Leaving the street? Exploring transition experiences of street-connected children and youth in Kenya

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"There are several things that led to me going to the street. The first was a fish." (Jackson, aged 18)

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Abstract

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Title: Leaving the street? Exploring transition experiences of street-connected children and youth in Kenya

This exploratory study was inspired by the author's voluntary work with street-connected children and youth in Kenya. It develops an understanding of the experiences of young people leaving the street in two provincial Kenyan towns. Although there has been extensive research concerned with street-connectedness, there has been a limited focus on young people's transitions away from the street.

Participants were identified with the help of three organisations: fifty-three young people, aged 12 -28, participated in semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and visual methods, during two field research visits to Kenya, in 2012 and 2013. The study found that their experiences of leaving the street were influenced by their day-to-day interactions with family, friends and other members of the communities into which they transitioned. These interactions influenced how accepted the young people felt and the extent to which they believed they were supported economically, physically and psychosocially, especially with regards to their relationships with family members. The participants' interactions with school-based peers and teachers were particularly important in schools and training centres, where they struggled to develop a sense of belonging.

Being street-connected is an integral part of the identities constructed by young people after they leave the street and establish places for themselves in their families, schools, local communities, and wider society. Such street-connectedness can be a strength: the resilience and skills developed on the street are useful attributes in adapting to new situations, potentially providing income-generating opportunities later on. However, the stigmatisation and resulting marginalisation they experienced on the street can have lasting effects. Barriers to inclusion experienced on the street influence a young person's ability to develop a sense of belonging to their new situation after leaving the street.

This study makes a conceptual contribution. Street-connectedness begins when a young person first arrives on the street, and continues until what could be years after they leave it. This street-connectedness can be characterised by three liminalities. The first is associated with living in the physical space defined as being on the street: a physical embodiment of liminality. The second, describes the process of being in transition as a young person newly arrived on the street, or having recently left the street: each being a liminal phase. The third liminality is described by an identity-forming social space, associated with being, and having been, street-connected: a liminal identity. This liminal identity, associated with being street-connected, impacts upon young people (re-)entering home communities and, in particular, education, and highlights a need to consider and address the effects of these impacts.

Declaration of Original Contribution

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Dedicated to the memories of Ellen Corcoran, John Fox and Tom Corcoran, three loving grandparents who I miss very much…

…and to the memory of Dave Shipp, so recently lost and so greatly missed.

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The Author

Su Corcoran is a physics graduate with a PGCE in secondary science and over a decade's experience of teaching physics and theory of knowledge in the UK and the international sector. She also has an undergraduate diploma in religion and a masters in development studies that culminated in a dissertation focussed on Sudanese refugees in protracted situations in Kakuma camp in Northern Kenya.

In addition, Su has experience of working as a volunteer for a number of civil society organisations focused on inclusive education, conflict or street-connectedness. Prior to starting this doctoral study she was a teacher and sponsorship coordinator for a Kenya-based charity working with street-connected children and youth.

Su also works as a research consultant focusing on education, wellbeing, and street-connectedness, in multiple country contexts. She assisted with the analysis and reporting of wellbeing data from street-connected young people in Uganda and Ethiopia, using a monitoring tool based on the Child Status Index. She attended the Street Child World Cup as a researcher working with Team of Life methodology, and completed the literature reviews for the Institute of Development Studies and HEART guide on *Inclusive Learning* and a scoping study for the Initial Teacher Education for Inclusion (ITE4I) research project for NCSE in Ireland. Finally, she assisted with the participatory impact monitoring and evaluation of the British Council's English Language Teacher Development Project for the Malaysian Ministry of Education.

Glossary

Abbreviations

ID	Identification card
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSNEPF	Kenyan National Special Needs Education Policy Framework
RoK	Republic of Kenya
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFRTF	Street Families Rehabilitation Trust Fund
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Urban Settlement Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education

Key Terms

Child	A person aged below 18 years.
Come we stay	Living together without having been formally married.
Communitas	Social structure developed within communities inhabiting a liminal space.
Informal settlements	Unplanned housing units constructed on land that the occupants have no legal claim to and the housing is not in compliance with planning and building regulations.
Northern, Global North	Pertaining to higher income countries, characterised by greater levels of development and mostly situated within the northern hemisphere.

Reintegration	The process of being supported to leave the street by an organisation.
Southern, Global South	Pertaining to lower income countries, characterised by lower levels of development and mostly situated within the southern hemisphere.
The Street	The physical and interactional space(s) inhabited by street-connected children and youth.
Transition	The physical process of moving from one place to another, e.g. moving between schools, leaving the street etc.
Youth	A person aged 18-35 years old.
Young person	An individual who is either a child or youth.
Young people	A group of children and/or youths

Kiswahili Terms

Andazi	Deep fried doughnut.
Bangi	Marijuana.
Bodas	Bicycle taxis.
Caratasi	Paper, but also used as the name for a plastic bag.
Chang'aa	Otherwise known as illicit brew, it is a homebrewed alcoholic drink.
Chokora	Used in Kenya as a negative term for street-connected children and youth; directly translates to 'a person dirty in both body and spirit' (Ngugi 1998).
Chome	Territory of a town inhabited by a particular group of young people.
Gum	Glue.
Imani	Faith, used as the name for one of the organisations involved in the study.
Jua Kali	Directly translates to 'hot sun' and is used to describe the skilled jobs found in the informal labour market such as carpentry, mechanics, welding etc.
Mafuta	A derivative of oil/petroleum such as benzene or aeroplane fuel.

Mandazi	Deep fried doughnuts.
Matatu	Small minibus-like vehicles that are used for public transport.
Matumaini	Hope: used as the name for one of the organisations involved in the study.
Miraa	Khat, a leaf that when chewed acts as a stimulant.
Murangano	Membership fee to a *chome* paid to a *chome* leader.
Ndoa ya Rumenya	Come we Stay. Living together without having been formally married.
Nyumbani	Home: used at the name of the long-term transition centre at *Usaidizi*.
Slippers	Open, slip on sandals or flip flops.
Tumekuja	We have arrived: used as the name of the school attended by the participants staying at *Matumaini's centre*.
Upendo	Love: used as the name for one of the organisations involved in the study.
Usaidizi	Charity (not a direct translation): used as the name for one of the organisations involved in the study.

Preface: Locating Street-Connectedness

The concept of street-connectedness has historical origins tied into the language researchers and practitioners use to describe young people who live and work on the street. The street being a way of describing the physical and interactional space(s) inhabited by these young people. The development of street-connectedness arose from a sense of dissatisfaction with the label street child. The phrase, credited to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), arose during the United Nations (UN) International Year of the Child in 1979 (Veale *et al.* 2000). International organisations developing programmes to meet the needs of young people on the street fuelled a discourse of care and concern (Balagolopan 2014). These organisations depicted the children as parentless, unable to support themselves in an alien city environment without adult supervision, and in need of rescue (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014). The presence of children on the street contradicted ideological constructions of citizenship that prioritise community, family and school (Beazely 2015 and 2003), which also lead to them being categorised as deviant.

Positioning young people as a menace to society prompted roundups by police and other authorities aiming to forcibly remove them from the street (e.g. van Blerk 2011; Thomas de Benitez 2007; Panter Brick 2004). Such treatment is still evident today: for example, the recommendation by one Egyptian scholar that children on the street should be dealt with by shooting them (Arhamonline 2014; Ali 2014a&b). Although this view was heavily contested in Egypt and internationally, and the newspaper that published it took the story off their website within hours, it nevertheless highlights an extreme end of the spectrum of attitudes towards such children: from the most vulnerable to the most dangerous in society. Consequently, the label street child, which was at the time of its initial development free of negative associations (Hecht 2000), has become increasingly a 'construct loaded with powerful and emotive moral connotations' (Veale *et al.* 2000:132). On the one hand, the children are extremely vulnerable and in need of care and concern, while on the other they are troublemakers to be feared.

Young people who live and/or work on the street are not a homogenous group and experience multiple possible realities. For example, many of the individuals thought of as street children are not all as parentless and far from home as originally depicted (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014). Therefore, definitions developed to describe children living and working on the street can be problematic. An often used definition of a street child is that developed by the Inter-NGO Programme for Street Children and Youth in Switzerland (e.g. Panter-Brick 2002):

> A street child is any girl or boy who has not reached adulthood, for whom the street (in the broadest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become her or his habitual abode and/or sources of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults.

This definition recognises a variety of street-based situations that exist for young people, but it is still limited in that the phrase "street child" continues to imply particular situations. As researchers and practitioners have discovered more about the daily realities of life on the street, specific definitions fail to fully explain the lived realities that many young people experience there.

UNICEF developed the use of children 'on' or 'of' the street, 'children at risk', and 'abandoned children' to better explain the various ways in which children may be thought of as street children (Huang 2008:626). Children 'of' the street are those that live almost full-time on the street and those 'on' the street work there during the day and return home each evening. Children 'at risk' are those who are susceptible to spending time on the street as a result of a particular set of risk factors and 'abandoned' children are deemed to be the most vulnerable of street child populations (Huang 2008). However, even these definitions do not fully represent the various situations in which children engaging with the opportunities on the street find themselves. Shand (2014) criticises the perception of young people as either 'on' or 'not on' the street, as it sets up a binary that does not represent their engagement with the urban environment in which they live, or their relationships with family, both street-based and biological, and other members of the community. For example, how do you categorise the child who lives on the street for the majority of the time but frequently returns home, for a night or two at a time to visit

their mother, differently from the child who has no family connections as they migrated over 200 miles to live in the city?

The numerous definitions and redefinitions of 'street child' that have arisen over the subsequent years have been influenced by the various countries, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and political agendas responsible for describing the phenomenon in their particular contexts (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014). For example, characteristics attributed to street children have varied in relation to the intended policy or intervention informing outcomes of research or organisational programming (Thomas de Benitez 2011). The definitions of the phrase street child are, therefore, either constrained or long-winded in the attempt to fully capture reality.

The debates around defining children living and/or working on the street relate, to a large extent, to problems of societal gaze. Many authors argue that emotional overtones, inherent to the use of a particular phrase, become stigmatising on a number of levels as the predominant approach is a deficit one, invoking pity or hostility (e.g. Aptekar 1988; Ennew and Swart-Kruger 2003; Panter-Brick 2002). In the search for what Hecht (2000) describes as a 'child-centred' approach to identity, research on the experiences of children who find themselves in a street-based situation, draws on two main ideas (Thomas de Benitez 2011). The first is social constructionism, particularly with reference to childhood and the idea that street children do not form a homogeneous population (e.g. Glauser 1990), and the second positions such children as agents of change in their own lives (e.g. Ennew and Swart-Kruger 2003).

I prefer to use the idea of street-connectedness, developed by Thomas de Benitez (2007) where varying levels of engagement with the opportunities and challenges inherent to the street are possible and often context-specific. Street-connectedness has been described as having four distinct parts, where the use of the phrase street-connected child (or youth):

(1) recognises each child as a social actor capable of developing relationships with people and places, and whose activities contribute to his or her identity construction;
(2) encourages a focus on children's emotional associations with public spaces, rather than on current, physical, presence on the street;
(3) recognises that children who have spent time working, hanging out or living on the street form attachments there – just as they have varying connections to family, community and wider society;
(4) recognises that street-based experiences make particular contributions to identity development that may differ from those experienced by other socially excluded children.

(Borg et.al. 2012:3)

Street-connectedness therefore, describes the situation of the street rather than defining the child or young person by the street. In so doing, it does not lend itself to the traditional stereotypes of street children as either victims or delinquents. Rather, being a street-connected child or youth suggests a variety of possible interactions with the opportunities and challenges inherent to the street, and the effects such interactions have on their identity, which may have a lasting influence after young people have physically left the street.

In addition, the use of the phrase street-connected goes further than street child, in that it can be used to refer to homeless youth in the global north and the young people referred to as street children, or street youth, in the global south. Street children are more often than not synonymous with a southern context, where the safety nets of a welfare state or social services provision are strained or non-existent (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014). Aptekar (1994) hesitates to call homeless young people in the global north street youth: they are not as prevalent on the streets as the large numbers working in public view in cities of the global south; they are more likely to be teenagers, while children in the global south migrate to the street at ages as young as five; and the majority of street-connected young people in the global south originate from families living in poverty, whereas up to half in the USA, for example, come from middle or upper class families (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014). He therefore distinguishes between these two groups, while also referring to them all as living in street situations, an alternative phrase to street-connected with similar connotations.

I am concerned with street-connectedness in Kenya, a country in the global south. By the south, I refer to lower income countries that are most often characterised by lower levels of development, less industrialisation and political instability, and are mostly situated within the southern hemisphere (Oluwafemi 2012). However, the term global south does not represent the scale and complexity of inequality and the imbalance of power that exists between and within countries; it suggests a dichotomous binary, but, along with the descriptors developed/developing country, is the term most prevalent in the literature (Miles 2009). I therefore apply the term with caution and use it only to recognise the differences that exist between countries of the north and south, how it affects my position as a northern researcher in a southern context, and the need for context-specific approaches to research and theory.

In the context of this thesis, I refer to a 'child' as someone aged below 18 years, and a 'youth' as someone aged between 18 and 35[1]. The broader term 'young person' is used when I wish to refer to an individual who is either a child or a youth.

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[1] The African Youth Charter defines a youth as being 18-35 years (Aryeetey *et al.* 2014) and I choose to use this as it is now the accepted definition of youth in an African context. It also better represents the demographic of young men and women who were involved in the programmes delivered by *Imani*, the organisation where I was a volunteer in Central Kenya, and the participants in the study.

Introduction

In this thesis, I report on a doctoral research project that explored the experiences of street-connected children and youth leaving the street. In particular, I focus on the data generated during two field visits to Kenya in 2012 and 2013, which involved the participation of 53 young people who detailed their transition experiences and their lives after leaving the street. Their stories provided an insight into how they (re-)position themselves within families, within school-based and training centre communities, and within wider society. As a result, this thesis contributes to an understanding of a previously under-researched topic, by conceptualising the liminalities associated with being street-connected and the lasting impact of having lived on the street on the lives of those who have transitioned (back) to school, or vocational training alternatives, and into family homes or alternative care situations.

Rationale for the Study

My interest in this topic arose from my experiences of volunteering with a Kenyan non-governmental organisation, *Imani,* working with young people who are, and are vulnerable to, living and working on the street. My role within *Imani*, as a qualified science teacher, involved the delivery of a non-formal curriculum to children at a street-based drop-in centre, a short-term transitional care centre, and to secondary students (who had been supported to leave the street by *Imani*) during their school holidays. During my time with *Imani*, I found that it was difficult to predict who would succeed at school (i.e. complete their education) and who would not. Ability did not seem to be an indicator of who would manage to reach their final year of primary, and/or secondary, school. I therefore wanted to understand the transition experiences of street-connected children and youth returning to education, or in some cases starting school for the first time after their lives on the street. In particular, I hoped to understand the motivations behind their decisions to leave education, and in many cases to return to the street.

However, the young people that return to the street, weeks, months, or years after leaving it, are difficult to find and may no longer be contactable via a gatekeeper

organisation. Therefore, this study explored the experiences of those young people who were being supported to follow various educational pathways. That is not to say that they have never dropped out, but in considering why they managed to reach a particular stage in the journey away from the street, the study goes some way to exploring possible challenges faced by those leaving the street and returning to education.

As it is necessary to understand the wider aspects of transitioning away from the street, beyond schools, that affect their experiences, I extended the focus of the research to reflect upon the experiences of individual street-connected children and youth leaving the street: to both inform organisational practice with regards to supporting them, and develop a conceptualisation of leaving the street in Kenya.

The research question chosen,

What is the experience of young people leaving the street in Kenya?,

frames an exploratory study that asked participants to relate their stories of migrating to the street, their lives on the street, leaving the street and their lives afterwards. I chose a broad focus to: include potential unforeseen aspects of their journeys; build upon my previous work and research experience; and maintain an interdisciplinary approach to the study, in a field that has been critiqued as being fragmented (Thomas de Benitez 2011).

Previous research on young people's street-based lives, tends to focus on a specific organisation or a particular area of the country. For example, the capital Nairobi and larger towns such as Eldoret, have a number of organisations working in relatively close proximity to each other, which makes the logistics of a multi-organisation study easier to negotiate for a researcher. These two cities are therefore well-represented in the literature. However, focussing on one organisation or area, could restrict the research findings to that situation only, rather than providing an overview applicable to a wider Kenyan context. I therefore chose to begin the research within the familiar environment of *Imani*, in Central Kenya, before extending the study to include two additional organisations, *Matumaini* and *Usaidizi*, implementing programmes for street-connected children and youth in a similar sized town in Western Kenya. Conducting research in these

three organisations enabled the inclusion of young people from a wider range of backgrounds, and considered the potential influence that different organisational programmes could have on their experiences of leaving the street. As *Imani* only worked with boys and young men, the other two organisations enabled the inclusion of girls and young women into the study, which highlighted gender- and non-gender-specific findings.

Each of the three organisations implement programmes of reintegration to support transitions away from the street. Given the growing body of evidence that young people who are separated from their families, are at risk of not meeting their developmental needs (e.g. Williamson and Greenberg 2010), establishing a consistent and caring attachment figure is said to ensure emotional functioning as well as social and cultural integration (Bakermans-Kranenburg *et al.* 2011; Johnson *et al.* 2006; Wakia and Corcoran 2016). Therefore, governments, charitable donors, and organisations working with separated young people, prioritise their return to families or appropriate alternative care situations (such as foster care). For organisations supporting street-connected children and youth, this translates to reintegration programmes that remove these young people from the street and facilitate their transition home or to appropriate alternatives (Wakia and Corcoran 2016).

In Kenya, Section 6.3 of The Children Act relates to the government's responsibility to provide assistance for the reunification of separated children with their families (RoK 2001), making provision for parental responsibility, fostering, adoption, custody, maintenance, guardianship, and the care and protection of children. In addition, the government developed *Guidelines for the Alternative Family Care of Children in Kenya* (RoK 2014), based upon alternative care guidelines developed by the United Nations to encourage governments to prevent the separation of families, where it could be avoided, and increase reintegration practice (UN 2010). However, despite the development of such policy-level documents, suggesting global and national agendas in support of reintegration programmes, there is limited practical guidance or evidence of best practice (Wakia and Corcoran 2016). In particular, young people's experiences of reintegration, or the long-term impact of the process, are under-represented (Ager *et al.* 2012; Fluke *et al.* 2012; Smith and Wakia 2012; Wakia and Corcoran 2016; Wedge 2013). Research

concerning the lives of young people while they live and work on the street is extensive, but in comparison there has been a limited focus on their journeys away from it.

At the time of writing this thesis, a general comment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), on children in street situations is being drafted. As part of the drafting process submissions addressing articles 15 (freedom of assembly), 20 (special protection and assistance when deprived of a family environment), and 27 (adequate standard of living) were requested (UNCRC 2015). More importantly these submissions were encouraged to involve consultations with young people, ensuring that their voices are part of the drafting process (e.g. Dynamo International and GUOTS 2016). The three articles above are prioritised, because advocating for the protection of street-connected children should rightly begin with the recognition that they are children, and the lobbying of governments for social policies that provide assistance. Recognising the 'multiple nature of deprivations over time' that is intertwined with street-connectedness (Thomas de Benitez 2011:x) and the need to understand what this means for the services developed to assist them is a logical next step for policy makers moving forward. Thomas de Benitez (2011) promotes a specific focus on street-connected children and youth within wider policy agendas and associated interventions.

Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG UNDP 2015) aim to achieve inclusive and quality education for all, particularly focusing on children from the poorest households who are four times more likely to be out-of-school. In order to effectively focus investment into raising the quality of education systems it is important to understand the needs of the groups who are more likely to be excluded. Research into the education provision for street-connected children and youth is limited (Corcoran 2015a) and more often focuses on the non-formal and additional education programmes delivered by non-governmental organisations (e.g. Thomas De Benitez 2013). As education is a means of moving on to the next stages of their lives as adults, the provision of appropriate education pathways for young people leaving the street is important. Understanding the experiences of young people as they journey through these pathways is an initial step towards understanding what this provision should entail.

Therefore, this study contributes to multiple research gaps with regards to the reintegration and education of young people leaving the street.

Structure

In Chapter One, I contextualise what it means to be street-connected in a provincial town in Kenya. Within the chapter, I build upon my experiences of working with street-connected children and youth at *Imani*, to develop the context for a research project into what could be learned from young people's experiences of leaving the street, locating it within current national policy contexts.

I introduce street-connectedness as a concept in Chapter Two. Beginning with how street-connected children and youth are thought of as out-of-place on the street, and therefore in need of removal, I explore the implications of such positioning on how these children and youth develop a sense of belonging after they leave the street. In so doing I position the street as a liminal space and street-connected identities as a process of becoming in relation to such liminality.

Chapter Three presents the exploratory qualitative research approach taken in this research project. I explain the research design and provide a detailed overview of the research processes engaged in data generation, as well as a summary of the data corpus. In addition, I present the framework through which I analysed the data.

In Chapter Four, I explore the participants' transition experiences and construct an overview of how they struggle to develop a sense of belonging to their new situations, particularly in relation to going (back) to school and (re-)joining the community.

In Chapter Five, I provide a conceptualisation of the process of leaving the street in Kenya. In doing so, I draw together the findings from the analysis to develop an overview of the experiences of street-connected children and youth making the transition, and in relation to home, schools and wider communities, discuss how these experiences suggest that street-connectedness can be characterised by multiple liminalities.

I conclude the thesis with a summary of the findings from the data and discuss my contributions to knowledge and possible directions for future research and practice.

Chapter One

Contextualising the Research

This chapter sets out to explore the context within which young people leave the street in Kenya. In order to understand the processes involved in making such transitions, it is important to locate the study in relation to the wider political and socio-economic inequalities to which street-connectedness in Kenya is attributed. In addition, as the study focuses on the experiences of young people assisted by three organisations, *Imani*, *Matumaini* and *Usaidzi*, I present an understanding of the organisational programmes through which they follow their journeys away from the street.

The chapter begins by locating the study within national contexts, and in developing the historical and political background to inequalities experienced by the country's rural and urban poor, provides an overview of macro-level reasons for street-connectedness in Kenya. Section 1.2 explores the Kenyan policy context with regards to street-connected children and youth. In section 1.3 I provide an overview of what it means to be street-connected in a provincial Kenyan town, using the observations I made in my previous role as a volunteer at *Imani*. In so doing, I introduce the two locations in which the research was conducted. Finally, Section 1.4 explains how the 3R's framework of rescue, reintegration and rehabilitation, translate into the programmes of intervention delivered by the three organisations involved in the study.

1.1 A Kenyan Context

Kenya, situated on the East Coast of Africa, is a country of contrasts: shopping malls and housing estates in the capital, Nairobi, convey an image of great wealth, and within easy driving distance (a matter of minutes) of these are the corrugated iron dwellings that characterise the informal settlements around the city. Over the last three decades the levels of poverty and inequality, evident in the contrast between the informal settlements and upper-class housing estates, have been exacerbated by incidences of conflict, within

Kenya itself and in neighbouring countries, drought, and in some areas the increase in the prevalence of HIV/AIDs.

In establishing a context for a study on street-connected children and youth leaving the street in Kenya, I am choosing to focus on three symptoms of this inequality: the growth in the size of informal settlements; the increasing disadvantage of impoverished women within these settlements and in rural areas; and the impact that these have on motivations behind young people migrating to the street. Together they contribute to an understanding of some of the key issues affecting the lives of the boys and young men I worked with at *Imani*, before embarking on the study reported in this thesis, as well as a number of the participants invited to take part in the study.

In the first two decades after independence, Kenya made impressive economic achievements, becoming a major trading and diplomatic hub in the region. Regional headquarters for organisations such as the United Nations (UN), and a number of embassies and consular centres are found in Nairobi. However, in the 1980s and 1990s this growth stagnated, and to a large extent declined, due to crony leadership and the introduction of structural adjustment policies (Kipkemboi Rono 2002). This decline was intensified with the collapse in global market prices for cash crops and corruption and mismanagement at multiple levels of society. In the lead up to the 2002 election, negative economic growth rates led to rising poverty levels and declining government expenditure on public servants' salaries, administration, and economic and social services (Kipkemboi Rono 2002). The deterioration of physical infrastructure and services, such as roads, railways, ports, telecommunications, electricity, and water put a further strain on business and economic growth (Taylor and Maithya 2007). The economic decline exposed families to severe socioeconomic risks because of inflation, unemployment, and increased inequality, and in 2003 income poverty had risen to 52% (RoK 2003). Massive migration from rural areas led to rapid urbanisation (Kilbride *et al.* 2000).

Rural to urban migration in Kenya largely stems from the designation of labour reserves, by the colonial government in Kenya, from which working men were expected to spend much of their time engaged in urban employment, only returning to their rural homes for short holidays and eventual retirement (Prince 2006:120). Levels of migration increased

as the Kenyan economy flourished prior to independence in 1963 and in the next two decades. Rural traditions and village life were sustained to a large extent, by the wages earned by the men who migrated for work. A high proportion of rural households in Kenya are characterised by poverty, resulting from a relatively underdeveloped rural economy. It was more economically viable for the rest of the family to stay at home, especially given the high costs of living in urban areas, combined with the limited wage potential and social capital enjoyed by a head of household with low human capital in terms of education or skills levels (Agesa 2004). Many families chose to run two homes and split the family's labour resources between rural and urban areas.

However, in postcolonial Kenya, falling levels of real wages and rising unemployment have prevented the flow of remittances back into rural areas, which put a strain on rural households, sometimes leaving women to cope as the head of the household when their husbands also did not return. The flow of men and women into urban areas in search of work increased (Prince 2006). Urban centres promised to provide relatively high wages within better developed economies and more opportunities. However, there are too few well-paid jobs to support newcomers to cities (Gulis *et al.* 2004). It is estimated that of the total workforce in Kenya, 31.6% are engaged in the informal sector (e.g. hawking goods, cleaning houses, manual labour on plantations and construction sites etc.), which offers limited job security (Kimani *et al.* 2012).

Urban populations in Kenya increased from one in twelve in 1962, to one in three by 2007 (UN Habitat 2007). By 2045, the total population is set to double, while the urban population is predicted to quadruple, with a 'spatial tipping point' expected in 2033, when over half of Kenyans will live in urban areas (Fengler 2011). Given the demand for affordable housing and basic services, such levels of urbanisation give rise to informal settlements. The largest in Kenya, Kibera in Nairobi, has over half a million residents living on 225 hectares of land (2,000 people per hectare) and is often described as being the biggest informal settlement in East Africa, if not the whole of the continent (Kalarickal 2007). Such settlements are found adjacent to many large towns and cities across the country.

Many informal settlements in Kenya arose post-1972, when land was demarcated for use by the landless after independence; so families do not have ownership of the land they inhabit (Hawkins *et al.* 2013; Gulis *et al.* 2004). They therefore live in a precarious situation, especially women who lack inheritance rights even where land deeds exist (Chant 2013). Rural to urban migration leading to the growth of informal settlements, can fragment social support networks, having an impact on the wellbeing of new arrivals to an informal settlement, especially in terms of mental health (Hawkins *et al.* 2013). Their experiences of migration and their access to services depend on social capital: those who are connected to other residents in the area have more positive experiences. When social capital is limited the difficulties can become more profound, particularly for poor women (Harpham 2009). The head of a household has an influence on a child's wellbeing, as poor nutrition and lower school enrolment and retention are attributed to single, female, child or grandparent-headed households (Dawson 1991; Kimani-Murage 2008).

In addition, residents of informal settlements tend to face disproportionate health disadvantages. For example, child mortality in informal settlements in Nairobi is over twice as high as other urban areas in the city (APHRC 2002:298) and overcrowding and substandard housing increase the spread of disease. Access to public healthcare is restricted because of an inability to pay (Zulu *et al.* 2011; Fotso *et al.* 2009): consultations in public hospitals are free, but materials needed for treatment, and medicines, have to be paid for. Compared to the national average, contraception use is less frequent in informal settlements in Kenya (Oketch *et al.* 2011), but women's sexual behaviours expose them to higher levels of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy (Erulkar and Matheka 2007; Zulu *et al.* 2011).

For example, having a man in the house is both socially desirable and perceived to be a form of financial security, leading women to engage in a process of 'serial partnering' in the hope that each new partner will be better than the last, resulting in a number of children belonging to single-parent households (Meda 2013). Traditionally, marriage within a number of ethnic groups in Kenya, involves the payment of bridewealth, which acts as a commitment to the partnership (Mwamenda and Monyooe 2007). Increasing levels of poverty prevent many young men and their families being able to pay, and informal cohabitation, referred to as "come we stay", has become prevalent in low-

income urban areas. Such arrangements are believed to threaten the stability of the resulting partnerships. Without the financial investment in the marriage that bridewealth signifies, men's commitment is not necessarily assured and a number leave when their partners become pregnant and they are unable to provide financially (Meda 2013; Mwamenda and Monyooe 2007). An increase in the number of women bringing up children from absent partners has therefore been linked to the struggle faced by young men attempting to fulfil the traditional view of a macho identity, within the changing cultures of modernity and poverty constraints (Meda 2013). Polygyny is one of such traditions.

The payment of bridewealth traditionally restricted the possibility of multiple wives to those men who could afford to pay, and therefore support, multiple households. Such marriages can ensure young people's wellbeing, especially considering the care of children from deceased or ailing mothers (Kimani-Murage *et al.* 2008). A 1997 study estimated that 23% of Kenyan women were in polygamous unions (Hayase and Liaw 1997). However, the rise of come we stay arrangements has led to an increasing number of polygamous partnerships arising in which men may be unable to provide sufficiently, particularly when his partners live in different homes. Even in polygamous arrangements where the father attempts to provide for all of his children, resource allocation, and widow inheritance, is distributed according to the rank held by each mother, with lower ranking, later wives with younger families receiving less (Meda 2013).

Of course, not all single-parent or low-income households in Kenya are headed by women. Even in male-headed and two-parent headed households, a low socioeconomic status, without the safety nets of social, human or financial capital puts a family at risk of shocks, such as a parent becoming sick or dying, the birth of a child with severe disabilities, or unprecedented inflation increasing the costs of basic commodities. Between 2007 and 2012, Kenya experienced a number of high price increases. This was partly a result of slower growth in maize farming compared to that of the population (UNEP 2012, World Bank 2012), as farmland is used for other export-ready commodities, but it was exacerbated by post-election violence in 2008 and 2009. Ethnicity in Kenya, widely thought to have been constructed and reinforced through processes of colonialism, has re-emerged in recent decades within the complex interactions of

multiparty politics, along lines of resource access and legitimacy (Muhoma and Nyairo 2011, Lynch 2006, Berman 1998). There are 67 recognised living languages in the country and even more associated ethnic groups (Lewis *et al.* 2013).

Such cultural and tribal identity is widely acknowledged to be the motivation behind post-election clashes, in three of the five elections to have taken place between 1992 and 2013 (Jenkins 2012, Lonsdale 2008, Klopp 2002). The contested results of the 2007 election, in particular, were followed by two months of unprecedented violence across six of Kenya's then eight provinces, leaving over 1,000 people dead and 350,000 internally displaced (Mäkinen and Kuira 2008; Kanyinga 2009; Kagwanja and Southall 2009; Anderson and Lochery 2008; Mueller 2008). Farmland was unattended during this time, and in some instances for years afterwards as people did not return home fearing similar outbreaks of violence in the 2013 election. Crop yields decreased and food insecurity increased. Soon after, in 2011, high oil and fuel prices, combined with a drought in Eastern Kenya and Somalia, increased food prices by 25% (Mulunda 2011). The effects, despite a drop in inflation towards the end of 2011, were still being experienced in Central Kenya in 2012 when my research began.

The context I have described above is a negative one that does not capture the many positive attributes of life in Kenya. I have chosen to focus on single-parent families and economic shocks as they explain the home background of a significant number of the boys and young men I worked with at *Imani* prior to starting the research study, as well as a number of the young people who participated in the research. Many young people found working on the street commute back and forth from their homes in the informal settlements, with a minority having migrated to the street from the outskirts of the town and rural areas (AfCiC 2011). Rural to urban migration, unemployment and displacement all correspond to an understanding of young people's mobilities, especially with regards to the independent or forced migrations made across countries and/or towns (Hashim 2005, 2006; Migration DRC 2008; Thorsen 2007). Not all young people arriving on the street come from single-parent families living in poverty. Not all young people living in poor single-parent families migrate to the street. However, in countries such as Kenya, poverty is a 'necessary [if] not sufficient condition' for street-connectedness (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014:12).

The impact of living in single-parent or low-income families in Kenya can be far reaching for some young people. Birth certificates, for example, cost money and many children from impoverished families are not registered at birth; a lack of official citizenship or residency status restricts access to schools and other benefits (Hawkings *et al.* 2013; KNUS 2008): without a birth certificate they cannot sit national examinations, or apply for an identification card (ID) when they reach 18 years old. Without an ID they cannot find formalised employment, open a bank account or register a mobile phone. In families with lower socio-economic status, older siblings may be drafted in to support younger members of the family: such as young sex workers having parental responsibility for brothers and sisters (Inter Agency Working Group on Key Populations 2014). Boys and young men are believed to be the most vulnerable, particularly when the head of the household, a stepfather for example, is not biologically related to them (Kimani-Murage *et al.* 2008). However, while authors attribute the existence of young people on the street to the decline in traditional kinship or village practices that previously took care of vulnerable children (e.g. Kilbride and Kilbride 1990; Suda 1981), in some areas these practices remain strong. Children from the Kamba ethnic group for example, are still brought up within immediate or extended family networks (e.g. Kalule 1987) - all of the social workers I have interacted with claim to have never worked with a street-connected Kamba child.

There is rarely a single cause behind the migration of young people to the street, rather processes at the global, national and more local, culturally-specific levels interact. The increase in the populations of street-connected children and youth in Nairobi and other Kenyan towns are attributed to: high rates of population growth; economic instability; rapid urbanisation as a result of poverty and underdevelopment in rural areas; high unemployment rates; economic structural adjustment; HIV/AIDS; the erosion of extended family traditions; ethnic conflicts and politically instigated violence (Kaime-Atterhog and Ahlberg 2008; Kilbride *et al.* 2000; Lugalla and Kibassa 2002; Meda 2010 and 2011). These macro-factors contribute to the number of street-connected children and youth in Kenyan towns and cities, but the actual micro-level motivations for migration to the street is specific to each individual (Young 2004; Patwary *et al.* 2012).

1.2 Street-connected Children and Youth in Kenyan Policies

Street-connected children are clearly identified within Kenyan policy and legislature. Young people who live and work on the street in Kenya are identified as in need of protection and care in section 38 of The Children Act (RoK 2001), which pertains to the functions of the Director of Children's Services. Sub-section 2f specifically names 'street children' as a category of 'children in hardship' that the director should 'give attention and provide assistance to' (RoK 2001:26). Officially, this assistance takes the form of the Street Families Rehabilitation Trust Fund (SFRTF), developed in 2003, which is supposed to be allocated to address the needs of street-connected children and youth in urban areas. However, the parallel process of devolution and a lack of resources complicate the provision of assistance to these young people.

Confusion exists over who exactly has the constitutional mandate to allocate resources from the SFRTF. The Kenyan constitution, enacted in 2010, led to the organisation of devolved single member constituencies, or counties, represented by elected members of parliament in the Senate of Kenya (RoK 2010). The delivery of children's services is through the Children's Department in the Ministry of Social Services. However, street-connected children are not included in their mandate. Instead, they fall under the Ministry of Devolution and Planning, which is responsible for the SFRTF. A lack of resources (the fund is criticised for having an insufficient budget) and collaboration between the different offices, translates to limited assistance for young people leaving the street (Ondieki 2015, 2016). Therefore, the provision of reintegration programmes for street-connected children and youth in Kenya is delivered predominantly by non-governmental organisations, such as *Imani, Usaidizi* and *Matumaini*. The approval, registration and monitoring of such organisations falls under the remit of the Children's Department.

In 2016, a budget was allocated by the Kenyan government for the assistance of street-connected children and youth. It was given to the Child Welfare Society of Kenya, a government agency for the protection and adoption of children. This suggests that the delivery of services for this group of young people is being directed towards reintegration and the provision of alternative family care (such as foster care, adoption or residential

care), in-line with the government's *Guidelines for the Alternative Family Care of Children in Kenya* (RoK 2014). Such a move sounds positive and the funding strategies are in the planning stages. Recognising the 'multiple nature of deprivations over time' that is intertwined with street-connectedness (Thomas de Benitez 2011:x), and the need to understand what this means for the services developed to assist them, is a logical next step for policy makers moving forward. Thomas de Benitez (2011) promotes a specific focus on street-connected children and youth within wider policy agendas and associated interventions. However, as street-connected children and youth fall under the Ministry of Devolution and Planning in Kenya, they are already positioned as a category that is not considered to be children in need of support in the same way as other children. Such positioning can reinforce a deficit approach to street-connectedness, which as an example, is currently evident in Kenyan education policy.

Access to education is an important consideration in the reintegration process for young people leaving the street. The Kenyan constitution, states that every child has the right to free and compulsory basic education (article 53.1b), with the stipulation 'to the extent compatible with the interests of the person' (RoK 2010:41). It also specifies that 'minorities and marginalised groups are provided special opportunities in educational and economic fields' (RoK 2010:41). The wording of the constitution therefore, does not necessarily advocate for the inclusion of such children into mainstream schools. In addition, street-connected children and youth are included as a category within the Kenyan *National Special Needs Education Policy Framework* (NSNEPF) (KMoE 2009). As part of an education system that relies heavily on units and special schools for children with special educational needs, this labelling could suggest the need for young people leaving the street to be directed towards parallel systems of education, such as non-formal, vocational training, instead of formal mainstream classrooms, based only on a perceived notion of deficit (Corcoran 2015a; Miles and Singal, 2010).

The need for the policies and dedicated funds described above highlight the existence of street-connected children and youth in a number of urban centres across the country, and how these young people are evidence of wider socio-economic processes in Kenya that need addressing. How policy translates into to effective practice to assist them remains to be seen.

1.3 My Insights into Being Street-connected within the Local Research Contexts

In this section I provide a contextual overview of what life is like on the street in the towns where the research was conducted and introduce the individual contexts where *Imani*, *Matumaini* and *Usaidizi* work. This overview is partly based on my experience of working at *Imani* prior to starting the research project, and forms the basis from which an understanding of leaving the street may be developed. In addition to the local context at *Imani*, I explore potential similarities with the location of *Usaidizi* and *Matumaini*, based on the literature, to present the foundation from which the study was developed.

The town in which *Imani* worked is located in Central Kenya, within an hour's drive of Kenya's capital. The population is predominantly Kikuyu, which is the language most often heard around the town. Situated within the outer industrial zone of Nairobi, it grew through coffee, tea and textile wealth, and now boasts a mixture of factory-based and agricultural industries such as pharmaceuticals, maize flour mills, and pineapple and coffee farms. It also hosts one of the largest informal settlements in the country: the 2009 Kenya Census counted 13,000 people living in 5,000 households (Mwau 2012). This settlement, and others around the town and neighbouring urban areas, dramatically increased in size with the collapse in the coffee market in the 1990s, followed by the decline in the textiles industry (AfCiC 2010).

It is impossible to generalise across the whole population of such settlements, as the residents live and work in a variety of situations. However, the poorer inhabitants rely on casual work: such as work in nearby quarries and plantations; hawking businesses that involve selling items on the street; sex work; and brewing *Chang'aa*. The latter of which, an illicit brew, has been responsible for rising alcoholism and methanol-related sickness and deaths (NACADA 2010; Subero 2016). Residents of informal settlements in the area have also experienced a degree of insecurity over the last two decades: theft is an issue, especially given the flimsy nature of corrugated iron buildings; and the violent activities attributed to the *Mungiki* movement, a politico-religious movement of young men from the Kikuyu ethnic group, predominant in Central Kenya, that grew in force in informal settlements during the 1990s and into the next decade (Rasmussen 2010; Ruteere 2008);

as well as incidences of fire that spreads through the closely packed housing - in 2011, 100 families lost their homes to such a blaze (Mwau 2012).

In 2011, a census of street-connected children in the town surveyed 170 individuals, 44% of which lived on the street in the town full-time (AfCiC 2011). All of the 66% still living at home, and a significant number of those sleeping on the street, came from the informal settlements on the outskirts of the town. The young people I interacted with at *Imani* had originally moved to live on the street for a variety of reasons; while poverty exacerbated many of these migrations, it was not always considered the most prominent motivating factor. Parental alcoholism, drug use, and physical abuse, were all mentioned, as was: living with single-parents (mostly mothers, but in some cases fathers) in relationships with new partners who chose not to provide for another's children; an inability to access education, particularly at secondary level; having a disability, or looking after a parent/sibling with a disability or mental health issues; being abandoned by one or both parents; and emotional cruelty.

Life on the street in and around the town was of a hierarchical social structure, amongst the young people who live and work there, that acted both as a means of survival and a form of control (Corcoran 2014). This structure was established and maintained on multiple levels. The first involved dividing the town into zones or territories, known as *chomes* or bases to the young people who lived on the street. Each *chome* belonged to a particular group of young people and a *chome* leader, usually a young man who has spent the longest amount of time on the streets in that area, and his deputy managed the group. According to the young people and social workers I spent time with, each group provided protection for its members and each member was allocated a role within the group.

The roles depended on the opportunities available in a particular *chome* and ultimately the age of the young person. Older children and youth were not as successful at begging as younger children, who emoted a greater level of sympathy with the public (see also Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014), and so teenagers and young men/women engaged in other income-generating activities: collecting scrap metals and plastic; prostitution; portering

for shoppers leaving the supermarkets, or the travellers arriving at the main bus station; and finding informal positions and casual work.

New arrivals on the street were usually picked up by someone already living and working there and taken into the *chome* that the individual belonged to. Once there, a *murangano* (or membership fee) was paid, either as a cash transaction or through the completion of a task. The young people I worked with described the tasks as involving the theft of an item such as a mobile phone, or sexual favours among other things. The older members, who were often spoken of as "Big Fish", could also demand a *murangano* on a regular basis from younger members that remained within the protection of the *chome*. For example, giving the *chome* leader a percentage of their daily income or further sexual favours. Older *chome* members also ran businesses staffed by younger street-connected children, such as the sale of drugs and solvents.

The *chome* leader exercised control through the payment of a *murangano* and the use of solvents, mainly *gum* (glue) and the more expensive *Mafuta* (a derivative of oil/petroleum such as benzene or aeroplane fuel), as well as *bangi* (marijuana) and *miraa* (khat) (see also Cottrell-Boyce 2010; Sansom 2016). *Chome* members were encouraged to use these substances to decrease their appetite, lower inhibitions and become dependent, which made younger members of the group became more pliant.

Not all of the *chome* members lived on the street full-time, others joined during the daytime and would return home at night to sleep. The social workers I worked with talked of this arrangement as potentially leading to a full-time move to the street, especially when the freedoms and benefits inherent to life in a *chome*, such as the social structure and money to buy food, become more attractive than life at home.

The context described so far explains life in the town where *Imani* was based. *Matumaini* and *Usaidzi* on the other hand, were situated at either end of a town about 400 Km northwest of Nairobi (the map in Figure 1.1 shows the towns' approximate locations). Both towns were important trading centres under colonialism for local plantation owners, but developed through different industrial histories, being either close to or distant from

Nairobi. The socio-economic profiles of the towns in 2012 and 2013, when my research took place, were therefore different.
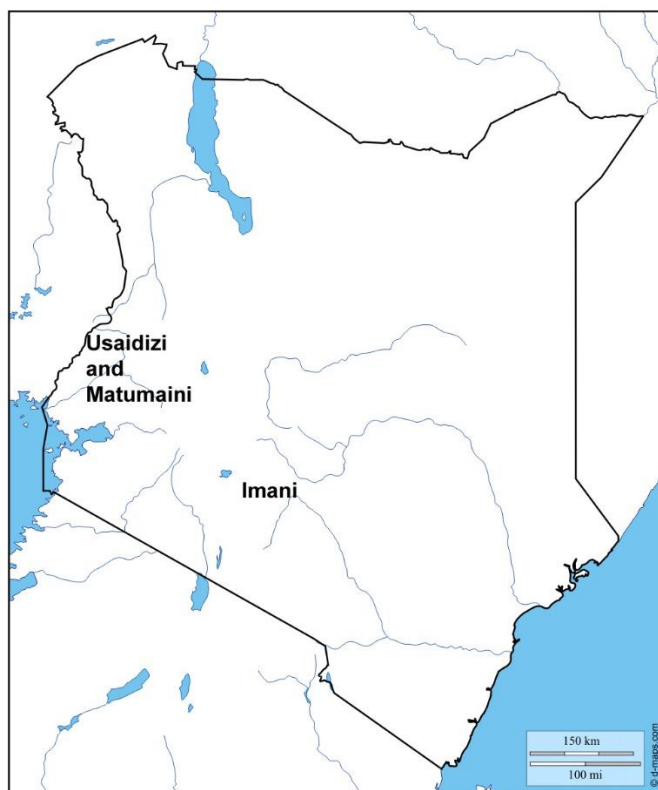
Figure 1.1: Outline map of Kenya showing approximate locations of *Imani*, *Usaidizi* and *Matumaini*.

The location of *Matumaini* and *Usaidzi* can be described as semi-agricultural in that the town was surrounded by small-scale farms and sugar or maize plantations in an area of the country known as Kenya's bread basket. The county was bordered by areas prone to conflict, or by desert, and the town was a key destination for those fleeing poverty, violence, and sometimes starvation. For example, nearby Turkana is an arid area prone to drought, as well as cattle raiders from across the border in Sudan. Instances of violence and skirmishes between different ethnic groups across the region, relating to territory and resources, have been exacerbated by the recent discovery of oil (Lutta 2013; Vasquez 2013).

Usaidizi based their operations in the centre of the town, focussing on the street-based communities around the central business district. *Matumaini*, situated five miles away, concentrated their work in a particular informal settlement on the outskirts of the town,

comprising mainly of Turkana families, who lived in a wattle and daub, or paper houses[2] (wooden frames covered in plastic bags), such as those shown in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Paper houses used by the Turkana living in the informal settlement

The Turkana living in the settlement can be described as one of 'the poorest and most vulnerable [ethnic] groups' in the town (if not the country) (Majale 2009:11). They did not have the security of tenure for the land on which they resided, which had been a municipal dump site. The move to the town was the first experience of urban living for many, and a significant number lacked basic education and employment-based skills (Majale 2009). Although the Turkana were in the majority, the other inhabitants living there were Luhya and Kalenjin, two of the main ethnic groups found in this region of the country. Their journeys to the area were different to those of the Turkana, but they experienced similar levels of poverty and marginalisation. In 2008 there were some 4000 people living in the settlement (Majale 2008), this number is likely to have increased in the years leading up to my research in 2013 as human conflicts continued in the Turkana region, and in 2011 north-east Kenya was subject to severe drought.

My understanding of life on the street in the town where *Matumaini* and *Usaidzi* worked relied initially on others' research conducted at Makutano and Eldoret, situated 40 Km

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[2] In Kenya plastic bags are referred to as paper, as the changeover from paper bags to plastic bags did not lead to a change in the vocabulary used to describe them. *Caratasi* can refer to a piece of paper or a plastic bag.

and 75 Km away respectively. Both resembled the town where my research would take place in terms of the different ethnic groups found living there. In Makutano, in the Pokot region of Kenya, Davies (2008) writes of similar peer groupings of street-connected children and youth as I discovered at *Imani* (although he does not mention the existence of *chomes*). He describes a communal identity, actively created and shared by street-connected children and youth, which required the observation of specific social codes, language and style of dress, and provided stability and support that may not be achievable at home. The income-generating activities that the children employed in Makutano, and the subsequent development of social and economic networks, allowed them to contribute to the wider economy of the town through informal labour markets. The children shared their earnings, which implies a more equal scheme than the *Murangano* system described by the young people at *Imani* (Davies 2008).

Ayuku *et al.* (2004a) explore the active networks of street-connected children, this time in Eldoret, through the comparison with control groups of school-going children and those living in a shelter. The street-based children developed larger *family* networks within their peer groups and enjoyed greater psycho-social support on the street than that provided at home (Ayuku *et al.* 2004a), which resonates with the reasons why young people interacting with the street part-time at *Imani* move there full-time. Thus, Davies (2008) and Ayuku *et al.* (2004a) suggest that the experience of being street-connected involves structure, hierarchical or otherwise, and peer support that is both similar and different to my understanding of street-connectedness developed at *Imani*.

The different roles that young people develop within the peer-groupings described above, imply that they experience life on the street differently depending on their age, language, gender, time on the street, peer support etc. (e.g. Corcoran and Wakia 2013). Similarly, the journey they follow away from the street depends on the context through which they make the transition. The organisation supporting their transition, for example, will have an influence on how they experience leaving the street.

1.4 Translating the 3 R's (Rescue, Rehabilitation, Reintegration) into Organisational Practice at *Imani*, *Matumaini* and *Usaidzi*

When describing the process of (re-)entering families and/or communities after time on the street (or after being in institutional care, displaced as a result of conflict/disaster, having had a prolonged illness or drug use, or after release from prison etc.), the accepted catch-all descriptor is that of reintegration (e.g. Robinson and Crow 2009; Wakia and Corcoran 2016; Wedge 2013). In Kenya, non-governmental organisations delivering interventions aimed at supporting street-connected children and youth, base their programmes on the 3R's: Rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration. All three of the organisations involved in the study did so; the walls of *Matumaini*'s centre in particular, bore the words as a declaration of their mission. In other organisations, an additional R is sometimes used. For example, AMREF, working in Dagoreti, Nairobi, runs a project that is aimed at 'rescuing, rehabilitating, reintegrating and re-socializing children from the street' (Biemba *et al.* 2009). Agape Children's Ministry (no date), an organisation founded on Christian ministry in Kisumu, rescue, redeem, rehabilitate and reintegrate the children they assist. Whether they apply a principle of three or four 'R's', the organisations prioritise the removal of young people from the street where they are perceived to be vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and a lack of access to formalised education provision, among other things. The organisations encourage their transition from the street to home communities: either to immediate or extended family homes, foster care, or children's homes (institutional care)[3].

