Being mobile, becoming educated

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Being Mobile, Becoming Educated

Young Ghanaians' mobility trajectories and educational experiences

between Ghana and the Netherlands

Dissertation

To obtain the degree of Doctor at Maastricht University

on the authority of the Rector Magnificus, Prof. dr. Rianne M. Letschert

in accordance with the decision of the Board of Deans,

to be defended in public

on Thursday, 9 May 2019 at 10:00h

by

Johanna Hendrikje Maria van Geel

The images in this thesis present a selection of fieldwork pictures (made by the author during fieldwork in the Netherlands and Ghana 2015-2016) and self-selected pictures by the young Ghanaians who participated in this study. The pictures either present moments during fieldwork or capture young Ghanaians' everyday experiences they felt readers should understand about their lives. I promised anonymity at the start of this research and have thus edited the pictures in such a way that the young people are unrecognisable. The (self-chosen) pseudonyms in the picture descriptions do not correspond with the pseudonyms used in the rest of the thesis. See more about consent and anonymity in Chapter 3 on methodology.

"Het is gewoon een 'strijders mentaliteit': waarom niet knokken voor een beter leven?"

"It's just a 'warrior mentality': why not fight for a better life?"

Edwin about how he manages to get through his education in the Netherlands
- the Bijlmer, Amsterdam 2016

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Image: Kweku and John taking a selfie after weekend class, Amsterdam – the Netherlands. Source: fieldwork 2015-2016.

1.   Introduction

1.1.   At stake: the mobility and education of migrant youth

Increasingly, the global youth population consists of 'migrant' youth, i.e. those who have migrated from one country to another (United Nations 2013). This means that global youth often have 'mobility', referring to physical movement between different localities (Urry 2007), in their biographies. But, mobility can also be part of migrant youth's lives through moves other than migration, such as moving between different caregivers prior to migration, or travelling to study abroad, visit family, and to celebrate religious holidays after migration. Ongoing mobility between country of origin and country of residence appears to be prevalent amongst migrant youth (Haller and Landolt 2005). This mobility back to a country of origin, however, has been politically and publicly problematized, especially in relation to migrant youth's education. This thesis takes the case of young Ghanaians aged between 16 and 25 who move within and between Ghana and the Netherlands to investigate controversies surrounding education and mobility. The term 'migrant youth' in this thesis refers to young people who engaged in at least one international move between a country of residence and their or their parents' country of origin. This thesis expressly avoids using the commonly used categories of 'first', or 'second' generation youth, in order to better explore the diversity of mobility that characterises young people's lives (see Chapter 3 for more explanation on selection criteria).

One such controversy concerns whether mobility disrupts migrant youth's education. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified by 196 countries, offers guidelines on both education and mobility. Article 10[1] of the Convention stipulates that states need to acknowledge and facilitate children and youth's right to be mobile and to maintain contact, *on a regular and personal basis*, with their parents, even when they are living in different nation-states. In a child-friendly version of the CRC, this right is explained as follows: "If your parents live in different countries, you should be allowed to move between those countries so that you can stay in contact with your parents or get back together as a family" (Plan International 2018). The CRC also emphasises the importance of the right to education (Article 28). Every child has the right to receive a quality

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[1] See appendix A for Article 10 and 28 of the CRC.

education, which is considered crucial for children's future perspectives. However, although young people may simultaneously have the *right* to education and mobility, tensions and complexities arise when the two phenomena meet in the lives of migrant youth.

Against the backdrop of generally and increasingly polarised contemporary European debates about migration (Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2013; Harteveld et al. 2018; Prooijen, Kouwel, and Emmer 2018), the way migrant youth and their mobility are approached in the Netherlands is problematic. Public debates typically rely on questionable assumptions about migrants' lives. At the one end of the discursive spectrum, the assumption that mobility is harmful for young people results in a call for protection and safety. Here the mobility of children and youth predominantly receives attention when it occurs under extreme conditions such as trafficking and asylum (Swalm 2018; Pozzo, Bender, and Visser 2018; Kinderombudsman 2016). The recent influx of Syrian refugee children and youth provides an example of youth mobility that is framed as being harmful. In public debates the victimhood of children and the potential violation of their right to education and safety are foregrounded, placing moral responsibility on the state to protect these vulnerable children while evoking sympathy amongst the public.

Yet, trafficking and fleeing conflict account for just a fraction of the forms of mobility undertaken by youth. Going on holiday to one's country of origin, visiting kin, or moving location for work or study are far more common. These arguably distinct experiences cannot be equated with trafficking or fleeing. At the same time, holidays, family visits, or religious journeys undertaken by migrant youth to their country of origin are publicly and politically associated with potential problems especially, when they involve non-Western destinations. Examples include the risk for young females of being circumcised against their will during holidays to Somalia (Smithuijsen 2017), or the risk for young males of being recruited for military service in Turkey and Morocco[2]. Yet, visiting friends and family and travelling abroad for leisure are increasingly normalised forms of mobility for (native) EU citizens. This mobility is even facilitated by laws and agreements such as the Schengen agreement on free movement of people and goods within the EU territory. The assumption that mobility is harmful for migrant youth thus needs further investigation at a time when mobility is increasingly accessible, diverse, and normalised.

At the other end of the discursive spectrum, there is far less sympathy for migrants and their children. Here, responsibility to adapt to the host society is placed on migrants and their children. For example, Dutch Prime Minister Rutte stated in 2016 that migrant youth need to 'fight themselves in' (Du Pré 2016). He claimed that they need to persevere

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[2] Notulen 69e Vergadering: vaste commissie voor het Minderhedenbeleid. 15 maart 1984, p. 4.

in the face of experiences of inequality, discrimination, and racism since these phenomena are inevitably present in Dutch society. Political parties that expressly reject migration have gained popularity all over Europe, the Netherlands being no exception (Cammearts 2018). They perceive intergenerational transference of 'language arrearages', holding on to traditional and religious values, and dual citizenship as parameters of the 'failed integration' of migrants and their children (Couzy 2017). Migrant youth are expressly criticised for not (adequately) embracing 'Dutch values', which are often considered incompatible with traditional and particularly Islamic norms and values (Leurs 2015). This discourse portrays migrant youth as subject to delinquency and as posing threats to social cohesion when they fail to assimilate. Mobility, here in the form of migration, is framed as undesirable.

These are two extremes of a constantly evolving and highly politicised discursive spectrum in the Netherlands. While many people position themselves somewhere in between these extremes, it is the extremes that tend to determine the tone of debates and inform policies that target migrant youth and their families. Both discourses are problematic. The seemingly 'sympathetic' approach tends to victimise children and youth. Although youth and children are undoubtedly vulnerable during their, sometimes extreme, journeys, vulnerability does not characterise *all* forms of mobility in which migrant youth engage. It is not fruitful to treat migrant youth and children as mere victims of mobility because this does not account for their agency and for the variety of their experiences.

The other discourse stigmatises and marginalises migrant youth by contesting their contributions to and presence in Dutch society. It treats migrant youth as troublesome for social and cultural cohesion and urges them to leave behind their societies of origin to focus on integrating into Dutch society. Approaching migrant youth's mobility as a single, one-way migratory journey, however, does not account for the realities of migrant youth who engage in multiple mobilities while they live transnational, multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious lives.

The heated political and societal debates are predominantly informed by the voices of adults, whose views on what is best for young people strongly differ. Migrant parents seem optimistic about the educational opportunities presented to their children due to mobility (Kao and Tienda 1995). Educators, on the other hand, are concerned that mobility interferes with migrant youth's overall ability to perform well in school and their right to education (Lightman 2016; Vogels, Gijsberts, and Draak 2014). Policymakers are positioned somewhere between the two extremes as explained above. Young people's own perceptions of their mobility and how it relates to their education are virtually absent in these discourses. As such, migrant youth find themselves caught between their mobility practices, the regulations that apply to them, and how educators and policy makers perceive them.

In this research, I aim to investigate how young people experience their mobility and what effects mobility has on their educational experiences. My research involved 20 months of multi-sited ethnographic data collection amongst 30 young Ghanaians who move for various reasons within and between the Netherlands and Ghana. It is through their stories that this study generates insights about the relation between mobility and education.

One such story is contained in the following vignette about the life of Abena, a young Ghanaian woman who participated in this study. It illustrates how young people's own stories have potential to inform political and societal debates about migrant youth's mobility and educational experiences:

> *Abena energetically waves her hands while we are talking about Ghana. We returned to the Netherlands from a joint holiday in Ghana two weeks ago. She sits across me in a high-rise apartment building in Amsterdam. Some of her fingers still carry the long acrylic nails she had put on just before the holidays, because she wanted to look beautiful for her family 'back home'. Abena is a cheerful young female who lives in Amsterdam, where she is currently studying with her mother and four siblings. Until the age of 14, Abena lived in Tema before moving to Accra. Her parents migrated to the Netherlands and the US, and so her maternal grandparents and aunt took care of her. She maintains close contact with her grandparents and is eager to visit them in Ghana whenever she can. Abena explains her relationship with them: 'So when I see him [maternal grandfather] again, he is only about education, education: "you need to learn hard!!!" He is not very kind or so, he is just about learning well. But my grandmother is just very happy to see me, she is also asking "do you learn well?" But she is just very happy to see me, she says "Oh Abena, I've missed you soooooo much!! I have missed you so, so much!" That makes me feel special, it makes me feel important. As I told you, my grandmother is not really educated, but she is a very intelligent woman too... I've learned a lot from her.'*

Abena's story draws our attention to several important aspects of her life. First, Abena's biography shows her different forms of mobility: she moved several times between her maternal grandparents and aunt within Ghana, then she moved to the Netherlands, from where she returned for holidays and later a funeral ceremony. In order to understand the impact migration has had on her, we need to understand how many times Abena has moved, for how long, and between which people and localities she has moved. But do contemporary understandings of migrant youth consider all these complexities of mobility?

Are diverse forms of mobility integrated into our understanding of how migration impacts young people? The answer to both questions is no.

Second, Abena's strong conviction that, despite the geographical distance, her grandparents remain important to her raises questions about the role of family in her life. Her move from Ghana to the Netherlands has separated her from the prime caregivers of her childhood, and her journey to Ghana during the summer of 2015 temporarily reunited her with them. This prompts the question of how changing family constellations affect migrant youth and what happens during periods of reunification with loved ones in Ghana.

Third, Abena's visit to Ghana seems permeated with educational stimuli. She tells of how her grandparents undertake attempts to motivate her explicitly (grandfather) and implicitly (grandmother) to do her best in school. This raises multiple questions: how do her experiences while visiting Ghana relate to her educational experiences in the Netherlands? Can experiences in Ghana create educational advantages or disadvantages? In order to understand whether and how experiences of mobility may or may not relate to youth's educational experiences in the Netherlands, we need to gain understanding about which dynamics enter into play when migrant youth go on a holiday to their country of origin and how their mobility possibly relates to earlier moves in their life-course.

Abena's story points to key aspects of the lives of migrant youth that are missing from current debates: there is no systematic research done on migrant youth's mobility patterns, and we know little about the potential 'workings' of mobility, the changing family constellations caused by it, or how it relates to young people's educational experiences.

Because of the many ways in which they are mobile, Ghanaian youth in the Netherlands offer an ideal case through which to increase our understanding of these underexplored topics. In their research amongst Ghanaian migrant parents, Poeze and Mazzucato (2016) came across evidence that the children of Ghanaian migrants indeed experience various forms of mobility. Anecdotal evidence revealed that Ghanaian youth move for short and long periods of time, within and between countries, with and without their parents, for holidays and for education. Literature on child circulation in West-Africa furthermore supports that children in this region are likely to be mobile for various reasons (e.g. Bledsoe 1990; Goody 1982; Isiugo-Abanihe 1985; Notermans 2008).

In addition, Ghanaian youth experience significant educational difficulties in the Netherlands. Dutch schools increasingly host students with mobility in their biographies: 25% of the total Dutch youth population is of so-called 'migrant background', lumping together those who migrated themselves with those who were born of migrant parents (CBS 2017). In the three largest cities, this percentage is significantly higher: 6 out of 10

young people qualify as such (ibid.). So-called 'non-western' migrant youth account for 46% in Rotterdam, and 43% in Amsterdam and The Hague (ibid.) of whom many struggle in the educational system. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Economic Development (OECD) has signalled that this group is under-represented at higher educational levels in the Netherlands, while they drop out more often from secondary education (OECD 2010). These and similar problems are confirmed by other sources: although their educational level is improving compared to native youth, migrant youth still 'under-perform' (Huijnk and Andriessen 2016), and they are persistently over-represented in the lowest levels of the secondary school system, the so-called VMBO[3], or vocational track. This track is stigmatised as accommodating the most unruly, undisciplined, and non-academically talented students (van Dalen 2010).

The problems are partly explained by the fact that Dutch teachers are inclined to underestimate migrant youth (Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving 2015) and struggle with ethnic diversity in the classroom, because they experience interactions with their migrant students as more complex (Thijs, Westhof, and Koomen 2012). Schools more often change their advice to migrant students in the final years of primary school than their advice to non-migrant students. This advice is important because it channels students in different directions within the stratified Dutch school system (De Staat van het Onderwijs 2016, 65). Migrant students also persistently experience discrimination during internship application procedures, which are often a compulsory component of their education (Rijksoverheid 2018).

Given these considerable hurdles, migrant students in the Netherlands need to develop 'educational resilience', the ability to adapt and continue educationally despite experiences of significant adversity (Alva 1991; Waxman, Gray, and Padrón 2004). Furthermore, migrant youth need to negotiate regulations that are informed by a particular framing of mobility. Young Ghanaians are no exception to any of this. But because young Ghanaians are also mobile, they provide an excellent group for studying whether and how mobility may relieve or aggravate some of the problems that young people experience in the educational system. This leads to the following overall set of research questions:

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[3] The secondary school system in the Netherlands is divided into three levels: VMBO, which is subdivided into four different vocational tracks: Basis, Kader, Gemengde, and Theoretische leerweg, HAVO, and VWO, which is subdivided into Atheneum and Gymnasium. The tracks correspond with tertiary levels MBO (vocational training), HBO (applied universities), and University (academic training), respectively.

How do young Ghanaians' mobility trajectories shape their educational experiences?

1. What characterises the mobility trajectories of young Ghanaians within and between Ghana and the Netherlands?

2. How do mobility trajectories shape young Ghanaians' educational resilience?

3. How do young Ghanaians and their Dutch educators frame mobility and its impact on education in contrasting ways?

To answer these questions, I draw on fieldwork predominantly conducted in *the Bijlmer* – short for the *Bijlmermeer* – a neighbourhood in Amsterdam (18 months), and in several urban areas such as Kumasi, Accra, and Cape Coast in Ghana (2 months). While accompanying young Ghanaians on their journeys to Ghana I conducted research in the urban areas where most Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands originate from (Mazzucato 2011).

The total Ghanaian population in the Netherlands is currently estimated at 23,809 (CBS 2018), of whom 28% is below 18 years old, and 72% 18 years or above. This makes the Ghanaian population relatively young as compared to the Dutch population (age division: 19,7% <18; 80,3% >18). This is also visible in the age-composition: 15 to 25 year old young people compose the largest cohort of the total Ghanaian population (18,9%). It is likely, however, that this is an underestimation of the total Ghanaian population in the Netherlands because some are undocumented or unregistered and are therefore absent from the statistics (Mazzucato 2011). The Ghanaian population is balanced in gender composition, and is steadily growing in numbers: in 1996, 13,079 Ghanaians were officially registered. This number grew to 16,429 in 2000, and reached 23,809 today, of whom 13,993 are categorised as 'first generation' and 9,816 as 'second generation' (CBS 2018). The young people in this study fall in both these categories (for a more elaborate discussion on selection see section 3.2.3.).

Ghanaians are smaller in numbers than more established migrant groups such as Moroccans, Turks, and Surinamese who came to the Netherlands as 'guest-workers' or from former colonies. These more established migrant groups have distinctively different

migratory experiences from the 'new immigrant populations' of Europe because the latter are facing increasingly restrictive policies and regulations (Grillo and Mazzucato 2008). Ghanaians, for example, came during the 1980s to the Netherlands due to the general socio-economic decline in the wider West African region. Many Ghanaians had sought employment in Nigeria that initiated forced expulsion of migrants in 1983, which lead to a search for work in Europe and North America (Ibid.). Moreover, 'new immigrant populations', such as Ghanaians, do not have the historical, linguistic, or educational ties that already existed with the Netherlands which can largely impact their routes to participating in Dutch society (Mazzucato 2008).

Half of the Ghanaians in the Netherlands live in Amsterdam South-East, an administrative district of Amsterdam, of which the *Bijlmer* is the largest neighbourhood (Obbink 2017). The Ghanaian population in the Netherlands is generally of lower socio-economic background with 4 out of 10 living on a minimum wage (IOS Amsterdam, Obbink 2017). Their 'silent presence' in the Netherlands went practically unnoticed until the *Bijlmerramp* in 1992, when a plane crashed into one of the typical *Bijlmer* high-rise buildings. The undocumented status of many Ghanaians made it difficult to count the exact number of victims of this disaster (Meershoek 2017).

For a long time, the *Bijlmer* had a notorious reputation. The recently published coming-of-age autobiographic novel *Wees Onzichtbaar* (*Be Invisible*) by Murat Isik, a child of Turkish migrants, offers a detailed portrait of an intensely deprived and dilapidated *Bijlmer* in the 1980s and 1990s. During this period its bad reputation was established mainly due to an epidemic of drug-addicts, high unemployment, and crime. Isik's narration intimately describes the stigma attached to migrant youth from the *Bijlmer* (see also figure 1.1) and the persistent hostility and intimidation experienced by young people living there. Paulle (2005) later investigated these experiences of intimidation and anxiety in schools in the *Bijlmer*. Isik's novel provides multiple sketches of situations in which educational resilience was of crucial importance when lurking underestimation by Dutch teachers tested his stamina.

Today, the *Bijlmer's* image is slowly turning around due to several financial injections and urban renewal plans conducted by the municipality of Amsterdam (Fainstein 2008). Some of the first well-known Ghanaians in the Netherlands, such as rapper Akwasi and PvDA-politician Ama Asante, (partly) grew up the *Bijlmer*. Ghanaian migrants' presence is clearly noticeable in the neighbourhood, to which some refer as 'little Accra' or 'little Ghana' (Obbink 2017); it is full of Ghanaian commerce, churches, political gatherings. One can find *fufu*, *yam*, and *kenkey*, basic ingredients for West African dishes, in the local market. Ghanaians have established travel agencies, saloons, and tropical supermarkets in different corners of the *Bijlmer*. The mixture of educational difficulties experienced by migrant youth

in this neighbourhood and the presence of many Ghanaian migrants made Amsterdam South-East the perfect field site from where this multi-sited fieldwork could depart.

Figure 1.1.: Graffiti in the *Bijlmer*, Amsterdam, expressing frustrations about unequal opportunities.

Source: fieldwork 2015-2016, picture by author.

1.2.   Towards studying youth mobility trajectories and educational experiences

The political and societal debates described above ignore important aspects of migrant youth's lives. These debates can be nuanced considerably when researchers explore the complexities that tangibly shape the everyday lives of migrant youth. There are two dominant tendencies in the literature on migrant youth that have hindered contemporary understandings of youth mobility in relation to education. First, research on migrant youth's education typically focusses only on the initial move from country of origin to country of destination, neglecting other forms of mobility taking place before and beyond the first international move. Second, research usually concentrates on formal education received in school and expressed through measurable outcomes such as test scores. It excludes informal education and youth's personal educational experiences.

I use insights from two bodies of literature to draw into question these two common conceptions in youth migration and education studies. First, I draw on transnational migration studies to expand our understanding of the 'transnational' lives of youth. This literature explores the way in which multiple localities are interconnected through the flow

of ideas, goods, remittances, communication technologies, and relationships (Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992). Researchers have emphasised that understanding migrants' lives requires moving the analysis beyond the nation-state. Scholars have also unpacked so-called 'transnational families', whose members live in different nation-states and shown the importance of children within transnational families (e.g. Dreby 2007; Fog-Olwig 2012; Mazzucato and Schans 2011). Family relations and other connections in young migrants' country of origin may thus continue to influence them after they have migrated abroad.

Despite the insights transnational migration studies provide, the way young people experience, view, perceive, and contribute to transnational family life, remains understudied (Ní Laoire et al. 2010). Moreover, while this scholarship compels us to pay attention to ties beyond the nation state, studies on migrant youth still overwhelmingly concentrate on place of residence, usually the 'destination country', a tendency that is clearly visible in research on education (see below).

Second, I draw on mobility studies. Mobility studies has turned attention to the presence of all sorts of mobility in current societies, including movements of goods and ideas, and mundane movements of people such as commuting to work (Sheller and Urry 2006). Mobility scholars argue that these movements of things, people, and ideas, fundamentally change how society is structured and how social interaction between people takes place. Moreover, mobility does not merely entail movement. Mobility scholars argue that things 'happen' during mobility: ideas change, social fabrics transform, and people gain experiences.

The idea that contemporary societies are marked by continuous movement, and that people engage in various mobilities, invites migration scholars to think beyond a migrant's first international move. Migration and mobility can be approached as distinct phenomena that can, however, be closely interrelated in the lives of migrants. A similar argument has been made King and Skeldon (2010), who point out the interlinkages between different 'types' of moves and the artificial binary that is commonly drawn in migration studies between internal and international migration. Instead of approaching these as distinct phenomena, they argue that the two are interrelated.

The literature shows that youth indeed engage in various forms of mobility. Aside their first international move, migrant youth engage in 'return mobility' to their or their parents' country of origin (Erdal et al. 2016; Ní Laoire 2011; Vathi and King 2011). They may circulate among different family members 'at home' to facilitate parental migration (Fog-Olwig 2012; Øien 2006; Mazzucato, Dankyi, and Poeze 2017). Once migrated, they undertake visits to solve crises, to perform duties, to maintain and rekindle ties (Baldassar, Baldock, and Wilding 2007), to be 're-educated' (Bledsoe and Sow 2011), or for holidays

(Mand 2010). Yet, how these mobilities interrelate within one trajectory and with their first international move remains understudied and poorly understood (Veale and Donà 2014).

The insights of transnationalism and mobility studies suggest that the reality migrant youth experience is more complex than conventional conceptualisations and theories allow. Conventional theorisations of migrant youth dismiss meaningful details and complexities of transnational mobility and education by not making these details visible. To illustrate the simplification that such approaches produce, let us return to the example of Abena. Abena's trajectory from Tema to Accra, then to Amsterdam and with regular visits back to her family in Ghana is a complex one. Describing Abena, as is commonly done in population statistics, as a 'first generation migrant' only focuses on her move from Accra to the Netherlands. This gives prominence to her status as an international migrant. This is not incorrect, but it is incomplete because Abena has also been an 'internal' migrant before coming to the Netherlands. Describing her as a 'left behind' child up to the age of 14, or as a 'diasporic visitor' when she returns for holiday visits to Ghana, only captures particular periods of Abena's life. Thus labelling Abena as a member of the wider Ghanaian diaspora, or simply 'Ghanaian', is not incorrect, but it is not very informative if we want to understand something about her mobility and migration, because diasporic and ethnic members do not have to be mobile per se. In order to truly understand how migration affects young people such as Abena, it is necessary to look at all the forms of mobility they engage in and to find concepts that do justice to trajectories in their totality (Mazzucato 2015).

Abena's story also illustrates a second point about how mobility impacts youth: the people who help shape their educational experiences are not necessarily or only those with whom young people live or interact daily. Abena's grandfather and grandmother are important for her education, even after her move to the Netherlands. Her grandfather is strict and checks on her education with a serious tone, conveying the message that he cares about her progress in school. Her grandmother motivates her more implicitly, by making her feel loved and important. Abena's grandmother is furthermore important because, as Abena recalled throughout her participation in this study, she has taught Abena important things about 'life'. Her grandmother's wisdom is composed of knowledge about relationships, how to appropriately behave, cultural repertoires, and religious knowledge, which Abena expressly qualified as meaningful knowledge because this will help her to navigate society successfully. Without a transnational lens, Abena's previous caregivers fall out of research focus as they do not reside in geographical proximity to her.

We could say that her maternal grandparents inspire Abena to become an 'educated person' (Levinson, Foley, and Holland 1996). Tacit and explicit knowledge both contribute to what has to be known in order to become a demonstrated 'educated person'. Yet, research on the education of migrant youth in the Netherlands rarely focusses on informally and tacitly acquired knowledge, but rather concentrates on educational 'outcomes' as expressed in test-scores (Stevens et al. 2013). Importantly, however, becoming educated when one lives a transnational life, entails far more than what is measured in tests.

Theories about the lives of migrant youth rely on concepts that seem insufficient to understand how their mobility impacts their educational experiences. In order to understand this, we need to explore their complex **'mobility trajectories', defined in this study as the moves youth make over time and across geographically distinct localities, in this case within and between Ghana and the Netherlands, and the changing family constellations that this entails** (Mazzucato 2015). Abena's story, supported by the literature on transnational families and mobility studies, indicates that we need to study youth migration as an integral part of broader mobility trajectories. Only then we will be able to understand how migration and mobility affect impacts young people's educational experiences.

1.3.   Roadmap of the thesis

This is an article-based thesis. The empirical chapters (4, 5, and 6) are published in or currently under review by international peer-reviewed journals. Inevitably thus, there is some repetition in the thesis, as parts of the methodology and theory are introduced in each article. In Chapters 2 and 3, however, I bring the different theoretical threads together into a cohesive and overarching theoretical framework and explain the overall methodology of this research. Chapter 2 focusses on the theoretical framework, explores the gaps that this study addresses, and elaborates on my research questions. Chapter 3 explains the methodological choices I made in this research. It provides an overview of the ethnographic methods I used, along with a reflection on my positionality and the ethical issues I confronted.

Chapter 4 critically revisits conventional conceptualisations of migrant youth. Drawing on the diversity of mobility patterns found amongst young Ghanaians, it proposes an alternative way to conceptualise and study youth mobility. Chapters 5 and 6 both employ the concept of 'youth mobility trajectories' introduced in Chapter 4 to investigate how

mobility shapes migrant youth's educational experiences. Chapter 5 zooms in on young people's 'educational resilience', their ability to adapt and continue educationally despite experiences of significant adversity. Specifically, it investigates how different mobility trajectories influence youth's ability to build educational resilience. Chapter 6 examines the tensions between different 'framings of mobility'. It compares the contrasting views of young Ghanaians and their Dutch educators about how mobility impacts education. Chapter 7 concludes by examining the contributions and implications of this study. It answers the research questions, suggests further research, and offers policy recommendations.

Theoretical framework

Kelsey on a wobbly tree bridge in Kakum National Park during her holiday in Ghana. Source: fieldwork 2015-2016.

2.   Theoretical Framework

2.1.   Introduction

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between young Ghanaians' **mobility trajectories** and their **educational experiences**. This chapter first elaborates on two scholarships that, when their approaches are combined, instigate new, unanswered, conceptual questions concerning the study of youth, migration, mobility, and education. Inspired by these two bodies of literature, I bring forward that youth may have their own patterns of movement and that these patterns are worthy academic inquiry. I will explain that there are several problems with conventional conceptualisations of youth migration. The chapter then introduces the first central concept of this thesis: **mobility trajectories**. This concept provides an alternative to existing concepts capturing movement and therefore enables alternative analyses that can broaden understandings of transnational youth's educational experiences.

This chapter then moves on to discuss the second main analytical concept of this study: **educational experiences**. Most scholars looking into the impact of migration pose the following question: 'how does migration affect youth's educational outcomes?' The concept 'educational experiences' enables an alternative approach to this question whereby contexts beyond the nation-state of residence as well as non-measurable educational outcomes can be considered. Furthermore, these concepts allow for an inclusion of youth's subjective experiences and perspectives.

Last, this chapter discusses how the relationship between the two main analytical concepts is studied. This study examines two **shaping mechanisms**; **educational resilience** and **conflicting framings of mobility**. This thesis engages with recent developments in literature on resilience and framing to investigate and contribute to an understanding of these shaping mechanisms.

2.2. Transnationalism

2.2.1. Understanding migrants' lives from a transnational perspective

Since the '90s, transnational scholars have problematized several fundamental assumptions in migration research. Until then, prevalent migration theories conceived of migrants as moving from their country of origin to a country of 'settlement' and integrating there (Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992). Consequently, migration scholars predominantly focused on the context of 'arrival' in the Global North, and studied issues concerning migrant assimilation, integration, and adaptation (Mazzucato et al. 2004). Yet, transnational scholars argue that migratory moves are rarely linear and that migrants maintain multiple ties instead of breaking them when moving to another country. Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc (1994, 7), among the first to theorise transnationalism, define it as: 'the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement.

Transnational scholarship argues that a constant flow of money, ideas, goods, and people transcends nation-states' borders, connects multiple physical, social, economic, and political spaces simultaneously. Transnational phenomena are not new, yet options to maintain connections are enhanced by technological developments, such as telephones, internet, and cheap travelling (Vertovec 1999). These technological developments enable connections, communication, and the mobility of humans, ideas, and goods over large distances and with increasing speed. Therefore, the nature and intensity of transnational connection has changed, and a binary portrayal of migration no longer accurately reflects migratory realities.

Given transnational connections, it is important to acknowledge that migrants live their life across nation-states' borders. This requires a conceptual and methodological approach that transcends the nation-state. In their book *Nations Unbound*, Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc (1994) problematize the nation-state, which had formed the basis of many analytical social science concepts and theories on migration. Taking the nation-state as an analytical starting point confines researchers' ability to conceive and investigate how migrants establish, navigate, and contribute to 'transnational social fields' (Glick-Schiller 2005; Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004).

Bourdieu (1989) compares a 'social field' with a field of play which can be defined as a structured social space that is often a site of conflict and contestation. A transnational social field is a field that encompasses the different localities and social contacts that are meaningful to a migrant; this may thus include a context and significant others in a migrant's

country of origin as well as in her current country of residence (Glick-Schiller 2005; Levitt and Glick-Schiller). Scholars show how transnational social fields are created and maintained when migrants exchange money, ideas, emotions, and care with their families and network members in their countries of origin (Faist 2000; Mazzucato et al. 2004). Other scholars highlight that transnational communities can be real or imagined and are formed through migrants' identities, practices of belonging, and religious and political activities (Appadurai 1990; Levitt 2001). Although the nation-state remains an influential entity because it structures the way migrants can or cannot live their lives, through regulating access to the labour market, territories (through visa), and opportunities, the assumption that identities, networks, and economic, political, and cultural activities conflate in one nation-state, is problematic (Grillo and Mazzucato 2008; Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004).

2.2.2.   Transnational families

For a long time, families received relatively limited attention in migration studies (Mazzucato and Schans 2011). An increase in female migration instigated more research into the impact of migration on families, mainly because mother-child separations were considered destabilising for families, and for children especially (Parreñas 2008). The emergence of the transnational lens invited inquiry into how family life 'works' when family members are living geographically removed from each other. Research on transnational families produced three insights that are relevant for this study.

The first insight is that families can operate transnationally (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; Parreñas 2001). Transnational families organise themselves across geographical distance and despite difficulties involved in migration such as bureaucratic barriers that impact the mobility options of different family members. Regardless of distance, transnational families can experience a sense of unity. For example, transnational Honduran families living across the US and Honduras, divide reproductive and productive labour responsibilities (Schmalzbauer 2004). Different family members who are located in different nation-states then carry out these responsibilities. Despite this geographical distance, families manage to create co-presence and are able to vitalise family relations (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; Schmalzbauer 2004). Other studies disclose a plurality of parenting and kinship practices carried out through ICT and sending remittances indicating that physical proximity is not a pre-condition for family life (Baldassar et al. 2016; Fresnoza-Flot 2009; Madianou and Miller 2011).

Second, transnational family studies show that migration research is informed by nuclear, Western-based notions of 'the family'. Apart from the presumed need of physical co-presence, studies also tend to exclusively focus on nuclear family constellations (Mazzucato and Schans 2011). Anthropological literature on kinship, however, points out that other forms of family life, such as paternally or maternally extended family constructions, contest a universally applicable notion of the nuclear family. Hereby, family members outside the nuclear unit, such as aunts, uncles, and grandparents, are perceived in the core unit of what constitutes the family. Extended family members can be of crucial importance for the functioning of transnational families. Dreby (2010) for example explains how Mexican grandmothers, in the absence of their migrated children, carry important caregiving responsibilities for their grandchildren. Similarly, studies in Ghana and the Caribbean show how grandparents and siblings reciprocally exchange caregiving responsibilities for children, therewith facilitating the overseas stay of their migrated kin (Dankyi, Mazzucato, and Manuh 2015; Fog-Olwig 2007). These studies show that notions associated with the nuclear family may not be applicable to transnational families.

The third important insight on which this study builds is that children are important actors in transnational families (Orellana et al. 2001). Their very existence and future is often amongst the prime motivations for parents to migrate in the first place. When parents migrate, transnational networks of care, often centring on the children, are established. In her study among Angolan families, Øien (2006) shows that fostering practices, whereby children are informally circulated between family members, are carried on beyond national borders. Ghanaian families also establish such transnational networks of care when members migrate abroad. Different caregiving and child raising responsibilities, such as day-to-day care, financial support, and emotional care, are divided and circulated between family members who are living in Ghana and the Netherlands (Mazzucato, Dankyi, and Poeze 2017). Moreover, studies show that children are agentic; they influence the migratory decisions of their parents (Dreby 2007) or other relatives, thereby contributing to traditions, religious practices, and cultural customs that are carried out transnationally and inter-generationally. Children within transnational families thus importantly contribute to the functioning of the family.

2.2.3. Studying transnational youth

Scholars now turn to children and youth as their prime focus of investigation, aiming to understand youth's own transnational ties and connections as well as their contribution to and positioning within the transnational families they are part of. Scholars pose questions such as: how are children positioned within their transnational families? How do they

experience growing up transnationally? Recently, studies have turned to the transnational engagements of the so-called 'second generation' (Levitt 2009). Studies show that children of migrant parents who were born in the country where their parents migrated to, often have transnational experiences and connections to their parents' country of origin. They can be politically active, construct transnational identities, maintain a transnational network of friends and family, participate in transnational religious events and activities, or even 'return' to their parents' country of origin (e.g. Fouron and Glick-Schiller 2001; Levitt and Waters 2002; Potter 2005; Reynolds 2011).

Some studies do not only focus on the 'second generation' per se, but include youth who have themselves migrated. These studies explore the transnational practices in which children and youth engage as well as their everyday virtual contact, text-messaging, gift-sending, letter-writing activities, and the way that children and young people are 'doing family' transnationally (Halloway and Valentine 2006; Punch 2012; Zontini and Reynolds 2018). Yet others investigate the emotional experiences and worldviews of children who grow up transnationally (e.g. Coe 2012; Gardner and Mand 2012). Scholars showed furthermore that migrant youth may experience transitions into adulthood that are shaped within a transnational social field (Tse and Waters 2013; Punch 2002). These studies show that children have distinct views and experiences from the adults in their families and that they uniquely contribute to and transform transnational activities and realities. It is therefore important to conceptualise childhood and successive transitions into adulthood with a transnational lens (Gardner 2012; Zeitlyn and Mand 2012).

The number of studies applying a transnational lens to study youth is growing. Yet, the perspectives and experiences of transnational children and youth remain empirically understudied (Levitt 2009; Gardner 2012). Studying transnationalism through children and youth's eyes contributes to an understanding of how transnational relations, familial practices and discourses are created and maintained, and of the life course and its relation to migration (Gardner 2012). Following transnational scholarship this study adopts a transnational lens. This means that it acknowledges that contexts beyond the nation-state can be of importance to understanding the lives of migrant youth. Concretely, this means that this study explores mechanisms that take place in the transnational social field through transnational practices and ties that may impact youth's educational experiences in the Netherlands.

Drawing on transnational family studies, this study focusses on the connections youth may have with family members who are situated in another country. Apart from understanding the family as a unit situated in different localities, I also consider extended family members beyond the nuclear unit who contribute to family functioning. Hence, this

study investigates Ghanaian youth's changing family constellations over time by following their mobility trajectories. This automatically implies an inclusion of family members who may not reside in the same nation-state as the young people.

2.3. Mobility

2.3.1. The emergence of mobility studies

In the 1970s-1980s geographers pointed to the limitations of the concept 'migration'. They argued that it was used almost exclusively to refer to international human movement, which implied a change of residence of permanent nature. Chapman and Prothero (1983), for example, drew attention to 'circulation', which they considered to be a distinct form of migration. Prothero and Chapman (1985, printed in 2011) argued that these non-permanent circular or reciprocal movements, often taking place between rural and urban areas, were far more common than international and permanent moves throughout Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. Skeldon (1977) approached circulation as a transitional phase that propelled migrants into more permanent migration to urban areas. Later, Chapman (1991, 289) conceived of migration and circulation as 'integral parts of broader regional systems of mobility', that connect individuals, families, and wider communities in the Pacific archipelago. These early critiques, based on observations in different parts of the globe, signalled that the majority of human movement was of different size, length, and function than international migration, and that participants had no declared intention for a permanent or long-lasting change of residence. Scholars thus called for a more accurate conceptualisation that could help to make sense of the diversity of temporal and spatial dimensions of human movement.

In a similar vein, but largely separate from the above, what has come to be called the 'mobility turn' or the 'new mobilities paradigm' has brought theorisation on the role of space into sociology by focusing on various forms of spatial mobility undertaken by people, objects, and ideas over time. As opposed to the classic sociological concept 'mobility' that refers to an individual's rise on the socio-economic ladder, this 'mobility' rather refers to spatial movement. Mobility scholars have developed a specific interest in mundane, everyday movements, such as commuting to work; people's movement in specific spaces, such as cities or airports; but also the spatial mobility of goods and ideas as well as blocked and prolonged movement (Büscher and Urry 2009). Mobility scholars critique social scientists for still not being able to sufficiently deal with mobility, as most studies tend to

approach subjects of study as if they are sedentary (Cresswell 2010; Sheller and Urry 2006; Urry 2007).

Mobility scholars concentrate on *all* forms of movement undertaken by people and things. They do not necessarily concentrate on migrants because mobility does not necessarily equal migration. Migrants can be mobile, but not everyone who is mobile is a migrant. Human mobility, therewith, is a broader concept than migration encompassing a wide range of mobilities undertaken by people who may or may not happen to be migrants. Migration scholars, on the other hand, study human movement. Therefore, some ideas brought forward by mobility scholars are interesting for migration scholars. The reverse is true as well. For example, migration scholars have studied and generated insights about human movement for decades, and their understanding of how transnational family life is organised can broaden mobility scholars' theories and concepts.

Two ideas of mobility scholars seem to have potential to broaden contemporary understandings of migration. First, their claim that understanding mobility has become key in societies where mobility has become partial in everyday life, relationships and the way society is regulated (Sheller and Urry 2006; Urry 2007). Second, mobility scholars' attention to different forms of mobility is interesting. Yet, there seems to be minimal exchange and application of ideas from both sides (Urry 2007; Schapendonk and Steel 2014). This is for instance visible in the limited attention given to migrants' mobility other than their first international move. This is problematic in an era in which mobility has become increasingly accessible and at the same time inaccessible. Cheap travel opportunities and open border policies within the EU and ECOWAS may facilitate human movement. At the same time, increasingly restrictive migration policies in Global Northern countries impede mobility opportunities of specific groups. It is thus likely that immobility and mobility form an inherent element of the contemporary migratory experience. Therefore, it seems fruitful to investigate if mobility and migration are mutually intertwined rather than approaching them as distinctive phenomena.

Recent studies unpack specific forms of mobility in which migrants tend to engage, such as 'return mobilities' or 'diasporic home visits' (Wagner 2008, 2017). Other scholars study how migrants' actual journeys unfold, are blocked, or progress, illustrating how journeys of different family members overlap, diverge, coincide, and change over time or facilitate identity-shaping mechanisms (Carling 2017; Schapendonk 2012; Schapendonk and Steel 2014; Wagner 2017; Wissink and Mazzucato 2017). Others investigate the possibility that mobility and migration may be interlinked, for example, when young people migrate abroad and mobility is initiated to maintain ties with a former place of residence (Frändberg 2014). These scholars have pioneered a scholarly endeavour to bring mobility more explicitly

into the analysis of migrants' experiences. Moreover, these studies draw attention to the idea that people's life course may encompass various forms of mobility and that 'migration' is indeed a much more dynamic phenomenon than many conventional concepts are able to reflect. Yet, few, if any, of these studies focus specifically on migrant youth.

2.3.2.   Youth mobility

Increasingly, mobility is accessible for young people as a way to maintain a transnational life when migrating abroad (Frändberg 2014). Child and youth mobility often receives attention when it occurs under extreme conditions, such as trafficking, asylum, or forced exile. Studies reveal the heavy psychological and emotional consequences of such mobility, and as a result the many efforts to reduce the negative implications of movement often centre around stopping children and youth from engaging in mobility (Howard 2017; Huijsmans and Baker 2012; Yaqub 2009). Yet, trafficking and fleeing conflict do not represent all mobility undertaken by youth.

It is clear that migrant youth engage in a wide range of mobilities both prior to and after their first international move. Some scholars, for instance, focus on physical mobility undertaken by migrant youth after their or their parents' first international move. Preliminary studies show that some migrant parents decide to 'send back' their children to a country of origin when, for example children misbehave, or the burden of caregiving cannot be combined with occupational responsibilities in the host country (Bledsoe and Sow 2011; Kea and Maier 2017). Others reveal that migrant youth tend to engage in frequent mobility on holidays to visit family and friends (Cressey 2006; Mand 2010; Portes 1999; Rumbaut 2002; Schimmer and van Tubergen 2014). Migrant youth also return (temporarily) to their or their parents' country of origin to receive religious or cultural education (Erdal et al. 2016; Whitehouse 2009).

Additionally, there are a wealth of studies suggesting that youth may experience mobility prior to their first international move. Mobility is widespread and, therefore, 'paramount' in any understanding of African life (Bruijn, van Dijk, and Foeken 2001). Since this study focusses on young Ghanaians, it is worthwhile considering mobility that could have taken place prior to a young person's first international move. Fosterage, the informal transfer of children into other families, is a widespread phenomenon and an integral element of many child-raising cultures in West Africa (e.g. Bledsoe 1990; Goody 1982; Isiugo-Abanihe 1985; Notermans 2008). In Western society it is considered self-evident that children grow up with their biological parents (Bowie 2004), yet in other parts of the world

the transfer of children into other families serves to strengthen kinship ties as well as the training of adaptation, endurance, and stamina in children. In Ghana, many children experience living away from their mother, for example because of fostering (Whitehead, Hashim, and Iversen 2007). The nationally representative Demographic and Health Survey shows that 18% of children up to the age of 14 were fostered for reasons other than parental death (GDHS 2008 cited in Mazzucato and Cebotari 2016). Fosterage requires temporal withdrawal of the child from the nuclear family unit; it is, thus often, a form of mobility (Whitehead, Hashim, and Iversen 2007).

