man is your degree” (Esson 2013:89). Thus young people are trying to become ‘somebody’ and take responsibility for their lives in alternative ways (Esson 2013: 91)

However the circumstances facing young people in Ghana prevent them from taking the measures that will turn them into acknowledged and well-respected adults (Langevhu 2008: 235). The young people complain that they “see little help coming from the state (…)” (Langevhu 2008a: 234) and therefore they develop their own strategies in order to progress. The young Ghanaians try to actively do something themselves in order to evolve, as they do not wish to merely stay in the house all day, because it signals laziness, lack of initiative and unemployment (Langevhu & Gough 2009: 749). As a result existence as a young person in Ghana depends on the ability to network and nurture social relationships to family members, neighbors and various form of associations (Hanson 2005: 1295 in Lauterbach 2010: 264). Attaining a job in Ghana without connections is almost impossible, as it is more a matter of “know who than know how” (Jones and Chant 2009: 193). Many young Ghanaians are forced to provide for themselves and cannot depend on support from their parents (Langevhu 2008b: 2044). Rather, they are expected to contribute to the household and ‘give back’ to their parents when they reach a certain age (Jones and Chant 2006:
191). Even if the young people are provided with a roof over their heads, they must often find material support through networks outside the family (Langevang & Gough 2009: 747). Therefore, many young Ghanaians feel desperate to find strategies that can make them economically independent and give them the position in society they aim for.

**Strategies of young Ghanaians**
To concretize the discussion, the following section provides examples of the strategies young Ghanaians take in order to become a ‘somebody’ and escape the stigma that is related to the label of youth.

**Physical movement and youth bases**
A field study by Langevang and Gough shows that young Ghanaians, especially in the urban centers survive through physical movement and nurturing of social network. Therefore as a strategy much time is spent on visiting family and friends, participating in social events, attending church, delivering goods etc. (Langevang & Gough 2009: 748). The conviction is that there is a correlation between spatial movement and social movement, thus the physical movement is considered to be crucial for success and progress in life (Langevang & Gough 2009: 752-53).

Some young people get by through establishment of so-called youth bases with other young people in the same desperate situation as themselves (Langevang 2008a: 235). They mostly contain of young men because they cannot stay in the household, as this is considered to be feminine. Furthermore the young men usually have more free time than young women who are not as free to move around as men but rather expected to stay home and maintain domestic chores if they are not working (Esson 2013: 88).

The youth bases are public spaces where young people meet and hang out during the day. The young people meet to discuss their situation and network with their peers in terms of getting a job or planning another strategy. Moreover they use the bases as a
safety net and help each other if someone is not able to afford a meal, fall sick or have unexpected expenses (Langevang 2008a: 237). One young person in the field study by Langevang expresses: “We know we are weak, but together we are strong” (Langevang 2008: 236). Hence, young Ghanaians realize that they cannot rely on assistance from the government or other actors. To progress in society they must follow their own strategies and rely on their network, which is fundamental in order for a young person to progress in Ghana.