For all three organisations involved in the study, rescue begins on the street. Young people living and working around the town and adjacent informal settlements were identified during regular street walks, conducted by social workers. At *Imani* and *Usaidizi* the street workers (street-based social workers) began each day walking through town to remind young people that the drop-in centre was open, talking to them and getting to know them, especially the new arrivals, and building trust in order to better assist them to transition from the street. At the drop-in centre, soap and water were provided to wash their bodies and their clothing. Minor first-aid was conducted when required, new arrivals were interviewed by social work staff and the problems faced by regulars

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[3] Although legislation in Kenya, and other African countries, is making it more and more difficult, this list also includes International adoptions.

discussed. Once morning ablutions had been completed, they attended classes that covered elements of the primary school curriculum and life skills lessons (which included aspects of hygiene, religion, drugs education and sex education etc). They were also encouraged to join sporting activities such as football and provided with lunch. The young people returned to the street in the late afternoons.

As a result of referrals from the drop-in centre staff, a second group of social workers conducted home visits to locate family and other community members who were able to provide information concerning the reasons why children and youth were on the street. Sometimes, for example when a child had run away after an argument with a parent, mediation was conducted by the social workers and the child returned home straight from the street. However, those identified through the street-based drop-in centre as unable to return home straight away were encouraged to visit the drop-in centre daily until they were ready to be taken into a residential, short-term transitional care centre, for the rehabilitation stage.

Imani's programme for street-connected children is essentially based on the process outlined in figure 1.3.
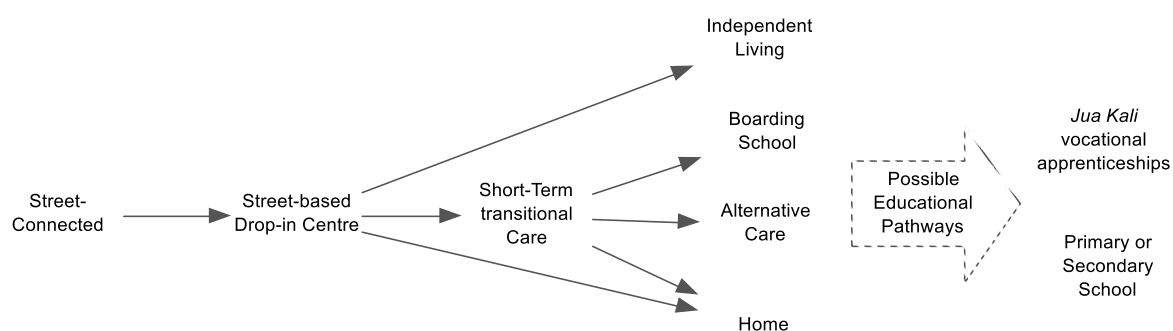
Figure 1.3: The structure of *Imani*'s programme with street-connected children.

Boys, aged 6-16, were taken into the short-term transitional care centre within intakes of approximately 25 at a time. Boys and young men greatly outnumbered the girls and young women living on the streets in the town where *Imani* was based. Girls needing assistance were referred to another organisation in Nairobi. The boys stayed at the centre for six to nine months while *Imani* helped them prepare to move back to their home communities and to school. As part of the rehabilitation process, they underwent

counselling, informal education sessions aimed at reintroducing them to the expectations of a formalised classroom and helping them to catch up with the curriculum, life skills lessons, and drug rehabilitation if it is was required. A major part of their stay at the centre involved reconciliation with parents and/or extended family and the (re-)development of relationships through mediation sessions and family counselling. The families were also assisted in preparing for their child to come home, which could involve financial or skills-based support to develop income-generating activities and/or psycho-social support.

Like *Imani*, *Usaidizi* followed a three-stage process of reintegration: from street to drop-in centre, drop-in centre to short-term transitional care centre, short-term transitional care centre to home. The programme differed in that girls and boys could request to be taken to the short-term transition centre once they felt that they were ready to leave the street, unlike *Imani*'s use of intakes. Young people spent up to a year at the centre as they prepared for reintegration.
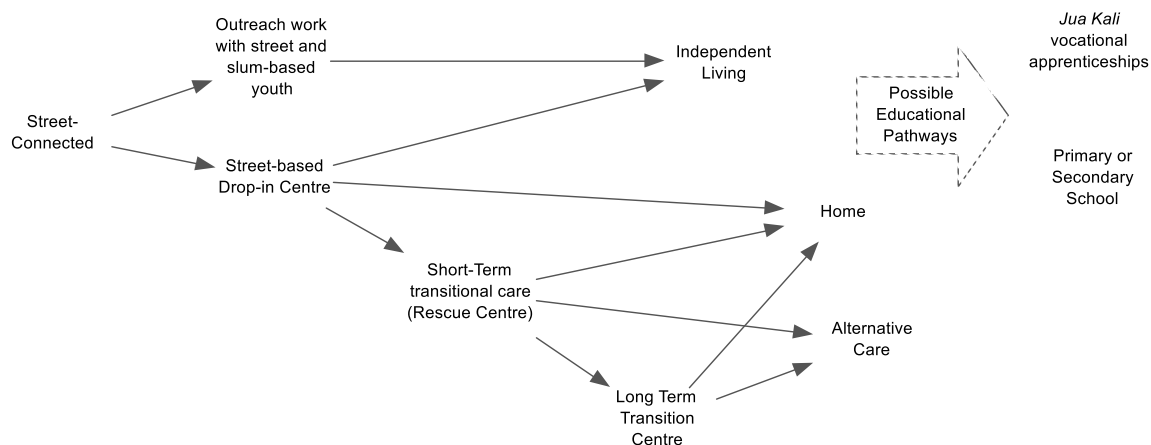
Figure 1.4: The structure of *Usaidizi*'s programme with street-connected children and youth

As figure 1.4 shows, a young person at *Usaidizi* transitioned from the centres to one of three possible living situations, similar to Imani, depending on their age and home situation. *Usaidizi* also ran a project that involved street-connected youth and young men, and women living in the informal settlements, to help them become financially able to support themselves, and for some their young families, through peer mentoring and *jua*

kali[4] apprenticeships with trainers working in construction, tailoring, mechanics, hairdressing etc (e.g. Kariuki and Corcoran 2014).

At both organisations, the young people's return to family homes was prioritised, or to extended family settings when parents could not take them in. However, if suitable family members were not found, alternative care settings were sought (children's homes or foster carers). At *Imani*, if the child was old enough and home was not somewhere that social work staff felt that they should live full-time, a sponsor would be found and a place at a boarding school secured. The child would then spend time at home during the school holidays and report to the staff at the short-term transition centre regularly. At *Usaidizi*, when the search for extended family took longer than the usual 6 to 12 months, a child was moved to a long-term transition centre, *Nyumbani*, where they could access formal school-based education while social workers searched for suitable alternative care or worked with families to better prepare them for the return of their child. At both organisations, young people who were old enough were assisted to find independent living situations, often sharing with others, while they completed *jua kali* vocational apprenticeships.

In Figures 1.3 and 1.4 the different education pathways available to the young people are listed. The children graduating from the short-term transition centres were enrolled in primary school and later moved to secondary schools if they obtained the necessary grades in their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations, as part of the reintegration process. Those not obtaining the minimum grade specified by *Usaidizi*, or wishing to take an alternative educational pathway at *Imani*, were provided with *jua kali* apprenticeship placements.

Matumaini was originally set up by Catholic priests who developed the programme after observing that a large number of the children they worked with did not remain at home after they had initially moved from the street. *Matumaini* therefore managed a centre where the children of an age to attend primary school stayed from Monday to Friday. Some of those staying at the centre had been street-connected, while others had been

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[4] *Jua Kali* directly translates to 'hot sun' and is used to describe the skilled jobs found in the informal labour market, that often take place out-of-doors, such as carpentry, mechanics, welding etc.

identified as being out-of-school and at risk of migration to the street. The one condition that all the children had to satisfy was that they had to identify a parent or guardian who could take care of them during weekends and during the holidays. This was to prevent the expectation by the community that they could send their children to *Matumaini* fulltime to be looked after. The organisation aimed to ensure family cohesion, by providing only part-time care for the children. This would meet the aim of keeping the children in school while also being able to interact regularly with their parents and guardians to maintain connections with their families and the communities they came from, making reintegration an ongoing process.

When a street-connected child was taken into *Matumaini*'s centre they would begin their stay attending informal education classes delivered by *Matumaini* staff members. During this time, they would not return home. Once they had overcome any addictions they acquired on the street, developed their relationships with their families and were deemed ready to fit into a mainstream classroom, they began to attend a local primary school. *Tumekuja*[5] was a state school across the road from the centre that was subsidised by the Catholic Church. The children would also return home for weekends and holidays.
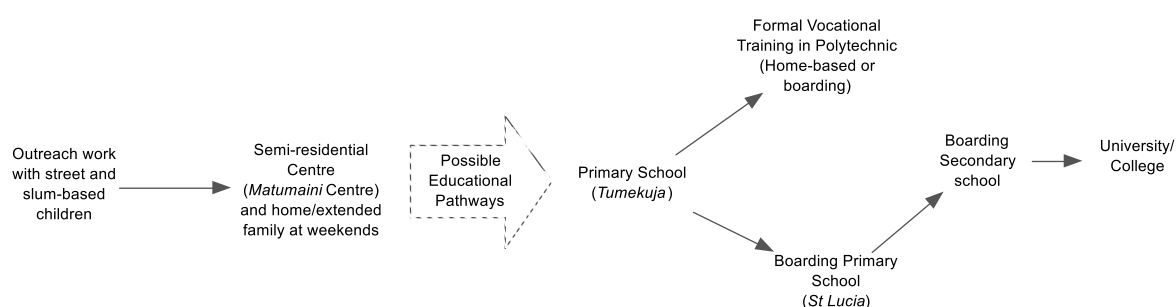
Figure 1.5: The structure of *Matumaini*'s programme with street-connected children and youth

How and when a child left *Matumaini*'s centre depended very much on their educational level and/or academic ability (Figure 1.5). When they completed primary school at *Tumekuja* they were moved onto a polytechnic offering formalised training in a number of possible vocations, such as bricklaying or hairdressing. However, those children who performed well in their end of year exams while at *Tumekuja*, were found sponsors and moved to a Catholic boarding primary school, *St Lucia*, until their KCPE examinations.

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[5] *Tumekuja* literally translates to 'we have arrived' and refers to.

These children were expected to do well at KCPE level and tended to go on to boarding secondary schools and later to university. Students supported by *Matumaini* were reading for courses in education, medicine and engineering at the time of the research.

As can be seen from the overviews of the programmes at *Imani*, *Matumaini* and *Usaidzi*, rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration take on different forms depending on the development of an organisation's programme of intervention. Inviting three non-governmental organisations to be part of the study enabled a consideration of how the nature of the reintegration programmes influenced the participant's experiences of leaving the street. In providing the overviews above, I have presented the contexts within which the young people participating in the study left the street.

Summary

This chapter provides the context from which I developed a study that explores young people's experiences of leaving the street. It provides an overview of the national context through an exploration of the historical and political processes that have contributed to rising levels of inequality for marginalised communities living in poverty in Kenya. In particular, it focuses on two of the macro-level motivations for street-connectedness in the country that I have observed in my time working with young people in Central Kenya: rural to urban migration and the growth in the size of informal settlements in urban areas, and the increasing marginalisation of impoverished women and children. I explored how street-connected children are located within current policy and legislature, and developed an appreciation of being street-connected in Kenya. In order to design the research aspect of the study it is necessary to conceptualise street-connectedness and understand the identity-forming processes by which young people become street-connected, and what this implies about how they experience their transitions away from the street. Chapter Two provides such an overview, exploring how street-connectedness is located in the literature and the various stages of identity construction inherent to becoming and being street-connected.

Chapter Two

Responding to street-connectedness

This chapter presents an overview of the context within which young people leave the street. In order to understand their transition experiences, it is necessary to locate the study within the wider context of what it means to be street-connected: from the motivations behind young people's migrations to the street and their experiences on the street, to how the literature explains the positioning of street-connected children and youth as out-of-place in urban spaces. Developing a conceptualisation of street-connectedness in this way provides the foundation from which a study exploring the experiences of leaving the street can be established.

Considering the transition away from the street as a stage in a journey that begins with a young person's initial migration to the street, the chapter constructs a chronology to becoming street-connected. Section 2.1 briefly outlines the various explanations for young people migrating to the street and describes street-connectedness as a process of becoming. I then explore how the street, as an inhabitable space, is both constructed and contested. Section 2.2 considers the conceptualisation of the street as a liminal space, in which young people are positioned as out-of-place, and the possible impacts that such positioning has on the construction of street-connected identities. Section 2.3 explores the influence of these conceptualisations on how young people living on the street are positioned and the subsequent development of street-based sub-cultures with which they identify. Section 2.4 focuses on existing literature describing research into young people's exits from the street in the contexts of Bolivia, Guatemala, Canada and the United States (USA) (e.g. Glasser and Bridgeman 1999; Karabanow 2008 and 2009; Lucchini 1999), and discusses the role of organisations in assisting with this transition. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of the implications of previous studies for a Kenyan context, and sets the scene for the methodological and empirical work that follows in the subsequent chapters.

2.1 Becoming Street-Connected

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of young people leaving the street in Kenya. Such transitions take place within, and may be influenced by, the particular context within which these young people experience the street and for some, the motivations behind their initial migrations away from home. I conceptualise this context through the construction of street-connected identities in relation to the individualised processes of becoming street-connected. In this section I begin to discuss how these identities develop by considering why young people migrate to the street and how the street, as an inhabitable space, is conceptualised.

2.1.1 Migrating to the Street

The motivation for migration to the street is specific to the individual (Young 2004; Patwary *et al.* 2012), and as I explain in Chapter One, is often because of a combination of a number of factors. According to Lucchini (1999), street-connected children and youth inhabit complementary and interconnected fields such as their home or the street. When a young person is able to choose, they move to, or remain in, the field that they perceive to be most likely to provide for their resource and/or psychosocial needs. Migration to the street therefore is the result of home not meeting these needs, where most young people who move to live on the street, do so with some knowledge of what to expect when they arrive there (Oino and Auyu, 2013; Suda, 1997:215; Waller 2014). In a study in Kampala, Wakia (2010) found that the most popular of 19 reasons given by young people for their migrating to the street were: a low standard of living; inability to attend school; being forced to work, either at home or on the farm; lack of food at home; encouragement to go to the city to find work; abandonment by their mother; and emotional cruelty. All of which suggest that migration to the street, whether through voluntary or involuntary decision-making, occurs because of negative aspects inherent to their lives at home and/or the perceived benefits to be found on the street, which may over-shadow their arrival there.

The circumstances under which young people migrate to the street may impact upon their experiences once they arrive, and in their new situation. Individual identities involve a person's capacity to establish a place for themselves within a broad array of factors that influence their understandings of self and how they orient their relationships with the

world and others in it (Butler 2015). Such knowledge is constructed through stories of lived experiences, in which meaning making happens when people anchor themselves and shape their roles in life (Bruner 1986). These stories invoke multiple identities across the varied interactions that they experience day-to-day (Langellier and Peterson 2004), and are constructed and reconstructed within the mental space of the internal conversations people have with themselves (Goodson 2013).

Holland *et al.* (1998) call such figuring of identities spaces of authoring, which determine an individual's ability to operate in the social universe within which they live, as well as being constructed in relation to it. Therefore, becoming street-connected implies that young people author stories of becoming (Butler 2015), which do not necessarily represent their lives on the street as they have lived them, but rather the re-interpretations of those lives within the wider contexts of social relations and context-specific cultural priorities (Goodson 2013).

For young people arriving on the street, the stories they relate to are constructed within their experiences of leaving home and reconstructed as they become acquainted with life on the street. The street for example, as the place where these young people eat and sleep, where they engage in income-generating activities and spend their leisure time, fulfils the basic functions of home and, although not ideal, may become for all intents and purposes the home to which they primarily identify (Dryjanska 2014). As such, their stories represent struggles of becoming (Butler 2015), in which street-connected identities may be resolved in relation to this new notion of home and the experiences of the young people on the street.

These identities are not fixed, but fluid: constructed, claimed, defined and re-defined with each new layer of experience (Butler 2015). As Hall (1996:4) suggests:

> Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not "who we are" or "where we came from", so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.

Hall's words imply that street-connected identities are processes of becoming, by which a young person will continually negotiate and re-negotiate their lives before and on the street, as well as the aspirations and life trajectories that they envisions for him/herself, in developing a sense of who they are. The agency, with which they are able to construct a sense of self and choose how they want to be represented, is expanded or constrained within cultures and structures of power and self-determinism (Butler 2015).

Street-connected children and youth improvise histories for themselves that not only fit the situation but shape future spaces of authoring. The histories that give shape to the spaces of authoring are both personal and public, and the time and space in which this improvisation takes place determines their ability to develop and act upon their own sense of agency (Holland *et al.* 1998). Personal authorship depends on social efficacy and the interplay of intimate and social spaces of being (Holland *et al.* 1998). On the street, I envision such authorship to be tied into the ability to appropriate, and make use of, the urban space possessed by street-connected children and youth.

2.1.2 Inhabiting Contested Urban Spaces

The urban spaces in which street-connected children and youth attempt to author themselves are contested spaces, open to multiple interpretations of what is socially acceptable. In this section I examine how the street is conceptualised in such a way as to position the young people living there as out-of-place. In so doing, I briefly explore the street as an adult space, and notions of order and disorder, inhabited by young people in search of autonomy.

Street-connected children and youth are more often than not associated with cities and large towns, although there could be arguments to suggest that being street-connected does not necessarily imply the existence of streets in the young person's lived experience. For example, children not living at home or attending school in rural settings may be sleeping rough and engaged in informal economic activities to survive, as street-connected children and youth do in towns; or there are those living in urban areas who reside on and around large dump sites (landfill or rubbish dumps). The existence of 'streets' in both of these areas is debatable. In addition, there exists an inconsistency in the definitions of rural and urban used by various nations' governments, and emerging

human settlements challenge conventional perceptions of the city and the countryside in terms of 'location, physical structure, functional relation, institutional context and culture' (Allen 2009:1).

Inhabiting urban spaces gives rise to the production of specific social practices developed in line with, or in resistance to, a localised social order. Exploring the processes through which such social practices develop is useful in understanding the position(s) occupied by street-connected children and youth within urban environments. The process of urbanisation is one of power, in that urban spaces are panoptic systems of organisation: designed and constructed according to a 'finite number of stable, isolatable, and interconnected properties' (De Certeau 1988:94). The people that operate within these spaces actively, or unintentionally, step in and out of the various interpretations of what is expected, required and possible. They are directed through the 'different vertically layered strata of articulation', provided by political and physical infrastructures that 'stratify movement' and determine the 'interactional possibilities' that translate into collective social lives and belonging (Simone 2012:32).

However, the everyday practices of people within an urban setting often involve a re-appropriation of the space. De Certeau (1988) describes this re-appropriation through footsteps. Walking is the 'spatial acting-out of the place' and spatial order infers a finite number of possibilities which may be actualised by the walker, but does not assume that the walker may improvise or abandon completely certain spatial elements (De Certeau 1988:98). For example, pathways creating a square formation around a central lawn may be abandoned in favour of the diagonal shortcut straight across the grass. Although a minor manipulation of the spatial organisation, such 'desire paths' (Bachelard 1994) create uncomfortable ambiguity within, or resistance towards, the social model constructed when the space was designed. The constructed order therefore becomes disordered. The presence of street-connected children and youth may be thought of as an extreme form of such disorder.

Public space is not neutral, but always entangled in complex power arrangements that determine who can use it and how they must use it (Lefebvre 1991). It is a hybridised space, characterised, inadvertently or otherwise, by negotiations of power and inequality

that shape and reshape both the space and the social expectations of interaction with it over time. In Hubbard's (2006:1) words, the city is:

> …a spatial location, a political entity, an administrative unit, a place of work and play, a collection of dreams and nightmares, and mesh of social relations and an agglomeration of economic activity and so on.

Each of these categories define a different set of expectations that conflict as much as they may be complementary.

Nevertheless, cities or urban centres cannot all be approached with a one-size fits all theory (Edensor and Jayne 2012) and it is not my intention to impose a hegemonic Northern theory onto a Kenyan context. Urban centres are not globally homogenous but rather such centres are characterised by heterogeneity of urban practice, identities, and processes (Edensor and Jayne 2012). However, given the effects of colonialism and globalisation it is inevitable that Northern theories and practice are adopted elsewhere. Therefore, I agree with Edensor and Jayne (2012) that cities can be conceptualised in terms of entangled processes of social interaction from elsewhere that are grounded in local dynamics.

Focussing in particular on urban areas in a country such as Kenya, the planned nature of cities is threatened, as rates of rural to urban migration put pressure on the ability of urban planning processes to accommodate the rapid influx of people into cities. The World Health Organization (2010) estimates that by 2050, 70 per cent of the world's population will be living in towns and cities and one in three urban dwellers will live in informal settlements. The population in urban areas in low income countries is estimated to rise from 1.9 million globally in 2000 to 3.9 billion in 2030 (UN 1999). The demand for affordable housing and basic services therefore, outstrips supply, giving rise to informal settlements on poor or service land, often as squatters, with little or no security (Speak 2004). Eventually, many millions of families live in overcrowded, shared accommodation, in makeshift dwellings and informal settlements with limited essential services (Garland, Massoumi and Ruble 2007; UN-HABITAT 2008). Therefore, the city becomes less ordered and more dynamic, shaped by the needs of those who live there.

The lack of facilities and opportunities in informal settlements means that the inhabitants must enter the city proper to find work. Low pay and ever increasing costs of urban living make it difficult to transition to better housing. For a number of people the informal labour market (e.g. hawking goods, cleaning houses, manual labour on plantations and construction sites etc) is the only option (e.g. Kimani *et al.* 2012). Generating an income in this way is inconsistent and unreliable. In addition, informal settlements have not been part of planning procedures and are consequently not a priority of local political agendas. While municipal authorities may aim to increase the provision of basic services, water, and sanitation to these settlements, others can and do decide to remove them, razing them to the ground[6] and forcibly displacing the inhabitants (e.g. De Boeck 2012).

In addition to this, access to housing and land is gendered. Women and children are often not entitled to own or inherit land in their own right (Chant 2013; Krueckberg and Paulsen 2002; Speak 2005). In Kenya widows can be evicted from their home and land, along with their children, by their husbands' extended families, and boys chased away from home by step-fathers who do not wish their land to be inherited by a son that is not theirs (Chant 2013; Kimani-Murage *et al.* 2008). Therefore, factors such as poverty, poor health provision, illiteracy, unemployment and poor urban management are interrelated and contribute to push young people towards migrating to the street. The street however, is often understood as 'an extension of the private domain of adults' (Matthews 2003:102), implying that young people found there are in conflict with accepted social order.

A globalised notion of childhood, and a western conception of the street as morally dangerous, has been imported into local agendas (e.g. *The Kenya Children Act* (RoK 2010) from international legislation (Van Blerk 2006). For example, universal declarations created by international institutions and governed by international law, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), have led to generally held expectations of what childhood should entail (Wells 2009). How these agendas are interpreted depends on a combination of the traditional customs and rituals, chosen

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[6] Of course, in many cities the informal settlements are now too large, being home to many thousands of people, to simply raze to the ground. Instead they may benefit from refurbishment and improved water and sanitation services as a result of the work of municipal authorities, non-governmental organisations and the influence of international pressure (e.g. Majale 2009).

religions or national laws of an area, but street-connected children and youth, are frequently considered to be out-of-place on the street. They are presented as 'unruly and threatening' (Wells 2009:17) and the street as an adult domain is becoming normalised, conflicting with local interpretations of being a child.

The construction of adult/child binaries that create worlds for children and worlds for adults is criticised as a construction that positions children as 'less-than-adult or adults-in-the-making' (Matthews 2003:113). Streets in low income areas of African cities have historically played an important role in the lives of children, because it is here that they help to support the family, or play, as indoor leisure spaces are often limited particularly in informal settlements (Van Blerk 2006). The street as an adult space is therefore problematised. Nevertheless, the street could still be positioned as a third space, where young people are found outside of familiar or accepted socially constructed norms: they inhabit a social space 'betwixt and between' (Matthews *et al.* 2000:66). In such a space young people are caught between two realities: that of the street, and that of the family home (Beazley 2000a). Although the former is not necessarily the preferred option it does eventually became the more effectual home for street-connected children and youth.

Reactions to the young people living and/or working on the streets of cities and urban areas are similar to those directed at informal settlements destined to be removed. In Kenya, and other countries, municipal authorities conduct roundups of street-connected children and youth, often on an annual basis, with the use of security officers and police (e.g. Buske 2011; Geenen 2009; Huang and Ayoub 2011; Moolla, Myberg and Poggenpoel 2008; van Blerk 2011). Street-connected children and youth may therefore be positioned as an extreme symptom of disorder - threatening the order that urban planning strives for. Viewed as out-of-place in urban public spaces such as on the street, they are at home outside of their normal environment in a space that is deemed inappropriate.

How street-connected children and youth inhabit the space I refer to as the street, and transform it into territory defined by their ownership of the space, is determined by the interplay of relative levels of control (exercised on or by them) and freedom experienced on the street (Lucchini 1999). For example, how young people engage with the street and manage the street's ability to monopolise their skills and energies will determine the risks

they face, the freedoms they enjoy, the obligations they must fulfil and the level of control they influence over their lives (Lucchini 1999). In the next section I consider the ways in which street-connected children and youth both define and are defined by their engagement with the street.

2.2 The Street as a Liminal Space

Contested interpretations of the street position it as: a space that is gendered, generational, societal, and racial (Van Blerk 2006); 'neither entirely owned by young people, not fixed as adult domains', giving rise to both autonomy and separateness (Matthews *et al.* 2000:66); a site of identity or a cultural borderland (Matthews 2003). Each of these descriptions suggests a struggle in which young people inhabiting this space establish a place for themselves and become street-connected. The development of a street-connected identity could therefore be intertwined with the constraints and freedoms inherent to street life. In this section, I examine the notion of the street as a liminal space and what that could entail for those who live there. In so doing, I use the literature to introduce the concept of liminality and how it could be associated with street-connectedness: setting the scene for later conceptualisations of liminality in Chapter Five, based on the data generated as part of this study.

2.2.1 Defining Liminality
The concept of liminality was developed by Van Gennep (1906), through his theory of cultural rites of passage, particularly in relation to the process by which a child transitions through the liminal stage of adolescence to become an adult. In so doing, the child passes from one identity state to another through three phases: separation, margin and re-aggregation. Essentially these phases refer to the processes by which ritual subjects, undergoing the rite of passage, detach themselves from their previous positions in society and re-enter society transformed, or positioned differently. Characteristic of such rites of passage is a temporal stage, the margin, in which the liminary (for example the child becoming an adult) is influenced in such a way that they adopt a new identity position (as an adolescent) that may or may not adhere to certain norms inherent to the liminality they experience (Turner 1967).

Van Gennep's (1906) conceptualisation of liminality describes the ritual nature of rites of passage that are conducted after a specific life milestone (such as menstruation in girls) is reached and conducted in specific ways over defined time periods, before the liminary is invited to re-join society. In extending Van Gennep's conceptualisation, Turner (1967) positions the liminary as 'interstructural', in that they are caught in a liminal phase betwixt and between the two established end points (Turner 1977). During the transition process the liminary is socially invisible, or ambiguous, and often difficult to define. They may be regarded as unclean (contact with them is deemed polluting and often prohibited), the subject of taboo, or have no rights (Turner 1967). Therefore, an individual's experience of inhabiting, or transitioning over the limen, significantly disrupts their place within a social system and therefore their sense of self, implying that liminality can be defined as a reconstruction of identity (Beech 2010; Noble and Walker 1997).

The liminal space alluded to in Van Gennep's (1906) conceptualisation appears to have defined beginning and end points, whereas liminality as the reconstruction of identity is open to ambiguity and varied anthropological and sociological applications. Berman *et al.* (2009) consider the intersections between conceptualisations of liminality and the 'uprootedness' experienced by girls who were displaced from their homes in Canada as a result of being homeless, Aboriginal, or new to the country. Starting with the idea that liminality is the process by which refugees 'reterritorialize, or build, themselves anew' (Naficy 1993:86), Berman *et al.* (2009) explore how liminality not only concerns the transition itself, but also the development of a *communitas* among the liminaries who share a temporary liminal space. Their research focussed on the lived experiences of displacement, to highlight the structural forces that can marginalise and subordinate the girls as well as their sense of agency (Berman *et al.* 2009). They argue that as girls transition through liminal spaces they learn and adopt new ways of being that result from the othering they experience within various social interactions. Although they inhabited marginal spaces, the girls constructed a resilient sense of, and developed spaces of, belonging in which supportive alliances were formed (Berman *et al.* 2009).

If liminality is considered as a particular state inhabited by those passing over the threshold between two phases of their life, the physical confines of the refugee camp or detention centre (Hynes 2011), or the street, become the boundaries of physically

defined liminal spaces. As liminal spaces they are often characterised by marginalisation. However, they may be attributed to both positive and negative processes: liminal spaces may be places of risk, danger, and life at the margins of society, but they also offer a space of welcome and belonging (Berman *et al.*2009).

2.2.2 Conceptualising Street-based Liminality

The street has been described as a site of independence with which young people engage as part of the process of growing up: a hybridised, liminal space where they develop a combination of contradictory identities that affect not only an individual's ability to survive but how they 'produce a sense of agency or identity in situations in which they are continually having to deal with symbols of power and identity' (Bhabba 1994:219 discussed in Matthews 2003:102). In my opinion being or becoming street-connected is rather more than a liminal stage between childhood and adulthood. I would argue that it represents a more forced independence in which for all intents and purposes children act like adults while still embodying children. Therefore, assuming street-based roles, more usually associated with adults, reinforce notions of being out-of-place or deviant, affecting the identities which are subsequently authored. As such the liminality that describes being street-connected, while I consider it as a process of becoming, is not temporally constrained but an ongoing state of being neither a child nor an adult, but both at the same time.

Identity is described by the interconnections that exist between the 'intimate and public venues of social practice' (Holland *et al.* 1998:270). It is co-developed and co-constructed during social interaction and performed in the moment that the interaction takes place, but it is also central to a persons' sense of being and developed over time as each interaction is negotiated and interpreted. The negative interactions that street-connected children and youth have with municipal authorities and members of the public positions them as out-of-place, and their repeated experiences of such interaction can reinforce the effects of this positioning on their identity construction.

In Kenya, annual roundups of street-connected children and youth are conducted in many towns. Such routine harassment and physical abuse is part of a wider picture of physical and psychological violence (Schimmel 2008). The World Health Organisation (WHO) and

the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) include child maltreatment within the wider categorisation of violence (WHO ISPCAN 2006). They use a typology to classify violence by type and the nature of the acts of violence that are perpetrated (Thomas de Benitez 2007). As can be seen in Figure 2.1, there are three broad categories of violence that differ according to the context within which violence occurs: self-directed, interpersonal and collective violence (WHO ISPCAN 2006). Cutting across these categories is the nature of the violent acts, be they physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or due to neglect.
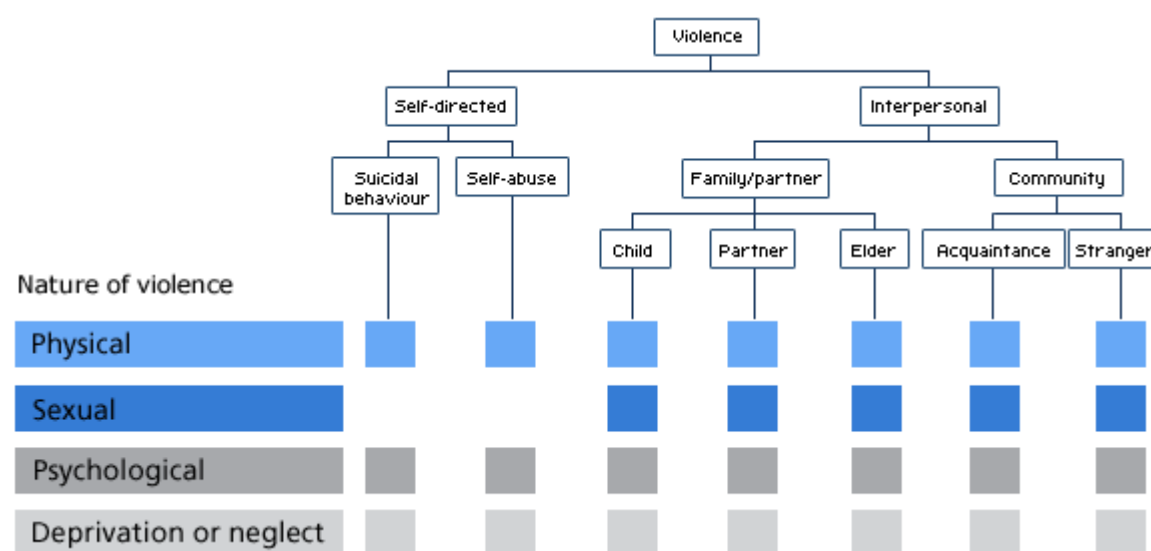
Figure 2.1: Typology of violence (WHO ISPCAN 2006).

This typology of violence has been used in a number of instances to position the violence that street-connected children and youth experience and the interventions with which organisations seek to support them as they leave the street (e.g. Ali 2014; Schimmel 2008; Thomas de Benitez 2007).

Child maltreatment has been linked to physiological alterations in brain development and negative effects on children's physical, cognitive, emotional and social growth (WHO ISPCAN 2006). In the long-term, such violence, neglect and abuse, and the stress and trauma that develops, impact upon a young person's ability to take care of themselves later on in life (Thomas de Benitez 2007). Violence is an established norm in the lives of street-connected children and youth across the globe (Thomas de Benitez 2007). This violence is experienced at home, on the street, at places of work, and in school; and is

perpetrated by family members, the community, the police and municipal authorities, and even by the young people towards other street-connected children and youth or towards themselves (e.g. Abdelgalil *et al.* 2004; Bar-On 1997; Feeny 2005; Hecht 1998; Jones at al. 2007; Orme and Seipal 2007).

Although it is often 'down-played' because of assumptions that it is a norm in their lives (Ali 2014:50), such violence is symptomatic of the emotional and physical deprivations that are witnessed or experienced by street-connected children and youth (Schimmel 2008). The trauma and humiliation that result from the violence are profound and mitigate to undermine psychosocial health and development (Schimmel 2008). The young people affected may engage in self-destructive behaviours, such as low self-esteem and fatalism, which are socially isolating and exacerbate both the stigmatisation they face and their marginalisation from society (Lugalla and Mbwambo 1999).

In interacting with others, people place themselves, and those they interact with, within social fields that are in 'relation to', in 'opposition to' and at a 'distance from' identifiable others (Holland *et al.* 1998:271). Within this figuration, positionality takes on a defining role: it is how they position themselves in relation to social and material resources, and depends on the deference shown to positions of authority or higher status and the legitimacy accorded to different groups in society (Holland *et al.* 1998). For example, social position and entitlement are intertwined with being street-connected as well as other aspects of their lives (such as age, race etc.). In effect, street-connected children and youth inhabit a liminal space where they are ignored or subject to negative treatment, which can be explained through the process of strangering (Ahmed 2000).

Ahmed (2000) examines the relationship between strangers, embodiment and community and posits the idea that strangers, rather than being simply those we do not recognise, are already recognised as strangers, with particular histories. The stranger is constructed as static, often lacking in agency, and perceived in terms of a pre-existing object, rather than as a subject of knowledge (Wuthnow 2002). The 'other' becomes the 'stranger' because they are out-of-place. The identification of the stranger therefore becomes an efficient, but problematic, process of inclusion and exclusion. The stranger is

someone who is 'already recognised' at the moment of the encounter, familiar in their very 'strange(r)ness' as someone who does not belong in a given space (Ahmed 2000:21).

Ahmed (2000) uses aliens to explore the concept of representation: she suggests that what is 'beyond the limit' of what we find comfortable, extra-terrestrial beings, is not only beyond representation but is at the same time subject to representation and therefore over-represented. This over-representation constructs the concept in such a way that it allows the reduction of the unfamiliar into something familiar. However, it is almost impossible to locate examples of such reductions in forms described by the representation. Ahmed (2000) describes aliens, but it is not a huge leap to identify the intersections between this analysis and the ways in which various members of the wider community relate to street-connected children and youth. Social discourse delineates what can be deemed safe and what is dangerous and it is the role of street-connected children and youth to be everything that is wrong or deviant (e.g. Beazley and Miller 2015). Through processes of stranger fetishism the street-connected young person is dehumanised and positioned as delinquent and out-of-place or in need of rescue, safety, and protection. Street-connected children and youth are alien in their difference to perceived norms and therefore subject to over-representation.

The role of the alien is not in being represented as good or bad, or in this case out-of-place, but the function is in defining the boundaries of the identities of those doing the strangering (Ahmed 2000), constructed in that moment of interaction when they come across street-connected children and youth. In providing a member of the public with who they are, the young person is simultaneously othered, or recognised as the stranger, which necessitates the demarcation of spaces of belonging. It is this stranger fetishism that dehumanises the street-connected young person as out-of-place. During the encounter they become the 'stranger' that has already been recognised: the delinquent who requires a negative response from municipal authorities, police and members of the public, or the cute, angelic child that needs to be rescued from this fate by the good Samaritan or social worker. The stranger is either expelled as being the 'origin of danger', or welcomed as the 'origin of difference' (Ahmed 2000:4). Interestingly the *Kiswahili* word for stranger is *mgeni* (*wageni* in the plural), is also the word for guest, which makes the conceptualisation of strangering appeal in my interpretation of a Kenyan context of

street-connectedness. A young person on the street may be simultaneously welcomed as in need of help or treated with suspicion; neither representation relates to their identity as an actor able to exercise their own sense of agency.

The concept of strange encounters may also be applied to ideas of inhabiting urban space. If cities are constructed as worlds full of strangers and the cultural and spatial boundaries affect the encounters that take place between others, the '(mis)recognition of others as strangers is what allows the demarcation of forms of mobility and movement within the public [domain] and the deligitimation of others' (Ahmed 2000:32). There is a relationship between movement, occupation and ownership in that spaces are not so much owned through their being inhabited, but as a result of people passing through, giving them value as places with boundaries (Ahmed 2000). This extends to the places that are deemed suitable for use in certain ways. Children for example are restricted from using the street to keep them safe.

Just as the space becomes identified through our use of it, the person using that space may be likewise identified through that use. Recognising strangers as those that do not belong, who are out-of-place, allows the demarcation of safe areas and the enforcement of their boundaries (Ahmed 2000). In the process of this recognition, spaces become bounded both physically and in terms of a living community. Bodily stigma arises in which the bodies of others are marked as different and social encounters involve and reinforce rules and procedures that define strange. Encounters with street-connected children are therefore encounters with 'embodied subjects' (Ahmed 2000:8) where the particular, the individual, is framed by the general within an asymmetry of power; particular encounters are therefore determined by broader relationships of power and antagonism. People with disabilities are similarly encountered.

Murphy *et al.* (1988) use the idea of social liminality to describe the setting apart and stigmatisation of people with physical disabilities. They argue that disability is an in-between state, characterised by isolation and lacking in definition. For example, a person using a wheelchair cannot be described as well or able-bodied and is often unable to access all places or situations. Through processes of othering they may be deliberately or unconsciously excluded, making them marginal to society and reinforcing both physical

and social distance. As Murphy *et al.* (1988:239) explain: there is the paradox of 'nobody seeing the one person in the room of whom they are most acutely, and uncomfortably, aware'. Disability therefore, becomes a liminal phase that is 'immutable and all encompassing' (Erevelles and Mutua 2005:254), where the liminary is neither out-of-society but is not fully part of it (Murphy *et al.* 1988). As a liminal phase, disability lacks the temporality that characterise other liminalities, but complicates the traditional liminal transitions that all people transition through. Such permanent liminality concerns a social space that is no longer betwixt and between two social positions but characterises permanent outsider status (Willet *et al.* 2001).

There are structural adaptations to a person's status in society, through the development of legal status, access to education and employment for people with disabilities that can and do change the nature of the liminal phase they inhabit (Willet *et al.* 2001). However, as Turner (1974) explains, the position of outsiderhood, or being out-of-place, that is created by structural inferiority and subsequent stigmatisation, places individual liminaries at the margins of society. Street-connected children and youth occupy some of the lowest social positions and their experiences intersect with those of people with disabilities (Corcoran 2015a).

In many ways the process of strangering denies street-connected children and youth with physical access to certain spaces as well as interactional access to wider society. Van Blerk (2013:570) highlights the continued marginalisation of street-connected children and youth in that their lives are 'very much shaped by structures beyond their control and influence'. She makes it clear that even though young people may be seen as competent social agents they are not necessarily able to access opportunities, networks, or the resources that they need for social mobility. This is often as a result of how they are connected relationally to other members of society and the power dynamics that need to be negotiated (Van Blerk 2013). Within a Kenyan context for example, street-connected children and youth fall under the Ministry of Devolution and Planning (Ondieki 2016). As such they are positioned as a category that is not considered to be children in need of support in the same way as other children are, as children's services and the needs of other groups of vulnerable children, fall under the Children's Department in the Ministry of Social Services.

Street-connected children and youth may therefore inhabit a socially and self-imposed world defined by their sense of liminality: constructing a liminal space that is characterised by neglect and abuse and a lack of supportive intimate relationships. The harassment they face on the street from police and other municipal authorities exacerbates this isolation. Safety, and in some ways support, is found in numbers, but being together also belies their presence - making them a target to authorities such as the police (Van Blerk 2013). They experience a greater sense of liminality in being alone or in smaller street-based communities. Reduced visibility and dispersal across a town makes it more difficult for police to find them, but also more difficult for them to access services as outreach workers, from organisations delivering interventions targeting these young people, have to adapt their area of focus and strain already stretched resources. Therefore, the sustained emotional support that Schimmel (2008) advocates, to enable street-connected children and youth to recover their self-esteem, becomes more difficult to facilitate, and their liminality more pronounced.

Practiced identities are constructs within which a sense of belonging is developed. They are frames of meaning that are socially identified, in which a person interprets aspects of social interaction to negotiate their own individual social identification (Holland *et al.* 1998). The stigmatisation that street-connected children and youth receive from members of the public and municipal authorities that position them as out-of-place leads to their increasing invisibility and reinforces their liminality. This invisibility is often heralded as an improvement at a political level, as there are fewer of them seen on the street; however increased invisibility is more likely to be associated with marginality than opportunity (Van Blerk 2013). The most extreme cases of such invisibility can be a direct result of cities in the global South receiving significant international attention. In the lead up to the World Cups in South African and Brazilian cities, and the Pope's visit to Manila in the Philippines, a number of roundups were organised to forcibly remove street-connected children and youth and tidy up the cities (e.g. Campbell 2015; CSC 2013).

Either as a result of being displaced, or because of the threat of being found by the authorities, the young people retreat to areas where they are not seen. Being hidden within the urban landscape means that access to urban areas is through increasingly

disparate locations in groups of smaller numbers of individuals, making street-connected children and youth more open to abuse, and an increased likelihood of sleeping alone making them more vulnerable (Van Blerk 2013). However, within such a marginalised existence a sense of community may still develop. Street-based communities can be constructed in direct opposition to the 'identities of exclusion' (Karabanow 2008:78) they face in being recognised as strangers and the resulting stigmatisation that arises when inhabiting a liminal space. Young people share a common experience in being street-connected: their treatment at the hands of wider society. The liminality they experience could be explained as a temporal process through which they develop a sense of belonging to a street-connected community. In the next section I use case studies from the literature to explore the development of peer-based sub-cultures on the street that provide support for the young people living there.

2.3 Developing a Street-Connected Sense of Belonging

The relationship between identity and strangerness, as a lived embodiment, influences the development of a sense of belonging and the familial support that is shared between street-based peers; it inevitably creates new communities of strangers. How a young person finds their place within such a community influences, and is influenced by, the extent to which they receive familial support that reinforces their community identity. In this section I explore the development of street-based subcultures and their role in providing familial support as street-connected children and youth develop identities in practice, beginning with a case study from Indonesia.

In Yogyakarta, Indonesia, the *Tikyan* subculture has been developed by street-connected children and youth as a means of setting themselves up against dominant forms of society and buffering themselves against their treatment by the state and members of the public (Beazley 2000a, 2003a and 2003b). The peer group provided support through a shared understanding of fleeing poverty, or abusive home situations, and the creation of a subculture to which a sense of belonging could be forged (Beazley 2000b). Belonging to the *Tikyan*, involved a particular style of dress, which included accessories such as

earrings and tattoos, and learning their own specially developed *Tikyan* language[7] (Beazley 2004). The language comprised of vocabulary for events, activities or objects that were key parts of the young people's day-to-day lives. It enabled the development of a space of autonomy and solidarity that reinforced a sense of belonging through the exclusion of outsiders (Beazley 2004). The *Tikyan* subculture developed in resistance to being positioned as out-of-place.

Likewise, Davies (2008) describes a communal identity, actively created and shared by street-connected children and youth in Makutano, Kenya, that constructed an insulating boundary between these young people and the general public. As with the *Tikyan*, this street family required the observation of specific social codes, language and style of dress, and provided stability and support that may not have been achievable at home. Membership of the group involved the allocation of roles and responsibilities that enabled the young people to integrate into the informal labour market and become an essential part of the local economy (Davies 2008). Street-connected children and youth in a number of towns and cities take on roles within the informal sector, working for informal traders such as unregulated stall holders or hawkers in a number of cities (e.g. Young (2003) in Kampala, Uganda). In Makutano, membership of the group could, to some extent, provide a formalisation of these arrangements, as well as empower the children, give them agency, and provide social capital, in terms of the relationships and social networks they are part of (Davies 2008).

The social networks developed by street-connected children and youth, both within and without the street-based communities they belong to, are important to their immediate survival needs as well as their wider psychosocial ones. They reinforce self-confidence, provide social security and to some extent cultural identity (Oino and Auyu, 2013; Suda, 1997; Waller 2014). Developing active networks with local traders, members of the public and other young people yield benefits that may not have been experienced at home. For example, children living on the street in Kathmandu, Nepal had lower rates of malnutrition than their peers living in nearby informal settlements (Baker 1996), while

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[7] Although not confined to use by street-connected children and youth, *Sheng*, a creole used by young people in Kenya, which is based on the grammar system of Kiswahili but uses vocabulary from other Kenyan languages, is in particular use by street-connected children and youth in Nairobi and other large urban centres (Githiora 2002).

Ayuku *et al.* (2004b) found that the children in Eldoret, Kenya, became more resilient as a result of their street-based experiences. In exploring the children's ability to create active networks, they compared a control group of school-going children with those living in a shelter. Although the street-based children experienced less social services support, they developed larger 'family' networks within their peer groups. The support enjoyed by young people on the street, therefore, fulfilled many more needs than the support that had been provided at home (Ayuku *et al.* 2004a).

However, the supportive nature of street-based subcultures observed in some research studies cannot be universalised. Heinonen (2011) found that gang membership, for the young people found living and working on the street in Addis Ababa, did not provide such support. She describes the relationship between group members as a 'complex and imperfect system of reciprocity' (Heinonen 2011:106), rather than the companionship and familial kinship alluded to above. In this instance, an exchange occurred in terms of economic loans or related acts in kind that were subject to a continuum of valuation that was not always straight forward to calculate. What was expected however, was that an act of kindness was supposed to be reciprocated at a later date. According to Heinonen (2011), the young people of Addis Ababa did not share a subculture. She describes the boys in the groups she studied as seeking individual autonomy, in that they needed 'to live as part of and yet apart from the group' and this reality 'superseded their need to work as a team' (2011:111).

As mentioned earlier, street-connected children and youth do not make up a homogenous group, and attempts to create a unified category are socially constructed and fail to take into account their socially and spatially complex micro geographies (e.g. Holloway and Valentine 2005; Van Blerk 2005). The urban space or 'street' they inhabit becomes a site of contradictions: both dangerous and empowering, it is a zone of socialisation and social transitions from child to adult (Matthews 2003). Uses of the street are determined through patterns of language and specific behaviours that define membership. Belonging within this space is actively constructed by the young people in direct opposition potentially to the ways in which adults may have envisaged.

Street-connected children and youth often exercise a greater degree of autonomy than they do at home and hence realise a greater level of influence on others (Malone 2002). They carve out their own cultural locations within the adult framework of the street. How they perceive themselves as belonging to the street, is dependent on how they come to understand themselves in relation to the street and how they relate to those they interact with, within or outside of this space (e.g. Urrieta 2007). Power relations operating in urban public space affect the spaces they occupy and the ways in which they use those particular niches are individualised (Young 2003). Street-connected children and youth create an alternative city, transformed through the hijacking of particular spaces for a variety of functional and imaginative uses (Young 2003). They claim legitimacy to be on the street not only as a way of life imposed on them by circumstances, but also as a choice (Lucchini 1999).

Therefore, the removal of young people from the street is a transition from a position of relative autonomy to one of perceived obedience within the realms of an adult-governed world that requires the individual to fit into the expectations of home, society and school (e.g. Beazley 2000a; Corcoran 2015a). In the next section, I discuss the potentially problematic process of leaving the street, drawing mainly on the work of Karabanow (e.g. Karabanow and Clement 2004; Karabanow 2008, 2009; Kidd et. al 2013) and Lucchini (1996 and 1999) who separately model what they refer to as 'street exits' or 'leaving the street'

2.4 Preparing to Leave the Street

This study has its origins in my personal experience of working with street-connected children and youth in Kenya, and was carried out with the support of three community-based organisations. Therefore, the research was conducted in a practice-oriented context. In this section, I build upon the concept of street-connectedness developed in earlier sections to consider the process of leaving the street, and focus on publications resulting from organisational research and practice, as well as the academic literature, to provide an overview of current explanations of how street-connected children and youth both prepare themselves for, and are supported through, such a transition.

2.4.1 Overcoming attachment to the street

Given the apparent benefits, opportunities and challenges inherent to the street that have been discussed so far within this chapter - such as finances, food and the support of street-based social and familial networks that young people may enjoy - leaving the street to return to home communities does not appear to be a simple choice. There is more to the process than physically leaving the street. Shand (2014) highlights how perceptions of young people as being either 'on' or 'off' the street are flawed, as the binary fails to represent the complexities that describe street-connected children and youth's engagement either with the urban environment in which they live, or their relationships with family, both street-based and biological, and other members of the community. Therefore, organisations working with street-connected children and youth have found that those who are (forcibly) removed from the street by police and municipal authorities are much more likely to drop back to the street than remain at home (e.g. Corcoran and Wakia 2013). In addition, the attractions to be found on the street can, to some extent, explain the number of young people that return to the street at various stages of the transition process (e.g. Corcoran and Wakia 2013; Droz 2006; Mugo 2004).