Apart from fosterage, children and youth in Ghana are found to be regionally mobile for other reasons, such as for education and labour (e.g. Whitehead and Hashim 2005; Whitehead, Hashim, and Iversen 2007; Hashim 2007; Hashim and Thorsen 2011; Langevang and Gough 2009; Ungruhe 2010). Parental migration is also likely to instigate children and youth's own mobility. When parents migrate overseas and leave their children in the care of someone else, usually a family member and occasionally non-relatives (Fog-Olwig 2007; Poeze, Dankyi, and Mazzucato 2017), children may circulate between different caregivers (Mazzucato and Cebotari 2016). In Ghana, 24.2% of the children live with only one biological parent while the other parent has migrated nationally or internationally (ibid.). A recent study indicates that one or both parents of 16% of the junior and senior secondary school youth in southern Ghana have migrated internationally, and at least one parent of 32% has migrated internally (Mazzucato and Cebotari 2016). These figures and literature suggest that Ghanaian youth are likely to experience some form of mobility in Ghana prior to coming to the Netherlands. Taking these socio-cultural realms and practices concerning mobility into consideration is crucial to understanding young Ghanaians' mobility. These norms may be the basis of their movement and the way youth give meaning to their own movement or how they imagine their futures (Coe 2012; Mazzucato and Schans 2011).

In sum, migrant youth engage in various forms of mobility that remain relatively unexplored. Haller and Landolt (2005) even state that migrant youth's mobility between a country of origin and a host country is 'the norm' under favourable conditions. 'Extreme' forms of mobility such as child and youth trafficking or mobilities undertaken by refugee youth may be similar to a certain extent, but result in conceivably distinct experiences than somewhat more 'typical' or 'normal' mobilities undertaken by migrant youth in the form of holidays or family visits. It is, therefore, important to give equal attention to other potentially influential forms of mobility beyond the first international move and to understand these mobilities as distinct, yet possibly intertwined.

2.4.   Youth mobility trajectories

Inspired by transnational scholarship and mobility studies, this study focusses on one specific way of living and maintaining a transnational life: by being mobile. As opposed to studies that investigate the transnational experiences of children and youth that do not necessarily entail their own mobility, such as transnational identities (Levitt 2009) this study investigates migrant youth's own mobility experiences.

In order to enable studying transnational youth's mobility experiences, it is crucial to conceive of migrant youth as having their own (in)dependent trajectories that may encompass different forms of mobility at different points during their life course. Notably, these mobility patterns may relate to how they are (un)able to live their transnational lives. This prompts a clear conceptual demand for concepts that capture the variety of mobility youth engage in. Despite the diverse mobilities in which migrant youth appear to and possibly engage, there are, to date, limited attempts to conceptualise and study youth's mobility patterns in their totality and to approach migration and mobility as mutually intertwined (Veale and Donà 2014). Therefore, there are no possibilities to further investigate how mobility potentially affects migrant youth outcomes (Mazzucato 2015).

This conceptual problem becomes visible when we consider studies on migrant 'youth outcomes' and concentrate on how these studies conceptualise migration. These studies, for example, examine the impact of migration on migrant youth's educational achievements, labour market position, identity, and wellbeing in order to examine their adaptation, assimilation, and integration. Thereby, many studies employ concepts such as 'first' and 'second' generation and/or 'immigrant' youth. This categorisation of migrant youth is based on the timing of their or their parents' first international move (e.g. Pásztor 2010; Portes and Zhou 1993; Rumbaut 2002; Rumbaut 2004; Suárez-Orozco, Bang, and Onaga 2010; Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie 2002; Waldinger and Perlmann 1998). Scholars like Rumbaut (2004) have attempted to nuance this categorisation by adding a '1.5' and '1.75' categories. Yet, the principle remains the same: migrant youth are distinguished based on their or their parents' first international move from their country of origin to a host country.

Conceptualising youth migration as such is problematic. It contributes to a bifocal portrayal of migration, conceptualising migration as a unidirectional move from context A to context B; it essentially reduces 'migration' to a first international move undertaken by youth or by their parents and it conceptually simplifies migration by leaving out the complexity of mobility (Mazzucato 2015). We have seen that there are many other forms of mobility youth may engage in. A combination of these different movements can occur in one biography of a young migrant. Conceptual flexibility is needed to include these other

forms of mobility related to migration in order to assess the impact of mobility on migrant youth's lives. Furthermore, we can see a strong host-country focus in most conventional conceptualisations. These host country based conceptualisations are problematic because they do not account for a transnational understanding of youth's lives.

Martiniello and Rea (2014) suggest the concept 'migratory careers'. By drawing on the classical sociological concept of 'career', they aim to connect dominant sociological theories of migration that more explicitly focus on migrants' 'integration', 'assimilation', and 'incorporation' more explicitly with mobility and social identity theory. Moreover, their aim is to integrate micro, meso and macro structures that impact the subjective experiences and objective pathways of migrants through intertwined processes. Martiniello and Rea's (2014) study shows that in the case of migrant youth specifically, there is a clear need for better concepts and theories to understand their lives; it is evident that mobilities and migration are mutually intertwined, yet conventional concepts do not allow a comprehensive analysis. When studies do investigate young people's mobilities, they usually do so by exploring one particular mobility with great detail, and they rarely place these mobilities within a total migratory pathway because of a lack of analytical concepts (Veale and Donà 2014). Despite the pertinence of mobility in migrant youth's lives, mobility remains an underexplored aspect of their lives. Rather than juxtaposing 'migration' and 'mobility', this study approaches them as mutually intertwined and aims at holistically integrating both into one analysis.

Inspired by transnational and mobility literature, this thesis first revisits the concepts that are generally employed in research on migrant youth and proposes an alternative concept to study the impact of migration on youth outcomes. Concepts that can help to dissect the various mobility patterns undertaken by migrant youth, are virtually absent in the literature and/or do not allow for the integration of mobility forms and patterns into analyses. In search for more a suitable concept this thesis first aims to devise a typology that brings out the variety in youth's mobility patterns. Therefore, this thesis poses the following sub-question:

What characterises the mobility trajectories of young Ghanaians within and between Ghana and the Netherlands?

'Youth mobility trajectories' is a key concept in this study and conceptualising youth mobility trajectories is the first step towards answering the main research question. It will also help with the inquiry of the second and third sub-questions. The concept captures the spatio-temporal complexities of mobility by mapping young people's physical moves through space and time and the concurrent family constellations this results in, without attributing particular importance to only one move within or between Ghana and the Netherlands. Through a systematic mapping of youth mobilities prior to or after international migration, this thesis arrives at a typology of emerging mobility trajectories undertaken by Ghanaian youth. Aside from visualising and analysing young people's actual mobility patterns in their totality, the concept also allows for an analysis of the interrelation between different mobilities within the life course. Chapter 3 (methodology) elaborates on how exactly to conduct an inquiry of migrant youth's subjective experiences through a mapping of youth's individual mobility trajectories.

2.5. Educational experiences

2.5.1. Educational outcomes and migration

Education has become one of the 'defining features of modern childhood' (Crivello 2011, 395). Children spend many hours of their weeks in classrooms and dedicate much of their time to school-related activities such as studying and rehearsing. Parents all over the world make sacrifices to enable their children to go school (Boyden 2013). Given the prominence of education in youth's lives and the promise attached to education, the links between migration and education logically gained increasing attention in academic literature. Scholars are typically concerned with how migration affects youth's educational outcomes and they are inconclusive about the effects of migration on education.

For example, the 'segmented assimilation theory', developed by Portes and Zhou (1993), explains the multiplicity of assimilation pathways into different socio-economic layers of host societies followed by 'the second generation' and recently arrived migrant youth. Arriving migrant youth are expected to take over the occupational and educational aspirations of more established migrant youth, whose motivations and ambitions are deteriorated by everyday experiences of inequality and discrimination. Migrant youth are likely to experiences 'downward assimilation' given migrants' frequent lower socio-economic status upon arrival. The educational success of migrant youth, according to this theory, corresponds to the ability of families and youth to resist assimilation into the disadvantaged segments of society. As such, the educational success of Asian youth in the

US has been attributed to a successful withstanding of downward assimilation mainly achieved through restrictive parenting methods (Schneider and Lee 1990).

The 'parental optimism' hypothesis has been developed to explain migrant youth's educational achievements. Instead of being negatively impacted by the consequences of their or their parents' migration, Kao and Tienda (1995) theorise that migrant youth are advantaged as compared to native youth by their parents' optimism about the educational and occupational opportunities offered through migration. The opportunistic stance and expressive hopes of migrant parents for their children's future instil motivation and strength in youth that makes them outperform their native peers.

More explanations for migrant youth's educational achievements after their or their parents' migration have followed the ones mentioned above. Scholars point at the importance of so-called 'significant others', people who can help with homework and school choices, the differences in school systems, and the influence of neighbourhoods (e.g. Crul, Schneider, and Lelie 2012; Crul and Vermeulen 2003; Dronkers and Dunne 2012; Schnell, Keskiner, and Crul 2013). Others concentrate more on pedagogical differences (Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Ogbu 1992; Ogbu and Simons 1998), the school environment (Paulle 2005), or behavioural and educational differences between migrant youth and native peers through a socio-cultural lens. Scholars have also investigated the role of gender, family factors, and community impact on youth's mathematical performance (Dronkers and Dunne 2012; Dronkers and Kornder 2014; Levels, Dronkers, and Kraaykamp 2008; Levels and Dronkers 2008). All these studies point at dynamics, often caused by migration, that can either complicate or improve migrant youth's educational performance.

A commonality of these studies is that they usually deploy a host country focus. This means that these studies investigate youth's educational performance *after* youth's or their parents' migration. Youth's educational performance is usually studied as indication of adaptation, assimilation, and integration processes into a host country. Yet, these studies do not take into consideration that migrant youth can live transnational lives, which connects them with contexts beyond the nation-state, nor do they explicitly address the diversity in mobility patterns that migrant youth engage in. This host country focus means that education received in another context, such as education prior to youth's migration, or through mobility to their country of origin, is left unconsidered.

2.5.2.   Informal education, tacit skills and knowledge

In studies on migrant youth's educational performances, there is another tendency visible. Educational success is often measured through migrant youth's educational outcomes – for example in the form of test scores, math grades, and graduation success – as indicators of students' academic achievement (e.g. Crul, Schneider, and Lelie 2012; Kao 1999, Kao and Tienda 1995; Portes and Zhou 1993; Suárez-Orozco, Bang, and Onaga 2010). The widespread popularity of expressing educational progress in concrete measurable output is a general global trend (Carnoy 1998; Sahlberg 2011). This implies that informally and tacitly acquired knowledge and skills are excluded from our understanding of migrant youth's 'education', especially when they have mobility in their biographies.

Anthropologists have traditionally acknowledged that every society provides some form of training, in and/or outside schools, to create the 'educated person' – a person who is socially and culturally accepted to be 'knowledgeable', as marked by a demonstrated set of culturally-specific appreciated skills, repertoires, and knowledge (Levinson, Foley, and Holland 1996). This includes informal ways of learning such as through experience, participating, or exposure (Michalos 2008). In the West African context, there is a long-standing tradition of informal education; children learn crafts and important socio-cultural repertoires through informal and intergenerational transmission at home (Hashim 2007). In Ghana, cultural knowledge, transferred to youth via the use of proverbs, is found to develop self-worth and character, and to socially discipline children (Die 2011). The expressions '*efyiɛ nyansa*' and '*book mu nyansa*' in *Twi*, a widespread Akan language in Ghana, distinguish 'knowledge from the home' and 'knowledge from the book'. Together, '*efyiɛ nyansa*' and '*book mu nyansa*' accumulate into the cultural capital that is needed to become a socially accepted educated person. This literature indicates that youth are likely to engage in informal learning practices. These learning processes differ across contexts, yet are an integral aspect of education around the globe.

A conceptualisation of 'education' operationalised in terms of measurable outcomes is hence likely to solely scrutinise explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge entails the practical abilities or skills acquired through habituation (see Gerrans 2005, 54, following Bourdieu and Heidegger) which people often acquire implicitly, and which teach them how to 'comply with [a group's] fundamental cultural rules' (Gerholm 1990, 263). Therefore, tacit knowledge makes people socially competent in a specific institution through the generation of 'know how' which facilitates adaptability (Kogut and Zander 1992). Educational institutions have difficulties (or have no interest in) acknowledging alternatively acquired forms of knowledge due to financial incentives and general structures within the educational system, while these skills become increasingly important in today's globalising world (Carnoy 1998; Sahlberg 2011).

The World Economic Forum published a list of key educational demands posed by the globalising world (World Economic Forum 2016). Listed are qualities such as 'social and cultural sensitivity', 'curiosity', 'persistence' and 'adaptability'. It therefore seems relevant to concentrate on these 'softer' skills the development of which is becoming increasingly important (Smyth and McInerney 2014). Increasingly, attempts are undertaken to identify and validate these 'softer' skills. Migrant youth who live transnational lives may develop skills such as 'social and cultural sensitivity' or 'adaptability' by virtue of their mobility, or their transnational upbringing. This thesis broadens the second main analytical concept, 'educational experiences', in order to explore whether (and if so, how) integrating informal education and tacitly developed skills and knowledge delivers insights into the 'softer' skills developed in migrant youth.

Bourdieu's work on cultural reproduction helps to clarify why it is important to understand tacitly and informally acquired knowledge if we want to enhance our understanding of how migration shapes youth's educational experiences (e.g. Bourdieu 1986; 1974, Bourdieu and de Saint Martin 1974). Bourdieu argued that 'cultural capital' is acquired through the embodiment of the social repertoires of a social group. Cultural capital is a social resource that possibly enables social mobility. Yet, educational institutions tend to, through their curricula and tests, reproduce the content of the most powerful social groups' cultural capital. Consequently, the cultural capital mastered by one group is institutionalised as universal and imposed upon groups that possess alternative forms of capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, 115). When students experience this imposed cultural capital, this reveals to them how their own forms of capital are disregarded. This can lead to the internalisation of their subordinate social position. As a result, students have been reported to self-censor and silence themselves, unconsciously sabotaging the possibility to deploy their academic potential (Fordham 1993). Because alternative forms of capital are not legitimised within the school context, this results in the reproduction of socio-economic inequality.

Bourdieu's work has been criticised for being too strongly focused on class, and for having been developed mainly in the West (Goldthorpe 2007). Yet scholars have built substantially on his theories (such as Ogbu and Lareau, in Levinson, Foley, and Holland 1996). Bourdieu's theories argue for a broadening of the definition of education by including informal education and tacit knowledge as integral elements of education. When applying Bourdieu's critique to contemporary schools that receive migrant students, a problematic paradox emerges: migrant youth are likely to possess alternative forms of cultural capital, yet alternative forms of cultural capital are neither visible nor validated, while lacking knowledge of the dominantly appreciated cultural capital is an immediate disadvantage to migrant youth.

The tensions in schools between dominant and marginalised forms of cultural capital, is the reason why research on migrant youth would benefit from concepts that include informal and tacitly acquired education. Becoming educated while being mobile transnationally encompasses the accumulation of 'transcultural capital', which enables 'the strategic use of knowledge, skills, and networks acquired by migrants through connections with their countries and cultures of origin which are made active in their new places of residence' (Triandafyllidou 2009, 94; Meinhof and Triandafyllidou 2006). Migrant parents are found to deliberately organise transnational educational projects for their children. These equip children with specific cultural capital, such as religious and cultural knowledge, or linguistic skills pertaining to their countries of origin, that enable them to navigate different contexts (Coe and Shani 2015; Kea and Maier 2017; Levitt 2009; Reynolds and Zontini 2014; Whitehouse 2009).

As explained in section 2.2. on 'transnationalism', migrants navigate a transnational social field, a field that is composed of people and resources situated in different geographical contexts. Youth may learn things and acquire skills in these transnational social fields. Scholars have therefore suggested theorising 'transnational educational fields' as evolving social spaces and subfields of the transnational social fields where education is received (Fürstenau 2016; Küppers, Pusch, and Semerci 2016; Lightman 2016). Educational outcomes, although informative about the educational achievements of migrant students, essentially reflect how well migrant students 'perform' adaptation and integration into a national educational system. Educational outcomes do not reflect what migrant youth learn in the transnational social field or the transnational educational field. Not investigating which alternative competencies youth develop outside of school, and possibly in a transnational field spanning multiple national contexts, risks reinforcing their disadvantaged positions that stem from minimal familiarity with dominantly appreciated cultural capital.

This makes it relevant to stretch the concept of 'education' beyond a conceptualisation that exclusively focusses on the formal educational output of individual migrant youth. This study employs the broader concept 'educational experiences', thereby aiming to capture a young person's formal and informal educational experiences; these may take place in a local context in a school as well as through instruction and experiences in the transnational educational field as a subfield of transnational social fields. The transnational educational field is approached here as a space in which educational experiences can be gained. This study focuses on how youth('s opportunities to) gather educational experiences within the transnational educational field are facilitated or disabled by their (im)mobility.

2.5.3.   Experiences and the process of gaining education

Youth are often left voiceless in educational research (Levinson, Foley, and Holland 1996). Yet, the educational experiences of migrant youth can fundamentally impact their eventual outcomes. For example, when students experience a sense of safety and belonging in school, they are more likely to perceive self-efficiency, and to commit themselves to attending school; this in turn is known to impact their eventual educational outcomes (Kia-Keating and Ellis 2007). Understanding the perceived patterns of achievement and progress cannot be done by outcome assessment only because education is a lived experience (Stevens et al. 2011, 15).

This study is interested in youth's own experiences that eventually produce 'outcomes', whether concretely in the form of grades or less concretely in the form of informally and tacitly acquired skills. This study does so by concentrating on youth's own perceived patterns of achievement and experiences with formal and informal education. The main research question therefore involves the concept **'educational experiences'** which refers here to young Ghanaians' experiences of encounters with formally and informally gained education. The inclusion of informally received education allows for a consideration of the tacit knowledge and skills which youth may acquire in the transnational educational field (see above in 2.5.2), while concentrating on youth's own perceptions and lived experiences. Through this, this thesis contributes to the literature on migrant youth's education. Having explained the two main analytical concepts – 'youth mobility trajectories' and 'educational experiences' – this chapter now explains how I will study the relationship between the two.

2.6.   Shaping mechanisms

In investigating *how* mobility shapes educational experiences, this thesis thus also aims to understand the underlying mechanisms that are activated or remain inactive through (im)mobility and how perceptions about the impact of mobility on education influence this relationship. Two shaping mechanisms on two different levels of influence are investigated: one at the micro-level whereby mobility directly influences specific mechanisms that impact the educational experiences of migrant youth, and one at a wider societal level whereby the relationship between mobility and educational experiences is influenced by broader discursive and policy dynamics.

Academic research has predominantly been conducted with the objective to find causal relationships between migration and education. Following these general trends in

migration research on education, Dutch policy makers have incentivised researchers to conduct large-scale macro-explanatory studies since the 1970s (Stevens et al. 2011). Micro-sociological and ethnographic studies that can help to dissect the mechanisms that shape these causal relationships have practically disappeared from the educational research agenda. Micro-educational processes, such as that which happens on a daily basis between teachers and students in schools, however, can nevertheless help to explain youth's educational outcomes, as research in the UK has shown (Stevens et al. 2011).

The educational experiences of migrant youth are not formed in a vacuum and are not solely shaped by micro-dynamics. At a broader socio-political level, regulations and laws influence the relationship between migrant youth mobility and their educational experiences too. Those laws and regulations partly determine the extent to which mobility is allowed to influence young migrants' educational experiences – or, the contrary, is prevented from doing so. Societal debates and political discussions frame the impact of mobility on education and inform policies and regulations that apply to migrant youth. It is thus important to understand the wider socio-political context, the framing of mobility, and the legal and regulatory rules resulting from this framing. These together define the boundaries within which the relationship between mobility and education can unfold.

2.6.1.   Educational resilience

The first shaping mechanism that is explored in order to understand the relationship between mobility and educational experiences is the *educational resilience* built in youth. Resilience is understood as 'a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity' (Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker 2000, 543). Educational resilience refers to resilience exhibited specifically in the educational domain (Alva 1991; Waxman, Gray, and Padrón 2004).

There are several reasons why this particular shaping mechanism receives attention in this study. First, because migrant youth in the Netherlands, such as demonstrated in the introductory chapter (section 1.1.), experience considerable educational adversity due to experiences of discrimination and underestimation. The field of resilience research has recently moved away from an understanding of resilience as a personal trait (Masten 2014; Rutter 2012, 2015; Schoon and Bartley 2008). This means that instead of perceiving resilience as the final product of an individual's characteristics, differing by individual, it is now understood as a quality that is interactively constructed with the environment. Youth may be perfectly capable, but it is the interaction with their environment that determines their

resilience and thus their ability to actually overcome adversity. This is a relevant insight for understanding migrant youth's educational experiences, because it suggests that it is youth's resilience that helps them to progress despite experienced hurdles in the educational context.

Resilience is predominantly studied by psychologists. The 'socio-ecological' model of resilience is a relatively recently-developed model that helps to investigate the resilience of people who experience adversity (Masten 2018). Contrary to the established approach that treats resilience as a personal trait, the socio-ecological model approaches individuals as embedded in systems. An individual can, for example, be embedded in a neighbourhood, a family or a culture that provides a 'sense of continuity, connectedness, hope, positive identity and meaning in life' (Masten 2018, 21). In interaction with resource-poor or resource-rich systems, resilience is constructed (Motti-Stefanidi 2018; Panter-Brick and Eggerman 2012; Ungar 2008).

When applying this model used in general resilience studies to the domain of the educational resilience of migrant youth, two issues arise that are worthy of further investigation. First, the socio-ecological model indicates that the 'context' that migrant youth navigate substantially determines their capacity to develop resilience. Yet most studies concerned with migrant youth and their education tend to exclusively concentrate on the resources offered in the context of the *host country*. For example, the 'segmented assimilation' theory mentioned in section 2.5.1 exclusively focusses on youth's assimilation into segments of the host society, concentrating on the resources that are absent or present in migrant youth's local settings of arrival such as the neighbourhood. Transnational connections and mobility, however, may provide migrant youth with access to resourceful contexts beyond the nation-state in which they currently reside.

Furthermore, within the socio-ecological model of resilience, special importance is attributed to healthy, warm, and supportive family relationships (Masten 2018). The family is perceived to be a fundamental reservoir for resilience. Family narratives about histories of suffering and overcoming adversity have for example been found to support Caribbean migrant youth in the UK (Franceschelli, Schoon, and Evans 2017). Similar dynamics were found amongst successful Mexican migrant graduates in the US, who appeared to receive specific motivation-instilling family history narrations (Fernández-Kelly 2008). Yet, resilience research rarely includes the extended family members who might be and continue to be important even after youth have migrated. Moreover, resilience research does not necessarily take into consideration changing family constellations. As discussed above, migrant youth are likely to experience a changing network due to their personal and other family members' migration and mobilities. This implies that their networks change over time,

and migrant youth may therefore develop bonds with multiple caregivers who end up living in different localities than themselves.

The socio-ecological model has the potential to increase our understanding of the ways in which migrant youth acquire educational resilience. However, a transnational approach highlights that the model needs to be expanded. This thesis investigates whether the local Dutch context – comprised by nearby family, schools, and the neighbourhood – is complemented by the Ghanaian context, and examines how other contexts may contribute to the resilience-building process of young Ghanaians. Moreover, this thesis investigates whether mobility blocks or facilitates access to alternative resources situated in other contexts. Therefore, the second sub-question will be addressed in Chapter 5:

How do mobility trajectories shape young Ghanaians'
educational resilience?

Chapter 5 analyses the different dynamics that build educational resilience in youth through mobility. This study aims to contribute to the development of the socio-ecological model of resilience by moving beyond the nation-state context. It does so by examining which mechanisms are activated in educational resilience-building and by investigating the role of mobility in educational resilience-building. As such, it reveals an important mechanism that shapes the relationship between mobility trajectories and educational experiences. In the next section, I discuss the second shaping mechanism that is investigated in this study.

2.6.2.   Framing

2.6.2.1.   Framing and policies

The educational experiences of migrant youth are not formed in a vacuum. At a broader socio-political level, regulations and laws affect the way mobility is perceived, which in turn affects the ways in which mobility is allowed to influence young migrants' educational experiences. Societal debates and political discussions 'frame' the impact of mobility on education and determine the boundaries within this relationship between mobility and

education can, or cannot, unfold. Framing is a phenomenon that is intrinsically related to the policy design and implementation processes. It influences which policies are deemed effective and feasible (Verger 2012). Framing is a process whereby those who aim at designing new policies compellingly and consistently communicate value systems and political ideas to a broader audience (ibid.). Butler (2009) describes framing as a discourse-shaping process that selectively constructs narratives, and thereby eventually influences the way phenomena are viewed and understood. Rein (1983) defines a frame as:

> *'a way to understand the things we say and see and act in the world. It consists of a structure of thought, of evidence, of action and hence of interest and values' (1983, 96).*

Frames are not strictly speaking policy ideas (Béland 2005, 11), but they inform how the issue at stake is perceived and interpreted, which in turn affects the directions in which solutions are sought. 'Frame-analysis' serves the purpose of identifying how policy decisions are framed in society and whether they resonate with wider interests and ideologies. This technique has been widely applied in order to understand the political influence of social movements such as feminists, antinuclear, civil rights, and peace movements (Davies 1999). The judgements and actions of policymakers are analysed to see which ideologies underpin their policy proposals (Pick 2006). More recently, 'frame-analysis' has been applied to analyse education policy controversies (Grek 2017) and changes in migration policy (e.g. Roggeband and Verloo 2007).

An example that illustrates that framing is an important process in educational policy implementation is the introduction of the law on education in 1900, a far-reaching policy change that marked the start of public educational politics in the Netherlands. The earliest version of the law '*Het Kinderwetje van Houten*', was proposed in response to increasing societal inequalities and demands to abolish child labour (Veld 1987), both consequences of the industrial revolution. Taking children out of the labour domain, which was generally perceived as acquainting them with the 'virtues' of 'order and punctuality' (de Graaf 2000, 27), required an equally instructive alternative. Education was framed as the suitable alternative. Inspired by new pedagogical approaches that sprang from Enlightenment thinking (Veld 1987), education offered similar disciplinary possibilities to shape children into docile citizens while simultaneously responding to the increasing demands of child labour abolitionists. This example illustrates that analysing framings helps to understand how and why policies are positioned in accordance with broader societal sentiments.

Framing also happens during more contemporary shifts in education policy. On an international level, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an influential player in constructing new, 'evidence based' directions for policy reform (Grek 2017). The OECD has for example firmly re-framed literacy as a persistent and urgent problem that, eventually, blocks economic prosperity. Thereby, the 'vocational turn' has been unchained and illiteracy was placed high on the global educational reform agenda (Black and Yasukawa 2014). Black and Yasukawa (2014) refer to this as the 'illiteracy myth' because portraying literacy as the driver of economic prosperity is too simplistic. Public-private partnerships for education in the Global South is another example of an approach that has gained increasing centrality on the political agenda due to convincing, consequent, and feasible framing (Verger 2012). The re-framing of higher education from having a social and cultural role to ascribing a role that focusses more on expansion, marketization, and competition is another recent development attributed to effective framing (Pick 2006). Framing-analyses can thus help to illuminate the dynamics of educational reform and change (Davies 1999), and to examine which variety of normalising discourses, symbols, and ideals underpin regulations and laws in the educational realm.

2.6.2.2. Framing mobility

Mobility is a contested phenomenon that is framed as a problem in several domains. We know that moral questions about what is best for children are particularly highlighted when children become mobile. In a comparative study among young Guatemalan and Chinese migrants, Heidbrink and Statz (2017) illustrate how young migrants make agentic decisions about dangerous journeys in order to support their families. Their choices strongly contrast with national campaigns and discourses that depict these youth as victims of parental neglect. The same national narratives portray their parents as ignorant of the risks posed to their children during their journeys and simplify the complex economic and relational motivations for children's mobility in these regions. Yet the simplifications resonate with already-existing normative narratives about migrating children and their parents, and therefore turn international initiatives and campaigns that warn parents against this form of 'neglect' as compelling interventions. Similarly, Howard (2017) shows how international NGOs and the Beninese government frame mobility as harmful trafficking that results from parental malfeasance and from the ignorance of a 'backward culture'. Yet, this framing excludes local understandings of child circulation and childhood in which mobility has traditionally played a developmental function. But, because it resonates with international discourses against child trafficking this narrative legitimises international interventions.

In the lives of mobile Guatemalan, Chinese and Beninese youth, mobility is framed as a dangerous problem by outsiders. These studies reveal how this framing is done: based on romanticised and Western-centric notions of childhood, mobility becomes highly problematic. The ideal childhood should be safe and care free, within a nuclear, caring family that is above all, sedentary. Yet, these studies demonstrate that these notions of childhood and the good or bad of mobility are far from universal. A pathologising discourse is employed through which interventions that concentrate on children's withdrawal from mobility can be legitimised. These studies thus illustrate that the framings of mobility can be translated into tangible interventions, regulations, and laws in the domain of child protection.

It is unclear how mobility is framed in the institutional realm of education. We know that mobility is increasingly positively framed in the case of tertiary, higher education within the Global North. Internationalisation is deliberately encouraged at higher education institutions, and scholarship programs support international mobility for the purpose of education. However, we do not know whether this positive framing of mobility is reserved for a specific segment of the global student population that can afford streamlined international schooling and exchange projects. Does a positive framing of mobility also apply, for example, to secondary education? And how is mobility in the lives of *migrant youth* perceived and framed in the institutional realm of education?

A preliminary study suggests that these are relevant questions: a study among Canadian secondary teachers showed that when teachers view mobility as positively related to education, they are more willing to assist mobile students, sometimes in creative ways such as through virtual homework support (Lightman 2016). The opposite was true for teachers who disliked mobility; they approached it with a 'degree of hostility' (Lightman 2016, 7). How educators perceive mobility and its consequences for education thus matters for the implementation of laws and regulations and for everyday classroom interactions with students. Yet, educators' perceptions of mobility and its relation to education are hardly topic of academic inquiry since most studies focus on educators' perspectives on what is usually conceptualised as 'migration': youth's first international move. How do they perceive the mobility of migrant youth, which for example encompasses mobility after the first international move? Similarly, it is unclear how educators' views have been constructed; where do they come from? Since explicit framing-analyses about the framing of mobility in relation to education are virtually absent, we cannot know how this potentially influences everyday classroom realities. To answer this question, this study examines how educators frame mobility and its impact on education.

2.6.2.3. Dominant and marginal framings

Butler (2009) contends that 'frames' are responsible for a powerful production of a version of reality. In her book *'Frames of War'*, she elaborates on the way in which modern warfare is framed in Western nations and particularly in the media. Muslims are persistently excluded from framings as victims of war, rendering the loss of their lives less 'grievable'. A general point that can be drawn from Butler's study is that frames thus produce *versions of reality* that are *exclusionary*: frames highlight one narrative as an objectively and universally 'true' version and neglect other versions of reality. When these narratives become dominant, as we have seen with Western ideals and ideas about childhood, they inform policies, regulations, and interventions.

The existence of a dominant frame implies that there are alternative or marginalised framings that deviate from dominant narratives. In the studies mentioned above about youth mobility in Benin, Guatemala, and China a clear link between interventions and framing was missing: the young people's own perspectives. Contrary to the legal and normative international framings, children and youth in these studies appeared to deploy their own, distinct framings of their mobility. They framed their mobility as agentic moves for livelihood improvement, instead of as resulting from victimhood caused by relationships with adults who had made the wrong decisions on their behalf. This is an interesting insight for migration scholars. From which frames do migrant youth draw? What happens to youth's framing of mobility when they grow up transnationally? Neglecting youth's views does not only create partial narratives, it also creates the risk that policies are misdirected. This study therefore also investigates Ghanaian youth's own framings of mobility in relation to their education.

Taylor (2004) explains the existence of 'discourse multiplicity'. She argues that educational politics can be understood through policy research that focusses on competing discourses. Framing-analysis has a tendency to focus on dominant frames and the dominant actors who hold political and discursive power in the political arena (Davies 1999). It has to date not dealt in satisfactory ways with the question of how dominant and marginal framings interact (Davies 1999; Welsh and Chester 2004). Instead of focussing on broader shifts in educational politics, Davies (1999) therefore points at how the politics of educational reform also happen through the dynamics of interactions between marginal and dominant framing.

Davies (1999) shows that marginal groups, such as religious minorities, indeed may achieve political reform due to the framings they employ, despite their relatively powerless position within the political and discursive landscape. Yet, we know little about what happens when marginal and dominant framings about the impact of mobility on education meet. What happens when dominant and marginal framings clash? Is there space for

movement, agency, and change through rupture between the two framings? The third sub-question explores the last shaping mechanism: the framing of mobility in the educational domain in order to investigate how dominant and marginal framings interact.

How do young Ghanaians and their Dutch educators frame mobility and its impact on education in contrasting ways?

The aim of Chapter 6 is to investigate how educators and mobile Ghanaian youth interpret the relationship between education and mobility. Furthermore, Chapter 6 shows how their framing of mobility in the realm of education clash. In this way, this study aims to contribute to the expansion of how framing-analysis can be applied to understand education policy decisions and (the potential for) change.

This chapter has shown that dominant conceptualisations of migrant youth do not integrate mobility sufficiently. However, the literature on transnationalism and mobility indicates that this is an important aspect of the lives of migrant youth, who are transnationally connected to multiple localities simultaneously and who are likely to engage in various forms of mobility. This thesis therefore aims to investigate how youth mobility and migration can be conceptualised and understood as mutually integrated phenomena.

Chapter 4 will analyse the mobility patterns in which Ghanaian youth engage, in order to create a typology that can be used to identify and analyse various mobility patterns amongst migrant youth. In searching for ways to make understandings of migration more inclusive of the mobilities in which migrant youth engage, Chapter 4 offers an alternative approach to conventional conceptualisations. Chapter 5 and 6 explore the educational experiences of Ghanaian youth from their own perspectives while integrating the transnational and mobility approaches, and identify two shaping mechanisms. Chapter 5 does this by investigating the shaping mechanism 'educational resilience' and how it relates to young Ghanaians' (in)ability to experience mobility. Chapter 6 does so by examining the shaping mechanism 'conflicting framings' whereby young Ghanaians' perceptions of the impact of mobility on their formal and informal education are juxtaposed with the perceptions of Dutch educators. Having presented the theoretical lacunas this study will address, the next chapter continues to explain the methodological approach and tools that enabled the data collection and analysis of this study.

Image: Roaming around with Abdullah, Mo, and Fareed in the *Bijlmer*, Amsterdam – the Netherlands. Source: fieldwork 2015-2016.

3.   Methodology

3.1.   Introduction

Studying youth is an exciting, enriching, rewarding, and at times frustrating, difficult and challenging exercise. It requires methodological and ethical considerations and adaptations (Young and Barret 2001). In total, 30 young Ghanaians participated during 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork, which were carried out in the Netherlands (18 months) and Ghana (2 months). Sanjek (1990) posits that in ethnography, validated strength is acquired through theoretical, methodological, and ethical reflection, by providing insights into the methodological choices and interpretative steps undertaken. This chapter discusses the methodological foundation of this study; it reflects on methodological decisions, problems, and solutions encountered throughout the research. Additionally, I will address my positionality, and elaborate on ethical issues involved in studying youth.

3.2.   Research approach and design

3.2.1.   Youth-centred approach

The voices of children and young people have only recently received increasing academic attention (Hirschfeld 2002). Children and youth have long been viewed as beings on their way to becoming adults. Therefore, their opinions have rarely been taken seriously by social scientists (Hirschfeld 2002; Mitchell 2006). The exclusion of youth's views is problematic, because it potentially obscures our understanding of culture and how cultural knowledge is formed and acquired (ibid.).

The objective to investigate youth's views has methodological implications. It first implies a necessity to contextualise youth's worldviews in the setting or culture in which their views acquire meaning. This necessitates a constructivist and interpretative ontological approach, which makes 'meaning-giving' the subject of knowledge production (Geertz 1973). This is done here through an ethnographic approach. Mehan (In: Hammersley and Atkinson 1995) brings forward an eloquent example that illustrates why it is important

question if doing research on youth and children requires different methods. In the example, children are instructed to select 'the animal that can fly' from an elephant, bird, and dog. Some children circle the elephant instead of the bird. The elephant is, in an adult-centred approach to the world, an obviously incorrect answer; children should circle the bird, the only animal out of these three with the capacity to fly. However, *Dumbo*, the famous flying Disney elephant, can fly. From children's interpretive frameworks it thus makes perfect sense to select the elephant.

Although the above example involves children younger than the youth in this study, it illustrates the need for a consistent reflection on adult-youth interpretative schemes. As pointed out by Mazzucato and Schans (2011), local and cultural realms concerning children, their upbringing, and mobility, may inform caregiving arrangements within transnational families. These cultural and local understandings may also inform youth's mobility experiences. Therefore, specific attention is given to the youth's interpretative framework concerning mobility. The Dumbo-example illustrates that the possibly distinctive interpretative frameworks should be the focus of research when trying to understand youth's experiences, because otherwise a researcher is essentially testing young people's knowledge of adult worldviews. A youth-centred mode of inquiry implies that the techniques utilised intend to suit the demands and imaginations of the youth involved. This entails finding language and tools that are aligned with *theirs* – which may include playing, drawing, rap, or usage of technologies (Dell Clark 2011). Taking youth's views seriously is a fundamental starting point in this study which traces throughout the research process.

3.2.2.   Multi-sited ethnographic approach

'Ghana is the place of birth, Amsterdam the place of bless'
(Abena, 18 – Accra, July 2015).

Migration research has been critiqued for 'methodological nationalism', the tendency to take the nation-state as the 'national political and social form of the modern world' (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002). All youth in this study indeed engaged in transnational activities to a varying degree and attributed, like Abena, who is cited here, distinct meaning to Ghana and the Netherlands. Some called every once in a while with relatives, while others were building houses or contributed financially to their overseas family's income. Young people in this study frequently referred to Ghana as 'back home' or 'back in Ghana'. Some did physically visit Ghana for holidays, internships, and funerals, while others did not in the

course of my fieldwork. By virtue of the selection criteria explained in section 3.4, all youth had experienced some form of mobility between Ghana and the Netherlands. This collective of transnational experiences and day-to-day transnational activities were an important focus of this study. Methodological nationalism was avoided in several ways.

First, it is important to develop sensitivity for national framings, starting from the research question leading up to the concrete interview guide employed in the field. This for example means adapting the interview guide in such ways that the questions allow participants to elaborate on ties to localities beyond the Netherlands. Different methodological tools can be employed to guarantee a framing that is not bounded to one nation-state. The concentric circles are an example of such (see section 3.3 on tools). Gradually, it became clear that it was important to be open to the possibility that young people may have 'another mother', living on another continent, who still plays an important role in their current life in the Netherlands. This 'other mother' could, for example, be a maternal aunty in Ghana who took care of a young person when her or his parents migrated abroad. Young people's separation from these previous caregivers did not withhold them from continuing to refer to this person as a 'mother', and experiencing a connection. With the concentric circle, I invited young people to write down the people who are important to them, where after we circled names with different colours corresponding to the location where they were based. It was necessary to be sensibly tuned to capture these transnational aspects of youth's lives, because young Ghanaians themselves considered this normal and did not automatically explain this.

Another way to overcome 'methodological nationalism' is by following the subject of study (Marcus 1995). Marcus makes a general point about transnational phenomena, but some of his arguments apply to studying transnational youth too. As opposed to conventional ethnographic methods that are usually rather localised, and aimed at understanding one specific locality, moving things and people with multiple connections across the globe sharply challenges this traditional methodology (Falzon 2009). Conducting 18 months of ethnographic research in the setting where young Ghanaians spent their current lives, painted a fairly comprehensive picture of their daily struggles, fun, activities, pains, family composition, and educational progress. Yet, relying on their oral accounts and memories of Ghana was not thorough enough; what were the things that made them enjoy or dislike Ghana so much while being on a holiday? Did their images of relationships with their previous caregivers and other relatives alter upon return? Would they mention to me potential pressures or confusions they experienced while being in Ghana? Were they capable of bringing across the much more sensorial experiences they lived through while being back in Ghana? I decided that following young Ghanaians during their mobility would

provide me answers to these types of questions. To illustrate the added value of multi-sited fieldwork, consider the following vignette of Myriam, a young Ghanaian woman who I was able to observe and interact with in both the Dutch and Ghanaian contexts of her life:

Amsterdam, 2015

After meeting each other in bars, restaurants and libraries, this time we meet at Myriam's place in Amsterdam. I ring the doorbell of a story building and Myriam opens the door for me through the intercom. A windy, grey staircase brings me to the second floor where the door is already opened, waiting for me to enter a dark, small corridor. Kwame, Myriam's little half-brother immediately runs to me and lifts his arms, indicating that he wants to be carried. Every morning, before commuting to Utrecht for her lectures or going to her work at a supermarket, Myriam brings her little half-brother to school as her mother is leaving for work early in the morning. 'Kwame, normaal doen!' [Kwame, behave!!] annoyed by his request Myriam pulls him away from me and gives me a hug. I hear some noise from the room next to hers, which is sublet by her mom to a Ghanaian girl with a two-year old. When we enter the living room Myriam's cousin Gladys shouts from the kitchen that dinner is almost ready. Gladys is a witty girl. When they are together, the two girls usually turn into an amusing duo to observe; sharp senses of humour, lively, loud, and jokingly cocky. They both are fashionably dressed, as always. I take a seat at the table in the kitchen which is full of African and Dutch products, kitchenware and recently shipped boxes from, what I assume, Ghana. We complain about the weather and discuss how we are going to make it to the gospel concert that we are planning to attend. Later that night our make-up session appears useless when we get lost in the neighbourhood and get soaked by the cold Dutch November rain.

Accra, 2016

Myriam lifts her arms in the air and spreads them widely, 'Whohooooo!! Ghanaaaa!' she outcries followed by cheerful laughter. While firmly holding on to the motor taxi driver she grasps her phone and makes a selfie on Snapchat, laughing because she can barely hold her eyes open due to the wind. We shout at each other that we 'feel so free' and the taxi drivers, both laughing about our joy, accelerate their speed a bit. We leave the main road and go down winding, dusty, bumpy paths that are barely distinguishable from the wild grass and bush growing on both sides. Around us a rough landscape unfolds, with unfinished houses under construction scattered

randomly through a furthermore bewildered area. This is clearly the 'boring' site where Myriam has been talking about: a remote area, far away from the centre of Accra where it was reasonably affordable to build a new family house. We thank our taxi drivers who drop us off at a large compound.

Two of Myriam's cousins are awaiting us dwelling in boredom in the middle of the compound. They warn us that it is busy inside – the preparations for tomorrow's wedding are keeping everyone occupied. Myriam kindly pushes me into the direction of the front door; time to meet her family with whom we will celebrate her brother's engagement and wedding for the following two days. At the doorstep, Myriam bends over an old lady who is sitting in a chair, gently takes her hands into hers, embraces her and turns around 'please Joan, meet my grandmother'. Later that night, Myriam introduces me to another important lady who had previously taken care of Myriam in the absence of her migrated mother. Her maternal uncle's wife, referred to by Myriam as her 'real mother' embraces her 'daughter' warmly at reunification. She is the lady who Myriam has marked to be of great importance for her educational motivation.

Myriam is one of the 7 young Ghanaians whom I accompanied on their journeys to Ghana in summer 2015 and 2016 for a time span of 2 months. 5 Other young people went to Ghana without my company during the course of my fieldwork. I interviewed them prior and after their trips, and some participated in a diary or photography exercise (see section 3.3. on tools). Joining Myriam and the 6 other young Ghanaians on their journeys to Ghana invaluably contributed to this study in two ways. First, because it would have been impossible to imagine the nature of activities that young people undertake, and what 'happens' (or not) on a day-to-day basis during their holidays. Spending days and nights together with Myriam in Ghana, an opportunity I never had in the Netherlands, made me realise what transformative experiences she was going through during her holiday, which position she occupied in her extended family, and how she had to negotiate her position and identity within previous peer networks. It was thus not only an opportunity to understand the 'rules' that determine young people's transnational life but also a way to understand *how* they familiarise themselves with these rules and try to negotiate them.