**Migration**

Some of the young people who have attended the youth bases described above have succeeded in migrating to Europe and hereafter try to help the remaining members do the same (Langevang 2008a: 237). A large number of young people wish to migrate and search for other opportunities either nationally, continentally or internationally. The national migration usually entails poor young people from the North travelling to the urban cities in the South. Due to their lack of network, they often end up unemployed or at the bottom of the social latter, e.g. as servants for the middle class. There are young Ghanaians in all social layers with a dream of emigrating to the West in search for better opportunities. 50% of the youth in Ghana with a tertiary education emigrate (MO Ibrahim Foundation 2012: 49) but there are also young Ghanaians with little or no education, who choose to emigrate. However, due to their lack of competences they often end up at the bottom of society in their receiving country. Migration turns out to be a success for few, however migrants cannot return empty handed, as they will be stigmatize as failures (Langevang & Gough 2009: 751). Van der Geest writes: “Having no money is the most effective barrier preventing people from returning home, for it is the clearest sign of failure, a cause of shame. The only way to avoid such a loss of honour is staying away” (Langevang & Gough 2009: 751). This is another indication of the pressure young people feel is
on them to become ‘somebody’ and make their parents and community proud. They take high risks and if they fail there is no safety net. Nonetheless, the dream of the link between migration and success stays very much alive. One explanation can be found in the definition of success, respect and adulthood. Young Ghanaians do not look up to people who are highly educated such as lawyers, doctors or even the President and other politically influential people (Esson 2013: 89). They rather see people who are able to go abroad, make big money and provide for their families as role models because they represent what many young Ghanaians aim for; to live an extraordinary lifestyle through strategies that rarely include formal education (Esson 2013: 89). Some of the careers that have gained this status include movie stars, charismatic pastors, musicians and businessmen (Banegas & warnier 2001: 7 in Lauterbach 2008: 7) and football players (Esson: 2013: 86).

**Professional football**
The attempt of a professional football career is a strategy for young men to get out of poverty and get rich fast. The professional football players are an example that it is possible to become ‘somebody’ for a struggling young person in Ghana. Most wealthy Ghanaian football players come from poor backgrounds and have no or little formal education but have later gone abroad and created a successful lifestyle (Esson: 2013: 86). Consequently, especially young men try to follow their example and drop out of school to pursue a football career (Esson 2013: 86). Some of them even receive scholarships due to their football talent but still do not attend class because they, as earlier emphasized, do not believe in education as a way out of poverty. Hence, large numbers of young people will rather rely on alternative strategies than suggested in the policies to become a’ somebody’. Through a successful career in football they are able to get well-paid jobs, be self-sufficient and thus gain respect (Esson 2013: 91). Furthermore the perpetual label as ‘youth’ can be an advantage in pursue of a football career (Esson 2013: 87).
Becoming a charismatic pastor

Another strategy young people take to become ‘somebody’ is through a religious path in becoming charismatic pastors. As enlisted in the mapping of religious institutions pastorship can lead to respect and status in the church but also in society at large. Pastors are not only religious and spiritual figures. They are also a highly respected social, political and public figure with great authority (Lauterbach 2008: 10). They form part of a new emerging elite especially at a local level (Lauterbach 2008: 11). Some of the pastors have become icons of success and have been able to gain their position without a tertiary education. This helps demonstrate pastorship as yet another strategy to gain respect, success and become ‘somebody’. In theory everyone can become a pastor, also young people. Accordingly there is an increased interest in becoming successful as a pastor, as a choice of career, because it is a way to gain status, access to spiritual powers and much more than what can be obtained as a civil servant (Lauterbach 2008: 234). A Ghanaian pastor (Osei 2005: 13) writes in his book: “wisdom does not come with age but through the knowledge of God” (Lauterbach 2008: 103). The social status of a pastor is not only determined by age but also by wealth and the ability to connect with spiritual powers (Lauterbach 2010: 265). Hence through knowledge in God young people can be considered as wise unaffiliated with the age-status, which makes pastorship an attractive strategy for several young Ghanaians. Thus, the strategy to become a pastor can help young people gain status and power and become ‘somebody’ through Christ. Lauterbach writes: “Pastors as new figures of success can be seen as part of a broader pattern of reconfiguration of elites, where young people are challenging the positions of more established holders of power” (Lauterbach 2008: 8).