Williams (2011) advocates for a transitional approach to social work practice with street-connected children and youth: based on the indication that a journey is underway in which the young people transition from a defined starting point, with a (possible) destination in mind, in a particular direction. Organisations then take on the role of providing assistance as the young person completes the journey. He recommends an holistic approach to social work that attempts to address the 'multiple, complex transactions between people and their environments', taking the person as an 'integrated whole' built up of component parts[8] that inter-relate in a particular way to produce a unique individual, within a wider context that can shape health, social relationships, self-perception, self-esteem and personality (Williams 2011:6). Therefore, as each individual young person migrates to the street because of a specific combination of motivating factors (e.g. Wakia 2010; Meda 2011), and experiences life on the street in their own

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[8] Williams (2011:7) lists the following component parts: 'health, physical attributes, appearance, childhood experience, mental and emotional state, self-esteem, trauma, educational ability, talents, family structure and dynamics, sibling order and relationships, culture, social and political context, economic status, spirituality and faith, aspirations and expectations'.

individual way, organisations supporting them to transition away from the street will assist them along a number of different pathways.

Williams (2011:67) describes the transition of young people through a particular social work programme in Uganda as:

> …rarely smooth and there would be false starts, detours, disappointments and unexpected events all the time. The journey is far more likely to resemble a rocky or African *murram* [a claylike laterite material] road than smooth tarmac!

Yet, much of the literature on homeless, and/or street-connected children and youth concerns the ways in which they engage with the street, and what occurs there, and pays less attention to their exit strategies (Karabanow 2009). There are currently studies underway that explore specific aspects of the programmes conducted by organisations assisting children and youth to complete their transitions from the street: for example Retrak[9] have been developing monitoring and evaluation processes to inform their reintegration programmes and have developed standard operating procedures for family reintegration that can be adapted for use by other organisations (Corcoran and Wakia 2013, 2016; Wakia and Corcoran 2016; Retrak 2013, 2015); and Railway Children[9] are currently in the initial stages of researching the adaptation of a family reintegration programme developed by one of their partner organisations in Mexico for use by their partners in East Africa (no publications as yet).

Karabanow and his colleagues (e.g. Karabanow and Clement 2004; Karabanow 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009; Kidd et. al 2013) have conducted extensive research with homeless youth populations in a number of cities across Canada and in Guatemala. Utilising mainly ethnographic methodologies and grounded theory, they have constructed a detailed exploration of how young people exit the street focussing on their own individual struggles, as well as the relative success of a variety of service provision methods. Similarly, Lucchini (1993 and 1999) facilitating research in Bolivia, has also explored the ways in which young people are motivated to leave the street. He conceptualises a street career in which attachments to street-based environments are progressive ones involving

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[9] Retrak: www.retrak.org; Railway Children: www.railwaychildren.org.uk.

the development of relationships with street-connected peers and wider street-based social networks (Lucchini 1993).

In particular, Lucchini (1993) describes two main competencies developed by street-connected children and youth: instrumental and symbolic. Instrumental competency refers to the visibly observable attributes of skills, knowledge and abilities engaged in activities such as those used in income-generation that young people develop during their time on the street. Symbolic competencies on the other hand are invisible and refer to the abilities of street-connected children and youth to form useful friendships and engage problem-solving capabilities on the street, to ensure survival (Lucchini 1993). It is these symbolic competencies that Karabanow (2008 and 2009) also highlights.

He emphasises how young people need to overcome their social and emotional ties to the street when they leave it, including attachments to the sub-cultures developed, through which they may find belonging, social capital and support (Karabanow 2008; see also Davies 2008; Evans 2006; Beazley 2003). Leaving is an emotional upheaval which can emote both feelings of hope and self-confidence, as well as deeply felt emotions of 'loneliness, guilt, and disloyalty' (Karabanow 2008:782). In trying to disengage from the street, 'loneliness and uncertainty' are difficult emotions to overcome, especially when making new friends can be difficult, and subsequent returns to the street may result from visiting friends who still reside there (Karabanow 2008:783).

The young people Karabanow (2008) interviewed, explained how they required something that would attract them or provide them with the motivation to overcome the lure of the street. This carrot had to help them to overcome their addictions and cut the ties with street-based social networks. Having the motivation to change is key to the disengagement process but it relies on a complex balance of internal and external factors, specific to the individual choosing to exit. For example, a young person's relationship with the street and their relative wellbeing may be determined by factors such as age or time on the street (Corcoran and Wakia 2013; Panter-Brick 2002).

Getting older can make the street more dangerous, as young people are progressively seen as adults and therefore more visible to the authorities such as police (Aptekar and

Stoecklin 2014; Lucchini 1999). They are also seen less as children by the general public and subject to greater levels of suspicion, as trouble makers, the closer they are to adulthood. Outwater *et al.* (2011) describe the case of Dula, a young man in Tanzania who was beaten to death: the community had supported him as a parentless young person on the street, but refused to sustain an adult who was perceived to be preying on them for his needs. On the other hand, street-connected children and youth have been found to be better able to take care of themselves and provide for their own needs the older they are when they arrive on the street, and the higher the level of education they have received (Corcoran and Wakia 2013).

Lucchini (1999) suggests that there are four key motivations behind young people's decisions to leave the street. The first concerns situations in which street-connected children and youth are no longer able to fulfil their needs, the advantages of remaining on the street diminish and a self-governing exit may be facilitated. In the second, a transition from the street is facilitated by a meeting - for example, with a member of the public offering assistance, a family member or a social worker - that enables the young person to be receptive to the idea of leaving (Lucchini 1999). The third situation involves the occurrence of a significant event, such as a death threat, the risk of prolonged institutionalisation, or a change in the way a young person perceives the identity of a person who is important for them emotionally (such as their mother), that causes a re-evaluation of the street and proposes a credible alternative.

In the fourth situation, young people begin to see the negative aspects of living on the street and refuse to be associated with the deviant nature of adult street-based careers. They observe changes in the behaviour of passers-by and other actors on the street towards them: such as being viewed with suspicion and avoided by members of the public (Lucchini 1999). In such situations they may attempt to remain on the street while adopting strategies to make their presence more acceptable to passersby (e.g. taking on positions in the informal labour market such as hawking small goods - matches or cigarettes) but continued hostility towards them and their peers can motivate them to leave the street (Lucchini 1999). On the other hand, being part of a street-connected population can be a marginalising experience. Asking for help is integral to the

disengagement process and a number of young people could struggle to seek out the assistance required unaided (Karabanow 2008).

Organisational support for young people leaving the street takes many forms. Summarising approaches to providing pathways out of homelessness that they find 'most interesting and effective', Glasser and Bridgeman (1999:90) highlight a number of key aspects of programmes that have had positive impacts. They include: outreach work, to develop support in terms of social contact and services for those on the street; the provision of social and service-based networks for those leaving the street; halfway shelters or homes to ease the transition into more permanent housing; good case management by social workers and counsellors; and the development of sustainable self-help skills. According to Karabanow (2004:1), organisations that are effective in their work deliver social programmes that provide spaces in which street-connected children and youth 'feel safe, cared for, and part of a community'. This is especially important given that they are often running away from problematic home situations, when they first arrived on the street; and the street presents the 'healthier space' of the two (Karabanow 2004:1).

Retrak, working in Uganda and Ethiopia, has developed standard operating procedures for the reintegration of street-connected children and youth that are based on what they call the Retrak Model (Retrak 2013). At the centre of this model is the (re)building of positive attachments between young people and their parents and other care-givers, where each young person feels a sense of belonging through a secure attachment to caring adults (Corcoran and Wakia 2013; Wakia and Corcoran 2016). Where Retrak prioritises family support, Karabanow (2004) advocates for organisations that promote mutual peer support, to help street-connected children and youth recognise that they are not alone in their experiences and therefore not culpable for their situation. Therefore, relationships with family and friends would appear to be an important step in overcoming the attachment to the street.

In Karabanow's (2009) study, those participants who believed that there were family and friends who truly cared for them were better able to disengage and leave the street. Strong personal support from them led to fewer struggles as the young people exited.

Therefore, developing trusting professional relationships, with service providers becoming surrogate families, appears to be an important aspect of programme development for facilitating exits (Karabanow and Rains 1997; Retrak 2013; Wakia and Corcoran 2016). As such, organisations tend to have exit strategies in place that are effectively determined by a young person's exit from the programme of work delivered by that organisation. For example, a young person living at home, supported financially and emotionally by their parents and attending school regularly does not necessarily need further follow up from a social worker. Exit strategies are thought to be important to prevent dependency and better support the development of the young person to be a functioning adult in society (Retrak 2013). They provide a target to aim for and the exit from the programme can be celebrated as a milestone achieved.

Just as Williams (2011) and I have observed in our work, in East Africa, both Karabanow (2008) and Lucchini (1999) note that the participants in their studies made repeated attempts at exiting the street and returning to it. Therefore, assisting a young person to make a transition and effectively exit the programme is not always simple. For example, the time taken varies depending on the direction of the journey and the individual young person leaving the street. Being able to relinquish their dependency on the organisation's support requires the development of a sense of identity to which the organisation does not become an integral part. Therefore, the sense of belonging they develop when they leave the street also depends on the organisations supporting them, and the fine balance that must be maintained between support and dependency.

2.4.2 Reconceptualising the Self to Exit the Street

If street-connectedness is a process of becoming, in which young people make sense of who they are and their place within the context of the street (e.g. Butler 2015), leaving the street can also be thought of as a process of becoming, but in relation to a different context. Lucchini (1999) suggests that being able to settle in to life after the street, starts while young people are still on the street: as they undergo a re-conceptualisation of the self in relation to a world beyond it. He found that choosing to leave the street required that a young person be able to imagine a future that they desired and wished to realise (Lucchini 1999).

Karabanow (2008) on the other hand, describes six layers of change that must be effectively negotiated before homeless young people are able to facilitate their own successful exiting from the street. These layers start with an individual choosing to leave the street, then seeking and utilising assistance, and undergoing changes in identity once they have physically left it. Such changes in identity are described by Lucchini (1999) as linked to the construction of a situation or *project* (translated from Lucchini's (1999) French) post-street that motivates their transition. Inspired by the work of Bourdieu, he emphasises the complementarity of three fields, street, institution, and home, and how they interact to meet the needs of street-connected children and youth. When a young person has a choice, they remain in the field that is most likely to provide for their resource and/or psychosocial needs. Karabanow (2008) suggests that a reconstruction of the street in negative terms is also key to severing the ties an individual experiences there. Leaving the street is therefore an attempt to identify themselves with a project in the family home, an institution and/or in relation to an organisation assisting their exit. As young people transition from the street they reconfigure their sense of belonging to be less related to the street, and more related to the communities into which they transition.

However, one of the main aspects missing in both Lucchini and Karabanow's models, concerns the detail of how the specific roles young people assume either on, or after they leave the street, are determined by their street-connectedness. Positional identity is constructed as an entitled or disqualified self, where social place is assumed and taken up depending on a self-perceived sense of entitlement (Holland *et al.* 1998). How young people mediate belonging on the street in relation to the self and others, and how such mediations are taken with them when they leave the street is also important.

Lucchini (1999) describes how a young person's choice to leave the street is an attempt to reconstruct themselves in relation to an adult world that they must eventually belong to, but this does not necessarily explain how street-connectedness is constructed and may be an integral part of how they construct their own entitlement to reside in this new world. For example, there are 'identities of exclusion', resulting from constructions of street-connected children and youth as being out-of-place, that must be overcome when they leave the street (Karabanow 2008:78). Such identities are complicated by the 'inclusionary dimensions' (Karabanow 2008:78) they feel, in relation to the peer culture

communities they lived with on the street. Belonging to these communities, which I described earlier in the chapter, has an influence on an individual's positional identity when they leave the street. In exploring how young people experience these transitions, I feel that it is important to explore how a sense of belonging is developed in relation to the communities they transition into, and the aspects of the transition experience that could potentially influence returning to the street in the weeks, months and potentially years after they leave it.

Furthermore, the application of Karabanow or Lucchini's models to a Kenyan context is not immediately apparent. Lucchini's research is based in Bolivia, which is similar to Kenya in terms of economic context, but in the different cultural context of Latin America. The majority of Karabanow's (2008) observations have been made in the context of Canada (with some observations from Guatemala (e.g. Karabanow 2004)), which provides a mostly northern context to leaving the street, in contrast to southern countries like Kenya. According to Aptekar and Stoecklin (2014:12), 'poverty is a necessary but not sufficient condition' for young people to become street-connected in the global south where the majority of street-connected children and youth are from poor backgrounds[10]. In northern contexts, they argue, poverty is not a necessary condition of homelessness: less than half of homeless youth in the USA come from poor households (measured as those having access to public assistance or experiencing issues such as unemployment) (Schaffner 1998), and up to half of all runaways come from middle or upper class families (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014).

Aptekar uses his observations of urban youth in Portland, USA to conclude that homeless minors in the global north tend to be older teenagers, dressed far better than their counterparts in the global south and in possession of material items ('at least one electronic device' (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014:12)) that are often out of the reach of young people in the global south, which suggests an ability to connect with others through more than one medium. In Portland half of the homeless youth are female, compared to 10-20% in the global south (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014:12), and two common reasons for becoming a 'runaway' are parental abuse and parental rejection of a child's homosexual orientation, which can influence a peer culture in which dress and

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[10] Heinonen's (2011) ethnographic study includes the story of a boy from a middle class family.

behaviour is constructed in such a way as to 'anger or embarrass parents' for their rejection[11]. Abuse and neglect, being major reasons for running away in the global north, also have implications for the mental health of homeless youth. Karabanow (2008) mentions how the majority of street youth felt that the street was safer than their previous home environments, which is not necessarily the case for young people living on the streets in Kenya.

Therefore, while there are aspects of both models that may describe leaving the street in Kenya, taking an exploratory approach for a research study has the potential to showcase a specifically Kenyan context, which can be compared later with existing models.

Summary

In this chapter I have set the foundations from which I will develop a conceptualisation of street-connectedness in Kenya in Chapter Five. I have explored the contested and liminal nature of urban spaces occupied by street-connected children and youth, to examine how they are positioned as out-of-place and often strangered by their presence in areas where the authorities say they do not belong. The resulting street-connected identities are constructed within a process of becoming, in which young people develop a sense of belonging, or not, to the street in relation to how they inhabit these urban spaces and interact with street-based and non-street-based communities. Subsequent identities are constructed through the authoring of stories, which help young people to make sense of who they are and their place within the context of the street.

I chose to adopt an exploratory approach for the study and, as such, the conceptualisation of life on the street that I have developed in this chapter, particularly in terms of liminality, has been constructed in relation to the participants' responses as I prepare the ground for an exploration of their experiences of leaving the street. I will further develop the conceptualisation of street-connectedness in terms of liminality in Chapter five.

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[11] This does not consider the invisible homeless, found living under bridges and detached from the centre of the cities and large towns.

In transitioning away from the street, young people undergo another re-conceptualisation of the self, this time in relation to how they envisage their lives after the street, and their experiences of the transition. Leaving the street can therefore be thought of as another process of becoming, in which young people develop a place for themselves in their new situation; and their stories of leaving the street could potentially provide an understanding of their transition experiences. In the following chapter, I present the research design for a study that explores the experiences of young people leaving the street in Kenya, based on the generation of the stories related when describing their experience.

Chapter Three

Generating Stories of Transition

The study reported in this thesis is concerned with young people's experiences of leaving the street. Using an exploratory, qualitative approach, I am interested in the stories that these young people relate, about their transitions. Such stories, as a means of making sense of the self and negotiating identity, are reconstructions of experiences, remembered at the time of narration, that 'capture the lived experience of [young] people in terms of their own meaning' (Charmaz 2011:225). The purpose of this chapter is to provide the rationale behind the use of these stories, and the methodological and conceptual approaches chosen in designing the processes of data generation and analysis to develop an in-depth understanding of young people's transition experiences, as well as recognising common or shared aspects of the transition process applicable to a wider Kenyan context.

The chapter begins by outlining the process of designing the research. In the Section 3.1, I start by exploring the different research relationships that I shared with the community-based organisations enabling my access to the participants, and the young people they support. Following on from this I: explain the rationale behind the choice of methodology and why I developed the research question; provide an overview of the selection of the young people invited to participate; and explain the choice of multiple methods of data generation before introducing each of the methods used.

Section 3.2 evaluates the process of data generation, and highlights the adaptations that were made to each of the methods used as a result of the context within which the field research took place. Section 3.3 explores other methodological implications of the research: the ethics of working with (street-connected) children and youth and managing their expectations of the research process; and negotiating with the organisations acting as gatekeepers. Finally, the processes through which the data was analysed are explained in Section 3.4, from the use of interpreters, and the decisions made during the

transcription and translation stages, to the thematic analysis of the participants' responses.

3.1 Designing the Research

Prior to starting the research study, I volunteered as a teacher and sponsorship coordinator with an organisation called *Imani*. This acted as a reference point from which I both planned the research and developed the structure of my fieldwork. As a doctoral study is first and foremost a personal learning experience, I wanted to build upon what I had observed during my time at *Imani*. I was interested in developing a greater understanding of this particular context as well as a wider appreciation of how transferrable my observations would be to an organisation managing similar interventions in a different Kenyan town, and therefore to the wider Kenyan context. Researching an unfamiliar setting offered an opportunity to more easily notice cultural or social relations inherent to the research context, and draw attention to potential observations at *Imani* that may have otherwise gone unnoticed (Neuman 2014). I worked with three organisations in the course of the study: *Imani*, *Usaidizi* and *Matumaini*.

3.1.1 Developing Research Relationships

As the study has its origins in my work with street-connected children and youth in Kenya, potential impacts on a conceptualisation of leaving the street, as well as on recommendations for organisational practice, were important considerations within the design process. Working with community-based organisations provided a practice-based context within which to conduct the research, additional support and protection for the participants, as well as colleagues who could elaborate on the wider cultural context and its implications on the analysis of the data generated. Establishing research relationships was therefore an important starting point to the study.

Working with three different organisations meant that my position within each, and therefore my relationships with the participants, differed greatly depending on the specific role that I fulfilled for each one: from a position of active membership, at *Imani*, to one of peripheral membership, at *Matumaini* (Neuman 2014). As they were providing

me with my research participants, and interpreters, I aimed to provide them all with my time in exchange. I continued my previous volunteer roles at *Imani*, as teacher and sponsorship coordinator during a two-month field research visit in 2012. At *Usaidizi* I volunteered part-time in the office for the majority of a six-month field research visit in 2013, and spent my weekends at *Nyumbani*, their long-term transitional care centre, facilitating revision sessions for the candidates preparing for their KCPE. In both of these settings I developed a relationship with some of the participants beyond that of the role of researcher. *Matumaini* on the other hand did not have a voluntary role that I could fill. Instead the director requested that I write up my initial findings, those directly related to social work planning, for dissemination at the annual staff meeting. Therefore, at *Matumaini* my position was that of researcher only.

I anticipated that each of these relationships would have an impact on how the participants interacted with me during the data generation process, and adopting a range of relationships offered opportunities to identify how the research relationship was affected (Neuman 2014). In addition, the development of the research methods, and the use of interpreters, was informed by how the participants could potentially position me as the researcher. As a UK-trained teacher, who is an *mzungu* (white person) and female, I am essentially an outsider occupying a privileged position in the research relationship (e.g. Bhopal 2001; Milner 2007). I cannot claim any essential connection to Kenya; although having come to my doctoral research through the route of a practitioner of sorts, with Kenya-based work experience and intermediate communication skills in Kiswahili, I blur the distinction between insider and outsider.

In addition, my position affects how I design research and analyse the data generated. I am unable to claim a shared experience with street-connected children and youth, or a blended worldview between myself as the researcher and my participants. Although, there are degrees of inter-experience and intersubjectivity possible (Finnström 2008), in which I am able to achieve a level of understanding that is negotiated within the interpersonal relations facilitated by the research process. Therefore, to develop a greater level of intersubjectivity and identify the key aspects of focus within the data as a whole, my choice of organisations, and the relationships I developed with staff members, aimed to provide opportunities for conversations with social workers, and other members

of the community, that would give the themes identified in the data greater cultural context (e.g. Finnström 2008).

My relationships with the organisations continued after I had completed the field research visits to Kenya and returned to the UK. I maintained an involvement with the UK-based operations of both *Imani* and *Usaidizi*, and continued my conversations with the social workers and/or directors at all three organisations. They became a useful sounding board when I required clarification on my interpretations of the data generated.

In the next section I outline the rationale behind the choice of a qualitative approach to research, explaining the influence of the organisations' work with street-connected children and youth on the decisions made as well as the importance of focusing on generating stories of transition.

3.1.2 Developing a Qualitative Study

I wanted to develop a conceptual understanding of the process of leaving the street as experienced by young people. Therefore, this study was designed to focus on individual experiences of specific young people in order to identify aspects of the process that could potentially inform interventions aimed at reintegrating street-connected children and youth. The study was therefore designed to focus on the experience of individual participants following a number of different pathways away from the street.

I chose to take an explorative, qualitative approach to research that was informed by multiple methodologies. As I generated data with young people supported by projects delivered by three community-based organisations, the use of a multiple embedded case study approach (Yin 2009) appeared to lend itself to the research design. However, as I explain in Section 3.1.4, I ended up with seven different cohorts of young people and a total of 53 individual participants. The total number of subjects, and hence units of analysis could be described as unwieldy for case study research (Gerring 2007; Yin 2009). Therefore, while I approached my data generation and analysis through the use of cases, the number of cohorts and the sample size imply that the research could be more aptly described as an in-depth qualitative survey.

As I explained in the previous section, the nature of my interactions with the young people depended very much on the organisation that was supporting them, which had implications for deciding on possible research methods. I had considered an ethnographic approach to data generation as a participant observer (Atkinson *et al.* 2007). However, while I was able to spend every day at the drop-in centre run by *Imani*, where I was volunteering as a teacher, and had previous understanding of the young men's histories that would have privileged data generation in this way, I was unable to spend many weeks of prolonged ethnographic fieldwork with every cohort of young people that I wished to include in the study.

I decided to focus on the appropriateness of the methods for both the aims and the context of the study, in developing a specific approach to empirical research. I opted to develop narrative methods for data generation and a broader framework for the thematic analysis of the data (the latter of which I explain in Section 3.4). I aimed to understand young people's experiences of leaving the street. Such experiences may be thought of as a process of meaning-making or storytelling, in which stories of past events are (re-)constructions, remembered and retold as a performance that both makes sense of the past and provides a social function for a particular audience within a certain context (Clandinin and Connelly 2000; Lieblich *et al.* 1998; Riessman 2008). Narrative methods that encouraged the telling of stories therefore presented the means through which experiences, or the ways in which those experiences are told, could be understood.

In addition, telling stories played a role in the everyday lives of the participants. The street-connected children and youth that I had worked with in the past loved to tell stories: whether about their lives or as part of a range of social activities. They were used to telling their life stories for the social workers assisting them to transition home or for case study development as part of the programmes delivered by the three organisations. Games and educational activities facilitated at the drop-in and short-term transition centres, or started ad hoc by the children themselves during their leisure time, often focussed on telling stories. Therefore, stories were an integral part of life and a useful starting point for designing methods for data generation.

3.1.3 Developing the Research Question

Central to the study was the research question:

What is the experience of street-connected children and youth leaving the street in Kenya?

I opted for a broad focus, as I wanted to conduct an exploratory study to generate data that would provide as detailed an understanding as possible of the transition experiences of the young people participating in the study. I wanted to understand their perspective of leaving the street, and associated events, and the meanings they attached to different situations (Maxwell 2008). Such rich and explanatory data required the design of methods that would evoke responses that were meaningful to the participants, as well as allowing topics of conversation to develop that I may not have anticipated (Mack *et al.* 2005; Maxwell 2008). I therefore decided on an exploratory question, but developed selection criteria for the participants to provide a framework for the study that retained a focus on education, the initial rationale for the research.

3.1.4 Selecting the Participants

Young people's journeys away from the street follow a number of possible pathways. The type of organisation supporting them through the transition, the education they receive (formal, non-formal, academic, vocational etc), and the home situation they move into, will all play a role in the how they experience leaving the street (e.g. Karabanow 2004b). In planning the selection of participants invited to take part in this study therefore, I was conscious of the need to develop purposive sampling criteria (Robson 2011).

Age plays a role in how young people experience their lives on the street (e.g. Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014; Corcoran and Wakia 2013) and it can also affect their experiences of leaving the street. In Kenya, children return to the level of formal education that they left when they migrated to the street, or start at the beginning if they had not been able to attend previously, rather than the class described by their age (Lewin *et al.* 2011). Therefore, it is not uncommon to see young people as old as twenty completing the KCPE, which can have social implications as well as affecting their overall academic performance (Lewin *et al.* 2011). All three of the community-based organisations involved in this study

select the type of education pathway they will support, according to age of the young person, as well as their academic performance at the end of KCPE. Given the range of different pathways available, I chose a large age range for the participants in order to include a number of the possible options available (e.g. Boyden and Ennew 1997). I wanted to include participants who were studying on primary, secondary and vocational education pathways and/or lived at home, in foster care, in residential care, and in independent living situations.

I chose to invite young people who had previously lived on the street and who were aged between 12 and 35. The lower age reflected the lower end of the average age I found in the literature for children living on the street (e.g. Grundling and Grundling 2005; Le Roux 1996; Rizzini 1996; Scanlon *et al.* 1998; Veale and Donà 2003) and the upper age was set by the definition of a youth in an African Context (a youth is defined as being aged between 18 and 35 (Aryeetey *et al.* 2014)). Although each of the community-based organisations work with children as young as four, the age range I chose to research reflected the majority of the young people they were being supported through the various programmes of intervention. In addition, working with the older youth enabled a longer term retrospective appreciation of some of their experiences of leaving the street, as well as the possibility of their having made multiple transitions away from the street. A number of the older participants had also experienced more than one of the education pathways. The younger participants were chosen to ensure that recent experiences of transition were included.

Different organisations influence how young people transition away from the street (Karabanow 2004b), therefore I chose to work with three organisations that, as gatekeepers, enabled my access to the participants. Having worked with *Imani* for a number of years I understood how the staff worked and understood the policies and procedures they had in place for reintegration, psychosocial support and child protection. As I wanted to work with at least one other gatekeeper organisation based in a different area of the country, I used part of my time during the first field research visit, which focussed on *Imani* only, to acquaint myself with members of a Nairobi-based network of organisations working with street-connected children and youth. In so doing I was able to

develop connections and research organisations that were well-respected and modelled perceived good practice.

There were two reasons for choosing organisations by their reputation: the first was that I wanted to be able to spend part of my time during the second field research visit volunteering for the organisation, both in return for access to the participants and to gain a deeper understanding of how the organisation functioned, and therefore I wanted organisations that I could learn from. The second reason was the access to my participants being through gatekeepers: the organisations would therefore control who would actually be chosen to participate and I did not want the participants to be coerced into taking part. I also wanted to avoid the likelihood of the participants being cherry picked to provide me with a favourable impression of the organisation.

For each organisation I envisioned developing a number of cohorts, categorised by educational pathway that comprised of two participants, where possible a boy and a girl. However, as selection would inevitably depend on the young people supported by the organisations at the time of my research visit to Kenya, I could not predict the exact combination of gender, educational pathway and living situation prior to beginning my field work. Therefore, while I engaged purposive sampling criteria (Robson 2011), in that the participants were to be aged over 12 years and had previously lived on the street, the selection of individuals taking part in the data generation process depended on the context. Convenience sampling (when the participants invited to take part were the only young people available who fit the criteria) or total population sampling (when all of the young people in a cohort were invited participate) were used to select the young people within each cohort who participated (Lund Research 2012; Robson 2011). Seven cohorts of participants were eventually included in the study, shown in Table 3.1:

Organisation	Cohort	Sampling Technique
Imani	1. Young men completing *Jua Kali* Apprenticeships in professions such as mechanics or mobile phone repair.	Total population sampling
Matumaini	2. Children living in semi-residential care at *Matumaini's centre* and attending *Tumekuja* primary school. 3. Children boarding at *St Lucia* Catholic Boarding School. 4. Young men and women studying vocational courses at the polytechnic and living at home or in a boarding facility.	Total population sampling
Usaidizi	5. Children staying at *Nyumbani*, a long-term transition centre and attending the neighbouring primary school.	Total population sampling
	6. Children living at home or with extended family and attending various primary schools.	Convenience sampling
	7. Children living in foster care and attending various secondary schools	Convenience sampling

Table 3.1: An overview of the cohorts involved in the research.

In addition to not being able to predict the cohorts in advance, I also had to adapt plans while in Kenya. Only one cohort from *Imani*, out of the two planned, was involved in the study because 2012 was a year of teacher and student strikes (e.g.Gikandi 2012; Mwangi 2012a Mwangi 2012b). There were many issues arising earlier in the year that led to last minute changes of term dates and upheaval for the secondary school students supported by *Imani*. I therefore decided not to invite participants from this group at that time. The numbers of participants within some of the cohorts was changed.

The young men completing apprenticeships supported by *Imani* attended adult education classes at the drop-in centre each morning before work. There were only nine students in the class, all young men, and I took the decision to invite all of them to participate in order to avoid perceived favouritism and prevent any of them feeling neglected. It was a close knit group of peers and I did not want to affect their relationships with each other. In addition, by including all nine young men I was able to more effectively assess the appropriateness of the methods selected for the study with this first cohort. For similar reasons, I also invited all of the eight boys who fit the criteria at *Nyumbani* to take part.

Furthermore, as part of the arrangement for working with *Matumaini*, I was asked to interview all of the young people that fit my initial criteria (had lived on the street and were aged 12 years and over), and were willing to take part, to provide a general

overview of the findings related to the organisation's social work programming. Increasing the number of participants in the cohorts I accessed through the organisation fulfilled a practical aspect of their work, in exchange for access to the participants. I interviewed three cohorts of participants at *Matumaini*, a total of 32 young people aged 12-22 years. In total, 53 participants were involved in the study reported in this thesis: nine girls and young women and 44 boys and young men.

3.1.5 Engaging Multiple Methods

In Chapter Two, I presented the process of becoming street-connected as one that involves identity construction through the authoring of stories, which help young people to make sense of who they are and their place within the context of the street (e.g. Butler 2015). Similar to arriving on the street, leaving the street can also be thought of as a process of becoming in which young people develop a place for themselves in their new situation. Therefore, their stories of leaving the street could provide an understanding of their experiences of the transition. These stories of experience, remembered, retold and performed in the moment of retelling (Connelly and Clandinin 1990) were the basis for designing methods of data generation.

Using life story interviews (Goodson 2013) as a methodological starting point, I developed a semi-structured interview approach that became the main method of data generation used. The semi-structured interviews were used to generate stories. These stories provided descriptions of key life experiences of the participants, which, for the purposes of this study, constitute life stories. The research literature recommends that life story interviews be conducted over a number of sessions to develop greater depth to the data generated (e.g. Boyden and Ennew 1997; Cohen and Crabtree 2006). As I was particularly interested in the transitions young people made away from the streets, I conducted several sessions but engaged multiple methods to generate the stories. Visual sociology (Thomson 2009), where young people are actively involved in producing images as part of the research, was used to focus on, and develop greater depth to, particular aspects of the participants' journeys away from the street (Prosser and Loxley 2008). The resulting stories were constructed using responses from semi-structured narrative interviews and focus groups, as well as the images created using visual methods (Riessman and Quinney 2005).

Choosing to employ qualitative, open-ended and loosely structured methods of data generation (Cohen *et al.* 2011), provided the participants with the means to relate personalised experiences of transition, and to explain the social context within which these transitions took place. In addition, using a range of different approaches to data generation enabled better preparation for adapting to the needs of young people of differing ages, and in a different cultural context to my own (Punch2002). According to Flick (1998), qualitative research is 'inherently multi-method in focus' and the main benefit of the approach is that it offers the freedom to be flexible, iterative, and to improvise and adapt approaches to different research situations (Denzin and Lincoln 2000).

Stories were a means of examining the 'ongoing struggle for purpose and meaning' (Goodson 2013:20) that young people leaving the street undergo as part of the process of settling in to a new situation. In relation to such stories, identities are informed and performed (Bruner 1986), constructed and reconstructed, to varying extents, within the 'mental space of [people's] internal conversations' (Goodson 2013:128). They involve layers of understanding in which a person organises their interpretation of events within a wider context of culture, social relations, values, beliefs, and priorities (e.g. Goodson 2013). Just as street-connected identities are constructed in relation to the context of the street, young people's experiences of leaving the street, and the way in which they choose to remember them, influences a reconstruction of identities.

The lived experience may influence the story told by a young person leaving the street, but the narrative is crafted with a particular aim in mind (e.g. Riessman 2008). They are told within a particular context, affected by how the narrator perceives their place in society and, in this study, their understanding of my reasons for conducting the research. Therefore, the stories related, being performances constructed for me, the researcher as audience (Simpson 2003), would undoubtedly be shaped to meet any preconceived and inadvertent expectations of the research. As a British woman who may be positioned in a certain way (e.g. Milner 2007; Bhopal 2001), these expectations could have influenced the telling of what I choose to term the 'NGO story'. The participants at *Imani*, *Usaidizi* and *Matumaini*, had previously related their life stories for use by the organisations,

which were collected to develop case studies for their files and the search for sponsors. The strength of this similarity was that it enabled the participants to develop a certain familiarity with what was expected of them, but the similarity could also be described as the approach's greatest limitation.

Employing multiple methods aimed to counter the effects of the NGO story. Visual sociology can tackle the power dynamic inherent to the researcher-researched relationship, and generate data within an activity that does not resemble the day-to-day programme delivered by the three organisations. The participants were given some autonomy over the research process (e.g. Noland 2006; Collier and Collier 1986; Harper 1986). The images produced by the participants in this study all became the focus of image-elicitation interviews, or were created as part of a focus group activity, in which they related their reasons for creating the images and the wider story that was being represented (Boyden and Ennew 1997; Harper 1986). The effects of the research context cannot be removed completely, but using a drawing or photograph to relate the story provides a space in which the participants can determine the nature of the discussion (Liebenberg 2009). Within the space of the activities involved, the participants were able to exercise control over the mode of delivery of the method and how that translated into the story they chose to tell (see also Corcoran 2015b).

One of the main advantages of using visual sociology was the ability to include individuals or communities that are often excluded because of literacy levels. When conducting research with groups of young people who have spent time away from school, images were an effective method with which to engage them: 'mediating conversations across linguistic, ethnic and cultural divides, and across boundaries between experience and inexperience' (Howes and Miles 2015:16). Visual sociology appeared to be perfectly suited to research with street-connected children and youth, that are either on the street (e.g. Corcoran 2015b; Evans 2006; Wiencke 2008; Young and Barrett 2001a), or have made the transition away from it.

Adopting multiple qualitative methods to generate narratives enabled me to develop an idea of the context within which the young people made the transition from the street

and provide depth to the process of the transition itself. I explain each of the methods in detail in the following sections.

3.1.6 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the main method of data generation used within the study. Open-ended, or semi-structured, interviews are recommended for research with marginalised groups (Cohen *et al.* 2011), such as those living on the street. They enable the participants to have a degree of self-disclosure, providing them with relative control over the structure of their responses and how they describe their past experiences (Cohen *et al.* 2011; Maxwell 2008). The structure for the interview was influenced by the research question, which I translated into a single interview question concerned with the participants' experiences of leaving the street.

As the young people participating in the study were unused to being provided with an open platform for speaking, this single question provided a framework for their answers, to prevent the interview situation becoming too overwhelming. This question was designed to generate important context to the process of transition, and encourage a chronology to their responses. As I explained in the previous chapter, young people living and working on the street are positioned as out-of-place, and the stigmatisation they experience there can lead to 'identities of exclusion' (Karabanow 2008:78) that could affect their experiences of leaving the street. Therefore, the question asked at the start of the interview aimed to generate responses that included the participants' lives on and before the street, as well as the transition experiences required by the research question.

> Please tell me about your life. I would like to know about your life at home before the street, why you went to the street, your life on the street, why you left the street, and what happened next.

Before asking the question, I explained what was expected of them during the interview: what they would be asked to talk about and how it contributed to the research as a whole. I would then provide them with another opportunity to either confirm their consent verbally or choose not to carry on.

Other questions to be asked would be composed at the time of the interview in relation to the content of the participants' responses to the initial question, except for my last two questions. At the end of my initial round of questions I planned to ask if there was anything else that they wanted to say. Depending on whether their response inspired further questions, this question was to be followed by: "If God gave you one wish, what would you wish for". This question aimed to highlight key challenges being faced by the participants and/or their aspirations for the future. I chose this phrasing partly because I did not want the participants to think that I was going to grant the wish, and also because granting a wish from God implies that anything could be possible, which broadens the field of possible topics they would include when answering.

For the younger participants, I introduced drawing activities (explained in Section 3.2.3) to be used at the beginning of the interview to ease them into the conversation.

3.1.7 Auto-Photography

The semi-structured narrative interviews were designed to provide an overview of the participants' experiences of life before, on and after the street. In order to focus in on the transitions they made away from the street into family homes, or alternative care situations, and into education, I decided to engage auto-photography (Ziller 1981). Auto-photography, (or photovoice as it is also referred to in the literature (e.g. Joanou 2009; Johnson 2011)), has been described as being useful in giving participants the opportunity to 'speak for themselves' (Noland 2006:1) and has been used extensively as a means of offering marginalised groups a voice (e.g. Campos Monteiro and Dollinger 1998; Kessi 2011; Lombard 2013; Munt 2012).

In an auto-photography exercise, the participants are given cameras with which to take images related to a specific aspect of the research. The images produced by the participants may then became the focus of photo-elicitation interviews, in which they relate their reasons for creating the photographs and describe the subject matter being represented by the images (Noland 2006; Collier and Collier 1986; Harper 1986). Auto-photography enables participants to take control of elements of the interview process, to not only shape the stories they choose to tell but, in the context of the study, also be

reminded of what happened during those transitions that occurred months or years previously (Corcoran 2015b; Lombard 2013; Munt 2012).

I wanted to use auto-photography to understand the experiences of moving back home or into a new home, and starting or returning to school, or another education pathway. I planned to use either inexpensive digital cameras or disposable cameras for the exercise. The digital cameras were for use in situations where adult supervision could be maintained, for example in schools or residential centres, and the disposable cameras were to be taken home over a twenty four hour period, especially into informal settlements where I could not accompany them. When I initially discussed this exercise with social workers at *Imani*, disposable cameras were thought to be safer for the participants, as they were less likely to draw attention from members of the public who may decide to steal them. If security had not been a consideration, digital cameras would have been the preferred equipment for all of the situations as they are more engaging for the participants given the immediacy of the images created (Corcoran 2015b). In addition, there would be no extra time required for developing the photographs.

For the auto-photography exercise, I asked the participants to take pictures of objects or places that they could use to tell me all about their first days, weeks, or months at home and/or school, after moving away from the street. In so doing, I was able to generate a richer description of the participants' transition experiences.

3.1.8 Drawing Activities

I chose to employ drawing activities because young people can take time over the production of the image that answers a particular question. In comparison to an interview situation where they are asked the same question, drawing provides them with the space to think about what they wish to include as part of the answer (Dockett and Perry 2005). Having this time in which to consider their response also recognises the co-construction of meaning that takes place in a research situation, giving the young person more control over the situation, and the opportunity for them to combine verbal and non-verbal means of communication (Einarsdottir *et al.* 2009). Drawing activities have been used widely with street-connected children and youth (e.g Baker *et al.* 1996; Beazely 2000; Di Carlo *et al.* 2000; Young and Barrett 2001a, 2001b, 2001c).

I used drawing activities for multiple reasons, the first of which stemmed from giving the participants more control. I was aware that the younger participants in particular, may be overwhelmed by interview situations, the drawing activity and image-elicitation exercise could be a way of breaking the ice and making them feel more at ease (Fargas-Malet 2010; Ogina and Nieuwenhuis 2010). Using their drawings as a research method could enable their perspectives to become central to the meaning-making process between myself, as the researcher, and them, providing the confidence to answer the questions that would come later (e.g. Clark 2005; Ennew 2003). I therefore incorporated an image-elicitation exercise at the start of the semi-structured narrative interview.

Secondly, I was not sure if I would be able to conduct the auto-photography exercise with all of the participants. For example, if they lived in informal settlements that were experiencing higher than usual levels of unrest and insecurity, then the use of disposable cameras would be inadvisable. The drawing exercise was envisaged as an alternative approach. Lastly, the drawing exercise could provide detail on topics that could not be photographed: homes that the participants had lived in previously or possible future lives; and homes that they lived in at the time of the research, but could not photograph because they were living at a boarding school or residential centre.

Drawing on Beazley's (2000a,2003a) use of children's images of home, I used drawing activities as a starting point for a discussion about life and home and what it was like to return home, or not to have returned home, depending on the residential situation of the children. I therefore planned to ask the participants to draw home, without specifying what home was, or even when it was: the details were to be left for the participants to decide for themselves. This task was designed to explore where they believed home was, what home-life was like, and to provide a way in which we could move onto the topic of moving (back) home. In addition, I asked that they draw their lives in ten years' time in order to understand their aspirations and how they hoped to achieve them, and the challenges they faced, having left the street, in getting there. Depending on the content of the resulting images, I aimed to understand how their future aspirations were inspired by their lives on and after the street. I intended to use the drawing activities with the younger participants only.

3.1.9 Focus Groups

To understand the individual experiences of young people as they make the transition away from living on the street, it is important to listen to the their stories in their own words. However, exploring a personal life story has been described as having the propensity to be an '*individualising* device' that can de-contextualise the narrative from the social, cultural and historical circumstances within which it is told (Goodson 2013:30; author's emphasis). Personal life stories focus on the individual participant's personality and circumstances and do not necessarily provide an indication of the collective circumstances influencing their construction (Goodson 2013). These stories are socially situated (Polkinghorne 1995) and constructed within a context that depends on multiple micro and macro socio-economic and cultural factors. Therefore, in order to understand the wider social influences on the participant's responses, and consequently their experiences of transition, I conducted a number of focus groups.

These focus groups were developed in response to the opportunities that arose as a result of changes in the sizes of the cohorts of participants. When I became familiar with who could participate at *Nyumbani*, and the polytechnic, both of which presented larger groups of young people, focus groups posed a useful addition to the methods already planned. They provided the means through which I could: more explicitly explain the aims of the research; include children who may otherwise have felt left out and neglected; and encourage the participants to negotiate a collective appreciation of various aspects of their lives. Two sets of focus groups were conducted.

Nyumbani was home to approximately 40 children, but not all of these children had lived on the street and therefore only a selection would be involved in the main data generation activities. However, the exclusion of some children because they did not fit the selection criteria (aged 12 years and above and had lived on the street) meant that possible resentment could be felt towards those who were selected to be involved in activities with the visiting *mzungu* (white person). Therefore, at this centre I planned the focus groups to enable every child over the age of 12[12] to be involved in the research to some extent.

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[12] The younger children were able to join drawing activities that were held for all the children about what they thought their lives would be like in 10 years' time. Similar to the drawings I asked the children engaged

The focus groups communicated the aims of the research, so that the children who had not lived on the street would understand why they were not involved in later stages, but still feel that they had contributed in some way. Four focus groups were organised, one for each year of primary school attended by the children, from Standard Five (and some in Standard Four who were 12 years old) to Standard Eight. Each session began with introductions, to break the ice and give the children the opportunity to speak at least once: asking them to talk about how long they had been at the centre, their names and where they had come from. The rest of the conversation was focused on the following topics:

- What was it like to move to the centre for the first time?
- What were your first days at the school like?
- What do you like about living at the centre?
- What do you not like about living at the centre?
- What do you like about school?
- What do you not like about school?
- How do you get along with the local community
- How often do you see your family?
- What is it like when you visit your family?

In addition to providing an opportunity for as many children as possible to feel involved in the research, the focus groups at *Nyumbani* were designed to gain an understanding of life at the centre to add a generalised context to the later interviews conducted with the participants who had lived on the street.

Focus groups are recommended for use with marginalised groups (Cohen *et al.* 2011), as they are able to provide a dynamic in which the participants interact with each other as well as the researcher to provide a collective, rather than an individual view. At the

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in the later research activities to create, these drawings were able to give me a general overview of cultural expectations with which to compare the ones I later used as part of the elicitation interviews. They were not included in the data analysed in the study.

polytechnic, a second set of focus groups, involving the young people supported by *Matumaini*, aimed to explore a shared experience, or understanding, of the challenges, benefits and attractions of various stages of their lives, in particular their time on and after the street. Focus group situations can give participants more confidence. They also increase the levels of interaction and there is a degree of correction to statements made, as they negotiate the information that they want to put across, as well as bringing up additional information not obtained in an individual interview (Boyden and Ennew 1997).

There were 12 participants from the polytechnic, six young men and six young women. The two focus groups were designed to be arranged by gender, to highlight any differences, if there were any, between the views of the two groups, and provide a space to discuss issues that the participants may have been too embarrassed to mention in the company of peers of a different gender. The aim of these particular focus groups was to develop a negotiated understanding, or shared experience, of the benefits, challenges, dangers, attractions, shared/important relationships and safety aspects of different stages of their lives.

Inspired by collective visual methods (Boyden and Ennew 1997), to provide the participants with a focus for the discussion, each focus group was designed to centre on the creation of a poster describing seven life stages, identified during the narrative interviews conducted at the polytechnic (e.g. Kitzinger 1994). I bought flip chart paper, various types and colour of pens, and foolscap paper for use in the sessions. I wanted to give the participants the space to openly discuss the stages and free reign on how they chose to represent their information. I provided a framework, in the form of the spider diagram shown in Figure 3.1, that could also be used to explain what I wanted the participants to discuss. I was then able to step back and take the role of observer, intervening when asked a question, or to move them on when time was running short. In addition to the posters, the data included audio recordings of the interactions taking place between the different members of the group as they negotiated what would be included on the poster (Cohen *et al.* 2011; Kitzinger 1994).

school/education

matumaini

home

OUR LIVES   work

family

the street

future aspirations

Attractions
Benefits
Challenges
Dangers
Safety
Relationships
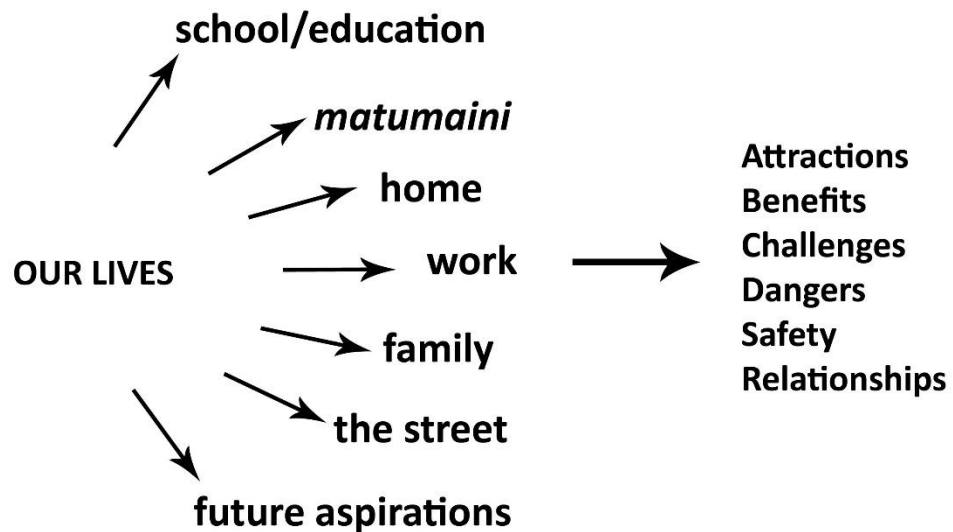
Figure 3.1: Recreation of initial spider diagram given to focus group participants as a guide for creating their own 'Our Life' posters.

3.2 Generating the Data

Data was generated during two separate field research visits to Kenya. The methods were originally designed as a means of engaging with young people. I wanted to enable their active participation in the research, reduce the effects of my own positionality, and break through the inevitable telling of the NGO story. Four different methods of data generation were chosen: semi-structured narrative interviews; auto-photography; drawings; and focus groups. The first three of the methods were piloted with older participants during my first fieldwork visit to Kenya in 2012 and adapted in light of the lessons learned, in preparation for their wider use in the second fieldwork visit in 2013. Some of the lessons learned are included as part of the evaluations of each method in the sections that follow.

The methods were not conducted uniformly across all of the seven cohorts of participants involved in the research as I had to be reflexive to the wishes of the three organisations and the demographic of ethnic backgrounds represented within each group. Every participant was involved in either a semi-structured narrative interview, or a group interview, with selected cohorts participating in one or more form of the visual methods. Further adaptations depended on the availability of the participants for multiple sessions

and the perceived inappropriateness of auto-photography for certain cohorts. A summary of the cohorts and the research methods that they were involved in is shown in Table 3.2.

Organisation	Description of Sample	Methods used
Imani:		
Cohort 1:	*Jua Kali Apprenticeships Independent Living* 9 young men aged 18 – 28 8 mechanics and 1 mobile phone repair	- Semi-structured narrative Interview - Image-elicitation interview based on drawings created by the participants
Matumaini:		
Cohort 2:	*Matumaini's centre and Tumekuja primary school* 9 boys Aged 12-14	- Semi-structured narrative Interview - Image-elicitation interview based on drawings created by the participants
Cohort 3:	*St Lucia Catholic Boarding School* 3 girls and 8 boys Aged 14 - 16	- Focus groups by class - Semi-structured narrative Interview - Image-elicitation interview based on drawings created by the participants
Cohort 4:	*Vocational Polytechnic* *Boarding or living at home* 6 young women and 6 young men	- Semi-structured narrative interview - Focus group by gender
Usaidizi		
Cohort 5:	*Nyumbani, the long-term transition centre, and neighbouring primary school* 8 boys Aged 12-16	- Focus groups by class - Semi-structured narrative Interview - Image-elicitation interview based on drawings created by the participants - Auto-photography and elicitation interview with all 8 boys
Cohort 6:	*Various primary schools* *Living at home or with extended family* 4 boys Aged 15-17	- Semi-structured narrative interviews
Cohort 7:	*Various Secondary Schools* *Living in foster care* 2 boys Aged 18	- Semi-structured narrative interviews

Table 3.2: An overview of the cohorts involved in the research and the research methods conducted.

In the following sections, I reflect upon the methods used in the study and provide an overview of their effectiveness and the adaptations that needed to be made. In addition I outline how the data was brought together in preparation for thematic analysis.

