



11th EADI General Conference 

INSECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT
INSÉCURITÉ ET DÉVELOPPEMENT

Regional issues and policies for an interdependent world *Approches régionales et stratégies politiques pour un monde interdépendant*

11th EADI General Conference

Insecurity and development
Regional issues and policies for an interdependent world

Bonn, 21 - 24 September 2005

Shifting allegiances? Transnational networks and Social Security regarding Health, Education and Funerals in Accra, Ghana

by Lothar Smith

Presented in the EADI Working Group on Urban Governance

Contact Person: Lothar Smith
Institute: Amsterdam institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies (AMIDSt), University of Amsterdam
Address: Nieuwe Prinsengracht 130, 1018 VZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands
E-mail address: L.Smith@uva.nl
Telephone: ++ 31 (0)20-525 4149
Fax number: ++ 31 (0)20-525 4051

Shifting allegiances? Transnational networks and Social Security regarding Health, Education and Funerals in Accra, Ghana¹

Lothar Smith²

Paper for the conference: “*Insecurity and Development: Regional Issues and Policies for an Interdependent World*”, EADI Working Group Session 14: Urban Governance, Bonn, 21-24 September 2005

Abstract

This paper explores the influence of transnational networks on social security arrangements of urban respondents in Accra, Ghana. Hereby the focus is on three themes, namely: health, education and funerals. These three themes, in different ways, explicate what social security issues exist for urban actors in Accra. Based on findings from one year of transaction data collected, corroborated with qualitative data from discussions on social security and social networks, the involvement of urban-based respondents in social security issues is analysed. To analyse the data a typology is used with which main differences in the research population in terms of access to formal/informal social security, general income/welfare, and characteristics of their social networks can be examined.

The contextual point of departure of this paper is two-pronged: Firstly, the physical space of Accra shows a contrasting perception between the economic struggle of Accra’s majority to meet their livelihood needs versus the ‘unlimited’ economic success of Ghanaians who had migrated abroad and are, or would be expected to start, investing their savings in Ghana. Secondly, the context of social networks, and the transnational ties respondents have, enables the physical and economic confinements of Accra to be overcome. Respondents in Accra thus actively identify, maintain and invest in transnational ties within their social networks hoping to thereby be able to further own needs, obligations and desires and/or those of others in Ghana they are socially and economically related to (especially the extended family).

Three main issues are brought forward which provide background and structure to this paper. They concern: 1) the historical-political context influencing respondent involvement in formal and informal social security arrangements, 2) the formal-informal social security nexus itself and 3) the interrelationships between economic themes.

The paper concludes that respondents noted much higher outgoing than incoming transactions in all three social security themes. This could relate to the absence of personal crises or the need for support from social networks but can also be attributed to the role that social network members play for the respondent and *vice versa*. For instance the influence of transnational ties and the local network differ much between the three main types of respondents within the typology. For the poorest the dependence on transnational support to meet crises and other expenses is high. For the less impoverished respondents ties with migrants often institute a potential for advancing economically rather than to meet crises. For the wealthiest respondents the role of transnational ties in social security is limited to the donations they may provide at funerals they organize. In terms of governance and social security, and the influence of transnational

¹ This paper reports on results of a collaborative research program between the University of Amsterdam (AMIDSt), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (AOE), Amsterdam Institute for International Development (AIID), and African Studies Centre Leiden, in the Netherlands and the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), in Ghana entitled “Transnational networks and the creation of local economies: Economic principles and institutions of Ghanaian migrants at home and abroad” (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO) grant number 410-13-010P). I would like to thank Jan Willem Gunning, Ton Dietz and Valentina Mazzucato in particular for their helpful comments and suggestions.

² Department of Geography and Planning, University of Amsterdam, Nieuwe Prinsengracht 130, 1018 VZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands, l.smith@uva.nl

networks, this paper concludes that the symbiotic nature of informal and formal social security arrangements needs to be accounted for, in every location within (rural, urban) and outside Ghana (migrants), in any attempt at understanding social security issues and activities at a local economy level.

Key words: social security, governance, transnationalism, social networks, Ghana, Accra, education, health, and funerals

Section 1: Introduction

In Accra much deference is given to Ghanaians who have successfully ‘gone to abroad’, i.e. who have migrated to a western country for economic reasons for an extended period of time. Where life in Accra, and Ghana at large, is perceived *and* presented by the large majority of its residents as a daily struggle to make ends meet, whereby the phrase ‘hand to mouth’ is often coined to describe their economic situation, with income earned just sufficing to meet direct consumption needs, Ghanaians abroad are regarded as having access to unlimited economic opportunities on which they can cash in. (own data, also see Tiemoko 2003)

The perceived economic success of migrants and expectations that this success will also rub off on their family and friends in Ghana also derives from the many visual signs of economic success of migrants one comes across on a daily basis around Accra. Many local businesses adorn clearly foreign names and/or proudly sell imported ‘home-use’ ware³, or these businesses are simply known by the local population to have been established by migrants. Success of migrants is also visual in the continual expansion of Accra’s outskirts; a seemingly non-ending sprawl of ‘mansions’; low-density housing, each built on a plot of its own, often separated from the outside world by a protective perimeter fence or wall. Various such houses seem abandoned as they await a new financial injection for months on end before renewed activity brings them to a next stage of completion. Foreign-based migrants build many of such houses.

Remittances, whether taking the form of goods or money, that migrants send to their home country, are thus met by their recipients with feelings of eagerness, gratefulness but also a ‘matter of course’, largely based on the assumption that the migrant can, and should therefore always try, to meet the specified and unspecified needs of his/her relations in Ghana, both the extended family and other relations to them.

This brief sketch of local perceptions of the local livelihood struggle in Accra, and the role of migrants therein, versus the economic opportunities held by migrants abroad, is an incomplete and gross generalization for a number of reasons. First, it does not acknowledge migrants who are not successful or uninterested in making investments and supporting their family and other relations in Ghana. Second, it does not acknowledge the

³ The term ‘home-use’ refers to second-hand products (cars, fridges, clothes, etc.) that have not (yet) been used in Ghana but have arrived ‘fresh’ in Ghana from a western country.

economic prowess and roles of a ‘local elite’⁴ that, without having gone abroad as economic migrants themselves, have been able to make similar investments and provide support to others. This is not to imply that they have no transnational ties, as indeed many of these elite have sponsored kin and friends to go abroad as economic migrants yet the main difference, as one respondent put it, is that dependency on transnational ties with relations abroad does not extend beyond those concerned with their profession or business. Third, the sketch is incomplete because it says nothing about the nature and context, i.e. the institutional embedding, of the specific investment or transaction. Not only is it important to be able to derive the meaning of each separate transaction that flows between migrants and their relations in Accra in terms of what it is to be used for (e.g. to invest in housing versus meeting a particular family oriented need) but also to understand the location, historic and institutional contexts in which a transaction between migrant and Accra relation is set. Fourth, the sketch also suggests that the local economy of Accra and that in which migrants operate, are separate, with physical boundaries determining the localness of their economies, when transnational networks enable flows to traverse the boundaries of these ‘local economies’. Fifth and final, the sketch suggests that support and investment flows only occur from migrant to their network members in Ghana while support can also occur in the opposite direction.