Second, multi-sited fieldwork allowed me to observe the spontaneous events that happened constantly when young people visit Ghana. In Chapter 5, I describe the importance of unanticipated encounters that youth have while strolling around in their childhood neighbourhoods in Ghana. These spontaneous, impromptu meetings cannot be orchestrated but happen frequently while youth are in Ghana. The impact of these

spontaneous events is significant, especially on young people's educational resilience (see Chapter 5). Yet, these unanticipated encounters were hardly ever mentioned during interviews with youth when reflecting on journeys to Ghana and if they were mentioned, young people found it difficult to describe why these meetings were enjoyable. Multi-sited ethnography has thus led to significantly different insights then when I had confined my study to the Dutch field site. The observations in Ghana offered me a unique possibility to grasp the sensorial and emotional aspect of youth's journeys and how these mobilities are connected with experiences in the Netherlands.

3.2.3.   Selection and sampling – a case study

One of the first selections that took place in this study was the choice to study Ghanaian youth. Gerring (2007) posits that the central question for case studies is: *what is this a case of?* Ethnography per definition is a 'case' of 'something'; a neighbourhood, a street, a community, an organisation, a school, a football club etc. Working with a small *n* requires ethnographers to acknowledge the possible uniqueness of their cases (Small 2009). Answering the question '*what is this a case of?*' sometimes must be answered by ethnographers with '*a unique cultural phenomenon'*. Yet, Small (2009, 9) explains that *empirical observations* may be locally or culturally unique, but that a *theoretical model* derived from these empirical observations may be applicable cross-culturally. Arriving at this theoretical model is possible through an in-depth inquiry of a case study and through 'thick descriptions' that embed phenomena into the local context in which they acquire meaning (Geertz 1973). The objective of this study to increase our understanding of the mobility trajectories of migrant youth made it important to select a case that would acknowledge the various youth mobility realities that may exist.

There are two reasons for selecting Ghanaian youth as a case to study of youth mobility. First, because anecdotal evidence from previous research suggests that Ghanaian youth in the Netherlands are mobile for various reasons, for example for reasons of reunification with migrated parents, and due to transnational caregiving arrangements (Mazzucato 2011; Poeze, Dankyi, and Mazzucato 2017). Second, anthropological literature on child mobility in West-Africa and literature on internal child migration in Ghana supports the idea that Ghanaian youth indeed are likely to engage in mobility prior to their first international move. Studying longer established migrant youth in the Netherlands, such as Moroccan, Surinamese, or Turkish youth, is likely to generate insight in one particular form of mobility, for example holidays. Yet, there was less reason, based on the literature, to assume the possibility to observe of a variety of mobility patterns amongst those groups.

This does not mean that these mobilities do not exist. However, for the selection of a case study, Ghanaians youth appeared to be the most probable group that could enable insights into different mobility patterns.

Given that this study began in from the Netherlands, where Ghanaians are a large and steadily growing but understudied migrant group, Ghanaian youth soon appeared on the radar. The results in the chapters that follow, present empirical material leading to theoretical and conceptual suggestions. An example of such is the mobility typology proposed in Chapter 4 in which we (I and co-author Valentina Mazzucato) make *conceptual* suggestions with *theoretical* implications, based on our *empirical* findings. The empirical findings helped us to rethink conventional categories that indeed may or may not be interesting to employ in research concerning other migrant youth too (Mazzucato 2015).

3.2.4. Youth sample

The core sample on which the analyses of this thesis are based consists of 30 young Ghanaians between the age of 16 and 25 (see table 3.1. for a detailed overview of participants' characteristics). Throughout this research, I employed a combination of snowball and purposive theoretical sampling strategy (Boeije 2010). My network gradually expanded through snowball sampling, yet the purposive-theoretical principle remained guiding. The most important sampling criterion was that youth needed to have at least one international move to or from Ghana in their biography. Because I wanted to study the independent mobility patterns and experiences of migrant youth in the Netherlands, I deemed this to require at least one international undertaken by the young people. As such, I deliberately avoided applications of the conventional categories such as 'first' and 'second' generation in my selection criteria. This study rather aimed at investigating young people's own mobility patterns, regardless of the type of move(s) they undertook, or the timing of the move(s) in their life-course. This implies that young people could have been born in Ghana, the Netherlands, or elsewhere, as long as their parents were of Ghanaian origin (Ghana was selected for specific reasons, see above, section 3.2.4.). This also implies that their first international move could have been from Ghana to the Netherlands, or the reverse, from the Netherlands to Ghana.

Furthermore, I deemed it desirable that young people had recollections of their stay and experiences in Ghana, as well as of their educational experiences. This implied that young people who were mobile for the last time in very early stages of their childhood, from

which they held only vague memories, were excluded. Young people were, for example, not included in this study if their last visit to or stay in Ghana was more than 10 years ago.

The initial age brackets were roughly determined at age 15 to 21, to align with a research project on Ghanaian migrants and their children conducted by a team of researchers at Maastricht University (www.tcra.nl). They had worked with the same age brackets and I wanted to keep open the option to utilise data generated in that study. The project was led by Valentina Mazzucato, one of the two supervisors of this thesis, who has headed several research projects on Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands and Ghana. Eventually I did not use the TCRA data, but I benefited from their expertise (for example when preparing fieldwork tools).

This age range was furthermore chosen in light of my aim of understanding educational experiences, including formal and informal education. For informal education, one could argue no specific age range is needed. But for the formal educational experiences this is different. The educational system in the Netherlands is compulsory until age 18 and youth in VMBO, HAVO and VWO, the three secondary school levels are likely to graduate and thus have recent educational experiences. By law, youth in the Netherlands transit into adulthood at age 18, and are considered 'independent' at age 21. These, however, were not part of my considerations for the age range, as they are rather artificial and debated cut offs. I anticipated that age brackets between 15 and 21 would allow me to observe young people with fresh recollections of, or current, educational experiences. Early in my fieldwork, however, I discovered that young Ghanaians, due to lengthy processes of language acquisition and adaptation to the new system, frequently took longer to transit out of secondary school or an equivalent of that. I therefore broadened the age range to 25. I was not able to find and include anyone of 15 years old, which resulted in a sample consisting of youth between the age of 16 and 25, with an average age of 19.

All the participants in this study were approached in the Netherlands from where this study departed. However, their current place of residence was not an explicit selection criterion; young people did not need to remain based in the Netherlands throughout the study. After all, I was interested in their mobility. One participant moved back to Ghana, and two participants moved to the UK. They remained active participants in this study through their return visits to the Netherlands, and meetings which we were able to arrange in Ghana.

Throughout the selection procedure, I sought variety in characteristics that possibly impacted mobility patterns and youth's experiences, such as age, gender, and length of stay in Ghana and the Netherlands (see table 3.1.). Migration experiences are temporal and therefore change over time (Cwerner 2001). Other influential background characteristics

were roughly stable over the sample and resembled those of the broader Ghanaian community living in the Netherlands. The young Ghanaians in this study were generally of lower-socio-economic background, were attending schools or had attended schools with fewer resources in the Netherlands, were active members or attending Christian churches, and belonged to one of main ethnic groups amongst Ghanaians in the Netherlands: Ashanti, Ewe, and Fanti. Some youth did not know their ethnic background. I also included 4 cases with different background characteristics; 2 young females of distinctly different socio-economic background and 2 young Muslim males. Such cases are purposefully included to prevent tunnel vision and help to strengthen findings (Boeije 2010).

Table 3.1.: Overview participants' characteristics.

NAME[A]	AGE[B]	SEX	PRIME CAREGIVER GH[C]	PRIME CAREGIVER IN NL[D]	PLACE OF LONGEST RESIDENCE IN GH	PLACE OF LONGEST RESIDENCE IN NL	EDUCATION GH[E]	EDUCATION NL[F]	MOB. (INT. y[G])	MOB. (NAT. y[H])
JEFF	16	M	Mother, maternal aunt	Parents	Accra	Amsterdam	JHS	VMBO	1	0
AKUA	16	F	Maternal grandmother	Mother	Kumasi	Amsterdam	JHS	VMBO	1	0
SOLOMON	22	M	Parents	Mother	Kumasi	Amsterdam	SHS	-	1	0
VANESSA	20	F	Paternal grandmother and aunts	Parents	Kumasi	Amsterdam	JHS	VWO	1	0
DENISE	18	F	Mother	Parents	Cape Coast	Amsterdam	JHS	VMBO	1	0
EBENEZER	18	M	Maternal aunt, father, maternal grandmother	Mother	Kumasi	Amsterdam	JHS	VMBO	1	1
HARMONY	16	F	Maternal aunt	Mother	Accra	Amsterdam	JHS	VMBO	1	0
ELIYAH	19	M	Mother, maternal grandmother	Parents	Kumasi	The Hague	JHS	VWO	1	1
DAVID	22	M	Maternal aunt	Mother	Kumasi	Amsterdam	JHS	HBO	1	0
SAVANNA	19	F	Multiple paternal and maternal family members	Mother	Multiple	Amsterdam	JHS	MBO	1	4
BRUNO	25	M	Multiple paternal and maternal family members	Mother	Multiple	Amsterdam	SHS	HBO	1	5
EVA	22	F	Multiple paternal and maternal family members	Mother	Multiple	Amsterdam	JHS	HBO	1	5
AMA	18	F	Multiple paternal and maternal family members	Mother	Accra	Amsterdam	JHS	VMBO	1	5
JOSEPH	-	M	Maternal and paternal grandparents	Mother	Kumasi	Amsterdam	SHS	MBO	1	2
KODJO	17	M	Multiple family members and acquaintances	Father	Multiple	Amsterdam	JHS	VMBO	1	6

NAME[A]	AGE[B]	SEX	PRIME CAREGIVER GH[C]	PRIME CAREGIVER IN NL[D]	PLACE OF LONGEST RESIDENCE IN GH	PLACE OF LONGEST RESIDENCE IN NL	EDUCATION GH[E]	EDUCATION NL[F]	MOB. (INT.)[G]	MOB. (NAT.)[H]
KWAME	20	M	Maternal grandparents	Mother	Kumasi	Amsterdam	JHS	HBO	2	0
KWABENA	23	M	Maternal grandmother	Mother	Kumasi	Amsterdam	JHS	University	3	2
FUZAILAN	23	M	Maternal aunt, paternal family house	Father	Kumasi	Amsterdam	JHS	-	3	1
EDWIN	23	M	Maternal grandmother and uncle	Parents	Kumasi	Amsterdam	Primary	MBO	4	1
MYRIAM	19	F	Maternal grandmother and uncle	Mother	Accra	Amsterdam	JHS	HBO	2	1
JENNIFER	19	F	Mother	Father	Kumasi	Amsterdam	JHS	MBO	2	1
KOFI	22	M	Paternal grandmother, maternal aunt	Mother	Kumasi	Amsterdam	SHS*	-	5	2
HARLEY	17	M	Maternal grandmother, maternal aunt	Mother	Accra	Amsterdam	JHS	Praktijk	5	4
ABENA	17	F	Maternal grandmother, maternal aunt	Mother	Accra	Amsterdam	JHS	VMBO	5	4
PENIEL	17	F	Paternal family members	Siblings	Accra	Amsterdam	JHS	VMBO	2	3
DANIELLA	20	F	Paternal grandmother	Parents	Kumasi	Groningen	SHS*	University	6	0
JAMILLA	21	F	Maternal grandmother	Legal guardiancies	Kumasi	Amsterdam	Primary	HBO	4	0
EKOW	19	M	Maternal grandmother	Maternal aunt	Kumasi	Amsterdam	SHS	HBO	2	0
HAKIM	21	M	Paternal grandmother and father	Paternal aunt	Kumasi	Amsterdam	JHS	-	1	2
EUNICE	22	F	Paternal grandmother	Parents	Kumasi	The Hague	SHS*	University	6	0

Source: fieldwork 2015-2016.

3.2.5. Educators sample

An additional objective of this study, expressed in the third research sub-question, was to grasp the discrepancy between youth's views on and educators' framing of mobility. I therefore conducted an additional set of interviews with a variety of Dutch institutional actors, who together shape the educational reality that youth need to navigate. I thus additionally interviewed teachers at a secondary school that receives recently arrived youth from all over the world, and found several teachers who interact with Ghanaian students on a regular basis. Furthermore, I conducted interviews with *leerplichtambtenaren*, attendance-monitoring civil servants whose task it is to check on and penalise students with excessive absentees. Additionally, I interviewed *onderwijsinspecteurs*, evaluators of the Inspection of Education who importantly shape the educational landscape in the Netherlands. Their assessment of the performance of schools is reported to the Ministry of Education and published online. As a result, this information is accessible to everyone who speaks Dutch. I also interviewed a school psychologist, and multiple social workers, such as a parent-teacher mediator, who were specialised in migrant family assistance in school. These experts inform the board of schools about the wellbeing of migrant youth and were therefore interesting to interview about their view on mobility too.

Bureaucracy unfeasibly obstructed the accessibility of educators. The response rate was close to zero when I approached these actors through top-down channels. Schools in the Netherlands are flooded with research requests and are thus understandably hesitant to participate, or simply never replied to the requests I sent. I therefore recruited these participants through as many channels as possible: phone, email, acquaintances, Facebook announcements, and eventually through Linkedin, which was surprisingly effective. These channels allowed me to elaborate a bit more on the purpose of the study and the importance of educators' voices in it.

The difficulty of recruitment restricted the possibility of applying very strict selection criteria, which automatically implies that my sample may include a certain 'type' of educator,

namely, those who were open to an interview and/or those who are concerned about matters affecting migrant youth. I therefore may have captured the more liberal-minded educators in this study. Yet, as we will see in Chapter 6, there was still a rather substantial discrepancy between youth's and educators' framing of mobility. If anything, the contradictions between the views is likely to be even greater if I could have included less liberal educators than the ones I was able to observe. Furthermore, I embedded the analysis of educators' framing of mobility into a historical analysis, for which I draw on state documentation such as parliamentary discussions and reports (see section 3.3 on analyses).

3.2.6.   Contextualising young Ghanaians' accounts

During fieldwork, it became clear that young Ghanaians in the Netherlands navigate some influential contexts beyond school on a daily or weekly basis mainly being home and church. Some young Ghanaians enthusiastically involved me into these contexts while others were more hesitant and desired to keep these contexts a private experience. To account for this, I conducted informal conversations and some interviews with pastors, youth workers in churches, social workers, and family members, to get an idea of the various problems experienced by Ghanaian youth and the avenues of support they embark upon. These conversations offered a contextualisation of youth's narrations about their life.

3.3.   Tools and analysis

3.3.1.   Tools of data collection

Data collection is a cyclic, iterative process in ethnography, based on accumulated data. New tools are employed to explore specific, emerging themes. During this fieldwork, I employed a variety of tools of inquiry. Appendix E provides a detailed overview of the employed methods per young person.

Access was a major issue in the early months of this study (see also section 3.4.). It was nearly impossible to start with participant observations, or just hanging around, conventional ethnographic methods to get a sense of young people's life, mainly due to my positionality and young people's intensely occupied agendas (see section 3.4). Below I explain how I generated access to the young Ghanaians in this study.

A Ghanaian friend and Miranda Poeze, a PhD student in the TCRA project who conducted fieldwork amongst Ghanaian parents in the Bijlmer, brought me into contact with potential informants. One of them appeared unsuitable for this study, since she had never been mobile between Ghana and the Netherlands. The girl nevertheless helped me to contact other youth in her network. Through Miranda Poeze's contact, who appeared suitable and was willing to participate, I was able to collect more phone numbers. Below I elaborate on other tactics I employed to gain access. In the first place, I contacted young Ghanaians for an interview of about an hour. After a detailed discussion of the project and seeking consent (see section 3.4.2), I conducted a brief, 'light' interview on a young person's life-history. Based on this information, I could evaluate if a young person was an interesting candidate for selection.

During follow-up meetings I expanded with a more thorough life-history interview. A life-history interview has the objective to reconstruct a person's life (Angrosino 2007), in this case focused particularly on young people's mobility trajectories. I had a list of topics that I wanted to discuss with them (see interview guide life history interview appendix B) and usually started with asking if the young person could describe a normal day in Ghana. These interviews resulted in a collection of stories about young Ghanaians' mobility patterns, the family constellations they had been and are part of, and their educational experiences in both Ghana and the Netherlands. The very first interview however, was important mainly because it was a way to establish first contact and it allowed young Ghanaians to experience an interview.

Valentina Mazzucato and I conducted a writing exercise at a secondary school with many Ghanaian students in May 2014. The exercise invited young Ghanaians to write a brief story about their lives. A year later, I designed a similar exercise, and intended to conduct it at the same school. The content of the assignment was similar but more extended, with a photo and small interview exercise. The main purpose of the project was to create the opportunity to introduce myself, explain my research, and to collect some phone-numbers of potential participants. With some youth I managed to schedule interview-meetings.

Gradually, mutual trust grew between me and the young Ghanaians, and through the interviews, I gained a better idea of their weekly activities to which they started to invite me. Participant observation is a classical ethnographic method that gathers data through the ethnographer's personal immersion in the event that is observed (Spradley 1980). The objective is to learn from participants through exposure to and jointly experiencing daily activities or special events that are important to the participant (Ingold 2008). In the beginning, I sought to engage in as many daily activities as possible. So, I joined young people at their church, bible classes, gospel concerts, driving around in cars, grocery shopping, diner and lunch, radio broadcastings, cooking, the cinema etc. (see overview

table 3.1). These were regular daily, weekly, or monthly activities that generated insights in how their lives are organised. Later, I selected specific activities to join, such as the preparatory activities undertaken before going on a holiday to Ghana.

Participant observations were crucial in this study. Expecting youth to verbalise their experiences equals ascribing 'translating capacities' to them. Yet, mainly young Ghanaians found it difficult to describe certain experiences. Observations often times were a welcome complement to their oral accounts.

Furthermore, I volunteered in an extra-curricular school to gain a better understanding of the neighbourhood and the educational hurdles experienced by migrant youth. The school provided homework assistance on Saturday mornings, a lunch, and a creative program in the afternoon. The school almost exclusively received migrant youth, of whom many were Ghanaian. Many students were seeking additional help because they were struggling in Dutch schools. Through small talk and homework assistance, I gained better insights in their weekly educational reality, and how they attempted to cope with it. This helped me to develop topics and questions about educational experiences for interviews.

During participant observations, informal conversations, or 'small talk', a taken-for-granted but valuable ethnographic method, was an important tool for inquiry. Small talk enables serendipitous insights that are difficult to acquire in a formal interview setting (Driessen and Jansen 2013). Small talk approaches natural settings of social interaction more than an interview, creating opportunities for impromptu exchanges in the form of gossip, secrets, or simply random talk, which can be crucially revealing (ibid.). It also enabled the young Ghanaians to get to know me and to reduce hierarchies (see elaboration on hierarchies in section 3.4).

This study furthermore employed the 'concentric circle', a network-mapping tool. (Antonucci 1986). Young Ghanaians received a sheet with three concentric circles. They were invited to write down the names of people who are 'important to them/they like', at the centre and work towards more distant rings in the margins with people who they considered 'less important/don't like'. Together, we then circled the names with different colours to indicate where these people were currently living. Additionally, I asked youth if and to whom they would reach out for emotional support, educational, and spiritual advice (see concentric circle and accompanied questions appendix C). This helped to understand the young people's social networks and if significant others were currently residing in geographical proximity or remoteness. The concentric circles also nurtured new interview questions, for example about specific relationships with previous caregivers, or about feelings of loneliness and abandonment.

To elaborate more on the young people's shared testimonies, I conducted 6 focus groups in the final stages of my fieldwork. I had established trust relations by then and invited participants who expressed interest in a 'sit and talk together', and so I organised focus group discussions. I tried to organise this within a secondary school in Amsterdam, but bureaucracy blocked my access to these spaces. Alternatively, I arranged a separate room in a public library where young Ghanaians could walk in freely. The first meeting, I positioned a box in the room where I asked them to drop in themes and topics which *they* wanted to discuss next time. I told them they were allowed to write down *anything*. Examples of themes in the box were: '*why are Ghanaian parents sooo difficult?*', '*to which extend can a Ghanaian have a good job?*', '*Ghanaian society. People need to be able to treat each other equally*', '*Students: they have to know the reason and purpose why they are in school. Having an ambition, been eble to know what he or she is gonna be in the future*' (sic.). The following weeks, I sent out an invitation-WhatsApp message prior to the meeting and waited to see who would show up – some 'core members' showed up consistently, others only came sporadically. These focus groups lasted for approximately an hour and were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

To elicit the experiences of young people who went to Ghana, but whom I could not accompany, I asked them to write a diary, to the level of detail they wanted, and asked them to take pictures. Visual methods give young people more agency in the research process (Young and Barret 2001), especially when given very lose instructions like 'please take pictures of things that you want to document'. Four young people (all female) enthusiastically participated. Male participants either rejected or 'forgot' this request. The photos and diaries were not subjected to interpretative analysis, but were discussed in an interview upon return. These discussions informed my focus during trips that I undertook in the second summer of my fieldwork. An example of this is the picture (figure 3.1) taken by a young woman during her holiday in Ghana in 2015. She wrote 'not far from the market there used to be train rails' (sic.) and explained that she felt annoyed by the knowledge that Ghana used to have a functioning railway system. One of the reoccurring themes in young people's accounts, visual and verbal, was Ghana's potential for development and young people's own possible contribution to this. To investigate this more precisely in the second half of my fieldwork, I decided to discuss this theme during the follow up interviews (see 'after Ghana interview guide' appendix D1 and D2). I elaborate on 'comparative confrontation' in Chapter 5.

Figure 3.1.: Photo taken by a young female during her holiday in Ghana.
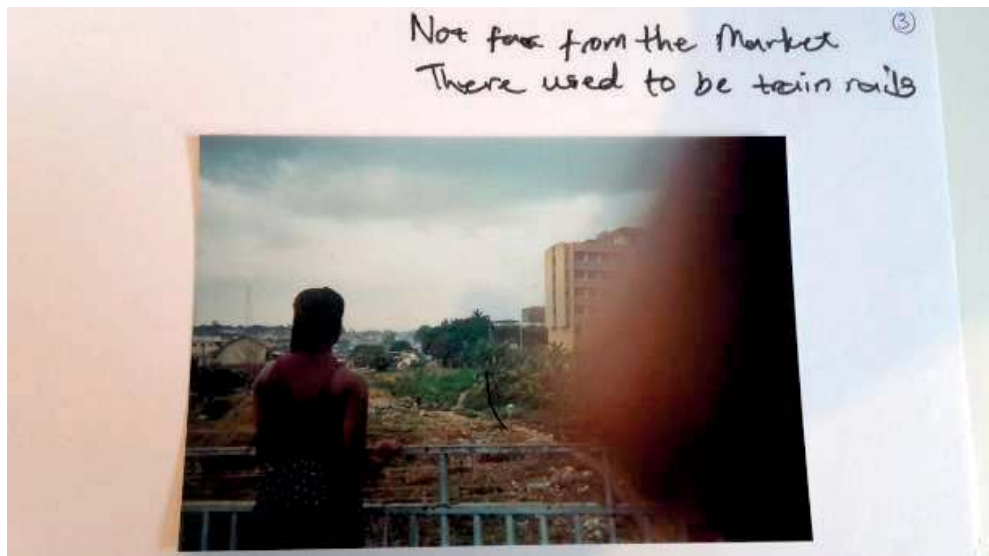
Source: photo project, fieldwork 2015-2016.

Finally, I mapped 'mobility trajectories' building on work mainly done by geographers. The main components used for the mapping were: location, with whom young people were living, the level of the move (national/international), their age at the time of the move, the duration and reason of the move (holiday, reunification with parents etc.). This information enabled a drawing that visually represented young people's physical mobility through time and geographical location, contextualised against the backdrop of changing family constellations. I collected this information using an adapted version of the AGEVEN (Antonie, Bry, and Diouf 1987). These visual mappings of young Ghanaians' trajectories did not only help me to come to the typology presented in Chapter 4, they were also turned into a reflexive interview tool, when I presented the visual output to the young Ghanaians and checked and discussed all the different places and people they had lived with over time. The visual presentation of their trajectory often triggered memories of more households young Ghanaians had been part of. This shows the added value of visual mapping – during oral interviews youth were less inclined to mention *all* the households they had been a member of because they felt these changes of residence were normal, or even insignificant.

The data were documented in written form. The recorded interviews were transcribed by me, and later by various research assistants who signed a confidentiality

agreement and were not provided with participant details in order to protect their privacy. The majority of the interviews were not recorded. I jotted down hand-written notes during these interviews, which I wrote down immediately after the interview. Furthermore, I wrote 'fieldnotes' (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 1995). Observations, informal conversations, and participation was processed into written accounts that described where and how events unfolded, how people interacted, what the sensory and spatial details were, and how the general atmosphere was etc. For each young person, I compiled a 'youth file' where interviews, informal conversations, observations and other descriptive accounts were accumulated into one document.

3.3.2.   Analysing and interpreting the data

Data collection and analysis are integrated processes in ethnography (Gobo 2008). The first phase of data analysis thus took place interactively with the data collection. Interim field reports provided an overview of the collected data and triangulated data through preliminary analyses. Through 'open coding' emerging topics, ideas, and recurring themes brought forward in the interviews and observations were identified inductively. The interim field reports served as the basis for in-depth discussions with my supervisors once every 4-6 weeks. The outcome of these discussions were written down in 'integrative memos' where different pieces of data and analytical points were brought together (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 1995).

Halfway through my fieldwork, Valentina Mazzucato, Ester Serra Mingot (another PhD who was conducting fieldwork at the time) and I organised reflective meetings. We selected fieldwork material, such as interviews and fieldnotes. We all commented and posed questions about each other's submitted material. This helped to identify which topics needed to be investigated further, to sharpen our interview techniques, and to track the 'story' that our data were telling. The fieldtrips to Ghana were followed by similar meetings.

The second analytical phase took place after the data collection, after I moved back to Maastricht. This second analytical phase consisted of 'focused coding', whereby the data are read line by line to analyse concrete themes that have been identified through 'open coding'. This analysis delivered a list of most prominent themes, and corresponding sub-themes based on the accumulated inductive codes of the interim analyses. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) note that frequency can be one analytical criterion. However, ethnographers also seek to identify patterns and variety in relationships in the ways that participants understand them. Frequency is thus not the only basis for analyses. Rather,

exceptional or unique cases can help to understand the contextual or situational differences that explain patterns.

Subsequently, analyses were undertaken for each individual paper. In the first paper, each young person's individual mobility trajectory was mapped and printed. These visualised versions of the mobility trajectories were compared and categorized on the basis of their shape, similarities, and differences. Helpful here was also a chronological timeline per young person, in which every different locality was presented in another colour. These coloured timelines increased the comparability of the mobility trajectories, because they eased the identification of commonalities and differences. The literature informed the identification of meaningful differentiating factors between trajectories. The discovered patterns were distinguished according to frequency and location of the move (within or between Ghana and/or the Netherlands). This automatically implied taking into consideration the timing and duration of the moves too.

The analysis of the second paper consisted of two steps. First, the interim analyses performed on the entire sample identified the core theme that needed to be investigated: the data indicated that young Ghanaians who were frequently mobile between Ghana and the Netherlands somehow seemed to gain educationally. Which underlying mechanisms were exactly enabled by mobility, and how these impacted young people's education, therefore became a topic of inquiry. The second step was the selection of two 'most similar' cases (Gerring 2007). We (I and co-author Valentina Mazzucato) selected two young men, Harley and Ebenezer, based on their *different* mobility trajectories. The selection was furthermore based on their *similar* profiles. Harley's and Ebenezer's youth files were deductively scrutinised for the most significant contextual factors that, according to the literature on migration and education, impact migrant youth's education. We concluded that they draw from the same neighbourhood, went to the same school, are both 'first generation' migrant youth, come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, and have similar family structures.

We deliberately sought two young people whose profiles were similar but mainly differed in terms of their mobility, to 'isolate' the workings enabled by mobility. We conducted inductive, focused coding to identify how these young men experienced their (im)mobility and if they benefitted educationally. An in-depth comparison of their concentric circles, for example showed that people belonging to their inner circles resided overseas. This gave rise to the question how satisfied these young men were with their overseas relationships and allowed us to investigate the role of mobility in their ability to maintain these relationships.

The analyses of the third paper was conducted on three different compartments of the overall data set. The perceptions of young Ghanaians on mobility were drawn from the youth sample. The focused coding process concentrated on young Ghanaians' opinions about their moves, either internally within Ghana or between Ghana and the Netherlands. It furthermore concentrated on young Ghanaians' assessment of their mobility in relation to their education. The Dutch law on education (*Leerplichtwet*) offered a relevant starting point to analyse the national narrative concerning mobility and education. The minutes of parliamentary debates are openly archived in the Netherlands and accessible online. The *Leerplichtwet* was implemented in 1900. First, I deductively selected parliamentary minutes, focusing on debates about the *Leerplichtwet*especially around 1969 and 1995, the years in which the *Leerplichtwet* underwent significant changes concerning mobility possibilities. Inductively gathered keywords, mostly Dutch words, such as '*allochtonen*' (a specific Dutch denomination, used to refer to people of migrant/ethnically distinct background), '*mobiliteit*' (mobility), '*vakantie*' (holiday), '*pendelen*' (moving up and down, to commute), enabled a second round of selection. In this second round, other state documentation was included such as reports requested by members of parliament. The analysis of this historical narrative contextualised the analysis of educators' views. Twenty-one interviews with educators across the sector were inductively coded. The accumulation of these codes revealed the structural elements in the views of educators about student mobility.

3.3.3.   Temporality in research with young people

There is a pertinent issue that all research with youth, whether qualitative or quantitative of nature, needs to deal with: the temporality of their emotions, moods, experiences and recollections. This is not absent in research with adults, but seems a more pressing issue among youth, who are in a particular transitory phase in which they develop their own views, become independent, and during which they can experience contestation, hormonal swings, identity questions, internal conflict (in some cultures referred to as 'puberty' or 'adolescence'). This can cause significant inconsistency in what they report concerning their experiences, memories, and feelings. This is not to say that youth are lying. However, the interpretation of the data therefore requires cautiousness.

Four methodological strategies were employed to deal with the issue of temporality. First, this study deployed a life course approach (Giele and Elder 1998). This means recognising that events in a person's life course are interlinked over time and with the life course of significant others. The abovementioned 'mobility mapping' and life history interviews are methods that allowed for contextualised understandings of youth's life course over time.

Second, it was desirable to include self-coined '*asala*' youth, who just arrived in the Netherlands from Ghana, as well as youth who resided in the Netherlands for more than a year. Youth usually developed more nuanced views on their own experiences throughout time, which made the inclusion of somewhat older youth invaluable. Third, the longitudinal ethnographic approach implied a lengthy stay in the field which allowed for a diversification in observations (Punch 2012). This enhanced data consistency. Meeting a young person on a moody day did not significantly impact the data, since more data, via various channels and at different points in time, were collected. A longitudinal approach also allowed observing crucial transitions, for example out of the so-called *Internationale Schakel Klas (ISK-klas)*, classes only for recently arrived migrant youth, into the regular school system. After the first months that were regularly described as rather intense due to the wide range of emotions experienced, youth often expressed more calmness and were very capable of nuancing their own experiences and identifying their own transitions. Fourth, the problem of temporality of experiences was countered by speaking to adults who observe youth through several transitions as well, such as such as pastors, youth workers in church, teachers, and social workers. These people could verify or nuance youth's testimonies.

3.4.   Ethical considerations

Morrow and Richards (1996, 90) describe ethics as 'a set of moral principles and rules of conduct'. Others have described it as 'the application of a system of moral principles to prevent harming or wronging others, to promote the good, to be respectful, and to be fair' (Sieber 1993, 14). Standardised guidelines stimulate ethical academic conduct. However, fieldwork is full of real-life encounters that require on-the-spot-responses. The ethnographer then relies on her own moral compass and needs to come up with appropriately contextualised responses. This section discusses three ethical issues that emerged during this study. Herewith I aim to contribute to discussions about what it means to conduct ethical research with children and youth by reflecting on my positionality and how this potentially influenced the collected data.

3.4.1. Informed consent

Informed consent is an important ethical principle. In this study, I sought *oral* consent[4], and approached consent as a *process* (Ensign 2003). Oral consent is desirable when involving migrant youth for different reasons. Written consent by means of a signature can be unnecessarily risky migrants, especially when they are undocumented. Several of the young Ghanaians in this study were undocumented or had experienced this in the past. The signature can also instil negative connotations that can needlessly harm the trust relationship between researcher and participant (Düvell, Triandafyllidou, and Vollmer 2010, van Liempt 2007). I opted for oral consent in order to avoid these situations.

According to the website FRA, the European Union Agency For Fundamental Rights, youth are considered to be capable of making independent choices about participation in research when they are 16 or above in the Netherlands (since 1 January 2014). For many ethical committees, however, additional parental consent is desirable for this age group. Out of 30, 6 participants were between 16-17 years old. In 4 cases I acquired extra parental consent. One participant I met through extracurricular classes in which I volunteered and received generic consent from the school director. The last of these 6, a girl who later turned out to be 17, initially misinformed me about her age. Communicating ambiguously about age is a deliberate and understandable strategy of more of my participants given the risks involved for young migrants in the Netherlands who are facing a precarious legal status. Several of my participants for example refused to divulge their age to me in the beginning of the study. The other 24 participants in my study were 18 or above and hence their personal consent confirmation sufficed.

I also aimed for young people's *informed* consent. In addition to explanations prior to interviews, I prepared an information brochure that I distributed, and designed a website with information about me and the project. Later in the project, I noticed that these had not been very effective. Often, I saw the folder sliding into backpacks, suspecting that they were not pulled out again. Giggling and a little embarrassed, many young people admitted they had never had a look at the webpage or folder when I asked them if they had any additional questions about the project. On one occasion, I witnessed my information brochure being used as a tray. These strategies clearly did not help me to achieve informed consent the way I desired.

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[4] And received ethical clearance to do so from the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Maastricht, December 10, 2014.
For the pictures in this thesis, I gained written consent – see the explanation after the cover picture.

I followed the example of other scholars and approached informed consent as a *process* which they had proven to be a much more productive approach when working with youth (Ensign 2003). I considered it important to find forms that suit young people's worldviews and to ensure frequent reaffirmations of consent throughout the research rather than collecting a signed form. In a way this happened naturally; the young Ghanaians in this study had such occupied schedules full of school, jobs, studying, and church that we always needed to pull out our agendas to schedule the first interview. While scheduling a meeting with them I would always explicate the purpose of our meeting, seek consent, and refresh their right to withdrawal at any point during the project. I was attentive to young Ghanaians avoiding an appointment by postponing, delaying it, not answering my calls, or not showing up altogether as possible signs of their unwillingness to participate. I felt it was essential to be attuned to these signals given the age difference and other power imbalances. In some cases it meant I stopped pursuing certain participants, either because they expressed being too busy for participation (1 young man) or withdrew by absence (1 young woman).

Because of young Ghanaians' busy weekly schedules, follow-up meetings required the same approach. This concerned me in the early stages of my study, feeling that this did not allow me to conduct the spontaneous or lengthy observations that I aspired as an ethnographer. Unknowingly, however, this created advantages as well. Each attempt to schedule a meeting implied an opportunity to reassess their willingness to participate and gradually move beyond mere interviews. Additionally, I always ended our meetings on an evaluative note – asking how the young person had experienced our meeting. In case they brought up anything that radiated discomfort or if I sensed it during our meeting, I elaborated on that, either directly, or when seeking the next appointment.

Yet, it remained a challenging task to know if young people comprehended what research is, how it is conducted, and what their participation would imply. The educational background of young Ghanaians themselves was important to take into consideration. Students at the lowest level of the educational system in the Netherlands have little personal experience with research. Others were studying at HBO or the University where they have personal experiences with research projects and one young female even attended an ethnography course. The level of experience with research influenced young people's capacities to make informed decisions, hence the pace with which their understanding of participation could grow.

A processual approach to informed consent has downsides, especially when the project matures. After all, ethnographers seek to immerse themselves into the lives of their participants. I found having to continuously ask the young Ghanaians for their consent undermined the rapport I was building with them and the process of participating in their

everyday lives. When I explained to Daniella that I regularly wanted to check her willingness to participate, she reacted surprised, if not slightly annoyed, and told me there was no need to do so; she had given her consent and saw me as a friend now, to whom she would be able to articulate her willingness to withdraw, if needed.

Furthermore, I found it problematic having to frequently remind young people of their participation in the project, especially when I accompanied them on their holidays. Was their preparedness to take me on their holidays itself not the firmest affirmation of consent I could possibly receive? I therefore developed less explicit ways to check their consent status. For example, while in Ghana, many family members and friends would curiously inquire the relationship between participants and myself. Whenever possible I would pass that question to the young person I was with 'why don't you explain to your uncle?'. Their answers revealed if they were aware of the reason for my presence, which they usually formulated in terms of 'a project' that would help me to 'learn about our lives here and in the Netherlands'.

Because I wanted to trigger readers' imaginations, I aimed at including some pictures in this thesis. For this, I sought young people's written consent when editing the thesis two years after my last fieldwork activity. With most young people I maintained contact after I officially ended my fieldwork and had built a relationship of trust that made it possible for me to ask them for written consent. All young Ghanaians gave their permission to use their pictures. I asked if they preferred me to use their own pictures and some were happy to send me additional ones that I was allowed to use. I first planned to insert the original pictures as a way to honour and agentically involve the young people in this part of the project too. However, I decided that this would threaten my ability to maintain their anonymity, something I had promised them. There is always a possibility that readers may recognise them and reconstruct who said what by using other background details provided in the thesis. Moreover, the increasing interconnectivity of other (public) data sources, such as Facebook and Instagram made me hesitant. We cannot foresee which databases will be freely accessible in the future, what type of information can be derived from them, and how this information can be combined with other sources, or how this can possibly harm youth. So, despite having gained written consent from the young people in the pictures, I decided to edit the pictures in such ways that they are not recognisable.

This reflection shows that obtaining informed consent is a dialogical process. Increasingly restrictive consent guidelines, including a strong focus on written and parental consent, paradoxically give rise to more ethical and practical complexities in research with transnational youth. The next section elaborates on another issue related to consent in youth research.

3.4.2. Adult consent in transnational families

Most contemporary ethical guidelines deem youth less competent to make independent decisions about participation in research earlier than the age of 16 or 18, due to their considered (cognitive) immaturity (Coyne 2010). Therefore, additional parental consent is often required. The need for parental consent usually builds on several assumptions about youth's perceived incompetence to fully assess the risks and consequences of participation in research (Friedman et al. 2016). The competence – argument is a contested one. For example because competence is an individual quality that differs per person, meaning that the researcher should first be able to check a young person's individual potential to decide upon participation. Parental consent is sometimes a highly problematic 'substitute', for example when this would require a revelation of youth's personal secrets, such as possibly the case with gay-youth (Coyne 2010). Tymchuk (1992) stresses that parental consent is linked to parents' right to be involved in decisions about what happens to their children. Yet, he also points out that 18 is an arbitrary boundary, because it is 'not based on any empirical determination of when young people acquire mature decision-making skills' (Tymchuk 1992, 129).

In research with mobile youth, the adult-consent requirement is complicated by the inherently Western-centric presumed coincidence of legal authority and responsibilities of care in one or two caregivers. Most young participants in this study grew up in collective caregiving settings, including (extended) family members such as grandparents, uncles, and aunts. After migrating, young Ghanaians still ascribed authority to their previous caregivers, for example, when they needed to make financial decisions. This sharply questions who of all these caregivers, and on which grounds, should be ascribed legal authority to agree on or veto youth's participation in research.

There are pragmatic considerations, since there is a heavily impractical aspect to adult consent requirement in transnational families. Hypothetically, the above suggests that it might be an option to attune consent requirements in such a way that youth can select the most important caregiver from all those who have participated in their upbringing. Yet, this immediately creates a new problem: what to do when the appointed figure to obtain consent from is living in another country? This is a likely scenario when doing research with transnational youth. Multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork might offer a solution to a certain extent. Young Ghanaians in this study, however, commonly have family members in third countries as well (mainly US, UK, and Canada). Being able to follow young people during their journeys requires a relationship-building process prior to the journey. Yet, having to seek consent from adults living abroad implies postponing the young person's participation until a caregiver elsewhere grants permission.

Consent of a caregiver is thus an attempt to provide an 'extra layer' of protection, replacing youth's presumed lesser capacities to make the right decision. Transferring the decision about participation to an adult may sound like the most appealing practice to safeguard ethical conduct. The presumed incompetence of youth to give consent, however, is not in line with the latest developments to approach children and young people more and more as social actors who have agency (Balen et al. 2006). Children and young people can be vulnerable, but it is problematic to equate this with *incapable*. I agree with others that the aim to understand youth's voices and perspectives, taking their perspectives and capacity to make their own decisions seriously, are important ethical considerations in research with youth (e.g. Eder and Corsaro 1999; Ensign 2003; Meloni, Vanthuyne, and Rousseau 2015). Taking the above issues into consideration, standardised ethical regulations that include parental consent may actually impede ethical involvement of youth in research and paradoxically lead to a situation in which youth's views cannot be heard and studied, which in a way is rather unethical when writing about youth. It is for this reason that it becomes pertinent to critically rethink how and from whom to obtain consent in research with transnational youth.

3.4.3. Power relations: adult-youth hierarchies

The ethnographer's identity and positionality matters for the relationships she is able to build with participants. This implies that ethnography as a methodology is not easily replicable because the interaction between researcher and participant impacts what can be observed, what participants will or will not share. It is therefore important to reflect on one's own position in the field. Together with 'thick' descriptions (Geertz 1973) this generates internal validity in ethnographic research (Sanjek 1990). Positionality is a dynamic process depending on a multiplicity of identifiers such as class, race, gender and their intersection (e.g. Merriam et al. 2001; Naples 1996). As my reflections will show, my positionality was also subject to change: some determinants of my identity, although seemingly static and unchangeable were emphasised differently over time.

My positionality first and far most affected my access to young Ghanaians and the possibilities to establish relationships of mutual trust. At the time of my fieldwork, I was 25, 26 and 27, slightly, and sometimes significantly older than participants. I am also white, female, raised in the West, a daughter of a large family, a sister to two siblings, a lover of novels, dancing, and food, and educated at Dutch Universities. Some of these pillars of my identity imposed on me an inescapable position with reference to the broader societal fabric in the Netherlands. On top of that, these pillars of my identity interacted with the environment. This urged me to re-think how and where to access young Ghanaians.

Schools for example are typically characterised by significant hierarchies between adults and youth which determine interactions. Teachers hold power by virtue of their job (grading, disciplining, rule-implementing), and have their own adult-space (separate toilet, a 'coffee room' that is only accessible for teachers) within a school building. These spaces are not accessible for youth, while all the spaces in school where youth hang out are accessible to adults. Interactions between students and teachers occur along the lines of these hierarchical principles. I soon realised that it was nearly impossible to escape these pre-existing positions. Within the school building, it was obvious I am not be a student, which left me to be categorised as a 'teacher'.