3.2.1 Re-structuring Interviews

Every participant took part in a semi-structured interview. It had to be adapted at times to the needs of those taking part, but it kept the same form for the majority of the participants, as described in Section 3.1.6. With Boyden and Ennew's (1997) recommendations in mind, that interviews do not take place either side of a table, desk, or symbol of authority, the interviews were conducted with two or more chairs close together, on a sofa or other chairs in living rooms, or on the ground outside if grass coverage allowed. I endeavoured to make the situation as informal as possible, to make the participants more comfortable.

At the start of each interview I reminded them of the aims of the research: that I wanted to understand what it is was like to leave the street to better support other young people to make the transition. I also explained that to put their story in context I wanted to know about their lives before, on and after the street. The question I asked, included in Section 3.1.6, provided a framework that aimed to elicit their life stories in chronological order, by giving the participants a structure to follow. Some of the participants spoke for an extended length of time, while others provided very short overviews of their life stories. The shortest, told by a young man at *Imani* was simply: "I lived at home, then I was on the street and now I am here". In such instances the framework was broken down and we concentrated on each section in turn.

The interview was broken down into smaller chunks for the younger participants who appeared less confident in relating their stories, and slightly overwhelmed by the situation. They were also given the opportunity to take part in the interview with a friend if they felt uncomfortable doing it alone. Group settings, at *Nyumbani* or *Matumaini*'s centre, with two or three children at a time, provided a more relaxed environment for the interviews (e.g. Boyden and Ennew 1997). Each section of the framework was dealt with separately:

1. Tell me about your life at home before the street. (Additional questions included where do you live, who lived at home, did you go to school, what grade did you reach, as this section aimed to relax the participants into the interview situation).
2. Why did you go to the street?
3. Tell me about your life on the street.
4. Why did you leave the street?
5. Tell me about living at *Matumaini/Nyumbani*.

The format of the group interviews differed from those facilitated one-to-one, but the interview schedule was kept as similar as possible to the original interview framework.

Group interviews can lack detail as the participants may not want to create conflict, reducing the depth to which experiences of individual transition may be explained. However, the use of multiple methods was useful to further develop aspects of the stories related (e.g. Boyden and Ennew 1997; Cohen *et al.* 2011).

3.2.2 Adapting Visual Methods

Providing an initial framework to the narrative interviews gave me an appreciation of the various transitions that the young people had experienced in terms of migration to the street, making the decisions to leave the street, arriving at a new centre or school and going home etc. In order to add greater depth to the stories, visual methods were employed: auto-photography, drawing activities and a focus group.

I was unable to conduct auto-photography with all of the participants. At *Imani* disposable cameras were taken home by the apprentices, which were used to take photographs over 24-hours, of objects that would help them to describe their return journeys home. However, on developing the film from the disposable cameras it was found that they had all been damaged by heat. Time did not allow for a second attempt. *Matumaini* advised against the use of auto-photography with their beneficiaries as they either came from or lived close to the town's Turkana community: older members of which would have been suspicious of the use of cameras and considered it disrespectful to encourage young people to actively take photographs around their home communities. Auto-photography was therefore only organised at *Nyumbani*, the long-term transition centre run by *Usaidizi*, to avoid offending the local community.

Eight boys were given a digital camera for a short period of time and asked to take photographs of objects, rooms and areas of their primary school and *Nyumbani*'s compound that would help them to talk about their first few days and/or weeks there. Once the pictures had been taken, they were downloaded onto a laptop to be viewed as a slide show. Each boy participated in an image-elicitation interview. The boys were asked to view their pictures and then choose the one that they felt was most important. Once this had been done, I asked them why this picture was important and why it had been taken. Once the picture had been fully discussed I then asked each boy to choose the next important pictures and asked the same questions. This continued until all the photographs had been viewed. In ordering the photographs, the boys dictated the structure of the narrative they related and led through the interview. As such they were able to feel in control of the narrative and provide an indication of the most significant and/or challenging aspects of the transition made to *Nyumbani* and school.

As there were only two cameras available for the activity, only two boys could be trained in the use of the cameras or engaged in taking photographs at any one time. It therefore took a number of days to complete both the auto-photography sessions and the subsequent photo-elicitation interviews. The participants appeared more relaxed during the image-elicitation interviews: I took care to ensure that both myself, and the student, were on the same side of the table used for the laptop, and the images on the screen provided a focus through which they could develop confidence in their answers before talking to me directly. The drawings created by the younger participants at *Nyumbani* and *Matumaini*'s centre were a similar focus at the beginning of the narrative interviews. The discussions about the pictures were effective in breaking the ice and making them feel more at ease.

As I had been unable to complete the auto-photography exercise at *Imani*, I adapted the drawing activities for use with the apprentices. I asked them to draw one or more pictures of something that they wanted to tell me about and provided coloured pencils, pencils, pens, paper and rulers. The drawing activity was conducted after all of the young men had been interviewed. The resulting images were of a variety of different subjects and aspects of their lives. Given their age (between 18 and 28) I had not anticipated that the drawing activity would be as engaging for the young men as it had been. They

enjoyed drawing so much that I had to arrange a second session in which they were able to "finish the pictures properly". The main benefit of using the drawings was how the interviews yielded greater detail about the aspects of their lives that were shown in them. They either added depth of detail to certain elements of the stories related during the semi-structured interviews, or highlighted aspects of their lives that had not previously been mentioned.

The use of collective visual methods (Boyden and Ennew 1997), through the creation of a poster as part of a focus group exercise, provided an insight into the lives of the participants that highlighted both their transitions away from the street and the contexts within which the transitions took place. I gave the young people free reign on how they wanted to present their posters. Neither recreated the spider diagram framework from my handout (Figure 3.1): the young women wrote in columns on the flip chart paper that corresponded to each of the life stages they discussed, and the young men wrote their thoughts out on A4 foolscap as prose. The discussion they had while negotiating what they were to write down provided a depth of understanding to the phrases they chose to include.

3.2.3 Audio recording the participants

Each of the interviews was audio-recorded using a digital dictation machine. The participants' permission was sought at the beginning of each interview. As a number of the young people had not seen such a recording device before, some of the interviews began with a short session on how it worked. They were able to record themselves and listen to the recording, which was effective in breaking the ice and developing a relaxed environment for the interview itself.

At the end of each interview, the participants were given the opportunity to listen to the recording. Some of the young people were fascinated by hearing their own voices, and one in particular listened to his interview more than once over the course of the morning. Listening again to the interview gave those participants who chose to, the opportunity to revisit their interviews and make more informed decisions about their stories being included in the data analysis. I explore the process of giving consent in more detail in the next section.

3.3 Methodological Implications of the Research

When conducting research with people, particularly marginalised young people and the community-based organisations supporting them, it is important to be mindful of the ethical implications of the research process and the relationships developed between the researcher and the participants. In the following sections I consider the ethics of researching street-connected children and youth and the need for effective communication to manage their expectations of the research.

3.3.1 Ethics of working with (street-connected) children and youth

A consideration of ethics and ethical procedures should be embedded within any study, especially when it concerns individuals who have experienced marginalisation. One of the first stages of developing an ethically sound position for doctoral research is to consult the codes of ethics developed by the most relevant professional association. As I was conducting my research with children and aspects of the study concerned the transitions they make from the street to school, I adhered to the guidelines laid out by the British Educational Research Association (BERA 2011). In addition, the University of Manchester requires that all researchers follow specific ethical regulations determined by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC).

As I was conducting research in a country that is not my own, and a number of the participants were under 18 and, having been street-connected, considered vulnerable, my research was classified as high risk. I was therefore required to complete and submit the requisite UREC forms and risk assessments pertaining to the classification and sit before the committee in person to discuss and defend my research proposal. I underwent this process twice: in May 2012 and January 2013, before each of the two research visits to Kenya. To enable the participants to provide voluntary and informed consent I also adapted UREC participant information sheets and associated consent forms for each of the methods conducted as part of the research. An example form is included in Appendix A.

Part of the UREC process included my compliance with the University Data Protection Policy (2013) and the 1998 Data Protection Act. Therefore, I stored recordings of my

interviews on a stand-alone hard drive device that was password protected. To enable me to work on documents from both my home laptop and office desk top I also used a password protected folder saved in cloud storage (Dropbox). Printed copies of the data, signed consent forms and earlier draft versions of my PhD were kept in lockable storage at home and, in the case of the draft documents, shredded when no longer useful. All of the data in use was anonymised, with all files receiving pseudonyms from the moment of transfer from my voice recorder.

As part of the UREC procedure, discussions into the benefits of the research for my participants were highlighted. Although it is not appropriate to pay participants, it was important that they receive recompense for their time. I therefore paid transport costs for those participants who had to travel to interviews and provided lunch or other refreshments. All of the young people I visited at their homes were exam candidates preparing for the KCPE examinations. They therefore received study guides to help with their revision for the examinations. These were not alluded to before the interviews, so that they did not act to coerce the children into participation, but were gifted as I left. I also provided text books and study guides for all the children to use at the various residential centres, a few days after the research had been completed. At the polytechnic training college I again provided refreshments during the focus group exercises, which took place after all of the trainees had participated in the narrative interviews.

All of the participants were required to give voluntary and informed consent via adapted UREC consent forms. These forms were introduced to the participants before data generation took place and revisited after the process had been completed, when the participants were asked to sign them. I took time to explain the nature of the research in multiple languages (with the help of interpreters where necessary) as part of one-to-one and/or group discussions using the participant information sheets to guide the process. I was aware that participating in a study may not necessarily be a tangible concept; I therefore re-introduced the consent forms after they had taken part. At this point the participant information sheets were read through and explained again; they had been read to the participants in advance and a copy left in the offices at the centres for them to read again during the research period.

Asking for verbal consent before participation and signed consent afterwards ensured that the young people understood what information I was taking away with me and whether they would want it to be included in a doctoral thesis and possibly other publications. Given the possibility that the participants would relate sensitive information, and this could not be predicted before the interviews took place, I felt that this process of gaining consent was the more ethical route to follow. They were all given the opportunity to listen to the recordings of their interviews, which is recommended by Boyden and Ennew (1997) as a key part of the research process with street-connected children, before making a decision. Those participants that did choose to listen found this to be an enjoyable aspect to the interview process. Hearing themselves on tape was fascinating and one young man repeatedly listened to the recording. None of the participants asked to be left out of the study. In contrast, I had dilemmas to consider at the residential centres when young people who did not fit the sampling criteria wanted to be involved.

Although UREC procedures are put in place to ensure that risk assessments have been carried out and ethical considerations have been included in the planning of the research, abiding by such a particular set of rules for research procedures alone does not imply a completely ethical research process. There are issues of justice and respect for the participants that go beyond procedural matters (Rossman and Rallis 2010). Ethical research involves 'trustfulness, openness, honesty, respectfulness, carefulness, and constant attentiveness' to ensure that it is not treated as a tick box exercise or a separate part of the research (Davies and Dodd 2002). There were many aspects of the research process that needed to be considered, some of which are discussed separately within this and later chapters (the use of interpreters (Section 3.4.1), my positionality (Section 3.1.1) and representations and the analysis of the data (Section 3.4)).

One of my main concerns was how I understood the context in which I facilitated the research study and how much the process of generating and analysing data was affected by my own personal history. Milner (2007) argues that the researcher's background (e.g. ethnicity, gender, age) matters less than the knowledge the researcher has regarding the people and communities who are involved in the research. He stresses the critical importance of the researcher who is an outsider, developing cultural knowledge (Milner

2007). Achieving a collaborative context, in this case through interactions between the researcher and the researched and the researcher and the gatekeeper organisations, is therefore critical for effective research (Woodhouse 2007). Such collaboration is also important for the participants to understand the identity of the researcher and the purpose of the research. Power dynamics could have affected my relationships, as the researcher, with the participants, in that interview situations can be overwhelming for the young people involved. Role clarification was therefore important to mediate these issues (Walmsley 2004).

Using visual sociology enabled me to develop a more equal relationship with the younger participants. Engaging with the images they created in partnership with the producers of each image allows the researcher to access that value system or meaning (Howes and Miles 2015). However, because the separation between the researcher and the researched has been overcome, significant ethical issues arise - such as the representation of vulnerable groups/individuals (Howes and Miles 2015). Often the use of visual sociology is heralded as the means by which we are able to represent those who have either been unfairly represented or unrepresented in the past. However, the use of these images and their ability to represent depend very much on the research process being undertaken (Howes and Miles 2015).

The nature of qualitative social research is such that it intrudes on people's lives, and therefore ethical issues are inherent to every stage of the process (Punch 2002). Social research can also be unpredictable and both the participants and the context within which they reside are liable to change, which was the case for this study. The research process may likewise evolve in parallel and researcher reflexivity must include an ethical dimension that encompasses representation, particularly of a marginalised voice such as young people who are/have been street-connected. The first stages of such a process of representation involved my management of participants' expectations with regards to the research.

3.3.2 Managing Participants' Expectations

In my review of the literature concerning the ethics of facilitating research with street-connected children and youth, there was more of a focus on the conflict between keeping young people safe from harm and the content of the disclosures made by young people with regards to their experiences on the street[13] (e.g. Young and Barratt 2001b, Panter-Brick 2002, Veeran 2004) than discussions related to the problems of managing expectations (e.g. Baker *et al.* 1996). However, I found that the management of the participants' expectations was one of the most important ethical considerations.

With each cohort I took time to explain the nature of the research to all of the participants in advance of the interviews taking place. Where necessary this was done in both English and Kiswahili. I explained what the study was about and what they could expect from it; and this was repeated again individually before each of the interviews. I was clear about what expectations the participants should have of the research process.

The young people who had to travel to the interviews were provided with travel expenses and were recompensed for their time with lunch or refreshments. The older youth, at the polytechnic, were also provided with refreshments during the focus group sessions. However, the children living in residential or boarding situations were not given extras as it was deemed inappropriate when they were living with so many other children who would feel jealous at the preferential treatment. In these situations (at *Nyumbani*, *Matumaini*'s centre and *St Lucia*), the initial focus groups held before the individual interviews allowed us to discuss the research together in detail.

There were two instances of the participants expecting more from the research process. During a focus group at *Nyumbani*, one boy told me that he needed socks when I asked if there were any more questions. He was advised to request them from Madam (the title given to the manager of the centre) and I again explained who I was and my role as a researcher with the group again. At *Imani* the expectations of one young man was such that they needed more sensitive negotiation. He was hopeful that readers of the thesis

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[13] For example, the responsibility of the researcher with regards to removing a child from the site of abuse; or if the young person admits to having committed a crime should that information be passed on to the authorities (Veeran 2004).

may want to offer him sponsorship. I attributed this belief to my previous role as sponsorship coordinator. I therefore took time to explain who would possibly read my thesis and the aims of the research study. In the end we found a compromise and it was decided that new case studies, which are used in securing donor funding, and possibly sponsorship, be written from the interview data for use by the organisation.

3.3.3 Negotiating with the Gatekeepers

This research study was conducted in two geographical areas with the assistance of three community-based organisations. My relationships with each organisation differed in relation to the roles I fulfilled for them:

- In-depth interior knowledge of the organisation and a prior relationship with the participants at *Imani* (a teacher working at the centre daily over two months with the participants, as well as over three years of administrative involvement and teaching at other centres).
- Interior Knowledge of the organisation developed during field research visit (administrative work in the office at *Usaidizi* for six months and limited teaching, which included some of the participants).
- External (Interview only arrangement with *Matumaini*, with responsibility for reporting).

As well as affecting how I was positioned in relation to both the organisations and the participants, there are other questions that should be considered when participants are accessed through organisations acting as gatekeepers. One of the most obvious areas of consideration is the level of control that the organisations are able to exercise over the nature of the cohorts involved in the research (e.g. Neuman 2014).

I had autonomy over choosing all of the participants within each cohort, except for the primary and secondary students living at home, who were supported by *Usaidizi*. I am confident that these students were not cherry picked to provide a favourable impression of the organisation, rather they were either the only candidates fitting the criteria and available for interview, or social work visits were scheduled at the time of my research

and it was advantageous to use this opportunity, as it impacted upon the workload of my interpreters who were social work staff.

A second concern was whether the participants felt impelled or coerced into taking part in the research because my relationship with the organisation supporting them was clearly known. This was more of an issue when I was facilitating research with *Usaidizi* and *Imani*, as I also occupied volunteer positions with the organisations. At *Matumaini* however, I was identified as an external researcher. Therefore, the ethics procedures that I outlined in the previous section were all the more important to ensure that participation was as free a choice as possible. After I explained the research to them, all of the young people invited wished to be involved. The main problems arose when those who did not fit my criteria wanted to participate also.

In general the organisations were happy to allow my study because they were interested in the nature of my research and the possible recommendations arising from it. This was most evident with *Matumaini,* as they requested that I summarise my initial observations and develop a report that would inform the following year's social work planning. They also provided me with a research assistant, a social work student on placement at their centre, who assisted me in developing context-specific analyses and delivering the report. With *Imani* and *Usaidizi* it is more difficult to make assumptions of exactly why my access was enabled as I set the criteria of the partnership in offering my time as a volunteer. I felt that I should give something to the organisation in exchange for their assistance, but I also wished to develop my understanding of the organisations in general. I exercised freedom over what I wanted to research and how I collected data within all three organisations, except for the use of photography with cohorts that included members of the Turkana community (see section 3.4.3).

In conducting my research with and through organisations I was able to improve my understanding of the local context and critically discuss my observations with staff to consider local perspectives, and in so doing establish alternative meanings to the data. Such collaboration aimed to ensure that I was able to better address issues of representation, being an outsider in the sense that I am not street-connected or Kenyan

(e.g. Finnström 2008). I was therefore able to negotiate different perspectives to avoid my voice overshadowing that of the participants (e.g. Milner 2007).

However, my roles within the organisations also provided access to information about my participants beyond the interview situation. At *Imani*, I had already met my participants within my role as teacher or sponsorship coordinator and spent a good deal of time interacting with them on a daily basis; while at *Usaidizi* I was involved in the office-based administration and delivery of their programmes and as such attended meetings with local village chiefs (council officials) and the district children's office that discussed sensitive details about children's individual cases, some of whom I interviewed. Therefore, I walked a fine line between being the researcher and the practitioner. Even though my experiences added greater depth to the stories, such as understanding the background of the participants and how they interact with both the organisation and other children assisted to leave the street, such detail was not part of the consent process. I can therefore not share these observations, but they inevitably affect how I approach the analysis of the data.

Having travelled to Kenya frequently for a number of years to volunteer with street-connected children and youth at *Imani*, before starting my doctoral research, implies that I have a particular understanding of the context and the relevance of my study, which influenced the focus of the research and the research question I chose to answer. Liaising further with the organisations, beyond issues of access, can increase the depth of this understanding and the applicability of the research to practice at a grassroots level. Such familiarity, with the context and/or the participants, may affect the research in such a way that I had to be aware of the balance between: the practical implications of the research and the application of theoretical frameworks; an 'ethnographic'[14] space and my usefulness to the organisations; and being part of an organisation and maintaining some level of academic detachment. At times negotiating between these was difficult, but I aimed to understand the implications of each in establishing contextual practical relevance, while also constructing a theoretically sound thesis.

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[14] Although I have not considered this to be an ethnographic study, my roles at *Imani* and *Usaidizi* loosely resemble the involvement of participant observer (Atkinson *et al*. 2007).

3.4 Processes of Analysis

My role in completing the analysis, was to bring the different pieces of data together (audio recordings of interviews, photographs and drawings produced by the participants, and posters (or information sheets) created as part of the focus groups) for thematic analysis to understand how young people experience leaving the street in Kenya. The analysis of the data began at the start of the first interview conducted during the initial field research visit to Kenya in 2012. It was an iterative process, rather than an isolated stage, that was both continuous, throughout the processes of data generation and later stages of analysis, and cyclical, as I made new findings and returned to previously analysed data (e.g. Kvale 1996). Within the following sections I explain the analysis of the data.

3.4.1 Interpretation, Transcription and Translation

In order to examine the experiences of young people leaving the street, I was aware of the need to understand the context within which the research was facilitated, to analyse the data effectively (e.g. Oyěwúmí 2002). Developing a research study that focusses on a Kenyan context, as a non-Kenyan researcher, can unwittingly problematise 'differences and cultural specificity' (Porter 2005:162). My previous role, working as a volunteer with *Imani* before I began this research study, positions my identity between that of outsider, and inside-outsider: as I was 'working in the culture, yet outside of mainstream identities' (Porter 2000:164). I have a greater sense of the community within which I facilitated the research than another, newly arrived, researcher in Kenya, but there are many aspects of the local culture that I am unaware of as a white, British woman. Becoming 'culturally attuned' (Porter 2005:158) to the particularities of the region under investigation was a major concern of mine during the field research visits. In order to further develop a Kenyan context through which my analysis of the data could be facilitated, I sought to fill in the gaps in my understanding of the local context by engaging various interpreters and translators in more than just the interview-translation-transcription process.

The use of translators and interpreters in research depends on the languages used by both the researcher and the participant and the methods chosen for the study. However, the mention of translation within published research with street-connected children is

limited. There are instances where this involves the translation and back translation of questionnaires completed as part of interviews (e.g. Madu *et al.*2005, Plummer *et al.*2007, McAlpine *et al.*2010) or the transcription and translation of audio-recorded interviews (e.g. Malindi and Theron 2010). However, there is limited discussion of the decisions made in the process of the translation other than the use of multiple interpreters, and/or native language speaking professionals (such as psychologists) with subject-specific vocabulary knowledge, to ensure accurate translations. Hanssen[15] (1996) made use of two interpreters to ensure a more accurate translation of the interviews he conducted with street-connected children in Sri Lanka.

Having one interpreter across the whole project meant that I could also develop a working relationship with them, similar to Jones in Bosnia (Ficklin and Jones 2009), in which I could develop a greater appreciation of the Kenyan context. In addition, I wanted the interpreters to be able to support the participants throughout the research process: especially if personal and sensitive information arose about any emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, they had experienced at home and on the street (e.g. Kudrati *et al.* 2008; Salem and Abdel-Latif 2002; Senenayake *et al.* 1998; Sherman *et al.* 2005) and they became upset. I had intended to hire an interpreter with counselling experience for the whole process. However, the organisations preferred that I work with members of staff who were already signatories of their confidentiality agreements and were expected to follow the relevant child protection policies. An advantage of this arrangement was working collaboratively with interpreters who understood both the local cultural context and the organisational context within which the participants found themselves, to identify themes arising from the data that were significant to my interpreters, and clarify those that I felt were important. In total I worked with five different interpreters who knew the young people involved in the research well: a teacher at *Imani* and social workers at *Usaidizi* and *Matumaini*.

Interviews were conducted mainly in English or Kiswahili. Phrases from other languages spoken at home or on the street featured occasionally (Turkana, Luo, Kikuyu or

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[15] Although I appreciate his approach in the use of two interpreters for accuracy I do not agree with the methods Hanssen (1996) used to encourage the children to trust him and speak during interviews. I believe that his having them stay at his home meant that he took risks with the children's reputations, and, as well as taking advantage of their moments of upset, could be viewed as coercive.

Kiluhya/Kibukusu or derivatives of Sheng creole - a colloquial mix of Kiswahili, English and other local languages popular among urban youth). As the interviews were designed to capture stories I aimed to allow the participants to speak freely. My knowledge of Kiswahili allowed me to do this as I was able to follow most of the language, but the interpreter was on hand to clarify at the end of a more difficult monologue so that I could better direct the questioning. When Kikuyu and Sheng creole were used I needed the interpreter to give a more detailed translation.

The role of the interpreter may directly involve enabling the researcher's ability to follow the line of conversation during an interview, but their choice of words in translating the participant's speech is an initial analysis. Therefore, it is important that the interpreter understands what the researcher requires of the interview process. For the first interview I conducted, I made the decision to have everything translated from the Kiswahili. This was to ascertain how he chose to translate the speech. Rather than tell me what the participant was saying, there were a number of instances when the translations reflected what he thought should be said. Sometimes it bore no relation to the original words spoken. He was not only making choices about the words that should be used, but he was reading between the lines and making judgements about which sections of the narrative he believed necessary and what should be retold to give a better story. I confirmed my suspicions after the fact by asking a third person to transcribe and translate the interview. Consequently, every subsequent interpreter underwent a short training session before we started, and all of the interview data was later given to another *Kiswahili* speaker to check through.

As well as instructions about concentrating on translating what the children and young people are actually saying, rather than what they think they should be saying, the training included the importance of respecting the silences that come after questions. I find that these can be a difficult part of any interview and it is important to leave these silences to give the children the space to answer in their own time and in their own words. Despite the training, all of the interpreters initially felt uncomfortable with the wait: some would repeat the question or reword it, but others effectively answered the question by giving them examples as a way of 'helping' the particpants to speak. Where possible I started with an English language interview, which we would deconstruct together afterwards as a

learning activity. Aside from interpreting, I also asked that they monitor the participants and make judgements with me about whether the interview should be stopped, or if further conversations were needed about sensitive issues.

The interpreters were important to the process of initial analysis, after each interview to inform those that followed, or in compiling reports requested by the organisations to inform programme planning. After each interview and at the end of each day I would sit down with my interpreter and talk about what we had listened to. These were initially feedback sessions, to improve our approach to the interviews, but they evolved into analysis sessions to locate important themes and personal elements that would later feature in this thesis. My interpreters therefore took on the role of research assistant or critical friend, offering a Kenyan view of the participant's stories.

In much the same way that the position of the researcher shapes all aspects of the research process, mediating through an interpreter has similar effects (Ficklin and Jones 2009). As all interviews are a performance, in which the researcher and the participant interact in such a way that their preconceptions of what is required of them, and the situation, are reinforced (Simpson 2003), the addition of an interpreter changes the dynamic of the performance. An interpreter is more than just an instrument for data generation, as the children's words will be affected by how they react to the interpreter's class, race, gender, age as well as the researcher's.

All of my interpreters were male, which worked well as most of the participants were male. The majority of the young women involved in the study were all students at the polytechnic. The interpreter assisting me there was approximately the same age as the participants and to some extent could be considered as part of their peer group, so there was less of a power differential to overcome. They responded well to him, and so the interviews were conducted differently. As he has been involved in interviewing 20 young people from *Matumaini* prior to this site, it was natural that he take the lead in the Kiswahili interviews. I asked questions at the end if anything came up that I felt needed exploring further. These interviews avoided the halting approach of needing to translate questions or more complex sections of their narratives and enabled a more relaxed atmosphere to the interviews, which changed the researcher-participant dynamic.

The interpreter I had at *Matumaini*, became more of a research assistant than the others, mainly as a result of the number of *Matumaini* participants that were interviewed. He transcribed the Kiswahili interview data, and I brought it back to the UK for translation. I wanted to be involved in the translation process to understand the choices made in the interpretation of the data. As translation is itself an interpretation, and therefore a stage in the analysis process, I ideally wanted translators with experience of development and youth issues. I recruited the first translator using contacts from the Institute of Development and Policy Management: a Kikuyu who had studied development studies, she worked with an organisation focused on youth in Kenya. I approached the second translator after hearing him speak at a conference on young people in difficult circumstances. He grew up in Nairobi after fleeing Somalia, before coming to the UK as a refugee, had knowledge of the Sheng creole spoken in Central Kenya, and was studying English language and linguistics. We could therefore discuss the use of certain phrases, where appropriate, to consider alternative meanings of the data.

I chose not to transcribe the interviews that were predominantly in English, choosing instead to analyse them by listening again to the recordings. Transcription can become 'solely a record of data rather than a social encounter' (Cohen *et al.* 2011:426), and the recordings provide contextual details, contained within the ambient noise that accompanied the participants' responses. For example, hearing the weaver bird colony on the recording, situated outside the classroom window at *St Lucia* boarding school, triggers memories of the room within which the interviews took place, and the young people who participated. Listening again, when I am no longer in Kenya, I am better able to visualise the detail of the interview situation, maintaining a connection to the person behind the words and a 'sense of the whole' (Cohen *et al.* 2011:429).

My analysis of the data was, therefore, an ongoing process that began during the first field visit with the first interview I completed. A number of the themes identified as a result of the analysis, became apparent to me during the interviews themselves or were recognised as significant in the debrief discussions with the interpreters, and during the translation process with the UK-based translators. I carried out further thematic analysis by returning to the recordings and transcripts over the months that followed.

3.4.2 Analysing the Data

Each of the participants were provided with a pseudonym, which was applied to the filenames at the point that the recordings were transferred onto an encrypted hard drive. Within the analysis process the pseudonyms only were used. As I explain the processes through which I analysed the data, I have chosen to use actual pieces of data from three of my participants: Andrew and Keith from *Imani*, and Karanja from *Usaidizi*. I use Andrew's semi-structured interview responses, a photograph taken by Karanja and Keith's drawing. They have been chosen because aspects of their responses/images are pertinent to an explanation of a particular aspect of the analysis. An overview of the analysis process is shown in figure 3.2. Stage 1 in the diagram refers to the initial analysis conducted in the field as themes become evident during the interview and in the debrief sessions with the interpreter.

I followed an inductive, bottom up approach to analysing the data from the various interviews and focus groups (Braun and Clarke 2006; Urquhart 2012), using the research question to provide a broad structure to the analysis - what are the experiences of young people leaving the street in Kenya? (Stage 2 in Figure 3.2). The focus on transitions directed my analysis towards the interview responses that concerned transitions away from the street, and the lives of the participants after they left it. Rather than asking other, more specific questions of the data, I approached the analysis by 'listening naively' (Lieblich *et al.*1998), to take the participants' responses at face value, and enabling a data-driven thematic analysis (similar to open coding, e.g. Gibson and Hartman 2013; Urquhart 2012) to focus on what they chose to tell me about their experiences of leaving the street and their lives afterwards. For example, my concentration on transitions was broadened to include the various physical transitions that make up the journey followed by young people after they have left the street (e.g. from the street to a short-term transition centre; from a short-term transition centre to a long-term care centre; from transition centre to home; between schools etc).

Stage 1: Initial Analysis at
the data generation stage -
identification of themes

Identification of themes evident
in the participants' responses at
time of interviews and in later
debrief conversations with
interpreters

Broad structure provided by
research question

Focus on transitions from
street and lives afterwards

Stage 2: All data from
each participant in a
cohort analysed

Listening naively (Lieblich *et
al.* 2012): bottom-up data
driven thematic analysis

Open coding of extracts -
identifying themes
(Braun & Clarke 2006; Uruquart
2012)

Stage 3: Hierarchy of
codes developed to
identify overarching
categories for each
participant

Stage 4: Revisit data -
adapt categories to
better represent extracts
of data within and
across cohorts

Stage 5: Hierarchy of
categories developed
within each cohort to
identify interconnecting
themes

Stage 6: Three
overarching themes
established

Figure 3.2 Overview of the data analysis process.

Seven cohorts of participants were involved in the study, which are explained in detail in Section 3.1.4. The young people in each cohort attended a specific school or vocational training facility, and/or stayed in a particular residential situation. I conducted the data generation cohort by cohort, which enabled me to make observations across a particular cohort during the field research visits. To maintain this approach later on, I analysed their interview responses individual by individual (or group by group in the case of focus groups and group interviews) within a particular cohort before moving on to the next

cohort. I did not analyse line by line, but rather incident by incident (Charmaz 2006), coding the themes I identified, and selecting, or transcribing, the extracts that corresponded to them (Stage 2 in Figure 3.2). To recognise that the data comprises of stories shared by young people, I referred to it as interview responses or images.

Analysis of an individual's story began during the first interview facilitated with that participant: the identification of themes was possible at the descriptive level at this initial stage (Kvale 1996). In reading a transcript or listening to an interview recording for the first time, I was revisiting the responses and validating my initial analysis, as well as interrogating it for new information. The thematic analysis involved selecting extracts from the interview responses and coding them to identify themes in the data. To illustrate the analytical process I present Andrew's story as an example. Andrew was supported by *Imani* to complete *jua kali* training to be a mechanic. In Figure 3.2, I show a selection of the codes identified in his narrative interview. The initial coding was as broad as possible, identifying various different themes in Andrew's responses: for example the need to support his family, police harassment or reconnecting with the opportunities on the street. Many of these themes overlapped.

Figure 3.3 is structured to show some of the interconnections between the themes. The numbered boxes refer are the descriptive themes initially identified, and the extracts that correspond to them. The smaller boxes, to the centre of the diagram, are the codes assigned to the extracts. The most prominent theme in Andrew's data was the need to support his family. It was one of the reasons why he made multiple migrations to the street (shown by the extracts in box 1 of Figure 3.3): the first, when he lived in Nairobi, happened when his mother could not afford primary school fees and the last, after a move to the town where *Imani* worked, was due to a lack of money when he was in form three of secondary education. Needing to support his family was also one of the reasons why he struggled at school (box 4), as he only managed a partial attendance, and explains why he was reconnecting with the opportunities available on the street (box 6) alongside his apprenticeship.

Andrew

3. The importance of friends

"I found my colleague there. One of them. He told me I am going to centre."

4. Difficulties returning to or being retained at school

"My teacher was no no you are talking more Kikuyu. There we spoke kikuyu but when I come here they are talking more English and Kiswahili. It was very difficult for me."

"My mother has more children and she has small baby so cannot work [...] she cannot pay [...] I tell you I was to school three days or maybe two so that I could survive. I do not take lunch there [...] Even in secondary I have never been in school for the whole as I need school fees and it is me who is finding the money."

5. The Importance of Education

"If you want to be employed you must have form four. Not for all jobs, but we say that if you want to work you need to earn certificate of form four. My please is to be a soldier, to be in the army. I need form four to get the army."

"Before they were employing people who were not yet educated. Now they said that more people who are educated are not in work, we are not going to take those who are not educated as we have those who are educated. Now you see if you are not educated you cannot get the work."

"If I go to school it would be better. I would be employed in a good job. Education is good. I have struggled enough and I have realised that if I go to school I can survive. I can survive because I am surviving but it is not very good. I like school."

Reasons for leaving the street

2. Stigma related to the street

"Now I go to town when I drop school and I was picked up by police and put in jail for six month. They met me in the time and it was midnight. They caught me and said I was loitering for prostitution and I was a thief."

"After jail I was on the street. I was dirty."

"I have now been in jail for four times in my life. I felt uncomfortable. I could not tell people what was happening. I told my teacher I was in shambani. I could not say I was in police station as it would spoil my name."

Police harassment and/ or jail

Qualifications for future career opportunities

Language issues in classroom on return to school

Challenges linked to financial sustainability

6. Reasons for reconnecting with opportunities on the street

"Now I stay where I usually training, that person used to give me 50shillings with that 50 shillings I stay without lunch."

"I want to get a good life. I am so confused that I just need to go away and go to street. When I am in the street I can get money to pay rent, to eat and life go on. But in Imani there is no help now."

"My mother she lives there and I am living close. These days when my mother and the husband they fight and my sister she will get me in the night. Everything I give them they sold. Even I gave them stove and I go back and they no have anything. They say they are stolen, but my mother she sells the stove. She lives in the slum. I try so that the children are in school. my mother never pays the rent. Yesterday I paid the rent so that they cannot be chased from home. That money I was to pay the rent of my house but I pay for them. So even if I have something I must give them so that life must go on. If I have money I want to go far away from here so I can make life better when I am asleep my sister call me, even ten times my sister calls at night to call me to tell them to stop fighting. "

1. Reasons for migration to the Street

First time:
"when I was young we used to go and look for firewood with my mother so that we could sell to get food and money to pay school fees [...] My mother cannot go there to look for wood as I do not go so she is not safe to go […] So now I was needing to work."

After third year of Secondary Education (that he had to leave):
"I could not go there to look for firewood as there was a time I was caught by the police and I was put in jail for one month because I was on that side at D___ and they caught us."
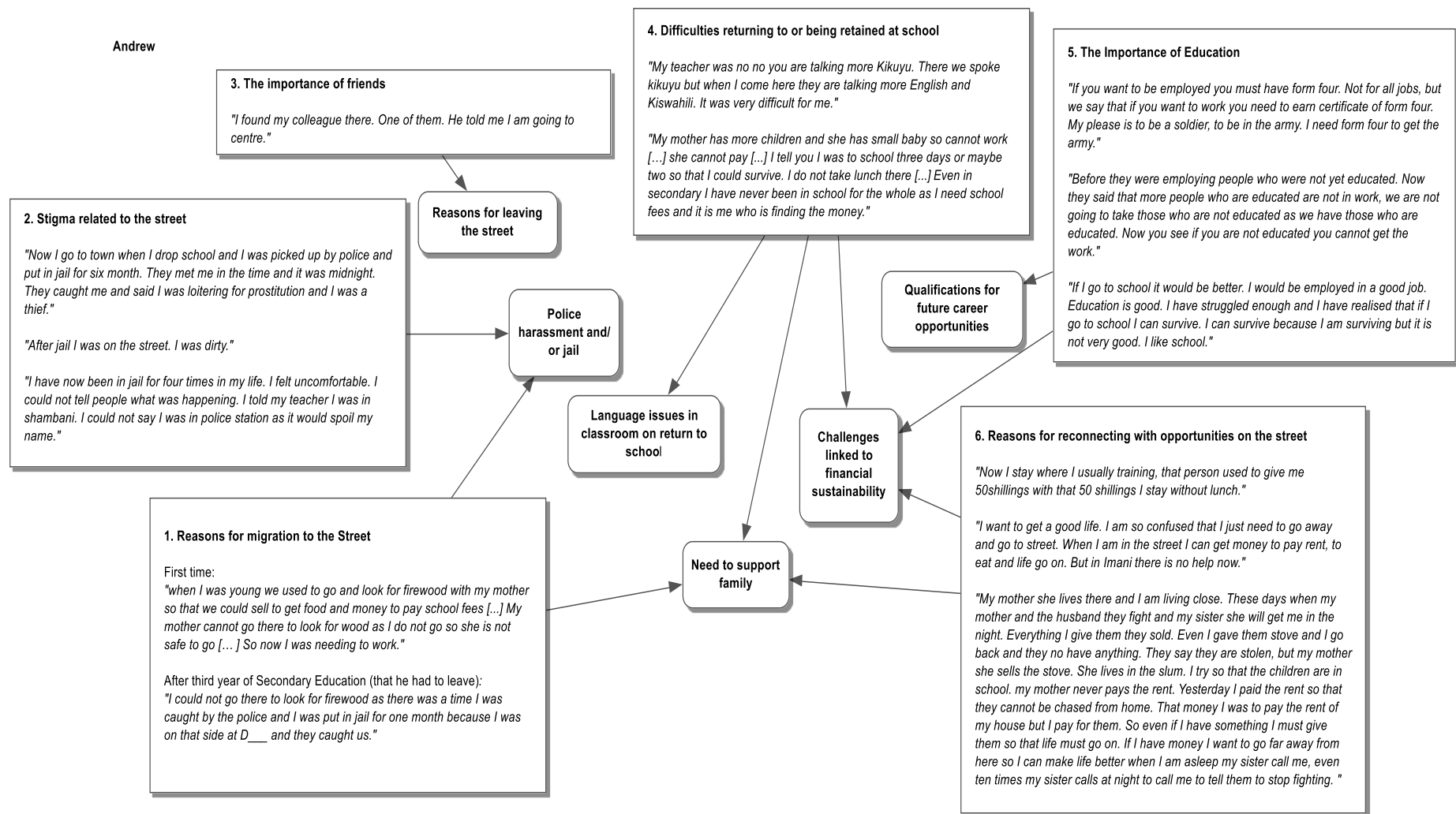
Need to support family

Figure 3.3: The coding of extracts taken from Andrew's interview for six themes.

Once the themes were coded for, I categorised the codes to establish higher order themes related to Andrew's experiences of leaving the street and his life afterwards (Stage 3 in figure 3.2). Table 3.3 provides an overview of the descriptive codes, in the middle column, assigned to the themes identified in the left-hand column (taken from the boxes numbered 2-4 in Figure 3.3), and the categories established from the codes, shown in the right-hand column.

Theme	How it Manifests (example codes)	Categories
Stigma related to the Street (2)	- Police Harassment - jail time for being on the street - attitudes of teachers	Lack of Acceptance or Respect
Importance of Friends (3)	- motivations for leaving the street - support for transition	Supportive Relationships
Returning to School from the Street (4)	- challenges of using different language to that spoken at home or on the street - part-time attendance to support family - stigma related to jail time	Acceptance Supportive Relationships
Education (5)	- the importance of formal education qualifications - choosing vocational training over formal education - helping siblings to stay in school - financial sustainability	Aspirations for the Future
(Re-)connecting with the Street (6)	- difficulties returning to or being retained in school - financial sustainability - contributions to deal with alcoholic mother	Supporting Family Aspirations for the Future

Table 3.3: Themes identified in Andrew's interview responses, the codes assigned and the categories established**.**

As table 3.3 shows, a number of the codes fall into more than one of the themes shown in the left-hand column. The categories established, relate to Andrew's experiences of leaving the street and his life afterwards. The snapshot provided by this brief analysis does not necessarily represent the wider context of Andrew's story. The full transcript of his interview, as well as my descriptive contextual analysis of his story, is included in Appendix B.

I employed the same process of analysis for the recordings of the focus group sessions as I have detailed for Andrew above. The extracts selected, were labelled with each individual speaker's name to enable responses from the focus groups to be considered alongside those made by the participants during their narrative interviews. Focus group data is negotiated, in that responses are constructed as part of interactions between the various participants (Cohen *et al.* 2011; Halkier 2010). This was especially the case for the focus groups at the polytechnic, which were centred upon the development of posters. The negotiation in this instance, explicitly related to how they decided the poster content. The posters, which contained quite a bit of text, were analysed in the same way as an interview transcript. The nature of the participants' discussion and the poster content, provided another level of detail to the themes included, and suggested codes that applied to multiple participants, especially to the wider context within which young people leave the street.

Using multiple methods reinforced elements of the participants' stories that featured in the responses from multiple interviews, providing additional detail, or identified new detail that would not necessarily have been mentioned if using only one method. In addition to the audio recordings of narrative interviews, image-elicitation interviews and focus groups, the data corpus comprised of drawings and photographs. The meaning of which, decided by the participants who created the images, was not immediately obvious. For example, Figure 3.4 shows an image of a school bell, which was suspended from a tree adjacent to a large open space in front of the school (not all of the detail is pictured), taken by Karanja, living at *Nyumbani*.

On its own this is a picture of the school bell, but within the context of the image-elicitation interview, this bell signalled the beginning of the school day and the assembly of students ready to start learning. It was used, along with the other photographs taken by Karanja, to structure his descriptions of the first few days at the centre and school. In particular, the image was used to remind him to talk about how the day was ordered and the daily routine structured.

Figure 3.4: A picture of a school bell taken by Karanja.

(The Kiswahili/English chalk writing, 'is *Jembe,* is *Kengele*', means 'is a plough, is a bell' - as a plough blade is being used as the bell)

The photographs were a means for the participants to relate information about moving to the centre, and to school. The walk around the school and *Nyumbani*, triggered memories of the transition. The images created by the participants acted as *aide-memoirs* to help them relate the story during the interview situation. Therefore, during the analysis process the photographs themselves were secondary to the interview responses describing them, but offered tangible detail to the recorded descriptions.

Each photograph created by a participant represented a particular story, as well as being part of a larger narrative about their move to *Nyumbani* and the neighbouring school. The stories found within the drawings were even more detailed, as an individual image was created by each person to answer a particular question. For example, Keith from *Imani* drew a map when I asked him to draw something that he wanted to tell me about (Figure 3.5). The map features many of the landmarks seen around the town where he lived and trained, but only includes those that were important to the story he wanted to tell. The map was a tool with which Keith structured his interview responses, and a reference point for the analysis.

Figure 3.5: Keith's representation of town (names have been hidden to maintain confidentiality)

As well as the including only what was salient to the story he wished to relate, Keith's composition suggests the degree to which certain landmarks were important. For example, the bridge, featured at the bottom right hand corner, is drawn at a considerably larger scale to the rest of the map: its size, as well as its inclusion on the map, emphasises its importance. The significance of the bridge to Keith's story was the insight it provided about his aspirations for the future (detailed in Section 4.3.1). However, although the image itself could be coded as income generation, importance of friends and family, and

having aspirations, these codes were not immediately identifiable without the interview responses. Therefore, the analysis of images was predominantly focused on the audio recordings of the image-elicitation interviews that narrated the images.

3.4.3 Selective Coding to Identify Overarching Themes

Once I had completed the process of identifying themes and coding the data, I began to interrogate the interconnections between them (Stage 5 in Figure 3.2) in order to start a process of selective coding (e.g. Gibson and Hartman 2013; Robson 2011; Urquhart 2012): to identify associated categories (or interconnecting themes), inherent to the data from a cohort or across cohorts. Approaching the analysis of the participants' responses individual by individual within a cohort, and then cohort by cohort, enabled the codes to be compared within and across cohorts. Categories associated with these codes were identified as part of this selective coding process. Three main overarching themes were eventually established. In this section I provide an example of the process of coding and how the overarching themes were selected.

Only one cohort participated in the first field research visit to Kenya in 2012, the young men who were supported by *Imani* to be apprentices. The data from this cohort was, therefore, the first to be analysed. In focusing on the research question, I coded extracts related to the process of leaving the street and the participants' lives afterwards. A number themes applied to the whole cohort. For example, all of the young men at *Imani* appeared to engage in income generating opportunities on the street, alongside their apprenticeship training. The motivations for this street-(re)connectedness were related to the challenges they faced in establishing a life for themselves after leaving the street.

Street-(re)connections was a prominent theme. In coding for it, the extracts associated with the code fell into the two main categories: how the young men were engaging with the opportunities available on the street, and why they were engaging with them, shown in Figure 3.6. Focusing on why, as this explained the challenges the young men were facing, I identified four reasons why the young men were (re-)connecting with the opportunities available on the street (listed in the Why? box in Figure 3.6). All of the young men mentioned having to pay for rent and food, six of the nine supported their families in some way, two spoke of preparing for the future (getting married, having

children and/or building a house), and the majority of the cohort discussed how the extra money earned helped them to buy accessories that other young people in the community possessed. These reasons suggested four associated categories, included in Figure 3.6. Each of these categories related to interactions with other people, or actors, involved in the lives of the young men. Associated categories were compiled for each of the themes identified in the data from the cohort.

Street-(re)connections

How?

-Portering outside supermarket and at main stage
- Collecting Scrap
- Cleaning market stalls
- Cleaning Verandhas
- (*Boda* driver)

Why?

- Supporting incapacitated single parents (roles of responsibility)
- Saving for future families/ weddings/ building homes
- Buying clothes/accessories/ mobile phone credit
- Paying rent and buying food

Associated Categories

- Roles of Responsibility

- Plans for the future

- Identifying with local youth community

- Survival and self-sufficiency

Influential Actors

- Family

- Friends

- Wider Society

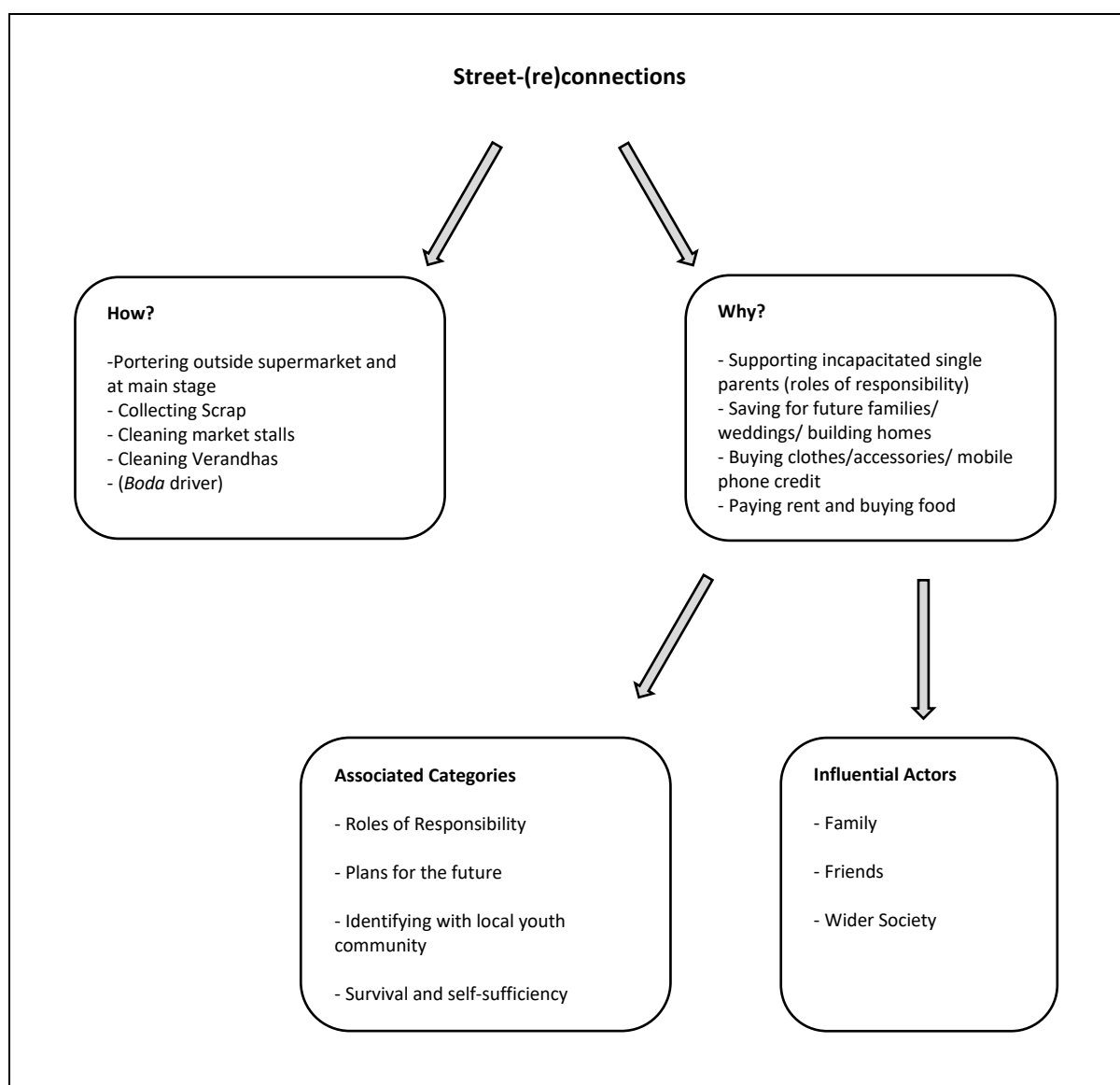**Figure 3.6:** Relating the code street-(re)connectedness to the reasons behind the code and the associated categories developed, for the young men at *Imani*

I followed the same process of analysis for all of the cohorts. I noted themes associated with leaving the street, or related to the participants' lives after the street and other aspects arising from the data, and coded for these themes. I established categories of

codes that were compared across the participants within a cohort, listening again to the interview recordings to see if themes present in interviews analysed later, could also be identified in those analysed earlier. Comparing the content of the photographs across the cohort, immediately identified important themes. If a number of the participants took photographs of a similar subject, it stood out very quickly as a significant to the transition. Corresponding audio recordings were compared to establish similarities and interconnections. These interconnections between the participants' stories were established more easily in relation to similar photographs.