The above limitations to the sketch raise three key issues with regard to transnational influences on social security of respondents in Accra:

The formal-informal social security nexus: While it is generally acknowledged in literature on developing countries and sub-Saharan Africa in particular (c.f. van Ginneken 2003) that formal insurance mechanisms are highly confined with regard to whom they are available to and who participate in them, the fact remains that in the urban setting of Accra respondents in this research are either already involved, or interested to participate, in various forms of formal social security. Participation in formal security can, to some degree, be attributed to the formal and regularized status of work for a part of the urban working population (which contrasts with the rural, farming population), but also relates to access, knowledge and a general belief in the social security role of formal systems within their livelihoods.

At the same time participation of urban residents in formal social security schemes does not automatically imply that interest in informal insurance mechanisms dwindles. This would have implications for the relationships they have with members of their social network, whether these are based abroad or in urban or rural Ghana. When such informal arrangements continue to exist the kind of insurance coverage they provide may differ widely. This may depend on the type of crisis encountered by the urban resident or his/her network member, the location, the past history of exchanges between respondent and network member and economic capabilities to provide support. Yet for some respondents a general division can be noted whereby members of the network that are based abroad are primarily providers of support at times of crises while network members

⁴ For instance Ghana’s ‘old money’ elite, who have accumulated wealth from decennia of cocoa plantation sales, or have been able to accumulate wealth from passing on highly valued craftsmanship from one generation to the next.

in rural locations may be dependents to the urban resident when they encounter some kind of crisis.

The historical-political dimension to social security perspectives: During the life cycle of actors, changes may occur in location of the actor, his/her income activities and investments (e.g. securing own housing, raising/supporting own children, seeking to secure a pension of some kind), the confederation he/she is member of (marriage, household, direct/extended family, etc.) all of which influence the actor's (perceived) needs for social security. In a country with a relatively stable economic and political climate the choice for a set of formal social security arrangements can be made easily and adhered to throughout a person's life cycle. In contrast Ghana has, since its independence, undergone a number of major political regime changes. These changes not only affected the local economy but also affected the sheer existence of formal, state related social security mechanisms and the trust and belief of people to vest income earned in these if this was not obligatory (as with the 'taken from source' contributions of civil servants). The choice for formal and/or informal social security arrangements therefore not only relates to (knowledge of) the existence of a market of social security mechanisms, and access to these mechanisms, but also to trust of people in formal schemes, especially those deriving from their government. One question the choice for formal schemes also raises concerns the consequences of their implementation for the continuation of informal social security arrangements. The interest and need for maintaining such informal arrangements may differ strongly between economic domains (e.g. education, health, funerals), and may relate not only to the economic benefits they (can) provide to the actor and/or the confederation allied to, but may also be influenced by various cultural and social norms (i.e. institutions).

Intertwining economic domains: Relationships between respondents in Accra and network members may not necessarily be confined to one economic domain (e.g. education, funerals, business or housing investments) only. This applies to kinship related ties as well as to friendships with others. For instance a relationship with a non-kin person may spark off at school or church. From this a common involvement in a certain economic activity may come forth. Initially there may not seem to be much balance in the involvement and efforts of the respondent versus the other in financial, labour or other inputs. A respondent befriended to a migrant abroad who spends a substantial amount of time supervising the construction of the migrant's house without being paid for this provides such an example. However the investment of the respondents in the other may, at some point, result in various economic benefits, including investments of the migrant in the respondent, e.g. goods sent to help the respondent set up a business, or the provision of crucial financial support at times of crisis, e.g. when securing financial means for a funeral. These are moments of reciprocity of the migrant to the respondent in Accra that may not necessarily pertain to the same economic domain.

For some respondents opportunities to link to financially able others (especially to migrants) through investment of own labour and other resources, from which to then hope to derive return investments may be limited as their own skills, means *and* the trust of the other to involve them in their Ghana/Accra based activities, are limited. For a final

group of respondents the burden of spending time on other activities without perceiving immediate benefits from their investments means that they do not proactively seek to become involved with economic activities of migrants.

To enable an exploration of the issues raised above, while also recognizing the heterogeneity of the research population, three main *types* of respondents have been developed. These reflect the welfare disposition of respondents, the access to formal/informal social security and the kinds of relationship they maintain with network members, abroad and in Ghana. In the empirical section of this paper I discuss and expand on these typologies as related to social security issues.

The focus of this paper is on the relationship between social security concerns of urban respondents and transnational networks and the way this relationship is institutionally embedded. To gain an understanding of the institutional context shaping social security concerns and instruments of urban actors in Accra I focus on three economic themes: health, education and funerals. These economic themes play a central role in attempts of urban actors to maintain their livelihoods.

The next section will highlight some main theoretical issues relating to governance, social security and the urban context of developing countries. Hereby the focus will be on three main issues I have already briefly introduced: 1) the historical-contextual background of social security (at the African, Ghanaian and Accra level), 2) the formal-informal social security nexus and 3) the existence, especially through informal institutions, of inter-linkages between economic themes which relate, but also which do not relate, to social security issues. In Section 3 I present some findings from field research conducted in Accra on social security issues as these relate to the three themes of health, education and funerals. A summary and conclusion (Section 4) of main issues raised ends this paper.

Section 2: Governance & social security in urban and transnational contexts

Social security in an African context

Conducting a literature search on the relationship between transnational networks and urban social security did not provide much in the way of directly relevant literature to substantiate arguments of my own. From this literature and an additional general search in the *Google* search machine valuable insights were gained into what main issues relate to governance as this is linked with transnationalism, social security and/or urban sub-Saharan Africa. The following form key observations derived from this literature search:

1. Few links seem to be drawn between social security and transnationalism when this concerns the influence of transnational flows on the country of origin of migrants. Instead focus, when this concerns migrants, is often on how they can be integrated into the social security mechanisms of the country they have migrated to (Adelman 2005).

2. When informal social security arrangements are mentioned in the context of the developing countries of Africa, their existence is usually related to the presence of a large informal economy that provides employment to a significant part of a country's working population. The majority of this informal economy (rural or urban) population has little or no access to formal insurance, or perceive the sustained costs of such schemes as being too high given the irregularity of their income, and more immediate interests and needs (van Ginneken 1999, Cichon *et al.* 2003:61). Van Ginneken (1999) writes how for sub-Saharan Africa formal social security coverage is confined to about 5 to 10 percent of the total working population, with little sign that this number will rise (1999:49). While other authors produce slightly different numbers (e.g. Kaseke & Butare 2003:3) the basic message is the same: formal social security insurance is more or less limited to civil servants and, in some countries, also other salaried employees. Thus those operating in the informal economy have to rely on informal social security mechanisms to meet crises when these arise.
3. The discussion of what informal mechanisms are adhered to is usually confined and coupled to a conclusion that their existence should primarily be explained in terms of a failing market for formal social security mechanisms. Recommendations therefore suggest an adaptation of existing informal arrangements and schemes to enable their absorption into formal social security schemes in the near future (Kaseke 2000, Schrieder & Knerr 2000).
4. Finally, there also seems to be very little discussion on the relationship between urban and rural domains where this concerns the contemporary interplay of formal and informal social security with the livelihoods of urban actors. It may be argued that this interplay affects what social support mechanisms are maintained with rural counterparts, amongst other related to their including/excluding principles for extended family members. While the body of literature on migration does dwell on this to some degree (c.f. Caldwell 1969, Tacoli 2002 and Simone 2003), precise research that investigates this relationship seems to be largely missing.