It was therefore important to approach young Ghanaians through diverse channels and to eventually meet them outside such spaces. This became very clear when I held focus group discussions in a private room of a public library instead of the school I previously had in mind (see also section 3.3.). This turned out to be a good decision since youth interpreted this as having their own space as opposed to school, where hierarchies and disciplining applied. On our way to the library, we made a stop at the supermarket where we bought some snacks and drinks – the ones that *they* preferred (and are usually disapproved in school by adults who consider these items unhealthy). Every time I asked the participants to drop topics for discussion in a box I brought with me. This made us discuss the issues *they* had suggested. Through our conversations, it occurred to me how little experience youth have, in general, with spaces and exchanges that are not authorised and regulated by adults. Raby (2007) argues that with age the potential to develop non-hierarchical relationship increases. A change of scenery, and some little attempts from my side to provide them with a sense of authority, can be other ways to reduce hierarchies.

Time was another crucial component that allowed for the growth of trust and the reduction of hierarchies. Over time, when my relationships with young Ghanaians matured, they gradually started approaching me differently. Early in fieldwork, some young Ghanaians persistently called me 'u', a Dutch personal pronoun used for a senior person. I am not called 'u' in any other context. Youth usually introduced me as 'a teacher' to their parents, or named me 'teacher Joan' in their phones. I sometimes corrected them playfully, but not always. I understood that this was a way for them to categorise me into for them and their parent's familiar categories. Some of these early categorisations, however, could be de-constructed over time.

While doing fieldwork, I started to dress more youthfully. I cannot remember (and did not document) if this was a deliberate strategy, or that this happened unnoticed. Either way, my new sneakers were noticed with great enthusiasm, which allowed me to embark on other topics more informally. Similarly, I started to engage on Snapchat, an application

that rapidly gained popularity among youth worldwide. Some youth document their entire days on Snapchat. I have not used this as a data collection tool, but rolled into using it when the young Ghanaians kept asking me for my account name. Although these adaptations went almost unnoticed and were subtle, I believe they mattered as they allowed young people to deconstruct their image of me as an 'adult' and to formulate a different category for me. Gradually I moved from 'teacher' to 'friend' and later even 'sister'.

This does not mean that I ever became an 'insider'. There were plenty moments of reversed power imbalance – especially in Ghana where young people often expressed that they felt they needed to take care of me. Such moments evidently showed that I was not an 'insider' after all and that they knew much better how to handle certain situations. This shows that the transnational context can invert the power imbalances between the researcher and researched. In Ghana, I had to become acquainted with specific cultural capital that youth already or at the very least partly possessed, due to which they had to take care of me. Aside from day-to-day power imbalances that needed to be mutually negotiated between me and young Ghanaians, power became another emerging topic during the writing phase of this thesis.

3.4.4. Power and writing

'The critical comments of the men led me back to the essentials: why am I doing this? And why do I think this [research] is important? At the moment I am confused'
(Methodological memo, March 2015).

This methodological memo of March 2015 marks a crucial moment of realisation about power and writing. In this particular moment, I tried to establish a network and gladly accepted the opportunity to join a well-known figure in the Ghanaian community to a meeting with some Ghanaian residents in the neighbourhood. It turned out to be a rather confrontational and unpleasant encounter. After explaining the purpose of my study, some attendees of the meeting asked me why *I* had to conduct this research – did I not know there are bright Ghanaian students who could do this study too? Others expressly said they disliked that someone was going to write about their children. Instead, I better directed my research at the teachers and schools who structurally underestimated their children!

Retrospective reflection makes me grateful for this encounter because it taught me about broader societal power imbalances experienced by members of the Ghanaian community. It reminded me of the implications this has for writings. Attendants of this

meeting drew on previous experiences and saw me as a probably insensible, possibly racist researcher with a likely intent to write negatively on the community. Prior to the start of my fieldwork the NRC, one of the Netherlands' largest newspapers, published an article in which three journalism students reported on obesity among Ghanaian migrants. Despite the questionable methodological rigour of this project the NRC allowed the students to report on their project about overweight amongst Ghanaians in the Netherlands. The newspaper currently states that this article has caused significant consternation and that the Ghanaian community feels misrepresented by it[5].

The accuracy of the findings is not of interest here, rather the article is an excellent and painful example of patronising the migrant body, which is possible in a society with power imbalances. This raises questions regarding who writes what, from which position, and who is entitled to qualify what is produced as 'knowledge'. The example of the newspaper article and the meeting emphasise that writing implies power, and that writing can result in experiences of misrepresentation if it is not done carefully.

Inspired by this meeting where parents were so expressly annoyed, I repeatedly sought opportunities to discuss how to write sensibly. Exchanges with supervisors, who are both experienced with this, encouraged me to take a critical stance towards potentially imbalanced presentations, Eurocentric and Western conceptualisations and theorisations. Furthermore, I found an invaluable soundboard in several academics such as Dr. Divine Fuh (CODESRIA), Emma Abotsi (University of Oxford), Salomay Afrifra (ISS), Dr. Kwaku Arhin-Sam, and other Africanists at the European Conference on African Studies (Basel, July 2017), the African Studies Associations Africa Conference (Accra, October 2017), and the Emerging Scholars Workshop (Johannesburg, April 2018). These exchanges helped me to write, theorise and conceptualise with existing power imbalances in mind.

Having outlined the methodological foundation of this study, what follows are three analytical chapters that each, based on the empirical data collected, contribute theoretically and conceptually to several academic fields.

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[5] 'Binnen de Ghanese gemeenschap is er ophef ontstaan over deze productie. Daarom is er negen weken na publicatie een bijeenkomst geweest met een aantal geïnterviewden en sleutelfiguren uit de Ghanese gemeenschap. De meeste geïnterviewden hebben daarbij aangegeven zich niet te herkennen in het beeld dat van de gemeenschap wordt geschetst' (NRC website).

English translation:
'This article has caused consternation in the Ghanaian community. Therefore, a meeting with interviewees and key-figures in the Ghanaian community has been organized 9 weeks after publication. Most of the interviewees have indicated that they feel the community is misrepresented' (NRC website).

Conceptualising youth mobility trajectories: Thinking beyond conventional categories*

Image: Samuel performing during youth choir concert, 2015, Amsterdam – the Netherlands. Source: Samuel.

4. Conceptualising youth mobility trajectories: Thinking beyond conventional categories

4.1. Introduction

Youth migration is a widespread phenomenon. The United Nations (2013, 19) estimates that there are 35 million international migrants under 20 years of age who migrate either with their parents or unaccompanied. The majority of migrants, however, remain within one nation-state (estimated at 740 million in total) and, given the young populations of many migrant-sending nations, youth are likely to form a large share of these internal migrants. Aside from international and internal migration, youth also travel for study, holidays, and family visits. Although these categories are distinct, a young person's biography may be characterised by a variety of moves. For example, a young person may move to various destinations within his or her origin country, then migrate internationally, and then engage in various holiday visits to third countries as well as to his or her origin country. However, this diversity of moves is hardly taken into account in studies of how migration affects young people's lives.

Research on migration and youth has shown that migration impacts youth outcomes in terms of educational performance and mental and physical health (Boyden 2013; Crivello 2011; Fernández-Kelly 2008; Kao 1999; Mazzucato et al. 2015; Portes and Zhou 1993; Suárez-Orozco, Todorova and Louie 2002; Wen and Lin 2012). Whether they focus on youth who stay behind or youth in destination countries, studies are inconclusive about the effects of migration. Both positive and negative outcomes are found in diverse areas of the globe. While it is clear that different contexts of migration impact youth differently, none of the studies that assess the impact of migration on youth take mobility patterns into consideration.

Conventional conceptualisations of youth migration usually focus on one of the variety of moves that a young person might undertake. Youth are categorised as 'international' or 'internal' migrants depending on whether they move within or beyond a nation-state, as 'first' or 'second generation` depending on whether they migrated to or were born in the destination country, and as 'left-behind' if they remain in the origin country

while their parents migrate. These categories have in common their focus on one specific move, as they aim to place youth in one of the above categories.

We contend that the way youth are categorised in these studies obscures the variation in mobility that characterises young people's biographies, and it may be precisely this variation that can help us to understand how migration impacts youth. In this article, we discuss the conceptualisations of youth that are widely used in migration studies and propose the concept of 'youth mobility trajectories' to capture different moves in space and time and the concurrent changing family constellations that they entail, in order to gain more insight into how migration, and more specifically, mobility, affects the lives of youth.

4.2.   From youth as migrants to youth mobility

The study of the relationship between international migration and youth experiences and outcomes has mainly relied on three conceptualisations of youth: either as first- or second-generation immigrants who moved to a country of destination or were born from foreign parents, respectively; as immobile youth who stay in their country of origin while one or both of their parents migrate overseas; or as youth who travel for the purpose of education. Below, we examine these categories and explain why there is a need for categories that can capture the diversity of youth mobility.

4.2.1.   Mobile only once: 'first and second generation immigrant youth' and 'youth of migrant background'

The most prevailing categorizations of youth are so-called 'first' and 'second' generation, and in some countries, even 'third' generation[6]. The category of first generation applies to those youth who arrived in a country of destination during their childhood. Second generation generally refers to youth born, raised and socialised in their migrant parents' country of destination. 'Third generation' refers to children without a migrant background but for whom one or both parents might be second generation migrants.

The category of 'second generation' has been restrictively defined ranging from scholars only include children who migrated before the age of 12 (Portes and Zhou 1993)

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6   See, for instance, the National Statistical Service Netherlands' definition of first, second, and third generation.

to Crul, Schneider and Lelie (2012) who suggest excluding all youth who do not complete their *entire* education in the country of 'arrival'. Finally, scholars have broken this category down into sub-categories to place more emphasis on the timing of an international move. Thus, to nuance the variety in between the first and second generation, Rumbaut (1997) suggests using categories labelled 1.25, 1.5 and 1.75 categories based on the age at migration versus parental nativity.

As these shifts in definitional boundaries show, the applicability, measurability, and operational strength of the concepts of first and second generation are not straightforward. Scholars have circumvented these problems by deploying more inclusive terminologies, such as 'children of migrant background' or 'immigrant youth'. Yet, this has two implications. First, it reinforces an 'ethnic lens' that presupposes that country of birth is the prime distinguishing factor, rather than making it an area of investigation (Glick-Schiller, Çaglar and Guldbrandsen 2005). Second, it solely focuses on one unidirectional movement from the youth's country of 'origin' to a new 'country of destination'. Further moves, occurring before or after the first international move, are not considered in these conceptualisations. Hence, these categories essentially capture youth's status rather than their actual mobility patterns. As such, these categories do not allow the study of sustained mobility patterns over time, and they may be hiding a key factor that distinguishes youth and affects their future outlooks and aspirations, their identities and psychologies, as well as their outcomes: how geographically mobile they are and what type of mobility they engage in.

4.2.2.   Immobile youth: the 'left-behind'

Other conceptualisations of youth are 'left-behinds' or 'stay-behinds', employed by scholars investigating the impact of parental migration on children who stay in the country of origin. While their parents migrate, these children are left with a caregiver. These studies do not necessarily deny the possibility of these children's future mobility, yet their focus is on the effect of family separation under the condition that the children remain in one locality (Dreby 2007; Fan et al. 2009; Nguyen, Yeoh, and Toyota 2006; Mazzucato et al. 2015; Schmalzbauer 2008; Wen and Lin 2012). Some studies do indicate that children who stay behind while their parents migrate do aim to join them and eventually do so (Fog-Olwig 2007; Kandel and Massey 2002). In a unique study, Wu, Lu, and Kang (2015) actually contrast children of different 'left-behind' categories, such as those left in rural areas of China by their parents and those who initially migrated with their parents but then were sent back to live with their grandparents. However, aside from these few studies, most studies of 'left-

behind' children assume that the children are immobile sedentary actors with a family migration history that *affects* rather than *engages* them.

4.2.3.   Local, regional or elite mobility

There are some notable exceptions to the above approaches, namely, studies that focus on youth who circulate or who are independent migrants. There is a longstanding academic interest in the phenomenon of child circulation and migration in the context of kinship practices (Bledsoe 1990; Fonseca 1986; Goody 1982; Isiugo-Abanihe 1985; Notermans 2008) or poverty reduction strategies (Boyden 2013; Leinaweaver 2007), especially in the context of the Global South. Goody's (1982) extensive work on child-fostering in West-Africa pioneered an interest in locally meaningful reasons for child circulation. Children and youth in Bolivia, Peru, Ghana, Cambodia, Vietnam, India, Ethiopia and Bangladesh migrate either independently or with their families in their pursuit of access to work and education, while crossing regional and even national borders (Boyden 2013; Whitehead, Hashim and Iversen 2007; Hashim 2007; Huijsmans and Baker 2012; Leinaweaver 2007; Orgocka 2012; Punch 2002; Yacub 2009). As opposed to studies that conceptualise youth as immobile, these studies give central prominence to the migration or circulation of children and youth between different regions and households and thus acknowledge their physical mobility. Yet, these studies focus on child circulation in order to understand social dynamics, such as the performance of kinship. They generally give less or no attention to the actual trajectories followed by youth, and they do not make distinctions among the types of mobility demonstrated by youth who are engaged in circulation. Therefore, we do not know how youth mobility trajectories evolve, shape and change over time.

There is another type of mobile youth: so-called 'parachute kids' (Zhou 1998), 'third culture kids' (TCK) (Pollock, van Reken, and Pflüger 2009) and 'satellite children' (Waters 2003). These children all grow up outside their parents' countries of origin due to their parents' professional placement, parents' return-migration, or for reasons of their own schooling. This strand of literature does recognise youth mobility but focuses on a specific, often elite, socio-economic segment of the global population that has the financial means to pursue socio-economic mobility across the globe.

In sum, the available concepts have generated insights about the different ways in which migration and youth intersect and how this impacts the lives of youth. Yet, we also argue that these concepts assume children and youth to be immobile, mobile only once in their lives, or mobile mainly in a regional context for locally meaningful reasons (Mazzucato

2015) and thus obscure the diverse mobility patterns of youth. Clarifying these differences may help to further our understanding of the diversity in outcomes among youth who originate from the same country (or whose parents originate from the same country) and are living in similar neighbourhoods and attending similar schools in destination countries. This variety is currently poorly understood, as it has hardly been investigated as most investigations compare migrant youth with 'native' youth or with migrant youth of different origins. At the same time, a focus on mobility trajectories allows looking at all same-aged peers, without necessarily making ethnicity the main categorization of groups. Finally, when youth are assumed to be immobile, as is the case with 'left-behinds', they might be affected by mobility but are not seen as engaging in it themselves. Again, mobility trajectories allows this to be investigated rather than assumed.

The studies mentioned above share another commonality: because they focus on one particular move and/or moment in youth's lives, they do not capture the roles of others who may not be living in the same country as youth at the time of study but who nonetheless may have played – and may continue to play – a significant role in the lives of youth who connect either virtually or physically to multiple locations (Mazzucato 2015).

4.3.   Why study youth mobility?

This paper extends three developments in migration studies. Transnational migration studies have shown that migrants maintain multi-stranded relationships between their countries of origin and countries of residence in various ways that span social, economic, political and cultural domains. This has been shown mainly for adults, but authors such as Levitt (2009) have argued for the need to study how young people of migrant backgrounds, be they first or second generation, live and grow up transnationally.

At the same time, mobility scholars have argued that social scientists have not dealt thoroughly with mobility (Cresswell 2010; Sheller and Urry 2006). The mobilities paradigm focused on the study of mundane, everyday forms of mobility (Büscher and Urry 2009) to understand the way people move around in space, the means of movement they use, and the people they meet along the way. These are all important for understanding daily lived experiences, identity formation, and forms of belonging, as these movements and activities 'make' social and material realities. Recently, scholars have applied this approach to study how the journeys of international migrants unfold (Schapendonk 2012; Schapendonk and Steel 2014; Wissink and Mazzucato 2017). Others have focused on the ongoing material and identity negotiations that take place during these journeys (Wagner 2017).

Furthermore, we build on recent scholarly attempts to unravel the relation between time and migration (Cwerner 2001; Griffiths, Rogers, and Anderson 2013). A 'temporally informed' approach entails sensitivity to the non-linear dimensions of time in journeys, the rhythms of mobility and the different 'cultures of time' migrants engage with (e.g. Marcu 2017). Yet, how to embed this experiential dimension of time in the migrant life-course and explore interlinkages between time and other important components of a journey, such as the relations one builds along the way, remains understudied (Collins and Shubin 2015).

Tracing the actual evolution of a migrant's trajectories tells us not only the locality and pace of their physical mobility across space and time but also their separation from or connection to kin and/or significant others. Although modern communication technology can enable youth to access and maintain transnational relationships (Fresnoza-Flot 2009; Madianou and Miller 2011; Parreñas 2005), these relationships seem to also need some face-to-face contact in order to remain active and meaningful (Baldassar 2008; Dreby 2006; Haagsman and Mazzucato 2014). Despite the established importance of real-life connections in transnational families, and the recent studies that have identified the social and identity-shaping processes that occur during journeys, youth mobility trajectories have received limited academic attention.

Our work is inspired by research that tries to understand differences *within* migrant groups and moves beyond the prevailing 'ethnic lens' that currently informs the common comparisons *between* immigrant groups. Fernández-Kelly (2008) asked what distinguishes successful Mexican college graduates from similarly under-privileged background in the US. She found that meaningful details such as knowledge of cultural, religious and geographical heritage matter in explaining their educational success. By exploring within-group differences qualitatively, one can develop categories of difference that do not presuppose the ethnic as a main category. Hence, our starting point here is that the everyday realities of migrant youth are likely to be influenced by family members across borders and that travel and journeys matter for understanding migrant youth's lived experiences and possibly their outcomes. This informs our proposed alternative typology which allows the exploration of the ways in which youth, through physical mobility, are able to link different values and social relationships they build as part of their life trajectories, or what Meinhoff and Triandafyllidou (2006) term transcultural capital. Such transcultural capital is important for understanding how physical mobility affects youth's experiences and outcomes.

4.4.   Multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork

This paper draws on data collected as part of a study on the relation between youth mobility and educational transitions. We selected Ghanaian youth between the ages of 15 and 25 to observe their transitions out of secondary school. Additionally, youth needed to have at least one international move to or from Ghana in their biography at the time we approached them. Note that such a definition allows us to include both first- and second-generation youth in our sample. Twenty months of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork were conducted amongst young Ghanaians who lived in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and during their trips to Ghana. The main data consist of participant observations in meaningful locations such as churches, homework classes, schools, barber shops, homes, music studios, cultural events, in the streets, and during holidays to Ghana. Additionally, formal and informal interviews were conducted with youth, key-informants and experts in Amsterdam, The Hague, Kumasi and Accra.

To maximise the time spent with interlocutors, opportunities for serendipitous interactions, and local involvement (Driessen and Jansen 2013), one author lived in proximity to the youth, in a neighbourhood where many Ghanaians reside. Conventional ethnographic methods focusing on one single 'field site', however, were challenged by the youths' multi-locational lives (Falzon 2009). The researcher thus accompanied youth on their travels to Accra, Kumasi and Cape Coast, Ghana in the summers of 2015 and 2016. Our network gradually expanded through a creative writing project we organised, and through key-informants, homework classes, church meetings, schools, spontaneous meetings on the street and snowballing. In total, 30 youth participated in our study. Of these, 12 visited Ghana during our data gathering period, 7 of whom we accompanied.

We sought variety in gender, age and length of stay in the Netherlands and Ghana. Other background characteristics of our participants resemble those of the broader Ghanaian community in the Netherlands: youth were generally of lower socio-economic background, attended schools with fewer resources, were Christians, and belonged to one of the four largest Ghanaian ethnic groups in the Netherlands: Ashanti (Mazzucato 2008). Others belonged to the Ewe, Fanti and Hausa and some youth did not know their ethnic background. We aimed for variety in the sample in order to capture as much variety in mobility patterns as possible.

The analysis presented here draws on an adapted version of the 'Ageven grids' (Antonie, Bry, and Diouf 1987). Through life-history interviews, we drafted such grids for each young person, which visualise their trajectories (see figures in the next section). Later, we conducted a reflexive interview with each youth, during which we used the grid to –

together with youth, travel again, this time on paper, through their life histories, passing through time and space in order to elicit more complete information.

Working with youth raises specific ethical questions (Heath et al. 2007), a prominent one being informed consent. We approached consent as a process (Ensign 2003), knowing that written consent can potentially frustrate interviews with people who have a migrant background, especially when their legal status is pending or insecure (Düvell, Triandafyllidou, and Vollmer 2010); we also had to consider that some of the youth might be unfamiliar with research. Thus, we created opportunities for youth to experience participation in research after extensively discussing the project, providing them with an information brochure and a link to our website. We also designed a creative writing project with youth in schools to give them an impression of the type of research we were doing and what it would mean to participate. We explained the voluntary nature of their participation, that we ensured their anonymity and confidentiality and that they were free to withdraw at any point in the process. Throughout the research, we found occasions to recall the aims of our project, and youth were asked to reaffirm their willingness to participate by means of continued dialogue (Ensign 2003). Interviews took place at venues selected by the youth themselves, usually conducted in English or Dutch. Youth were only asked for permission to be tape-recorded during interviews once a certain level of familiarity, comfort and trust had been established. The research received ethical approval from the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of Maastricht University. In this paper, traceable details have been removed, and youth's names have been replaced by pseudonyms to protect privacy.

4.5.   Mapping youth mobilities

Mobility trajectories map where a young person was, with whom, and at which point of her or his life. They visualise a mobility pattern in its totality, including the duration of a stay in one locality and the timing of movements in a person's life course.

By empirically exploring the lives of Ghanaian youth growing up between Ghana and the Netherlands, we note diverse patterns of mobility, which allows us to create a typology. The typology is based on the frequency and locations of moves, given the importance of separation and reunification with kin and friends that we have identified in previous literature. Consequently, we do not give prominence to just one international move but instead include all physical moves without differentiating between those of a permanent and non-permanent character. By virtue of our selection criteria, we concentrate on mobility

within and between Ghana and the Netherlands, as well as third countries if they implied reconnection with kin or when the youth themselves reported a significant impact. Mapping 'frequency' of mobility accordingly, automatically implies taking timing and duration into consideration.

Our typology distinguishes four different trajectories: 1) single international mobility; 2) multiple international mobility; 3) multiple national mobility; and 4) multiple national and international mobility. The different types are composed of two juxtapositions. The denotations 'national' and 'international' refer to the geographical space where mobility occurred, either within the borders of a 'home' country, in this case Ghana, or across borders, in this case between Ghana and the Netherlands and sometimes third countries. The denotations 'single' and 'multiple' express the frequency of mobility: single entails not more than one move, and multiple entails more than one move. While all youth in our study have experienced at least one international move, these denotations focus on what differentiates each type. Below we discuss an exemplary case to illustrate the differences between each type of trajectory.

4.5.1.   Single international mobility

Elyah (19) is laughing and shaking his head, indicating that I cannot even begin to imagine how many people he lived with in Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti Region, Ghana. We are evoking memories of his childhood in Ghana over a cup of coffee at a Starbucks. With a big smile on his face, Elyah waves his arms around in his attempt to sketch how large the compound was, demonstrating how many children there were to play with. The paternal 'family house' hosted the extended family, counting 6 out of the 16 children his grandfather had in total. Including their spouses and children, the flexible household was made up of approximately 30 people. Until he was 10 years old, Elyah grew up surrounded by his cousins and other kin. His father was already commuting between Ghana and the Netherlands when Elyah was born. While living in the paternal family house, Elyah, his sister and his mother were regularly visited by his father from the Netherlands. When Elyah was about 10 years old, his mother departed for the Netherlands, too, leaving her children in their paternal grandmother's care in the new house his father had built by then. Elyah's narrations are enthusiastic and lively. They draw an idyllic picture of his childhood in Ghana, where he felt beloved by his grandmother and extended kin, where he could play and carelessly enjoy the Ghanaian 'freedom' he always refers to with a sense of nostalgia. After his 12th birthday, his mother came to pick up Elyah and his sister to be reunited

with their father in The Hague, the Netherlands, where his younger brother was born in the year of Elyah's arrival. This move not only marked the beginning of life with his nuclear family, it also preluded an exciting new phase in Elyah's life. Although life in the Netherlands was less carefree than his childhood in Ghana, he reviews his move to the Netherlands positively due to the educational opportunities and life-lessons he feels he gained from it. Elyah longs for Ghana, but he has not yet managed to visit since leaving almost 8 years ago (figure 4.1).
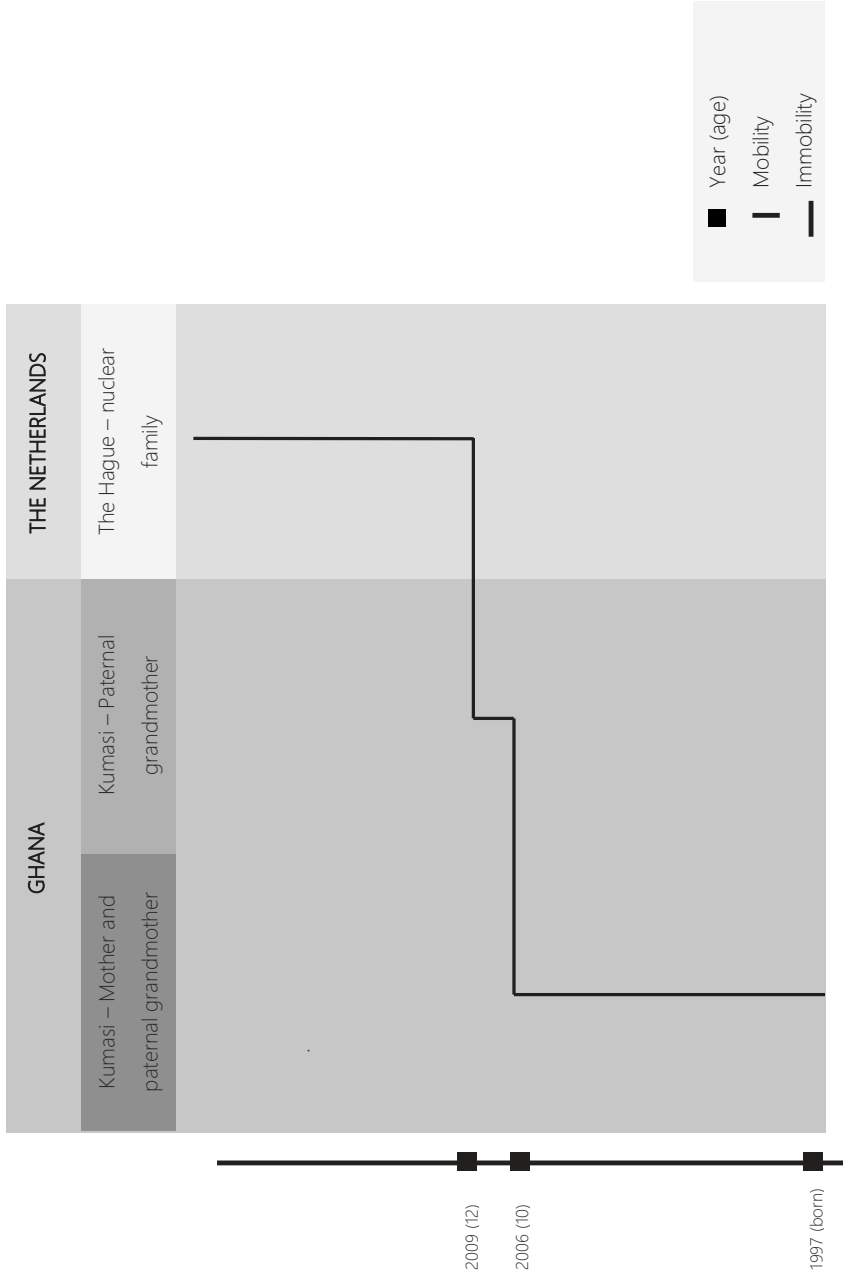
Figure 4.1: Elyah's mobility trajectory. Source: fieldwork, 2015-16.

THE NETHERLANDS

The Hague – nuclear family

GHANA

Kumasi – Paternal grandmother

Kumasi – Mother and paternal grandmother

Year (age)
Mobility
Immobility

2009 (12)
2006 (10)
1997 (born)

Elyah's trajectory is of the simplest type: he moved once in Ghana, followed by one move from Ghana to the Netherlands. In this sense, Elyah's trajectory is the one that comes closest to what is emphasised in the conventional category of 'first generation' youth: one international move. Yet analysing his entire mobility trajectory, reveals that Elyah's immobility after his first international move entailed a separation from his grandmother who had been his primary caregiver during the first 12 years of his life in Ghana. Child development literature emphasises the importance of the role of a primary caregiver in a child's early years (Bowlby 1973; Suarez-Orozco et al. 2002) in determining their outcomes later on in life. As such, it is important, when analysing Elyah's educational outcomes, for instance, to understand the role of the grandmother and how their separation impacted his outcomes. These are aspects that are not usually taken into account in studies on migrant youth and educational outcomes, as they focus on a) their first international move, and b) who they are currently living with.

4.5.2. Multiple international mobility

I'm sitting at the edge of Fuzailan's (24) bed, which occupies almost the entire room in a shared apartment on the fifth floor of one of this neighbourhood's characteristic high-rise buildings. It is the fourth apartment in five years and the second since I have known him; Fuzailan has moved around a lot since he started living on his own at age 18. Ever since, he has depended on the informal subletting system in this neighbourhood, which offers cheap and fast accommodations but is notoriously erratic. It is a small room. My knee is almost touching Fuzailan's knee; he is squeezed in a chair between the bed and the wall. Soft, rhythmic Ghanaian tunes come from the speakers connected to the flat screen TV. I am holding my breath. Fuzailan is bent over, his head resting in his hands, and I barely dare to continue the conversation as I cannot see if his facial expression reveals the pain I just heard in his voice when he was telling me about his deceased aunt Aasia. In Ghana, she was taking care of him, and for a long time, he did not even know that his 'mother' was actually his biological mother's sister. Through aunty Aasia's negotiations, Fuzailan was eventually allowed to get in touch with his father and live at his paternal grandfather's family house. Next door to his beloved aunt, whom he could still visit on a daily basis, Fuzailan moved into the 'boys' room' with many adolescent male members of the extended family, all descendants of the four wives his grandfather married.

Looking back, he cannot let go of the secrets surrounding his past: why did he live with his aunt? What caused his parents' divorce? Was it his existence? Unfortunately, the person who could have helped him answer these riddles, aunty Aasia, passed away before he was able to ask her these questions. When he moved to the Netherlands at age 15, these issues were not really bothering him yet. He now deeply regrets his lousy attempts to maintain frequent contact with aunty Aasia. Soon after his arrival, he became occupied with school, with recurring clashes at home, and later, with financial difficulties. The tensions over his existence that he felt in Ghana took on a different and more confrontational nature when he moved, together with his half-brother, into his father's newly established family in the Netherlands. Connecting with his new stepmother was difficult. Sitting in that small room, we talk through all these different localities; from his caring aunty Aasia, to the cosy 'boys room' in the paternal family house, to his father's newly established family in the Netherlands, and to the numerous rooms after he decided to leave that last venue. He lifts his head up and seems to carefully pick his words when he, calmly and slowly, tells me that this is the reason why he is determined to go to Ghana this year. This second holiday, which he will undertake independently, should help him to find answers and make peace with his past (figure 4.2).

In Ghana, Fuzailan changed venues only once, while remaining close by his previous caregiver. Like Elyah, Fuzailan lived in a family house, with many extended family members, where children are cared for collectively, a common experience for children growing up in Ghana. When he moved to the Netherlands Fuzailan reunited with his father. The distinguishing factor of this trajectory is the frequency of international moves; Fuzailan remains physically mobile between Ghana and the Netherlands following his initial international move. By following Fuzailan's moves, we discover that he was at the centre of a complex family dispute, the importance of his aunt for Fuzailan, especially in forming a narrative about his family history but that her untimely death leaves Fuzailan with unanswered existential questions, and subsequently, the special significance that his holidays 'back home' take on for his identity formation.
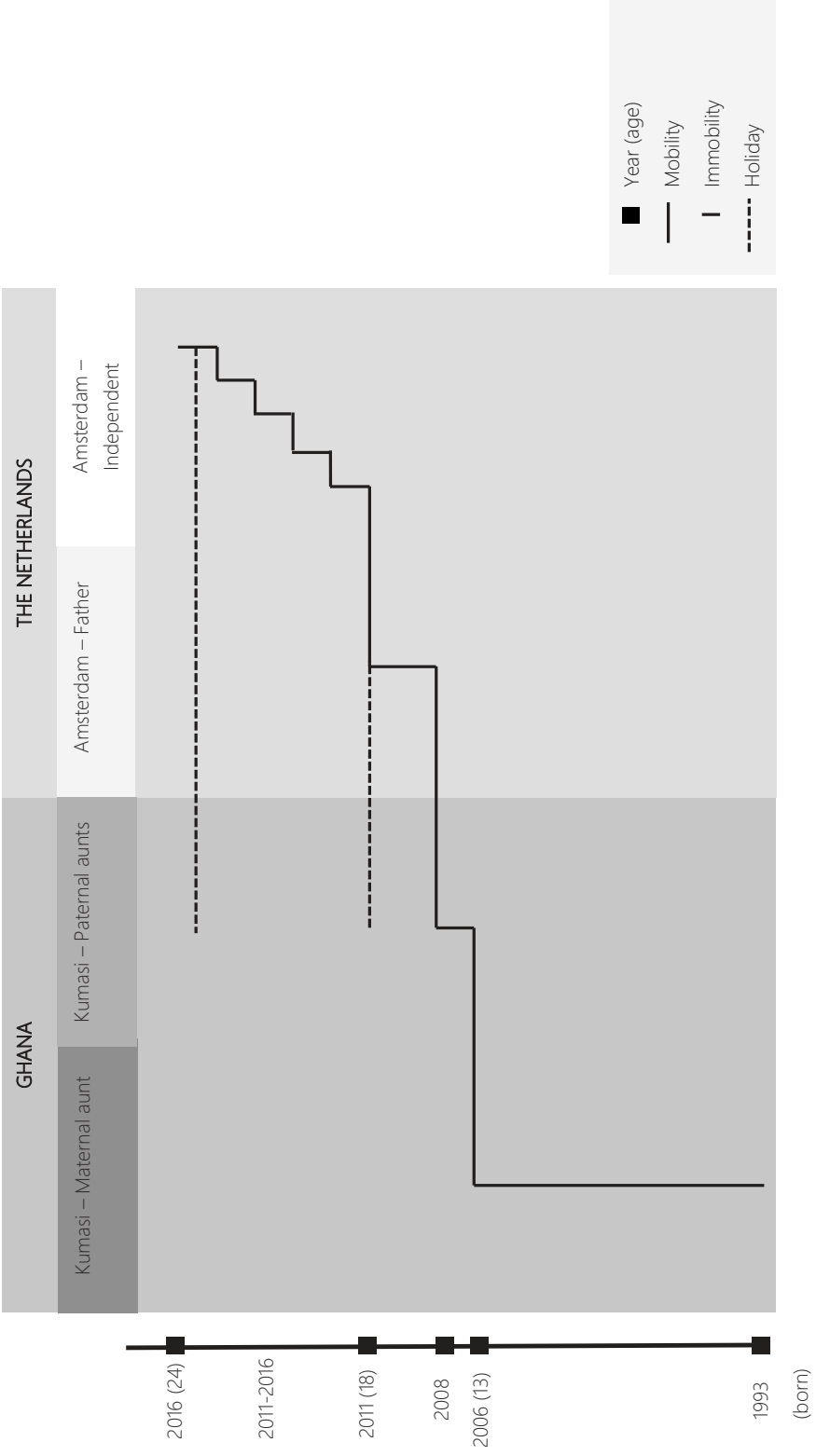
Figure 4.2.: Fuzailan's mobility trajectory. Source: fieldwork 2015-2016.

4.5.3.   Multiple national mobility

Bruno (25) plays with his straw while looking at a drawing in front of him, following the horizontal and vertical lines that I drew as his 'trajectory'. I let him look for a while. Almost inaudibly, he is mumbling the names and places that are written, 'Accra'... 'Winneba'... Soon, he begins to shake his head, indicating that the trajectory is incorrect. Together, we travel with our fingers over his path, correcting where necessary. Bruno was born in Takoradi and was still a toddler when his parents got divorced. Due to this divorce, he was relocated several times from his paternal to his maternal family, all living in Takoradi and Winneba, two towns on Ghana's south-west coastline. After his mother moved to the Netherlands, she left her three children in the care of her sisters. Bruno explains, 'Yes, I saw many different schools and regions. I have never had a problem with it. Every move brought me to a new place, with new people. In Ghana, this also means you have to learn a new language. I just really liked it! And when they announced another movement, I just thought: okay, another movement again, this was also just the situation. So I thought, okay this is it, let's do it. Through these movements, I have learned to find the unknown interesting. This is something that I have experienced all my life: one month here, one month there'. Bruno completed JHS7 after several moves between different aunts, and he then moved to an SHS boarding school in Anum, in the Volta Region. While he was boarding, his mother rented a house for her children in Accra. Bruno lived in Accra under the supervision of his older sister until his departure to the Netherlands at age 15. He has not yet returned to Ghana, but he is building a house together with his mother and sisters (figure 4.3).

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[7]   Secondary education in Ghana is divided into two successive levels that students enter after primary school: Junior High School, which follows primary school and lasts 3 years, and Senior High School, which also lasts for 3 years. It is common for students to be either a 'day student' or a 'boarding student'.

THE NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam – mother

GHANA

Anum – boarding SHS

Accra – older sister

Takoradi – maternal aunt

Winneba – maternal aunt

Takoradi – paternal grandmother

Takoradi - parents

2005
(15)
2003
2002
2001
1994
1992
1990
(born)
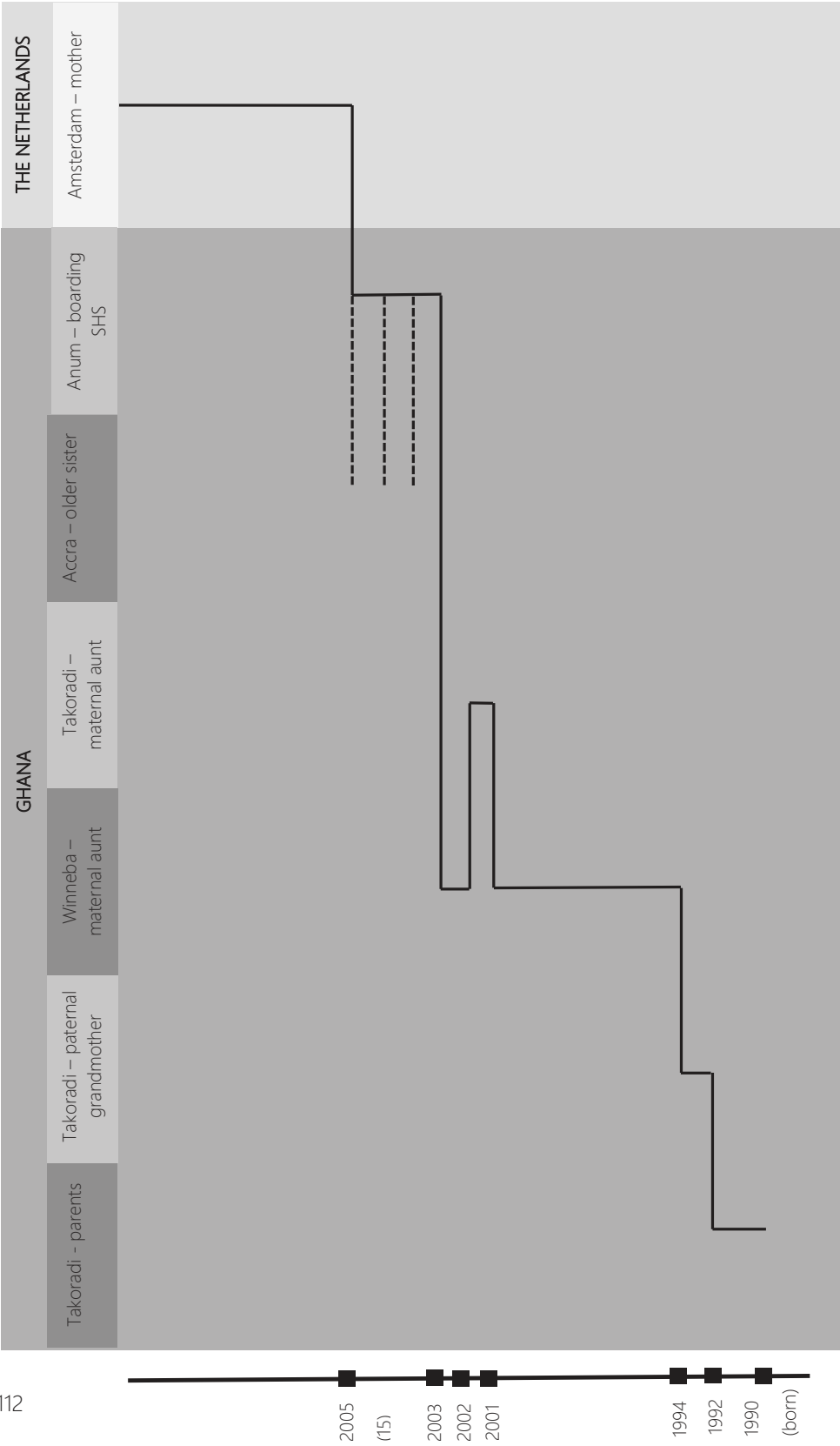
Figure 4.3.: Bruno's mobility trajectory. Source: fieldwork 2015-2016.

Contrary to Elyah's and Fuzailan's trajectories, Bruno has experienced frequent physical mobility in Ghana leading to his being cared for by numerous caregivers and moving to several different schools. In the absence of one or both parents who move abroad, it is common for children and youth in Ghana to be left in the care of others. This can be the other parent, another family member, or occasionally non-relatives (Poeze, Dankyi, and Mazzucato 2017). We know from a study of various African countries, Ghana amongst them, that the well-being of children and youth who stay behind while their parents migrate, is negatively affected if youth move from caregiver to caregiver (Mazzucato et al. 2015). Bruno's story, thus, raises several questions. How has his hyper-mobility in Ghana affected his outcomes in the Netherlands? Might his many adjustments that he has had to make while moving in Ghana, have negatively affected his well-being, or rather has his mobile background facilitated his ability to adjust to his international move, when he came to the Netherlands? Both of these questions highlight the potential interconnectivity between internal and international migration that gets hidden when the two are studied separately.

4.5.4. Multiple national and international mobility

'[...] and after eating I went to my grandmom and we talked for a while. I was soo soo happy to see her. So while we were talking I saw my grandfather I runned to hag him because it's been along time I saw him so I really do miss him. So we came as one family we talked and talked we were all happy'
Akua (18) wrote in her diary during her holiday in Ghana, summer 2015. Indeed, I observed her excitement when she was reunified with her grandparents in Ghana. Akua and her brother first lived with their mother in Ghana; their father was living in the US. Their mother left for the Netherlands and decided to entrust them to her older sister. Aunty, however, inflicted harsh treatment on Akua. They frequently clashed, as Akua rebelled against the unequal treatment she felt she and her brother received compared to her cousins. After complaining about it to her grandmother, who was infuriated by the aunt's behaviour, she was separated from her brother and began living with her grandmother in Accra. Her brother followed later. Meanwhile, her mother in the Netherlands wanted nothing but reunification with her children. She found a way to realise this desire through unofficial channels. Akua was 5 years old when she arrived in the Netherlands for the first time. Her mother's undocumented status, however, was heavily restricting their life. From finding stable housing to enrolling in school, everything was complicated because her mother was terrified to interact with any official institutions, stemming from a well-founded fear of being deported. In consultation with their pastor, it was decided to bring the children back to

Ghana because life in the Netherlands was unreasonably stressful under these circumstances. Seven more years of living in Ghana followed – again Akua was brought to her aunt because the school and living environment were considered more desirable in Akropong, and again she ended up with her grandmother in Accra after frequent clashes with her aunt. Living with her grandparents represents a period on which Akua looks back with fondness due to the warm bond she developed, particularly with her grandmother. During the interval of her children's absence, Akua's mother was able to meet the family reunification requirements. She brought Akua and her siblings to the Netherlands again, this time officially. By the time she arrived, Akua had was 14 years old. While residing in the Netherlands, Akua visited her father in the US once and her family in Ghana twice. Especially for the last trip in summer 2015, she is incredibly thankful because, although she did not know it at the time, it was the last time she saw her grandmother, who suddenly passed away in summer 2016 (figure 4.4).