The categories were adapted in order to more effectively describe all the corresponding extracts of data, or they were split into smaller categories to better represent the differences. Associated categories that described interconnecting themes within and across cohorts were identified and compared, by revisiting the data to code for themes in earlier cohorts analysed that only became evident in later cohorts. For example, the auto-photography exercise conducted at *Nyumbani*, emphasised the importance of being clean to the children living there. Returning to the data from *Imani* identified responses that also referred to the state of being unclean or dirty on the street. These responses, shown below, had not been immediately identified in the initial analysis, as the references to being clean were brief and subsumed within broader discussions of negative social interactions and being out-of-place on the street.

> After Jail I was on the street, I was **dirty**.
>> Andrew, from *Imani*, describing one of his returns to the street

> Mostly in a town *chokora* are street boys and the *kanjo* they do not like to see them there. The *kanjo* they think that they make the town **dirty**.
>> James, from *Imani*, describing life on the street

> I was used to education, taking **baths**, being smartly dressed all the time and sleeping in a house.
>> Josephat, from *Imani*, describing his first few days on the street

Being clean, as a code within the data, was categorised as keeping up appearances, which was later subsumed within the associated category of respect and status.

When I was confident all of the themes had been identified, I selected the most prominent associated categories across all of the cohorts by interrogating how they

interconnected with each other. Many of the categories overlapped and a hierarchy could be developed, in which I determined sub-categories and identified the three overarching themes explored in Chapter Four. These were: Support through Acceptance, Respect and Status, and Relating to Family. The overarching themes were selected because they interconnected with a large number of the other themes and they were the most relevant to the research question.

Figure 3.7 is a visual representation of how a number of the themes and associated categories are interconnected. The Three overarching themes are shown within text boxes. With these overarching themes as the focus, I revisited the data, and the extracts selected as part of the earlier stages in the analysis, to develop a comprehensive picture of the different ways in which these themes were manifest.

In addition to these three overarching themes, revisiting the data suggested an all-encompassing theme that became the central thesis of this study. To a large extent the young people's journeys away from the street could be characterised by their efforts to develop a sense of belonging to the situations in which they found themselves after leaving the street. This sense of belonging was influenced by competing aspects of their lives and, given its prominence in the data, appeared to be central to their experiences of transition.

Summary

This chapter has presented the research design of the study, explaining the rationale behind my choice of an exploratory, qualitative study before evaluating the research methods I engaged for generating data. An overview of the processes through which I analysed the data highlighted the identification of three overarching themes: Support through Acceptance, Respect and Status, and Relating to Family. In the following chapter, I interrogate how these three overarching themes are manifest in the experiences of leaving the street related by the participants. I assess the extent to which the analysis of these experiences, and the corresponding themes, contributes to the development of a conceptual overview of such transitions, and how they can be characterised by the process of developing a sense of belonging to their new situation.
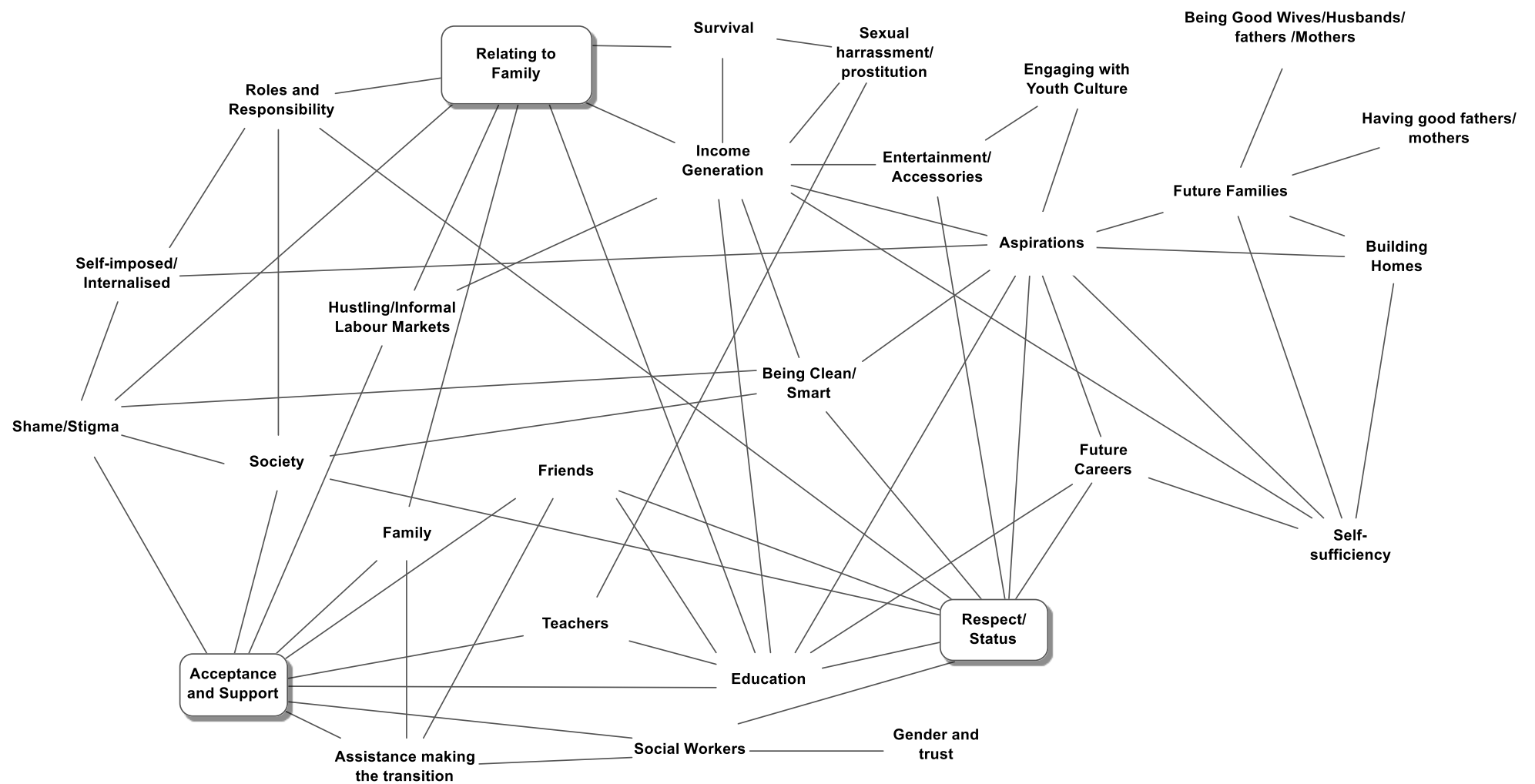
Figure 3.7: Mapping the intersections between the themes and/or associated categories identified in the data.

Chapter Four

Explaining Transition Experiences through three Overarching Themes

Central to the study reported in this thesis was a single research question: what are the experiences of young people leaving the street in Kenya?. The question formed the basis of a loose, iterative, bottom-up approach to analysis through the interpretation and thematic coding of the data (Braun and Clarke 2006). The analysis involved the identification of themes associated with leaving the street, or related to the participants' lives after the street and other significant aspects arising from the data. Coding the data for these themes suggested associated categories that were compared for all of the young people who participated. Analysing the interconnections between the themes and associated categories led to the development of a hierarchy of themes and sub-themes, related to the extent to which they represented the data corpus and described the participants' experiences of leaving the street and their lives afterwards.

Three overarching themes were identified: Support through Acceptance, Relating to Family, and Respect and Status. The first theme was the most prominent, and concerned the participants' day-to-day interactions with friends and school-based peers, and teachers. These interactions influenced the way in which the participants' experienced the transition away from the street. Similar to the first theme, Relating to Family involves the extent to which the participants felt supported through the transition, but this time focussing on their families or the significant adults providing care in the absence of parents and extended family. In addition, it concerns the challenge of supporting their families, especially financially, and how that affected the decisions they made in migrating to, leaving, and (re)connecting with the street. The third theme, Respect and status, describes how the participants' attempted to establish a place for themselves in the communities they transitioned into, and was therefore related to the challenges they faced after leaving the street. Respect and status were aspirational: related to the role of

education and training, and other economic activities, as pathways to gaining respect and achieving their hopes for the future.

The extracts from the participants' responses included within this chapter go some way to explaining whether they were able to settle in to their new situations and develop a sense of belonging to the communities in which they lived, worked and were educated. Throughout this chapter, I explore what this sense of belonging means, and identify the barriers and opportunities that influence young people's experiences of leaving the street in Kenya. In so doing, I use the participants' responses to shed light on how each of the overarching themes in turn contributes to an overall understanding of these transitions, as well as their individual experiences of them. Section 4.1 considers the first theme: Support through Acceptance. This theme is broken down to first examine the role of peer support during the transition process, paying particular attention to the role of friends who have also lived on the street. Secondly, I focus on school communities and the ways in which interactions with teachers and school-based peers affect how young people leaving the street experience going (back) into the classroom.

Section 4.2 considers the theme of Relating to Family by exploring the relationships that the participants have with their families, both in terms of receiving support and the roles of responsibility they adopted to support their families. As a number of the participants were unable to return home, and all of them interacted with social workers as part of the transition process, this section also includes an examination of the interactions that the participants had with other significant adults in their lives. Section 4.3 considers the participants' efforts to develop roles in the community, or a status, that engenders respect. It explores the future roles in society that they aspired to achieve and how the development of respect and reputation began with the right first impressions, and the ability to distance themselves from their lives on the street.

Within this chapter I have chosen to include responses that represent transition experiences that were mentioned by multiple participants. There are a small number of participants whose responses mention more than one of these experiences. These participants are included more often than others. Responses from other participants that provide a greater level of detail, or an alternative point of view with regards to these

experiences, are included to develop a more complete picture of key aspects of the transition process. Although I refer to the participants' contributions to the interview process I do not necessarily detail their background/histories within the main body of the text. Each of the participants is briefly introduced in the Participants' Pen Portraits boxes appear in close proximity to the first time they are that mentioned.

4.1 Support through Acceptance

When young people leaving the street return to a family or community after a long period of absence, or settle in to a new one, they undergo the upheaval of settling in to this new situation and understanding what is required of them. In this section, I explore the interactions they have with friends, school-based peers, and teachers, to explain the importance of being accepted by these members of the community and how support, or a lack of support, influences their experiences of transition.

4.1.1 Receiving Peer Support

On the street, young people can develop supportive relationships through which they may find belonging, social capital and support (Beazley 2003; Davies 2008; Evans 2006; Karabanow 2008; Lucchini 1993). Overcoming such social and emotional ties to the street as they leave, has been described as an emotional upheaval, which can emote both feelings of hope and self-confidence, as well as of 'loneliness, guilt, and disloyalty' (Karabanow 2008:782). Therefore, the friendships developed by young people as they leave the street would, to some extent, suggest a means of overcoming street-based attachments as they move forward. Many of the participants described friends that helped them to settle in when they first migrated to the street, and groups of street-connected children that slept together for protection, or worked together to earn money. They were not explicit about the importance of these relationships, or if they struggled to leave these friends behind. However, friends were mentioned as important to helping them find their feet, when they described arriving on the street and again when leaving it.

Peer support, or the impact of developing accepting and supportive relationships with peers, was a central theme in explaining the participants' experiences of leaving the

street. Friends and friendships were mentioned by all of the participants involved in the study, particularly in relation to peers supported by the same organisation, or attending the same schools and training centres. The nature of the social interactions they shared with peers at various points along the transition journey was instrumental to developing a sense of belonging to the communities in which they lived and were educated. The support through acceptance they received was especially influential before and after a physical transition: such as moving from the street to a transitional care centre, from a transitional care centre to school, and from primary school to secondary school. This support was most evident in the interactions between the young men from the cohort at *Imani*.

As I saw the participants from *Imani* on a daily basis at the drop-in centre, I witnessed the friendship groups that they had developed with each other, and with others who had made the transition from the street into vocational training. This social network was not necessarily comprised of individuals who were on the street together, and they had not all been through *Imani*'s reintegration programme (a stay at the short-term transitional care centre before moving home), but their shared identity as a result of their similar histories and experiences formed the basis of supportive friendships. They spent time together at the garage complex where they were training, at the drop-in centre, and

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Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.1

Andrew was supported by *Imani* to train as a mechanic. He lived with a friend in one of the informal settlements very close to his mother (an alcoholic) and his siblings. Andrew had been on the street on two separate occasions. The first time he lived in Nairobi as a 10 year old boy with his older brother, who still lived on the street with his partner and child. The second time he lived on the street, he could no longer attend secondary school in the town where the study took place. He was taken to *Imani* by Thomas, another participant, and requested an apprenticeship so that he could earn money as he trained. At the time of the research Andrew was the main breadwinner in the family.

Chebete was supported by Matumaini to train as a tailor at the polytechnic. She lived at home with her aunt, siblings and cousin, and walked to the polytechnic each morning to attend her training course. Chebete was having difficulties at home as her aunt was struggling to support all of the young people living with her.

Faith was supported by Matumaini to train as a tailor at the polytechnic. She lived at home with her mother and walked to the polytechnic each morning to attend her training course. Faith had previously finished primary school at *Tumekuja* while she stayed at *Matumaini*'s centre, visiting her family at weekends.

Thomas was supported by *Imani* to train as a mechanic. He lived with a friend in the informal settlement, very close to his mother and his siblings. His mother had a respiratory disease and was unable to work. Thomas had been on the street on three separate occasions. The first time was when he lived in Nairobi. He moved to the town where the study took place when a "good Samaritan" assisted his family to move. At the time of the research he was the main breadwinner in the family.

during their social time.

As well as being rooted in shared experiences of transition, the friendships between the young men were also the result of one of them being integral to the other deciding to leave the street. A number of the young men referred to a 'friend' who took the role of convincing them to approach the staff at *Imani* for assistance. Thomas met Andrew and took him to the drop-in centre, which formed the basis of their close friendship: Andrew referred to Thomas as his "best friend", and vice versa. There were similarities in their backgrounds, as both of them supported incapacitated single mothers and their siblings, as well as having lived on the street, and this shared understanding made their friendship stronger.

The cohort of young people supported by *Matumaini* to train at the polytechnic shared a similar sense of camaraderie. A number of the trainees boarded together at the polytechnic dormitories and the day students lived close to each other in one of the informal settlement outside of the town. Being associated with *Matumaini* appeared to give them a structure of support.

> At *Matumaini* there is safety and security, and supportive friends…who listen.
>
> Chebete

Chebete mentions the importance of support from friends, which some of the young people at the polytechnic referred to as continuing after they had completed this stage of their education. For example, Chebete and her friend Faith made plans to share their business endeavours as tailors once they had completed their courses.

The young people at the polytechnic had lived at *Matumaini*'s centre together and developed strong friendships over a number of years. At the centre, the children stay Monday to Friday, attending the primary school across the road, and go home at weekends and holidays, therefore they spend most of their time with their friends at the centre. If they were moved to another primary school, because of good exam performance for example, they did so in groups and tended to board there. Therefore, if the young people at the polytechnic are representative of the *Matumaini* experience,

providing a support network of young people who have similar life experiences could be said to develop social capital and strong emotional ties.

Usaidizi and *Imani* followed different models of reintegration, in which young people transition from the street to short-term transition centres before returning home. The long-term benefits from the peer support provided during their time in transitional care may not be guaranteed, especially if they were the only young person to return to their particular community and school from the centres. Five of the participants lived in rural homes and attended schools nearby, where they were the only student to have been supported by one of the three organisations. In addition, children graduating to boarding secondary schools (who were not part of this study) may have found themselves boarding alone. In the next two sections I explore the relationships between those participants' who were attending primary and secondary schools and their peers from the wider school communities.

4.1.2 Arriving at a New School

When they talked about their first few days, weeks or months at their new schools, some of the participants discussed issues that made the transition challenging, and highlighted how support and encouragement were needed to help them settle in to their new situations. These issues included getting used to length of the school day, the number of subjects that they had to learn, writing, and using a different language to the one they spoke regularly.

> Waking up early is a problem after being on the street and you do not have to wake up.
>
> Francis

> It was difficult to concentrate for the whole day and to start doing all the different subjects. In *Upendo*[16] there was only literacy and numeracy classes. They helped me to learn to read and work with numbers – so I was ready for school. But we suddenly had more subjects to learn and the day was longer. At *Upendo* we went to literacy classes for only two hours a day and then we go to lunch. I was also going in to class 7 [the penultimate year of primary school] and I did not feel prepared for class 7.
>
> Josephine

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[16] Josephine lived on the street in Nairobi and completed the initial stages of her transition with an organisation based in the capital city. Organisations in Kenya sometimes develop networks so that children returning to rural areas of Kenya, that are not easily reached by social workers in the city, may be monitored by a more local team.

Writing for the whole day was tiring.

<div align="right">Sabila</div>

Going from the street to *Matumaini* and then to school there were challenges, there is so much expectation. You had to work in English and you were used to talking Kiswahili. You have to face different exams. There were many subjects that you had to study. In class 1 only 3 [subjects] but in class 4, 7 subjects so there are a lot to study. Exercises are many and homework and assignments very difficult. Transport is a challenge… it is far for some of us. It was difficult making new friends, this was a new environment to get used to and everyone has a different background and you are in a new place.

<div align="right">Ronald</div>

The problems experienced in the extracts above, suggest that major adaptations were required of them in terms of: completing academic work; behaviour; concentration; transportation; and routine. Many of the participants mentioned the informal education programmes that were delivered by all three of the gatekeeper organisations, as part of their reintegration programmes. The aim of these classes was to prepare the young people for the return to the formalised environment of school, and in general they spoke quite highly of the courses. Only Josephine, see her extract above, spoke of issues with the provision. At *Upendo*[17], a Nairobi-based organisation where she underwent the initial stages of her transition, they had focussed mainly on literacy and numeracy for a short period of time each day. She therefore struggled at the beginning with getting through the daily timetable and the additional requirements of the curriculum.

Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.2

Francis, aged 12, was staying at *Matumaini*'s centre and studying at *Tumekuja* school. He spent his weekends at home with his mother in an informal settlements outside of the town.

Josephine was supported by Matumaini to board at *St Lucia* Catholic primary school. Josephine lived on the street in Nairobi and completed the initial stages of her transition with an organisation based in the capital city. She transferred to *Matumaini* so that she could redevelop her relationship with her mother and siblings. Josephine visited her family during the school holidays.

Mulu was living at *Nyumbani*, a long-term transition centre run by *Usaidizi*, because he was unable to return home to his family. He never knew his father and had been brought up by a grandmother. His mother returned when he was about eight years old and died soon afterwards from AIDS related complications. Mulu's grandmother died a few years later. Social workers were developing a plan to send him to an uncle to stay while at secondary school.

Ronald was supported by Matumaini to train in construction at the polytechnic. He boarded at the polytechnic as his father lived too far away for him to commute every day. Ronald had previously finished part of his primary school education at *Tumekuja* while he stayed at *Matumaini*'s centre, and later moved to a boarding primary school. Ronald completed his secondary school education and worked as an unqualified teacher in a primary school for two years before deciding to train in construction.

Sabila, aged 13, was living at *Nyumbani*, a long-term transition centre run by *Usaidizi*, because he was unable to return home to his family. Sabila's parents had abandoned him when he was very young. His mother had mental health issues and *Usaidizi* were looking at whether he would be returning home or going to live with an extended family member.

Ronald's description of the issues faced by students in schools includes the problems of language use, transportation, completing homework, and learning how to study for exams; but also highlights the difficulties of making transitions between different stages of education. In this instance going from lower to upper primary involved the addition of four more subjects. In doing so he emphasises the ongoing issues that young people face as they continue along their journey through education. Such transitions are similarly experienced by all children, but they can seem more challenging when experienced as part of the journey away from the street.

One challenging aspect of this journey relates, as Ronald mentions, to the difficulties that the participants faced in making friends. Mulu, who lived at *Nyumbani* (Usaidizi's long-term transition centre), referred to the loneliness he felt when he first arrived at the centre. He described his photograph of a tree (Figure 4.1), taken during the auto-photography exercise, as the place where he "watched what was happening" during the first few days at school as he "had no friend" (Corcoran 2015a). Therefore, highlighting both the difficulty of starting at a new school and the importance of having friends there.

Figure 4.1: The tree under which Mulu sat during his first days at school

Jackson, from *Usaidizi*, equated his ability to settle in to a new school and *Nyumbani* with having friends, highlighting the importance of feeling accepted and supported by his peers.

> Also when I went there [*Nyumbani*] I met people I did not know and had never seen before. I feel like I was lonely. It was difficult to feel at home there and it was difficult to settle in to the new school.
>
> Jackson

Eric, from *Nyumbani*, even explains how the problems he faced within the classroom were resolved when he made friends.

> When I reached [*Usaidizi*'s short-term transition centre] even reading was difficult because I didn't have any friends, the education left my head [my mind was blank]. And then when I reached there I asked for a pen and a paper and then I started practising education and now I have *shika kusoma* [caught reading].
>
> Eric

He suggests that the development of supportive friendships makes other issues, such as coping with the length of the day, the number of subjects, and getting to grips with reading and writing, less of a challenge. Malindi and Theron (2010) describe how bonds shared with street-based peers and the development of a sense of community, contributes to the maintenance of wellbeing for street-connected children and youth and the development of a sense of belonging and support (see also Beazley 2003; Davies 2008; Evans 2006). The participant's responses suggest that such peer support could be extended to also describe how they were able to develop a sense of belonging as they left the street. Eric's improved confidence in learning and Jackson's ability to settle in to his new home and school, both indicate the value of supportive peers to the transition process.

The participants living in residential centres, (such as *Nyumbani*, *Matumaini*'s centre, and *St Lucia* boarding school), and attending schools with the young people they live with, could be thought of as having an accessible support network. A number of them talked

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Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.3

Frank was supported by Matumaini to board at *St Lucia* Catholic primary school. He had previously lived at *Matumaini*'s centre and attended *Tumekuja* School. He moved after one year as his exam grades were considered high enough to be sponsored at a school that would ensure better performance. Frank wanted to be a doctor.

Jackson was a secondary school student from *Usaidizi* who lived with his foster mother and her family. His younger brother, Karanja, also participated in the study. They had initially migrated to the street after an argument with their mother about a fish. They lived there on and off for a year, sometimes staying with a "good Samaritan", before being taking to *Usaidizi*'s short-term transition centre by one of the social workers. After another year they moved to the long-term transition centre as their mother was unable to care for them, she was an alcoholic. Their father, who had older children by three other women, was denying that they were his sons.

Teresia was supported by *Matumaini* to study at *St Lucia*. She had previously lived at *Matumaini*'s centre but was moved to the boarding school when she did well in her studies at *Tumekuja*. She was unable to return home for extended periods of time as her father was an alcoholic and could be violent. Therefore, Teresia spent most of her holidays at *Matumaini*'s centre.

about how the young people at the centres/schools helped them to settle in and provided effective support. Although, as Mulu and Jackson suggest above, they may still have felt lonely when they first arrived. Having access to such a support group, however, was not always a welcome opportunity: especially for a number of participants who had no choice but to be identified as part of the group.

As the children at *Nyumbani* and *Matumaini*'s centre attended primary schools next door and across the road from where they lived, everyone else at the schools knew who they were. They were therefore identified as children who came from the informal settlements, who had lived on the street, or who had no parents of note[17]. Being recognised as such at the two schools, however, was not necessarily a negative prospect. The children at *St Lucia*, who had previously lived at *Matumaini*'s centre and attended *Tumekuja*, compared and contrasted their experiences of the two schools.

> At *Tumekuja* they understand you better. Here [*St Lucia*], if you tell someone your life story they cannot understand you. At *Tumekuja* everyone knows *Matumaini* so they know your life story.
>
> > Teresia

> But the pupils understand me better at Matumaini [both centre and *Tumekuja* school] than here [*St Lucia*]. We are used to each other.
>
> > Frank

Both Frank and Teresia talked about being "understood" by those around them, and that they were understood better at *Tumekuja* primary school than they were at *St Lucia*. Teresia attributed being better understood to others having knowledge of her background. Frank implied that familiarity led to greater understanding with his mention of: "we are used to each other". Being understood therefore suggests support and acceptance from their peers. Such understanding was not necessarily on offer at *St Lucia*, as Teresia explained:

> But the pupils were friendly, and more friendly than at St Lucia. At *Tumekuja* the friends are many compared to this school [*St Lucia*]. A friend is someone who is social to theirs. There [*Tumekuja*] you can borrow and here you cannot even borrow a text

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[17] *Usaidizi* and *Matumaini* had a wider remits than supporting street-connected children and youth. *Matumaini* worked within a particular informal settlement and *Usaidizi* also received children referred by the district children's office because of other issues such as abuse or abandonment. Therefore, not all of the children at the centres had lived on the street.

> book, they say they are using, but it is in their locker. Sometimes I wish they did understand us better.
>
> <div align="right">Teresia</div>

Teresia's words suggests that there is an element of snobbery at *St Lucia*, a Catholic boarding school. She mentioned peers who refused to lend others their books, and how she wished that these peers, who were not part of the group supported by *Matumaini*, were more understanding: "[s]ometimes I wish they did understand us better". Her words suggest that her peers chose not to socialise with the young people from *Matumaini*, which could, to some extent, imply that they did not accept those who were sponsored to study at the school. Their inability to "understand" Teresia and her friends may have stemmed from an ignorance of the background of the *Matumaini* students. Teresia stated that "[h]ere [*St Lucia*], if you tell someone your life story they cannot understand you", and therefore her words could be interpreted to suggest that her peers had not known that she had lived on the street, and that she perceived a barrier between herself and them because she was unable to share such significant information if she wanted to be accepted. Alternatively, it is probable that her peers did know about her background and had responded negatively to it.

At the time of the interview I understood her words to imply the latter case, it was only when later listening to the recording that both meanings were suggested. Therefore, I had not explored this issue with her further, but I did ask later participants if they told peers outside of the group supported by the organisation about their backgrounds. Elvis, a young man who had attended a different boarding primary school before the polytechnic had not.

> No, because you can tell them where you are from, you tell them home. Because if you tell them they will think that you are too poor.
>
> <div align="right">Elvis</div>

Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.4

Elvis, was staying at *Matumaini*'s centre and studying at *Tumekuja* school. He was in Standard Five in the local primary school. At the weekends he returned to the informal settlement to live with his Aunt and her children.

Robert, was attending primary school and living at home with his single mother. He had gone to the street when his mother had been away longer than planned, taking care of his sick older sister in another town. Robert had been supported by *Usaidizi*, staying at the short-term transition centre for six months before returning home. His mother had also been assisted to start apply bio-agriculture techniques to her smallholding, which had improved her yields and provided an income.

Elvis highlights another possible source of shame, being poor, which may be both connected to the street and his home community. A large percentage of the participants lived in informal settlements on the outskirts of the towns, or in remote rural areas where income-generation was difficult. In the day primary schools that they attended (e.g. those schools attended by the children at *Nyumbani* and *Matumaini*'s centre) the student body comprised of young people from similar backgrounds. Those attending boarding schools lived and studied as part of a wider community of young people who were mostly from, what could be described as, upper working class or middle class families. For Teresia and Elvis, being accepted by this community was an important aspect of settling in at school; being able to hide certain elements of their backgrounds therefore became an important tactic in avoiding possible stigma.

When there was no support group from the organisation on hand to ease the process of transition into a new school, the participants suggested that aspects of their identity be kept private. Robert, a Standard Eight student (final year of primary school) from *Usaidizi* who was living at home with his mother, thought that reinventing himself was useful. He chose to attend a different primary school to the one he had gone to before he lived on the street, so that no one would know that he had spent time away. He told his peers that he had lived with family in a different area and had returned home to live with his mother. Robert felt that his peers would not have understood if he told them the truth.

Similarly Jackson, who was attending secondary school and lived with foster parents, suggested that adopting a new identity could help with settling in to a new school setting.

> I have friends at my new school but they do not understand. They take me as my good mother's[18] child, and I am not. It is not a problem but you know sometimes about all of the school I come from far and I am different. The other students all come from near to the school and I am from far. They do not understand me and they do not know me. Many of them do not want to make friends with me as they do not know me. They see me as Janet's son, not Jackson from [his home town]. It is different than to go to a boarding secondary school. At that school everyone is different. But at my school most people are from nearby. They know themselves from before and they do not need to make new friendships. They do not know me and do not need to be friends with me as they already have friends.
>
> Jackson

---

[18] Jackson calls his foster mother his "good mother".

In the extract above, Jackson explains how problematic it can be to feel part of a school community. In addition to keeping his time on the street hidden, he hides the knowledge of where he comes from. Jackson chose not to dispel his peers' beliefs that his foster mother was his original mother. In so doing, he suggests that adopting a new identity can help with settling in to a new school setting, which for Jackson seemed important as he was not from the same area as the school and found establishing himself at school difficult.

In Kenya, a large number of secondary schools are boarding facilities, which are the schools of choice for those with good KCPE grades. Students who cannot afford to pay the extra costs that boarding necessitates attend local day schools. As Jackson was living in a different area to both the community he came from and the primary school he graduated from, he was in a class at a day school with students who were not only settled into this new and different community, but they had forged friendships during their time in the primary schools local to that area. At the time of the interview Jackson was in form one, just over halfway through the school year. All of the students in his year group would have been new to the school at the start of the year. However, Jackson gives the impression that he was the only student, or one of a few students, in his year group to have moved into the area to start at the secondary school and highlights how important acceptance through peer support is to settling in.

Developing a sense of belonging to a new school community is therefore problematic. In explaining the need to adopt a new identity, or keep aspects of their past private, Jackson and Robert's responses suggest that they perceived barriers to fitting in if they had been completely truthful. There is limited research on such transitions from countries like Kenya. Although not an ideal fit given the difference in contexts, exploring the research on looked after children (who live in foster care or children's homes) moving schools in the UK can, to some extent, offer a comparison for street-connected children and youth. Research from the UK on the transitions between schools suggest that a young person's experience of settling in to the new school affects their relative levels of wellbeing and can, if the experience is negative, result in a lack of self-esteem or depression (West *et al.* 2010). The researchers promote holistic approaches to the transition process that are specific to the needs of the individual young person (Brewin and Statham 2011), with

positive relationships between the parents, teachers, and students deemed essential for a positive transition experience (Coffey 2013).

The attitudes of teachers towards street-connected children and youth can affect the welcome that they received from their peers. For example, I know a Kenyan social worker, who had once been street-connected, and was introduced to the school by the head teacher as a street child and therefore not to be trusted. The teachers' attitudes do vary, but the participants' descriptions of the teachers' approaches suggest that they stem from a deficit attitude to street-connectedness (see also Corcoran 2015a). Ronald had a similar experience to the social worker, of being introduced to the whole school on his arrival, but in this instance he was being held up as an example for his peers. He therefore had no choice about whether he was going to own his background as a street-connected child or invent a new identity for himself. When he arrived at the school everyone knew where he had come from as the organisation's vehicle had "street children" written on the side as part of the logo. In addition, on the first day the head teacher brought Ronald in front of the school community and said "look at this boy, he was a *chokora* and will give you all a challenge [he performed well in exams despite having lived on the street]".

At first, the other students could not believe that someone who had been on the street would be able to surpass them academically and Ronald struggled to settle in and make friends. Very quickly his scores put him at the top of the year and he gained a degree of respect and friendship from his peers.

> When I beat them in the exam they think that even though this man is from the
> street he can perform well academic.
>
> Ronald

Ronald's academic ability gave him status within the school and, as he was confident in his own ability, he recalled having no reservations about telling his peers about his background when he reached secondary school.

> My fellow students were thinking that I also have parents and when they were talking about their parents I said, me I have only one parent, my father. Me, I came from street. On the street I know, the life on the street I know, so I gave them a challenge: I wanted them to look at me and know that I had been on the street so they think differently about other boys and girls on the street.
>
> Ronald

Although it is difficult to ascertain whether Ronald would have been as proud of his background if he did not have the status suggested by his academic ability, his initial introduction to the school was through a deficit lens. The headteacher's reference to him as *chokora* reinforces a negative view of street-connected children and youth to the student body, one that made it difficult for him to make friends until he had proved himself academically. Research exploring teachers' attitudes to street-connected children highlighted how they appeared to see street-connectedness as synonymous with a lack of ability (Corcoran 2015b), which could suggest that Ronald may not have been as welcome if he was not as able. Nevertheless, in contrast to Elvis, Robert, Jackson and Teresia, Ronald felt that he could acknowledge his time on the street. He said the street had taught him to be stronger, and even though he struggled to settle in at the beginning, he was able to establish a place for himself within the school community. Teachers' attitudes to the young people transitioning from the street and into their classrooms can therefore influence their experiences of leaving the street.

Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.5

Mochoge, was living at *Nyumbani*, a long-term transition centre run by *Usaidizi*, because he was unable to return home to his family. He was very young when he was found on the street and could not remember where home was. The social workers were trying to trace members of his family.

Raphael, had been at *Matumaini*'s centre and studying at *Tumekuja* school for a year before he moved to *St Lucia* boarding school. He was in Standard Eight, preparing to sit for his KCPE exams.

4.1.3 Teachers' Provision of Support through Acceptance

The welcome and support provided by teachers, or the lack of either, to the participants as they started at new schools was mentioned frequently. Two boys in particular described how they had been treated no differently to the students who were already at their school. At *Nyumbani*, Mochoge described his first day at *Tumekuja* school as difficult as he was set a test, although he had not been present for the lessons leading up to it.

> It was hard, because when I arrived we started with a test and I have never done a test.
>
> Mochoge

Mulu, attending the same school, was upset by how he was caned on his first day, an act which he felt was unjust.

> On my first day at school I was given five strokes of the cane. The prefect did not collect the books of mathematics and the teacher got angry.
>
> Mulu

He mentioned the incident during the narrative interview, and reinforced its importance by also taking a photograph of the tree under which he was caned, as part of the auto-photography exercise (see also Corcoran 2015a).

Figure 4.2: The tree under which Mulu was caned on his first day at school

Neither of the boys appear to have been eased into their first days of school, which was a complaint that was made of other schools. For example, Raphael, attending *Tumekuja*, complained of not being shown where the toilets were on his first day, suggesting that the teachers did not do enough to welcome him.

In addition to their welcome on the first day, some of the participants explained other challenges. Teresia's interview provided a detailed comparison of studying at the two primary schools she had attended while being supported by *Matumaini*: *Tumekuja*, where she had studied with Raphael, and *St Lucia*.

It was worst at *Tumekuja*. The teachers were not coming to class. There was nothing good about *Tumekuja*. The teachers are not teaching and we are not finishing the syllabus. The learning was slow.

The teachers understand us better [at *St Lucia*]. Sometimes the teachers call us together to talk to us ... We are brought together and counselled together. The head teacher, when you don't have anything you tell him and he will produce for you. The teachers support you better.

Teresia

Using her experiences of learning as a guide, Teresia viewed academic support and teaching skills as important to her ability to settle in to a new school. She suggests the attendance of teachers at *Tumekuja*, a state run primary school, was poor in comparison to *St Lucia*, a private boarding school. To some extent, being present and teaching effectively extends the notion of support, in that Teresia's learning was supported. At *St Lucia*, Teresia described the additional attention that was provided through regular meetings with all the *Matumaini*-supported children at the school, together with the teachers. These meetings were examples of ongoing support that she felt were useful, and they stood out as significant when compared to not having received similar support at *Tumekuja*.

Of course, the above examples are not representative of all of the participants' experiences of starting at new schools. A number did not mention any issues with starting school. These individuals did not provide detail other than that they felt happy to be (back) at school. As a whole the participants' interview responses describe various levels of support and acceptance from their teachers, friends, and school-based peers. However, school does not happen in a vacuum and the support and acceptance that the participants enjoyed at home were the most important factors affecting their experiences of leaving the street. In the next section, I consider the relationships they share with parents, extended family and significant adults offering alternative care.

4.2 Relating to Family

Family was important to all of the participants in this study: playing a role in their decisions to migrate to the street, as well as their experiences of leaving it. Participants from all cohorts talked about how they had missed their parents when they were on the street, and those that had not returned home full-time after leaving it still missed them. Mothers were mentioned in particular and, for some, members of their extended families, such as grandmothers and aunts. Female family members were mentioned more often than male ones, although Denis and Keith from *Imani* were primarily concerned about their father and grandfather respectively. The relationships that the participants had with their families were complicated and the levels of support and acceptance they experienced varied.

4.2.1 Support from Family

Given that home, or the lack of a home, was a feature in the lives of all those involved in the study, I asked the younger participants staying at residential centres to draw home, and then discuss their image as an ice breaker at the start of their semi-structured narrative interviews. All of the boys from *Nyumbani*, and the children at *Matumaini's centre*, created images of houses, except for Owino who drew his family members rather than a building, Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: A drawing of his family by Owino, staying at *Nyumbani.*

Owino lived at *Nyumbani*. His home situation was difficult and he visited rarely, seeing extended members of his family rather than his parents.

I drew this because I haven't seen my parents for six years and I want to see them. I miss them.

Owino

In the image, shown in Figure 4.3, Owino imagines his return home: his parents are both running to greet their son with open arms, welcoming him back into the family. I did not question Owino further on the image content, as I did not want to bring up sensitive issues about why he was not at home. The image, and his brief explanation, was sufficient to highlight the importance of parents and their support to a child wanting to return home.

Owino was not alone in missing his family. Almost all of the young people who did not live at home, or in close contact with families, missed one member or all of their family, especially their mothers. For example, Jakob, who was staying at *St Lucia*, missed his family during term time and could not wait to go home to see them.

I love seeing my brothers, my sisters, my mother and my father. When I don't go I will not know if my parents are dead or alive.

Jakob

In addition to missing his family, he worried about their welfare when he was away. Markus also spoke of the importance of being at home. Unlike Jakob he saw his parents weekly because he lived at *Matumaini*'s centre and therefore returned home every weekend to spend time with his family and community.

[At weekends] I go home. I go to see my parents and my family, and they are happy and they welcome me, you do work and you help them with work.

Markus

Markus described the role he played at home and the responsibilities he had as a member of the family, emphasising his place and the importance of his relationship with his parents.

Although family was important to all of the participants involved in this study, being at

Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.6

Jakob was supported by Matumaini to board at *St Lucia* Catholic primary school. He had previously lived at *Matumaini*'s centre and attended *Tumekuja* School. He moved after six months as his exam grades were considered high enough for him to be sponsored at a school that would ensure better performance. Frank went home to visit his parents during the school holidays.

Lukas was staying at *Matumaini*'s centre and studying at *Tumekuja* school. He returned home each weekend to stay with his mother and younger brother. Lukas spent some of the weekend on the street as there was limited food at home.

Markus was staying at *Matumaini*'s centre and studying at *Tumekuja* school. He returned home each weekend to spend time with his mother and father and younger siblings.

Owino was living at *Nyumbani*, a long-term transition centre run by *Usaidizi*, because he was unable to return home to his family. He visited his grandparents during the holidays, who were too frail to look after him all the time.

home was not always a happy time. Like Markus, Lukas returned home each weekend to stay with his family. In contrast however, he was not happy at home and mentioned a lack of food, which led him to return to the street.

> I feel like staying here sometimes because the parent chases you and tells me to go look for food ... When I stay at home in the holidays I go to the town but I don't sleep in town. Sometimes there is no food at home so I go look in town.
>
> Lukas

He was the only boy at *Matumaini's* centre to talk about being sent to the street to find food over the weekends at home. Other participants at the centre mentioned a lack of food, but explained that the weekend was too short for them to go to the street. This lack of food did not necessarily mean no food. They had three meals a day at the centre and in a number of cases only one or two at home, implying that no food could also mean less food. For a number of the participants, the issues surrounding food were part of a combination of problems.

As Teresia was boarding at *St Lucia*, she returned home infrequently. Her father was an alcoholic and beat her mother, so Teresia spent part of each holiday at *Matumaini*'s centre (she did not have extended family members that could take her in). As the family relied on casual labour, mostly carried out by Teresia's mother as her father was incapacitated at times, their ability to meet basic needs was often limited. Teresia found all of these issues stressful and distracting and as such they were part of the reasons why she preferred boarding school to attending a day school from home.

I was not happy to go home as it would give me stress. You see your mother and your father and they are fighting. They are fighting because when my mother asked about food my father is beating her. They do not work. They go nearby to ask a rich person to give them jobs like mopping the house. I don't go home for the long holiday now. I usually go home for a day at a time. I go home at weekends [in the school holidays]. When you go home there is no time for reading. When my father is coming he says that you are not reading and you are pretending and he rip your book. I do not always miss my family and I want to stay in school.

<div align="right">Teresia</div>

Much of Teresia's interview concerned her ability to study. She discussed the support and acceptance she had in the various schools she had attended with reference to teachers' capabilities for teaching and her comfort, or lack thereof, at home in relation to her ability to do well at school. Being at *St Lucia* not only made Teresia feel safer but provided her with an opportunity to forget her problems at home.

At day school if your mother is sick you go to school and you just cry and cannot study. But here at boarding school no one can tell me so I can study.

<div align="right">Teresia</div>

Teresia gives the impression that she wished to avoid the problems faced at home, choosing to focus on her school work and the future goals of getting an education. To some extent *St Lucia* provided her with a supportive environment that she was not able to enjoy at home.

Despite the difficulties, that Teresia and other participants faced at home, they still missed their families or, possibly more significantly, the communities they came from.

I miss my friends in the community [at home], but if I see them for one day I am ok. I miss them because the way they are I like to know they are safe. My community understands me better.

<div align="right">Teresia</div>

In August I am going home to visit my mother. I am looking forward to going so that I can see my friends there, but I am not happy about going home: to the community yes, but not to home.

<div align="right">Jackson</div>

Neither quote above relates directly to missing family, but rather that they miss their home communities. Both Jackson and Teresia talked about not quite fitting in to school because the community there would not have understood them, which related to how

they missed their friends and families and felt that they belonged in their home communities. However, this did not translate into wanting to live at home. Teresia for example, had mixed feelings about her family. She obviously loved her mother and missed her, but did not necessarily want to stay at home:

> I do not always miss my family and I want to stay in school … My mother usually gives me advice now she knows how I am. I usually miss my mother.
>
> Teresia

As Jackson and Teresia's stories suggest, home represented a site of belonging that did not necessarily live up to the idealised version shown in Owino's image in Figure 4.2. The participants construct identities in relation to their families and wider home community. Their conceptions of home, like Owino's image, are to some extent idealised through the expectation of being understood when they are there. Such findings resonate with those of Beazley (2000) in Indonesia, studying children living on the street in Jakarta. She found that the children were caught between two 'irreconcilable and opposed lifestyles': the street and home (Beazley 2000:207). Visiting home required a complicated process of resolving the two and coming to terms with a reality that shattered their idyllic images of life with their families. Similar to Teresia and Jackson's responses, home was a place that children living on the street could only inhabit occasionally (Beazley 2000).

Only two of the participants, both boys from *Usaidizi* lived in their parental home. They attended day primary schools and lived with single parents: Robert with his single mother and Stephen with his father and step-mother. Except for four participants who lived with aunts or in foster care, the others either lived at a residential centre or boarded for the majority of their time, or they shared a house with friends close to their families. Robert's mother was extremely supportive of her son. She joined the interview session unexpectedly and started narrating her own story, blaming herself for not having been there when he initially migrated to the street as she had been staying with his sick older sibling at the time. Robert was happy at home with his mother, and despite inventing a reason for his peers about why he started the school late, felt supported as he prepared for his KCPE examinations. There were issues with Stephen's stepmother: he felt that she did not care for him and his brother like she did her own children. Stephen was happy to be at home with his father, but at the same time was troubled that his father did not stick up for him enough.

How participants related to their families, how often they saw them, and the issues that they faced at home were all important to their experiences of leaving the street. When families provided support, such as Robert's mother and Lukas' parents, the young people seemed more confident about how they described life at home. When it was missing, or parents were unable to provide adequately for a young person's psychosocial needs, and they had to live elsewhere, developing a sense of belonging appeared to be difficult. Markus, Lukas, Teresia and Jackson were less sure of themselves and their places within the communities they found themselves in, and they simultaneously worried about their families and spoke about how it was difficult being at home.

Street-connected children and youth, who may have experienced neglect and/or abuse at the hands of adults, or experienced the breakdown of their relationships with care-givers such as parents, can lose their trust in adults and view them with suspicion (Conticini and Hulme 2007; Veale 1992). Assisting young people to leave the street, and providing a home, therefore requires that trusting relationships be (re-)developed with immediate or

extended families and additional support be provided by other significant adults. This is especially so for those young people who cannot return home directly from the street or after staying at a short-term transition centre, and for those who do not return home at all.

Jackson initially stayed at *Nyumbani* before moving to a foster home when he started secondary school. He had great respect for his foster mother, speaking very highly of her and the support she had given him by taking him in. However, there were reasons why he did not feel altogether comfortable living with her. He described missing his friends and the community at home where he used to live and felt that he belonged there, rather than the other places where he had lived since leaving the street.

Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.8

Josiah, was staying at *Matumaini*'s centre and studying at *Tumekuja* school. He spent his weekends at home with his father and step mother. Josiah had originally migrated to the street because he did not like his father's new wife.

> If parents can be helped it is better for children to go home. They can have that love from their parents. You know love from parents is not like love from other people. Parents are the ones who bless you. They will wish you good things in your life but other people will wish their children but not you. I am happier when I am staying with my good [foster] mother as she looks after me better than being at *Nyumbani* but she is not my mother so I will be second to her children.
>
> Jackson

The extract above was part of Jackson's answer to the question: If God could grant you one wish, what would you wish for? In his answer, he implied that settling in to a new situation depended on more than support and acceptance. Although he appreciated that he was well looked after at the home of his foster family, he wanted to be at home with his own family where he would come first. However, given that Jackson's mother was an alcoholic and life at home was not easy, he also acknowledged that living at home would not work without help and support for his parents. Jackson struggled with how he felt about his family. Earlier in the interview he talked about his next visit home for the holiday, "I am not happy about going home", but in the extract above he said that he would like to be able to live at home. Thus suggesting that he wished for an ideal situation that may not necessarily have been achievable without being granted a wish from God. Jackson's brother, Karanja, was living at *Nyumbani*.

Family, or the support of significant adults in the lives of young people leaving the street were important to the transition process. Such support was not necessarily available from family members. Although a number of street-connected children and youth have contact with parents when they live on the street, many do not (e.g. Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014; Beazley 2000). The participants' had varied contact with home from the street, and all three of the organisations working with them attempted to facilitate a sense of support and belonging for all of the young people they supported. For example, at *Imani* it was common practice for staff to talk about the "*Imani* family".

The support provided by the staff at each of the organisations began with the first interactions between the social workers and the children while they are still on the street. According to the children at *Matumaini*'s centre, all of which were boys, the gender of the staff members made a difference to the development of trust during these interactions. At one group interview with three boys, they spoke about being suspicious of male social workers approaching them on the street. They had not believed the men at first and required a number of meetings before they felt comfortable enough to visit *Matumaini*'s centre. Even after agreeing to go to the centre with the male social workers, the boys thought that they would be going to do work such as looking after cattle. I asked the children who were interviewed after this group, and had been approached by female members of staff, whether they would have felt the same if they had been men. The answers echoed the suspicion that was directed at male members of staff. For example:

> If she had been a man I would not have trusted her. Some men are not good. They send you to do things you do not want to do. They make you steal things.
>
> Josiah, staying at Matumaini's centre

Josiah's words suggest the risk of abuse and exploitation on the street, and that the exploitation is associated with men, rather than with women, highlighting the additional barriers that young people face should they decide to leave the street. Their suspicion of male social workers made them reluctant to accept support, which highlights the time required for the social workers to foster trust when encouraging young people to leave the street. For those participants who intended to return home to family situations that had been difficult, developing trusting relationships with their social workers was

important for the mediation process that would take place between themselves and their families.

Outside of the participants' immediate family, care was provided by social workers, members of the participants' extended families, foster carers, and teachers and other staff at boarding facilities. Supportive care was important for engendering a sense of belonging. Teresia appeared to feel safe and supported at *St Lucia*, to some extent more than she felt at home. Teresia's ambition was to be educated, but her references to her father suggested that he did not empathise with this wish. He was described as ripping up the books she was using for her homework and distracting her from study. Teresia's father was an alcoholic. She described how she preferred to be at school, away from his influence and attempts at preventing her education, and therefore, emphasised how her ability to develop a sense of belonging in relation to her family was challenged by how she perceived her future and the ambitions she had formed. In so doing, Teresia also highlights how significant family support is to the transition process, as well as the support of other significant adults who can step in when the family was not able to provide.

4.2.2 Supporting Family

For the older participants, the mention of family was not necessarily about how parents supported them. Rather, it was often in relation to their need to support their families. A number of the young men and women spent time working, alongside their training courses, in order to do so. At *Imani*, Thomas' mother was sick with a respiratory problem he described as chronic asthma, which prevented her from being able to carry out casual work at nearby coffee plantations. Thomas, as the eldest, felt that it was his place to support his family. Therefore, as well as attending his *Jua kali* apprenticeship at the garage complex each day, he also engaged in other income-generating activities to ensure that he paid both his own and his family's rent and his siblings remained in school.

Andrew, also from *Imani*, supported his mother in similar ways to Thomas to ensure that his siblings were looked after. Andrew's mother and step-father were alcoholics and their relationship was characterised by confrontation. He therefore found himself responsible for financially supporting his mother and siblings, as well as living close enough to offer

physical protection when needed. As the extract below shows, Andrew's sister would fetch him when the confrontation between the two adults became too violent so he could stop them from fighting.