Choosing to become a pastor is not a secured route for respect, success and authority but if the strategy turns out to be successful the person will be among the most influential persons in society, due to the position given to religion and ‘people of
God’ in Ghana. Becoming a pastor is usually a choice of career where other options are less attractive or accessible. Nevertheless the pastors themselves believe that they have received a special calling from God and are destined to become pastors (Lauterbach 2008: 146). Thus, their choice to become pastors is not a choice of career but rather a fulfillment of their predetermined destiny (Lauterbach 2008: 146). It is believed that a calling from God to become a pastor should not be ignored, as it is the will of God and defying it will lead to failure later in life (Lauterbach 2010: 269). The belief and respect for the calling might be understood in reference to Asante culture, which is the biggest and most influential tribe in Ghana. In Asante there is a great trust in destiny and fate and the traditional priests are also believed to receive an undeniable calling (Lauterbach 2010: 269).

Even though the choice or calling of becoming a pastor enables young pastors in a position in society usually not held by young people, the strategy cannot be fulfilled without acceptance by a senior pastor (Lauterbach 2008: 117). Most young pastors attend Bible school and serve as junior pastors in church as an assistant to the senior pastor. In this way they can receive training in pastorship and be validated by the elder pastors as genuine pastors, who are called to serve God. Nonetheless, the progress of the junior pastors is monitored carefully by the church leadership. The young pastor cannot become too successful and challenge the authority of the senior pastors. If this happens, the young pastors could be relocated to a smaller church in a village or advised to start up his own church (Lauterbach 2010: 268). Consequently, the relationship between the young upcoming pastors and the senior pastors is ambivalent. The young pastors need legitimacy and acceptance by the senior pastors in order to become ‘somebody’ but simultaneously the relation can become a hindrance for advancement and the position in society, which young people strive for (Lauterbach 2010: 272).
Concluding points