Akua has experienced substantial mobility both within and between Ghana and the Netherlands, resulting in an alternation of long-term and short-term stays in both countries. Tracking Akua's moves within Ghana shows which people impacted Akua's life, both positively and negatively, and how her own agentic attempt to improve her situation resulted in more mobility. Knowing the negative impacts on wellbeing of frequent mobility caused by unstable caregiving arrangements, but also the importance of Akua's grandmother in her upbringing, the question emerges what impact mobility within a country (Ghana) might have on outcomes after an international move (the Netherlands) and how the separation from her grandmother impacted Akua's wel-being. This again emphasises the potential interconnectivity between internal and international migration as well as the importance of significant others who may not be living in the same country as youth currently live in.
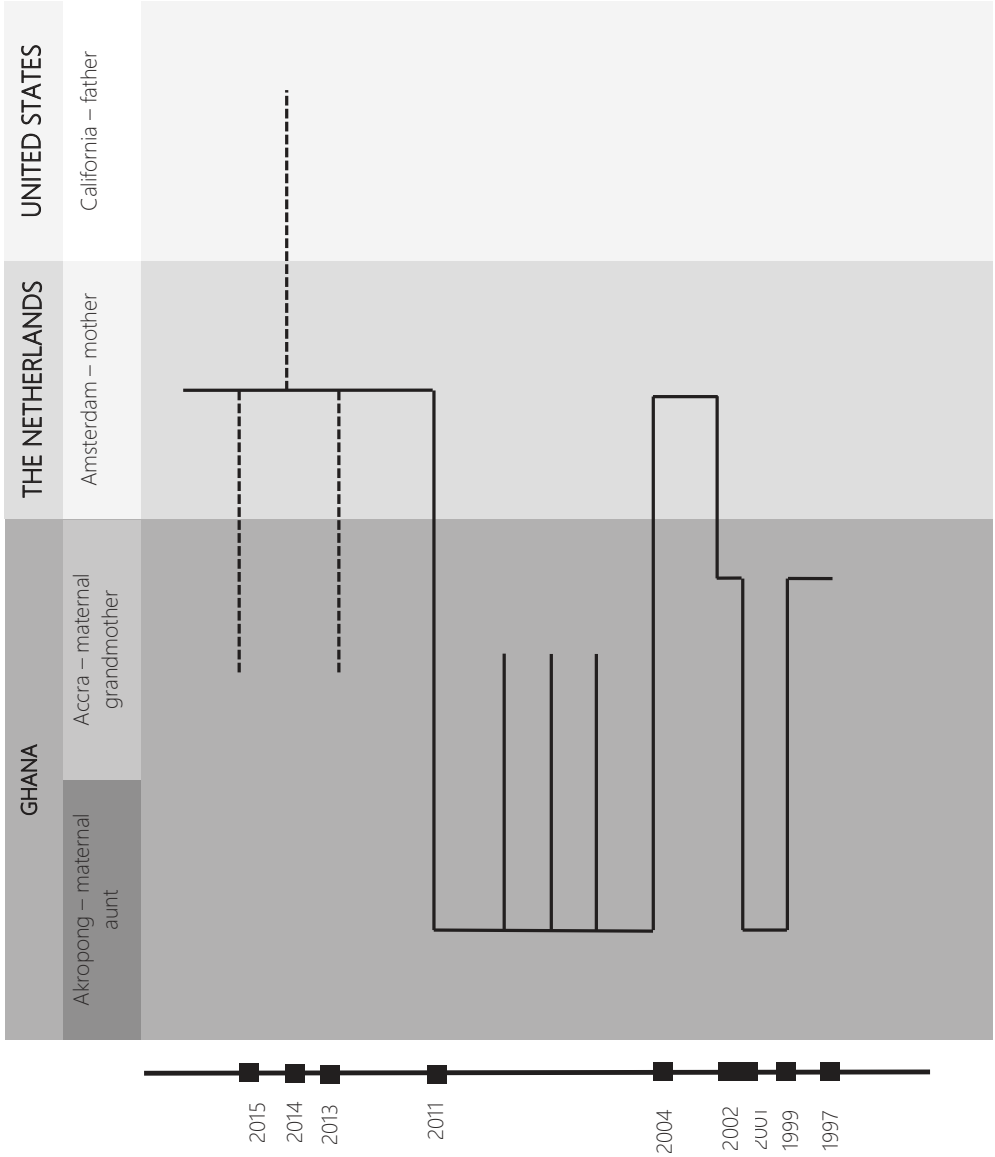
Figure 4.4: Akua's mobility trajectory. Source: fieldwork 2015-2016.

UNITED STATES — California – father

THE NETHERLANDS — Amsterdam – mother

GHANA — Accra – maternal grandmother

Akropong – maternal aunt

2015
2014
2013
2011
2004
2002
2001
1999
1997

4.6. Discussion

Table 4.1 shows that when we apply the 'first' and 'second' generation categories to our sample, the results appear rather homogeneous, as the majority of our respondents (25/30) would be classified as 'first generation' based on their country of birth (Ghana) and having made their first international move later in life. Even if we nuance the table and add a 1.5 generation category (6/30), the largest share of our sample would be defined as first-generation youth (19/30, not shown). Regardless of their immobility or mobility prior to, during and after their first international moves, they fall within one category based on their or their parent's first international move.

Table 4.1: Conventional conceptualisations compared to youth mobility trajectories.

Mobility trajectories	Conventional conceptualizations	
	1st Generation (25)	2nd Generation (5)
Singular national, singular international	8	0
Singular national, plural international	4	4
Plural national, singular international	7	0
Plural national, plural international	6	1

Source: fieldwork 2015 - 2016.

The variety of mobility patterns illustrated in the four vignettes vanishes in these conventional conceptualisations: Elyah, Bruno, Fuzailan and Akua all fall into the category 'first generation' or 'immigrant youth,' which fails to reveal the differences in their mobility patterns. We do not see that Bruno lived in six different localities prior to coming to the Netherlands, while Elyah only changed location once. We also overlook Fuzailan's holidays in Ghana, which he undertook on his own initiative after his first international move. The over-simplification of youth mobility through conventional categories becomes even clearer when we look at Akua's trajectory; such classifications would fail to capture her move away from her aunt, and it would not capture her repeated attempts at reunification with her mother in the Netherlands or her holidays that facilitated temporary reunification with her

grandmother and other kin. Categorising youth in terms of first-generation, second-generation or left-behind does away with *all* mobility that occurs prior to, during or after their first international move. These and other categories, such as 'immigrant youth,' give dominance to youth's place of birth, or sometimes to their parent's place of birth and the timing of their first international move as defining factors. Hence, they do not reflect the mobility that may characterise their childhood in Ghana, nor do they reflect the mobility that may have taken place internationally, apart from their first move.

Kin or others who may have played significant roles in a youth's lifetime may also remain concealed by conventional categorizations, as moves often entail changes in caregivers. However, when applying youth mobility trajectories, we see, for example, that Elyah spent his childhood surrounded by extended kin and was cared for in a collective setting while being nearly immobile. Or, in Bruno's case, we see the multiple households he has been a part of during the absence of his migrated mother. We know the importance of aunt Aasia to Fuzailan, the impact of her loss, and his attempts to temporarily reconnect to remaining kin during holidays. We also come to know the significance of Akua's circulation between her aunt and grandmother and her last holiday to Ghana before her grandmother passed away. Proximity and distance to relatives and other important people generated through mobility significantly shapes mobility trajectories beyond mere physical movement. To understand the importance of these dis-and-reconnections, it is crucial to have a situated and contextualised picture of the physical mobility patterns of youth.

In sum, categories such as 'immigrant youth' or 'first or second generation' or 'left-behind' are static representations of youth migration, capturing only one move: either a youth's first international move, or that of their parents. However, these are the main categories used in analyses that try to understand how migration impacts youth. Informed by existing literature and the analysis of our empirical cases, we argue that meaningful details – such as significant events in the form of holidays, or disconnections and reconnections with important others – can plausibly influence youth's outcomes. Take, for instance, Fuzailan's strong desire to unravel, during his holiday to Ghana, some important questions regarding his childhood. A focus on youth mobility trajectories enables us to understand the possible importance of such a journey for a young person's identity formation and feelings of belonging. Looking at Bruno's pattern of mobility prior to his movement to the Netherlands – and his positive assessment of his mobility experiences – makes us wonder if the frequency of his movements might have prepared him for a mobile life. Taking into account a young person's frequency and types of moves is the foundational condition for being able to understand the meaningful connections, reunifications and separations within a transnational family which may impact youth's psychological wellbeing, educational outcomes, and more

generally their future prospects. Hence, we argue that these questions can only be adequately answered if the actual mobility patterns of youth are accurately captured.

4.7.   Conclusion

By studying the life histories of young people of Ghanaian background living in the Netherlands, we have proposed 'youth mobility trajectories' as an alternative concept through which to study youth who have migration in their biographies. Such a concept allows the inclusion of relevant dimensions potentially impacting youth outcomes, than current categories that focus on the timing of one international move, either the youth's or that of their parents. The proposed typology builds on recent developments in migration and mobility studies that foreground time as a non-linear element that affects the way migration is experienced and given meaning in people's lives by taking three dimension of time into account: the frequency of moves, their timing in a life-course, and their duration. It further includes the locations lived in, and the people whom youth were connected to or disconnected from as a consequence of their mobility, identified as important elements by transnational family studies.

There are several advances made by using such a typology relative to first and second generation distinctions used in migration studies. First, the typology pushes research beyond the 'ethnic lens'. Migrant youth studies tend to focus on differences *between* groups of migrant youth categorised by their ethnicity or country of origin. This drives findings towards making ethnicity the important distinguishing category, without actually investigating if this is the case (Glick-Schiller, Çaglar and Guldbradsen 2005). This study has focused on youth of Ghanaian background as a case through which to study mobility in youth biographies *within* a group as a way to explore categories that do not take ethnicity as the primary category. Yet the typology here proposed, can be used with any youth -- so-called 'migrant' and 'native' youth -- as travel is increasingly popular and within reach of different kinds of youth. Our selection criteria, of youth with at least one international move, resulted in the four proposed types, but the typology can readily be extended to two more trajectory types, referring to 'single' or 'multiple' national mobility without any international mobility. These are the most relevant 'control' groups to which youth with mobility backgrounds can be compared. It is our contention that in order to fully understand the effect of mobility on youth, comparing mobile with immobile youth is more relevant than comparing them with 'native' groups.

A second advance of such a typology is that it allows moving beyond the artificial division between internal and international migration characterising migration studies (King and Skeldon 2010). By taking a processual view of migration that includes all moves a youth has experienced during her lifetime, mobility trajectories show how internal migration may precede international migration or how successive periods of internal and international migration may intertwine. Mobility trajectories thus allow the exploration of how having internal migration in one's biography may affect the way international migration is experienced and given meaning to and vice-versa.

Typologies based on mobility trajectories thus offer new possibilities for methodological and theoretical explorations. It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate the actual effects of different mobility trajectories, yet based on elements found to be important for non-migrant youth outcomes in child development or education studies, and through the vignettes presented here, we have proposed important domains for further investigation relating to how mobility trajectories affect psychological wellbeing, educational outcomes and their future prospects (see www.motrayl.com for a project that investigates this).

While the typology proposed is indeed another categorization of youth and as such, inevitably simplifies the individual experiences of youth, it nonetheless offers a way to include more complexity in the way youth mobility is conceptualised, by incorporating recent insights from migration and mobility studies and transnational migration studies in terms of time, space and transnational relationships. Our aim is to contribute to large-scale and quantitative analyses that continue to inform policy making on youth and their families in various domains such as education, social welfare, and employment, so as to include more complete conceptualisations of youth mobility, avoid presuming that ethnicity is the relevant category, and bring such analyses closer to the lived experiences of mobile youth.

Building educational resilience through mobility trajectories: Young people between Ghana and the Netherlands*

Image: Katerina spontaneously visiting her old school during her holiday in Kpong - Ghana. Source: fieldwork 2015-2016.

5.   Building educational resilience through mobility trajectories: Young people between Ghana and the Netherlands

5.1.   Introduction

Mobility among migrant youth in the form of visits to their country of origin is a common phenomenon (Haller and Landolt 2005; Schimmer and van Tubergen 2014). Scholars investigating the impact of migration on education, however, rarely investigate the relation between mobility and education (Gulson and Symes 2017; Mazzucato 2015). This paper analyses how young Ghanaians move within and between Ghana and the Netherlands – what we call their mobility trajectories – and how what transpires during these moves relates to their education, by concentrating specifically on their educational resilience.

Resilience is understood as 'a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity' (Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker 2000, 543). Educational resilience refers to resilience manifested specifically in the educational domain (Alva 1991; Waxman, Gray, and Padrón 2004). Getting through the school system can be a challenging experience for many migrant youth due to new curricula, new didactical cultures, or having to learn a new language (Adams and Kirova 2006). In the Netherlands, schools are segregated especially in urban areas (Onderwijsinspectie 2017), migrant students are often underestimated by their teachers in their abilities, and discrimination during internship applications, often a mandatory component of their curriculum, are persistent problems (Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving 2015; Rijksoverheid 2018). Furthermore, Dutch teachers struggle with what they perceive to be more complicated student-teacher relationships with migrant youth (Thijs, Westhof, and Koomen 2012).

Studies have argued that educational resilience is thus what helps migrant youth to further their education despite such hurdles (e.g., Alva 1991; Kumi-Yeboah and Smith 2017; Wu, Tsang, and Ming 2012). Very few studies, though, investigate young people's own perspectives and voices on this matter (but see, Li, Bottrell, and Armstrong 2018). Furthermore, educational resilience literature has to date focused on the resources that

young people have at their disposal in the country where they reside and go to school. Yet we also know from transnational migration studies that migrants continue to be engaged with their home countries in multiple ways, creating transnational social fields (Glick-Schiller 2005) or social spaces (Pries 2001). These studies have argued that these transnational fields or spaces are constituted by several national contexts that are relevant for understanding migrants' lives, relationships, aims and activities, pointing to the fact that resilience of migrant youth may need to be studied by looking at multiple countries, something that has not been done.

Finally, while transnational migration studies tend to focus on the international moves between home and host country, the new 'mobilities turn' literature pointed out that migratory experiences are shaped by (im)mobility prior, during, or after international migration (e.g. Carling 2017; Schapendonk 2012; Wagner 2017). This literature has recently started to follow migrant's specific moves through time and space, yet has rarely focused on youth, how mobility shapes the way they relate to transnational social fields or spaces, or how these mobilities are interrelated within the overall migratory experience (Veale and Donà 2014).

This paper combines literatures from mobility, transnational migration, and resilience studies to investigate whether and how being transnationally mobile is related to young people's educational resilience. We identify three mutually constitutive mechanisms which shape educational resilience through mobility: connection to motivational others, active recollection, and comparative confrontation. While the identification of these mechanisms comes from a 20-month multi-sited ethnographic study among 30 Ghanaians living in Amsterdam, we illustrate the workings of these three mechanisms through an in-depth comparison of two young men, Harley and Ebenezer, who were selected for being most-similar-cases (Gerring 2007). Through a mobility perspective (Urry 2007), this paper contributes to academic endeavours that investigate within-group differences (Fernández-Kelly 2008; Mazzucato 2015; Rutter 2012; Waxman, Gray, and Padrón 2004) to reveal why youth from equally underprivileged backgrounds differ in their educational pathways, with some excelling while others struggle. As such, we contribute to debates on how mobility relates to young people's education (Gulson and Symes 2017; Hoechner 2015), and in this case by investigating their educational resilience. We expand on the socio-ecological model of educational resilience developed within the field of psychology by deeply investigating the role of a transnational context within the socio-ecology of young people, taking their own views and experiences as analytical starting points.

5.2.   Theoretical framework

5.2.1.   Educational resilience and mobility trajectories

Scholars debate if and how migration impacts young people's educational choices, progress and outcomes (e.g. Kao and Tienda 1995; Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2008; Portes and Zhou 1993, Schnell, Keskiner, and Crul 2013; Sichling and Roth 2017; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2010; Turney and Kao 2009). These studies have established the multiple factors through which migration impacts education: socio-economic status, parental motivation, neighbourhood composition and resources, school context and support of significant others, being some of the most important. Yet, there is a tendency to exclusively focus on outcomes (test-scores, diplomas), leaving unexplored underlying mechanisms that enable these outcomes. Moreover, scholarship has hardly focused on how mobility other than the first international move relates to migrant youth's educational pathways (Mazzucato 2015).

Mobility scholars have urged that people's movements through space and time are pertinent in understanding contemporary social reality (Sheller and Urry 2006; Urry 2007). For migrants in particular, if and how they are able to travel may impact their migratory experiences, for example because a transnational life can be maintained, or because material and identity negotiations take place during mobility (e.g. Carling 2017; Schapendonk 2012; Wagner 2017). There is thus reason to investigate what and how specific mechanisms related to young people's geographic mobility shape their educational pathways.

Reasons to focus on mobility trajectories while studying educational resilience stem from recent theoretical insights in resilience studies. Recent, mainly psychological, research conceptualises individuals as embedded in systems, such as families and cultures, which provide access to specific resources that can build resilience, such as religion, cultural beliefs and practices (Holleran and Waller 2003; Masten 2018; Motti-Stefanidi 2018; Panter-Brick and Eggerman 2012; Ungar 2008). This differs from previous research which acknowledged context, but focused on personality traits, treating resilience as an outcome of individual characteristics (Masten 2014; Rutter 2012, 2015; Schoon and Bartley 2008). Thus within the recent ecological model of resilience, young people's resilience is formed through interaction with these systems. In times of hardship, cultural beliefs, positive identity and religious practices can 'provide a sense of continuity, connectedness, hope, positive identity, and meaning in life' (Masten 2018, 21). Retrospective narratives about family history, for example, build educational resilience in Black Caribbean youth in the UK (Franceschelli, Schoon, and Evans 2017), a finding that resonates with a study conducted with Mexican

migrant youth in the US (Fernández-Kelly 2008). Narrations of family resilience and community history instil a sense of meaning, pride, and endurance in youth.

Applying these findings to the domain of educational resilience implies that contextual factors such as family and neighbourhood composition, also qualify to be influential factors mediating the relation between migration and education, because they affect whether migrant youth can actually develop the educational resilience that is required after migration. Although psychological and migration studies both ascribe a central role to context, they seem to refer exclusively to young people's direct environment of residence.

Psychologists see healthy, warm, and supportive family relations (Masten 2018) as 'the relational foundation of resilience' (Franceschelli, Schoon, and Evans 2017). Most studies, however, deploy Western conceptualisations of 'family', depicting the 'family' as a nuclear unit and in geographic proximity of each other. Hence the focus of research has been overwhelmingly on the parent-child relationship (e.g., Motti-Stefanidi 2018; Xiang, Wong, and Hou 2018). A recent study conducted in Afghanistan has shown that 'caregiver-child' relationships are important for resilience building in cultures where not only parents but also extended family members partake in caregiving and rearing children (Panter-Brick, Grimon, and Eggerman 2014). A similar logic might be relevant for the educational resilience of migrant youth from West-Africa. Anthropological studies conducted in West-Africa, have shown that a nuclear conceptualisation of family is not universal. Norms of social parenthood, child circulation, or fostering are an integral part of kinship and child rearing practices in this region (Goody 1982). Furthermore, transnational family literature has shown that when parents migrate abroad and leave their children in their country of origin, transnational networks of care are established, due to which children may experience living and bonding with multiple caregivers (Fog-Olwig 2007; Mazzucato, Dankyi, and Poeze 2017). When youth migrate themselves, social networks can change again; young Ghanaians for example often experience a change in caregiver when they move internationally (see Chapter 4). Migrant families can maintain ties with loved ones in different nation-states through the use of modern communication technologies (Fresnoza-Flot 2009; Madianou and Miller 2011). Moreover, migrant youth's everyday lives are permeated by multiple cultural and societal contexts simultaneously (Levitt 2009).There are thus ample reasons to refute the common assumption made in studies on migrant youth that the most important or relevant others for youth are only those living in their geographic proximity.

By bringing together the literatures on mobility, transnational migration and resilience, we aim to investigate the ways in which a transnational context, including significant others who live beyond the nation-state where youth currently reside, are

important for young people's educational resilience. We investigate the roles that significant others who are not necessarily located in the same nation-state and the narratives and experiences that young people collect during mobilities, may play for building educationally resilient through an examination of mobility trajectories.

5.3.   Methodology

This study is based on 20 months of multi-sited (Falzon 2009) ethnographic fieldwork in the Netherlands (18 months) and Ghana (2 months).[8] The analysis draws on our entire sample comprising of 30 young Ghanaians (16 males and 14 females) between 16 and 25-year-old. The young people needed to have made at least one international move between Ghana and the Netherlands to be selected, but they could have been born in Ghana, the Netherlands or elsewhere, as long as their parents were of Ghanaian origin. Other selection criteria were that young people needed to have experienced attending school in both countries, and that their last mobility took place no longer than 10 years ago and when they were above the age of 12 for reasons of recollection.

The ethnography was conducted by living in a neighbourhood of Amsterdam where many Ghanaians live in order to be able to observe and participate in young people's lives in as natural a way as possible, by hanging out, meeting by chance, or going places together. However, access was difficult. Given the previous negative experiences with journalists and researchers (resulting in harmful consequences), the undocumented status of an unknown number of Ghanaians in the Netherlands, and countless negative encounters with white institutional actors, young people were hesitant to trust a researcher. After months of carefully building trust, repeatedly explaining to them the reason for my presence, a lot of hanging out, and obtaining consent, participant observations were conducted in significant locations such as schools, music studios, churches, homes, homework classes, barber shops, cultural events, and on the streets. These observations were complemented with life history interviews, creative writing exercises, network mapping, mobility mapping, photo exercises and informal conversations. We did not want to breach the relationship of trust we had with young people, and therefore did not involve relatives directly in our study. We did conduct 21 interviews with experts working with Ghanaian youth (teachers, psychologists, social workers) to obtain institutional perspectives, but these were not people tied specifically to the young people under study.

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[8]   The project received ethical clearance from the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Maastricht University.

During the course of fieldwork, 12 young people returned to Ghana for funerals, holidays and internships. In the summers of 2015 and 2016, we accompanied 7 of them on their journeys to Ghana, where we stayed with the families and participated in their daily routines. Additionally, young people who returned were asked to bring and discuss photographs in an interview conducted upon their return to the Netherlands. Four females participated in a diary project, in which they documented their experiences and feelings during their journeys. Others (particularly males) were less interested in the diary project and were therefore asked for interviews prior, during, and after their trip to Ghana.

We analyse within-group differences to examine why youth coming from a similar context in the Netherlands show different educational pathways (Fernández-Kelly 2008; Mazzucato 2015), rather than comparing young Ghanaians to an overall functioning of a total population as is commonly done in migration and education studies and studies on resilience (Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker 2000; Rutter 2015). We have selected two young men, Ebenezer and Harley, in order to build a most-similar-case comparison (Gerring 2007). Most-similar-case comparisons consist of comparing very similar cases that differ in the characteristic that is being studied, while being almost identical in all other characteristics of importance. We therefore study Ebenezer and Harley whose socio-economic backgrounds, family structure, 'first generation' migrant status, and their school environment are all very similar. They instead have different mobility trajectories. This allows us to investigate what can happen to educational resilience when mobility trajectories differ.

We pay particular attention to the mechanisms that are set into motion by the absence and presence, respectively, of high transnational mobility, identifying the relational and context-specific mechanisms that are associated with the transnational spaces young people navigate. We use Ebenezer and Harley in order to illustrate in an in-depth way how these mechanisms work. However, the analysis of their cases, and the selection of the mechanisms that we focus on, comes from the knowledge of the other 28 young people's biographies and the similarities in the mechanisms observed in their lives. We chose for this way of illustrating our findings, to be able to show the depth and complexity of young people's experiences. Through these case studies we aim to make a theoretical contribution to the conceptualisation of resilience and spur new research questions about potentially important resilience building mechanisms in youth who grow up transnationally. What follows in an introduction of Harley and Ebenezer's similar backgrounds.

5.4.   Analysis: two 'most similar' cases compared

5.4.1.   The Dutch context

Harley (19 years old) and Ebenezer (18 years old) operate in a virtually identical context in the Netherlands. The school contexts they navigate are similar. Both attended so-called *ISK*-classes: special classes for recently arrived students with a strong focus on Dutch language-acquisition. The student population of this particular secondary school they attended is predominantly of non-western or migrant descent. This school has fewer resources to cater to the special needs of its students and since 2014 has been classified as 'weak' by the Inspector of Education. After having left secondary school without a diploma, both attended schools with high drop-out rates (see next section) and high student populations with special needs.

Furthermore, Ebenezer and Harley come from comparable socio-economic, working-class backgrounds. Both boys are currently living with their mothers, pioneer migrants of their families who obtained a secondary education in Ghana prior to moving to the Netherlands. Harley's mother receives social benefits and occasionally earns some extra income with housekeeping. Ebenezer's mother is working double shifts and subletting his room to make ends meet. Harley's father provides an extra source of income while working and living in the US. Yet, this relative financial advantage that Harley has over Ebenezer is recent (as we will see below) and has not been invested in Harley's education (such as in language classes, homework assistance, or the like). Additionally, the two young men are living in the same underprivileged neighbourhood in Amsterdam. Although the neighbourhood has improved significantly through urban renewal projects, it still has a notorious reputation based on high crime-rates, social-benefit dependency and poverty rates (Onderzoek, Informatie en Statistiek Amsterdam 2017). Ebenezer and Harley live life rather alone – they have a handful of friends in the Netherlands but are reluctant to reach out to a wider peer network.

5.4.2.   Harley's and Ebenezer's educational resilience

Both Harley and Ebenezer need to develop educational resilience in response to the adversities they experience in school in the Netherlands. So far, their insertions into the Dutch educational system have been equally difficult, interspersed with discouraging experiences and a structural lack of support. In secondary school, teachers considered their *werkhouding* (learning attitude) insufficient; both left secondary school without a diploma,

which is an entrance requirement for post-secondary education. Their only possibility to eventually obtain a diploma was to enrol in schools that would grant them a supplementary certificate that allows them to enter vocational education. Both young men reported deeply unsettling feelings during this period, while among students who were diagnosed with learning disabilities or severe behavioural problems. Currently, they are both at the lowest level of their respective vocational trajectories, aiming for a diploma in 1 (Harley) and 2 (Ebenezer) years.

Ebenezer and Harley thus face similar educational challenges that require resilient responses if they are to complete their education with a diploma. Yet, their educational resilience differs significantly. Although it has its ups and downs, Harley's motivation can be seen in his actions; he requests extra study materials, completes his homework, is pro-active in fulfilling his internship requirements, seeks help on choices about schools, and, over time, has reported more confidence in his ability to obtain his diploma. Moreover, he resisted dropping out from a school with a 42.9% dropout rate among non-western male students (CBS Statline voortijdig schoolverlaters 2015-2016). Ebenezer, instead, is barely managing, despite being in a school with a significantly lower dropout rate of 16.8% amongst non-western male students (ibid.). Only a couple of months into vocational training, Ebenezer was reprimanded by his monitoring civil servant, and his absences accumulated to unacceptably high levels. Ebenezer was not motivated to find an internship and ended up taking one he disliked, did not complete his homework but copied it from classmates, and reported an overall confusion about what he was doing in this school. The clearest sign of his demotivation was his inability to show up altogether.

5.4.3.   Transnational context and mobility trajectories

Figures 5.1. shows that Ebenezer and Harley both grew up in Ghana and were left in the care of others while their mothers travelled to the Netherlands. Both boys' fathers were virtually absent during their childhood. Ebenezer was constantly moving between his primary caregivers – his maternal aunt and grandmother – and his father. Although Ebenezer's father was around, they did not develop a good relationship. Since coming to the Netherlands at age 12, Ebenezer has not visited Ghana, nor family or friends in other countries and has limited contact with his father who still lives in Ghana.

Harley, instead, has experienced multiple mobilities between Ghana and the Netherlands. While growing up in Ghana, he was living with his maternal aunt and later with his maternal grandmother in Accra. His mother brought him to the Netherlands at age 5

but had to return him soon thereafter because of her undocumented status, which did not allow her to provide sufficient care. At age 14, Harley returned to the Netherlands. He visited Ghana two times (at age 16 and 18). Harley did not know his father until he was 14. The family reunification of both boys with their respective mothers in the Netherlands after extended periods of separation was not easy, a common experience among the young Ghanaians in our study. Although both report frustrations and have regular clashes with their mothers, both are attached to their mothers.

By following these two young men's mobility trajectories, we investigate the meaning of these moves and how this impacts access and the opportunity to mobilise resources for their educational resilience. We first present Harley's and Ebenezer's (im)mobility experiences, and then analyse three specific educational resilience building mechanisms that are related to their mobility trajectories.
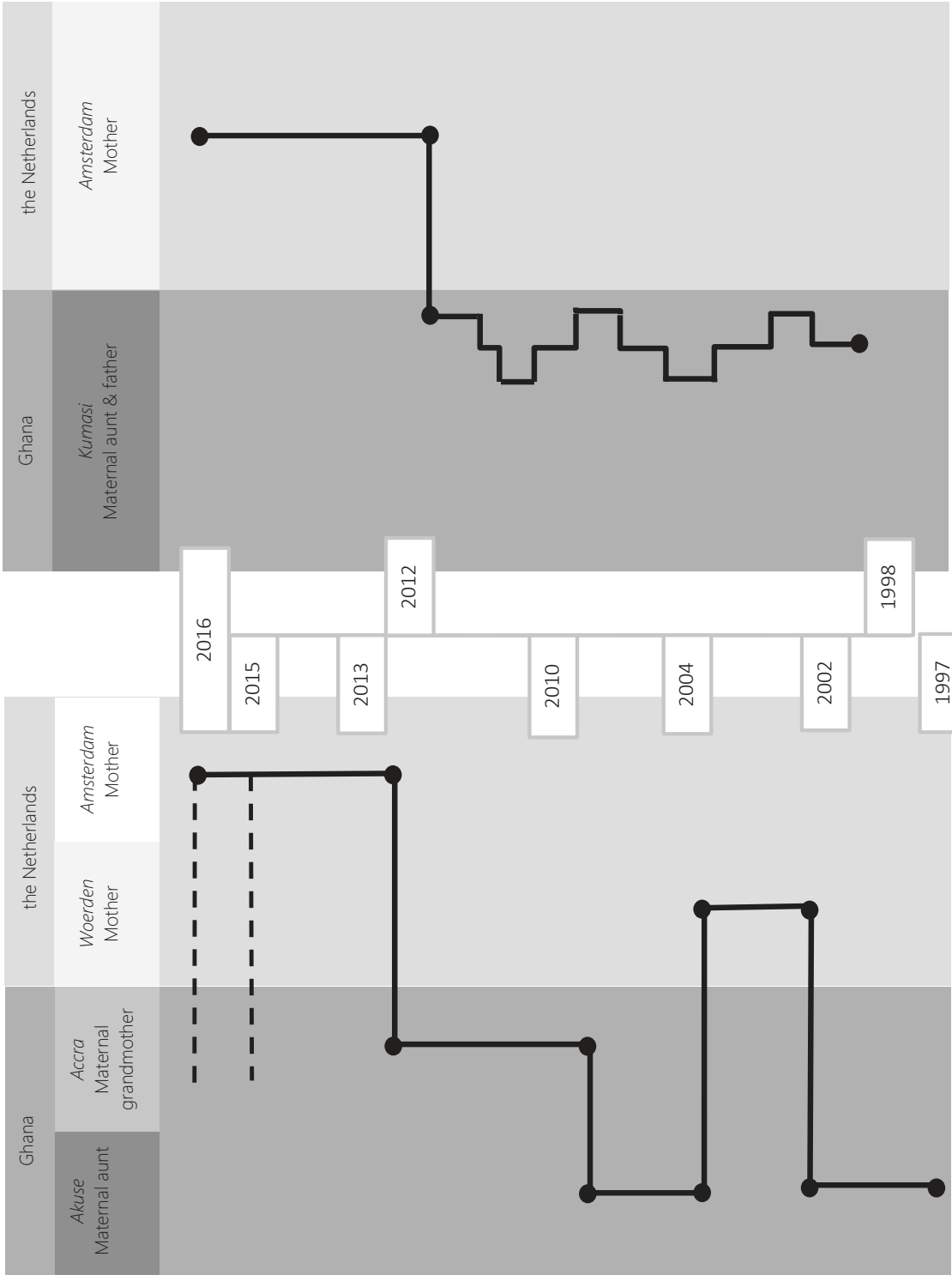
Figure 5.1.: Harley's and Ebenezer's mobility trajectories. Source: fieldwork 2015-16.

5.5.   Two Portraits

Harley

In a village in the Volta Region, Ghana, we are sitting in the living room of a head teacher's house. Across from the teacher one of his former students, Harley, currently on a holiday 'back home'. It was a spontaneous decision by Harley's sister to pay their former teacher a visit while strolling through their childhood neighbourhood. Harley is calmly answering the questions his former teacher raises in a gentle voice. How is he doing? What is he studying? How is the Netherlands? The visit turns out to be filled with compliments interspersed with expressions of kind yet insisting expectations: upon completion of his education, Harley must return to Ghana, his former teacher urges. The country needs him.

Once we return to his house, Harley drops sentences such as 'wow, that was a really good idea to go', while describing his former teacher as a 'very knowledgeable person, very sensible'. In the days that follow, Harley mumbles these phrases many times, with a broad smile on his face. When he recalls the visit, his bodily posture softens; he lifts his head and smiles. He cannot really verbalise why it was such a good idea, or why he did not want to go in the first place. However, viewed within the context of Harley's broader educational pathway at that point in his life, this event becomes significant. His encounter with this fatherly teacher, who complimented Harley extensively and was expressly proud and confident of his capacities to contribute something meaningful to Ghanaian society, was in sharp contrast with Harley's educational experiences in the Netherlands at that time.

When we return to the Netherlands, Harley explains that he feels supported by his friends and families in Ghana. He sporadically brings up the spontaneous visit to his previous teacher, always accompanied by the same broad smile on his face.

Ebenezer

Ebenezer is a restless young man and constantly apologises for this. I emphasise that I do not mind him throwing a ball, walking around, and changing position constantly during our conversations. This time he is lying on a mattress which he dragged into the darkened living room. He is giggling, tossing, turning, and wrapping himself in and out of a blanket. The curtains are closed: Ebenezer has been suffering from headaches these past few days. Nonetheless, Ebenezer is sharp and joyful, and at times enthusiastically waves his arms while narrating which he alternates with careful thinking while selecting his answers.

Since Ebenezer entered the Dutch school context at age 12, he was deemed a problematic student with disruptive behavioural problems. Several schools have tested him for disorders which were not detected. Interactions with teachers that escalated into conflicts, then suspensions and repetitive unauthorised absences leading to reprimands by monitoring civil servants: Ebenezer's list of negative encounters is impressive. The final decision to send Ebenezer to STOP-class, a last preventive measure against students dropping out, he believes, was urged by one of his teachers who systematically relegated him to an empty chair in the back of the classroom as he did not know how to temper Ebenezer's restlessness. Seated there, without a desk, Ebenezer was not allowed to ask questions or interact with other students. He failed the subject.

Gradually, Ebenezer reveals how misjudged, disappointed and unsupported he feels. He has adopted a strictly self-relying, cheerful, almost clownish attitude, one that conceals his inner caution and suspicion toward the intentions of others. School, however, is not the only issue occupying Ebenezer's mind. He explains that he can think about 'his life' until he gets severe headaches such as the one he has today. He recognises the type of headache that comes from deep thinking. Sometimes questions about himself, his life and his character bother him to the extent that he cannot get to sleep. 'You really want to sleep but you cannot because your mind is exploding. If someone could take a look into my head!! Everything is messed up there!'

5.6. Relational resilience and connecting to motivational others

Given the importance of healthy, supportive relationships for resilience (Franceschelli, Schoon, and Evans 2017; Masten 2018), we investigate young people's transnational networks. Harley's and Ebenezer's changing family constellations over time and space caused separation or reunification with family members, friends or teachers who are or have been important for them. Although communication can be enhanced by modern technology, network maintenance remains a challenging and dialectic process that benefits from regular face-to-face interactions (Haagsman and Mazzucato 2014). The young Ghanaians in our study generally expressed difficulty in managing pressures and demands they received through phone calls from family members and friends in Ghana. Moreover, insertion in a new school system, building a life in a new society can take time and energy, leaving some young people to concentrate more on their new lives 'here', while putting their lives 'there' on hold. Ebenezer struggled with his network maintenance, as he explains:

> 'I'm not that good with contact. But that doesn't mean you aren't in my mind! I can neglect calling you for 2 years, but you won't leave my mind. I'll think about you a lot. This is how it is with my grandmother. [When I ask him how thoughts about his grandmother develop, he describes:] Oh, I really need to call her, but then it doesn't happen. I don't know why, I swear, but it never works out. But that doesn't mean she isn't important to me, you see?' (Amsterdam, 20 March 2016).

Ebenezer's inability to maintain satisfactory family ties should be understood as intertwined with increasing problems, feelings of abandonment, and loneliness. Ebenezer's desire to maintain bonds with people in Ghana is counterbalanced by the nature of the contact he perceives from people in Ghana: forceful and disciplinary, as his mother called on help of family members to reprimand Ebenezer on the phone. This makes him reluctant to actively engage in communication with them. Ebenezer reported repeatedly that he did not have a supportive network. The only one he could trust and rely on, he felt, was himself. Unsatisfactory contact with significant people in his network cut him off from a resource that in Harley's case turned out to be a motivational one.

Harley, similarly, explains that 'advice' given by uncles and aunties through the phone can significantly pressure him. His holidays offered him the experience of quality time with previous caregivers. After his holiday in Ghana, he expressed an understanding of what he now came to see as well-intended advice of family members:

'I see it like you know, old people [referring to a paternal uncle] always say this kind of thing [do well in school]. They don't want their children to grow up being like something else, different' (Amsterdam, 10 October 2015).

Lengthy personal interaction with family members gave Harley the opportunity to reaffirm relationships and understand that advice and disciplining are signs of a caring relationship. Previous caregivers set aside time to listen to their complaints and concerns, and offer some encouraging words. Harley and his sister, for example, explained the trouble they experienced with their mother and in school to their aunty and previous caregiver. Their aunty listened carefully, while nodding supportively and calmly expressing her understanding with 'yes' and 'of course'. Then, she offered concrete strategies to peacefully interact with their mother, and added 'you have to accept it; you have two homes now' (Fieldnotes, 17 June 2015, Accra). Herewith, their aunty gives direction how to embrace the responsibilities but also opportunities created by their transnational life.

Mobility can generate proximity to former caregivers who young people may prefer in assisting them in formulating realistic and comforting solutions to the tensions they face, such as in Harley's case when struggling in school or facing difficulties after re-unification with his mother. Especially when reunification with biological parents in the Netherlands is troublesome after extensive periods of separation, it can be a relief for young people to reconnect to their former caregivers in Ghana.

Furthermore, physical presence in Ghana allows for serendipitous encounters. Harley's encounter with his former teacher, described above, is one such case of the many we observed in Ghana. They occur thanks to a rare combination of presence, timing, and luck involving people youth had not planned to visit. The accidental nature of these impromptu meetings is difficult to theorise (Gladkova and Mazzucato 2017). However, they do occur and their effect is remarkable. Explicit expressions of trust, pride, and confidence in young people's abilities from acquaintances boost their feeling of having a supportive network. Two months after we returned from Ghana, Harley explains "it's good that they [family members and acquaintances in Ghana] give me that advice, cuz, also I'm trying to do my best in everything I do" (Amsterdam, 24 October 2015). Harley shows that these encouragements can be drawn upon back in the Netherlands to help young people persevere in their education. Especially for those on a problematic track, these positive encounters in Ghana can be stimulating, given their contrasting experiences in the Netherlands. Without being physically present, the chances to meet a former schoolteacher or other significant others from Ghana, are significantly smaller. Mobility can generate the possibility for young people to maintain relationships with former caregivers or significant others in Ghana.

5.7. Active recollection

Recollections of the past are also important resources that can be drawn upon for resilience because 'your past makes you who you are' (Fernández-Kelly 2008; Fransceschelli, Schoon, and Evans 2017). Narratives of 'your past' can refer to the individual, family or community level, which provide access to stories of struggle that instil the feeling in youth that they can rely on a strength that is passed on within the family (Fransceschelli, Schoon, and Evans 2017). Ebenezer and Harley's mobility trajectories reveal that they lived with different people at various points in their lives. Especially after their first international move, young Ghanaians may begin living with a previously absent parent or relative who is unfamiliar with their childhood or family narratives in Ghana. Ebenezer's headaches strikingly indicate how the absence of this knowledge bothers him. He explains:

> *'I don't really know how I became like this... I have forgotten how I was when I was a child. That's a bummer, maybe I have changed due to something. Why am I like this? Maybe not, maybe I have always been like this'* (Amsterdam, 20 March 2016).

Ebenezer thinks that his aunt, with whom he partly grew up, would be a good person to describe him during his childhood. She is still living in Ghana and contact with her occurs primarily for disciplinary issues. Young people are not inclined to discuss sensitive topics virtually:

> *'But I am not really good with WhatsApp, you know. I just wanna sit down and talk, like this [pointing his finger at me and back to himself]. Just face-to-face. Sit and talk, I don't like it through WhatsApp, through the phone with these things. But maybe she has forgotten too, how I was'* (Amsterdam, 20 March 2016).

Young Ghanaians like Ebenezer experience difficulty in posing these questions over the phone. They do not avoid these sensitive questions only because of feelings of insecurity, awkwardness or shame. They also have huge feelings of responsibility and know very well that these questions could potentially disturb family relationships by awakening sensitive themes. In the delicate domain of relational questions, communication technologies, elsewhere proven to generate co-presence in transnational families (Baldassar et al. 2016), are therefore not sufficient for youth. Given the desired face-to-face interaction, prolonged immobility can lead to regretful situations, especially when prime caregivers and carriers of this knowledge pass away prior to youth being able to reconnect with them, such as occurred with 6 young people in our sample.