> My mother she lives there [in the informal settlement] and I am living close. These days when my mother and the husband they fight and my sister she will get me in the night. Everything I give them they sold. Even I gave them stove and I go back and they no have anything. They say they are stolen, but my mother she sells the stove ... I try so that the children are in school. My mother never pays the rent. Yesterday I paid the rent so that they cannot be chased from home.
>
> <div align="right">Andrew</div>

Both Thomas and Andrew had to live separately from their families as their single mothers lived in rented single roomed huts in one of the informal settlements. Given the age of the young men it was culturally unacceptable for them to share the house. However, they were both living near enough to be closely involved. The young men positioned themselves as bread winners for their families. They were both the oldest child living close to home (Andrew did have an older brother who was still on the street in

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Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.9

Alice was supported by *Matumaini* to train as a tailor at the polytechnic. She lived at home with her mother and siblings and walked to the polytechnic each morning to attend her training course. Alice had previously finished primary school at *Tumekuja* while she stayed at *Matumaini*'s centre, visiting her family at weekends.

Boniface was supported by Matumaini to train in construction at the polytechnic. He lived at home with his mother and walked to the polytechnic each morning to attend his training course. Previously, Boniface had completed some of his education at *Tumekuja* while he stayed at *Matumaini*'s centre, later moving to a boarding school for the last two years of primary school.

Nairobi and had limited contact with his mother) and this put them into a position of authority.

Neither Thomas nor Andrew alluded explicitly to being the head of their families, but in the absence of their fathers it would appear that they felt it important to step up and take control of looking after their mothers and siblings, especially as older sons. According to the young men being supported by *Matumaini* to train at the polytechnic, a man (father) is always the head of the family.

> The man is to be the head of the family. In Kenya you are the son of so and so, but the mother is always the mother of so and so. The mother takes on the father's name…In Africa they believe that the man is ever the boss of the family.

The young women at *Matumaini* also talked about the need to support their mothers, but the reasons for such responsibility suggested a need to understand and assist their mothers, rather than supporting the family. They described how at weekends and in the holidays they also needed to supplement the family income, but it was as much for themselves as it was for their mothers. Alice also describes how such support is a process of training for the future.

> [In the holidays] we are selling sugar canes and making and selling *mandazi*. We need to during the holiday to help your mother to make money. You need to make the money for food. It is for our mother but for us we need to get more money to buy clothes and *slippers* as we need to look good. We need to do it for ourselves or every day we will be asking our mother can we have money – and maybe you only have breakfast as there is no food. You must learn how to live in your parents' station.
>
> Alice

Being part of a family, instilled a sense of responsibility in these older participants, which defined roles that needed to be fulfilled. Thomas chose to return to the street at one point (he had lived on the street during three separate periods of time) in order to take on his role of breadwinner. Their sense of belonging to their families, and being accepted by them, translated into a sense responsibility for their care, and possibly their survival. However, fulfilling the roles they established for themselves was difficult at times.

At *Imani* in 2012, inflation was a major topic of discussion at the street-based drop-in centre. Between 2007 and 2012, Kenya experienced a number of high price increases in basic commodities, this was partly a result of slower growth in maize farming compared to that of the population (UNEP 2012, World Bank 2012) as farmland was used for other export ready commodities; but it was exacerbated by post-election violence in 2008 and 2009, as a number of displaced people did not immediately return to farmland, and the drought of 2011. In the middle of 2011 oil and fuel prices were already high, and subsequently food prices increased by 25% (Mulunda 2011). The effects, despite a drop in inflation towards the end of 2011, were still being experienced in Central Kenya in 2012.

The opening of the first super highway linking the town, where *Imani* was based, to Nairobi was also having an effect: there was evidence of development with new buildings

and increased numbers of *matatus* (small minibus-like vehicles that are used for public transport) making the quicker and easier journey to the capital, but rental costs and food prices also rose for the new market of commuters choosing to live in the town. The garage complex where the participants were being trained were suffering. Business was low as *matatu* drivers were able to take their vehicles elsewhere as competition increased, or made less frequent maintenance visits with the improved road. Josephat in particular was perturbed by this turn of events.

> You find a month goes by without you taking a spanner to change a tyre.
>
> Josephat

For an apprenticeship to be successful there needed to be customers: training occurred when they worked on the vehicles brought in to be fixed, and the apprentice received a small stipend of 20-30 Kenyan shillings (about US$0.30) for their assistance with each

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Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.10

Josephat was 28 years old and was supported by *Imani* to train as a mechanic. He was also staying rent-free in a room at the back of the street-based drop-in-centre run by *Imani*, with two other young men. They provided security for the centre in exchange for a roof over their heads at night. He came from one of the areas adjacent to the town itself, but was left by his mother at an early age when she returned to the rural area that her family came from. He stayed in town with his brother. Josephat completed only three years of primary school and spoke very little English. He first left the street after asking an aunt for financial help to start a business, but he lost all his stock in a burglary and returned to the street. One of the trainers at the garage complex where he was completing his apprenticeship took him to *Imani* from the street.

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assignment. From this the apprentices had to pay rent (on average Ksh 400 a month), buy their meals and provide for other daily necessities. Some assistance was given by *Imani*, but in general the apprentices were responsible for the majority of their own living costs.

For Thomas and Andrew, the concern at having to cope with raised prices was even more immediate as they had both established themselves as the breadwinners for their families, and their money-making activities revolved around the need to pay two sets of rent. As mentioned earlier, Thomas felt that it was his place to support his family.

> At first when I wake up I pray God to find me work. I do not stay with my mother, the house is small and there is only one room. I stay with friends. I go home to look for some tea. At lunch I do not spend the money and have lunch. Maybe there is no work

and if I eat lunch and then walk home maybe my family have not eat. So I keep the money to take home. I go to class in the morning and then I go to garage. If there no work I go to town after lunchtime and carry luggages.

<div align="right">Thomas</div>

He went without lunch to save this stipend for his family in case he was unable to earn any money at the garage complex or the supermarket. He took his role as breadwinner seriously. This also meant putting his training at risk. He took the decision to leave the garage complex at lunchtime if there had been no customers, which meant that he was unable to take advantage of any arriving in the afternoon, making his position tenuous. However, his mother and siblings were foremost in his mind and, at the time of the research, the opportunities available on the street were more likely to yield income than waiting at the garage complex. Andrew would similarly leave the garage complex at lunchtime. They would go to a local supermarket to be porters for shoppers with heavy loads, or use their bicycles as *bodas*, bike taxis.

All of the young men at *Imani* were worried about supporting themselves, especially in the future, a view that was shared by the older participants at *Matumaini*. Supporting their families was a key priority, and this included the families they hoped to be part of in the future, as mothers and fathers themselves. Fulfilling the roles they defined for themselves within their families, or planning for future families, were part of a wider consideration of how the participants developed places for themselves in their communities and wider society after they left the street. In order to be accepted by these communities, they endeavoured to develop respect and status, the various aspects of which are discussed in the next section.

4.3 Respect and Status

Aspects of physical appearance were mentioned by participants in all of the cohorts involved in the study. In being clean and dressing the part, the participants suggested an idea of order and everything having a place, which could engender respect from society and help them to distance themselves from being street-connected. At the same time, maintaining appearances and fitting in to local youth culture, influenced a re-engagement with the opportunities available on the street. In the following sections I discuss the social

interactions responsible for developing such expectations, and how ensuring such impressions are positive enabled the participants to potentially distance themselves from life on the street and be accepted by others.

4.3.1 Aspirations for the Future

Gaining respect and status was most clearly evident in the aspirational goals described by the participants, and how they were aiming to achieve them. The responses from the older participants, for example the young men and women from *Imani* and the polytechnic, revealed how they were more concerned about their future than the younger ones. Josephat, who was the oldest of all of the participants at 28 years old, talked about his need to build a house and establish himself so that he could get married, have a family and fulfil the expectations of society. He felt that he was running out of time.

> First of all what I am mostly in need of is to be on my own, on my feet, not depending on anyone – to be stable. Second, to build a house because I have never done it and the years are passing by.
>
> Josephat

This wish was shared by most of the young men at *Imani* when they were asked about what they desired to achieve in the future, and they all worried about how they would be able to afford it. James exclaimed over price hikes in daily commodities, such as milk, affecting his ability to afford a wedding and Simon had opened a bank account and was saving to get married.

The young men at the polytechnic gave detailed responses as to what made good mothers and fathers, emphasising the future roles they saw for themselves and their future wives.

> A good father provides food, shelter, education for his family and childrens. He provide basic needs for his family and medical. A good father is present rather than absent – if present he is always there *kila wakati* [every time] he is in that house maybe the activity is taking place. The father communicates with his children, there's good relationship between the father and his wife. I want to be more of a father than my father – I want to be a better father – some take drugs or alcohol.
>
> Elvis

> A good mother looks after her family, she is very good at encouraging her family and interested in how they are doing. A mother works – she must work because laziness is not good. So that we can survive.
>
> Barasa

They described family lives that they had not necessarily been able to experience. They wanted to provide for their future children, ensuring that they do not end up on the street as they had. The young women at the polytechnic described futures that were a balance between better lives for themselves and for their families and communities. There was empathy for, or a need to empathise with, their parents' situations and a wish to improve them, as well having better lives than their parents did.

In the images created by the children at *Matumaini's centre* and *Nyumbani*, when asked to draw their lives in the future, homes and families featured most often (e.g. Figure 4.5).

These pictures differed from the earlier drawings of home that they produced at the start of the narrative interviews. They featured cars, productive farmland and in one case a helicopter, suggesting that the participants envisaged futures for themselves that included an ability to earn money, support future families and achieve future positions in society that engendered a significant level of respect.
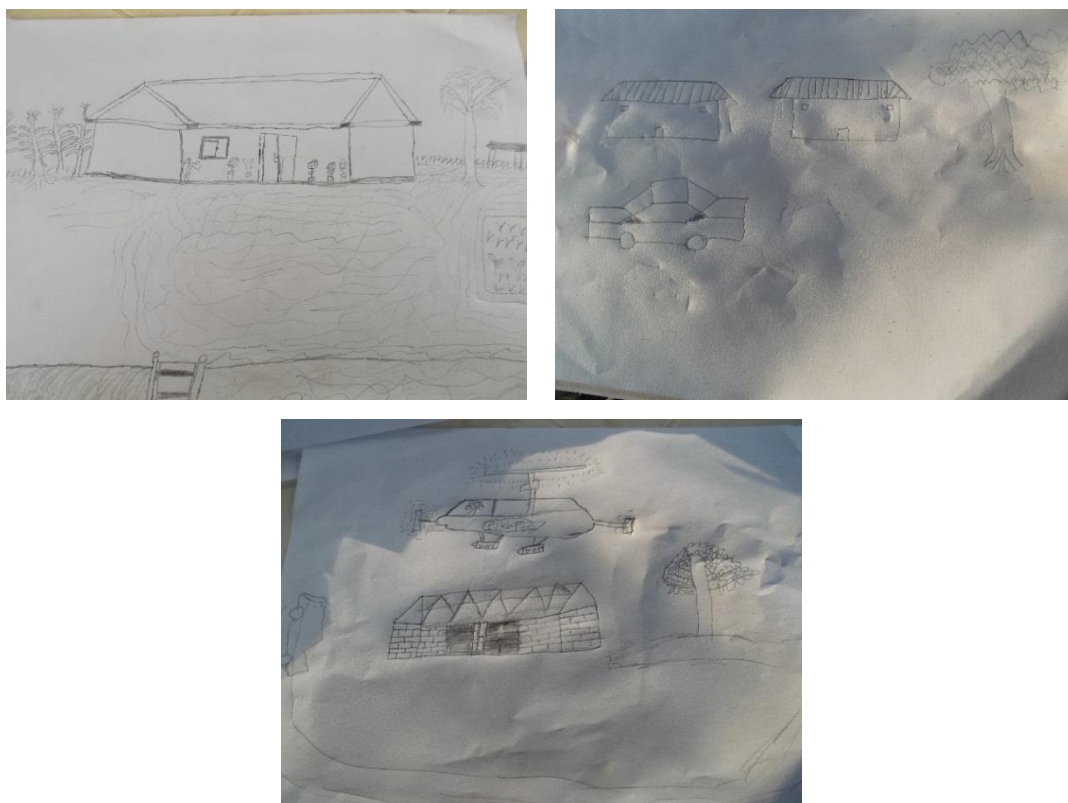
Figure 4.4: Drawings from the children at *Matumaini*'s centre featuring future homes and the fruit trees in the gardens (all three). Also included are crops (Lukas, top left) the ownership of a car (Josiah, top right) and a future career as a helicopter pilot (John, bottom right).

The younger participants talked of becoming doctors, lawyers, engineers and aeroplane pilots, describing career goals that education could help them achieve. The older participants were more inclined towards ideas of stability, sustainable incomes and being able to set up a comfortable home. As young men and women they wanted to take on these trappings of an adult world sooner and as such were developing plans to establish themselves.

The young women at the polytechnic explained how they were developing their reputations as they hoped to eventually own their own tailoring businesses to support their families. They sold *mandazi* (deep fried doughnuts) and other home-baked sweet goods to earn the money to buy clothes, or the material to make them, that fit the image of a good tailor while they were still in training. Similarly, Keith had aspirations for the future that involved being a successful businessman and obtaining a level of respect and status in the community. These aspirations were highlighted during his image-elicitation interview. When asked to draw something that he would like to tell me about, Keith mapped all the landmarks that were important to him in the town (Figure 3.4). Included in the drawing was a bridge which, given the scale of the diagram, was drawn much bigger than anything else featured. In telling me about the significance of the bridge he said:

> I like this bridge in the [Area B] in the river. I like the bridge because it is very fantastic. Sometimes you go and see the richer going on. I stand on the bridge and watch the people in B. That is where I want to be.
>
> Keith, from *Imani*, during image-elicitation interview

Area B on Figure 3.4 is a hotel, famous for its gardens, where the middle classes and tourists meet for lunch or drinks. Keith therefore saw himself being able to patronise this hotel, as an equal to those he watched from the bridge. He was already developing his reputation, and establishing respect and status in the community in preparation for developing his business ventures.

Keith was always well-dressed, even when he was about to head to work at the garages: his overalls were kept in good condition and he wore shoes, rather than the *slippers* (open-toed sandals or flip flops) worn by his peers from *Imani*. As part of the plan to

elevate his status and become a respected member of society, he worked at extending the economic networks he had established while he lived on the street. Keith outlined the many activities he engaged in to earn money and maintain the social standing he described as important. The income-generating opportunities depended to some extent on networking and Keith's subsequent social capital. The stall holders who employed him did so because he had a trusted track record; the same is true of the homeowners he cleaned verandas for. Keith firmly saw where he wanted to be.

I interpreted Keith's aspirations as tangible, in that they were grounded in his everyday experience and the hard work he put into to developing his reputation. With his endeavours to look smart, make money and establish himself in society he aimed to join the people he watched from the bridge. Keith's choice of educational pathway was also tied into his aspirations. He did not want to waste time being at school, especially when he did not like it: he had originally moved the street after leaving school when he argued with his teacher and chose not to return to formal education. He wanted to be able to make money as soon as possible. Keith saw his career as a mechanic as a useful way to make money and develop a position in society in which he could be dependable and able to assist others. For example, Keith mentions being able to contribute to the funeral of a friend or parent:

> …being a mechanic is good because if you know and you have that talent for doing a mechanic you will see you are doing good and you will be able to help your family and you will be able to be learned and if you have a problem you can solve it. Like if you have a friend and their parent dies or gets an accident you will be able to give maybe 100 shillings to help.
>
> Keith, from *Imani*

In this area of Kenya it is customary for all those attending a funeral to give an amount of money that would be used towards the costs of the funeral and to fill any gap that has been created as a result of that person dying. Such interdependent communal ways of living require social capital: the larger the social network someone has, the more money they and their family receives when a close relative or they themselves die.

To provide context to Keith's statement, the previous week a young man who was being supported by *Imani* through an apprenticeship, but was not involved in this study, lost his father. All of the young men wanted to be able to give some money to their friend. For

most of them, finding the 50 Ksh (approximately £0.40) suggested by the social worker accompanying them to the funeral was a struggle. Keith however managed to give 100 Ksh. Mentioning his contribution suggested that he was proud of being able to give at this level. In addition, the example of giving also stood in contrast to the inability of street-connected children and youth to pay for the funerals of their peers when they die on the street. During my field research visit at *Imani*, a small group of boys arrived at the drop-in centre asking for contributions so that they could bury their friend. They did not know his family, or where he was from, so they wanted to make sure that he was looked after. Being able to give was therefore a sign of status.

Although not as clearly communicated in their interviews as it was in Keith's, the other participants also spoke of their dreams of the future and their hopes of attaining them through education, training and/or family support. Developing the knowledge and the skills with which a job could be found, and a level of respect and status that would secure the position, the participants could support themselves and their (future) families. Central to the process of gaining the respect of their communities and developing a place for themselves in society, were the physical aspects of the participants' acceptance, concerned with first impressions and the social interactions such impressions influenced.

4.3.2 Cleanliness and Hygiene

Cleanliness and hygiene was the most prominent theme, related to respect and status identified in the data. Participants from every cohort mentioned bathing or being clean. All of the boys at *Nyumbani*, and a large number of the participants living at *Matumaini*'s centre and *St Lucia* boarding school, referred to bathing, access to water or aspects associated with being clean at some point. During the auto-photography exercise at *Nyumbani*, the boys were asked to walk around the compound in which they lived, and that of the primary school they attended next door, to take images that would help them to tell me about their first few days, weeks and months at *Nyumbani* and at school. Each of the eight boys participating took photographs of toilets, either at the residential centre or the school, Figure 4.5 shows examples of these.

Figure 4.5: Indoor toilets (top left) and outdoor toilets (top right) at *Nyumbani* taken by Mulu. Outdoor staff toilets at the centre (bottom left) taken by Karanja and outdoor toilets at the school (bottom right) taken by Sabila.

The boys explained the images during the subsequent photo-elicitation interviews (see also Corcoran 2015b), of which two extracts are featured here:

Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.13

Karanja, was living at *Nyumbani*, a long-term transition centre run by *Usaidizi*, because he was unable to return home to his family. He was in Standard Seven, the penultimate year of primary school. His older brother, Jackson, also participated in the study. They had initially migrated to the street after an argument with their mother about a fish. They lived there on and off for a year, sometimes staying with a "good Samaritan", before being taking to *Usaidizi*'s short-term transition centre by one of the social workers.

Otieno, was living at *Nyumbani*, a long-term transition centre run by *Usaidizi*, because he was unable to return home to his family. He had originally migrated to the street because there was no food at home. *Usaidizi* had been unable to find his mother. He was getting to know his aunt in preparation for moving to her home the following academic year.

Hii ni vyoo. Tukitaka kujisaidia tunakuja hapa. Tukitoka parade na tumekazwa wavulana wanakuja hapa.

These are the toilets. When we want to ease ourselves we go here. When we are from the parade and we are pressed boys come here.

Otieno, of a photograph of the school toilets.

Hii ni choo za ndani. Tukiwa Town tukuwa hatuna choo za ndani tulienda msituni ama za nje. Usiku tunatumia choo za ndani na mchana tunatumia za nje.
This is the inside toilet...At night we use the inside toilet and during the day we go to the outside one.

<div align="right">Owino, of the toilet situated in the boys' dormitory.</div>

At first, these comments appear to be simple descriptions of features found within the two compounds where they took their photographs, but the boy's collections of images included those they wished to talk about rather than a comprehensive overview of *Nyumbani* or the school. The photographs therefore highlighted the importance of being able to use a toilet in relation to their arrival there. Having a choice of toilets, indoor and outdoor, was also significant. The images in Figure 4.5 show all of the toilets available for use by the children, and the staff at *Nyumbani*. Six of the boys took photographs of more than one set of toilets, in different combinations. For example, Mulu took two of the photographs featured in Figure 4.5.

Toilets were not the only aspects of order, hygiene and cleanliness that the boys' images revealed. They also took photographs to describe their move to the long-term transition centre run by *Usaidizi* that included: areas in which clothes were washed and dried; sinks for washing dishes; taps for washing hands; showers; and shelves on which to stack various items (examples are included in Figure 4.6).

The boys' responses to the images during the interviews highlighted how there were specific places to wash bodies, clothes or kitchenware, and places to keep things neat and tidy:

Hii ni waya ukiosha nguo zako unakuja kuanika hapa.
Here is the wire for clothes that have been washed you can put them here.

<div align="right">Otieno, talking about a photograph of the clothes' lines.</div>

Hii ni laundry sazingine kama umetoka kuosha nguo na ikakauka unapanga kwa hizi drawers.
This is laundry sometimes if you are from washing the clothes and they are dry you arrange them in these drawers.

<div align="right">Owino, talking about a room where all clothing, shoes and bags are kept.</div>

Figure 4.6: Pictures of *Nyumbani*: washing stands for crockery and pots (top left)), drying racks (top right) and bags and shoes on shelves (bottom left) at Nyumbani, taken by Mulu. Clothes drying on washing lines (bottom right) taken by Karanja

Taken together the images, and the boys' responses, provide insights into certain aspects of the transition process, as well as emphasising the difference between being on the street and living at the centre. For example, the boys sometimes described their photographs in such a way as to position their lives at the time of the interviews explicitly in contrast to their lives on the street. Karanja in particular reflected upon his experiences, describing a photograph of an outdoor tap and sink:

> This is where we washout our hands before food…which is good as we didn't have a tap to wash hands on the street and we ate food from the dustbins, which is dirty.

Owino, likewise, spoke of his inability to access toilets when describing a photograph he had taken:

> When we were in town we don't have toilets inside we went either to the bush or outside toilets.

On the street, the boys had lacked toilets and access to water, unless they could afford to pay to use the public amenities that were found in the town centre. All of these toilets had attendants and were only open during daylight hours. In the informal settlements around the town, toilets were often shared by two or more families, and it was unlikely that any family had their own indoor toilet. The boys similarly talked about how at *Nyumbani* they had items that they were required to keep in order and the facilities where they could keep these items, and their bodies, clean, which they did not necessarily have on the street. Therefore, the facilities available to them at *Nyumbani* stood in contrast to both the street and their lives at home.

Using the photographs of toilets, taps, and access to water, the boys constructed an image of the street as being dirty and socially unacceptable. This construction was explained by Karanja in terms of the social perceptions of being clean:

> This is a bathroom…when we just arrived we would just turn the tap and waste water so the teachers took off the tap so we just come with our buckets and water. Even this is good as in the street we did not have bathrooms and we could go one week or more without bathing. Lice can come and your clothes will be dirty and you will smell bad and when you are passing the people the people are looking at you, with a very bad look and they just think bad things about you.
> > Karanja, describing a photograph of the shower unit inside the boys' dormitory.

Karanja mentioned the availability of running water indoors and suggested that it was an unusual luxury that the children were unfamiliar with, so they could not work the taps effectively. Having access to water indicates the difference of life before and after arriving at *Nyumbani*: as many of the children would not have had running water in their homes, especially if they had lived in one of the informal settlements surrounding the town, it does not necessarily differentiate between life on the street and life at *Nyumbani*. However, Karanja implies that being clean is synonymous with a sense of social acceptance from the community. Having access to toilets, and facilities where they can wash, was not possible on the street. They are, therefore, important aspects of the physical nature of the transition made away from the street.

At *Imani*, Josephat began his semi-structured narrative interview by distancing himself from street-based behaviours, comparing his life before migrating to the street to his time on the street.

> …the guys I lived with were all street boys. Their behaviour was not very appealing to me because I wasn't used to that lifestyle. I was used to education, taking baths, being smartly dressed all the time and sleeping in a house…I used to see them fight amongst each other, but a time came when we were addicted to staying with them, we would eat from dustbins where we would eat the *good* leftovers.
>
> <div align="right">Josephat.</div>

Although one of a list of negative aspects that he identified with living on the street, he clearly mentioned "taking baths" as something that should feature in life at home. Similarly to Karanja describing access to water, Josephat implies that being clean, and smartly dressed, are important to maintaining a socially acceptable appearance that living on the street prevented.

A number of the participants, at *Imani*, *Usaidizi*, and *Matumaini*, spoke of having to take their first bath and receiving a fresh change of clothes when they first arrived at the short-term transition centres from the street. The description of these encounters were mixed. Most of them spoke of being clean positively, but one of the younger boys staying at *Nyumbani* was afraid of this first bath:

> I didn't feel like bathing, I was afraid of the water, but I was caught [and taken to wash]
>
> <div align="right">Eric.</div>

John, a boy living at *Matumaini'*s centre, felt that it was unnecessary to bathe as he had not done so on the street and therefore felt it was not important. Although he did not show the same affinity for being clean as other participants, John mentioning that he had to bathe when he arrived, highlighted the significance of this aspect of leaving the street.

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Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.14
Eric was living at Nyumbani, a long-term transition centre run by Usaidizi, because he was unable to
return home to his family. He was in Standard Six at the local primary school. Social workers at Usaidizi
were working with Eric's uncle and aunt to prepare them for taking him in.
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Eric and John, as well as Karanja, suggest that bathing and the use of so much water were not experiences that they had been used to before arriving at the residential centres, highlighting the contrast between life at a centre and life on the street, as well as possibly life at home in an informal settlement. In so doing, they suggest that the transition away

from the street is also a transition between two states: from that of being dirty, to one of being clean.

An explanation for the perceived importance of cleanliness and hygiene, could be the extent to which cleanliness as a virtue is included in the participants' Christian Religious Education lessons. These were conducted both at school and at each of the centres delivering non-formal education. Karanja, for example, quoted the phrase "the bible says cleanliness is next to godliness", when explaining the number of his photographs that referred to being clean (see also Corcoran 2015b). In addition, washing is foremost in the daily schedule at the street-based drop-in centres and transition centres, run by *Usaidizi* and *Imani*, where there are scheduled times for bathing, washing clothes, and cleaning the centre. Hygiene is a key topic, alongside religion, in the life-skills curricula delivered at these centres, and their discussions of cleanliness may have been fostered as a result of the lessons taught during the transition process from street, which aimed to change any anti-social behaviours established on the street and prepare the children for life at home. These lessons included health education concerning disease, sexual relations, drugs, cleanliness and hygiene.

Nevertheless, I have observed the negative social interactions that young people experience on the street because they are identifiable by their worn clothes and dirty appearance. For example, shaking someone's hand, even a stranger, when greeting them is an important part of interacting socially in Kenya. In my experience, such greetings were not common place in the interactions between members of the pubic and street-connected individuals. Their visibly dirty hands were a barrier to being treated civilly. I, and the staff from the three organisations, all made a point of greeting each child properly. This extended to encouraging those children arriving at the centres to greet everyone present: as expected by Kenyan custom. On a first meeting with young people on the street I have witnessed surprised, but pleased, expressions directed at the hand held out to greet them from a new acquaintance.

At the drop-in centres, run by *Imani* and *Matumaini*, street-connected children and youth were eager to get washed and take advantage of the privacy provided by the toilet facilities when they first arrived each day. Soap and water were available to wash both

themselves and their clothes. Being clean was repeatedly described as a way to stay healthy and important by the social workers and teachers as the boys arrived. It was such an important process that I often witnessed discontent over the size of the soap doled out, which was cut from a long stick and used for both their clothes and their bodies. It had to be of adequate size, as perceived by the boys, and was never enough, and all of the individual pieces had to be cut to as similar a size as possible. The participants who had been able to access the drop-in centre facilities in both towns, also talked of being able to regularly bathe there when they had been on the street full-time. Being clean could therefore be interpreted as a means of removing one barrier to social interaction.

Young people's outward appearance on the street, the dirt they acquired from sleeping rough, made them conspicuous, and a target for municipal authorities wanting to clean up the town by removing street-connected children and youth. James describes how they were treated by these authorities in the following extract:

> It was very difficult for me to stay at the street and I wondered how will I stay here? You are not sleeping, you are working throughout the day. When you are sleeping you are sodomised so you do not sleep. Mostly throughout the night you are collecting, you are collecting scraps because you will meet that most of the shops are closed and you will be able to rush to the street and nobody will ask you and at night there are not any *kanjo* [slang for council officers or authorities]. Mostly in a town *chokora* are street boys and the *kanjo* they do not like to see them there. The *kanjo* they think that they make the town dirty.
>
> James

James described a number of reasons why sleeping at night is not desirable. He mentions the fact that working at night (to collect scrap metals and plastics from rubbish heaps) is more productive than during the day, as they were able to avoid harassment by the *Kanjo*. The language James uses is significant here: *chokora* "make the town dirty"; the word *chokora* itself translates to 'a person dirty in both body and spirit' (Ngugi 1998). Highlighting how the presence of street-connected children and youth on the street, whether they are physically dirty or not, makes the town dirty. Therefore, being clean becomes a way of being accepted by the community, or being able to blend in.

4.3.3 Keeping up Appearances

Cleanliness was not the only aspect of physical appearance that was deemed important by the participants. The older ones, from *Matumaini* and *Imani* in particular, described

how developing good first impressions, and subsequently respect and status in the community, also involved dressing correctly. Aged 17 – 28, these young people were concerned with moving on to the next stage in their lives, which involved finding work, developing a customer base and finding a partner. As such they wanted to give the impression of someone who was trustworthy, respectable and of course they wanted to look attractive. Keith spoke of needing to earn extra money to pay for his "helps". These included fashionable clothes and mobile phone credit. Similarly, Pius, from *Imani*, listed bracelets as important.

> I need to do this so that I can buy my clothes and shoes and these [bracelets].
>
> Pius

Pius, James, and Simon, talked about the way they looked and the purchase of clothing and accessories that helped them fit the role they chose to adopt. Fitting in with other young men their age required that they wear the right items, were able to fund their mobile phones, and, as Josephat, Simon and James were keen to talk about, both within and outside of the interviews, be able to find girlfriends and/or wives. Each of these may be construed as a symbol of belonging to a society inhabited by modern youth in the urban area where they lived. Their membership of a group of friends was an additional aspect of being able to fit in. The young men supported by *Imani* formed a support group for each other that also involved the lending and/or borrowing of pieces of clothing, belts, hats and other accessories.

Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.15
Elizabeth, was supported by Matumaini to train as a tailor at the polytechnic. She lived at home with her mother and siblings and walked to the polytechnic each morning to attend her training course. Elizabeth had previously finished primary school at *Tumekuja* while she stayed at *Matumaini*'s centre.
Pius left home and moved town to live on the street when there was no money for secondary school. He left his mother and sister at home. Pius was supported by *Imani* to train as a mechanic and was living in an informal settlement on the outskirts of town with two other apprentices.

As typical members of a global youth culture the young men at *Imani* took their appearance seriously, and this was clearly evident from the discerning manner with which they chose clothes from *Imani*'s donations pile. At the drop-in centre was a collection of

second-hand clothes that were given to the children living on the street, who frequented the centre, so that they could have a second set of clothes to wear when they washed their dirty ones. Pigeon holes were provided at the centre where they could keep these clothes. The apprentices occasionally chose clothes from the donations. One day the young men were offered good quality white T-shirts, but they refused them as they could not "wash them properly". Six of the young men lived in an informal settlement outside of the town, which was on a fairly exposed plain prone to wind and orange dust from the soil. This dust coloured the water and often stained clothes. The young men did not want to appear unable to keep their clothes clean and wearing white shirts tinted orange would signify where they lived and their limited access to clean water.

Just as living on the street can imply specific stereotypes, living in informal settlements also appeared to attract a degree of stigmatisation by which a number of older participants at both *Imani* and *Matumaini* felt that they were judged, stereotypes that they wished to abandon:

> People they say look at this one, this is a slum person and you are a slum person so you want to move to something better than that.
>
> Elizabeth, during a focus group at the polytechnic

Education and training were seen as the key to moving beyond their lives on the street and in the informal settlements, but looking the part was essential to this process. Faith, training to be a tailor, explained how her appearance was an important consideration for acquiring a customer base for her business.

> You can be an attractive person and do better. Maybe you want to be a good tailoring so you need to look good to attract people. Maybe they say I want to buy clothes like that person is wearing/making so you need to be an attractive person to get work *poa* [cool or good] and to get money.
>
> Faith, during a focus group at the polytechnic

She highlighted how maintaining her appearance was key to developing her chosen career identity, and this was also important for the young people transitioning away from the street as they forge a place in society for themselves. Given that clothing and accessories are an important element of youth culture the world over, it is not surprising that they be mentioned by the participants. However, developing the right first

impressions by which members of the public, customers, and potential friends and girl/boyfriends, judge them was a motivating factor for their (re-)connecting with the income-generating opportunities of the street.

Earlier in the chapter, I explained how the participants were taking advantage of the income-generating opportunities available on the street to support their families and meeting daily living costs. In addition, a number of the participants wanted the extra income to maintain physical appearances that improved their social standing, provided access to entertainment or helped them to fit in with other young people and the wider community. The ways in which they engaged with the street varied. The young women studying at the polytechnic, sold *mandazi* (deep fried doughnuts) and other home-baked sweet goods to pay for clothes that would help them look smart enough to attract customers for their tailoring business. As Faith's comment above suggests, they understood the need to not only fit in, but also to portray themselves as talented at their chosen vocation through their style of dress, to raise themselves above the competition.

Keith took his appearance seriously. Although he did not mention it directly in his interviews, beyond listing what he used his money for, his appearance was something that was mentioned in conversation at *Imani*'s drop-in centre often as the other young men were always impressed by how he managed fund his "helps".

> I pay for things by hustling… my clothes and to help my family. If I have more money for extra I give it to my mum after I buy clothes and airtime for my phone. In a week I buy maybe 100 shillings of airtime to talk to my friends and my relatives.
> Keith, from *Imani*

Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.16
Chege was staying at *Matumaini*'s centre and studying at *Tumekuja* school. At the weekends he was supposed to spend time with his mother and siblings. Instead he chose to spend the time on the street earning money so that he could eat what he wanted and visit the small DVD stalls in the town that showed films in the evenings.

His appearance enabled him to establish a status within his peer group as well as the wider community. He was able to afford his look through the profits generated working for contacts within a complex network of social and economic connections, developed on

and after his time living on the street. To a lesser extent, the other young men at *Imani* were also engaged with the income-generating opportunities on the street.

In contrast to the older participants who wanted to forge places for themselves in society, the younger participants still engaging with the street on a regular basis spoke about short-term concerns. Chege, a boy living at *Matumaini's* centre from Monday to Friday, told me about how he did not return home every weekend to spend time with his mother as he was supposed to. Instead he spent his time on the street making money. The reasons he gave were to be able to buy *smokies*, small sausages sold from carts by street traders, and going to see movies. A number of the stalls selling copy DVDs on the around the town had a television that for a small price the young people could watch movies on. In the evening some of the stall owners arranged screenings of movies and/or football matches. Although not concerned with keeping up a physical appearance, Chege wanted to do the things boys his age did if they had the money to spend. Such wishes could be related to how he saw himself in a different position in society and how he was able to interact socially through the activities he took part in. Chege wanted to fit in to the social group of his choice and in many ways was more attracted to his life on the street than staying at home. Almost all the participants staying at *Matumaini's* centre described returning to the street on a part-time basis during the school holidays, mostly for extra food, but others, like Chege, went in search of entertainment.

4.3.4 We are "Hustling" not Street-Connected

Engendering respect and status also concerns the adoption of particular language, used by the participants, to describe their connections with the street. The language used to describe street-connected children and youth position them in certain ways: for example, the negative implications of labels such as *chokora* reinforces the stigmatisation that they experience. As a result, a number of the participants did not relate to having been street children/youth and described themselves as "hustlers":

> Before I came to *Matumaini* my father was a drunkard. When he came home at night he could beat my mother and he could not bring food to my siblings. Now I decided to **hustle** for the life.
>
> Teresia

> I did not go back to school, I start struggling at the street. I was **hustling**.
>
> Keith

Participants from every cohort used the term. In order to locate the importance of the language used, I had conversations with social workers at the three organisations, and beneficiaries and staff at other organisations in Kenya. Young people generally refer to how they either struggle or hustle to survive. Josephat, who was interviewed in a mixture of Kiswahili, Kikuyu and Sheng creole described struggles as follows:

> I've learnt that sometimes there's a way – they tell you to just continue with life. It tells us how to hustle and struggle in life.

The last sentence of which, when related in the Kiswahili he used in the interview, is phrased as follows: "*Ilinifunza kuhustle, kustruggle na maisha*". Struggling and hustling tend to be adopted from the English usage, as there are no equivalents in Kiswahili. The '*ku*' prefix being the 'to' element of the infinitive form of the verb in Kiswahili (*Kusoma* means to read, which becomes *soma* when used in I read: *ninasoma*)*.*

The use of struggle and hustle may be considered as having particular interpretations. To hustle in the Kenyan sense refers to a struggle to survive and in particular describes the possible activities that feature as part of the informal labour market. The word does not have the extreme negative implications that we associate with hustling in the UK, as a form of cheating others for financial gain, but instead denotes income-generating activities such as selling produce, washing cars, portering, cleaning verandas etc. It describes the jobs at the informal end of the career spectrum. In referring to themselves as hustlers, the participants are firmly locating themselves within the informal labour market, on purpose or unconsciously. Such positioning refers to their time living on the street as well as their engagement with street life after they have been supported to transition away from it.

Keith's map of the town (Figure 3.4) did not portray all the features of the area, but it included everything that was important to him at the time of the research. During the image-elicitation interview, he began his description of the drawing with the phrase "This is where I struggle" and continued to point out the areas that were key to various income-generating activities, family members and friends. In so doing Keith not only provided me

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with an understanding of how his engagement with the street fit into his daily life at that time, but also the importance of positioning such activities within the labour market rather than with his prior experience of being a street-connected child.

Keith's 'struggle' took place alongside adults also undertaking informal income-generating activities, and he wanted to be recognised as part of this community. As mentioned earlier, he was always the best dressed of all of the young men at *Imani*: his "helps" allowing him to position himself as respectable, trustworthy and employable. His activities on the street were therefore described in such a way as to reposition them as informal employment, rather than the activities of a street-connected youth. Keith and the other participants identified with others working in the informal labour market and claimed membership of this more respectable community in the language they used to describe their work.

Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.17

Denis was supported by *Imani* to train as a mechanic. When his mother left him, he journeyed to find his father who had left to start a new family after his parents' divorce. He was not welcomed to stay at his father's new home but Denis chose to remain in town, despite that meaning he had to live on the street. Social workers at *Imani* supported Denis through his stay at the short-term transition centre, mediating between him and his father and assisting with the transition he made to live with his father in the new home. Denis later dropped back to the street when there was no money for secondary school. At the time of his interview, Denis no longer lived with his father but stayed close by in his own rented home. However, he still enjoyed a good relationship with his father who had developed respiratory problems and needed support himself.

Another way of establishing themselves as valid members of the community was in having ID cards. Denis negotiated with me to receive the money I would have spent on lunch each day that he participated, instead of the food. As the young men at *Imani* were struggling to support themselves and their families at the time of the research, and it was clear that no extra was being given by the gatekeeper organisation, I agreed. Denis' aim in doing so was buying photographs and paying the fees for identity card (at a cost of 150 Ksh, approximately £1) so that he could start the process of getting a job when he finished his training course. He proudly brought the card to show me after he had been to collect it. An identity card also provided the young men with protection if they were stopped by the police walking home after dark. Without it they would be charged with vagrancy and put in a cell. A number of the young men at *Imani* described having spent a month at a time in jail for not having the card when they lived on the street.

4.4 Developing a Sense of Belonging After the Street

Within this chapter, I have applied the themes of support through acceptance, respect and status, and relating to family, to explore the opportunities and barriers to young people settling in to new communities after they leave the street. In so doing, I examined how they experience the transition, how this experience influences the decisions they make with regard to the roles they choose to establish for themselves, and how they construct the identities they perform in the communities they transition into. In this section, I focus on the ways in which the participants explain the process of settling in and finding a place for themselves, to develop an overview of how they develop a sense of belonging to their new situation.

Belonging in relation to families was possibly the most apparent aspect of the participants' transitions away from the street, which could only be replaced to some extent by familial relationships with social workers, foster carers and other influential adults and their peers. I have translated this sense of belonging to families in two ways. The first concerns the participants being supported and accepted by their families. Being part of a supportive family was something that all of the participants made reference to, either in relation to being part of a family or in the expression of wanting to be. Their description of the families they would have in the future tended to stand in contrast to the family lives many of them had experienced at home, as the participants described how they wanted to be able to financially support their families and be good mothers/fathers; their families were foremost in their interview responses. The participants highlight how returning home to their families, where possible, should be prioritised by organisations working with street-connected children and youth. *Imani* and *Usaidizi* both included family strengthening interventions into their programmes. These involved counselling, parenting classes, and loans and skills training to improve parents and guardians' financial sustainability. While *Matumaini* took care of the children five days a week, the organisation did not work so closely with their families. However, it was something that they were considering at the time of the research, especially in light of the initial analysis of the data from this study.

The second translation of belonging to a family, was emphasised by a number of the older participants who took on a supportive role, or became the breadwinner. In order to do so, the young men at *Imani* had reconsidered their relationship with the street and reconnected with the income-generating opportunities available there, as well as the young women at *Matumaini* who were training at the polytechnic. In so doing, they actively define belonging to a family by taking on an active role of responsibility for their parents and siblings.

The participants developed a sense of belonging in relation to the interactions they shared with family members and the alternative care givers provided through the assistance of *Imani*, *Usaidizi*, and *Matumaini*. They either established a place for themselves within the structure of the family (such was the case for Andrew, Thomas, Markus or James), or emphasised the lack of such a place and the need to establish a sense of belonging within other social structures (in the case of Jackson, Teresia and Owino). However, even though Jackson and Teresia felt that they did not have a place at home, they still highlighted how they actually did belong to their families, or at least voiced the wish to do so.

The chapter explored the participants' supportive relationships with their families and the implications this has on the aspirations they envisage for themselves. These supportive relationships are visible both in the support they receive from their families, and in the ways that they choose to support their parents and siblings. They see their places first and foremost with their families. As Owino and Jackson suggest, home is where they think they should be, even when they describe how they do not want to return home because of the problems they face there. However, the majority of the young people who were unable to return home were able to develop supportive relationships with other significant adults.

Settling in to wider communities began with the young people being accepted by peers and other community members, and first impressions were key to this process. Maintaining physical appearances enabled the participants to engender a degree of respect that was not experienced on the street: by accessing water and keeping clean; selecting an appropriate form of dress and accessorising effectively; affording to have

credit on their mobile phones; as well as access to leisure activities frequented by others their own age. Maintaining such physical appearances enabled the participants to remove outward signs of street-connectedness, such as being dirty or wearing ripped clothes, and develop first impressions that engendered a degree of respect, and established a status in society that was higher than the one they inhabited while on street. The financial means with which they were able to keep up appearances was earned through (re-)engaging with the income-generating opportunities available on the street. The participants describe these activities as hustling. In so doing they characterised themselves as being part of the informal labour market, therefore legitimising their involvement with street life and removing the negative associations inherent to public impressions of street-connectedness.

The effort that the participants appeared to apply to maintaining an image that engendered respect and status, suggests that in doing so they were able to establish a degree of acceptance from the wider community. Being accepted by those around them is a key first step in developing a sense of belonging within the participants' new situation. While they were on the street these young people were stigmatised, seen as dirty and out-of-place. In making the transition away from the street, some appeared to want to distance themselves from the image that being street-connected implies. Bathing and becoming 'clean' removes the outward appearance associated with being on the street. Wearing the appropriate clothes and carrying the necessary accessories, as well as accessing the leisure activities that others of their age enjoy, can to some extent establish a sense of belonging to a local interpretation of a global youth culture characterised by commodification.

In establishing good first impressions, young people leaving the street and forging a new place for themselves in wider society, are able to develop a basis from which they can further work towards an ultimate aim of finding their place in the world: be that through education, training, employment, marriage, supporting a family, or all of these. The young women in particular described looking smart and wearing nice clothes to develop their reputations as good tailors. Within the Kenyan context, being clean enough to invite the first handshake that was often denied them on the street, is the first step in removing

aspects of a street-connected identity and developing a sense of belonging to their new situations.

Settling in to local and school-based communities required that the young people transitioning in to them identified with the community in some way, as well as experiencing certain levels of support through acceptance. Peer support was a key aspect of the transition process and supportive friendships were important to developing strong attachments and a sense of belonging, while completing the physical transition and long after leaving the street. Fitting into new, or familiar, communities and situations appeared to be easier with the help of friends. The young men and women engaged in vocational training at *Imani* and *Matumaini* enjoyed the benefits of such friendships.

Providing support for children going (back) to school after completing their stay at a short-term transition centre, by placing multiple children together to give them someone to turn to who had been through the process before, or was completing the transition together with them, would appear to be an effective strategy. However, the participants who were attending schools problematised such practice. Mulu described his loneliness when he arrived at *Nyumbani*, despite having peers who had gone through the same process. This is unsurprising given that it was a new situation in which he had to come to terms with understanding the rules, routines and customs, as well as developing new friendships. Such a period of transition is to be expected. However, Teresia, Robert, Jackson and Elvis, highlighted barriers to settling in that appear to be more difficult to overcome.

Teresia and Elvis described the friends they had at *Tumekuja* as more understanding than those at *St Lucia*. They both suggest that it is best not to talk about their backgrounds with those peers who were not supported by *Matumaini* as they would be judged for having been street-connected or poor. Jackson and Robert, who were attending schools where they alone were supported by *Usaidizi*, similarly chose not to mention their time on the street and took the opportunity to reinvent themselves or their stories in order to fit in. All four of them suggest that they not only feel a greater sense of belonging with young people who share their background but they also experience a degree of shame about their previous situations. This shame appears to stem from a stigmatisation

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associated with having been street-connected, or living in an informal settlement, and it can include the treatment that the teachers show the children.

Although Ronald told a positive story of being liked because of his academic ability, the teacher introducing him as a *chokora* who is academically able reinforced a deficit construction of street-connected children and youth (e.g. Corcoran 2015a). In Ronald's opinion, time on the street had made him stronger and his academic ability had allowed him to occupy a popular position at school, but the teacher who introduced him upheld the stereotype of street-connected children and youth as deviant. Such negative perceptions of street-connectedness stayed with a number of the participants after they left the street, affecting their ability to develop a sense of belonging to their new situations.

The participants' responses do not highlight a definitive programme of intervention, and peer support, that should be followed when young people transition away from the street and (re)join educational pathways. Each of the participants had different experiences and needs, highlighting how street-connected children and youth are not a homogeneous population, on or off the street (e.g. Glauser 1990). Therefore, I cannot advise that all young people be placed in schools in groups, or that they be placed individually in schools where no-one knows their backgrounds. However, all of the participants benefitted from the provision of support through acceptance. This support was mostly provided by friends, but it could also come from teachers. Although the children from *St Lucia* were alone in describing the positive support they received from teachers, as they were able to compare this school with their previous time at *Tumekuja*, the need for better teacher support was made clear through repeated references to a lack of support made by other participants.

As a starting point, the need for effective welcomes to school are emphasised by participants' references to being caned, sitting a test and not knowing where the toilets are on their first day at school. Teresia also highlights the benefits to the provision of ongoing support from teachers in their regular meetings. Although, given the stigmatisation of street-connected children and youth by teachers, it is debateable whether their identification as having come from the street is advisable without

programmes of sensitisation that develop teachers' capacity to support them effectively. Belonging, particularly in a school-based environment, is multidimensional and influenced by social interactions with peers and support from teachers.

Summary

Within this chapter I have used three overarching themes, identified in the data, to explore the participants' experiences of leaving the street and their lives afterwards. Such transitions centre upon a young person's ability to develop a sense of belonging to the situations in which they find themselves. The sense of self they construct, is developed through the social interactions they experience with family members, friends, teachers, school, or training centre-based peers, and members of the wider community. Families, and the need to either be supported by them or to support them, were integral to the transition experience. In addition, peer support was important to the process of leaving the street and acceptance within the communities they transition into.

The participants emphasised challenges to the process of fitting in, highlighting how deficit views of street-connectedness dominate the public sphere. The participants' experiences of stigmatisation remain on and after they leave the street: either as socially constructed barriers to participation that they strive to overcome, or in terms of how deserving of inclusion in society they felt themselves to be. In Chapter Six, I develop the findings examined in this chapter to demonstrate how young people leaving the street, have been actively constructing and reconstructing street-connected identities in relation to their social environments: through conscious decision-making; continuous negotiations with peers and adults on and after the street; developing economic livelihoods; parenting their parents; and rather than just surviving, engaging their agency to achieve their aspirations for the future. In so doing, I explore the liminalities I associate with street-connectedness, experienced by these young people, that are made manifest in the socially and self-imposed barriers constructed, and performed, within their interactions with members of their wider communities.

Chapter Five

Conceptualising the Process of Leaving the Street in Kenya

The study reported in this thesis set out to answer the research question: what is the experience of children and youth leaving the street in Kenya?. In examining the participants' interview responses (explored in Chapter Four), I emphasised how leaving the street is much more than a physical transition away from the urban spaces in which they lived and worked. Rather, the transition away from the street is one in which young people strive to develop a sense of belonging as they figure a place for themselves in families, peer groups and the wider community. Their words highlight how inclusion in society is not just about geographical placement, but concerns experience (see also Jones 2014). Such experience is tied into the development, or lack thereof, of meaningful participation in developing a sense of belonging to a particular community. It concerns: the support and acceptance they receive as they make the transition; their status in the community and the level of respect that engenders; the role of family and community in providing that support, or needing to be supported; and the aspirations that the participants envisioned for themselves.

This chapter brings together the key observations made in Chapter Four, to assess the extent to which young people leaving the street develop a sense of belonging to their new situation. In Section 5.1, I present my interpretation of street-connected identities and the lasting impact that they have on young people's lives after the street. Building on the literature interpretations of liminality discussed in Chapter Two, in Section 5.2 I examine the temporal and spatial dimensions of liminality arising from the data and conceptualise street-connectedness as a multidimensional concept, categorised by three distinct yet intersecting processes of liminality. Section 5.3 considers the ongoing legacies of street-connectedness and problematises the concept of reintegration with which organisations, facilitating the programmes that assist young people to transition, shape their interventions. In so doing, I question whether street-connected children and youth do in fact 'leave the street'.

5.1 Street-connected Identities

Positional identity may be constructed as an entitled or disqualified self, where social place is assumed and taken up depending on a self-perceived sense of entitlement. If identities are constructed in practice as Holland *et al.* (1998) suggest, the process of developing a sense of belonging after leaving the street necessarily builds upon a young person's street-based experiences, and the social interactions they share with other people as they make the transition. For example, the perception of street-connected children and youth as dirty by the general public and municipal authorities, to some extent influenced the participants' view of themselves after they left the street and their need to establish greater levels of being clean and presentable. The positioning of street-connected children and youth as 'out-of-place', by these authorities, influences the construction of peer culture communities of belonging, which necessarily affect an individual's positional identity when they leave the street.