Through scrutinizing the strategies of young Ghanaians in society it has become evident that there is a lack of correspondence between the perceptions towards youth development by influential institutions in Ghana and the strategies the young people make to navigate in Ghanaian society. It seems that young Ghanaians wish to take responsibility for their lives and futures but are missing the needed opportunities and assistance to do so. Consequently they have lost faith in the system and connection between education and employment and therefore strive for alternative approaches to be considered ‘a somebody’ in society. This rarely includes formal training, as the definition of ‘a somebody’ in Ghana is linked to financial means instead of academic knowledge. Even the young people, who have the resources to complete a higher education, are not secured a position as ‘a somebody’ if they do not reach successful employment. This might be the reason why some young Ghanaians choose to migrate. Regardless of the great heterogeneity of young people in Ghana, which not all could be included in this thesis, they all have the same goal. The young Ghanaians are marginalized due to the cultural and social context of youth in Ghanaian society and therefore seem stuck in ‘a process of becoming, yet never arriving’. There is a disconnection between what the different approaches propose and what young people in Ghana actually need to progress. This could be linked to the tendency that all of the approaches wish to cater to other interest before they consider the youth. Even though the African Youth Charter and National Youth Policy indicate that the policies must be drafted in collaboration with the youth, it is quite obvious that this has not been the case. The NGO’s on the other hand have collaborated with the youth in their proposals and underline that young Ghanaians do wish to contribute to society. However, even the NGO’s have a tendency to implement a top-down approach with consideration of the national and international agenda, rather than a bottom-up approach that takes point of departure in the youth. This is not to suggest that the young Ghanaians do not educate themselves. The Ghanaian population today
is much well-educated than their parent’s but because they are also more unemployed, they have learned that it is their network than will make them progress in life no matter if they wish to become neo-pentecostal pastors, advance through their education or migrate to Europe. It can be suggested that the terms that makes you ‘a somebody’ in Ghana combined with the challenges present in youth development such as unemployment, marginalization and demographic challenges is the very reason for young people’s position in society, thus why they choose to make alternative but risky strategies. It must be noted that these strategies succeed for some young Ghanaians but not everyone can migrate, become a pastor or a professional football player. Consequently, Ghana is through its insufficiency from various actors to take a bottom up approach based on the needs of young Ghanaians, generating an increase in a lost and uneducated young population. The young people who fail in their strategies are left with little alternatives, as they are untrained and will have difficulty ever becoming ‘somebody’. This is not only a failure for the individual but for society at large, as it can lead to a loss of the potential for large parts of the young population and challenge the future development in Ghana. Hence, the connection between the needs of the youth and the approaches from different actors in Ghana must be further considered to ever reach a sustainable youth development. It is certain that the approaches to youth development and the navigation of the youth are very much connected. The young people choose alternative strategies due to their lack of opportunities, which is based on the approaches to young Ghanaians and youth development by the various actors in Ghanaian society. These strategies are taken in an attempt to challenge the age-hierarchy, which prevents them from attaining a respectful position in society.
Conclusion
This thesis has scrutinized the perceptions towards youth development by influential institutions in Ghana through policy analysis. Hereafter based on different field studies it has been discussed how these perceptions influence the navigation of young people in Ghanaian society. The analysis displayed that the influential institutions in Ghana acknowledge the challenges facing the young population and believe that initiatives must be taken to battle these challenges. However, they have different perceptions of how this should be done. The AU is concerned with living up to international agreements, due to their close connections to international organizations such as the UN. Moreover it is important to the AU because they wish to improve Africa’s position on the international scene. Therefore, the AU has made sure that even though they call on African solutions to African problems, their proposals for change do not interfere with international standards. The AU calls on member states to create opportunities to enable empowerment of the African youth. However, they ultimately place the responsibility for the circumstances plaguing the youth on the young Africans themselves, as they consider them to lack the responsibility a self initiative to participate in society. The government of Ghana has made a National Youth Policy on demands from the AU. Therefore, many of the proposed initiatives are similar to the ones found in the African Youth Charter. However, the Ghanaian government seems less worried about living up to international standards. Throughout the National Youth Policy the government emphasizes the importance of nurturing Ghanaian traditions and culture with assistance from non-official actors such as religious and traditional institutions. They believe that it is their responsibility to lead the approach for a sustainable youth development and indicate that they live up to this responsibility through the National Youth Policy. The obstacle for progress concerning the issues facing the youth is presented to be young Ghanaians lack of capacity, responsibility and decent living in reference to traditional and religious standards. The National Youth Policy outlines a wish to empower the young
Ghanaians but simultaneously wish to sustain the status quo in relation to young people’s position in Ghanaian society in relation to age hierarchies. The NGO’s have a slightly different perception of youth development. They claim that the youth has been neglected by the Ghanaian government and encourages the government to do more to improve the circumstances facing young Ghanaians. However, the NGO’s, like the other influential institutions in society, fail to provide concrete solutions to improve the challenges facing the youth. Due to their acknowledgement and funding by UN ECOSOC they are more concerned with following the approaches made by the UN than basing their proposals on their interaction with the youth. Thus, it seems to be common in all the perceptions of youth development by influential institutions in Ghana, that the institutions nurture their own agendas before they consider the young Ghanaians. There is a tendency to conduct a top-down approach instead of a bottom-up approach based on interaction with the youth, which does not provide sustainable solutions for young Ghanaians. Consequently, the young Ghanaians find themselves in a stagnant position in society. It seems that the proposal to train and educate the youth is a simplification of the challenges facing young Ghanaians, as the issues are too large to be solved through this simple approach. The investigation of the navigation of young people in Ghanaian society has emphasized that education is not necessarily a way out of the constant position of becoming, that young Ghanaians feel desperate to escape from due to the stigma this entails. The young Ghanaians seem to be prevented to become ‘somebody’ because of the marginalized position they are placed in due to cultural and social structures in Ghanaian society. The influential institutions in Ghana sustain the youth in this position through the problem representations they present in their policies and are therefore influential to the way young people attempt to navigate in society. To escape the stigma related to being a young person in Ghana, young Ghanaians stake on alternative strategies that could provide them with the respect they strive for despite of the age hierarchies present in
Ghanaian society. Hence, they attempt to desolve the socially constructed age-hierarchy that prevent them from progressing in Ghanaian society.
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