Governance and social security in the Ghanaian context

Before discussing what social security means in the Ghanaian urban context the question of how social security governance in developing countries should be understood and defined needs to be addressed. Van Ginneken (2003) defines social security as:

- (a) The provision of benefits to households and individuals (b) through public or collective arrangements (c) to protect against low or declining living standards (d) arising from a number of basic risks and needs. (1999:49)

This definition of van Ginneken concerns formal and informal arrangements. Yet most of the discussion on social security arrangements, and what institutions are involved, examine informal arrangements, often in rural settings, and focus on how they function, particularly in the event of crises (c.f. Dercon 2003, Dekker 2004, Appiah-Kubi *et al.* 2004). On the other hand governance discussions on social security, especially those focusing on the scope for social security with regard to health care, education and general upkeep, too often overemphasize the role of formal social security arrangements given their coverage, and the role of the state therein.

While I do not want to champion informal social security arrangements, as these have failings and limitations of their own, I would like to emphasize that the negative view that governance-oriented researchers and policymakers have of informal arrangements needs redressing. From a transnational perspective the argument for policymakers to focus more on informal social security arrangements is compelling when cast in the light of the recent surge of interest in the role of migrants and their remittances for development aid to countries they derive from. If this interest ensues a similar, and related, interest should also be there for the roles migrants play in providing support to their families and other relations in their countries of origin. While this support largely takes the form of informal arrangements, its role needs to nonetheless be appreciated. At the same time critiques of policy developments that seek to channel migrant remittances into development aid (including social security provision) rightly argue that the prospects of integrating migrant support into development aid should not be overestimated without a better understanding of the nature of migrants' support (c.f. Skeldon 2004, de Haas 2005).

The context of social security issues in Accra's urban setting

Few studies seem to exist which focus on the interrelationship between social security provision (formal and informal) and the role of the state over time in Ghana. Various authors discuss the influence of migration on changes in informal institutions surrounding social security such as the extended family and marriage (Clark 1999, Berry 1997), other authors examine the changing role of remittances from migrants (initially from urban parts of Ghana to rural areas) (Caldwell 1969, Mazzucato *et al.* 2004, Dam 1998, Ghana Statistical Service 1995) and a final group of scholars have discussed the influence of Structural Adjustment Policies and other macro-economic policies on existing state derived social security provisions (Jamal & Weeks 1999, Kumado & Gockel 2003). Yet none of these authors really seem to draw the link between social security arrangements along the formal-informal nexus with changes over the course of time in the political context that shape(d) national government policies and programmes on social security. While it is well beyond the beyond the scope of this research to assess this knowledge gap I would like to argue here that participation of (urban) Ghanaians in formal social security mechanisms not only relates to their eligibility to access these mechanisms as related to the kind of work conducted. It is also the outcome of changing levels of confidence in the relevance and adequacy of formal arrangements for addressing their social security concerns in a more apt manner than informal arrangements also adhered to.

Amongst the changes in policy regimes that affected formal social security provision it stands without doubt that the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) introduced in the 1980s, and related economic reform programmes that both preceded and followed it, had the largest implications on how people organised their livelihoods. In the urban areas SAP incited a general decline of the formal economy and much reduced employment opportunities. At the same time rising inflation saw the costs of daily expenditures increase. (Jamal & Weeks 1988, Tacoli 2002, Haruna 2003)

Kumado & Gockel (2003) thus conclude that the already ongoing breakdown of traditional social protection schemes, notably a shift away from a dependency on the

extended family for providing social security, was hastened by the so-called 'new economic order' introduced with SAP to Ghana in the 1980s. Economic performance came to be primarily determined by market-led strategies which, amongst others, saw much reduced expenditure by the government on welfare, adversely affecting formal social security provision to civil servants, but also having a wider effect on other parts of the Ghanaian population. Owuor (2004) sets out for Kenya, where SAP was also introduced in the same period, that rural-urban relations were often reconstituted and renegotiated as a consequence of this programme. They were either strengthened or (at least temporarily) abandoned by the large majority in urban areas of Kenya while attempting to face the economic recession and ensure limited losses in own income and consumption. Similar social changes are suggested to have occurred throughout sub-Saharan Africa (Beall & Kanji 1999) and also in various other parts of the world (van Ginneken 2003).

Taking health provision as an example of formal social security provisions the current government of Ghana (NPP) is set to institute a change with the introduction of a National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The 'cash and carry' system of the prior government (PNDC) had implied that patients pay for treatment expenses ahead of actual treatment (IRINnews 2004, Osei-Akoto 2003). It had meant a significant rise in livelihood expenses when compared with the social welfare schemes that had been provided before then by the Ghanaian state. The cash and carry system was understandably highly unpopular with the Ghanaian population as it saw health related expenses rise significantly. Maxwell *et al.* (2000) calculated that for their research population in Accra health expenses came to an average of 4,5% of all household expenses (Maxwell *et al.* 2000:54-57). The NHIS scheme of the current government is meant to ensure that nearly all medical expenses and treatment are covered by a government health insurance thus removing economic barriers for people to seek health care when necessary (IRINnews 2004). A strong reduction in health care expenses, through the introduction of NHIS, may also enable people to save and more ably meet other upkeep expenses.

Without doubt it can also be argued that the introduction of this scheme will influence relationships at a local, national and transnational level, as is indeed evidenced in national debate on its role. The general consequence seems to be an overall health improvement throughout Ghana as the scheme sets in place a more secure support mechanism than was provided by informal social security arrangements upon which most Ghanaians had relied before. On the other hand it is also argued that future requests placed by rural and urban poor with network members in urban and foreign locations to financially support them with health needs will no longer be heeded once the NHIS scheme is introduced. Especially opportunities to practise *chopping*, whereby a part of the remittances received from migrants to support certain health expenses are used for other needs, will become limited. Indeed, beyond the bright future of health care effectuated by the NHIS scheme Hanson (2005) argues that the current neo-liberal economic climate of Ghana is increasing social inequality and social exclusion, whereby vulnerability to socio-economic shocks has increased for individuals in Ghana while possibilities to limit their

vulnerability are confined. This holds especially for the rural population, the urban poor and the (socially) unconnected.

The practise of *chopping* constitutes only one element to transnational exchanges between actors in Accra and migrants abroad. What other influences do transnational ties have on local economic and social behaviour of actors in Ghana, and Accra in particular, as related to social security mechanisms? And do such transnational relationships fundamentally differ from relationships between urban migrants and rural ties in Ghana in the 1960s, as described by Caldwell (1969)?

One major change producing new social and economic processes concerns the rise of the urban region in Ghana as an intermediate geographical-social node between migrants abroad and ties of these migrants in their rural region of origin. Urban actors in Accra sometimes play instrumental roles in managing and sustaining this relationship between migrants and their families in the rural region. Particularly with moments of crisis such as funerals the supportive role of urban relations for migrants emerges (c.f. Mazzucato *et al.* 2004). The ties migrants are able to maintain with urban relations may also enable migrants to engage in economic activities in urban areas without the knowledge of, or interference by, rural relations.

Yet why would Accra based actors, as ties of migrants, be willing or interested to perform such activities on behalf of migrants? While Accra respondents are reluctant to stake firm claims that activities they conduct on behalf of migrants produce returns to them at a later stage, reciprocity to Accra relations by migrants does take place. Hereby the instance and the kind of return to investments made may vary widely. These may vary from direct returns of an equal monetary value and related to a same economic domain to reciprocity that takes the shape of a 'return' that concerns a different economic theme and may be of a different value, e.g. financial support with education. The introduction to this paper already pointed out the importance of such reciprocity. For other urban respondents who are less, or not, engaged in urban activities of migrants, no direct claim for support from the migrant can be staked. If a request is placed it will relate to a past, common history, especially when the urban respondent had supported the migrant in some way or another. Alternatively (matrilineal) kinship ties to migrants are used in requests with migrants to 'try' to give some support.