Active recollection may be stimulated by mobility. When in Ghana, active attempts are undertaken to explore broader stories – that of the family or glorious chapters of Ghanaian history. Young people sometimes undertook trips to reach out for this information on their own initiative, such as to Elmina Castle, a well-preserved slave trade settlement close to Cape Coast. Harley participated in a guided tour through Nkrumah Memorial, the Mausoleum built for Ghana's first and famous president after independence, Kwame Nkrumah. He eagerly soaked in the information, intrigued by the impressive strength of Nkrumah's post-independence ideological policies to free Ghana, and Africa, from its former colonial oppressors. Two months after he came back from Ghana, Harley listed Nkrumah as one of his role models, feeling inspired by his strength, boldness, and commitment. These narrations make young people knowledgeable about themselves, their family and Ghanaian history, and expose them to recollections of suffering – and, more importantly, of overcoming and stamina. Struggles with overseas contact when it concerns intimate and family histories, and the sensorial impact that physical presence generates highlights what Ebenezer is excluded from due to his relative immobility after migrating.

5.8.   Comparative confrontation

Mobility may also facilitates comparison and meaning-making. Meaning-making in life is important for resilience as it creates hope and purpose which makes perseverance worthwhile (Masten 2018; Panter-Brick and Eggerman 2012). In casual chatting with their former classmates or by simply walking down the streets in Ghana, young people are confronted with a set of conditions they have escaped because of their mobility. Being confronted with poverty, experiencing boredom and a lack of luxury in Ghana refreshes young people's memory of a reality that once was theirs or could have been theirs. During their holidays, they alternated between persistent complaining about everyday inconveniences – such as *dumsor*, the recurring power cuts, no running and hot water, the lack of a well-functioning Internet, open sewages and abject pollution in the city – with voicing admiration for how Ghanaians make a living despite all these difficulties. Surprisingly, many admitted that these hardships were filtered out of their memories.

Almost two months after his summer holiday in Ghana, Harley reflects on the educational and occupational position of his cousins in Ghana and concludes that, despite the long educational path that is before him, he is slightly better off in the Netherlands where youth unemployment is lower and social welfare guarantees a minimum income. His cousins, who are waiting to determine the actual value of their university diplomas in Ghana, are not guaranteed these social securities. Poverty, a lack of opportunities, the fierce desire

of many Ghanaians to 'make it abroad' despite their inability to achieve this dream, and the experience of what a hustle daily life can be in Ghana: all of this makes them realise the opportunities they received through migration.

Especially when young Ghanaians are at a critical juncture or at the bottom of the Dutch educational system, as Harley and Ebenezer, they can derive strength from comparative confrontation. It broadens their horizon beyond the Dutch setting, because their skills acquired abroad are unique and expressly welcomed in Ghana, as Harley experienced when visiting his former teacher. Ghana creates a field of future opportunities when young people realise the potentially valuable contribution they can make to the country's development. Comparison enables a meaning-making process that turns their struggles in the Dutch educational system into a purposeful experience – not only for themselves, but for a wider community.

Ebenezer expressed multiple times that he would not know what to do in Ghana. It was difficult for him to imagine what he could contribute there. For Harley, it was easier to imagine possibly meaningful futures in Ghana after his teacher had outlined to him how his skills could be of use there. The comparative abilities of young Ghanaians who never visit Ghana after migrating remain limited to the Dutch context, especially when they are positioned at the lowest social ranks or experience limitations in their possibilities to flourish. Selective memory, to which all humans are subject (Schaefer and Philippot 2005), filters out some aspects over others and confines immobile youth's abilities to compare and thus reframe their experiences in the Netherlands. Again, our analysis illustrates the significant building potential of actual physical mobility.

5.9.   Conclusion

By bringing together transnational and mobility literature with psychology literature on resilience, we added to scholarly understanding of the relation between migration and education. We have shown that by broadening the investigation to a transnational context, we become aware of potentially significant others who do not reside in the same nation-state as the youth, and experiences that are relevant for understanding the mechanisms for young people's educational resilience come to light. We have mapped 'mobility trajectories' which track young people's physical movements through time and across different geographical localities, identifying with whom young people lived, where and when over time. This has allowed us to identify and analyse the role of separations and reconnections with significant others, and resilience-building mechanisms that can be mobilised through mobility.

We have identified three mechanisms that can be activated through travels to Ghana. First, transnational relationships can be maintained or rekindled and opportunities for serendipitous encounters are created. Second, experiences in Ghana can serve to elicit active recollection while immobility reduces the chances of such recollections. These two mechanisms have been previously identified in the general resilience literature, but here we have shown how they work in a transnational context and in relation to educational resilience. Comparative confrontation, the third mechanism, emerged from our data as a new mechanism not previously identified by literature on educational resilience of migrant youth. This constructive mechanism helps give meaning and purpose to young people's attempts to strive educationally and is enabled by confrontation with the specific developmental context of Ghana.

There are three limitations to this study. Young males and females may vary in their experiences of connection to motivational others, in their active recollection, and comparative confrontation may occur during different, perhaps gendered activities. Given our small sample, it was not possible to identify whether there were gendered differences. Secondly, we have identified how specific dynamics are set in motion through travels to Ghana. However, it cannot be excluded that educational resilience may also impact young people's mobility patterns. Possibly the more resilient youth, may engage in more travels than less resilient youth. Disentangling this relationship is a fruitful avenue for future research. Finally, negative or disappointing reunifications with previous caregivers or significant others could possibly have a negative impact on educational resilience building. We did not encounter any such experiences but we cannot exclude such a possibility.

Our research into the mechanisms of educational resilience that can be set into motion through mobility leads to three theoretical and methodological implications. First, migration and education studies focus on measuring educational outcomes and mainly compare different groups based on origin country of the youth or their parents. More research is needed that considers within-group differences so as to gain an understanding of the mechanisms through which youth can become educationally resilient. Furthermore, educational outcomes that are broader than on-time school completion or grades and school level should be investigated as education can be gained outside of the schooling context, and especially for youth who are transnationally active, this is relevant for understanding their future opportunities.

Second, the socio-ecological model of resilience developed in psychology studies should be expanded to include contexts that are beyond the nation-state where youth reside. An analysis of young people's mobility trajectories reveals that significant others living beyond the nation-state than where youth currently reside, and their experiences

during their travels, are relevant for understanding the resources that are mobilised to build youth's educational resilience.

Third, it is important to recognise that young people can have their own mobility trajectories, independent of those of their parents or caregivers. By exploring young people's mobility in its own right, this study revealed how different types of mobilities composed a young person's mobility trajectory and how previous mobility gave meaning to new mobilities. For example, the significance of Harley's encounters during his holiday could only be understood through the knowledge of his prior mobility within Ghana and of his multiple caregivers. Mapping mobility trajectories thus allows understanding how mobilities interrelate and are meaningful within a broader migration experience.

Conflicting framings: Young Ghanaians' and Dutch educators' views on the impact of mobility on education*

Image: Pamela overlooking the sea while visiting Elmina Castle, a formerly Dutch slave trade point near Cape Coast – Ghana. Source: fieldwork 2015-2016.

6.   Conflicting framings: Young Ghanaians' and Dutch educators' views on the impact of mobility on education

6.1.   Introduction

School systems in industrialised countries increasingly receive migrant youth whose educational experiences are likely to include different forms of 'mobility', that is, the physical movements across time and between geographical locations and the changing family constellations that result from this (Mazzucato 2015). Mobility includes migration related to youth's first international move, but also other movements such as return, or onward migration, or home visits, for example for (religious) holidays, education, family visits, and internships (Kea and Maier 2017; Erdal et al. 2016; Haller and Landolt 2005). Mobility may also occur prior to migration within a young person's country of origin.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)[9] safeguards migrant youth's rights to both mobility and education (Article 10 and 28, see appendix A). Article 1 stipulates that countries must act in the 'best interest' of the child. Yet, problematic dynamics arise when the two rights intersect in the lives of migrant youth. Traditional forms of schooling usually serve settled students (Lightman 2016; Nelson 2004), but it is unclear how well they cater students with mobility in their biographies. In the four largest urban areas in the Netherlands, 4-6 out of 10 students consists of migrant youth (CBS 2017, 23). Furthermore, industrialised countries have different educational policies related to mobility, which raises the question which mechanisms shape educational policy design.

'Framing', the process whereby those who aim at designing new policies compellingly and consistently communicate value systems and political ideas, is a phenomenon that is intrinsically related to policy design and implementation processes. It influences which policies are deemed effective and feasible (Verger 2012). Butler (2009) describes framing as a discourse-shaping process that selectively constructs dominant

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[9]   (UNT vol. 1577). The CRC is ratified by both Ghana (1990) and the Netherlands (1995).

narratives, which influence the way phenomena are viewed and understood. 'Frame-analyses' have recently been applied to education policy controversies (Grek 2017). Yet, it remains unclear how mobility is framed in the institutional realm of education and how dominant and marginalised framings interact.

This paper examines the views of Dutch educators and those of young Ghanaians who engage in various forms of mobility between Ghana and the Netherlands. Here, 'educators' refers to the different actors who shape the educational landscape in the Netherlands – including teachers, *leerplichtambtenaren* (educational monitoring civil servants), education inspectors, and policy makers. The 'young Ghanaians' I refer to are the 16-25- year-old participants in this study.

The paper analyses the historical evolution of the *Leerplichtwet (Stb. 1900, 111)*, the Dutch law on education, as the most concrete legal actualisation of children's rights to education in the Netherlands. It reveals how a dominant normative narrative emerged that gradually problematized the impact of mobility on education, resulting in a legal infrastructure that prioritises the right to education over the right to be mobile. The paper then explores how this historically constructed narrative permeates the negative framings adopted by Dutch educators. In parallel, the views of young Ghanaians are analysed showing their positive perception of the impact of their mobility on education. To investigate how these framings are almost diametrically opposed, the paper addresses the following research question: 'how do Dutch educators and young Ghanaians frame the impact of mobility on education in contrasting ways?' The analysis will show that the powerful dominant national framing, embedded in historical narratives, contradicts youth's perceptions of what is in their 'best interest'. The conflicting framings consequently complicate the implementation of the CRC, but also provide a certain momentum for reconsideration of educational policies.

6.2.   Framing mobility in relation to education

Framing analyses can help to illuminate the dynamics of educational reform and change (Davies 1999), and to examine which variety of normalising discourses, symbols, and ideals underpin regulations and laws in the educational realm. The OECD is an influential player in framing new, 'evidence based' directions for global policy reform (Grek 2017). For example, the battle against literacy was successfully placed on the global educational reform agenda due to the re-introduction of the 'literacy-myth', whereby literacy is framed as a persistent and urgent problem that, eventually, blocks economic prosperity (Black and

Yasukawa 2014). Public-private partnerships for education in the development countries are another example of an approach that has gained increasing centrality due to convincing and consequential framing (Verger 2012). Pick (2006) identified how the re-framing of the purpose of higher education from a formerly social, economic, and cultural role to one that focussed more on expansion, marketization, and competition occurred in Australia.

Despite the recognised importance of studying frames, it remains unclear how mobility is framed in the realm of education. Studies that investigate the general framing of mobility usually conclude that mobility is viewed as having a dramatic impact on young people's lives. Beninese, Guatemalan, and Chinese children and youth who engage in locally accepted forms of mobility, and who independently make informed decisions about their mobility, are, for example, effectively framed as vulnerable victims of trafficking and ignorant parents (Heidbrink and Statz 2017; Howard 2017). Mobility becomes threatening and problematic, legitimising state interventions to prevent it, ostensibly in the child's best interest. Yet, these studies also show that such interventions misalign with young people's own understandings of their mobility and are ineffective.

In tertiary education the relation between mobility and education is often framed positively. At higher education institutions, internationalisation is fashionable, and students are increasingly encouraged to partake in international mobility for the purposes of their education (Hinton 2011). An example is the Erasmus Program, a European exchange programme to study a semester abroad set up by the European Union. The underlying normative assumption is that students' mobility leads to more rewarding educational experiences, greater independence, personal freedom, and broadened horizons (Holdsworth and Morgan 2005). However, this positive framing of mobility does not seem to apply to migrant youth's mobility between their country of residence and origin.

Butler (2009) theorised that frames are responsible for the powerful production of specific discourses which not only exhibit, but actively co-create what is narrated, enforced, and interpreted as 'reality'. Based on these dominant frames, national narratives and norms develop. These narratives shape how phenomena are understood (ibid.), and inform concrete policies designed by the state. The discursive formation of frames is performative and constructed through the repetition of historical narratives. Dominant frames are inherently exclusionary: they de-realise and de-legitimise certain, often marginalised, versions of reality. By imposing limitations on public discourse and debate they powerfully shape perspectives.

Marginalised framings and their potential to change dominant framings and policies are less studied (Davies 1999; Welsh and Chesters 2001). As noted by Skrbis, Woodward, and Bean (2014), few studies investigate how youth perceive the role of mobility in their educational projects. Some studies show that youth perceive formal education and mobility as positively intertwined because they hope and expect that education elsewhere will prepare them for the futures to which they aspire (Findlay, Prazeres, McCollum, and Packwood 2016; Skrbis, Woodward, and Bean 2014). Nigerian aspirant-migrants, for example, see mobility as a way to obtain overseas educational credentials (Adeyanju 2017), which they consider to be of higher value than a Nigerian equivalent.

Although these studies show that youth have thoughts on the impact their mobility has on their education, research has focused on youth's first international move or on youth in general. Studies rarely examine migrant youth's framing of other forms of mobility between country of residence and origin, or how their framings interact with the framings that are dominantly employed in the countries they migrate to. This paper therefore conducts an analysis of the framings of both Dutch educators and young Ghanaians.

Studies usually also focus exclusively on formal education, neglecting youth's broader educational experiences (Levinson, Foley, and Holland 1996). This is particularly problematic when dealing with transnational youth. Recent research indicates that migrant parents deliberately plan transnational educational projects for their children (Coe and Shani 2015; Kea and Maier 2017; Reynolds and Zontini 2014) through which migrant youth are (informally) equipped with tacit knowledge and skills that are applicable in multiple contexts. This study examines the acquisition of tacit skills and knowledge to enable a thorough analysis of Ghanaian youth's educational experiences. Tacit skills are treated here as 'practical ability or skills, acquired through habituation', following Bourdieu and Heidegger (Gerrans 2005, 54). When acquired through habituation, people develop skills implicitly, and these skills teach them how to 'comply with [a group's] fundamental cultural rules' (Gerholm 1990, 263).

6.3. A multi-sited, multi-method study

The Netherlands is an industrialised country with an increasingly ethnically and racially diverse student population in its secondary schools. Young Ghanaians are some of the more recently arrived groups, with Ghanaian migration to the Netherlands starting in the 1980s. This study focusses on them because there are few studies on recently arrived youth, with the majority of studies focusing on groups whose parents arrived as guest workers in the

1960s or who came from former colonies and thus have historical, linguistic, and educational ties with the Netherlands (Mazzucato 2008).

Young Ghanaians engage in very diverse mobility patterns that include different forms of mobility (see Chapter 4). Given their mobility, Ghanaian youth have experiences with Dutch educators who have to abide by the Dutch law on education. This law has a strong focus on physical presence, continuity, and attendance, and it restricts mobility. This case, thus allows me to carefully dissect the tensions inherent in the diversity of framings held by educators in a sedentary school systems and by mobile migrant students, a reality in many industrialised societies (e.g. Lightman 2016). It furthermore allows me to trace the historical legacies of policy design on current dominant framings.

This paper draws on three types of data that were collected during 20 months of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork in the Netherlands (18 months) and Ghana (2 months). The Leerplichtwet is the most concrete actualisation of children's right to education and therefore offered a relevant starting point for a descriptive analysis of the legislative framework concerning mobility and education in the Netherlands. Minutes of parliamentary debates discussing the Leerplichtwet between 1900 and the present were selected deductively. These parliamentary debates, especially prior to the 1969 and 1995 adaptations, offered the possibility to reconstruct the historical narrative from which a problematizing frame emerged. Later, inductively gathered keywords, mostly Dutch words that were used frequently in debates concerning the Leerplichtwet, enabled a second, more specified selection of minutes and other relevant state documentation. Additionally, policy reports on 'allochtonen' (1989), 'repeating class' (two reports in 2015), mobility amongst Bulgarian, Polish and Romanian children (2014), integration (2017), and the state of Dutch education (2016) were coded in their framing of mobility.

Additionally, I conducted 21 interviews with educators who either have a direct impact on youth's mobility or who influence the broader educational discourse: leerplichtambtenaren (monitoring civil servants), inspectors of education, teachers, school professionals such as psychologists and care-coordinators, and teachers of extra-curricular classes. I approached these educators via email and LinkedIn and through my network. The conversations were recorded, if permitted, and transcribed verbatim, and revealed how educators across the sector frame mobility in similar ways.

Last, ethnographic fieldwork with 30 young Ghanaians between the age of 16 and 25 allowed me to analyse their framings of mobility in relation to their education. In total, 16 males and 14 females from similar socio-economic backgrounds in the Netherlands participated. Young Ghanaians were eligible to participate if they had engaged in at least

one international move between Ghana and the Netherlands. During life-history interviews young people and I jointly mapped their 'mobility trajectories', a graphical display of their mobility from when they were born, including whom they lived with, where, and at which point in their life course. This then allowed conversations about family life, social networks, educational experiences, life in Ghana and the Netherlands, friends, and aspirations. This data were coded deductively for analysis. I conducted participant observations, a writing-and-diary exercise, and informal conversations, through which I gradually generated insight into youth's everyday lives, mobility experiences, and worldviews. Twelve out of the 30 young people returned for holidays and internships to Ghana in the summers of 2015 and 2016, 7 of whom I accompanied on their journeys. All quotes in this paper are anonymised to protect the identity of the participants.

6.4. The historical evolution of the *Leerplichtwet* in relation to mobility

The *Leerplichtwet* subscribes to the right to education and substantiates this right with a trio of obligations directed at children, caregivers, and the state. The bottom-line of the *Leerplichtwet* is simple: children between 6 and 18 years must go to school. For violation of the law in the form of unacceptable absences, children older than 12 can be sanctioned under juvenile law. Upon violation, caregivers can be punished with fines ranging between 100 and 100,000 euros. *Leerplichtambtenaren* (monitoring civil servants) are responsible for interim monitoring and corrections. The overall absence rates of the schools are collected by the Inspector of Education and included in the annual assessments of the schools, and then reported to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, and published online.

Several parliamentary discussions about the *Leerplichtwet* in the second half of the 20th century concerned the right to education and mobility. These debates illustrate an early emphasis on mobility as disruptive for education, ostensibly in 'youth's best interest'. In 1968, it was decided to delete 'absence of a permanent residence' as a valid exemption for not attending class (de Graaf 2000, 85). This change was considered desirable to equalise the rights of so-called *schipperskinderen* and *walkinderen* (literally translated: skippers' children vs children who stay on shore). Inland and overseas shipping has long been the backbone of the Dutch economy, requiring some families to live permanently mobile lives on the water. Although affecting a relatively small number of children whose parents still made a living on the water, the change in the law had significant implications for the lives of these shipping families.

Since this adaptation, it has become difficult to adhere to the *Leerplichtwet* while being mobile, unless parents can provide qualified home education or children are admitted to boarding schools (*schipppersinternaat*). The tendency to force mobile groups into sedentary systems, indicates that the entire notion of mobility was problematized, though there was no specific focus on migrant youth's mobility yet.

6.4.1.   The integration project

Since the 1960s, the importance of an effective *Leerplichtwet* regained attention in the context of migrant 'integration'. The Dutch government recruited workers abroad, predominantly men from Morocco and Turkey, to meet increasing labour demands (Bouras, Cottaar, and Laouikili 2009). Initially envisioned by the government as temporary 'guests', these workers stayed and brought over their families, contrary to the government's expectations. Between the 1960s and 1990s, mobility opportunities were not as accessible as today, and migrants' children were expected to settle indefinitely in the Netherlands. Hence, the main concern of policy makers was for the children of these families to enrol in and finish school[10]; education therefore became an important tool for 'integrating' migrants and their children. A recent report shows that educators in the four largest cities in the Netherlands remain concerned about their students' integration; some even describe integration as having 'failed' all together (van Grinsven, Woud, and Elphick 2017).

In the 1980s-1990s, parliamentarians addressed the need for systematic data collection that could validate their surmise that migrant youth were overrepresented in school absence rates[11]. Links were quickly suggested between criminality, unemployment, and drop-out rates of migrant youth (Crul 2000), increasing the desire for strict compliance with the *Leerplichtwet*. *Leerplichtambtenaren* of Turkish and Moroccan background who could conduct home visits[12] and information campaigns to educate parents about the importance of the *Leerplichtwet*[13] were proposed measurements to attract youth, particularly boys, to the classrooms and away from criminal circuits (Werdmölder 1985). Furthermore, male migrant youth's mobility in the form of holidays increased the risk of military service recruitment in a country of origin[14], further complicating youth's educational trajectories.

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[10] Wetenschappelijke Raad voor Regeringsbeleid. (1989). Allochtonenbeleid. Rapport aan de Regering: Den Haag.
[11] Notulen 13e Vergadering: vaste commissie voor het Minderhedenbeleid. 9 december 1991, e.g. p. 13.
[12] Notulen 19e Vergadering: vaste commissie voor het Minderhedenbeleid. 30 november 1987, p. 31.
[13] Notulen 19e Vergadering: vaste commissie voor het Minderhedenbeleid. 30 november 1987, p. 4, 7.
[14] Notulen 69e Vergadering: vaste commissie voor het Minderhedenbeleid. 15 maart 1984, p. 4.

Violations of the *Leerplichtwet* by Muslim migrant parents[15] raised specific concerns. Article 5c exempts from the *Leerplichtwet* children who receive education abroad. In an unknown number of cases, migrant parents reported that their children returned to their country of origin, and thus received exemption from the *Leerplichtwet*, when their children were actually in the Netherlands. 'The Muslim girl[16,17,18,19] is a reoccurring image brought up in these discussions, echoing what Roggeband and Verloo (2007) call the 'emblematic policy problem' of the Muslim migrant woman. The 'Muslim girl' is a strong, symbolic image that neatly fits into a discourse framing Muslim women as victims of their oppressive culture, in need of emancipation (Bracke 2011). The image of the 'Muslim girl', deprived of her right to education, is effective in addressing parliamentarians' concerns with sloppy compliance of the *Leerplichtwet*. Violation of her right to education by the other pillar in the triangle – her parents, who allegedly abuse her right to be mobile – stresses the protective responsibility of the state towards the vulnerable 'Muslim girl'. Her right to mobility directly corrupts her right to education. Thus, safeguarding her right to education crafts the path to emancipation, which presumably enlightens the 'migration community' as a whole (Roggeband and Verloo 2007).

Anxiety about the potentially negative implications of migration and mobility for education continues in public and parliamentary debates[20]. In 2009, an Inspector of Education suggested shortening permitted holidays for migrant children and youth because of the subsequent deterioration in the children's language skills (Obbink 2009). The Ministry of Social Security and Employment commissioned a policy research bureau to study children of Polish, Bulgarian, and Romanian migrants (Vogels, Gijsberts, and Draak 2014). Again, suspicion had arisen that migrant parents were violating the *Leerplichtwet*[21]. Mobility occurs among these migrant groups for holidays, seasonal labour, and interim travelling back-and-forth, presumably facilitated by the right to free movement within the EU[22] and the geographical proximity of the countries of origin.

The report concludes that mobility leads to a wide range of problems, based on the views of 29 professionals interviewed in the study (Vogels, Gijsberts, and Draak 2014). In their view, mobility interrupts migrant youth's educational paths, impedes Dutch language

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[15] Notulen 13e Vergadering: vaste commissie voor het Minderhedenbeleid. 9 december 1991, p. 6.
[16] Sometimes referred to as 'het Marokkaanse meisje' or 'het islamitische meisje'.
[17] Notulen 33e Vergadering. 17 mei 1994, p. 1772.
[18] Notulen Kamervragen. Vergaderjaar 1991/92.
[19] Actieprogramma Minderhedenbeleid. Vergaderjaar 1984/85, 16102, nr.89, p. 11.
[20] Kamerstukken II, 2006/07, 30901, nr. 3.
[21] Kamerstukken II, 2010/11, 27407, nr. 116.
[22] Schengen Agreement, a treaty of free movement of people that applies to Polish residents. Since 2014, The Dutch labor market is open to Bulgarian and Romanian residents.

acquisition (ibid., 42), has consequences for migrant youth's emotional stability, and creates a sense of 'uprootedness' (ibid., 59). The accumulation of all these mobility-related problems hinders migrant youth's integration and participation in Dutch society (ibid., 38), causing undesirable 'adaptive problems', as with their Turkish and Moroccan predecessors (ibid., 7).

The debates and subsequent legal adaptations made to the *Leerplichtwet* reveal how mobility has historically been framed in the political and public domain as detrimental to education. We see the increasing tendency to frame education and mobility as mutually disadvantageous, even in the case of holidays to a home country, a narrative that is repeated throughout for decades. Education became an integral part of a wider integration project, and in this, the Netherlands is not unique (Erdal et al. 2016). Adult-centred reasoning, conceivably in an attempt to design regulations in 'the best interest of the child', has resulted in the prioritisation of the right to education over the right to be mobile. Having identified the dominant normative trend to frame mobility as problematically related to education, we can now move on to educators' frames which are informed by these national narratives.

6.5. Educators' framing

6.5.1. Language problems and the Dutch curriculum

Educators are responsible for shaping and implementing the educational system that mobile youth must navigate. They face a challenging task to ensure migrant youth's successful navigation of a school system that is almost exclusively in Dutch, the 'language of power' in the Netherlands, and that concentrates on a rather specific national curriculum. As such, mobility, both in the form of migration but also sustained or intermittent mobility, was primarily framed as complicating the language acquisition process. Educators pointed out in interviews that learning a language is significantly easier during early childhood and when children are exposed to a language without interruption. They repeatedly maintained that mobility complicates youth's chances to eliminate what they refer to as 'arrearages' and makes it harder to master Dutch at the level required to pass exams. For this reason, they believed that if mobility has to take place, it should be timed as early as possible in a child's life and happen only once.

Furthermore, current institutional structures do not allow for a validation of migrant youth's previously developed skills. Educators confirmed this phenomenon, describing how they underestimate youth, consider skills inapplicable, or even consider previously acquired

skills to unnecessarily complicate the learning process. Educators often feel they must start 'all over', because they assume that Ghanaian youth's previous schooling does not match the educational level in the Netherlands, as explained by the following secondary school teacher:

> *'Because children who come here, sometimes without a diploma... yeah? Then, then, teachers think that, well, this is a white slate, this is nothing, I'll start all over. Right from the beginning. We will start with table 3, or 7. But that can be a wrong estimation. [...]. As in, just to be sure with Ghanaian kids. [...] Ghanaian students tell this to me. I didn't know, students told me themselves, it's demotivating them. [...] 'Aargh, why are you not attending your classes?' 'Oh, Sir, I'll only learn table 3, I already did that! [in Ghana]' (Amsterdam, 31 January 2015).*

Educators reported high levels of boredom among Ghanaian youth regarding subjects such as mathematics and biology. Curricular repetition as a result of underestimation is possible in a system that does not validate previously acquired skills. This dismissal of youth's previously acquired skills in the Dutch educational system is a key source of young Ghanaians' frustrations, as we will see below.

Educators were also concerned that skills acquired through mobility may complicate students' progress. For example, an English teacher differentiates between Ghanaian youth's 'higher' and 'lower' levels of English vocabulary. Because Ghanaian youth mix their English with Pidgin and their vocabulary is shaped by watching Ghanaian News channels, their English does not match the academic UK English that is tested in Dutch schools, a teacher explained. Pidgin English is spoken by millions of people from Sierra Leone to Cameroon, in the Pacific and the Caribbean, which arguably makes it a useful skill somewhere, but not necessarily in the Netherlands. The integration objective of education identified in the parliamentary debates thus permeates the arguments of these educators: only UK English, part of the standardised Dutch curriculum, will move youth forward educationally in the Netherlands.

6.5.2.   Demotivated youth and the invisibility of their tacit skills

Educators also problematize the impact of mobility on youth's emotional state and personal development. They frequently refer to youth as 'uprooted' and 'confused', not knowing if they belong 'here' or 'there', because of their mobility. Educators believe that mobility in the form of holidays to a country of origin unnecessarily intensifies these feelings (Vogels

et al. 2014), and they link a presumed lack of rootedness with educational disengagement. Youth lose their willingness to invest in a future when they are 'unplugged' from their country of origin, while not integrating well in the Netherlands either. When I explained to an inspector of education that young Ghanaians in my study remain mobile for various reasons after their first international move to the Netherlands, he commented:

> 'I'm shocked'. [J: Yeah?]. 'Yes. That [mobility] is always bad for children. It's bad for your development. The Dutch law on secondary education says that schools are responsible for an uninterrupted developmental course. That's simply stated in the law' (Utrecht, 22 December 2015).

This educator finds mobility undesirable because he considers it disruptive to youth's overall development, impacting emotional strength and impeding educational continuity. Educators tend to frame mobility as emotionally disruptive. As we will see in the next section, this fundamentally diverges from young Ghanaians' own assessments of their mobility. Educators' framing of mobility does not account for the motivational effects that mobility may have on youth's education (see Chapter 5). Instead, educators worry about dual loyalties and identity confusion which they assume are inherent in mobility. Here, educators echo discourses about the necessity of continuity and stability for educational success, seen, for example, in the parliamentary discussions when mobility was deemed too disruptive for successful educational engagement.

Educators struggle to recognise and validate the tacit forms of knowledge gained through mobility. Following global trends, the Dutch educational system is strongly driven by testing: students' abilities can only be discerned by the test outcomes they produce (Carnoy, 1998). Testing is considered to be of great importance, as explained by an inspector of education:

> 'That is why I always call for testing, you know? Look, every time you have to... Tests are not invented to punish people, but to indicate what has to be done by teachers' (Utrecht, 22 December 2015).

Testing is a subject of fierce debates in the educational sector in the Netherlands (Evers and Kneyber 2013). Tacit forms of knowledge are not necessarily measurable, at least not in conventional testing procedures. As such, tacit knowledge remains overlooked because it cannot be validated through testing. Moreover, even when educators do recognise the tacit knowledge youth acquire, they do not always consider it to be beneficial. Tacit knowledge earned through mobility can, in their view, be an indication that youth have not adapted 'enough' to Dutch standards.

Educators do believe that the risks posed by mobility can sometimes be mitigated. Parents play a crucial role in facilitating a smooth educational transition, in which timing is considered important. A *leerplichtambtenaar* reflected on a recent case: the mother of a 14-year-old Moroccan boy contacted the school the day her son arrived at Schiphol Amsterdam Airport, after having lived with his grandmother in Spain for some years:

> *'I have told the mom: well that wasn't quite convenient, you know? [...] She should have made that call earlier, then he could have entered school straight from Schiphol. But okay, the damage was done, he is here now'* *(Amsterdam, 20 January 2016).*

The educator explained that the parents of mobile children are usually underequipped to deal with the institutional regulations they are confronted with when engaging in mobility. In the educator's opinion, migrant parents lack knowledge about how to facilitate a smooth educational transition during or after mobility. Consequently, mobile young people can be out of school for prolonged periods, interrupting educational continuity. Therefore, parents should preferably not expose their children to (further) mobility. This reasoning places the responsibility of the timing of mobility on the parents, while previous studies show that the Dutch law on reunification, which only applies to children under 18, forces parents to withdraw their children from their schools at very unfavourable moments (Poeze and Mazzucato 2016).

The mitigating circumstances referred to by educators reveal that they consider mobility undesirable unless the parents can guarantee well-integrated educational projects, for which specific capital is required. This attitude places the main responsibility for educational success on youth's and parents' shoulders: given sufficient adaptive capacities and the parents' ability to facilitate the adaptation process, mobility in the form of migration or otherwise does not have to be problematic. Yet, not everyone who desires to be mobile possesses the capital to facilitate streamlined international schooling. As such, the educational system does not cater to the reality in which mobile students desire to become educated.

Educators' concern with educational continuity is understandable in a system with a static national Dutch curriculum that leaves no room for the validation of previous or tacit skills. This makes language 'arrearages' a direct burden, predominantly for teachers. Educators' rhetoric hence echoes the 'integration' language used in the parliamentary debates about the *Leerplichtwet* adaptations, showing that the educators adopt and confirm the dominant negative framing of mobility in relation to education. This paper will now consider the marginalised framings of Ghanaian youth.

6.6.   Youth's framings: mobility and education positively intertwined

6.6.1.   Mobility enriches education

Ghanaian youth in this study generally framed the impact of mobility on their education positively. Bruno explained how his mobility within Ghana enabled him to engage in different educational institutions and enriched his personal development:

> 'Yes, I saw many different schools and regions. I have never had a problem with it. Every move brought me to a new place, with new people. In Ghana, this also means you have to learn a new language. I just really liked it! [...] Through these movements, I have learned to find the Unknown interesting' (Amsterdam, 31 March 2015).

Bruno frames mobility as a means through which he developed curiosity and acquired linguistic skills. Likewise, mobility in the form of migration from Ghana to the Netherlands is perceived as a way to experience different educational contexts or acquire credentials at highly ranked institutions, as explained by Hakim, Ebenezer, and Daniela, respectively:

> 'I came here [to the Netherlands] because of school. Here classroom are culturally diverse. That is very good' (Amsterdam, 5 February 2016).

> 'In the Netherlands you get good education, and you don't get beaten [...]. In the Netherlands it feels like you are not doing a lot, but you learn a lot. In Ghana it's like this: you do a lot, but you don't learn anything really. And that's not possible, you see, because in Ghana, oooh! Your teacher only has a book and he will copy that, and you will need to copy too, write, write, write, hahaha! So, you do a lot. Yes, here [in the Netherlands] you can go to school in peace' (Amsterdam, 25 September 2015).

> 'And he [Daniela's father] was like: it [the University of Leiden] is a really good school, it ranks high in the universities in the world. [...] When he gave me this idea, yeah that is a really good idea. I can actually live somewhere else, apart from there – Ghana. And then go to school' (Amsterdam, 25 April 2015).

In these narratives, mobility generates exposure to educational experiences that were beyond reach within youth's context of origin. Moreover, Hakim and Daniela, like other youth in this study, frame education as the main purpose of their mobility. Most youth in this study came to the Netherlands through family reunification procedures. While family reunification may have been the legal route that enabled their mobility, they perceive education as the objective of their mobility. Youth's own narratives reveal how their mobility becomes purposeful and meaningful to them.

6.6.2.   Motivation and Tacit Knowledge

Mobility also stimulates motivation and builds tacit knowledge, helping young people to further their educations in the Netherlands and maintain their transnational lives, such as discussed in Chapter 5. Alex failed to obtain his *propedeuse* (requirement to pass the first year of tertiary education in the Netherlands) twice (2015 and 2016), which upset and demoralised him. However, when I met him during his holiday in Ghana in the summer of 2016, he faced the start of a new year's study in the Netherlands with refreshed courage and enthusiasm. When I asked Alex how he regained motivation to enrol again, he answered:

> *'That has developed here [in Ghana], I see it is not worth it [dropping out]. You will do your best for other people, you will take that initiative. But if you won't be successful later, no one will take care of you. So you have to focus on yourself. I don't mean to be egoistic' (Kumasi, 28 July 2016).*

Confrontation with Ghana's political and economic state of development and reconnection with family and friends during a holiday motivates youth to perform educationally (see Chapter 5). A few months later, I visited Alex at his new school in the Netherlands and asked him how he felt:

> *'I feel stable, stability. When I came back from Ghana I thought I might wander, but no. I don't want to waste time. I started to prepare' [for school] (The Hague, 13 October 2016).*

Alex successfully obtained his *propedeuse* in July 2017. His assessment that his journey to Ghana had led to internal stability is diametrically opposed to the views of Dutch educators, who are concerned that mobility unnecessarily destabilises youth. Alex also explained that

mobility instilled in him useful knowledge and skills, such as the ability to realistically imagine life in Africa, something his Dutch classmates were lacking.

Daniela and Harley had similar experiences. Harley gained knowledge about Kwame Nkurumah, the first president of Ghana after independence while being on a holiday in Ghana in 2015. In my fieldnotes I describe how eagerly he kept asking questions during the guided tour. Upon return to the Netherlands Harley discusses Nkrumah as a role model who inspires him to continue his education. Informal learning, in Daniela's case about her own capacities to adapt to Ghanaian work culture, was an important part of her learning goals during a self-arranged internship of six weeks in Ghana, as I recorded in my fieldnotes:

'When Daniela and I walk to the door, I ask her how she looks back at the internship [in Ghana]. She will not get ECTS23 for it, nor a diploma or certificate. But [...] it was something that she wanted to do for herself. She wanted to know if she could do it' [adapt to the work culture in Ghana] (Fieldnotes, Accra, 31 July 2016).

Daniela envisions an international career for herself. She expected that one needs to adhere to different behavioural standards in different professional contexts, and she wanted to acquaint herself with these differences in work-culture through direct exposure. Although she did not acquire content-specific knowledge that could be translated into ECTS during her internship, she did discover that she is capable of adapting herself to culture-specific expectations. This shows that Daniela equips herself, through mobility, with knowledge and tacit skills that are important for a successful transnational life in which different contexts and cultures need to be balanced and negotiated (Levitt 2009). Being mobile thus provides youth with knowledge and skills that enable them to be mobile and to sustain a transnational lifestyle (Coe and Shani 2015).

Young people's perceptions of mobility as positively impacting education are embedded in societal narratives in Ghana and West-Africa more broadly, which frame mobility as a means to generate access to informal and formal education and critical life experiences (Hashim and Thorsen 2011; Langevang and Gough 2009).

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[23]   Credit system employed in European Universities.

6.6.3. Frustrations and disappointment

Although young Ghanaians frame their mobility and education as positively intertwined, they often experience an educational reality that contrasts sharply with their hopes and ideals. Consequently, the positive stories of Ghanaian youth often had a bitter tone. Their enthusiasm rapidly transformed into frustration and disappointment. Young Ghanaians sense the dismissal of their skills. Edwin sent me a cartoon portraying an elephant, monkey, fish, dog, and other animals lined up (see figure 6.1.). Seated behind a table, a teacher says, "for a fair selection everybody has to take the same exam: please climb that tree". Edwin expressed his irritation at being tested on a narrowly defined set of outcomes, while other qualities were overlooked. In additional to going unrecognised, previously acquired and tacit knowledge young Ghanaians were also misinterpreted by educators. For example, Jennifer was judged by a teacher as 'anti-social' when exhibiting humbleness, which is appreciated in Ghana, instead of pro-activeness, which is favoured in Dutch classrooms.

Figure 6.1. Cartoon sent by Edwin.
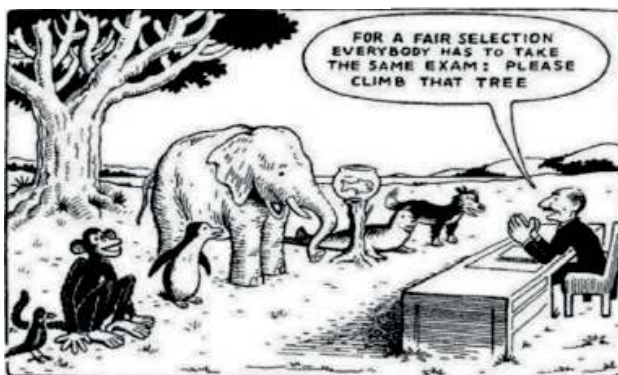
Source: fieldwork 2015-2016.

Cartoonist: unknown.

Young Ghanaians also experience institutional hurdles that block their access to education. The following vignette about Kofi is based on interviews and fieldnotes. It describes how he, despite his enthusiasm, was denied entry to school for nearly five years:

> *Kofi was excited once: 'I felt it would be great to receive some European education'. What frustrates him most is that he could not manage to get into school in the Netherlands, which was the only reason why he wanted to*

migrate at age 17. He failed repeatedly to enter Dutch educational institutions; his Junior High School diploma was not acknowledged; his Senior High School diploma was delayed due to his incapacity to pay his overdue tuition fees; he was not admitted to reception classes in secondary schools after turning 18, he did not master Dutch at the required level to study Law. Demotivated, he decided to forego his aspiration to receive formal European education. In October 2017, I visit Kofi in Ghana, where he is currently enrolled in the University of Ghana, one of the top Universities in Ghana, studying Law. He proudly guides me over the campus. Finally, he is where he wants to be: in school.

Although young Ghanaians frame their mobility and education as fruitfully intertwined, embedded in societal appreciation of the mutual influence of mobility and education in Ghana (e.g. Hashim and Thorsen 2011), they experience many obstacles that lead to frustration in the Netherlands. In many cases, the obstacles they confront produce feelings of discouragement, occasionally drop-out, and even greater mobility, as Kofi's case illustrates.

6.7.   Interactions between dominant and marginal framings

The conflict between the two framings of the relation between mobility and education emerges for two reasons. First, young Ghanaians and educators draw on different notions of 'education', arriving at different assessments of how mobility impacts education. Young Ghanaians appreciate the informal education they gain and tacit knowledge they develop through mobility because it enables them to maintain, and prepare for, a transnational life. Educators, however, focus solely on formal education. They see mobility as problematic and overlook the knowledge and skills developed before or during mobility.

Second, the conflicting views stem from the imbalance between dominant and marginalised framings. The discussion of the parliamentary discussions and the evolution of the *Leerplichtwet*, identified a normative narrative which problematizes the impact of mobility on education, informing policies and regulations that protect the right to education by constraining mobility. I showed how educators adopt this negative framing of mobility and use similar rhetoric to describe problems that they associate with mobility. Through this repetition, the negative framing of mobility becomes confirmed, reinforced, and dominant. Even though the *Leerplichtwet* was formulated in compliance with the CRC's first concern to act 'in the best interest of the child', it rejects the alternative empirical realities and perceptions of mobile youth. The analyses in this paper has revealed that educators'

framing of mobility neglects the perspectives and experiences of the very people whom they are concerned to help. Following Butler (2009) that framing produces a partial narrative, I argue that this framing excludes the marginalised frame of young Ghanaians.

Although dominant framings have tangible consequences for those targeted by policies, frames are not deterministic (Butler 2009). The analysis of the empirical realities of young Ghanaians here – their frustrations, the mismatch between their perceptions and lived experiences, and their mobility itself – demonstrates that their (subversive) agency implicitly demands for structural change within the educational system. Young Ghanaians (subversively) contest the dominant frame and demand educational settings that cater to their transnational needs and mobile realities. The framing conflict I have discussed thus also offers a window for change in an era where an increasingly mobile student population has diverse educational needs.

6.8.   Conclusions

Framing analyses tend to focus exclusively on dominant framings (Davies 1999), and research on how the impact of mobility on education is framed are rare, while framing appears to be an influential process in educational policy design. This paper has shown the value of understanding how the impact of mobility on education is dominantly framed, how it is historically constructed in an industrialised country with a school system based on sedentary notions, how it permeates the views of educators, and if and how it interacts with marginalised framings.

Furthermore, by foregrounding young people's own views and experiences, I have shown that their educational experiences are not merely 'formal' ones. Therefore, we need a more comprehensive conceptualisation of 'education' that encompasses informal education in order to capture and determine what is valuable to learn in an era of increasing mobility. Conceptualising education more broadly will help us to move beyond what Lightman (2016, 13) refers to as the 'static assumptions of Global Northern schooling superiority', and permit a more inclusive understanding of how mobility impacts education.

The framing of mobility that young Ghanaians formulate are possibly entrenched in national Ghanaian narratives about the relationship between mobility and education. This relationship may also be reverse – education could influence mobility patterns. Both issues lay beyond the analytical scope of this paper but present fruitful avenues for future research.

They promise to expand our understanding of the dynamics between marginalised and dominant framings and the relationship between mobility and education.