As Karabanow (2008) and Lucchini (1999) explain, leaving the street very much depends on the young person deciding to do so. Actively seeking to leave, or being in the process of deciding to make an exit, making the transition itself, and the early stages of having left the street, involve a renegotiation of a young person's sense of being in relation to their new situation. During this time the participants' described having to: build relationships with social workers; overcome the distrust that those at *Matumaini's* centre felt when they were approached by male members of staff; arrive at the transition centres for the first time; possibly leave the centres and return to the street soon after as a number of the participants did and where relevant, seek support from an alternative organisation; try to make new friends at the centre; and prepare to return home among others. There is therefore a settling in period, especially as they enter education, or vocational training, and develop routines. Karabanow (2008) suggests different layers, or stages, to the transition process, while Lucchini (1999) describes an ongoing process in which young people redefine their life trajectory in relation to dissatisfaction with the street (see Chapter Two). Both of these models of exiting the street resonate, to some extent, with a number of the participants' experiences of transition.

Central to this redefinition of a young person's view of their life trajectory, is the complementarity of Lucchini's (1999) Bourdieu-inspired fields of home, institution, and street. The field that provides for their needs most effectively, is the one that they choose, when resources enable a choice to be made - highlighted by the participants who left home because of a lack of psychosocial support, or food, and migrated to the street as it either promised to provide for these needs or represented a situation that was different to that at home. As the process of leaving the street for almost all of the participants in the study was facilitated by a social worker from one of the gatekeeper organisations, or a friend/vocational trainer who recommended that organisation, these individuals were instrumental in changing the perceived complementarity of Lucchini's (1999) fields.

The institution field, both on its own and later in combination with the home field, was perceived to provide more resources than that of the street in order for the transition to take place. The participants constructed identities for themselves, linked to a 'project' (Lucchini 1999) that they envisioned for themselves, closely connected to either the field of home or that of the institution, which is provided by the organisations assisting the transition. This project links closely to Karabanow's (2008) idea of a carrot, or motivation to change, that often takes the form of strong personal support from family or friends; and is clearly evident in the theme of support through acceptance identified within the participants' responses. The institution field could describe the participants' wish to complete their education, both formal and non-formal: their ability to access schools and training placements being the carrot, or the project.

Lucchini's (1999) concept of the complementarity of fields, is applicable to all stages of the transition process, within the responses of the participants. However, my findings suggest that leaving the street is less about a newly discovered dissatisfaction, as Lucchini (1999) suggests (Chapter Two). Instead, a number of the participants who talked about their time on the street claimed to not have liked living there, and spent their time looking for an alternative situation. Their decision to leave the street was made either after their sense of being out-of-place was reinforced by negative events, or the offer of resources, such as assistance from an organisation, enabled a journey away from the street to become a motivating factor. For example, being unable to look after a street-

based friend who was sick or to provide for a friend's funeral, as Keith described, which could be achieved with the income earned through an apprenticeship. For some of the older participants, the motivations for leaving the street stemmed from wanting more out of life, the younger participants on the other hand, talked about wanting to be able to go to school.

There are participants who I could argue have not left the street. In Section 4.3.2, I introduced Chege who would rather spend his weekends away from *Matumaini*'s centre enjoying the entertainment and food choices available on the street, than go home to stay with his family. The other children at this centre described going to the street on a part-time basis during the holidays to find food and money for other needs. The older participants in vocational training and apprenticeship placements were also re-engaging with the opportunities available on the street, this time in order to support themselves and their families. These physical re-connections, or returns, to the street suggest that the participants do not necessarily cease to be street-connected when they are supported to make the transition into education and/or vocational training. As such the idea of transitioning away from the street is questioned.

Of course, it is debatable whether such street re-connections are evidence of ongoing street-connectedness, or of young people engaging with the informal economy as other youth from their communities, who were never street-connected, may be expected to do. It may be possible to challenge the extent to which the young people's re-engagement with the street is a description of their street-connectedness or an entry into the informal labour market as 'adults'. The language that the older participants chose to identify themselves, and the work that they did, as "hustlers", suggests that they wished to position themselves within the informal economy. However, the young men at *Imani*, appeared to have been able to reconnect with, and build upon, the economic networks established during their time on the street, and benefitted from the support of peers with similar experiences who were part of their transition process. They also referred to their time living on the street as hustling, as did some of the younger participants.

Identity is described by the interconnections that exist between the 'intimate and public venues of social practice' (Holland et. al. 1998:270). It is co-developed and co-constructed

during social interaction and performed in the moment that the interaction takes place, but it is also central to a persons' sense of being and developed over time as each interaction is negotiated and interpreted. The physical journeys adhered to by young people as they move away from the street follow distinct pathways, but the process through which they (re)construct their identities are subject to any number of individualised combinations of factors. For example, the level of support and acceptance that the participants received from peers, teachers, families and members of the public all influenced the extent to which they felt they belonged and, more significantly, the personal history they acknowledged and the identity that they performed in public.

Practiced identities are constructs within which a sense of belonging is developed. They are frames of meaning that are socially identified and in which a person interprets aspects of social interaction to negotiate their own individual social identification (Holland et.al. 1998). In interacting with others, people place themselves and those they interact with within social fields that are in 'relation to', in 'opposition to' and at a 'distance from' identifiable others (Holland et. al. 1998:271). Within this figuration, positionality takes on a defining role, describing how people position themselves in relation to social and material resources. It is 'inextricably linked to power, status, and rank' and depends on the deference shown to positions of authority or higher status and the legitimacy accorded to different groups in society (Holland et. al. 1998:271). On the street, young people face a lack of amenities, as emphasised by the participants' focus on keeping clean and having access to toilets, which reinforces their being out-of-place and the negative attention they experienced from members of the public. Their material and social resources are therefore limited and their position in society is characterised by marginalisation and exclusion. It is from this position that street-connected children and youth begin their transition away from the street. Their sense of self is therefore constructed in relation to their street-based identity.

This construction is done within a space of authoring in which 'authorship is a matter of orchestration: of arranging the identifiable social discourses/practices that are one's resources' (Holland et. al. 1998:272). The identity that is authored affects an individual's ability to operate in the social universe within which they live, as well as being constructed in relation to it. They improvise histories for themselves that not only fit the

situation but shape future spaces of authoring. The histories that give shape to the spaces of authoring are both personal and public. The time and space in which this improvisation takes place determines their ability to develop and act upon their own sense of agency. The participants in this study actively perform histories for themselves that are improvised in relation to their time on the street.

The young men at *Imani* continue their engagement with the street to fulfil the roles they perceive for themselves. The majority appear to regret the time they spent on the street as children, and hope for a better future for their own (as yet unborn) sons and daughters, but like the young men from *Matumaini* training at the polytechnic, they recognise the lessons they learned on the street and the strength of character it developed. Their street-connectedness is therefore redefined as a social resource, enabling them to develop a sense of agency that encourages them to embrace and build upon their street-based experiences. At the other end of the spectrum participants from *St Lucia* and others assisted by *Usaidizi* to attend primary and secondary school choose not to share stories about their time on the street with their peers. Understanding the social positions they held as street-connected children and youth, their identities in practice are therefore constructed through feelings of shame.

A person's identity is multi-dimensional, determining and determined by the social interactions that take place in relation to that world (Holland et.al 1998). For example, Teresia, identified with being a girl, a daughter, a student, a sponsored child, a catholic, having an alcoholic father, coming from an informal settlement, having been street-connected, among many other aspects of her identity. She develops her sense of self and belonging, in relation to various situations of social interaction: e.g. belonging to family, belonging to *Matumaini*, belonging to *St Lucia*. The identities she performs in practice are subject to processes of 'personal formation' that depend on the 'cultural resources enacted in a social context' (Holland et.al 1998:282).

Therefore, Teresia is an actor in a cultural world who makes herself over, as she reconfigures her identity in a new context. Her agency lies in the improvisations she makes in relation to each context and the space in which her histories are authored is defined by contest and struggle (Holland et.al. 1998). As with all the participants involved

in this study, Teresia performs one or more identities, constructed in relation to her time on the street as well as other aspects of her life. In the next section, I revisit the concept of liminality developed in Chapter Two and explore the effects of the participants' street-based experiences on the construction of multiple liminal identities.

5.2 Street-Connectedness as Three processes of Liminality

Although this thesis is mainly concerned with the transition experiences of young people leaving the street, central to the stories told by the participants was the need to interpret and negotiate their street-based experiences in relation to the situations they transitioned into. How they developed a sense of belonging as they left the street, and with every transition they completed afterward, involved a renegotiation of the street-connected identities I explain in Section 5.1 (e.g. in moving from the short-term transition centre to home they (re)negotiate and (re)figure that sense of belonging). Street-connectedness was an integral part of their identity, even after they left, as was the liminality associated with the stigmatisation and low social positioning that characterise life on the street.

The participants' street-based experiences determined the identities they performed after the street and the lasting effects of being positioned as out-of-place. Such stigmatisation characterises the marginal space occupied by street-connected children and youth, and the liminality that is engendered. As I explain in Chapter Two, liminality describes the process of being betwixt and between, disconnected from mainstream society; where those experiencing such liminality may be socially invisible, ambiguous, the subject of taboo, or lacking access to certain rights (Murphy *et al.* 1988; Turner 1967). An individual's experiences of transitioning into a position of liminality, significantly disrupts their place within an overarching social system and therefore their sense of self.

This section revisits the conceptualisation of the street as a liminal space, introduced in Chapter Two, and further develops it to consider how the liminalities associated with this space relate to life on the street, the transitions followed by street-connected children and youth away from the street, and their lives afterwards. In so doing, I conceptualise three separate but interconnected liminalities associated with street-connectedness. The

first of these, concerning the street as a physically defined liminal space is explored in Section 5.2.1. The subsequent sections consider the liminal phases associated with initial transitions onto the street, and later transitions away from it, and the long-term liminal identities associated with being and having been street-connected.

5.2.1 The street as spatially defined liminality

In Chapter Two, I explored how the literature could be used to model the street as a liminal space, characterised as a site of independence with which young people engage as part of the process of growing up (Matthews 2003). Within this conceptualisation the street is both spatially and temporally defined: it is the space in which adolescents develop a sense of autonomy as they become adults. It is also a hybridised space, in that hybridity describes the combination of contradictory identities that affect an individual's ability to 'produce a sense of agency or identity in situations in which they are continually having to deal with symbols of power and identity' (Bhabba 1994:219 discussed in Matthews 2003:102). The levels of liminality experienced by those living and working on the street are tied into such notions of power.

Street-connected children and youth occupy some of the lowest social positions in the wider community, characterised by outsiderhood at the margins of society. Such outsiderhood was highlighted in the references made by the participants to their physical appearance. The nature of the informal work that they engaged in on the street (e.g. collecting scrap materials, cleaning market stalls and verandas) and sleeping on the ground, all contributed to an outward appearance that was far from being socially acceptable. They were often dirty and, as clothing was also difficult to come by, dishevelled. They were therefore identifiable, or strangered (Ahmed 2000) through the social interactions that identified them, by their dirty bodies.

By extension, the presence of 'dirty' street-connected children and youth was considered to make a town look dirty: as James explained (Section 4.3.2) when talking about the attitudes of the *Kanjo* (council officers). A number of the participants mentioned how such attitudes positioned them in relation to the wider community and were reinforced by the negative attitudes of members of the public towards them. Consequently they were subject to harassment and physical abuse at the hands of the police and other

municipal authorities. In extreme cases, such harassment extended to exploitation and rape (e.g. James (Section 4.3.2) mentioned that "When you are sleeping you are sodomised so you do not sleep").

The negative social interactions they experienced on the street will have influenced how the participants reconfigured their identity as street-connected children and youth. If the street is an identity-forming space in which the participants felt separated from society, it follows that the identity authored by a street-connected individual is defined to some extent by their experiences of residing within a liminal space. Liminalities arise because the street becomes a social arena in which the processes of strangering (Ahmed 2000), stigmatisation and marginalisation, construct street-connected identities as out-of-place.

In addition, there is the shared identity that is developed between members of the street-based communities of young people that they live with. Such a *communitas* represents a new social structure within the dissolution of order defining their liminality: it is tied into a levelling of social status, and a new sense of belonging that frames the reconfiguration of their (street-connected) identity (Berman *et al.* 2009; Szakolczai 2009; Turner and Turner 1978). Membership of the group potentially offers safety and solace: being part of supportive street-based networks is thought to not only provide for psychosocial needs, but also insulates the young people from the negative attention they attract from the general public (see also Beazley 2000; Davies 2008).

A number of the participants mentioned the presence of a friend (or friends) who were integral to helping them find their way when they first arrived on the street, and later feel protected when sleeping out at night (this was not developed in Chapter Four, which focuses specifically on transitions away from the street). Such friendships formed the basis of a sense of street-based belonging and the development of resilience and coping strategies (see also McAlpine et. al. 2010) that characterise the liminality of the street, especially for those who are thought of as long-term street-connected. Participants who had spent more time on the street appeared to have experienced liminality of a greater level of intensity, highlighting the temporality associated with their liminal experiences.

The development of support networks of friends and other acquaintances on the street were especially the case for the young men I interviewed at *Imani*, who all spoke of the friends they shared the street with (see also Corcoran 2016). These young men in particular had to negotiate the hierarchical gang-like structure of the each *chome* that they lived in (see Chapter One). Establishing a place for themselves, within the hierarchy of a *chome* or the social network established on the street, can result in the development of a sense of belonging and the provision of kinship and peer support in relation to the liminality they experienced.

There were however, a number of participants, such as Josephat (Section 4.3.2), Mulu and Jackson, who did not describe their time on the street as being part of a wider community of street-connected children and youth. Instead they related how it was a period of not belonging, in which they worked to find a way to leave the street. The identities they figured for themselves were therefore in opposition to the situation they found themselves in: positioning the street in negative terms and expressing their shame at having lived there. However, even in resistance they will have found a place for themselves within the social structure established on the street, further reinforcing the notion of the street as a liminal space.

If the street is spatially defined, betwixt and between two normative 'home' situations, Figure 5.1 represents a transition into and away from a street situation.

Home   Transition ⟶   **Street Situation**   Transition ⟶   **Home**

Figure 5.1: Simple appreciation of initial street migration and later transition away from street situation.

As explained above, a young person's time within this street situation (on the street) is characterised by liminality: they are likely to experience structural inferiority while they live there as they are positioned as out-of-place and potentially invisible to society. Consequently their sense of self becomes disrupted and the liminality associated with being street-connected leads to a reconstruction of their identity (e.g. Noble and Walker 1997).

The street is therefore an identity-forming space in which the participants felt separated from society, and for those who eventually transition away from it, this liminal space may be described as a journey between two end points (shown in figure 5.1) that may or may not be the same physical place. For example, a young person may migrate from home to the street and later return home again, or they may transition from the street to live in a residential care situation or with extended family or foster parents. The young people assisted to leave the street are neither simply children nor adults, rather they must contend with a combination of contradictory identities. Such hybridisation implies that as they transition away from the street they enter another liminal phase, a period of ambiguity, in which their sense of self is disrupted as they attempt to develop a new sense of belonging in relation to their new situation.

Although the literature (Chapter Two) and the data generated in this study enable the conceptualisation of the street as a liminal space, describing it in such a way as to associate the liminality experienced by the young people as inherent to that space, it does not immediately capture the nuances associated with the physical transitions that they complete as they migrate onto the street and later leave it. In the next section, I consider these situations, of physically making the transition, and the ambiguity that contextualises a young person's first days or weeks after making the transition (back) home.

5.2.2 Physical Transitions as liminal phases

There are two physical transitions suggested by Figure 5.1: that of the initial migration to the street, and that of leaving the street. Each of these is arguably a period of ambiguity as the young person enters or leaves the liminal space and struggles to identify themselves in relation this new situation. In addition, there are the physical transitions that take place during different stages of the reintegration journey (from street to transition centre, from transition centre to home etc.) and the possibility that a young person may make return migrations to the street and later leave it, for various reasons. I would argue that each of these transitions describes a liminal phase in and of itself, suggesting that there are multiple liminalities, or layers of liminality, at play for young people entering and/or leaving the street. Here, I will consider these situations in the

following order: migrating to the street, leaving the street, transitions between stages of the reintegration journey, and making multiple transitions away from the street.

Organisations working with street-connected children and youth recognise that the earlier they deliver an intervention to assist a young person to leave the street, after they initially arrive there, the easier it is to prepare them to return home or to move to alternative care situations (e.g. Connolly and Joly 2012; Retrak 2014). This is because the longer a young person spends on the street, the more likely they are to integrate into street-based communities and develop reliance upon the behaviours and relationships with social networks needed in order to survive. There is therefore a temporality to the liminalities experienced by street-connected children and youth.

When a young person first arrives on the street they could be described as transitioning through a liminal phase in which they are no longer at home and have yet to 'become' street-connected. A number of the participants described being uncomfortable when they first arrived on the street, the most vehement in distancing himself from the street situation was Josephat from *Imani* (Section 4.3.2: "When I first came to town [the street] I could not live the life I lived...I wasn't used to that lifestyle"). Over time, as friendships and support networks were fostered, they developed a sense of belonging and their 'street-connectedness'. Therefore, the longer young people stay on the street the more developed their sense of identity in relation to it.

The left side of Figure 5.2, which builds upon figure 5.1, features a liminal phase that characterises the initial migration to the street. It represents a period of ambiguity in which the young person is betwixt and between home and the street. They have left home, potentially as a result of a negative situation, but they have yet to establish a sense of belonging to the street.

- belonging is constructed in relation to identity with street-based networks of peers and/or economic opportunities.
- sub-cultures develop in opposition to othering and strangering processes
- no longer liminal space, but site of belonging
- characterised by autonomy,agency but also marginalisation

- site of constant transitions: from transitional care to home, informal education to school, primary school to secondary school or vocational training
- walking the line between independence and dependency
- peer support
-possibility of multiple liminal spaces and sites of belonging
- characterised by adherence to rules and regulations

Home → Transition → **Liminal Phase** → Transition → **Street-connected Identity formed in Resistance** → Transition → **Liminal Phase** → Transition → **Home or Alternative Care Situation**

- initial (or return migration) to the street
- sense of self developed as a result of street-based social practice and in relation to their life before migration to the street
- betwixt and between,identity neither at home nor fully street-engaged
- hybridised

- initial (or repeat) transition away from the street
- belonging is re-figured both in relation to their lives before, and on, the street, as well as as a result of non-street-based social practice
- effects of stigmatisation carry over
- betwixt and between,identity neither at on the street nor fully integrated to home
- hybridised
- overcoming addictions
-disconnecting from street-based families
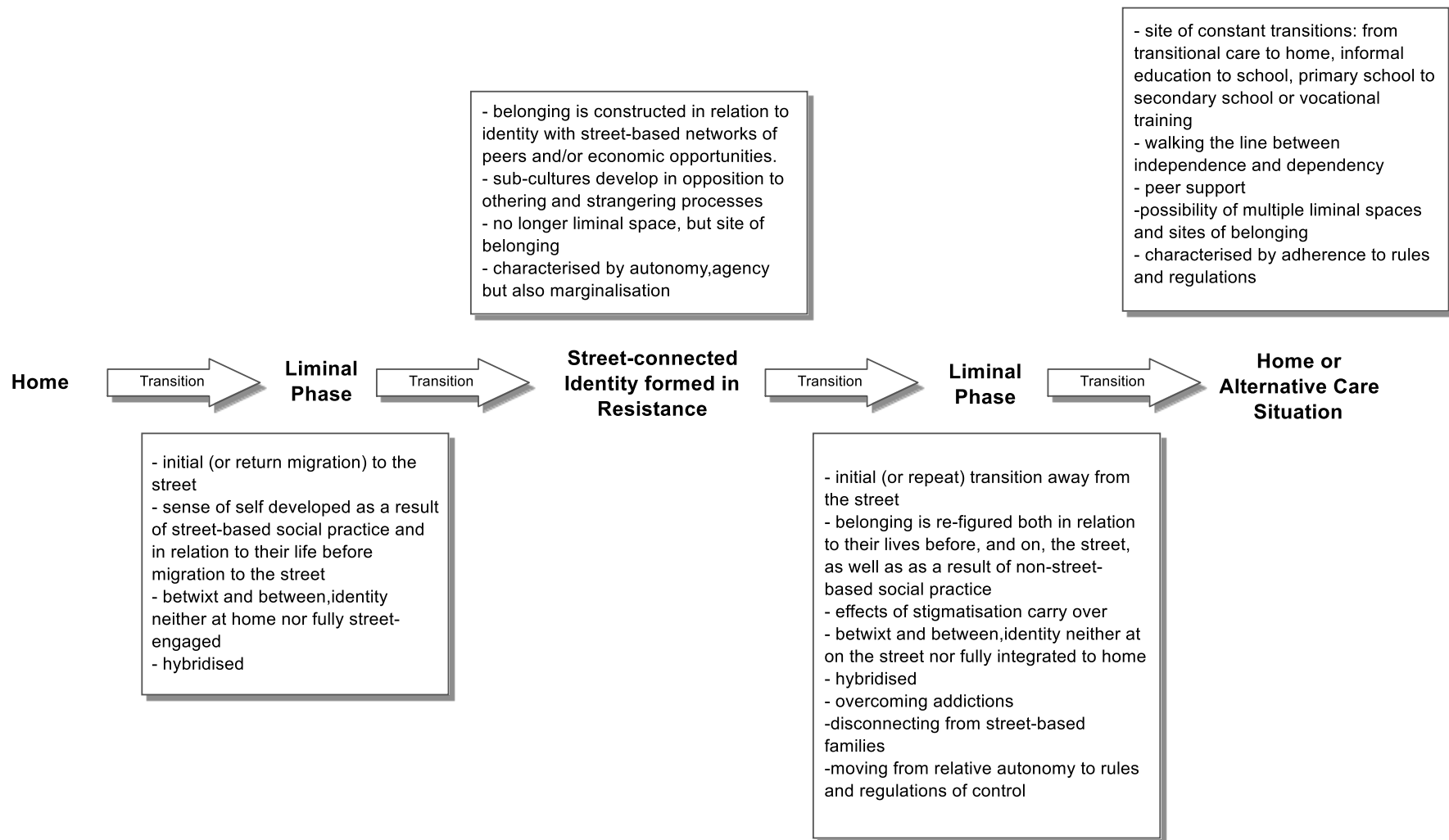-moving from relative autonomy to rules and regulations of control

Figure 5.2: Various stages in the identity-forming transition process of children and youth leaving the street.

Belonging is constructed in relation to their identity within street-based networks of peers, in resistance to being positioned as out-of-place, and/or as a result of the economic opportunities that are available. A young person's level of belonging will necessarily depend on their particular position within any social hierarchies that exist. The development of street-based sub-cultures, such as the structures that characterise the *chomes* established in the town where *Imani* works, do so in opposition to the othering or strangering that takes place in the interactions they have with member of the public. The *communitas* developed in parallel to mainstream society is a consequence of how street-connected children and youth are positioned and the liminality inherent to life on the street. This liminal space is a site of belonging, where identities formed are characterised by autonomy and a degree of agency, as well as marginalisation and longer-term liminality, as I explained in Section 5.2.1.

Leaving the street, the liminal phase featured to the right of Figure 5.2, refers to a young person making the physical transition away from this liminal space in an attempt to re-join mainstream society. For the participants, this transition is most likely to be to a short-term transitionial care centre at *Imani* or *Usaidizi*, or *Matumaini*'s centre. At the point of the transition, the young person develops a sense of self, or belonging, in relation to their life on the street. This sense of self is constantly figured and refigured as the young person negotiates their experiences and envisages a life trajectory for themselves away from the street. The sense of belonging they develop as they leave depends on their street-based positionality and how it affects the space of authoring in which their identities are practiced.

The development of a sense of belonging is therefore done in relation to the identities a young person constructed on the street and is characterised by multiple layers of liminality. Within the liminal phase they are betwixt and between, in that they do not fully identify with the street nor are they fully integrated into home, or the new situation that they find themselves in. They have moved away from the street and so are no longer street-connected, in the sense of actually living there and being supported by street-based peers, and they have yet to belong to their new situation.

An example of the minor changes that the participants needed to make when settling in is shown by the boys who had not wanted to bathe when they first arrived at a centre after leaving the street (Section 4.3.2). They emphasise the initial upheaval to their previous routines and the adaptations that were required of them. Being new to a centre involved settling in, and coming to terms with who they are and how they fit in at times when some of them were lonely and without friends (Section 4.1.2). Added complexity to the situation arises because of the lasting effects of stigmatisation experienced on the street. Negative social interactions influenced the development of identities of exclusion (Karabanow 2008) which carried over to the participants' lives after the street. For example, in Section 4.1.2, Elvis, Robert, Teresia, and Jakob, all spoke of the lack of 'understanding' that they would experience if they told their peers about their lives on the street. Two of them even developed new identities for themselves at school. Such feelings of not fitting in to their new situations can affect their ability to develop a sense of belonging during the liminal phase they enter when they leave the street.

A significant aspect of this liminal phase concerns the temporal nature of the transition. The participants at *Usaidizi* and *Imani*, who had left the street when they were under the age of 16, completed a stay at one of the short-term transition centres. During this time they re-engaged with family members and prepared for the return home or into an alternative care situation. Therefore, even as they figured a sense of belonging to the community they lived with during their time in transitional care; they were caught in a liminal phase between leaving the street and going home. In a number of situations this was a positive process. For example, Denis from *Imani* described rebuilding his relationship with his father, and the expectations of such a reunion reinforced his sense of belonging (Participants' Pen Portraits Box 4.17). However, when relationships with family members were problematic, as a result of abuse or alcoholism for example, returning home led to apprehension for some: Teresia, from *Matumaini* described her problems at home (Section 4.2.1), and while Andrew had committed himself to supporting his mother and siblings (Section 4.2.2), he had previously migrated to the street more than once to avoid her alcoholism.

In addition to the prospect of returning home or moving into alternative care, the participants also had to prepare to return to school or begin a course of training, adding a further dimension to the transition. The feelings of inadequacy, apprehension and/or shame, which determine aspects of their identities in practice, could be reinforced or alleviated depending on how they envisaged their entry into their chosen educational pathway. *Matumaini* reduced the instability of this stage as the children staying at the centre continued to do so from Monday to Friday. The move to school was still being prepared for as they attended informal catch-up education for their first few months at the centre. However, while the centre became for all intents and purposes a home in which the young people could develop a sense of belonging, this stage of the reintegration journey is still a finite one.

There are multiple stages associated with the programmes that *Imani*, *Usaidizi* and *Matumaini* deliver for street-connected children and youth, as well as those that many children make as they grow up: from street to short-term transition centre, from short-term transition centre to home or long-term transition centre, from home to boarding school, returning to school or starting a new training placement, moving from primary to secondary school etc.. Each move involves a distinct set of challenges and a degree of introspection.

An added complication, which stems from the need to avoid the realities of existing in a liminal space (such as hunger, abuse, emotional and mental health issues on the street) is the difficulty of overcoming an addiction to drugs or alcohol. Those participants who admitted to using drugs mentioned solvents, such as *gum* (glue) and *mafuta* (benzene or aeroplane fuel) and *bhangi* (marijuana). Overcoming their addictions impacted upon their sense of belonging: when addictions are strong, the likelihood of a young person returning to the street before completing their time at a short-term transition centre increases (Cottrell-Boyce 2010; Sansom 2016). But drug addiction does not necessarily have to be a factor for such returns. Negotiating with issues inherent to the liminality they experienced on the street could be reason enough for some.

A number of the older youth had made repeated transitions from the street, having returned months or years after they initially left it. Just as the reasons why they had originally migrated to the street for the first time varied, their motivations for returning to the street were specific to each individual: these included problems at home, an inability to access secondary school, being caught committing a crime, disliking school etc.. Each additional transition made away from the street involved shorter periods of time to find a sense of belonging and settle back into life after the street. Many of them had not had to stay at a short-term transition centre during their most recent transition.

Each transition to or from the street appeared to be less problematic than the one before, potentially because of a degree of familiarity with the process but also because of the lessons learned in the interim. Each transition involved more education, either in formalised settings or through non-formal life skills sessions, as well as life experience. Their engagement with the street therefore evolved each time they returned to it and their self-confidence and ability to settle in to new situations after the street appeared to improve.

As mentioned above, even when a young person does not return to the street, the physical transition of leaving it is not the only transition that they make: there are multiple stages associated with a reintegration journey, and with growing up. With each transition they must develop a sense of belonging that builds upon their lives before. As they develop as sense of self in relation to their new situation, they are also confronted with how they identify with their lives on the street during each stage of their lives after they leave it. For example, being at secondary school was problematic for Jackson after the support he had received through his years in primary school (Section 4.1.2). He was on his own in secondary school without peers who had also experienced the transition from the street or come from his home community. Mulu also describes the difficulties they face when they start at a new school (Section 4.1.2).

The multiple transitions that young people make to and away from the street, and the difficulties that they face settling in to new situations as they complete the many different transitions inherent to a reintegration journey, indicate that the liminality they

experience, the feeling that they are different to their peers or do not quite belong to mainstream society is long-term. They retain aspects of their street-connected identities that have some degree of influence on their ability to develop a sense of belonging years after they leave the street. Consequently, I explore the long-term, and potentially permanent, nature of street-connectedness as a liminal identity in the next section.

5.2.3 Street-Connectedness as a liminal identity

As has been suggested in the previous sections, leaving the street does not imply that the young people making the transition are able to leave their liminal identities behind. In order to understand the permanence of street-connectedness as a liminal identity let me build upon the discussion begun in Chapter Two and begin by emphasising the intersections between being someone who is street-connected and someone who has a physical disability. Social liminality can be used to describe the distancing and stigmatisation directed at someone with a physical disability, in that people who become disabled as the result of an accident or similar may be described as moving from one form of separation to another (Murphy et. al. 1988). While 'they have been made better they are not whole, and they remain liminal' (Murphy et. al. 1988:240). The liminality of their situations is defined by the impositions levelled against them by society. The intersection between their experiences and those of street-connected children and youth is in the idea that just as rehabilitation centres confine and remove their residents from society, life on the street forms a barrier in between street-connected children and youth and others not thought of as out-of-place. For those who spend years living on the street this barrier can become relatively insurmountable.

Street-connected children and youth occupy some of the lowest social positions and, as I have discussed in the previous sections, such liminalities are identity-forming. Therefore, physically leaving the street does not imply that the young person's sense of self adapts to their new situation, rather they may adopt a permanently liminal identity in contemporary society that is compounded by the social interactions they engage in. For example, the ways in which the participants described how they were dealt with by teachers, and other members of the community when they returned to school, can have a lasting effect. Therefore, although it is possible to say that being street-connected is

different to having a disability, in that a young person can physically leave the street while someone with a disability cannot abandon that disability, removing a young person from the street does not eliminate the aspects of their identity that correspond to being street-connected.

Taking the notion of cleanliness as an example, the stigmatisation that strangering (Ahmed 2000) engendered when the participants were on the street, or living in informal settlements with limited access to water, appeared to translate into a desire to be and stay clean once they have left the street. The transition, to a potentially new social status post-street, implied a change in physical appearance that was tied into the process of refiguring a sense of belonging to their new situation. A number of the participants aimed to distance themselves from the street through hygienic practices of keeping clean and using designated toilets, as well as dressing the part and accessorising effectively (Section 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). The removal of outward associations to the street suggests that the liminality they experienced when they lived and worked there had a lingering affect after they left it.

A number of the young men from *Imani* had returned to the street more than once in the years before the interviews were conducted, and some of the boys at *Matumaini*'s centre described leaving *Usaidizi* to return to the street before being supported by *Matumaini*. The more they felt like an outsider, the more difficult they found their ability to develop a sense of belonging to the situation in which they found themselves after leaving the street – suggesting that young people who do not transition away from the street, remaining within the liminal space long-term, may be considered as occupying a permanent state of liminality.

Repeated migrations to the street also suggest that it was a space of escape for the young people from various issues at home. To a limited extent it is possible to say that the street was a positive force in their lives, as it provided them with the means to support themselves and their families, but returning to live there reinforced the fact that the participants' identities and sense of belonging are interwoven with their street-based experiences. There were also the effects of disconnecting from the *communitas*

developed on the street, as well as moving from a state in which they were able to exercise relative autonomy to one where they were expected to adhere to rules and regulations of control, at home or in school. As such, there are both positive and negative aspects to choosing to return. The freedom and autonomy they experience on the one hand, may or may not be balanced by the stigmatisation they face.

Therefore, aspects of their identity associated with being street-connected do not necessarily end with the transition away from the street and there are three ways in which they manifest in the participants' responses. Firstly, there are ways in which the young people reengaging with the opportunities available on the street took advantage of the skills and networks that they had developed when they lived there. Secondly, there were participants that ascribed a positive identity to their street-based experiences: as having given them strength of character, or in terms of the opportunities available on the street enabling them to establish a status and a role in society, and with their families. Being able to engage with these street-based opportunities, potentially relates more to being able to distance themselves from the street over time and reflect upon their experiences, particularly for a number of the older participants. For the young men, being older also allowed a different relationship with the street to develop. For example, they were physically stronger than the younger children, and therefore not immediately seen as targets for exploitation. Their connections to the street therefore, helped them to move forward.

Finally, the third aspect of the participants' street-connected identity resulted from the stigmatisation and the shame associated with their lives on the street and how that determined who they became and the stories they chose to share. For example, a number of the participants actively avoided mentioning their lives on the street to their peers at school, which is a clear example of their reactions to ongoing stigmatisation, especially those who chose to tell fabricated stories to explaining their sudden arrival, mid-year, to a new school. Teresia and other participants at *St Lucia* described the nature of the friendships they experienced with each other, in direct contrast to their interactions with other students at the school.

They therefore suggest the development of a *communitas* in that they form a support group for each other, of peers that understand one another because they have a shared identity in having been street-connected. It was not explicitly clear whether the wider school population knew that this group of children had at one time lived on the street and their inability to understand was borne out of stigmatisation, or if they did not know because the children from *Matumaini* feared being rejected. In either situation a dependency on each other appeared to have developed between the participants as well as a perceived barrier that emphasised how the *communitas* was characterised by liminality.

A young person returning home, or transitioning to a new home after the street, is no longer the same person that originally migrated to the street. In many ways they have developed a degree of independence and a sense of autonomy, having become reliant on themselves and their social networks for survival. They must therefore fit their new self (back) into a world that is not street-connected and defined by different rules. For some, their street-based experiences are advantageous to their lives after the street. Keith from *Imani*, for example, began the process of developing his income-generating activities on the street and extended his economic network into a successful means of self-sufficiency while he was training to be a mechanic. His ability to overcome some of the barriers to participation in mainstream society, through his economic connections when he lived on the street, gave him an advantage when he developed a place for himself after the street. For others, however, this period of transition was uncomfortable and emphasised the difference they feel between themselves and those people who have not lived and worked on the street.

Therefore, the street forms the space in which liminality is constructed and performed, but this liminality is long-term and has a far reaching influence, potentially over a life time. It is this that can, along with compounding factors such as continued difficulties at home, or drug use, form a decisive factor in encouraging a young person to return to the street fulltime. I equate this liminality to Karabanow's (2008) description of identities of exclusion that must be overcome by street-connected children and youth leaving the street. Aspects of the structural liminality, such as the social exclusion of these young

people, can be overcome through acceptance and support from peers, family and wider society. With time, developing a place for themselves in society was perceived by many of the participants to engender respect and was therefore key to overcoming their sense of liminality.

The liminality experienced by young people leaving the street can be overcome to some extent, as the participants suggest in terms of the acceptance and support they received as they made the transition, and when they completed other transitions further down the line. The sense of self, and therefore belonging, that they appeared to develop for themselves and the ways in which they were able to interact with people, either reduced the effects of the stigmatisation, or compounded them. Structural barriers still remained that required further assistance and support to challenge. For example, being unable to settle in and develop a sense of belonging was evident in the responses of the children in school who felt unable to admit to their backgrounds – highlighting the ongoing nature of the liminality they experience. Structural barriers therefore resulted both from the identities of exclusion the young people construct for themselves, as well as the ways in which others interacted with them.

5.3 The ongoing legacies of street-connectedness

In the previous sections, I explored the idea of street-connectedness as three processes of liminality: being on the street, as a physical embodiment of liminality; physical transitions away from the street, and between different stages of the journey away from the street, as liminal phases; and street-connectedness as a liminal identity. However, street-connectedness rarely occurs in a vacuum, and in most cases the deprivations and marginalisation experienced by street-connected children and youth are multidimensional (e.g. Corcoran and Wakia 2013; Thomas de Benitez 2011). In this section, I examine the concept of street-connected identities associated with childhood and being a youth in contemporary Kenyan society and the lasting effects of having been street-connected on the life journeys that follow.

As well as being associated with varying degrees of liminality, street-connected childhoods are characterised by greater levels of autonomy than normative childhoods (e.g. Balagopolan 2014). The need to adapt and survive problematises the concept of who is a child or when adolescence is reached. In addition, being a youth in a number of African countries is becoming increasingly characterised by marginalisation, liminality and becoming 'stuck' in a period of waiting (e.g. Honwana 2012; Sommers 2012 and 2016), as formalised job opportunities cannot meet demand. Living on the street at the same time could further delay the progression to what is traditionally defined as being an adult: as young men struggle to earn enough to build a house and/or support a family (Sommers 2012). Therefore, street-connected children and youth are doubly liminal in this sense as they are both adolescents and street-connected.

As I discussed earlier, the liminality associated with having lived on the street continues to play a role, even after they transition away from it and this liminality is multi-layered when additional dimensions such as living in informal settlements are considered. However, it is important at this stage to negotiate the subtleties as I understand them that differentiate a period of liminality from the liminality associated with it. Being a youth is liminal in the sense that it is a temporally confined phase through which young people transition, but the liminality experienced, and consequently the failure to conform to traditional values can be long-term, especially in terms of being identity-forming.

Given that many young people spend a number of years living and working on the street, describing such a length of time as liminal, in terms of it being a temporary stage between two defined endpoints of a journey (Van Gennep 1906), could generalise and reduce the extent to which the experiences of street-life are identity-forming. As I explained in the Preface, the definition of a street-connectedness 'recognises that street-based experiences make particular contributions to identity development that may differ from those experienced by other socially excluded children' (Borg et.al. 2012). As such, the definition acknowledges the role of being street-connected on a young person's identity construction. Even though each of the participants in this study did not spend more than two years on the street at any one time (some of the young men at *Imani* who made

repeated migrations had spent a longer combined time there), it is possible to argue that street-connectedness is part of their identity for life.

Developing a sense of belonging is an important part of the process of moving away from the street, and the transition itself can be modelled to some extent as a liminal phase in which young people develop a sense of belonging for themselves in direct relation to their lives on the street. It can therefore be argued that they do not leave the street. On the one hand, the street, and the informal income-generating opportunities that it provides, is a useful resource for young people trying to make their way in a difficult modern world, and it may be inevitable that a number of the participants engaged with these opportunities part-time in order to fulfil certain roles and identities. On the other, although the participants may have physically made that transition, and have not returned, they developed a sense of identity that drew on, or attempted to challenge, their time on the street. This street-connected identity appeared to become integral to how they positioned themselves.

As I explained in Chapter One, intervention programmes for street-connected children and youth in Kenya, and especially those of the *Imani*, *Usaidizi*, and *Matumaini*, are often based on the '3R's': rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration. However, the liminalities associated with being street-connected and the construction of street-connected identities problematise the language use and meaning of being rescued, rehabilitated and reintegrated as part of the transition away from the street. As explained in Chapter Two, the use of the term 'rescue' implies that street-connected children and youth are helpless and in need of intervention. As such, the extent to which they are actors engaging varying degrees of agency as they transition away from the street, does not appear to be considered.

However, should transition journeys be planned and facilitated without the participation of the young person completing the transition, they are not expected to be as successful as those in which the young person is able to exercise some control over the process (e.g. Connolly and Joly 2012; Retrak 2014). Consequently, organisations like *Imani* and *Usaidizi* run street-based drop-in centres to build trusting relationships between the social work

staff and street-connected children and youth, to help the latter choose to leave the street. On the ground therefore, the process of assisting young people to transition from the street does not necessarily reflect the idea of helplessness and vulnerability that is projected by the choice of terminology and the media profiles that are created for fundraising and advocacy purposes. Ronald, and the young men supported by *Matumaini* to train at the polytechnic, also problematise the idea of being rescued in that they describe the 'strength' that being on the street gave them and the skills that they developed there.

Rehabilitation as a concept is difficult to define: the term is used in various contexts to explain different things. In understanding how it may relate to street-connected children and youth I choose think of rehabilitation as it relates to young offenders: described as the restoration of the offender to the state of law-abiding citizen, permitted to re-join the community, after a period of exclusion (Robinson and Crow 2009). I feel that this definition intersects with the experiences of street-connected children and youth, in that they have been taken from a state of being out-of-place (see Chapter Two) and brought to the socially acceptable position of living at home. However, I have chosen not to use the term in this thesis, except in introducing reintegration programmes, despite its prominence in the everyday terminology of intervention used at *Imani*, *Usaidizi* and *Matumaini*. I feel that rehabilitating street-connected children and youth implies that they are in need of change and adaptation, rather than time, acceptance and support, as the participants' responses suggest.

The prefix 're-' for rehabilitation, as well as for reintegration, denotes a return to a previous state (Robinson and Crow 2009). However, given the varied experiences of young people living on the street (e.g. survival skills learned or abuse endured), taking reintegration at face value suggests that such a return would only really be applicable to the physical return of the individual to their home, community, school – if they do indeed return to the same home. As I have explained so far in this chapter, the young person themselves is not necessarily the same person that made the initial migration to the street. The fact that some of the participants, such as Jackson, felt the need to adopt new

outer identities to shield their street-connectedness is clear evidence that they identify themselves differently.

Reintegration also suggests that the young person has been completely removed from home and is being returned - although the term is also used to describe transitions into alternative care. The participants' responses during the interviews reveal a number of different reasons for their initial migrations to the street (see also Wakia 2010). Two such instances, of a young person deciding to migrate to the street, could be to improve their family's situation or as a result of the deprivation of a loving family. In both situations street-connected children and youth often remain attached to their families and will endeavour to maintain, often infrequent, contact when on the street, or they may drop out from alternative care to find family members (see also Thomas de Benitez 2011). Even when contact with parents is limited or non-existent, families, especially mothers, are still considered important, despite the reality that, for some, attachment to street-based peer groups, and those forged after the street, may offer levels of safety and support that is not achieved at home.

The participants' responses highlight the idea that home and the street are not two separate realities, but exist in a space comprised of multiple layers of support from various, possibly interconnected, elements of society (e.g. Ennew and Swart-Kruger 2003; Lucchini 1996; Rizzini and Butler 2003). The term reintegration fails to acknowledge such complexity: especially as a perception of young people as either on, or not on, the street sets up a binary that does not represent their engagement with the urban environment in which they live, or their relationships with family, both street-based and biological, and other members of the community (see also Shand 2014). Taken in its simplest form, reintegration does not necessarily grasp the various mechanisms by which children and youth develop a sense of belonging after leaving the street.

The Borg *et al.* (2012) definition of street-connectedness (page 22) goes some way to consider the many ways in which young people engage with the opportunities and challenges of life and/or work on the street, and the ways in which it affects their sense of self. It also aims to highlight how street-connected children and youth need to be

recognised as a discrete category as well as recognising the intersectionalities that are shared by others residing in communities in urban informal settlements, and in the case of John, in rural areas where the street may not necessarily exist. The use of the term street-connectedness acknowledges the multiple deprivations that are experienced by street-connected children and youth, their processes of identity formation and the unique relationship they have with the urban environment (Thomas de Benitez 2011), but it is the 'street' rather than the wider societal context that is privileged. While their street-connectedness was a source of shame, or strength, for a number of the participants in this study, their backgrounds in informal settlements and their family connections were also important, and for some equally shameful. However, I do not think it is possible to develop a phrase that would fully capture the continuum of experiences that are individual to each young person that is currently seen as street-connected as well as the on-going liminalities that characterise their transitions away from the street.

Thomas de Benitez (2011:ix) outlines the need to consider street-connected children and youth as 'distinguished - but not isolated - from other children' in the development of policy and frameworks for intervention. This study reinforces the need to recognise that they are young people first and foremost, as it shows how the many of the young people are struggling to develop a place for themselves within local social structures. However, when social policies do not refer to street-connected children and youth explicitly there is a space in which politicians and other figures of authority can forge ahead with interventions such as police roundups, beatings, arrests and jail time in response to the need to remove the perceived threat of street-connected children and youth from the streets of a particular town. All of which reinforce public perceptions of these young people, even after they have left the street, that further marginalise and stigmatise them. For example, as I write this thesis one of the local county governments within which the three organisations operate, is building a remand home as part of the lead up to the 2017 elections, to which they aim to forcibly remove young people living on the street.

Summary

In this chapter I have set out to answer the research question: what is the experience of children and youth leaving the street in Kenya?. In so doing I suggest that young people making the transition do not actually leave the street. Rather the street-connected identities that they construct in relation to their time there are renegotiated and reconstructed as they develop a sense of belonging within their new situations. There are liminalities associated with these street-connected identities that influence the transition experiences of young people leaving the street. I recognise three processes of liminality associated with street-connectedness: being on the street, as a physical embodiment of liminality; physical transitions away from the street, and between different stages of the journey away from the street, as liminal phases; and street-connectedness as a liminal identity.

It is possible to conceptualise the lasting legacies of street-connectedness for young people who have transitioned away from the street, using the third, identity-forming liminality identified. For example, I problematise the language used by organisations working with street-connected children and youth. The phrases, rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration, neglect the agency that young people engage in making the transition away of the street; reinforce a deficit-based understanding of those living on the street as in need of change; and suggest that they are returning to the same situation that they left when they initially migrated to the street.

In order to increase their ability to develop a sense of belonging to the situations that characterise life after the street, and reduce the feelings of inadequacy that make them feel disqualified from doing so, young people rely on being accepted and supported by the communities they transition into. They require assistance to follow journeys that enable the realisation of aspirations that provide status and respect from others. The roles they develop for themselves are associated with their relationships with families and friends, whether they are supported or do the supporting, and hindered by the multiple dimensions of disadvantage that many of them face in addition to having lived on the street. In the concluding chapter of this thesis, I develop the findings outlined in

this chapter in relation to the wider contexts of the literature and make

recommendations for future research and practice.

Chapter Six

Conclusions

The study reported in this thesis examined the transition experiences of street-connected children and youth in Kenya, as a way of exploring what could be learned from their experiences of leaving the street. In Chapter Five, I presented an overview of the empirical findings of the study. Using three key themes, identified in the responses of the young people who participated, I drew attention to the idea that street-connected children and youth are always street-connected, even after they have physically moved away from street-based settings. They develop street-connected identities that continue to be constructed and reconstructed as they journey away from the street and discover new educational and home situations.

In this final chapter of the thesis, I aim to consider the findings of the study in their wider context. In Section 6.1, I summarise the findings of the study and relate them to other literature concerned with leaving the street, namely with regards to the 'identities of exclusion' described by Karabanow (2008:786). Section 6.2 explores whether street-connected children and youth do in fact leave the street if they continue to be connected to the street after they have made the physical transition away from it. In Section 6.3 I revisit the conceptualisation of street-connected liminalities and in so doing outline my contribution to knowledge. Section 6.4 suggests directions for future research and Section 6.5 considers potential implications for practice with street-connected children and youth.

6.1 Relating to the Literature

Leaving the street and transitioning into new homes and educational situations required a renegotiation of identity, in which the young people participating in the study developed a sense of belonging to the communities they live, study and work within. The sense of belonging developed by each individual participant differed in relation to their

experiences of the transition and their lives afterwards. Their day-to-day interactions with family, friends, and school-based peers and teachers, greatly influenced their ability to settle in. Where they felt supported and, through this support, accepted, they were able to develop a sense of belonging that in turn influenced long-term aspects of their lives after the street, such as their academic performances or the roles that they envisioned for themselves at home and in society. Karabanow, summarising the findings of his research with homeless youth in six Canadian cities, describes the process of re-entering what he calls 'mainstream culture', as one that involves a 'transition from *identities of exclusion* to one of *fitting in*' (2008:786 author's emphasis). My findings confirm this process of overcoming such feelings of being different, and expand upon Karabanow's work to detail the processes through which a sense of belonging, needed in order to fit in, is developed in a Kenyan context.

Karabanow's (2008:786-7) discussion of overcoming 'identities of exclusion' is centred on the 'inclusionary dimensions' of being part of street-based communities, including the effective support provided by social workers who develop surrogate family structures through the services they implement for street-connected youth. He suggests that the majority of the young people he researched, migrated to the street as a result of traumatic experiences at home, making the street seem like a safer space. Therefore, Karabanow (2008) advocates for integrated services and programmes of social welfare, to help young people overcome their feelings of exclusion and become citizens of mainstream society. In Kenya, the participants did not describe leaving the street as a process of disconnecting with the support offered by their peers there; a number related how their time on the street was a period of not belonging to the street, in which they worked to find a way out of their situation. The outreach work conducted by social workers on the street was therefore a key part of the process of providing them with the means with which to leave. However, from my voluntary work in Kenya I know that there are young people who do struggle to disconnect from street-life; outreach by social workers is essential to developing trusting relationships between the young people and the organisations' staff members as a first stage in the transition journey. Within the findings of this study, overcoming identities of exclusion were concerned with the social interactions experienced by the participants' in their daily lives after leaving the street.

The stages inherent to the transition journey in the two contexts of Kenya and Canada differ: namely as a result of the ages of the participants and the destinations each of them moved towards. Karabanow's (2008) research focuses on the transition of older teenagers and young people in their twenties into housing, employment, and employment-related training. Thirty of the 53 participants I interviewed in Kenya were 12-17 years old, and each of the 53 participants related experiences of transitions made away from the street that started between a year and six years previously. Therefore, the majority had been children when they lived on the street and, as minors, required long-term situations providing ongoing care. Overcoming identities of exclusion, therefore, required them to develop a sense of belonging to families, school and training centre communities, and the communities in which they lived and interacted socially on a daily basis. Central to developing a sense of belonging was the relationship the young people shared with family members, and in particular their mothers.