Shifting attention away from the (meaning of) transnational ties to the perceptions of respondents themselves as regards social security is also meaningful as discontinuities in institutional arrangements and affiliations are seen to arise, especially with those who perceive themselves as 'educated' and 'enlightened'. Such respondents shift the attention and organisation of their lives away from what they call 'traditional'; institutions like those of the matrilineal extended family, the hometown to be able to join the 'modern', 'western' and 'enlightened' world. This is expressed in the investments they make: the education of their children, an urban house that accommodates a nuclear and not also the extended family, and participation in various formal insurances securing their health, education and old age needs.

Some authors argue that particular forms of Christianity, notably Pentecostalism have induced and instituted such shifts, especially in urban parts of Ghana (van Dijk 2002, de Witte 2003, Meyer 1998). While I do not contest this finding I would like to add that the continual exposure to global trends and related opportunities, to western lifestyles as these are presented on television, through the internet or some other information channel, will have hastened the desire of urban actors to become 'world citizens', if necessary achieved at some expense to the extended family.

The formal-informal nexus for social security

Differentiating amongst the range of social security mechanisms available to respondents in Accra is important. A first difference concerns the degree of formalisation. On the formal side are various state and private insurances (providing health or life insurance, or welfare insurance schemes through the employer). Less formalized, although still explicit, security arrangements exist in the form of church welfare schemes, *Susu* saving club insurance mechanisms, amongst others. Finally, there are also various informal, implicit social security arrangements that usually relate directly to social networks of respondents. With these informal arrangements very little formalisation and explication may exist of conditions under which respondents give or receive support to members of their network although institutions in which these arrangements are embedded may provide some guidance. Conditions affecting the success of informal arrangements relate to the location other network members (influencing the scope for communication of needs and the availability of information to confirm the legitimacy of requests), the history of transactions (whereby the terms under which return requests may be expected in order to achieve reciprocity are also reviewed) and what effect the value of the support required has on the long term commitment and relation with the other. A second difference concerns the access of urban residents of Accra to social security mechanisms. For some access to formal mechanisms is possible because of the work they conduct, for others even access to certain informal arrangements may, at some points, become difficult due to sustained economic hardship.

Typically literature focuses on the shift from rural to urban locality as being related to changes in social networks from a fairly homogenous composition in terms of income, location and kinship of social network members to one that is more heterogeneous, including professional, new institutional, non-kin ties amongst others (Berry 1997, Clark 1999). This change, it is suggested, can also affect how people maintain relationships with their hometown as they balance between a desire to achieve certain levels of personal welfare, a 'western' lifestyle and prestige in the city versus the need and desire to gain the respect of hometown relations (kin and non-kin), amongst others by trying to meet their needs and desires with own resources, maintaining these ties to enable a return to the hometown, either at an unplanned early, or anticipated later, point in life. Anders (2005) aptly shows the precariousness of this balancing act amongst urban-based civil servants in Malawi. On the other hand Owuor (2004) emphasizes how urban dwellers invest in their rural ties to ensure their own survival and/or be able to maintain an urban livelihoods at critical moments. Obviously the economic situation of the urban actor much influences the choice for formal and/or informal social security and the role of relationships with others in this. Nonetheless what holds for the work of Owuor and of

Anders is that a change in location, especially a shift from rural to urban, often also enables a shift in the institutions which provide actors with the necessary social security, away from local, kin based networks and towards formal, state and private insurance arrangements.

Van Ginneken explains that the fundamental reason why both formal and informal economy workers choose *not* to seek so-called 'statutory social security coverage' (i.e. formal insurances) is that these insurances, in their view, do not adequately cover what they regard as most immediate interests given the confinements of their income. Largely due to the impact of measures of the structural adjustment programme, which either terminated or much reduced free access to (primary) education and health care, these have become more immediate needs for which to first make provisions. Finally, insurance concerning pension benefits should, in the first place, focus on measures of protection against death and disability rather than taking these as starting points for coverage provision. (van Ginneken 2003:9).

Both van Ginneken and Osei-Akoto draw the conclusion that what has arisen is a situation where the so-called 'poorest of the poor', comprising both the rural and urban poor⁵, are not only excluded from (formal) insurance schemes but often also excluded from informal risk-sharing arrangements, when they are the ones who are subject to the highest levels of risk. Osei-Akoto relates this to a number of factors. First he points out that the poorest of the poor generally have a low level of education which results in a restraint to seek support through social security mechanisms, whether formal or informal (with the possible exception of the church in which members often derive from various social strata). Furthermore formal insurance providers and leaders of informal social security schemes share a preference for low risk, high income members rather than high-risk low-income members and may thus actively dissuade the latter from joining their schemes especially if a number are already accepted as participants. (van Ginneken 2003, Osei-Akoto 2003). Leliveld adds one further factor: the choice of the urban elite for formal insurance arrangements, for whatever reasons, implies that the need to resort to their social network (especially their kin) to provide them with support at times of crisis, is strongly reduced. This may be a strong disincentive for them to (continue to) participate in informal social security mechanisms with kin or others, hastening processes of social exclusion, fragmentation and stigmatisation (Leliveld 2004).

Table 1 provides an indication of the range of formal and informal social security mechanisms to which urban actors of Accra could relate. Where these mechanisms seemed more particular to Ghana I have provided a brief explanation of their main purposes. Whilst this table makes a distinction between formal and informal social security mechanisms, following the prior discussion, this should not be taken to mean that such a strong distinction always exists between formal and informal measures. For this table the main criteria with which measures were allocated to either category related to the degree with which a social security arrangement was formalized (e.g. registered

⁵ Especially those operating in the urban informal economy often strongly depend on a single source of income generation, which makes them vulnerable to shocks (Arhin-Tenkorang 2001, Ashong & Rider Smith 2001).

insurance companies) or not (e.g. network derived support). Some forms of social security do not always fall into one or the other category. The case of welfare funds of churches is a case to the point. Although many churches in Ghana maintain verifiable accounts of their coffers and funds other churches may run their finances in a less open and formal manner. Yet both kinds of churches are certain to offer similar kinds of welfare schemes to their members.

Table 1: formal and informal social security arrangements

Formal social security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private health and pension insurance schemes • Life insurance/assurance • Church welfare scheme (provides financial coverage for funeral expenses of direct family members, also appropriated for some health expenses) • Business and other occupational and leisure associations/unions (saving schemes that often provide some crisis coverage/support)
Informal social security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calamity funds (family organized coverage of family member crises, especially funerals) • ‘Out of pocket’ self-coverage (own savings appropriated for unexpected expenses for own benefit or those of others. Such expenses are often health related but may also concern other unforeseen expenses, e.g. education) • ‘Out of pocket’ network coverage (network derived financial support for unforeseen expenses relating to various kinds of crises of respondents)

source: own fieldwork data 2002-04

Inter-linkages between economic themes

Does Accra, with its location on the crossroads of global and local interactions, enable changes or redirections in how social security is understood and organised, and what institutions relate to this? What specific role is played by membership of transnational networks? These ties of respondents in Accra with migrants (whether kin or non-kin) are particularly interesting as they also provide an opportunity to migrants to further their interests and play out any obligations/roles they may have in Ghana through the respondents in Accra. Thus Accra respondents may play important representational and informant roles for migrants at occasions like funerals and other crises. In turn Accra respondents may seek to derive support from migrants in reciprocity for services conducted, and as an expression of gratefulness.