Drawing on the above three theoretical and conceptual insights, my research has broader societal implications. Educational systems throughout the world have undergone surprisingly few adaptations in response to globalisation (Carnoy 1998; Nelson 2004). According to the World Economic Forum, the 21st century requires fundamental skills from youth: 'adaptability', 'social and cultural sensitivity', 'cultural and civic literacy', 'curiosity' and 'persistence', to mention a few. This paper has shown that young Ghanaians build some of those skills through their mobility. Yet, educators and politicians only seem to adopt a more positive rhetoric towards tertiary students whose futures are imagined to lie in increasingly globalised occupational settings. In contrast, we need educational policies that recognise that everyone occupies a globalised world.

The 1969 and 1995 adaptations to the *Leerplichtwet* were initiated in response to 'changing societal circumstances' (Carmiggelt 2001). Are the laws and regulations developed during a time when student populations were more homogeneous and sedentary still suitable in times of increasing global youth mobility? Perhaps, the time is ripe to discuss how educational and legal infrastructures can fruitfully integrate youth's right to mobility and education. Policy changes might begin with the validation of previous credentials to prevent the students becoming frustrated and bored. A recognition of the positives of mobility promises a more nuanced framing of the impact of mobility on education.

Summary and conclusions

Image: Abdullah at the beach, 2016 – the Netherlands. Source: Abdullah.

7.   Summary and Conclusions

7.1.   Summary and main findings

This thesis has investigated the relationship between the mobility trajectories and educational experiences of Ghanaian youth. To understand this relationship, Chapter 4 investigated the different mobility patterns in which Ghanaian youth engage and sought to find a concept that allows an analysis of this variety. Chapter 5 and 6 then explored two 'shaping mechanisms' that influence the relationship between mobility and educational experiences on different levels. This chapter first presents the most important findings of these three empirical chapters.

Chapter 4 presented the great variety in mobility that was observed amongst the young Ghanaian participants in this study. Inspired by the literature, the chapter sought to map and systematically analyse the mobility patterns of young Ghanaians and to capture them in their totality. Based on the empirical data, a typology was devised that distinguished different trajectories. The typology identified four types of youth mobility: 1) single international mobility, 2) multiple international mobility, 3) multiple national mobility, and 4) multiple national and international mobility. These four types were illustrated with the mobility trajectories of Elyah, Fuzailan, Bruno and Akua.

The different types of mobility are composed of two juxtapositions. The denotations 'national' and 'international' refer to the geographical space where mobility occurred, either within the borders of a 'home' country, in this case Ghana, or across borders, in this case between Ghana and the Netherlands and sometimes third countries. The denotations 'single' and 'multiple' express the frequency of mobility: single entails not more than one move, and multiple entails more than one move. While all young people in this study experienced at least one international move, these denotations focus attention on what differentiates mobility trajectories within the typology.

The typology is not meant as a new universal categorisation of youth mobility; within-group analyses of other migrant youth may require including other that different, locally meaningful forms of mobility are included in the design in order to distinguish one trajectory from another. Yet, the advantage of the typology is that it accounts for the

empirical diversity and complexity while allowing for systematic analyses of the types of mobility young people engage in.

In comparison, other approaches oversimplify actual mobility trajectories. When conventional categories such as 'first' and 'second' generation, or even 'immigrant youth', are applied to the analysis of mobility, the variety in mobility patterns vanishes. Commonly deployed categorisations of migrant youth are thus problematic. Young Ghanaian participants' mobility patterns reveal more complexity than can be observed when applying conventional categories to migrant youth. The topology presented in this thesis, in contrast, is based on the actual evolution of a young person's mobility pattern, determined by mapping her or his movements through time and between geographical locations and concomitant changes in family constellations. As such, the typology allows us to analyse the complex 'mobility trajectories' that are generated through a contextual and situated understanding of mobility patterns and the significant others young people live with.

Chapter 5 investigated the first 'shaping mechanism' of the relationship between mobility and educational experiences: 'educational resilience'. This shaping mechanism is particularly pertinent to investigate because migrant youth in the Netherlands experience structural hurdles in the educational system. Youth can only reach their potential when they develop enough educational resilience in this context of educational adversity.

Three mutually constitutive ways by which mobility helps to construct educational resilience were identified through a careful tracking of the mobility trajectories of two young men. The first, physical mobility can facilitate network maintenance that can help young Ghanaians to (re-)connect to motivational others whom they are separated from due to their migration. Physical mobility can enable the rekindling of ties with previous caregivers, which helps youth to situate the disciplining attempts and advice they receive through the phone in a relationship of care. Previous caregivers can be powerful motivators, as we have seen with Abena's grandparents who encouraged her to strife for success in school (see 1.1. introduction). Physical mobility also can enable unanticipated, serendipitous encounters with significant others, such as the spontaneous visit Harley paid to his former schoolteacher. These impromptu reconnections can only take place when youth are physically present in Ghana.

The second way mobility can contribute to the construction of educational resilience is through 'active recollection'. Here, recollections from the past, either in the form of childhood narratives or broader historical narrations, can serve as a reservoir to build strength and stamina in youth. Knowing who you are and where you come from appeared to stimulate the young Ghanaians in this study who were facing educational difficulties.

Distant or mobile family members can play key roles in articulating these narratives. As shown in Chapter 4, many young Ghanaians experienced frequently changing family constellations due to their own or family members' mobility. This implies that the carriers of childhood narratives often reside in different geographical locations. To have proper access to the narratives, young people need to be mobile because young Ghanaians considered face-to-face contact desirable when discussing sensitive topics. Moreover, timely mobility can ensure crucial access to carriers of knowledge before they pass away.

Thirdly, mobility seemed to enable 'comparative confrontation' whereby the contrast with Ghana's current socio-economic and political situation produced realisations in youth about their lives in the Netherlands and potential future contributions to Ghana's development. In Ghana, family and peers struggle to get valuable diplomas and/or suitable employment. People navigate a polluted and visibly poor environment, and at times experience basic services such as running water and electricity that are dysfunctional. Young people's experiences on visits in Ghana seemed to encourage a comparison with their lives in the Netherlands. In this comparison, young Ghanaians realise that Ghana presents a context where skills and knowledge acquired in the Netherlands can be of great value to their family members or even to Ghanaian society at large. It also makes them conscious of the advantages they enjoy due to their move to the Netherlands. Both realisations inspire them to continue their education.

The findings of Chapter 5 showed that a young person's individual mobility trajectory potentially influences their educational experiences. Comparing a type 1 (single international mobility) pattern (Ebenezer) with a type 4 (multiple national and international mobility) pattern (Harley) revealed that what transpires during moves undertaken by young people shapes educational resilience, which eventually affects their education. The comparison between the two young men showed that Ebenezer's immobility blocked his access to resources of resilience that were accessible to Harley. The three ways in which educational resilience was built in the type 4 trajectory, but which were inaccessible in the type 1 trajectory, indicate that different mobility trajectories may trigger particular 'workings' of mobility. Young Ghanaians' educational experiences can thus be shaped by the way a mobility trajectory evolves.

The second mechanism shaping the relationship between mobility and educational experiences, 'framing of mobility', operates at a level different from the previous shaping mechanism. Educational resilience was predominantly produced within families and at the level of interpersonal interactions. Chapter 6 explored a mechanism that is formed by wider normative and discursive societal trends, or frames, that structure the institutional context that young Ghanaians navigate.

Chapter 6 showed that particular framings, employed by those in relatively powerful discursive and political positions, become dominant when they are repeated over time. Dominant narratives inform concrete policies that impact youth mobility and education. The analysis of the evolution of the *Leerplichtwet* showed how political debates in the Netherlands gradually framed mobility as disruptive for education. Mobility was problematized for the children of skippers, who were living mobile lives on water. This resonated with political debates about the importance of equally educating every child in the Netherlands. Later, when the Netherlands began to receive guest-workers and their offspring, the mobility of migrant youth was problematized because it was considered to interfere with integration and emancipation objectives. More recently, mobility has been framed as threatening to psychological stability, creating a sense of uprootedness in migrant youth. The tendency has been to legally safeguard stability by complicating mobility. Essentially, young people's right to education has been prioritised over their right to mobility, ostensibly in youth's 'best interest'.

The accounts of educators echoed this negative framing of mobility in relation to education. The educators discussed in Chapter 6 appeared to perceive migration and more intermittent forms of mobility as complicating language acquisition. Moreover, skills and knowledge acquired through mobility were often either dismissed by educators, or viewed as impeding curriculum acquisition. Others did recognise tacit skills in their migrant students but noted that current system does not allow for the validation of those skills. Contrary to the perceptions of young people themselves, educators furthermore framed mobility as negative for emotional stability and overall development.

The empirical data presented in Chapter 6 show that Ghanaian youth and their Dutch educators frame mobility in almost diametrically opposed ways. The views of mobility expressed by Bruno, Hakim, Ebenezer, Harley, Daniela, Jennifer, and Alex who engage in different types of mobility trajectories (type 1, 2, 3, and 4), illustrate how the young Ghanaians in this study generally framed their mobility as positively related to their education. Referring to mobilities of different durations, levels (national/international), and types – migration, internships, holidays, and return-mobility –, their depictions met on common ground: mobility was framed as purposefully undertaken and beneficial for their education.

As we have seen in Chapter 6, but also in Chapter 5, youth gain educationally from their mobility when they are motivated and acquire tacit knowledge and skills through formal or informal channels. The sort of adaptive skills Daniela was able to develop during her self-arranged internship were considered important to young Ghanaians. They described these skills as useful for a successful life in which different contexts and cultures

need to be negotiated and as they develop transnational future pathways. Concentrating on young people's narratives thus reveals how mobility is purposeful and meaningful to their personal development and education.

The framings of the impact of mobility on education by Dutch educators and young Ghanaians' conflict for two reasons. First, both draw on fundamentally different notions of education: Dutch educators focus almost exclusively on explicit knowledge and curriculum acquisition, while young Ghanaians subscribe to a broader definition of education that includes tacitly and informally acquired knowledge and skills. Second, the dominant framing of Dutch educators does not include young Ghanaians alternative, and more positive, framing of how mobility impacts their education. The dominant framing ignores the views of the very people whom educators are ostensibly concerned to help. Not seriously engaging young people's own perspectives and understandings leads to the marginalisation of their views. It ensures that their empirical realities and what is in their 'best interest' remain poorly understood.

Despite young Ghanaians' enthusiasm about the potentially positive impact of mobility on their education, they often reported high levels of frustration. The analysis of Chapter 6 showed how their initial enthusiasm transformed into disappointment in the face of a wide range of obstacles encountered in the Dutch educational system. Young Ghanaians like Edwin and Jennifer found that the knowledge they acquired prior to or during mobility was misjudged or misrecognised. Others, like Kofi, faced such significant institutional hurdles that they did not even manage to enter school. Instead of mobility being beneficial for their education, as they had anticipated, it became detrimental to it.

The analysis of this thesis indicates that the dominant framing of mobility in relation to education in the Netherlands overwhelmingly excludes alternative framings. However, young Ghanaians actively formulate alternative narratives in which tacit and previously acquired knowledge and skills are valued and where mobility helps them to become educationally resilient. By continuing to be mobile and by seeking ways to validate their mobility experiences, Ghanaian youth implicitly demand an educational system that caters to their needs as transnational students.

7.2.   How mobility shapes educational experiences; answers and implications

7.2.1.   The relationship between mobility and education unpacked

The central question in this thesis was how young Ghanaians' mobility trajectories shape their educational experiences. This thesis has identified two shaping mechanisms: educational resilience and framing of mobility. Educational resilience does not directly produce educational outcomes; it rather influences how mobile youth eventually come to certain outcomes. Educational resilience provides youth with motivational incentives and courage to continue despite the educational hurdles they experience. The shaping mechanism educational resilience is constructed interactively in the transnational social field and in the local institutional context, the latter usually firmly embedded in nation-state contexts and policies. In the transnational social field, here mainly consisting of young people's transnational networks, Ghanaian youth have access to a reservoir that provides them with resources and enables them to train themselves for a transnational and mobile future. This does not imply that Ghanaian youth become hyper-mobile people to whom the nation-state becomes irrelevant. Rather, it shows that during mobility, young Ghanaians develop important skills for the future. Their experiences during mobility influence their educational experiences in the Netherlands.

Yet, the relationship between mobility and educational experiences is not formed in a social and political vacuum. The second shaping mechanism, the framing of mobility, does not operate directly between mobility trajectories and youth's educational experiences, but rather informs the extent to which mobility trajectories can influence the educational experiences of Ghanaian youth. Against the backdrop of wider socio-political circumstances, the framing of mobility produces the boundaries within which mobility can impact educational experiences. This becomes clear when we consider the conflicting framings of Ghanaian youth and their Dutch educators. The negative framing of mobility that prevails in the Netherlands has tangible consequences for Ghanaian youth. Laws and regulations are formulated in line with dominant framings, and these determine the extent to which mobility trajectories are permitted to influence educational experiences. Hence, the nation-state prominently influences the way mobility trajectories can or cannot shape Ghanaian youth's education.

Both shaping mechanisms are permeated with ideas and ideals about childhood. Childhoods across the globe are diverse, underpinned by different ideas about how young people ought to be socialised and educated to become socially accepted adults. Sedentary

childhood, associated with presumed stability, continuity, and consistency, is the underlying model of child development. This model opposes childhood models in which mobility is perceived as an integral aspect of child development. The investigation of young Ghanaians' experiences in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, showed that modern childhood, in contrast to the sedentary-based ideal, can be characterised by mobility and discontinuity. Chapter 5 demonstrated that the educational resilience-building process is informed by ideas about what is locally perceived to be good for children. But educational resilience building also reflects what family members and young Ghanaians understand to be important skills for a future that is not necessarily based in one locality, a future that continues the transnational trend often started by earlier generations.

Similarly, Chapter 6 revealed that the institutional and socio-political sphere in the Netherlands is informed by Western notions about how childhoods should ideally evolve. National educational institutions in the Netherlands are, as we have seen in Chapter 6, powerful regulatory bodies that facilitate the sedentary childhood model through the implementation of regulations. A mismatch between ideals about youth, mobility, and education results, leading to inevitable pressures upon transnational students. These pressures are created by intolerance towards alternative childhood experiences in which mobility can be a valuable resource and subsequent attempts to mould transnational youth into national, Dutch, subjects.

7.2.2.   Implications for research

The answers to the main research question of this thesis – how do young Ghanaians' mobility trajectories shape their educational experiences? – have important implications for research, predominantly for studies that are concerned with how migration affects education. This study problematized research that tends to treat mobility and migration as distinct forms of movement. This tendency is misplaced in a situation where different mobilities within one life-course are interrelated. Studies that discriminate between different forms of movement evoke common dichotomies such as rural versus urban, permanent versus temporary, single versus multiple, and national versus international migration. Essentially, conceptualisations used to categorise migrant youth rely on the assumption that youth are immobile, mobile only once, or mobile in regional contexts or for locally meaningful reasons. Hence, they do not consider the possibility that a mixture of mobilities occurs in a young migrant's life course, and that these different forms of mobility may interrelate. We need a more inclusive approach that allows us to conceptualise mobility over the life-course.

This study also argued that the variety in mobility patterns needs to be considered when assessing the impact of migration on youth because this variety can help us to move our understandings beyond the 'ethnic lens' in migration research. In the Netherlands, research on migrant youth typically divides this population into 'Turkish', 'Moroccan', 'Surinamese', 'East-European', and 'non-Western' categories. These are categories that are also deployed by policy-research institutes and national data collection agencies (Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek and Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau, for instance). The use of ethnicity, or place-of-origin-based categories, as a basis for comparison has resulted in a lack of understandings about within-group diversity. Why do some youth of the same ethnic background succeed educationally while others do not? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to investigate variables or dynamics than other ethnicity or national identity. The typology of mobility trajectories outlined in this thesis offers a concrete starting point to investigate such within-group-diversity and therewith push our analyses beyond ethnicised explanations.

This thesis has critiqued the general tendency to overlook young people's individual trajectories. Instead, I argue that young people have their own individual trajectories that need to be studied in their own right. Although personal mobility may initially start due to the mobility of parents other (extended) family members, categorising migrant youth on the basis of these principles hinders the study of a young person's individual mobility patterns. For example, the concept 'second generation' takes the parental move as a categorising principle; a young person is categorised as 'second generation' given her parents' move from country A to country B. Yet, the first parental move does not tell us anything specific about the mobility of the individual young person. By tying migrant youth's status to that of their parents' based exclusively on the first international move, researchers are blinded to investigate the complex independent mobility trajectories of young people themselves.

The concept of 'mobility trajectories' promises a new, more comprehensive understanding of a complex reality and encourages researchers to *investigate* rather than assume which factors help to explain variations in migrant youth outcomes. The notion invites the inclusion of meaningful details in the analysis of how migration impacts youth. It enables sensitivity to the non-linear time and experiential dimension of mobility and the interconnectivity between different moves within a life-course, thereby allowing us to move beyond common binaries such as international versus internal mobility. Furthermore, due to the centrality accorded to youth's personal mobility patterns instead of their parents', the notion of mobility trajectories promotes attention to youth's (transnational) networks and relationships built along the way, including with those living in other nation-states. Overall, it allows researchers to pose different questions about meaningful details that potentially

shape how migrant youth perform, maintain relationships, position themselves in and contribute to societies, all while being mobile and becoming educated.

The implications for how we understand and study mobility are complemented with several specific implications for research on migrant youth's educational resilience and success. The socio-ecological model presented in Chapter 5 highlighted how supportive and warm family relations, positive identity, and cultural beliefs and religious practices constitute a reservoir of resilience. This implies that it is worthwhile considering significant others who reside abroad – outside the country in which a young person lives – as important educational resources. Yet, significant others living abroad appear to be rarely considered in educational resilience research. By following young people's mobility trajectories, the concomitant changing family constellations they are part of become visible and the meaning of mobilities that (temporarily) reconnect them with significant others becomes clear.

Additionally, studies on educational resilience and the educational success of migrant youth have to date given little attention to stimulating or obstructing *mechanisms* that are enabled, or disabled, by mobility or a lack thereof. Mobility trajectories provide a starting point for investigating what 'happens' during mobility and how this might either stimulate or obstruct migrant youth's educational experiences in a host country. Shaping mechanisms can be studied by tracing youth's mobility trajectories since mobility may generate access to educationally resourceful environments.

The findings presented in Chapter 6 suggest that the relationship between mobility and educational experiences cannot be understood without considering wider socio-political discourses. The way mobility is framed in relation to education influences how this relationship can take shape, because framing is intrinsically related to policy design and implementation.

The comparison of Ghanaian youth's framings with those of their Dutch educators illustrates that 'framing analyses' can be enhanced when we analyse not only the dominant frames employed by those who hold discursive and political power, but also more marginalised framings. When marginal and dominant framings are investigated in parallel, it becomes clear how educational policies potentially fail to align with the perceptions of those who are targeted by those policies. Research on migrant youth would benefit from an investigation of young people's own perceptions and worldviews. Such research would contribute to an understanding of the way they frame their experiences, which would in turn inform how youth give meaning and ascribe purpose to the forms of mobility in which they engage. Research of this kind is important because historically constructed dominant narratives that inform regulations and laws tend to exclude marginal framings of mobility.

Lastly, it should be noted that 'educational experiences' are gained within the transnational social field and that these are enhanced by mobility. Yet, to observe this, it is necessary to move beyond measurable educational outcomes. As Chapters 5 and 6 have shown, becoming educated transnationally entails more than receiving formal education and passing exams. Ghanaian youth's educational outcomes as captured in test scores tell us little about the dynamics that enable or hinder them from becoming educated and retaining the motivation to pursue their education. Concentrating on their educational experiences in combination with an exploration of their mobility trajectories, however, can reveal what drives or blocks them, and what shapes their educational motivation. Such a focus on mobility is vital in the world today. Focussing exclusively on measurable educational outcomes no longer suffices to understand the set of competencies that are required to navigate today's rapidly changing and intensely globalising world. The need to accurately interpret young people's educational experiences is also important because education is a lived experience. Educational experience transcends the walls of a classroom and is ingrained in migrant youth's mobility trajectories. We need to direct our attention to those.

7.3.   Societal implications

7.3.1.   Mobility as educational resource: a story of inequality

This thesis has demonstrated that mobility can be positively related to education, though the two are perceived to be problematically related by educators. Interestingly, the idea of mobility as a valuable educational resource is not always rejected. In tertiary educational institutions throughout the Global North, mobility is celebrated as an avenue of exposure and to lessons outside one's educational pathway. Students are encouraged to gain international experiences, for example through programmes such as Erasmus Mundus, an international exchange project for European students. Such forms of mobility are considered to promote linguistic and other 'soft' skills such as cultural sensitivity in students who spend time abroad. In this ideal of 'the educated person', mobility and international experiences become vital in the facilitation of successful careers.

But educators' rejection of young Ghanaians' positive framings of mobility in relation to their education discussed in Chapter 6 suggests that the concept of 'the educated person' who has gained international experiences through mobility remains reserved for a specific segment of the global student population. This concept of the 'educated person' is

difficult (not impossible) to access for the young Ghanaians in this study. Institutions seem to adopt a much more positive rhetoric when their attention turns to students who are imagined to be in need of transcultural capacities and benefit from multi-linguistic skills, namely middle and upper-class tertiary students whose futures lies in business, diplomacy, and other increasingly globalised occupational settings.

Globalisation implies, amongst many things, increasing opportunities to be mobile. Yet, mobility is not equally accessible to everyone. The intolerance towards childhoods that deviate from a Global Northern ideal and the marginalisation of alternative framings of mobility in relation to education raise the question of how accessible mobility is as educational resource. It seems now that not only is access to mobility and education unequally distributed across the globe, but so too is the possibility of fruitfully combining both.

As we have seen in the introduction of this thesis, debates concerning migrant youth are relatively polarised in the Netherlands, and most certainly heated. For this reason, researchers have a responsibility to add nuance to existing debates when they can. When research on migrant youth keeps neglecting mobility, along with and tacitly and informally acquired knowledge, it remains unclear how mobility possibly can contribute, in possibly positive ways, to migrant youth's educational progress. More research from a youth centred perspective is vital, because this is how researchers can meaningfully nuance and complicate public debates and reveal inequalities.

7.3.2.   Policy recommendations

Several concrete policy recommendations can be made on the basis of this study. The first set of policy recommendations are directed at Dutch schools. These recommendations aim at the improvement of educational structures in the Netherlands in favour of youth who have mobility in their biographies. At the moment there is a growing debate about the importance of Dutch language acquisition and the severe consequences that language acquisition has on the overall educational performance of students (Vogelzang 2018). This debate not only concerns migrant youth but expresses a general concern about broader societal trends. This discussion is understandable and transnational students most certainly benefit from effective and fast Dutch language acquisition. Yet, their capacities cannot be measured exclusively by, and their needs are not exclusively confined to, language acquisition alone. We need to be more attentive to transnational students' broader needs and capacities. This can be done in various ways.

One way is to more seriously consider pre-migratory skills. Currently, the main concern of educators is to equip recently arrived migrant youth with the Dutch language. The importance of Dutch in the curriculum has an inevitable downside for migrant students: it means that they are streamed into the educational layers that correspond to their language proficiency. Yet, they may be more advanced in other subjects, such as mathematics and biology, as we have seen in Chapter 6. Validating pre-migratory skills more seriously would allow for students gifted in particular subjects to take advanced-level courses, even if their language capacities are not yet at the required level.

Policy recommendation 1:

Make educational structures in the Netherlands more attentive to transnational students' needs and competencies. Consider and validate pre-migratory skills by allowing migrant youth to take particular subjects on more advanced levels.

An additional option is to create more space in the classroom through which the non-measurable tacitly acquired skills of migrant students can be validated. This requires teachers and other educational staff to be appreciative of childhood diversity. For example, when a young migrant goes to Ghana for a funeral ceremony of two or three weeks, she or he indeed misses classes and may get behind with some work. Yet, when that person is allowed to share what she or he learned from this experience, for example by means of an oral-or-poster presentation, the experience can be translated into valuable knowledge for the whole class. All can learn something about their peer's experiences.

The subject "*burgerschap*", which loosely translates as "citizenship" and was recently re-articulated as an important course in the contemporary curriculum by Arie Slob, Minister of Primary and Secondary Education and Media, potentially offers space for such validation of mobility experiences. *Burgerschap* is currently focused on developing basic knowledge of and respect for democratic values and the acquisition of 'social and civil competencies' that enable students to participate in and contribute to society. The subject has a strong focus on Dutch society within the context of the EU. Yet, one could argue that within an average urban classroom where 6/10 students have a so-called 'non-western background',

the presentation of first-hand mobility experiences by a classmate would have considerable learning value and help students to develop cultural sensitivity. This suggestion may seem to require only a mundane change to the curriculum. However, the change is important nonetheless. Nowadays young people are likely to engage in different forms of mobility, and if not, to be confronted with people of migrant background or the consequences of migration and globalisation. In such a dynamic and an increasingly diverse world it seems constructive to think of ways in which students, both those who engage in mobility and those who do not, can be prepared for interactions beyond the local context.

Policy recommendation 2:

Let both non-mobile and mobile students benefit from mobility experiences in order to prepare them for their increasingly globalised futures. This can be done by creating more space in the curriculum for a validation of tacit and non-measurable skills acquired during mobility, skills which can be usefully considered 'social and civil competencies'.

This thesis suggests a critical revisiting of the *leerplichtwet*, the Dutch law on education. The last main adaptations to the *leerplichtwet* were made in 1968. They were a response to 'changing societal circumstances' (Carmiggelt 2001), referring to the entrance of migrants and their families into Dutch society. In that time, travel possibilities were more limited than today and migration laws were significantly different. Given the increase in global mobility options in general, and the changes in other legal fields affecting young migrants' lives, the time is ripe to revisit the *leerplichtwet*, and to critically reassess how the right to mobility and education can be integrated.

As we have seen in Chapters 5 and 6, some forms of mobility boost young people's educational resilience and motivation to go to school. Regular short-term mobilities, however, are often beyond the reach for migrant youth, due to the strict application of the *leerplichtwet*. Some *leerplichtambtenaren* said that they were understanding and personally granted permission for more extensive trips for funerals or important religious celebrations. Yet, this means that mobility options come randomly and at the discretion of a person who may just as well consider mobility problematic, as demonstrated in Chapter 6. Transnational

students are in need of flexible mobility possibilities. The Dutch government has recently allowed experiments with flexible holidays at several schools. This requires schools to find a creative balance between curricula requirements and students', and parents', demands for flexible school hours and holidays. This experiment is allowed in response to a society that is more and more characterised by flexibility. Similar forms of flexible school organisation could also support migrant youth's desires for mobility without disturbing their learning curve per se.

Policy recommendation 3:

Revisit the Dutch law on education to check if there are possibilities to better accommodate mobile transnational students. This might be done by creating a more flexible holiday system and a firmer recognition of young people's right to be mobile. When revisiting the law on education, policy makers should consider the ways young people frame mobility in order to ensure laws and policies that better account for their lived realities.

7.4.   Limitations and avenues for future research

Limitations are inescapable in research and this study is no exception. The study's limitations, however, in combination with anecdotal observations in the field that could not be thoroughly analysed, pave the way for further investigations. The first limitation of this study is that it could not thoroughly examine the societal framings and national narratives on the relation between education and mobility in Ghana. A "Ghanaian framing" is only partially included: in the analysis how youth are embedded in transnational family structures. Family members were found to positively frame the relationship between mobility and education. But immersion into Ghanaian society, even when this happens temporarily, may expose Ghanaian youth to wider national narratives beyond the family that, like dominant framing in the Netherlands, are rooted in historical narratives. During my visits to Ghana, I observed how streets are adorned with messages and symbols of

education. Visual representations of education, in the form school advertisements or pupils who wear their school uniforms, guarantee education a firm presence within the urban landscape. Interestingly, the school system in Ghana often requires mobility since Junior High Schools and Senior High Schools are scattered across the country. It is common for these schools to offer boarding facilities in order to cater for students coming from afar. This not only implies familiarity with the fact that people need to move for the purpose of education, it also signals that mobility may be 'normalised' in relation to education. Ghana's national narrative on education and the role of mobility in it, may conceivably inform young Netherlands-based Ghanaians' framing of mobility. This therefore presents a fruitful avenue for future research.

The second limitation is its neglect of (transnational) peer networks. The study mainly focused on the importance of transnational family relations because there were indications in the literature that these might be important to migrant youth and because the importance of family relations clearly emerged from the data. Yet, anecdotal evidence suggests that peer networks were also maintained transnationally. When I joined young Ghanaians on their holidays, peer relationships were re-kindled too. Spontaneous reconnections with previous peer groups in Ghana occurred as well, and sometimes even new friendships were established and carried on after youth returned to the Netherlands. In addition to transnational peer networks, youth were clearly embedded in local peer networks in the Netherlands. Peer networks in churches and in schools were often pertinently present in the stories of Ghanaian youth and did not exclusively consist of youth of Ghanaian background. A systematic analysis of peer networks lay beyond the scope of this study, partly because peer networks tended to be spread out over multiple countries too (mainly the Netherlands, UK, USA, Belgium, France, and Canada) which made including them infeasible. Yet, given the meaning that overseas relationships can have, such networks would be well worth further investigation.

The study's third limitation concerns the potential role of religion in educational resilience building. Religion is important to many Ghanaian youth and the literature on resilience points at the healing and strengthening potential of religion. Although a good share of the data was collected in or around churches and holidays to Ghana frequently took place in the context of religious holidays (Christmas, Easter, Id al-Adha, or Ramadan), family relationships emerged more clearly from my data and the literature as possible educational resilience builders, thus my focus on family. Religion was also in some ways inaccessible to me, because Mosques do not allow genders to mingle, and church services were often provided in Twi. Yet, it was clear to me that overall young people's religious practises partly structured their weekly schedules in the Netherlands and were thus

important to them. Additionally, religious experiences were important during mobility in Ghana as well. Anecdotal evidence indicates that youth undertake pilgrimages when they are in Ghana, at times wear expressive religious attire, and describe more collective religious experiences during their holidays.

Finally, I would like to put forward a recommendation that agencies that conduct policy-focused research begin to work with alternative categories of analysis. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS) and Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (SCP) are important Dutch research institutes that hold a powerful positions by virtue of the fact that their services are frequently employed by the Dutch government. Both CBS and SPB generally work with categories such as 'first' and 'second' generation, and with ethnic categories. This thesis offers new starting points for the analyses of such policy-oriented research organisations. Instead of categorising youth according to their ethnic background, researchers would do well to investigate other possible variables, such as mobility trajectories, to explain differences within the youth population. These agencies could attempt a collection of information about the mobilities young people engage (or have engaged) in, such as overseas holidays, internships, family or funeral visits. Another option would be to collect at least a minimum amount of information about caregivers who might live abroad and if mobility generates (temporary) reconnections.

In a globalised world, mobility is important. We need to take it seriously, to recognise its value and its potential for educating our global youth, and thus factor in into our analyses.

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Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A – Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 10 1. In accordance with the obligation of States Parties under article 9, paragraph 1, applications by a child or his or her parents to enter or leave a State Party for the purpose of family reunification shall be dealt with by States Parties in a positive, humane and expeditious manner. States Parties shall further ensure that the submission of such a request shall entail no adverse consequences for the applicants and for the members of their family.

2. A child whose parents reside in different States shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis, save in exceptional circumstances personal relations and direct contacts with both parents. Towards that end and in accordance with the obligation of States Parties under article 9, paragraph 1, States Parties shall respect the right of the child and his or her parents to leave any country, including their own, and to enter their own country. The right to leave any country shall be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and which are necessary to protect the national security, public order (ordre public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present Convention.

Article 28 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

(a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;

(b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

(c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;

(d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;

(e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-

out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Appendix B – Interview guide Life History Interview

Name:
Age:
Living in:
Came to NL when h/s was: ……. years old, …… years ago
Went to Ghana for ……………………………, ……. time(s), in 20..
Enrolled in:

- o SVO (special voortgezet onderwijs)
- o LWO (praktijkonderwijs/leerweg ondersteunend onderwijs)
- o VMBO-Basis
- o VMBO-Kader
- o VMBO-Gemengde leerweg
- o VMBO-Theoretische leerweg
- o HAVO
- o VWO
- o ISK

School: (Didactical approach):
Siblings (age, living in):
Parents (living in):

a. **School, life and family in Ghana**
   - Could you please describe a normal day in Ghana?
   - Could you please describe a day that you remember particularly well in Ghana?
   - What was so special about it?
   - With whom were you living in Ghana?
   - (When/Why did your parents migrate?)
   - (How did you have contact with your family abroad?)
   - Where were you born?
   - What are the things that you have learned from living in Ghana?
   - Why did you come to NL?

b. **Coming to NL/Going to Ghana**
   - Were you prepared for coming to NL/Ghana? How? By who?

- Can you describe how you felt the day you left Ghana/NL?
- Can you describe what your first impressions were when you arrived in NL/Ghana? How did you feel?
- (How did it feel to see your family again in NL?/Ghana)
- Did you have expectations of the Netherlands/Ghana? Where were they based upon?
- How do you look back at your expectations?

c. School in NL
- Can you describe your first weeks in a Dutch school? How did you feel?
- Can you explain to me what the differences are with a Ghanaian school?
- Are there things that you wouldn't have learned had you not been to a Dutch school?
- Are there things that you wouldn't have learned had you not been to a Ghanaian school?
- Do you know what you would like to do after your graduation?

d. Circulation/Mob
- (Have you been back to Ghana since you have come to NL)?
- Can you describe how it felt? Do you know why you felt that way?
- Had something changed?
- Did you want to go back to NL/Ghana? Why?
- Are you aspiring to go back again? For what?

e. Aspirations
- What would you like to become?
- How do you see your relation with Ghana and NL in the future?

f. Church
- Do you attend church here?
- Can you describe what it means to you?

g. Family genealogy/Concentric circle
- Draw family geneology, use different colours to indicate who is in GH and who in NL/Eng
- Draw circles and let youths indicate where people are: in a tight/more remote circle?

h. Extra questions (formulated on the basis of previous conversations)
- Can you explain what asala are?
- What is the difference with asala and youths who are born here?
- When is someone 'done' being asala?
- Would you refer to yourself as an asala?
- What makes up for a good teacher to you?
- Were you allowed to tell other people about your departure from Ghana?
- Can you explain why you were not allowed to tell anyone?
- How did it make you feel?
- How do you feel about it towards your parents/caretakers?
- Can you explain what 'respect'/'discipline' means to you?
- Can you describe how you show someone respect?
- Why is this important to you?
- What is the difference between book mu nyansa and efiye nyansa?
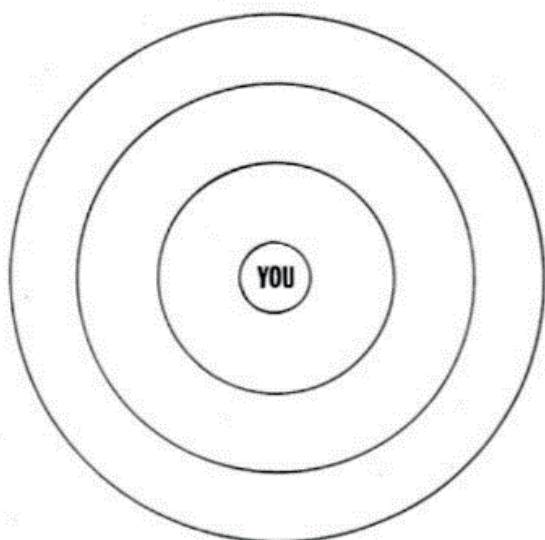
(Antonucci 1986). This circle was printed on an A4 page. Young people were asked to write down the names of people who are important to them/whom they like in the circles close to "you". They were asked to write down the names of people who are less important/whom they don't like in the outer circles.

Interview Guide Concentric Circle (7-10-2015)

1. Check the names and relations: who is who?
2. Ask to explain why people are positioned where they are in the circle, use different colours
3. Ask the following questions:

- When you would have a problem with *school*, who would you go to?
- When you would have *emotional* problems, who would you go to?
- When you would have a problem with *family* who would you go to?

- When you would have a *secret,* who would you share it with?
- When you would have to seek *advice,* who would you turn to?
- When you would feel *lonely,* who would you turn to?
- When you would like to have *fun,* who would you turn to?

Appendix D1 – After Ghana Interview Guide I (11-10-2016)

Emotions

- How did you feel when you arrived in Ghana?
- How was it for you to be back in Ghana?
- What was it that made you feel good in Ghana?
- What was the best day?
- What was the worst day?
- Did Ghana change?

Network

- Seeing who again made you feel good?
- How do people react when you are in Ghana again?
- What kind of things do they comment on?
- Do people ask you questions?
- Did your friends change?

GH Society

- Was there something in Ghana you disliked?
- Was there something you had forgotten about?
- Was there something in Ghana that made you feel proud?
- How was it for you to see poverty like it is in Ghana?
- What would be your advice for youth who is coming to NL?

Appendix D2 – After/during Ghana interview guide II

Living in Ghana

- ➢ Where in Ghana did you stay? (city, district, (non-)nzgo)
- ➢ With whom does you stay? (which side of the family; matri/patri?)
- ➢ How are the living conditions? (in what kind of house does he or she live, is there running water, electricity, do they have a car, do they cook on coal etc.)
- ➢ Why did she/he come to Ghana?
- ➢ What was the best day in Ghana?
- ➢ What was the worst day in Ghana?
- ➢ Did Ghana change?

Activities

- ➢ What are her/his main activities while being in Ghana?
- ➢ How does a normal day look like in Ghana?
- ➢ Who does she/he hang out with? (which side of the family; matri/patri?; is there a 'special' person in the family they have a strong bound with? Friends? New friends, old friends? How long do they go back?)
- ➢ Seeing who again made you feel good?
- ➢ How do people react when you are in Ghana again?
- ➢ What kind of things do they comment on?
- ➢ Do people ask you questions?

General impression

- ➢ What is my general impression of her/his mood?
- ➢ Can the youth identify specific things that make her/him feel good in Ghana?
- ➢ What does he/she talk about? To me, but also with friends and family?
- ➢ What are enjoyable activities, what does she/he like doing?
- ➢ How was it for you to see poverty like it is in Ghana?
- ➢ Was there something in Ghana that made you feel proud?

Difficulties

➢ Does she/he experience any difficulties, hardships, complex situations?

➢ How does she/he respond to these difficulties

Appendix E: Table 3.1.: Overview ethnographic activity per participant.

Name[a]	Participant observations[b]	Interview[c]	Focus group participation[d]	Participation in diary/photo project in Ghana[e]	Stayed with/met in Ghana 2015/2016[f]	Pages Youth file[g]
Jeff		1	3			4
Akua	3	2	3			79
Solomon	1	3				12
Vanessa		1				9
Denise	3	2	3			52
Ebenezer	1	5				52
Harmony	2	1				20
Hakim	15	2				62
Eliyah		2				17
David	4	5				71
Savanna		1				21
Bruno	6	3	2			26
Eva	1	2	1			40
Ama	11	3				85
Joseph	1	3	2			46

Name						
Kodjo	1	4	5			110
Kwame	1	5			Several meetings 2016	76
Kwabena		5				145
Fuzailan	11	3				79
Edwin	18	5				108
Myriam	11	5		1	5 days fulltime 2016 at family house, 3 days travelling and several separate meetings	83
Jennifer	15	2			2 weeks fulltime 2016 at family house	65
Kofi	5	5		1	Several meetings 2016, 2017	59
Harley	25	3	2		1 week fulltime 2015 at family house	147
Abena	23	4	1	1	1 week fulltime 2015 at family house	122
Daniela	4	3		1	6 days fulltime 2015+2016 at family house	35
Jamilla	1	2				18
Ekow	28	4				94
Eunice	1	1				8
Peniel	2	2		1	4 days fulltime 2015+2016 at family house	39

Source: fieldwork 2015-2016.

[a] All names are pseudonyms to protect the privacy of my participants.

[b] Participant observation include: informal conversation, serendipitous encounters, joining young Ghanaians to church celebrations/meetings, radio, music studio, (previous) schools, concert, hanging/walking around in the neighbourhood, driving around in the car, clubbing, groceries/shopping, funerals, pedicure, saloon, diner and lunch, birthday parties, baby showers, weddings, lawyer, police station, market/malls, bowling, travel agency, babysitting, chilling, cooking, cinema, visiting historical sites, family visits, meetings with youth to introduce the study, prepare for Ghana, or spontaneously meeting youth in the neighbourhood. Sometimes, these serendipitous encounters and informal conversations ended up being a participant observation. Excluded here are: conversations over digital devises (WhatsApp, Snapchat etc.), unless brought up interviews, participant observations at youth prayer groups, and Weekend College (bi-weekly on Saturday mornings from 09:30–15:00 throughout fieldwork period). These are not explicated in the overview because they were conducted with large groups of youth.

[c] Include: life-history interviews, concentric circle interviews, trajectory interviews, after-Ghana interviews (see other appendices).

[d] I organised focus group discussions in a church and library close to a school with Ghanaian students. Participation was on a voluntary and spontaneous basis.

[e] Youth were asked to keep a diary and make pictures during their holidays in Ghana.

[f] I either met youth in Ghana to have an interview/participate in an activity. Usually I stayed with the young people in their family houses.

[e] For every young person, I compiled a 'Youth File', a file that chronologically included all data gathered about that particular young person, including the Ageven mapping of their mobility trajectories. The pages are the total amount of pages produced per file. Some fieldnotes are hand-written and not included in the amount of pages in the table.

Nederlandse Samenvatting

Nederlandse samenvatting (Dutch Summary)

Mobiliteit en educatie van migrantenjongeren

Steeds meer jongeren wereldwijd migreren, waarbij ze van het ene naar het andere land verhuizen. Dit betekent dat steeds meer jongeren 'mobiliteit' – fysieke verplaatsing tussen twee geografische locaties – ervaren. Onder de definitie van 'mobiliteit' valt het migreren naar een ander land, maar ook eventuele mobiliteit die plaats vindt alvorens en na migratie. Zo zijn migrantenjongeren mobiel tussen het land van herkomst en het land waar zij gevestigd zijn omdat ze (tijdelijk) terugkeren voor studie, religieuze feestelijkheden, begrafenissen, familiebezoek of wanneer ze een stage regelen in hun land van herkomst. De literatuur wijst uit dat jongeren in West-Afrika, zeker wanneer zij onderdeel zijn van een huishouden waaruit mensen zijn gemigreerd, een redelijke kans maken om ook mobiel te zijn binnen hun land alvorens buiten landsgrenzen te migreren. Ze circuleren dan tussen verschillende sociale ouders die zorg voor hen dragen. Dit zijn veelal huishoudens waar een collectief van volwassen gezamenlijk zorg draagt voor kinderen.

We weten weinig over hoe al deze vormen van mobiliteit met elkaar samenhangen en hoe mobiliteit jongeren beïnvloedt, terwijl ideeën over mobiliteit tot controversiële maatschappelijke discussies kunnen leiden. Met name wanneer het de educatie van migrantenjongeren betreft, blijken velen van mening dat mobiliteit onwenselijk is. Het Verdrag van de Rechten van het Kind, ondertekent door 196 landen in de wereld – een unicum – behelst verschillende artikelen over educatie en mobiliteit. Kinderen en jongeren hebben recht op onderwijs (artikel 28). Wanneer kinderen van één of beide ouders gescheiden zijn door landsgrenzen, bijvoorbeeld omdat ouders of het kind zelf zijn gemigreerd, hebben kinderen het recht om regelmatig en op persoonlijke basis contact te onderhouden met hun ouders (artikel 10). Het Verdrag geeft aan dat Staten dit moeten faciliteren. Kinderen hebben daarmee recht op mobiliteit. In sommige regio's in de wereld is dit recht tot mobiliteit verankerd in verdragen over vrijheid in verkeer van personen en goederen, zoals het Schengen Akkoord in Europa en de ECOWAS regio in West-Afrika. Echter, is het recht op educatie en mobiliteit in de praktijk wel verenigbaar in het leven van migrantenjongeren?