All of the participants wished to be part of a supportive home environment that both understood and prioritised their needs (see also Beazley 2000a, 2000b). A number of them returned to immediate or extended family homes that, with assistance from the three organisations, enabled such situations. However, two conflicting, yet also corresponding, demands arose for many in the need to be supported by family, while at the same time being needed to support the family. When families were unable to provide for participants' economic, physical and psychosocial needs, they struggled to align their sense of home with meeting these needs and the realisation of their aspirations. Three situations arose. The first describes the ways in which young people took responsibility for solving problems faced at home. They (re-)connected with opportunities available on the street after they had transitioned away from it. Taking advantage of the street-based networks and informal income-generating activities alongside their vocational training courses, they provided financial support for incapacitated parents, and siblings.

The second situation involved a focus on aspirational goals for the future. In the short term, this could involve a reconnection with the opportunities available on the street, to buy the trappings with which young people fit into mainstream culture. In the long-term,

aspirational goals could be achieved by working hard at school to obtain boarding placements that provided space, away from families, in which they could attempt to ignore the problems they faced at home. This option was perceived to provide future answers to the family's problems when the young person doing the studying graduated and achieved a well-paid job. Similarly, the young people in the first situation envisaged the future capabilities promised when they completed their training. The third situation describes the younger participants who were unable to return home. There was still an undeniable connection to their family, usually in the wish to be part of a supportive family headed by their parent(s). In these instances, foster families, the organisations providing assistance, and friends and teachers in schools, could provide for them. The extent to which the young people felt supported, however, varied.

Within both family and alternative care situations, young people who have lived on the street can feel what Sherry (2004:772) labels 'familial isolation'. He uses it to describe the isolation felt by the only person in a household with a disability. Such isolation intersects with, and is potentially amplified by, the experiences of street-connected children and youth who, as well as being the only family member who has lived on the street, may have had limited or no connection with their families during this period of time or are new to a particular home situation (Corcoran 2015a). Beazley (2000) describes how children visiting home in Indonesia struggled to meet the requirements of strict households after their experiences of street-based autonomy. In Kenya, the participants did not describe their problems at home in relation to this notion of difference, rather home was thought of as either a good place to be or it was problematic, because of a lack of material needs, such as food, or because of a parent's incapacity (due to illness or alcoholism) to work or understand the study needs of their children. This latter problem was the only potential example of familial isolation in the data, which to some extent arose because the young people felt able to achieve much more, with the assistance of the organisations, than they had prior to migrating to the street. A sense of isolation was however, evident in relation to fitting in at school and within the wider community.

At school, attempting to fit in appeared to require that the participants hide aspects of their backgrounds, keeping their lives on the street secret in order to avoid

stigmatisation. Where this was not possible, they relied on the companionship of others who had been in the same situation: forming peer groups of young people assisted by the same organisation. They therefore felt isolated from their peers who had not been street-connected. I see this isolation as being related to how they internalised their experiences on the street, and in some cases after they left it, constructing barriers that prevented them from developing a sense of belonging to their new situations. Being unable to share their past with others was the foundation of these self-imposed barriers, which were a form of self-preservation: preventing the stigmatisation that resulted from the deficit approach to street-connected children and youth that was evident in young people's descriptions of their treatment by teachers, peers and members of the public.

In the wider community, belonging required the development of a status that engendered respect and enabled them to work towards, and achieve, future aspirations. Being accepted, and to some extent respected, was gauged by the participants within social interactions with members of the wider community. First impressions were key to developing respect. The participants highlighted the importance of maintaining an acceptable physical appearance: being clean and smartly dressed. Their outward appearance ensured that they were not treated as street-connected children or youth, fitted in to the expectations of local youth culture (in terms of accessories and standard of dress), and, for the older participants, developed reputations that earned respect as they developed businesses and worked towards becoming financially sustainable in the future.

Lucchini (1999) describes active exits from the street as requiring the development of life trajectories that enable young people to envision a life for themselves beyond the physical confines of the street. As I have explained above, being street-connected is an integral part of the identity that is a carried forward by those making the transition. Such street-connectedness can be a strength: the resilience and skills developed on the street are useful attributes in adapting to new situations, and potentially in providing income-generating opportunities later on. However, the stigmatisation and resulting marginalisation experienced on the street, continues as young people who are known to have lived on the street continue to be associated with the negative aspects of street-life. Even more relevant is how a young person internalises their street-connectedness,

creating a self-imposed barrier to inclusion which subsequently influences their development of a sense of belonging to their new situation.

6.2 Leaving the Street?

In Chapter two, I conceptualised how young people arriving on the street construct street-connected identities through stories that orient their understanding of themselves in relation to multiple cultural and social narratives, performed within the interactions they experience with police, municipal authorities, and members of the public. I suggested that, if street-connectedness is a process of becoming, in which young people make sense of who they are within the context of the street, leaving the street can also be thought of as a process of becoming, but in relation to a different context. The process of disengagement with street life involves the construction of a new, different type of story that can be constraining and difficult to negotiate. Young people are expected to conform to the idea of what society frames as a good boy or girl: they must be clean, well-dressed and behave in a certain way. As young men or women they are also expected to take on greater roles of responsibility, for their families or in becoming adults capable of supporting future families; living up to traditional ideas of what it means to be a man or a woman in their societies. Therefore, they are expected to squeeze themselves into positions that differ greatly to the freedom and autonomy they may have experienced on the street. Such positions may or may not require them to draw from the leadership capabilities, resourcefulness and resilience that they developed as part of their street-connected identities.

The participants' street-connected identities were often developed in resistance to the negative treatment they experienced on the street: being dirty, ignored, beaten, referred to as *chokora* etc. Exposure to such experiences has been linked to the development of a sense of fatalism around what young people believe they are able to achieve in life, and the possibilities that are open to them (e.g. Butler 2009, Le Roux and Smith 1998, Veale *et al.* 2000). The participants suggested that coming home was a new start, but there appeared to be a compulsion to over-compensate in order to fit in to society and gain the respect that was lacking on the street: to be 'more' clean, 'more' hard working, 'the'

bread winner for the family. There was also the possibility that they were subject to suspicion and blame, and if they did something that did not 'fit' with the behaviour expected of them, they were the street-connected child or youth again, subject to the stigmatisation inherent to such a position. The identities constructed by the young people leaving the street were developed in relation to these experiences.

On the street, time is very much measured in the present. There is an immediacy inherent to the process of survival. In leaving the street, street-connected children and youth must reconnect with a sense of time and long-term life trajectories (see also Butler 2009, Lucchini 1999). In a sense they align themselves with the possibility or likelihood of becoming an adult, and all that adulthood entails. However, given that an individual's associations with the street linger after they have transitioned away from it, becoming street-connected is not temporally or spatially constrained. Street-connected identities may shift and adapt to the new situation but elements of the structural inequalities experienced by street-connected children and youth remain after they have left the street. It is debateable therefore, whether street-connected children and youth 'leave' the street when they transition away from it: they may be physically removed from the situation of the street, but in many ways they still identify, and in some cases engage physically, with it.

Therefore, street-connected identities are shaped by young people's experiences on and after the street. They develop a sense of belonging in relation to socially defined cultural narratives that are rarely of their own making, through the interactions they share with others. The stigmatisation they faced on the street remains to some extent after they leave it. They therefore inhabit a liminal space, determined by the barriers they perceive to be between themselves and their peers, or the rest of the community they find themselves in. My contribution to knowledge is the conceptualisation of three liminalities, associated with being street-connected: that of living in the physical space defined as being on the street - a physical embodiment of liminality; being in transition as newly arrived on the street, or having recently left the street - as liminal phases; and finally the identity-forming social space that is associated with being, and having been, street-connected - a liminal identity.

6.3 Contributions to Knowledge

Liminality can be understood as being on the threshold between two places or states, betwixt and between both, but belonging to neither. In its original anthropological sense, such a liminal stage is ritualistic and indicative of a shift in identity: for example, being an adolescent means that you are neither a child nor an adult (Turner 1967, Van Gennep 1906). Previous considerations of liminality in relation to the street, draw from the process of becoming an adult: the street being a liminal space, characterised by relative autonomy, in which young people exercise their freedoms as adolescents (Matthews 2000, 2003). This conceptualisation of liminality is temporally constrained, with a metaphorical end point that signals a re-entry into society as an adult. However, as my findings in Kenya highlight, the ongoing stigmatisation and barriers experienced by young people on and after the street suggest multiple liminalities inherent to street-connected identities. I therefore extend the notion of liminality, exploring intersections between street-connectedness and disability, to conceptualise the ongoing process of being street-connected.

Disability and health studies model liminality as semi-permanent, in that a disability or medical condition implies a structural inferiority that positions the individual as continually standing on the threshold (e.g. Little *et al.* 1998; Murphy *et al.* 1988; Willet *et al.* 2001). They face varying levels of alienation, both through the stigmatisation they encounter from being identified as having a disability or terminal illness, and their inability to sufficiently communicate the nature of the experience of having the condition (Little *et al.* 1998). In being aware of their difference, and aware of the constraints of the position they occupy, they experience a sense of boundedness, within limits described by space, power and time. The patient therefore constructs and reconstructs a new sense of self, a story of becoming in relation to their experiences. A liminal identity is constructed, grounded within both the identification of being 'different' and how they subsequently develop their sense of self. It is this liminal identity that immediately resonates with being street-connected, and it is relevant when a young person is on the street and during and after their transition away from it; this is my contribution to knowledge.

There are three liminalities that I associate with being street-connected. The first is a physical embodiment of liminality. It is defined by the physical space in which young people live and work on the street. Using the participant's responses, this space is characterised by structural inequalities that are reinforced by their treatment at the hands of municipal authorities, members of the public, and their street-based peers: being told that they make the town dirty, having to work at night to avoid the harassment they experienced during the day, having to pay night security to leave them alone, or paying the *murangano* expected by 'big fish' for protection etc. Their responses highlight the role of street-based social networks of support that communicate adaptability, resiliency and a social order developed in resistance to the social interactions they experience. The liminality they experienced on the street was both spatially and temporally defined: a longer time on the street can lead to greater levels of liminality experienced that reinforced feelings of not belonging to mainstream society. The street is therefore an identity-forming space in which the participants felt separated from society, invisible to policy, protection, and education and welfare services.

The second liminality associated with being street-connected refers to liminal phases that describe being in transition: being newly arrived on the street; having recently left it; or the later transitions between stages in the journey through the organisations' reintegration programmes and educational institutions/pathways. When young people first arrive in a new situation, on the street, for example, or at a short-term transition centre, they have made a physical transition but they do not yet belong to their new situation. There is a period of transition as they develop a sense of belonging in relation to where they find themselves. Focusing on the process of leaving the street, when a young person first arrives at the short-term centre they are caught in a liminal stage between leaving the street and going home, which can have both positive and negative implications. The prospect of returning home or moving into alternative care, and going (back) to a school/training centre can inspire hope and confidence as well as feelings of inadequacy, apprehension and/or shame. When they first arrive at home, the young person is betwixt and between, in that they do not fully identify with the street nor are they fully integrated into home, or the new situation that they find themselves in. Each future transition, from short-term transition centre to home or long-term transition

centre, from home to boarding school, returning to school or starting a new training placement, moving from primary to secondary school, is also associated with feelings of upheaval. As they settle in and figure their own place, which involved coming to terms with who they are and how they fit, they resolve the effects of stigmatisation experienced on and after the street and reconstruct street-connected identities that they carry forward. Such identities lead to performed identities that will either acknowledge or deny their previous time on the street.

The third liminality describes the identity-forming social space that is associated with being, and having been, street-connected. This liminal identity characterises the long-term outsider status that intersects with the experiences of people with disabilities, described earlier. Having occupied some of the lowest positions in society, physically leaving the street does not imply that street-connected children and youth adapt and develop a sense of belonging to their new situation. How they internalise their street-based experiences and the acceptance and support they receive as they transition away from the street may result in the formation of a liminal identity that prevents them from fully engaging with life after the street. Physically leaving the street does not imply that the young person's sense of self adapts to their new situation: rather they may adopt a permanently liminal identity in relation to mainstream culture and the social interactions they engage in on a daily basis. This identity is fluid and is constructed and reconstructed with each new experience. Structural liminalities can be deconstructed over time and the social exclusion of being street-connected can be overcome, for example, with acceptance and support from peers, family and wider society. However, how a young person internalises these experiences is complex and may lead to 'identities of exclusion' (e.g. Karabanow 2008) that can become an integral part of how they make sense of their selves and their relationships with others.

The street is the space in which liminality is constructed, and subsequent street-connected identities are claimed and performed. The stories of becoming that street-connected children and youth develop to make sense of their world, are woven within this liminality, and they have long-term effects that may potentially last a life time. There are both positive and negative aspects associated with street-connected identities. Living

on the street can instil positive traits that prove useful in the face of unexpected events (such as the price hikes in basic commodities after the 2011 drought), which could be assets to a prospective employer. These same traits can pose problems as young people try to settle into the rigidity of classroom environments and socially constructed expectations of mainstream culture (see also Corcoran 2015a). In the worst case scenario liminalities associated with living on the street may, along with compounding factors such as continued difficulties at home, or drug use, mitigate towards a young person's inability to develop a sense of belonging to the situation they transition into, motivating the decision to return to the street fulltime. This is especially so for those young people who experience multiple layers of disadvantage that translate into associated liminalities: living in informal settlements, single-parent families, disabilities and learning difficulties etc. Each additional layer of disadvantage compounds the overall ability of a young person to re-story their identity and develop a sense of belonging after they transition away from the street.

6.4 Recommendations for Practice

My motivations for this study, which set out to explore the experiences of street-connected children and youth leaving the street in Kenya, arose because of my work-based observations of young people returning to live on the street, weeks, months and in some cases years, after they had made the transition away from it. I wanted to better understand the transition process from the street in order to potentially inform social work practice. The findings of the study showed that while there are overarching themes such as 'Support through Acceptance' that describe the needs of young people leaving the street and what that implies for the way in which programmes could be structured, there is no one way of working that fits each individual. For example, there were positive and negative aspects to taking groups of children to the same primary school and in enabling them to attend a school on their own. However, there are particular aspects of reintegration programmes that could be developed.

The first area of focus is the return to formal educational pathways. Participants from all of the cohorts involved in the study spoke of the difficulties of going back to school. These

ranged from problems concentrating and difficulty working in English (when they are used to communicating in Kiswahili or another language attributed to their ethnic group), to feeling unwelcomed by teachers and struggling to make friends. For a small number of the participants, school-based issues were the original motivating factors behind their initial migration to the street. Therefore, a focus on the transition process into schools and classrooms that focuses on teachers as well as the young people leaving the street is recommended: for example, working in collaboration with teachers to develop systems of support that ease young people through the transition process and in the following weeks. However, as the majority of the participants returning to school, without peers who had also lived on the street, did not wish anyone to know about their backgrounds, questions arise over whether teachers should be made aware of their situations, which deserves a more in depth focus, especially, as happened at *St Lucia*, young people felt supported when the teachers understood and offered encouragement.

In addition, there were concerns voiced by older participants about returning to mainstream primary schools, or starting school for the first time at an advanced age, which resonates with Lewin *et al.*'s (2011) review of the 2010 KCPE results. They found that a year increase in age was associated with an average drop of 10-15 points in the mean KCPE score. This trend does not necessarily describe the performance of all street-connected children going (back) to school, but it does highlight the importance of providing support as they return to the classroom (see also Corcoran 2015a). This is especially important in ensuring that young people leaving the street are able to achieve a minimum level of basic education in line with the sustainable development goals. The young men at *Imani* who had not finished school were struggling to gain employment in a labour market that was constrained by the downturn in custom at the garage complex where they were training. Their levels of formal education restricted the employment opportunities available to them elsewhere, advocating for alternative pathways of achieving KCPE and/or KCSE (Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education) certification to be made accessible to them.

Given that a number of country contexts, in which street-connected children and youth are prevalent, have education systems that do not necessarily cater to their needs (e.g.

Corcoran and Wakia 2013; Corcoran 2015a), work with schools as part of an holistic programme of intervention is recommended. This could involve liaising with teachers as part of a wider advocacy programme that aims to address the prejudice and the deficit approach that teachers can take towards street-connected children and youth (see Corcoran 2015a), especially at schools where young people are taken on their own to school. As the transition back to school is usually facilitated after a stay in a residential care centre, a focus on the preparation of young people to return to schools should be included. Such a focus would involve the adaptation of the catch-up curricula delivered by the gatekeeper organisations and the after-school clubs they run in partnership with teachers at the schools receiving the children afterwards. Developing and formalising such partnerships is recommended, initially with specific schools where a number of former street-connected children are in attendance, to develop staged re-entry for the children and in order to share good practice: to develop social work and provide teacher training.

The development of such programmes of intervention could be informed by research that explores both teachers' experience of welcoming street-connected children into their classes, as well as the children's experiences of learning. Given that street-connected children and youth are stigmatised, and the negative impression of them continues after they have left the street, approaches to research in this area would need to challenge this stigmatisation and recognise the skills and resilience strategies developed on the street. Possible ways forward could involve the development of action learning for reflective teaching practice (e.g. Lewis and Bagree 2013).

The action learning model is closely related to participatory action research, and in this instance involves challenging teachers to critically reflect and improve upon their teaching practice through a cyclical process of: understanding their experience or actions; reflecting upon that experience, or the consequences of their actions, to develop new learning; and incorporating the new learning into their planning for future actions (Atweh *et al.* 1998). Working in collaboration with other teachers, or with the assistance of a mentor, and incorporating activities that aim to understand the students' experiences of the teacher's actions throughout the action learning process can encourage a greater

level of reflection. Similarly, action learning could be engaged by social workers in collaboration with teachers to develop their social work practice. Employing participatory research techniques to improve practice, enables the various stakeholders in the transition process to invest in, use and internalise research findings, and more readily act upon them (McAlpine 2005).

The second area of focus highlighted by the research, that could have possible implications for practice, was the suspicion that the participants had of being approached on the street by male social workers. This was only the case for children at *Matumaini*, which was the only gatekeeper organisation without a street-based drop-in centre. Although all of the organisations had mixed gender teams of social workers, the participants who were approached by *Matumaini* staff may only have interacted with an individual social worker one-on-one during their outreach sessions, before being taken to the semi-residential centre where they would stay Monday to Friday. The others will have interacted with more than one member of staff, of mixed genders, at a centre that, in providing washing facilities, sports-based activities and non-formal education, was able to dispel the children's fears about being recruited, or kidnapped, for prostitution or another form of work/exploitation. Of course, it is impossible to recommend that organisations delivering outreach work in a similar manner to *Matumaini* only employ female social workers, as a mixed team is necessary, it is possible to recommend that they work in pairs/teams to reassure the children they are hoping to support through a transition away from the street.

The third area of focus in which there was concern was the problems faced by young people returning to families that were unable to support them effectively. Again this mainly concerned participants from *Matumaini*, which did not incorporate family strengthening programmes into their work model. Running a semi-structured residential system where the children stayed from Monday to Friday while they attended school increased the likelihood of children's attendance in primary education, but did not improve the situation at home. *Matumaini* did provide parenting classes and monitor parental situations, but *Imani* and *Usaidizi* offered support that focussed on developing income-generating activities and business skills to help the family become more

economically sustainable. At *Usaidizi* in particular I visited three participants at home who were proud of the benefits that adopting bio-agriculture techniques had had on the growing of food for the family, and their ability to sell surplus produce to pay for other needs such as school. The mothers were proud of being able to better support their children. Therefore, I would recommend that the family, as well as the young person leaving the street, should both be considered in the development of programmes of intervention for street-connected children and youth. Further research could establish the positive and negative aspects of existing programmes, in order to develop a model that could be adopted and adapted by other organisations.

Finally, the third area of focus concerns the barriers to participation and inclusion within the wider communities that young people transition into, which the participants either experienced or perceived. Advocacy work with these communities, in schools, with community leaders etc., is widely recommended and implemented by many organisations working with street-connected children and youth. For example: *Imani* ran a theatre project and Mkombozi in Tanzania use community radio to talk about street-connectedness; S.A.L.V.E International in Uganda and CHETNA in India print newspapers for distribution that are written by young people living on the street; Street Child United organise the Street Child World Cup and the Street Child Games alongside the official Football World Cup and Olympics to raise a global spotlight on the issues[19]; and all of the organisations involved in this study, along with other organisations in other African countries and around the globe, stage events on April 12th, the International Day of Street Children, and on June 16th, the Day of the African Child, to raise awareness (AMC 2016; Consortium for Street Children 2016). All of these programmes are making progress towards developing an appreciation of street-connected children and youth as young people in need of understanding, support, and appropriate social and political inclusion. However, in concentrating on the experiences of young people leaving the street, as the study reported in this thesis shows, such advocacy should focus at the level of family, community and school/training centres.

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[19] CHETNA: http://www.chetnango.org; Fairplay for All Foundation: http://fairplayforall.weebly.com; Mkombozi: http://www.dreamweaver.co.uk/mkombozi/index.htm; S.A.L.V.E International: http://www.salveinternational.org; Street Child United: http://www.streetchildunited.org.

Challenging a deficit conceptualisation of street-connectedness within local communities could be an essential first step to ensuring that barriers to developing a sense of belonging are reduced, especially with regards to the people that a young person will necessarily interact with after the street. Taking Ronald's experience of being academically gifted and therefore accepted by his peers, interventions that display young people's similar strengths could be developed: for example, debating competitions between teams of street-connected children and students from schools in the local and wider communities. Sporting competitions that include local football leagues are already developing these agendas (e.g. Fairplay for All Foundation[20]), other projects that focus on the different skills and strengths of young people to include a wider number of young people would also be beneficial.

6.5 Directions for Future Research

There are a number of areas that further research could focus upon. The first is to develop my ideas of liminality, particularly in relation to education, and explore the various aspects of the transition process (back) into school, or to the next stage of formalised education, such as primary to secondary school. For example, the study highlighted aspects of returning to school that were problematic, but it does not provide a detailed overview of how can street-connected children and youth can be effectively assisted to return to formal education and transition to secondary education. Potential research questions framing such research could be: what issues enable or prevent street-connected children returning to formal education?; how well does the non-formal catch-up curricula, provided by the various organisations, aid their return and transition into schools?; how can teachers in formal education practically aid young people's return to classrooms and their transition into future classrooms and further stages in education?; What issues should be considered by national policy makers to improve inclusive education for street-connected and other marginalised children?.

These questions are important within the current global interest in inclusive and quality education for all (particularly focusing on children from the poorest households who are

four times more likely to be out-of-school), outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) (SDG UNDP 2015). The SDGs aim to build upon the achievements made under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In Kenya, Universal Primary Education (UPE), prioritized by the MDGs, resulted in increased access to education; but it has not, however, guaranteed quality of the education and, as the participants from *Imani* highlight, drop-out rates remain high, especially with regards to the rate of transition into secondary education, when an organisation is not directly providing financial assistance to those who receive the highest KCPE grades. Assessments in Kenya have found that the literacy and numeracy levels in the last year of primary are below what they should be (Uwezo 2010, 2013) and that older children attain much lower scores in their KCPE exams than their younger counterparts (Lewin *et al.* 2011), which is likely to prevent their continuation into secondary education. The numbers enrolling for secondary schools in 2010 were approximately 50% of the age group, but if corrected for the number of children sitting the exams who were over-age, less than half of Kenyan children accessed secondary education in that year (Lewin *et al.* 2011).

Such statistics, and the barriers to inclusion posed by the liminal identities constructed by street-connected children and youth, highlight a need to develop a particular focus on the research of education provision for these young people. Research on the transitions into education, and between stages of education, should take a methodologically participatory approach, including both teachers and the young people affected; as well as institutional and political stakeholders to develop links with national and local policy makers. For example, taking an action learning approach (e.g Lewis and Bagree 2013), in which education and social work practitioners, working with street-connected children and youth, are challenged to reflect upon their work/classroom practice in order to develop theoretical and background knowledge that addresses the needs of their particular context. Data generated as part of this process could take the form of a participatory evaluation process, where those involved in the action learning process keep research diaries or participate in focus group activities conducted by a lead researcher and/or mentor (please see Section 6.5: Recommendations for Practice, for more detail on the potential of the action learning process).

A second area for of development for future research could focus on developing a longitudinal appreciation of children's progress during and after transition, especially after they exit from the reintegration programmes provided by assisting organisations (Wedge 2013). The participants involved in the study reported in this thesis all described their transitions retrospectively. While they provided an insight into their transition experiences, the stories of transition related by them were narrated through the perspective of their later experiences, which inevitably redefines how they interpreted the events at the time. To understand the real time challenges and opportunities inherent to making the transitions, longitudinal approaches to data generation could be employed. As well as providing an understanding of the changes that take place, both in terms of street-connected identities and their ability to overcome liminalities associated with street-connectedness, such research also has the potential to identify the events leading up to young people's returns to the street, should participants decide to do so.

Finally, I identify a limitation of the current study as an area of development for future research. As I did not have access to young people who had returned to the street full-time and had not left it again, I directed my study at those who were still completing their chosen educational pathway, to understand their experiences of moving (back) in to home and school communities. Therefore, while it goes some way to explaining the challenges and opportunities faced by young people leaving street, it does not explain the motivations for return migrations that lead to staying on the street long-term. In addition, as each of the participants involved in this study had spent less than two years on the street, and most had lived on the street for less than a year, their stories did not provide detailed insight into the experiences of young people who have spent a considerable amount of time on the street. Living and working on the street for a longer period of time, implies that the young people: have experienced greater levels of abuse, stigmatisation, or drug addiction; have more developed 'learned behaviours' to overcome; and will possibly be more reliant on street-based economic and social networks and familial support groups.

Consequently, extensions to this study could explore the experiences of transition and the reasons behind the repeated migration for street-connected children and youth who

are addicts, or noticeably experience the effects of trauma. Within this area the models of assistance provided by organisations, in collaboration with families, schools and training centres etc., should be considered: including the problems of maintaining the balance between support and dependency, on the organisations themselves, to establish how young people journey towards self-sufficient adulthood.

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Appendix A: The Ethical Approval Process

A1 The approval process

The ethical approval process was conducted twice: once for each of the field research visits to Kenya. Receiving ethical approval involved completing the requisite University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) forms and sit before the committee to explain and defend my research plans. In the first instance approval was sought for the research methods conducted at *Imani*, while the second application sought approval for the research conducted at the other two organisations. As well as providing an overview of the research design, I developed participant information sheets and consent forms for each of the methods I planned to use for data generation. There were two versions of each of these consent forms: one for the participants who were under 16 and one for those who were older than 16. The maximum length of time set for the younger participants was 30 minutes, rather than the hour set aside for the older participants, and so the time that was highlighted for the interview was the only part that differed for each of the two versions.

The following page contains a blank participant information sheet and consent form for the drawing activity and image elicitation activity completed by participants under 18. The majority of the form remained the same for all methods of data generation. The section in dark grey, corresponding to the subtitle "What would I be asked to do if I took part?" was adapted to describe each of the different methods. It was decided that each method should receive a separate form, rather than develop one form that covered all of the methods, to focus on describing only the activity that they were about to take part in. Therefore, consent could be given for each of the different methods separately.

Participant Information Sheet and Consent form for drawing activity and image elicitation interview

MANCHESTER
1824

The University
of Manchester

Life after the Street: Competing Identities

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of my PhD about how young people who have lived on the street experience education. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Su Corcoran
School of Education
University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester, UK

Title of the Research

Life after the Street: Competing Identities

The research seeks to answer the question:

How do young people experience their move away from the street?

(When students who used to live on the street return home and to school, what makes them stay at school and what makes them drop out again. What affects the decisions made by these students about how they live their lives?)

What is the aim of the research?

I would like to find out about how people who have lived on the street experience going home and back to school.

Why have I been chosen?

As you have spent time living on the streets I would like to hear about your experiences.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

You will be asked to draw pictures about aspects of your life that you mentioned in your interview with me. We will then look at your picture together in a 30 minute interview where you can explain to me why you drew your picture. The interview will be recorded using a Dictaphone. The pictures will be used as part of the research.

Sometime you may want to talk about information that upsets you. If you are upset you can stop the interview if you want to and talk to the person assisting Su. Or if you need to talk to someone after the interview takes place please go to the [Name of Organisation and centre to which the participant is affiliated] and talk to the staff there.

What happens to the data collected?

The information you give me will be used towards my PhD studies and possible published as part of a journal article. A report of my findings will also go to [Name of organisation]

How is confidentiality maintained?

I will type the recordings out so that I have a copy in paper form and the recordings will be deleted once this has happened. Your name will be changed so that your identity will be protected.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you wish to drop out you will not lose out on anything as a result.

If you do drop out all the data you have provided me with will not be used for my reports on the research unless you give extra permission for me to do so. If you choose for me not to use your information you can still have a copy of what you told me, but I will not use it. I will delete my recordings of you.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

You will not be paid, but you will be given your fare and provided with lunch.

What is the duration of the research?

The research will take place between May and September 2013. I shall be in [Town] in June and July and in [Town] in May, August and September.

Where will the research be conducted?

We will record the interview either in the classroom at [Name of Centre].

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

My PhD will be completed in 2015, and any published papers will be written from now until then and after submission.

Criminal Records Check (if applicable)

I have a current up to date Criminal Records Bureau check certificate. This is a system in the UK to check that I have not been convicted of any crimes.

What if something goes wrong?

If you need to talk to someone after the interview takes place please go to the [Name of the organisation and centre to which the participant is affiliated] and talk to the staff there. If you feel you would like to complain talk to [Name of designated staff member at the organisation] and she will forward that to:

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093

Contact for further information

I can be contacted by mobile (number to be confirmed on arrival in Kenya) and will call back if you flash me, or by email if you have access fieldworkinkenya@yahoo.co.uk.

Life after the street: Competing Identities

CONSENT FORM FOR FORMER STREET YOUTH

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

Please Initial Box

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

3. I understand that I will be drawing pictures that I will later be talking about in an interview.

4. I understand that the interviews will be audio recorded

5. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

6. I agree that any data collected, including the pictures, may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

I agree to take part in the above project

_____   _____   _____
Name of participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Name of person taking consent   Date   Signature

Appendix B: Andrew and Keith

In this section I have included the transcripts of the data generated during the interviews with Andrew and Keith, who were both assisted by *Imani* to train as mechanics through *Jua Kali* apprenticeships at a local garage complex. The interviews were conducted at the street-based drop-in centre where the young men attended adult education classes in the mornings before they went to work at the garages. These interviews were conducted in English, therefore the majority of the text remains as the participants phrased their responses; I have removed my voice and re-storied the responses of the participants to provide one piece of narrative. The transcripts are included here because they are used as exemplars in Chapter Three, where I explain the processes of analysis used in the study.

Keith

Keith's story was constructed using data from a semi-structured narrative interview and an image-elicitation interview focussed on a drawing Keith made when asked to draw something that he wanted to me to know about. I met Keith three years prior to the interview taking place as he would collect a food parcel from the organisation where I volunteered on a weekly basis to help with living costs, while he stayed with his aging grandparents who were unable to work when Keith was at school. Having some understanding of Keith's story before the research study was useful as Keith initially gave a very brief account of his life in the narrative interview. Therefore, I asked a number of questions to gain a deeper insight into his experiences. His answers were still short and the following is a re-storying of everything we talked about. I have removed or reworded my questions to keep only his words and responses. The content however has been greatly mediated by the questions I chose to ask at the time.

In the following I provide an overview of Keith's story, the narrative is split into three sections: the initial story that he told; the information that resulted from my questioning at the end; and the answer to the question 'If God gave you one wish, what would you wish for?'

Background

Unlike the other participants from *Imani*, Keith did not live on the street full-time but slept on and off at home with his grandparents for whom he took responsibility. He was born and raised within the town centre. Keith occasionally slept with friends on the street for a night at a time, but he tended to be on the street mainly during the day, to earn money to support his family. He was assisted by *Imani* to go back to school. His sisters lived with his mother and he stayed with his grandparents, as there was no other man at home, and he helped his grandmother around the house. He did not stay at school very long as he did not like it and had to wait before an alternative placement was found. *Imani* tried not to move children and youth too quickly from school to other educational pathways to prevent large numbers dropping out of free primary school provision. Keith therefore had to rely on the street again for a short time in between his second stint in primary school and starting his *jua kali* apprenticeship to be a mechanic. The organisation did not provide the food package when Keith was not in school as his attendance was the condition for the assistance.

Keith's Initial Story

> I was born here at Town, then I start my primary school at class one up to seven. Then that is where I put my comma because there was one teacher that he never liked me. I don't know well why he did not like me. He gave others, he gave us homework and tomorrow comes and he said he gave us two pages but he did not, so but then he chased me out. I was chased away and we go with my mother to the teacher but the teacher did not want me to go back. After that I come to the street. I did not go back to school, I start struggling at the street. I was hustling. But I did not sleep on the street. I realised that I can get food from the street because my mother she did not reach. Before I came to the street when I was at home I stayed with my grandmother and she died in August 2009. Sometimes you are going with the other guys and you can see metals and plastics and you can collect and sold it. My grandfather was too old to work and I needed to pay the rent with the money from the street. I did not take drugs when I was on the street. All I did on the street was collect scrap. I needed money for my helps: clothes, parents, food.

> I found out about *Imani* from a social worker and I went to see the teacher about doing a course as it can help me and help my family. I started as a mechanic in 2011 in August. I like it because I do not have anything else to do. But being a mechanic is good because if you know and you have that talent for doing a mechanic you will see you are doing good and you will be able to help your family and you will be able to be learned and if you have a problem you can solve it. Like if you have a friend and their parent dies or gets an accident you will be able to give maybe 100 shillings to help. I like my trainer. He is good so I am getting work and being paid a little. I will finish as a mechanic soon hopefully. I pay for things by hustling. The garage pays my rent and I work collecting scrap and cleaning verandas and get money when I work on the cars to help buy my food, my clothes and to help my family. If I have more money for

extra I give it to my mum after I buy clothes and airtime for my phone. In a week I buy maybe 100 shillings of airtime to talk to my friends and my relatives.

If God could give me anything?

Keith's response to the question asking about what he would wish for if God promised that he could have anything he wanted, but only one thing, referred to skills:

> If I could have anything today I would ask for talent so I can play football or I can be a good mechanic. When I think of education I think of not going back to school. Now I know the money, I know how to struggle and I did not like to go to school. In standard 6 I got 250 but I did not like to go to school. Being a mechanic will get me more than going to school because if you have experience and you have the tools, you see if you have the spanners and you can fix the car the owner will pay you. I get more money now being a mechanic.

Overview of Keith's Semi-Structured Interview

What is clear from the outset is that Keith disliked formal education. He blamed his initial exit from school on a disagreement with the teacher, but he did not regret the decision he made not to return. Keith did not see the value of education, beyond being able to communicate, and was an infrequent attendee to morning literacy classes. He was, however, always at meetings in which the boys were given informal business-related training and advice on setting up and managing initiatives, such as savings circles and shared businesses. He and another participant were the main instigators of a chicken business which eight of the participants were working on. As with all of the young men involved in this study, Keith's decisions were determined by economic and financial motivations. He refers to the 'struggle' associated with life on the street but describes himself as a hustler, which in Kenya refers to the income-generating activities that are found within the informal labour market: for example hawking on the street, casual labour such as cleaning in the shops and market place, washing cars etc.

Keith appears to have found his vocation as a mechanic. He sees his apprenticeship as an education, a way to be "learned". He speaks very highly of his trainer and at the time of the research was not affected as much as other apprentices by the reduced work at the garages. Keith's trainer had a good reputation and so was usually one of the first mechanics sought out by customers bringing their vehicles to the complex. Although Keith was doing comparatively well economically (as he was working on a number of vehicles as part of his apprenticeship) he still continued to engage with the economic

opportunities available to him on the street. The reasons for Keith's "hustling" are varied. He makes reference to keeping up with the social expectations of a young man with the need to buy clothes and mobile phone credit ("airtime"), but he concentrates mainly on the need to support his family.

Throughout the short exchange Keith referred to his family, or individual family members, frequently. Before his apprenticeship, he turned to the street to find money and food to pay the rent and feed his grandfather. He saw his work as a mechanic as useful as "you will be able to help your family", which puts family firmly within the future he aspires to achieve. He was 'hustling' at the time of the research in order to fulfil his obligations of helping them while he worked towards being fully qualified to take on his own customers. Keith also spokes of having money as being important, to help his friends when they lose their own parents. In Kenya, particularly in Kikuyu culture, you are obligated to give some money to a friend or relative who has lost a close family member to help with funeral costs. Ensuring that a funeral takes place and fulfilling the expectations laid on you as a friend are so ingrained that I have been stopped many times during my regular visits to the town, since 2009, with requests of assistance by those unable to meet this requirement. Street-connected children who lose a peer on the street feel obligated to fulfil the role of the family, when parents cannot be found. The children will take a collection, through begging and trying to complete extra work, to achieve the minimum standard of funeral. Therefore Keith's engagement with the street, while he was in training, helped him to maintain a sense of social standing that he hoped would improve when he finished his apprenticeship.

Keith's drawing and the second, photo-elicitation, interview emphasised the importance of family and friends to Keith and provided a more in-depth appreciation of the nature of his "hustling". In being asked to draw something that he would like to tell me about, Keith mapped out the town. This map did not include all aspects of the town but displayed areas and landmarks that were integral to Keith's working week. In contrast to the narrative interview, Keith spoke in detail about his map. I did not question him about the different areas, except to say "Is there anything else you want to say?" and to ask about

the significance of the banks (they were merely landmarks). Therefore this interview was mediated by the content of the drawing rather than my questions.

Keith's image-elicitation interview

When asked to draw something that he wanted to talk to me about, Keith created the map shown in Figure 3.4. He described the picture to me in a subsequent photo-elicitation interview Keith as follows:

> Town is where I struggle. Sometimes I come here at the supermarket and I carry luggages. Then I come to the bus stage and I struggle there. I see a job like collecting dust bins then I go and burn it [the rubbish]. I get maybe 50 bob [Ksh] for collecting rubbish for one hour. That is good money and it is paid by the owner of the rubbish who are the stall owners. I do this in the mornings after I go to class and before I go to work in the garage at 11 until 4. I have friends here. I like the work. Then I go to the supermarket from maybe 4 until 6 to carry luggages. Then I go to C to collect scrap metal until 6.30 when it is getting dark, if I do not make enough money at the supermarket. Maybe tomorrow I can go to B to collect scrap metal there. E is where I live. In A I have a good job washing verandas. I get 100 bob to clean a veranda for the *wahindi* [Ethnically Indian Kenyans]. It is my favourite job as it gives me the most money. It takes me maybe 1 ½ hours to clean one veranda. Sometimes I go back to the same house in two days' time but I also clean the verandas for new customer. I can go to wash verandas straight from the garage, I do not need to change my clothes first.
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> D is my base, where I meet my friends. They live in D and I live nearby in E. Maybe we also go to the [bus/*matatu*] station or D close by to see my friends. I have more friends in C but they come to me, I do not go there. I spend more time at the stage than everywhere else as there is lots of work cleaning rubbish or fetching water for the stall owners. The roads out of Town are also important. They are the ways I go to. I go this way to see my aunt, or this way to see my other aunt or this way to get the *mahindi* [maize] from my grandmother's *shamba* [farm]. My family are in E. My grandfather died and I now live with my mother. She washes clothes. I do not know my father. I have one older sister. She has 3 childrens.

At the end of this description I asked if there was anything else we needed to talk about. He was shocked that I had not noticed the bridge (I have marked it on the map in Figure 3.4). It is drawn very large, considering its actual size in reality, and holds quite a prominent position as a result of the scale to which it is represented. I had not considered the bridge as separate, until Keith drew my attention to it, as we had talked about B, which was the area surrounding a hotel next to the river over which the bridge is built.

> I like this bridge in the B area in the river. I like the bridge because it is very fantastic. Sometimes you go and see the richer going on. I stand on the bridge and watch the people in B. That is where I want to be.

In this interview Keith outlined the many activities he engaged in to maintain the social standing he described as important in his first interview. The income-generating opportunities depended, to some extent on, networking and Keith's subsequent social capital. The stall holders who employed him did so because he had a trusted track record and the same is true of the homeowners he cleaned verandas for. Aside from the areas of town that provided Keith with financial gain he also outlined the places where his social engagements took place and the roads out of town that led to various family members and their land. Again family and friends were important to Keith.

Andrew

Andrew was 21 years old. I had met Andrew briefly the year before I began my research, when he had arrived at the drop-in centre and was deciding on the *jua kali* profession he wished to be trained for. His story was constructed using data from a semi-structured interview and an image-elicitation interview. Unlike Keith, Andrew talked for a long time during the semi-structured interview.

Andrew's Initial Story

> When I was young we used to go and look for firewood with my mother so that we could sell to get food and money to pay school fees. Now my mother used to drink. The time we were there when we were going to look for firewood my mother was safe because I was there, but when I refused to go there she refused even her to go. Now she goes to look for polythene papers so that she can sell to those who are making *Chang'aa* [Illegal home brewed alcohol made and sold around the informal settlement]. She looks for those that are there to put in the *gunia* [sack] to cook *chang'aa* and to go and sell for 50 shillings. Paper bags [Kenyan term for plastic bags] are more good than firewood. She used to go and sell these things and when she is back to home she is already drunk.

> When I was born we were three, my brother and my sister and me. Our father, the first with my mother, he marries a wife and my mother is married to another husband and now us we are there hanging because there is no home there. My father when I met them there he told me. You know first he met me in the town and I was dirty and he said you are not my children, you cannot call me your father. I was uncomfortable. At first I used to go to his house to talk there. When I get in there I find his wife and she was told by my father he has got me there sniffing glue. She told me to go away and sniff glue over there.

> I went to my mother's house and she has been more married by a bad man. His parents they don't like us. They did not greet me with a hand. One day I met his mother and I was to greet him. She tell me no no I am not doing this way. I felt uncomfortable there. Now it was so difficult, my mother was the one who was to look after me. The time I was finish standard eight I was picked to go into form one but I did not have money. My mother said I should go for firewood to get money. I ended at form 3 and I found my money was gone. I went to my father and he told me he did not have anything. He is struggling as I am struggling. So I did not have anything. I could not go there to look for firewood as there was a time I was caught by

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the police and I was put in jail for one month because I was on that side at D___ and they caught us.

You know I was in standard 3 there [Nairobi], and when I come here I start a new school near the market. My teacher was no no you are talking more Kikuyu. There we spoke kikuyu but when I come here they are talking more English and Kiswahili. It was very difficult for me. I stayed here for one year on the street. My mother looked for me for a school. I had no uniform. I was one year without going to school. When I went back I was in standard four. I went on to standard 8 and I got 200 in my KCPE. I tell you I was to school three days or maybe two so that I could survive. Even in secondary I have never been in school for the whole as I need school fees and it is me who is finding the money.

My mother cannot go there to look for wood as I do not go so she is not safe to go. Now she looks for paper bags. She goes to the market to find work with the *fagia* [broom/brush]. She gets paid in maize and sometimes in *githeri* [stew made of beans and maize] but now she has more children from her other husband. She has seven children. They were never married. They do come we stay. She has four childrens by the other man. The first one is twelve years, the second one is about eight years in nursery school and they are drinking, the mother and father they are drinking, another is three years and one is now is five months. So now I was needing to work. I do not take lunch there. My mother has more children and she has small baby so cannot work. I went to the teacher and I said I cannot pay. I told him, my mum she drinks, she has childrens there, she cannot pay.

I finished form three but I didn't do exam. I was to go to form four. If I could have a support I could get my certificate I was always looking for someone to pay my school fees. if I go back I can really try to stay every day because I like education. Because nowadays there is education. If you want to be employed you must have form four. Not for all jobs, but we say that if you want to work you need to earn certificate of form four. My please is to be a soldier, to be in the army. I need form four to get the army. The school they were laughing. I needed 6000 but I could not get it.

I was at my home and they told me when I finish the school they could talk to those people and I could get there. But I didn't get money to pay for the exam so I dropped in first term. I went for the first term until I needed to pay money. At the time you need to sign and pay money I did not have even that. He sent me to my mother and my mother she was having no money. So I dropped it and I came to struggle here.

That time I was having nothing. Even my mother. I told her it is time to register and I need money. Even we had not taken lunch. I felt uncomfortable and I stayed because I did not have any other choice and I was not told about this organisation. If I was told about this I could have been here earlier.

Now I go to town when I drop school and I was picked up by police and put in jail for six month. They met me in the time and it was midnight. They caught me and said I was loitering for prostitution and I was a thief. But they never find me with anything that they could say I was a thief as I was not having any weapon. They were looking for knife and *panga* [large knife like a machete]. But I was not having any. After jail I was on the street. When I got myself out of there I found my colleague there. One of them. He told me I am going to centre. I asked him various questions so that I could have even me have something to talk about when I came here. *Mimi ogopa ongea na walimu* [I was scared to talk to the teacher]. Mr___ was children's officer. I told him I have come from the street. He said no no I have never seen you there. My friend told him I know this person. I know him from street. The teacher said it was not time. I must know my time. Before I enter here I was in the office in the plaza. They told me to go and talk to the officer here.

I go to here. The time comes that a new person now controls the organisation and they told us that the food that we get and the rent that we get is dropped. There is no money except

for course. Now I feel that I will not be able to survive and go to course. I used to be able to pay but now there is no customers. So that I must survive I must look for my food and I must look for my own rent. It is 400. But you know there is nobody. If I go to my father there is nothing. If I go to my mother she has nothing. She has a small child that takes her time.

Now I stay where I usually training, that person used to give me 50shillings with that 50 shillings I stay without lunch. I want to get a good life. I am so confused that I just need to go away and go to street. When I am in the street I can get money to pay rent, to eat and life go on. But in *Imani* there is no help now.

If I go to school it would be better. I would be employed in a good job. Education is good. I have struggled enough and I have realised that if I go to school I can survive. I can survive because I am surviving but it is not very good. I like school. I like speaking English. You know when I was there I have gone to two schools in secondary. I started form one. Then I didn't go to form two there because I did not have money. I had to drop that one and find another. I studied from term two, so I don't know anything from term one of form two. That time I entered and I got B and I felt no that is not mine, I did not believe. My mother said I should work hard.

My sister is now with my father. She is doing standard five. She was doing standard six here but the headmaster said she must go to standard five. My brother is older than me but he and me were in one class. My brother used to stay in my home but now he is a street boy over there [Nairobi] but now he has a wife. He used to look for metals. You know in Nairobi it is not like here. Here you get 30 shillings for metals but there you get 40 or 50. He goes back to his wife and he tries to pay his rent. It is more expensive in Nairobi. He is in trouble because he never go to school.

If God could give me anything?

Education. You know a person who is really really money to give me what I need I would go back to form one or form two so that I could finish the school. You know if you have form four certificate before they were employing people who were not yet educated. Now they said that more people who are educated are not in work, we are not going to take those who are not educated as we have those who are educated. Now you see if you are not educated you cannot get the work. In our country it is really real and there is time I was saying they were employing people who are not educated and the elders were calling all the young men and they were looking for your weight and your health. If you were fit you were qualified to work. They were not looking for education.

When I was in primary there was no food. My mother used to quarrel with my father. If they could give me food at least I could be in school. If I could get that money I would use it and I would use it well. I used to do bad things. I used to smoke bad cigarettes but I don't do it anymore I have left.

My mother she lives there and I am living close. These days when my mother and the husband they fight and my sister she will get me in the night. Everything I give them they sold. Even I gave them stove and I go back and they no have anything. They say they are stolen, but my mother she sells the stove. She lives in the slum. I try so that the children are in school. My mother never pays the rent. Yesterday I paid the rent so that they cannot be chased from home. That money I was to pay the rent of my house but I pay for them. So even if I have something I must give them so that life must go on. If I have money I want to go far away from here so I can make life better. When I am asleep my sister call me, even ten times my sister calls at night to call me to tell them to stop fighting. Even I was thinking to go away to look for somewhere I could stay where I could not see anybody who is known to me so that I could pay my rent.

One time we are three boys we say we are living here but we wanted a better life. We got into a *matatu* and we went to M_____ when we get in my colleagues tell me to go there they are going to be there with street boys who don't know us. When we got there we looked for street boys. They were not there. The money we have used to pay for transport. When we reached there, there was no street boys so when we got back to town we had no money. We found the police on the way, they ask where we are going. We say we are going to town where we are from but we have no money. They said come in and sleep in the station till morning. But they did not mean that. I have now been in jail for four times in my life. I felt uncomfortable. I could not tell people what was happening. I told my teacher I was in *shambani*. I could not say I was in police station as it would spoil my name. Now when I use my money to pay the rent and I want to get an ID.

Overview of Andrew's Semi-Structured Interview

Andrew's story centres on two key themes. The fact that he has to support his mother and siblings and his wish to go back to school. When Andrew left the street the last time, he had had to leave school in Form Three of his secondary school education as there was no money for fees, he chose to go into *jua kali* training. At the time he was concerned with supporting his family. However, Andrew had not considered that he could go back and complete school in just one year with evidence of his form 3 reports. Consequently Andrew was seriously re-evaluating his decisions. He emphasised how he had reached form 3 more than once and spent a few minutes talking about the B grade he had achieved: "I did not believe it was me". As though to further highlight his wish to go back to school.

With the economic down turn at the garages Andrew's regret at leaving school was repeated on a daily basis outside of the interviews as he wondered about the possibility of completing his secondary education. He struggled to fulfil the supportive role he performed at home and felt that sponsorship potentially offered the possibility of financial dependency and a trouble free existence. The future is uncertain and he worried about the possibilities of work available to him. He talks about a job market that increasingly wants secondary school graduates. As confirmation of these worries Andrew spoke of his older brother who migrated to the streets with him originally and who was then living on the street in Nairobi with a wife and child that he supported through collecting scrap metals: This fear for the future of his brother's family is echoed in his later words: "when you are not educated in this country you cannot get any work".

Andrew was also worried about juggling his training with supporting the family when the garages were not providing an income that enabled him to pay two lots of rent. He was therefore spending less and less time at the garages and more time outside the supermarkets offering portering services to the customers leaving with heavy bags.

Andrew's Drawing

Figure B1: Andrew's drawing of something he felt was important to tell me about showing the forest where he used to gather firewood with his mother.

Andrew did not say much about his picture when he was given the opportunity to do so. He pointed out that the forest was where he had to collect firewood with his mother. The beginning of his semi-structured interview and the drawing exercise both centred on the period of his life directly after his parents' divorce. He focused on the forest in both instances.

Although the forest is not directly to blame for his leaving school it seems that the collecting of firewood and his later refusal to participate in the activity is significant for him as it resulted in his first migration to the street, the first time he left school. The forest also highlights his responsibility to support his family: he used to collect firewood to do so, which was why he first left school, and, at the time of the interview, he was again supporting his family instead of going to school. As he repeatedly mentioned the need for education and his wish to complete secondary school, the drawing further emphasised his aspirations.