Understanding variations in reciprocity is of importance as these can differ along the dimensions of time and location but may also be different in the purpose and value attributed to them by the parties involved. Thus a reciprocal action may be immediate or delayed, can be returned directly to the original giver or be returned in an indirect manner, may concern a same economic domain or a different one. A transnational example is that of childcare by caretakers in Accra for children of migrants⁶. Hereby the Accra relation clearly provides a service to the migrant by taking responsibility for their children. This, while not directly related to social security, does provide agency, a room for manoeuvre, for the Accra respondents to seek social security with the migrant at times

⁶ Generally migrants have a clear preference for urban locations for their children while they continue to live and work abroad. Not only are these the predominant locations of private schools, perceived to provide the best education in Ghana, the urban context also immerses their children in global developments while, at the same time, they also encounter and acquire more traditional Ghanaian norms and values.

of crisis. The recipient in Accra may thereby contest that support received from the migrant to some degree is, in any way, a form of reciprocity for services provided. This assures future dependence on the migrant whilst childcare continues to be provided.

Other examples that demonstrate that transnational flows can be both multi-directional and initiate indirect forms of reciprocity relate to sponsorship of family members to go abroad and the rise of family calamity funds (for instance see Ferrara 2003). In the first situation an urban actor, especially those who are relatively prosperous, may decide to 'sponsor' a family member to go abroad to secure a steady, healthy income. Hereby, it is hoped, the diversity and security of income sources and thus also means for support to the extended family is improved. At the same time this sponsorship of a family member, especially in situations where the family is notified of the support provided, can also reduce financial obligations of the urban actor towards the family when the sponsorship is recognized as an act whereby the actor has 'done well' for the family and the brunt of support to the extended family should fall on others, including the sponsored migrant. The rise of calamity funds as a recent phenomenon provides a second situation that may be described as a 'reversed' transnational flow in terms of the obligations it ensues. In brief calamity funds operate at the extended family level and are intended to secure financial means with which to deal with family crises when these occur. Contributions to the fund are in proportion to the geographic location of adult family members as this is purported to indicate differences in welfare. Rural members thus pay lowest contributions and migrants the highest. The rise of calamity funds, informants explained, are a signal towards migrants that their support is received with rising consideration and understanding of the economic means they have. It is also intended to stem the stream of requests for financial support from their family, instead acknowledging and regulating the supportive financial role of migrants to their family.

Section 3: Empirical Findings

General Introduction

What are major crises for urban actors located in transnational networks? What social security mechanisms exist that respondents in Accra can employ in the event of crisis and how are these established, maintained and used? What are the roles of the social network of a respondent (especially where these involve transnational ties) and of particular economic institutions? These questions raise important issues that cannot be fully answered with the quantitative data collected in this research, which concerned one full year, as crises may not have taken place in this period. It is then difficult to ascertain how people manage, cope with and mitigate crises (Dekker 2004). Thus, to provide a more longitudinal time dimension to the quantitative data, I also collected qualitative data that focused on crisis moments in the lives of respondents as these pertained to various economic themes.

Moments of crisis can take many forms. Firstly, they relate to both foreseen and unforeseen events that take place in the personal lives of respondents. Secondly, they can also have various kinds of effects, such as emotional, social and economic effects. In this

research the focus is on the last two categories, as these are most apt to understanding any transnational dynamisms at play at moments of crisis. Thirdly, the impact (especially in economic terms) may vary from being highly indirect to direct. It can be indirect as in the case with idiosyncratic events to which a respondent is tied through his/her relations. In the situation that there is a direct impact of the crisis on the actor the scope of the impact may still vary. This variation not only applies to the degree of covariance of a crisis but also to what extent it influences the sustainability of an actor's livelihood. I return to the point I made earlier on indicating that covariance can also take place at a network level (as a spatial entity) and is not necessarily tied to one geographical location of whatever size. Network embedding may thus play a vital role in the ex-ante and ex-post social security strategies of Accra respondents.

While crises are generally accepted by social scientists as interesting occasions to conduct research on how an actor deals with difficult moments in his/her life, these crises (and their analyses) may say little about how livelihoods are sustained on a daily basis. Yet the processes involved with daily livelihoods are equally part of the lives of people and, in the case of this research, can relate to important transnational exchanges. For example transnational relationships may occur in instances where respondents in Accra spend substantial amounts of time (and other resources) on activities that primarily benefit the migrant. This is the case with the supervision of the construction of a migrant's house, or in instances where respondents took care of the children of migrants. I would also like to argue that transactions relating to daily livelihood support are often interrelated with those concerning crises; daily transactions and other exchanges may be able to sustain relationships, thereby expanding the social capital of respondents with members of their social networks, on which to rely in times of crises. Hoogeveen (2001) finds evidence for this in his research on risk and insurance in Zimbabwe. Hoogeveen refers to this as "the simultaneous fixing of transactions between two parties over several markets, with the terms of one transaction contingent on the terms of another." (2001:26)

How do respondents deal with crises? A number of issues rise when attempting to answer this question. First, bias may be expected to exist by gender for transactions related to some economic themes. Beforehand differences were expected in the frequency and value of transactions between male and female respondents, women being more likely recipients of upkeep related transactions and men expected to relate more strongly to investment oriented transactions (business, housing and education). Yet little evidence in the data could be found to directly support this argument. In the transaction data there is a slight bias between men and women in terms of men being more involved in housing and business investments yet this cannot be taken to mean that women are not involved in transactions relating to such activities, to the contrary. This finding is especially interesting for housing investments, as it indicates a shift in the housing sector, away from being male dominated. Bortei-Doku (1990) calculated that the proportion of women in the construction sector rose from 1% in 1960 to 6% in 1984 and this research might suggest a further rise due to transnational influences (Bortei-Doku 1990:65, in: Baden *et al.* 1994). The question here is whether this rise derives from a migrant need to, in the first place, secure the support of an Accra tie who is trustworthy and reliable, rather than experienced in house building.

Table 2: Moments of crises during the period 2003-2004⁷

Crisis	Implications of crisis	Involvement of respondents and their networks
Education	If, for financial reasons, completion of education fails then the opportunity of the family to diversify their income sources and reduce dependency is also reduced.	During the field research various respondents played a role in financially supporting a friend or fellow church member with education. A few respondents also relied on migrant remittances to pay for their education or that of their children, while others had received support from migrants for own education or that of their children in the past. Support to others, an extended family member or a member in church, often takes place when the regular 'sponsor' (usually the father of the child) – located abroad or in Ghana- fails to produce necessary funds to pay for educational and other fees of the child, often due to adverse income circumstances.
Health/ Illness	Health care expenses may lead to financial losses that may be difficult to overcome, especially when recovery is achieved with sale of assets meant for income opportunities. In the case of death of an ill person health treatment costs are transferred to the family. These costs may be included in calculations of total expenses of the funeral held for the deceased.	Most respondents supported others in their social networks, especially ties based in rural and urban Ashanti Region. Some also supported semi- and non-network members such as church members and passers-by seeking their aid. Vice versa some financial support was received by respondents from their network members, especially from migrants, in dealing with any medical expenses in instances where respondents were not formally insured.
Funerals	With family member funerals, especially those in which respondents have an organizing role, the sudden nature of expenses can affect consumption levels of the respondent and his conjugal family, thereby also negatively impacting income opportunities. This financial situation may be sustained if costs made cannot be reimbursed at the closing of accounts of the funeral ceremony.	About 75% of the respondents had a financial role in one or more funerals during the field research. Yet only a few noted incoming transactions (donations, support) showing that their role was primarily supportive. Funerals are occasions at which social ties at local, national and transnational level are reasserted. They are occasions at which public, recorded donations can be provided and are hereby recognized and explicit moments of reciprocity (esp. friends). For some funerals a so-called 'profit' may emerge from the accounted balance of expenses and donations.