Om dit te onderzoeken stelde dit proefschrift de volgende onderzoeksvraag: *Hoe vormen de mobiliteitstrajecten van Ghanese jongeren hun educatieve ervaringen?* Hiermee werd de relatie tussen 'mobiliteitstrajecten' en de 'educatieve ervaringen' onder de loep

genomen, nadrukkelijk vanuit het perspectief van jongeren zelf. Mobiliteitstrajecten zijn de patronen die ontstaan door fysieke verplaatsing van jongeren door tijd en tussen verschillende geografische locaties. Dit proefschrift heeft zich beperkt tot verplaatsing binnen en tussen Ghana en Nederland, en in enkele gevallen andere landen. Door de fysieke verplaatsing van jongeren, en de eventuele mobiliteitstrajecten van familieleden, ontstaan frequent veranderende familieconstellaties. De 'mobiliteitstrajecten' brengen, simpel gezegd, in kaart welke route jongeren hebben afgelegd, en met wie zij waar en op welk moment in hun leven samenwoonden.

De 'educatieve ervaringen' refereren naar de formele en informele educatieve ervaringen van Ghanese jongeren. Formele educatie is het onderwijs genoten in een institutionele context zoals school. Mensen leren echter ook vaardigheden die minder makkelijk toetsbaar zijn, en die veelal buiten de schoolcontext opgedaan worden door informele leerprocessen. Denk hierbij aan het beheersen van cultureel-sensitieve repertoires, zoals de gepaste omgang met senioriteit, of het vermogen om te 'switchen', tussen verschillende contexten door middel van aanpassingsvermogen. Deze 'stilzwijgende kennis' en vaardigheden werden in dit proefschrift bekeken vanuit de visie en percepties van de jongeren zelf.

Typologie van trajecten en het belang van concepten

Allereerst werd in hoofdstuk 4 de diversiteit aan mobiliteitspatronen in kaart gebracht. Ghanese jongeren bleken namelijk zeer verschillende patronen uit te stippelen in en tussen Ghana en Nederland. Op basis van de empirische data droegen we een typologie aan die verschillende 'typen' trajecten onderscheidt. We identificeerden verschillende type trajecten: 1) enkelvoudige internationale mobiliteit, 2) multipele internationale mobiliteit, 3) multipele nationale mobiliteit, 4) multipele nationale en internationale mobiliteit. Elk type onderscheidt zich op basis van de kruising tussen twee criteria. De noemers 'nationaal' en 'internationaal' refereren naar de geografische ruimte waar mobiliteit zich voordeed; ofwel binnen de landsgrenzen van het land van herkomst (nationaal), in dit geval Ghana, ofwel tussen verschillende landen (internationaal), in dit geval tussen Ghana en Nederland. De noemers 'enkelvoudig' en 'multipel' differentiëren de mobiliteitsfrequentie. 'Enkelvoudig' geeft aan dat er niet meer dan één beweging heeft plaatsgevonden, en 'multipele' indiceert dat er meerdere bewegingen tussen verschillende locaties hebben plaatsgevonden. Het voordeel van deze typologie is dat er recht gedaan kan worden aan de empirische diversiteit en complexiteit van mobiliteitstrajecten waarin jongeren engageren. Tegelijkertijd

blijft het mogelijk om systematische analyses uit te voeren, omdat er een zekere mate van vergelijkbaarheid gewaarborgd blijft.

Door middel van de typologie problematiseerde ik in hoofdstuk 4 tevens het gebruik van conventionele concepten die doorgaans veelvuldig worden toegepast in onderzoek naar migrantenjongeren. Concepten zoals 'immigranten', 'eerste', 'tweede', en soms zelfs 'derde' generatie, categoriseren jongeren op basis van de eerst ondernomen internationale verplaatsing, ofwel de migratie, of zelfs op basis van de eerste verplaatsing die hun ouders of grootouders op internationaal niveau hebben ondernomen. Door andere vormen van mobiliteit geheel buiten beschouwing te laten versimpelen dergelijke concepten de daadwerkelijke trajecten die jongeren afleggen. Deze conceptuele reductie zorgt ervoor kunnen dan de impact van migratie en daaraan verbonden mobiliteit niet goed inschatten. Ook suggereert de nadruk op de eerste internationale verplaatsing dat eerder of later ondernomen mobiliteit minder impact heeft, en wordt er een scherpe analytische scheiding gemaakt tussen 'nationale' en 'internationale' mobiliteit terwijl deze juist vaak met elkaar zijn verbonden.

De typologie, daarentegen, genereert de mogelijkheid om de individuele patronen van jongeren in hun totaliteit in kaart te brengen met behoud van context-gebonden en situationele eigenschappen, zoals met wie jongeren op welk moment in hun leven samenwonen. Daarmee kunnen we analyses nauwkeuriger uitvoeren die beter kunnen inschatten hoe migratie en mobiliteit jongeren beïnvloedt. Zo is het denkbaar dat migratie naar een ander land een andere impact heeft op een jongere die hieraan voorafgaand al in zekere mate bekend is met mobiliteit door circulatie tussen verschillende familieleden, dan op een jongere voor wie dit de allereerste keer is.

Vorming van educatieve veerkracht door mobiliteit

In hoofdstuk 5 en 6 onderzocht ik beiden twee 'vormingsmechanismen' die de relatie tussen mobiliteitstrajecten en educatieve ervaringen op verschillende niveaus beïnvloeden. Het eerste mechanisme dat werd onderzocht was de vorming van educatieve veerkracht door middel van mobiliteit. Deze veerkracht is cruciaal in een educatieve context waarin jongeren met een migratieachtergrond met verschillende obstakels worden geconfronteerd. Het geeft hen de moed en het doorzettingsvermogen om, ondanks de tegenslagen die ze te verwerken krijgen, niet op te geven.

In hoofdstuk 5 staan twee jongemannen centraal: Harley en Ebenezer. De analyses in dit hoofdstuk zijn gebaseerd op de data verzameld onder alle jongeren die hebben

meegedaan aan dit onderzoek, maar deze twee jongens gaven mij de mogelijkheid de vormingsmechanismen van mobiliteit treffend te illustreren. Beide jonge mannen kwamen van vergelijkbare sociaal-economische achtergronden en gezinssituaties, zaten op dezelfde school en kregen vergelijkbare negatieve obstakels en ervaringen op hun Nederlandse school te verduren. Echter, ze vertoonden vrij verschillende maten van educatieve veerkracht. De overeenkomstige sociaal-economische positie, dezelfde school en de relatief soortgelijke gezinssituatie van de twee jongens deed vermoeden dat hun leefomgeving in Nederland niet van doorslaggevend belang was voor de vorming van hun educatieve veerkracht. Door een nauwkeurige vergelijkende analyse van de mobiliteitstrajecten van de twee jongemannen bleek dat Harley toegang had tot een andere context – Ghana – waarin een actieve bijdrage werd geleverd aan de vorming van zijn educatieve veerkracht. Dat gebeurde op drie verschillende manieren.

Allereerst kan fysieke mobiliteit goede randvoorwaarden scheppen voor het behoud van sociale netwerken van jongeren. Mobiliteit zorgt ervoor dat oude relaties kunnen worden opgefrist, en schept daarmee de mogelijkheid tot (tijdelijke) hereniging met mensen in Ghana van wie jongeren gescheiden zijn door hun migratie naar Nederland. Met name het aanhalen van de banden met voormalige zorgdragers bleek belangrijk. Voormalig zorgdragers kunnen tevens een krachtige bron van motivatie zijn. Dit zagen we bij verschillende de jongeren besproken in hoofdstuk 5, en bijvoorbeeld ook bij Abena, die in de introductie uitlegt hoe haar grootouders, die de eerste veertien jaar van haar leven voor haar hebben gezorgd, haar tijdens haar vakanties keer op keer weten te motiveren om haar best te doen op school, ieder op hun eigen manier. Ook kan fysieke mobiliteit de mogelijkheid voor spontane ontmoetingen genereren. Een voorbeeld hiervan is het in hoofdstuk 5 besproken ongeplande bezoek dat Harley aan zijn middelbare school docent bracht tijdens een vakantie in Ghana. Diens positieve uitingen stonden lijnrecht tegenover de ontmoedigende ervaringen die Harley tot dusver had met Nederlandse docenten. Ongeplande ontmoetingen gebeurden regelmatig wanneer jongeren door hun oude buurten in Ghana slenterden. Zogeheten 'chance encounters' zijn lastig te theoretiseren, maar ze functioneren als belangrijke motivatiebron. De kans om spontaan een vroegere Ghanese leerkracht of kennis tegen het lijf te lopen is aanzienlijk kleiner voor Ebenezer die in Nederland bleef.

De tweede manier waarop mobiliteit kan bijdragen aan het vergaren van educatieve veerkracht is door het 'activeren van herinneringen'. Jeugdherinneringen, maar ook familiegeschiedenissen en historische Ghanese vertellingen over doorzettingsvermogen en kracht kunnen een bron van motivatie bieden. Weten wie je bent en waar je vandaan komt bleken stimuli van educatieve veerkracht. Wederom kunnen familieleden een belangrijke rol spelen in dit proces. Zoals beschreven in hoofdstuk 4 verandert de samenstelling van huishoudens regelmatig door de mobiliteit van jongeren en andere familieleden. Hierdoor

verkeren de mensen die jongeren iets kunnen vertellen over hun eigen kindertijd, of de dragers van familieverhalen, niet per se in hun directe nabijheid. Om herinneringen te activeren, bleek mobiliteit wederom van belang. De verhalen over de kindertijd en familiestructuren werden veelal door jongeren ervaren als sensitieve thema's. Wanneer ze met vragen omtrent hun verleden worstelden, voelden de Ghanese jongeren in dit onderzoek een verantwoordelijkheid om deze thema's op invoelende wijze aan te snijden. Dit betekent dat ze wilden kunnen inschatten of het gepast en wenselijk werd bevonden om familiethematiek en geschiedenis bespreekbaar te maken. Daarom gaven jongeren de voorkeur aan een bespreking in de fysieke nabijheid van de kennisdrager, in plaats van over Skype of de telefoon. Daarnaast zijn kennisdragers dikwijls voormalig zorgdragers zoals grootouders, oudtantes en oudooms. Om toegang te hebben tot hun kennis is tijdige mobiliteit wenselijk; 6 van de 30 jongeren in dit onderzoek hebben hun voormalige zorgdragers verloren.

Ten slotte maakte mobiliteit 'comparatieve confrontatie' mogelijk. Het contrast tussen de huidige sociaal-economische en politieke situatie in Ghana en Nederland zorgt ervoor dat jongeren zich realiseren dat hun leven in Nederland op sommige vlakken voordelen biedt. Het wakkert eveneens hun verlangen aan een toekomstige bijdrage te leveren aan de vooruitgang van de Ghanese maatschappij. In Ghana, zo realiseren ze zich, hebben familieleden en vrienden moeite met het vinden van werk dat aansluit bij hun opleidingsniveau. Mensen navigeren daarnaast een zichtbaar vervuilde urbane leefomgeving, en moeten zien te dealen met regelmatig uitvallende basisvoorzieningen zoals water en elektriciteit. Dergelijke ervaringen articuleren de verschillen tussen Ghana en Nederland en moedigen een vergelijking tussen beide samenlevingen aan. Dergelijke vergelijkingen doen jongeren realiseren dat in Nederland opgedane vaardigheden echt van waarde kunnen zijn voor familieleden of zelfs in dienst kunnen staan van algemene maatschappelijke vooruitgang in Ghana. De vergelijking maakt hen ook bewust van de voordelen en kansen die hun migratie naar Nederland heeft gegenereerd. Deze realiseringen mobiliseren educatieve veerkracht in jongeren en maakt hen gemotiveerd door te zetten ondanks educatieve tegenslagen in Nederland.

De vergelijking van een type 1 mobiliteitspatroon (enkelvoudig internationaal, Ebenezer) met een type 4 traject (multipele nationale en internationale mobiliteit, Harley) bracht aan het licht wat zich kan voordoen gedurende door jongeren ondernomen mobiliteit. De vergelijking tussen de twee jongemannen liet zien dat de relatieve immobiliteit toegang blokkeert tot bronnen die veerkracht kunnen genereren. De drie manieren waarop educatieve veerkracht werd geconstrueerd in het type 4 mobiliteitspatroon, indiceren welke mechanismen er in werking kunnen worden gesteld tijdens mobiliteit en hoe deze mechanismen jongeren kunnen helpen vast te houden aan een positieve educatieve koers.

Een conflict tussen verschillende interpretatieve raamwerken

Het tweede vormingsmechanisme dat de relatie tussen mobiliteitstrajecten en educatieve ervaringen beïnvloedt, de frictie tussen verschillende interpretatieve raamwerken, ofwel *framings*, speelt zich af op een breder maatschappelijk niveau. Educatieve veerkracht komt op interactieve wijze en met name binnen families tot stand. Het tweede vormingsmechanisme wordt gevormd door normatieve en discursieve maatschappelijke trends die uiteindelijk de institutionele context structureren waarin migrantenjongeren zich wegwijs moeten maken.

De proces van *framing* komt neer op het construeren van kaders. In hoofdstuk 6 stond de vraag centraal hoe de interpretatieve raamwerken waardoor Ghanese jongeren en Nederlandse onderwijsactoren de impact van mobiliteit op educatie duiden met elkaar interacteren. De term 'onderwijsactoren' refereert niet alleen leerkrachten, maar is een verzamelterm voor mensen die het onderwijslandschap in Nederland beïnvloeden, zoals leerplichtambtenaren, medewerkers van de onderwijsinspectie, schoolpsychologen en leerkrachten. Zij bevinden zich in een relatieve machtspositie ten opzichte van jongeren, omdat zij de dagelijkse gang van zaken in de klas beïnvloeden, of de wet-en-regelgeving omtrent mobiliteit en educatie bepalen en implementeren.

De impact van mobiliteit op educatie in Nederland bleek al decennialang negatief gekaderd. Mobiliteit werd in politieke debatten al vroeg gekaderd als ontwrichtend voor educatie, zoals een analyse van de leerplichtwet en de veranderingen die deze wet gedurende de vorige eeuw onderging liet zien. Zo werd mobiliteit allereerst geproblematiseerd in het geval van schipperskinderen die veel onderweg waren door de binnenlandse en overzeese vaarroutes die hun ouders aflegden. Later, toen Nederland gastarbeiders begon te ontvangen, werd ook de mobiliteit die zij wilden ondernemen geproblematiseerd. Mobiliteit, destijds minder voordehand liggend en minder veelvoorkomend dan heden ten dage, werd gezien als onwenselijk omdat dit integratie en emancipatie doeleinden in de Nederlandse samenleving zou bemoeilijken. In meer recentere debatten aangaande de leerplichtwet wordt aangehaald dat mobiliteit jongeren onnodig zou destabiliseren en het een gevoel van verwarring en ontworteling in jongeren zou veroorzaken. Deze discursieve tendensen van de afgelopen decennia kaderen mobiliteit als destabiliserende factor die discontinuïteit veroorzaakt en moet worden beperkt ten behoeve van educatie. In essentie heeft daarmee het recht op educatie de prioriteit gekregen, een besluit ogenschijnlijk genomen in het 'beste belang' van jongeren.

In de gesprekken met onderwijsactoren echode deze argumenten door. Allereerst vonden onderwijsactoren dat migratie, en tussentijdse vormen van mobiliteit,

taalontwikkeling bemoeilijkt. Bovendien werden vaardigheden en kennis opgedaan voor en tijdens mobiliteit dikwijls over het hoofd gezien, aangewezen als indicaties dat de jongere zich nog niet voldoende aan de Nederlandse samenleving had aangepast, of gezien als complicerende factor in de overdracht van het Nederlandse curriculum. Tenslotte waren de onderwijsactoren van mening dat mobiliteit niet goed is voor de emotionele stabiliteit en algehele ontwikkeling van jongeren. Onderwijsactoren, in navolging van de parlementaire debatten, herhaalden dus de negatieve *framing* van mobiliteit in relatie tot educatie.

De empirische data van de Ghanese jongeren die ik presenteerde in hoofdstuk 6, schetsen een heel ander verhaal. De visies van Bruno, Hakim, Ebenezer, Harley, Daniela, Jennifer, en Alex, die allemaal verschillende mobiliteitstrajecten ondernamen (type 1, 2, 3, en 4), illustreerden hoe en door welke raamwerken de Ghanese jongeren in deze studie een positieve betekenis gaven aan de impact van mobiliteit op hun educatie. Jongeren kaderden hun mobiliteit van verschillende lengtes, op verschillende niveaus (nationaal/internationaal), en verschillende typen – migratie, stages, vakanties, en terugkeer – als betekenisvol voor hun educatie. Ze zagen educatie als de hoofdreden voor hun mobiliteit en legden uit dat mobiliteit kan helpen bij het creëren van een gevoel van stabiliteit en een motiverende werking op hen kan hebben.

Mijn bevindingen dat Ghanese jongeren educatieve ervaringen, motivatie en skills opdoen tijdens hun mobiliteit (zie ook hoofdstuk 5) verklaard waarom zij opgedane kennis waardevol en belangrijk achten en de relatie tussen mobiliteit en educatie positief benaderen. In een transnationaal leven moeten verschillende contexten en culturen worden genavigeerd en kan dit type kennis en kunde essentieel zijn. Ondanks het enthousiasme over de potentieel positieve relatie tussen mobiliteit en hun educatie, ervoeren velen van de Ghanese jongeren in dit onderzoek een hoge mate van frustratie. De analyses in hoofdstuk 6 lieten zien dat hun aanvankelijke enthousiasme vaak vluchtig transformeerde in teleurstellingen veroorzaakt door een breed scala aan obstakels in het Nederlandse onderwijssysteem. In plaats van voordelig, werd mobiliteit hiermee nadelig voor hun educatie.

Ik liet daarmee in hoofdstuk 6 zien dat het dominante interpretatieve raamwerk in Nederland geen notie neemt van alternatieve interpretatieve raamwerken, en dat assumpties over de nadelige gevolgen van mobiliteit niet stroken met de ervaringswereld van Ghanese jongeren.

Mobiliteitstrajecten beïnvloeden de educatieve ervaringen van Ghanese jongeren dus via twee verschillende 'vormingsmechanismen'; via de vorming van educatieve veerkracht en via de conflicterende manier waarop Nederlandse onderwijsactoren en

Ghanese jongeren de impact van mobiliteit op onderwijs kaderen. Beide vormingsmechanismen zijn doordrongen van ideeën over hoe kinderen idealiter zouden moeten opgroeien. In het sedentaire model staan continuïteit, stabiliteit, en vastigheid centraal. Er zijn echter andere modellen, waarbij kinderen door middel van onder andere mobiliteit, worden blootgesteld aan discontinuïteit en instabiliteit om zodoende aanpassingsvaardigheden, doorzettingsvermogen, flexibiliteit en weerbaarheid in kinderen te trainen.

De sociaalpolitieke sfeer in Nederland is sterk geïnformeerd door het sedentaire ontwikkelingsmodel, met daaraan verbonden opvattingen over wat wel en niet goed is voor kinderen en jongeren, terwijl de ervaringen en belevingswereld van Ghanese jongeren zelf nauwelijks aandacht krijgt. Opvattingen over wat wel of niet goed is voor jongeren zijn niet universeel. De toenemende diversiteit in Westerse samenlevingen vraagt om een kritische houding ten opzichte van veronderstelde algemene wetmatigheden die worden gefacilieerd en gelegitimeerd in wetten en regels.

Bovendien is het opvallend dat voor een specifiek segment van de Westerse jongerenpopulatie, mobiliteit wél als integraal en vruchtbaar onderdeel van hedendaagse educatie wordt gezien. Deze groep studenten (hogere klasse, veelal tertiaire studenten) wordt in toenemende mate aangemoedigd mobiliteit in hun onderwijstrajecten te integreren. Dit wordt zelfs gefaciliteerd, bijvoorbeeld via het Erasmusprogramma in Europa. Voor deze studenten wordt mobiliteit gezien als een manier waarop zij allerlei vaardigheden ontwikkelen die noodzakelijk zijn in een globaliserende wereld. Eenzelfde of vergelijkbare logica, waarbij mobiliteit niet alleen een obstakel vormt voor educatie, maar juist bijdraagt aan educatie, blijkt absent in discussies over de mobiliteit van migrantenjongeren.

In een globaliserende wereld waarin meer en meer mensen toegang hebben tot mobiliteit, dienen we rekening te houden met mobiliteit in onze analyses, onderwijsstructuren, en wet en regelgeving. De maatschappelijke implicaties van dit wetenschappelijke onderzoek worden uitgelegd in het valorisatie addendum.

Valorisatie Addendum

Valorisatie Addendum

Jongeren zijn de toekomst. Zij bepalen hoe onze samenlevingen van morgen eruit gaan zien en hoe samenlevingen zullen functioneren. Het feit dat de Conventie van de Rechten van het Kind de meest ondertekende internationale conventie wereldwijd is, indiceert dat Staten zich het lot van kinderen en jongeren aantrekken. In een globaliserende wereld waarin samenlevingen zich blijven ontwikkelen is het belangrijk om te blijven evalueren wat we verstaan onder handelingen 'in het belang van het kind' (artikel 1). Zoals dit proefschrift heeft aangetoond is 'het belang van het kind' een omstreden kwestie: niet iedereen ter wereld denkt hetzelfde over wat goed en niet goed is voor kinderen en jongeren, zeker niet wanneer het mobiliteitsvraagstuk zich aandient.

Dit proefschrift biedt, naast de geleverde theoretische en conceptuele bijdragen, tevens inzichten ten behoeve van de samenleving en ter verbetering van institutionele structuren. In de volgende paragrafen zet ik verschillende valorisatie activiteiten uiteen. Hierin bespreek ik achtereenvolgens activiteiten die al tijdens het onderzoek hebben plaatsgevonden en activiteiten die kansen bieden voor valorisatiedoeleinden. Ook reflecteer ik op de scheidslijn tussen het reciprociteitsprincipe binnen etnografisch onderzoek en valorisatie. Omdat de meeste aanbevelingen gericht zijn op de Nederlandse samenleving schrijf ik dit hoofdstuk in het Nederlands.

Valorisatie van kennis tijdens het onderzoek

De start van dit onderzoek viel samen met de afronding van een ander onderzoeksproject over transnationale opvoedafspraken binnen transnationale Ghanese gezinnen (het zogeheten Transnational Child-Rearing Arrangements-, ofwel TCRA-project) uitgevoerd door een team van onderzoekers aan de Universiteit van Maastricht onder leiding van Prof. Dr. Valentina Mazzucato. Voor de afrondende conferentie verzamelde ik essays onder Ghanese jongeren die een persoonlijke draai zouden geven aan de conferentie. Samen met Prof. Dr. Valentina Mazzucato en een leerkracht op een middelbare school in Amsterdam, heb ik een schrijfwedstrijd voor Ghanese jongeren georganiseerd met als doel het verzamelden van essays waarin de jongeren hun transnationale leven beschreven.

De essays van de jongeren en uitgelichte citaten werden geprint op A1 formaat en verspreid opgehangen in de conferentiezaal. Tijdens de lunchpauze namen veel

internationale sprekers en gasten de tijd om de verhalen op de posters tot zich te nemen. De posters gaven aanleiding tot levendige discussies onder de aanwezige professionals, onderzoekers, en beleidsmedewerkers. Op deze wijze werden de ervaringen van jongeren actief vermengt in de discussies die op de conferentie plaatsvonden. Na de conferentie ben ik teruggegaan naar de betreffende school om aan de deelnemende jongeren terug te koppelen hoe waardevol hun bijdrage was geweest en tot welke reacties en vragen hun essays hadden geleid. Sommige jongeren waren verbaasd dat er interesse was naar hun persoonlijke verhalen, anderen waren trots.

In het tweede jaar van mijn promotieonderzoek heb ik een gastcollege verzorgd voor pabo studenten (Pedagogische Academie voor het Basisonderwijs) in de cursus 'Wereldwijs bewegen'. Docenten in het primair en secondair onderwijs in Nederland krijgen steeds meer te maken met de instroom van leerlingen uit andere landen. Deze kinderen en jongeren hebben zeer diverse achtergronden: ze komen uit oorlogsgebieden of niet, uit landen van diverse politiek-economische ontwikkelingsniveaus, hebben verschillend onderwijs genoten (bijvoorbeeld exclusief privaat, openbaar, of soms juist nauwelijks onderwijs), zijn opgegroeid in verschillende religieuze of sociaal-culturele contexten, en spreken allerlei verschillende talen. Ook hebben deze leerlingen allerlei verschillende mobiliteitstrajecten. Samen resulteert dit in een bijzonder uitdagende dynamiek voor docenten. Tijdens de cursus 'Wereldwijd bewegen' daagden we aankomende docenten uit om na te denken over hoe diversiteit op vruchtbare wijze vorm te geven in de klas en hoe recht te doen aan de ervaringen van kinderen die nieuw zijn in Nederland.

Geïnspireerd door op de verhalen van Ghanese jongeren die deelnamen aan mijn onderzoek, sprak ik met de pabo studenten over twee thema's: eerder opgedane onderwijservaringen en levenservaringen alvorens en gedurende mobiliteit. Daarbij trachtte ik studenten aan te moedigen hun nieuwe leerlingen zo open mogelijk te benaderen, met oprechte interesse in de belevingswereld van het kind of de jongere. Zoals ik mede in hoofdstuk 6 beschrijf, viel het mij op dat leerkrachten de neiging hebben om nieuwe leerlingen te behandelen als een leeg blad, wat van voor af aan gevuld moet worden. Dat is logisch in een systeem dat geen recht doet aan eerder opgedane onderwijservaringen en waarin kinderen en jongeren eerst een nieuwe taal moeten leren om educatief succesvol te zijn.

Toch is het belangrijk dat er ruimte is voor eerdere onderwijservaringen. Kinderen en jongeren voelen het feilloos aan wanneer ze onderschat worden en zijn hier zeer gevoelig voor. Ook kan het gebrek aan erkenning van eerdere onderwijservaringen pijnlijk en demotiverend werken. In het geval van de Ghanese jongeren betrof dit veelal eerder behaalde diploma's die niet in overweging werden genomen en het gevoel dat leerkrachten

neerkeken op de kwaliteit van Ghanese onderwijsinstellingen. Daarom is het voor de eigenwaarde en motivatie van jongeren belangrijk om momenten te creëren in de klas wanneer kinderen en jongeren de mogelijkheid krijgen te reflecteren op hun eigen, al eerder opgedane kennis en vaardigheden. We bespraken dat zelfs wanneer deze onderwijservaringen niet officieel kunnen worden gevalideerd, het van belang is een zekere mate van erkenning en waardering voor deze kennis en kunde te genereren, zonder dat deze direct vergeleken (en doorgaans gedevalueerd) worden met wat leerlingen worden geacht te leren in het Nederlandse onderwijssysteem.

Daarnaast spraken we over het thema 'levenservaringen' alvorens en gedurende mobiliteit. Zoals beschreven in de introductie van dit proefschrift, is het Nederlandse discourse aangaande de mobiliteit van kinderen zeer gepolariseerd. Kinderen en jongeren worden ofwel benaderd als slachtoffers van mobiliteit, of, anderzijds, als risicogroep die de sociale cohesie vermindert en criminaliteitscijfers doet stijgen als gevolg van hun mobiliteit. Vluchtelingenkinderen zijn zonder meer kwetsbaar en hebben speciale aandacht nodig. Echter, er zijn meerdere vormen van mobiliteit, en niet elk kind of elke jongere is uit haar of zijn land van herkomst *gevlucht*. Ook belandt niet elk kind na mobiliteit in de criminaliteit en kampt niet elke jongere met een taal-of leerachterstand. In een toenemend diverse samenleving moeten we genuanceerder bekijken wat de effecten zijn van mobiliteit op leerlingen.

Ik wees de pabo studenten er daarom op dat de belevingswereld van kinderen en jongeren aanzienlijk kan afwijken van die van volwassen. Uit de verhalen van Ghanese jongeren, en de literatuur die ik gedurende mijn PhD bestudeerde, bleek dat niet elke vorm van mobiliteit per definitie slecht is voor jongeren. Veel kinderen in West-Afrika circuleren tussen verschillende verzorgers en nog meer kinderen groeien op in een collectieve huishoudelijke setting waarbij verschillende volwassenen zorg dragen voor alle betrokken kinderen. Dit maakt mobiliteit tot een integraal onderdeel van de opvoeding. Hierdoor raken kinderen vertrouwd met veranderlijke huishoudelijke composities en een bestaan dat wordt gekarakteriseerd door aanpassing, doorzettingsvermogen, en flexibiliteit.

Mobiliteit staat dus niet per definitie gelijk aan trauma, verwarring, en negatieve ervaringen, zoals veelal het geval bij kinderen die gevlucht zijn. Dit is een veelvuldig gehoorde aanname waarop vervolgaannames over de belastbaarheid van kinderen en jongeren voortbouwen: 'ze hebben het al zwaar genoeg gezien ze een traumatische mobiliteitservaring hebben ondergaan', aldus de gedachten van veel onderwijspersoneel. Ook over mobiliteit na migratie – bijvoorbeeld voor een familiebezoek – werd verschillend gedacht onder de pabo studenten. Zou dat niet slecht zijn voor de taalontwikkeling van kinderen? En raken ze daar niet van in de war? Wederom invoelbare vragen door veelal

betrokken docenten die primair willen dat hun leerlingen zo spoedig mogelijk de Nederlandse taal machtig worden. We spraken daarom op de Pabo uitvoerig over de veerkracht van kinderen en jongeren en hoe mobiliteit hieraan kan bijdragen. Daarna bespraken we hoe deze weerbaarheid te behouden en of deze misschien kan worden gemobiliseerd in de klas.

In het Mobility Trajectories of Young Lives, ofwel het MO-TRAYL project, een internationaal onderzoeksproject gefinancierd door de European Research Council onder leiding van Prof. Dr. Valentina Muzzacato, zal ik mij als post-doctoraal onderzoeker onder meer toeleggen op het ontwerpen van een korte 'gids' voor leerkrachten die te maken hebben met migrantenjongeren.

Tot slot heb ik in 2015 een bijdrage geleverd voor de website *Versvak*[24]. *Versvak* heeft als doel wetenschappelijke kennis direct en voor iedereen toegankelijk te maken. Wetenschappers worden uitgenodigd om in begrijpelijke bewoording onderzoeksresultaten te delen. In dit artikel bespreek ik de beleving van jongeren in gezinsherenigingsprocedures, hun percepties van 'familie' en 'mobiliteit' en waarom hiermee rekening gehouden moet worden tijdens gezinsherenigingsprocedures.

Valorisatie kansen op basis van inzichten van het onderzoek

Dit onderzoek indiceert verder nog een aantal extra *kansen* voor valorisatie. Deze zijn met name gericht op het verbeteren van onderwijsstructuren. Mijn eerste aanbeveling richt zich op scholen die migrantenjongeren ontvangen die al onderwijs hebben genoten in een ander land. Momenteel worden er cross-cultureel valide toetsen afgenomen om het niveau van pas aangekomen studenten te bepalen. Hoewel dit noodzakelijk is om te bepalen op welk niveau een student kan instromen, zijn er weinig mogelijkheden om eerder opgedane onderwijservaringen te valideren. Hierdoor, en met name door het feit dat deze leerlingen eerst Nederlands moeten leren, ontstaat het gevaar dat jongeren terechtkomen op lagere niveaus. Dit terwijl ze op bepaalde vakgebieden soms al vergevorderd zijn. Het is dus wenselijk dat juist deze jongeren vakken kunnen volgen op verschillende niveaus en dat er nauwkeurig wordt bekeken hoe er recht kan worden gedaan aan eerder opgedane

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[24]http://www.versvak.nl/politiek/de-beleving-van-kinderen-in-gezinsherenigings-procedures/

onderwijservaringen. Zo kan op nauwkeurigere wijze aan hun onderwijsbehoeften worden voldaan zonder talent onbenut te laten.

De tweede aanbeveling heeft betrekking op het valideren van kennis en vaardigheden die zijn opgedaan *tijdens* mobiliteit, bijvoorbeeld in het vak *Burgerschap*. Deze skills, zoals aangetoond in hoofdstuk 5 en 6, zijn vaak onmeetbaar en worden stilzwijgend opgedaan, wat vraagt om non-conventionele toetsing. Deze kwaliteiten zijn niet alleen van belang voor leerlingen die zelf mobiel zijn tussen hun huidige woonplaats en hun land van herkomst. Ook leerlingen die zelf niet mobiel zijn komen in toenemende mate in aanraking met globalisering. Ook zij hebben baat bij een voorbereiding op een leven dat zich afspeelt buiten een lokale context en dat gekarakteriseerd wordt door toenemende diversiteit. In de hedendaagse globaliserende wereld hebben *alle* leerlingen baat bij het ontwikkelen van culturele sensitiviteit, aanpassingsvermogen, en nieuwsgierigheid – zoals onderschreven door de OECD en EU. Een vak als *Burgerschap* kan ruimte bieden voor erkenning en verdere ontwikkeling van dergelijke eigenschappen. Het delen van deze vaardigheden verrijkt tevens de leerlingen die zelf niet mobiel zijn. Momenteel ben ik in gesprek met een leerkracht op een middelbare school in de Randstad om een workshop te organiseren waarin deze twee verbeterpunten kunnen worden besproken met docenten en bestuur.

De laatste aanbeveling richt zich op beleidsmedewerkers die inhoudelijke beslissingen nemen over de leerplichtwet. In hoofdstuk 5 en 6 kwam duidelijk naar voren dat bepaalde vormen van mobiliteit een positief effect kan hebben op de Ghanese jongeren in deze studie. Met name deze kortlopende mobiliteit, zoals voor familie-of-begrafenis-bezoeken, wordt beperkt door de leerplichtwet. Sommige leerplichtambtenaren gaven aan dat ze uitzonderingen maakten voor mobiliteit gerelateerd aan persoonlijke omstandigheden. Dit impliceert echter dat de goedkeuring van tussentijdse mobiliteit in grote mate beïnvloed wordt door het goeddunken van de desbetreffende leerplichtambtenaar. De leerplichtambtenaar kan echter net zo goed negatief tegenover mobiliteit staan (zoals gedemonstreerd in hoofdstuk 6). Afhankelijkheid van de persoonlijke visie van een leerplichtambtenaar is echter onwenselijk, omdat dit tot grote diversiteit kan leiden in de toepassing van de leerplichtwet.

Migrantenjongeren hebben behoeften aan flexibele onderwijsvormen waarin eventueel verlangde mobiliteit een passende plaats krijgt. Onlangs zijn er op verschillende scholen in Nederland experimenten met flexibele vakanties gestart, toegestaan door de Minister vanwege de veranderende samenleving die toenemende flexibiliteit vereist van mensen. Een dergelijke flexibele schoolorganisatie kan ook migrantenjongeren de kans bieden om hun mobiliteitsbehoeften te combineren met het recht op onderwijs zonder dat mobiliteit

intervenieert met hun leercurve. Zoals in hoofdstuk 6 beschreven, werden de laatste significante aanpassingen aan de leerplichtwet doorgevoerd in 1968, als antwoord op veranderende maatschappelijke omstandigheden. In die tijd waren reismogelijkheden voor iedereen aanzienlijk beperkter en was migratiewetgeving minder restrictief. Gegeven de algeheel toegenomen mogelijkheden tot mobiliteit, en de veranderingen in migratiewetgeving, is de tijd rijp om de leerplichtwet opnieuw onder de loep te nemen en ons af te vragen op welke wijze het recht op onderwijs en mobiliteit kunnen worden geïntegreerd.

Tot slot, valorisatie door reciprociteit

Etnografie heeft vaak een sterk maatschappelijk oogpunt, en vrijwel altijd een wederkerig karakter. Etnografen zien data dikwijls als een 'gift' van participanten die daarvoor veel tijd vrijmaken, zich open durven te stellen en zeer persoonlijke verhalen en ervaringen delen. Er moet een vertrouwensrelatie worden opgebouwd, wat inzet en toewijding van beide kanten vereist. Zonder deze welwillendheid van participanten is etnografie onmogelijk. Daarmee is etnografie arbeidsintensief voor zowel onderzoeker als participant. Idealiter stellen etnografen hier een dienst, vaak van een ander karakter, tegenover. Een etnograaf maakt dan gebruik van kennis en vaardigheden om iets terug te doen voor de participant. Zo ontstaat een medemenselijk verband waarin ruimte en vertrouwen geschapen wordt voor het delen van ervaringen. Ondanks de vaak scheve machtsverhouding tussen etnograaf en participant, zoals uiteengezet in hoofdstuk 3, kan de etnograaf op individueel niveau soms daadwerkelijk iets betekenen voor een participant.

In dit onderzoek was er sprake van een machtsverschil, meestal gekenmerkt door het verschil in leeftijd en het feit dat ik geboren en getogen ben in Nederland, wat bijvoorbeeld consequenties heeft voor mijn taalbeheersing en kennis over institutionele wet-en-regelgeving. Mijn opvattingen over dataverzameling zijn hetzelfde: ik ben dankbaar voor de data die ik van jongeren verkreeg en wilde daar graag iets tegenover stellen. Zo heb ik huiswerk begeleid, brieven vertaald, gesprekken met advocaten bijgewoond, heb ik geholpen met inschrijvingen, betalingen en onderhandelingen met diverse overheidsinstanties en zorgverzekeraars. Als ik naar Ghana ging was de helft van mijn bagagekilo's gereserveerd voor kleding, cadeaus, geld, en andere goederen die ik mee nam voor families en vrienden in Ghana. Sommige jongeren hebben aangegeven dat ze zich persoonlijk verrijkt hebben gevoeld door deelname aan mijn onderzoek, bijvoorbeeld omdat het een nieuwe ervaring voor hen was.

Een duidelijk voorbeeld is dat van Ekow, die door zijn leeftijd (19 jaar) tussen wal en schip viel. Vanwege zijn leeftijd kon hij niet meer naar de Internationale Schakel Klas (ISK-klas) maar hij kon ook niet naar het HBO omdat hij nog geen Nederlands sprak. Via een specifieke procedure heb ik hem uiteindelijk op school gekregen. Hij zit momenteel in zijn derde jaar HBO waar hij het erg goed doet. Ik besefte mij dat het ook voor mij een uitdaging was om wegwijs te raken in de wirwar van instroomregelingen. Dit is een van de talloze voorbeelden waarbij het reciprociteitsprincipe van etnografie een belangrijke rol speelde.

Op de Universiteit Maastricht voeren we gesprekken over valorisatie, omdat iedere PhD student geacht wordt hierover een hoofdstuk te schrijven. Valorisatie wordt in toenemende mate belangrijk geacht, een trend waarin ik mij primair kan vinden. Maatschappelijk discussies over hoe onderzoeksgelden verdeeld moeten worden spelen hierin een rol. In de *Social Sciences* wordt valorisatie vaak vertaald als 'maatschappelijke impact' of 'maatschappelijke relevantie'. Zijn de voelbare gevolgen voor participanten door het wederkerige karakter van etnografie te kwalificeren als 'maatschappelijke impact'? Deze vraag resulteerde meerdere keren in onderlinge discussies. Door het reciprociteitsprincipe en de intensiteit van etnografisch veldwerk heeft participatie in een etnografisch onderzoek vaak voelbare gevolgen voor participanten, en in sommige gevallen dus ook voor de samenleving. De jongen die nu bijna zijn HBO heeft afgerond zal een veel vruchtbaardere bijdrage aan de Nederlandse samenleving kunnen leveren nu hij zijn talenten heeft ontplooit. Maar mogen wij dit kwalificeren als valorisatie?

Uit discussies op de Universiteit Maastricht kwam naar voren dat sommigen van mening zijn dat het reciprociteitsprincipe niet onder valorisatie geschaard zou mogen worden. Zij maakten een scheiding tussen de implicaties van het onderzoeks*proces* en de *uitkomsten* van het onderzoek. Deze gedachtegang is doorgaans makkelijk toepasbaar op onderzoek naar bijvoorbeeld medicijnen of economische trends. De *uitkomsten* van onderzoek naar consumptieproducten of medicijnen kunnen directe maatschappelijke of economische waarde hebben.

Echter, de aard van sociaalwetenschappelijk onderzoek is vaak anders dan onderzoek uitgevoerd door artsen, psychologen of economen. Wellicht ligt de valorisatiekracht daarom bij participatie en het onderzoeks*proces*, in het geval van etnografisch onderzoek veelal vormgegeven door het reciprociteitsprincipe. In mijn visie blijft het reciprociteitsprincipe primair een noodzakelijke methodologische verhandeling die mogelijkerwijs maar niet noodzakelijkerwijs valorisatiewaarden kán hebben. Deze bijkomstigheden zijn moeilijk 'meetbaar' maar kunnen desalniettemin van waarde zijn.

Ik achtte het van belang om af te sluiten met deze kritische noot. Sociaalwetenschappelijk onderzoek kan een zeer waardevolle bijdragen leveren aan maatschappelijke debatten en ontwikkelingen. Echter, het is daarvoor nodig dat sociaalwetenschappers kritisch bekijken wat wij onder valorisatie scharen.

CV

Curriculum Vitae

Joan was born in Amsterdam, on Sunday November 27th, 1988. In 2011, she conducted fieldwork in India and obtained her Bachelor degree in Anthropology and Development Studies from Radboud University Nijmegen. She continued with a selective 2-year Research Master program in Social and Cultural Science at Radboud University Nijmegen which she successfully completed (*bene meritum*) in 2014. During her Masters, she received a scholarship from the Netherlands Institute of Athens to conduct research on the coping mechanisms of African migrants in Greece. Directly after her Masters she started her PhD on the mobility trajectories and educational experiences of young Ghanaians, at Maastricht University. Joan presented her work at several international conferences (e.g. IMISCOE, ICYRnet, ECAS, ASAA), was selected for an emerging scholars workshop at the African Centre for Migration Studies at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and received funding from the Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration, and Development to organise an international workshop on urban ethnography. Following the submission of her PhD, she started a 2-year Post-doc position at Maastricht University.

This thesis investigates how young Ghanaians' mobility trajectories between Ghana and the Netherlands shape their educational experiences. Based on 20 months of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork in the Bijlmer, Amsterdam, and several urban areas in Ghana, this thesis draws the readers into the lifeworld of young Ghanaians (age 16-25) who actively give meaning to their mobility and education while growing up transnationally. The new concept 'mobility trajectories' is proposed to enable research on the complexity of moves that young people undertake over time and across geographically distinct localities and the changing family constellations that this entails. This thesis furthermore identifies three mechanisms that help to build 'educational resilience', young people's ability to adapt despite experiences of adversity in the educational domain. Herewith, it pushes beyond conventional conceptualisations of migrant youth and the socio-ecological model of resilience, and demands attention for the tacit knowledge that young people can gain through mobility. A framing analysis places the experiences of young Ghanaians into a wider socio-political context in which educators dominantly frame mobility as problematic for education. The conflicting framings employed by young Ghanaians and their educators indicate a plea for more inclusive (educational) policy design in which youth voices are considered and mobility and education become integrated as equally important rights in a globalising world.