Source: own fieldwork data 2003-04

Similar to the apparent involvement of women in housing construction is the involvement of men in upkeep. Whether this concerns local, regional or national social ties, male *and* female respondents provided (more than received) support to family members (direct and

⁷ The findings presented in Table 2 require a few cautionary remarks: Firstly, all respondents with formal health insurances were unlikely to receive support from others with health support. Secondly, the data concerned one year during which some respondents did not incur crises. Thirdly, in terms of age most respondents fall into the economically active age group. They are thereby less likely to rely on others to provide them with support in education, upkeep and health, in contrast to the young and old.▲

Formatted

Formatted

extended) and to friends. This upkeep role of women and men relates well to the findings of Abu (1983) on the Ashanti, who concludes that it is expected of men that they provide most of the 'chop' (food and upkeep) money to pay the education of their children, while the women can (or may need to) supplement money to what the men are able to provide (also see Clark 1999). While some respondents agreed that this division was still appropriate in their lives, other respondents, male and female, felt that they had long departed from such a financial division arrangement. These respondents were pooling their incomes and claimed to only have one wallet and one bank account as a couple, to which both partners had equal access. Respondents explained that these developments were the logical result of their being 'modern' and 'enlightened', attributable on the one hand to being in Accra but on the other hand also attributable to their incorporation of advice by their churches to give precedence to ties through marriage and the conjugal family over other relationships.

The second issue concerns the management of resources as this relates to social security and perspectives of respondents to participate in formal and/or informal social security mechanisms that also give meaning to the role of relationships with others. Respondents seem to rely more strongly on formal than informal security measures to meet crises in health, funerals and secure an income when pensioned. Of the 39 respondents involved in this research 15 (38%) respondents had access to formal social security policies⁸ that covered the health expenses they and their conjugal families might incur. Respondents holding health insurances were all employees of a company or institute and their health insurance was usually 'deducted at source' i.e. taken from their gross income before pay-out of salary. Participation in formal insurances increased with the level of income (correlation between (coded) income level and average participation in formal insurance was estimated at 0.69). Overall this formal insurance participation corroborates the finding that support (whether or not based on requests placed with network members) from others in personal health care by respondents is minimal.

The third issue raised by the data regards the role of reciprocity, especially where transactions between a respondent and members of his/her social network concern different economic themes. When this is the case it demonstrates that especially informal institutions to which respondents relate to provide them with directive for their livelihood, are often not limited to one economic theme only. On the contrary, by embedding transactions in institutional contexts, forms of reciprocity can be strategically evoked to concern alternative themes.

Methods

Before presenting and discussing my empirical findings I will briefly explain what methods were used to collect the empirical data for this paper.

⁸ For a further three respondents formalized social security could not be ascertained from the transaction data although such membership would be expected given their employment positions.

During 2003 and 2004 I conducted fieldwork in Accra, Ghana's capital city, and the adjacent harbour city of Tema⁹ with 39 respondents¹⁰. The purpose of this fieldwork was to understand the influence of transnational networks on economic activities pursued by respondents, both in greater Accra and elsewhere. This approach is integral to the general research strategy of the *TransNet* research programme of which this research is part, namely to examine the influence of transnational networks of Ghanaian migrants in Amsterdam on local economies through simultaneous research in the three locations of Amsterdam (the basis of migrants), rural Ashanti Region (region of origin of migrants) and Accra (an important nodal point in travel and other communication and financial flows, also a major location for migrant investments)¹¹. The respondents in Accra are members of the multi-sited transnational networks of migrants based in Amsterdam and were selected by way of matching, their names produced by a name-generator exercise with the migrants of the Amsterdam research.

For each respondent a combination of field research methods was used, including: monthly transaction studies (capturing economic transactions of respondents and social ties involved with these), a name generator exercise (capturing the social networks of respondents) and semi-structured discussions (focussing on the role and meaning of social networks in various economic themes) and life histories (particularly relating to economic crises).

Introduction to the typology

As I argued in the introduction of this paper a typology analysis will form the basis for the presentation of empirical findings. This typology provides clearest insights into differences within the research population as this regards the influence of transnational relationships on social security. Amongst others this typology analysis will be able to differentiate respondents by their participation in formal social security mechanisms, and also illustrate the different roles migrants and Accra respondents play for each other with regard to the provision of social security.

Table 3 provides an overview of main economic and social features of the three main types into which the total research population of 39 respondents has been divided. The table provides some first noticeable differences between the three types in terms of income earned, the proportion of network members based abroad and the size of social networks.

⁹ In this paper I will not distinguish between the two cities of Tema and Accra and their immediate surroundings and refer to the region as a whole as 'Accra'.

¹⁰ The original number of respondents was higher: three respondents could not be located, one respondent declined to participate. Two respondents also migrated to foreign destinations without giving notice of this but data on first months of transactions and discussions with these respondents are included in the analysis.

¹¹ For further information see: <http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/ghanatransnet/index.html>

Table 3: Overview data of the three main typologies

Type	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
Total number of respondents	12	16	11
Gender of respondents	7 male 5 female	7 male 7 female	10 male 1 female
Age distribution (std. deviation)	39 (15.7)	38 (13.1)	48 (5.6)
Network density (NG)	0.56 (0.20)	0.45 (0.23)	0.50 (0.16)
Network size for name generator (NG) (std. dev.)	14 (3.9)	15 (3.8)	18 (3.8)
Network size NG + transaction data (TA)	16 (10.0)	24 (8.8)	26 (7.8)
Network members in Accra (NG+TA)	57% (17.2%)	52% (15.8%)	40% (12.1%)
Network members abroad (NG+TA)	34% (15.7%)	31% (12.8%)	40% (10.6%)
Income (average per month)	31 €	61 €	436 €
Formal insurance participation	0 %	44 %	64%

Source: own fieldwork data 2003-04

Social security and the three respondent types

Type 1: The struggling informal economy operator, the caretaker & the pensioner

This type concerns respondents who generally receive (and depend upon) support from migrants, especially at moments of crises, but also for upkeep requirements. Why these respondents rely so strongly on migrants relates especially to the life cycle stage they are in as well as their ability to gain financial support from their social network. In general these networks, especially with regard to the local Accra component, are limited in size and the economic potential that can be derived from it, with many of the local network members being in relatively similar economically vulnerable positions as the respondent. This means that (the potential for) local support is limited, especially when needs and crises faced require larger financial inputs. At the same time a social security outlook with a more central rural dimension is regarded as irrelevant (in instances where respondents have little to no ties to the hometown) or seen as a last resort only to safeguard one's livelihood.

For respondents who belong to this type social security is generally confined to non-state, informal social security arrangements. These arrangements may sometimes derive from associations or organizations with a wider purpose than to provide social security to their members such as the church or informal saving schemes (*susus* or business associations). The level of support these associations can provide, while certainly of value, is generally inadequate to meet the financial implications of crises such as funerals and/or may only be provided for some kinds of crises (e.g. funerals) and not for all (e.g. health treatment). Given the lack of alternatives to cope with crises of respondents belonging to this type the general dependence on migrants to provide the respondent with financial support to the respondent can be understood.

Table 4 indicates findings for Type 1 with regard to transactions that concern the three themes of health, education and funerals. The table shows, for a period of one year (July 2003 – June 2004) what transactions were 'incoming' to respondents and what were 'outgoing', where transactions were sent to/received from ('location' combined with 'incoming'/'outgoing') and whether these transactions were used for own benefits or

those of a member of the social network ('own' versus 'others'). Tables 5 and 6 below, that provide findings for the other two types, are set up in the same manner¹².

Table 4: Thematic data for Type 1 (period: July 2003-June 2004)

<i>Location</i>	<i>Meant for</i>	Education transactions		Funeral transactions (incl extd fam for 'own')		Health transactions	
		<i>Outgoing</i>	<i>Incoming</i>	<i>Outgoing</i>	<i>Incoming</i>	<i>Outgoing</i>	<i>Incoming</i>
Accra	Own	€ 155	€ 6	€ 0		€ 194	€ 23
	Others	€ 2.499		€ 152		€ 1.067	€ 58
Ashanti Region	Own			€ 20			
	Others	€ 7		€ 16			
Kumasi	Own						
	Others	€ 76		€ 12		€ 17	
Ghana Other	Own						
	Others	€ 145		€ 27		€ 72	
The Netherlands	Own				€ 93		€ 302
	Others		€ 197				
Other countries	Own		€ 180				
	Others		€ 83				
Total		€ 2.882	€ 383	€ 226	€ 93	€ 1.350	€ 383
Own total		€ 155	€ 186	€ 20	€ 93	€ 194	€ 325
Others total		€ 2.727	€ 281	€ 206	€ 0	€ 1.156	€ 58
<i>Average own total</i>		<i>€ 13</i>	<i>€ 15</i>	<i>€ 2</i>	<i>€ 8</i>	<i>€ 16</i>	<i>€ 27</i>
<i>Average others total</i>		<i>€ 227</i>	<i>€ 23</i>	<i>€ 17</i>	<i>€ 0</i>	<i>€ 96</i>	<i>€ 5</i>

source: own fieldwork data 2003-04

From Table 4 it emerges that relative to the income earned by respondents who are part of this type expenditure on education and health of others is notable at almost 10% of total income earned. Most of the education transactions took place in Accra and concerned own children, grandchildren staying in the same homestead and children of migrants staying abroad for whom respondents were taking care (2 cases in this type). With regard to the latter the general arrangement was that the migrants refunded any expenses concerning the children but usually remittances sent would also be sufficient to allocate to other needs or the educational expenses of own children. Further incidental support was given to educational expenses of children of siblings and to other extended family members (maternal), if this was requested for. With regard to health it was interesting to note that these transactions predominantly concerned family members based in Accra. Other than the conjugal family they concerned siblings, parents and extended maternal family members. When compared to the findings for the other two typologies the absence of support in health to network members in the Ashanti Region (rural and urban), the region of origin for most respondents, can be observed. One young respondent received substantial financial support from a migrant friend based in Amsterdam in order to be able to continue treatment of her illness. Two other young respondents also received further one-off support from family members in order to enable

¹² With regard to the interpretation of findings Mazzucato and Niemeijer conclude that general experience from surveys suggests that incoming rather than outgoing transactions are underreported (2000).

their recovery. An explanation can be found in the disparity in age of this type, with 2 respondents being over 60 years old, while 5 respondents fall into the 20 to 30 age category. This latter group is still emerging as a source of economic support while the other two elder respondents have limited financial means and depend on migrant remittances and support from other members of their network to make ends meet.

With regard to funeral transactions it also emerges that most outgoing transactions flow to network members who also reside in Accra. This finding contrasts with general literature on the role of funerals in Ghana, which asserts the dominance of rural hometowns as locations for funerals. Although the physical distance between Accra and Ashanti Region (about 270 kilometres, or a five hour bus ride) hampers possibilities to attend such occasions in the hometown, the findings from the data nonetheless remain remarkable given the general perception in Accra that attendance at funerals in the hometown, especially of family members, is important to gain respect with own family and others who derive from the same hometown. One reason for the relative importance of funerals attended in Accra relates to respondents attending the funerals of various kinds of ties in Accra: church members, neighbours, friends and close family of friends. This is, potentially, a much larger group than the extended family. At the same time such attendance, and donations provided at these occasions, do point to the importance of these ties over those directly linked to the hometown.

Amongst the informal security mechanisms available those that emanate from religious institutions are considered to be important by respondents of Type 1. Hereby the church plays an economic role for its members beyond providing for their spiritual needs (Kunfaa 1999). Other than support provided by the informal network of church members most churches in Ghana have also instituted welfare associations. One respondent of this type explains why it is important to contribute to such a welfare association:

“The welfare fund caters for church members who are sick, who may have had an unfortunate accident or a funeral in their close family. If the funeral is for a person who was a member of the church and he has paid his welfare then the church will also pay for the coffin of the person... At times, if the funeral is of a more rich person, the family may prefer the church to give a larger donation at the ceremony of around 400 000 and 500 000 Cedis [40 to 50 euro] rather than a coffin. For a poor person’s funeral if the family does opt for the coffin then the church donation to the funeral ceremony will be around 100 000 [about 10 euro].”

If it is accepted that the value of a coffin is generally below 20 Euro then it emanates from this explanation that a dependence on the church to acquire a coffin implies that the total contribution of the church is lower than in cases where the family has been able to acquire a coffin themselves while also meeting other expenses to ensure that the funeral is a ‘proper’ (i.e. worthy, respectable) occasion.

Type 2: The junior white collar, the blue collar & the aspiring business (wo)man

This type concerns respondents who seek to augment their basic income, derived from a regular, formal job or an economically steady micro business, with other income activities in order to be able to make further investments or meet crises, should these occur. Avenues for augmenting income usually relate to informal business opportunities and ensue from own financial savings coupled to small short-term loans from Accra based friends, investments by migrants, and sometimes also own spouse. Loans provided

by Accra relations are important as they often maintain business impetus by enabling restocking of supplies while awaiting payment from previous business dealings and/or to meet various direct small financial needs in health, education and upkeep expenses. The majority of the respondents of this type are also members of formal insurance arrangements (especially for health) and/or informal schemes (church welfare, 'old boys' and business associations).

The role of migrants based abroad especially concerns their role in expanding income opportunities (business, sponsoring a respondent to also migrate) for respondents rather than providing support to meet livelihood needs. Respondents, especially those befriended with migrants, seek to encourage and inspire migrants to make one or two large investments with which a crucial improvement in urban income opportunities can be made by the respondent and possibly also the migrant. Often respondents seek the support of migrants in an indirect way, e.g. by sharing a vision with their migrant friend of an investment they perceive as economically worthy yet financially impossible during an international phone call they receive from the migrant. If the migrant chooses to invest in the respondent this may be in recognition of services the respondent had provided and the fact that the investment may also produce a profit for them.

Respondents argue that their way of seeking involvement of migrants is also attributable to their economic situation and general welfare which, when compared to that of other relations (esp. family in the rural hometown) of migrants, is generally of a higher level. This relates well to a generally shared viewpoint by respondents that Ghanaians living in urban parts of Ghana are, or should have opportunities to be, economically better off than those located in remote, rural parts, whether this reflects actual welfare differences or not. Thus urban Ghanaians are also seen to be less eligible to seek support from migrants as these migrants should, in the first place, support rural relations. For respondents of this type who work in the formal sector the provision of formal social security measures (for health, funeral costs and retirement) implies that the need for supplemental support from migrants is lower.

Table 5 largely confirms the discussion of the preceding paragraphs. Few transactions are incoming for any of the three themes, with the exception of financial support received by one young female respondent from her father to complete her university education, and of some remittances received by another respondent from migrant friends to support him with health expenses of his ailing mother. Outgoing transactions, especially for health and educational needs, show the commitment of respondents to their social network in Ghana, especially those based in Accra. For education 92% of all transactions are provided to family members (especially own children, some based outside Accra). The remaining 8% goes into the support of education of friends (and friends' children). For health similar findings are found: 90% of all transactions are provided in support of (extended) family members with the remaining 10% going into support of friends based in Accra and Kumasi.

Table 5: Thematic data for Type 2 (period: July 2003-June 2004)

Location	Meant for	Education transactions		Funeral transactions (incl extd fam. for 'own')		Health transactions	
		Outgoing	Incoming	Outgoing	Incoming	Outgoing	Incoming
Accra	Own		€ 225	€ 3		€ 360	
	Others	€ 1.990		€ 92		€ 1.833	
Ashanti Region	Own			€ 5			
	Others	€ 33		€ 14		€ 188	
Kumasi	Own						
	Others	€ 456		€ 41		€ 267	
Ghana Other	Own			€ 10			
	Others	€ 1.025		€ 191		€ 30	
The Netherlands	Own						
	Others					€ 178	
Other countries	Own						
	Others					€ 59	
Total		€ 3505	€ 225	€ 357	€ 0	€ 2.676	€ 237
Own total		€ 0	€ 225	€ 18	€ 0	€ 359	€ 0
Others total		€ 3505	€ 0	€ 339	€ 0	€ 2.317	€ 237
<i>Average own total</i>		<i>€ 0</i>	<i>€ 14</i>	<i>€ 1</i>	<i>€ 0</i>	<i>€ 22</i>	<i>€ 0</i>
<i>Average others total</i>		<i>€ 219</i>	<i>€ 0</i>	<i>€ 21</i>	<i>€ 0</i>	<i>€ 145</i>	<i>€ 15</i>

source: own fieldwork data 2003-04

Transactions for funerals have a much lower value. Nonetheless this may also relate to the fact that there were few funerals of direct family members in which respondents played an organizational and financial role. Had this been the case then the financial picture presented above might have looked a little different. As was already argued earlier on, migrants are perceived to be especially important in creating financial means with which to organize funerals for family members that are seen as worthy. On respondent, explaining the rising popularity of calamity funds, also brings forward this role of migrants:

“In origin the calamity fund was organized in recognition of the fact that those abroad were too often called upon for any problem, to demand their financial support, when they might actually be out of a job or in other financial difficulties. Thus, to add to their financial support of such events the fund was created. Those in the village pay 2000 (women) or 5000 Cedis (men) per month [i.e. about 20 and 50 euro-cent], while the family in Kumasi pay more, those in Accra even more, and finally those abroad will add the most. If the money in the fund coffers is not enough to pay for certain expenses then an extra donation from those abroad is requested.”

The above explanation points at an institutionalisation of the role of migrants and other family members as related to their physical location. On the one hand the rising popularity of this fund is a recognition of the need to introduce reforms in the way funeral expenses are insured against, as the general tendency at present is to rely heavily on migrant family members to bear the brunt of funeral expenses and/or any losses that may remain (after deduction of donations provided at the ceremony from expenses incurred). This may result in family relationship crises, with migrants choosing to become temporary or permanent dissidents who feel there is little option but to shy away from family obligations. Thus the calamity fund ensures that all family members contribute to

the fund whereby their location determines the height of their respective contributions. What remains is the expectation that in the event of a succession of family crises in a short time span, leading to a depletion of the fund, migrants can still be expected to provide some 'topping up'.

Type 3: The senior white-collar worker & the successful business (wo)man

This type relates to respondents who usually occupy higher positions in the formal sector, or own one or more registered businesses. Hereby these respondents secure a regular, high income (by Ghanaian standards). These respondents seldom receive financial support from migrants or other members of their social networks except in the event of family funerals. At such occasions significant donations may be provided. However the level of donations provided is more indicative of the urge of the donating person to demonstrate the strength of his/her relationship with the respondent, possibly also coupled to the history of past donations and support reciprocated between the respondent and this other, than that it is an expression of the financial needs of the respondent.

The majority of respondents belonging to this type have access to formal social security mechanisms (for health, pension, life insurances, funerals). Those respondents who do not adhere to formal social security mechanisms operate in the informal sector and maintain that in the event that they incur health expenses these can always be covered by the financial means they have at their disposal for such moments ('out of pocket'). For such emergencies one of these respondents indicated he kept some foreign money in a hidden place.

Respondents of this type do play important roles as providers of social security to family members, especially those relating most directly to them, but also to friends. Some respondents indicated that they have or are presently 'sponsoring' one or two family members in their education or migration. Such support is predominantly perceived by respondents as a way to reduce social pressure from their extended families. Not only does sponsoring a family member ensure that the basis for financial support to the family broadens, it is also a signal to the family that the respondent *is* already taking care of his extended family and that they cannot always pressure him/her to provide more. With such sponsoring acts respondents thus gain a certain amount of respect that gives them the agency with which to maintain a balance between their personal gains and the needs of the family. While Table 6 does not indicate any sponsorship of migrants, not surprising given that such sponsorship are seldom yearly occurrences, support in education, especially of network members based in Kumasi and Accra, can be seen to occur.

Respondents of type 3 who hold formal health security policies spend between 7 and 15 percent of their gross income on these policies. The level of payment depends on whether an employer financially supports the incentive, or whether the respondent is self-employed, in which case both payments of employer and employee contributions is required. Such payment has an impact on the total expenditure of respondents. However also expenses incurred for funerals and education are at higher levels than those incurred by respondents of types 1 and 2. This seems to correspond to the higher level of income obtained by respondents of type 3.

Table 6: Thematic data for Type 3 (period: July 2003-June 2004)

<i>Location</i>	<i>Meant for</i>	Education transactions		Funeral transactions (incl extd fam. for 'own')		Health transactions	
		<i>Outgoing</i>	<i>Incoming</i>	<i>Outgoing</i>	<i>Incoming</i>	<i>Outgoing</i>	<i>Incoming</i>
Accra	Own			€ 2.635	€ 2	€ 1.940	€ 48
	Others	€ 9.021		€ 671		€ 1.373	
Ashanti Region	Own				€ 55		
	Others	€ 61		€ 326		€ 70	
Kumasi	Own			€ 410			
	Others	€ 1.268		€ 147		€ 747	
Ghana Other	Own			€ 50			
	Others	€ 418	€ 555	€ 284		€ 34	
The Netherlands	Own				€ 242	€ 1.574	
	Others	€ 581					
Other countries	Own				€ 1.150		
	Others		€ 545	€ 97			
Total		€ 11.349	€ 1.100	€ 4.620	€ 1.450	€ 5.739	€ 48
Own total		€ 0	€ 0	€ 3.095	€ 1.450	€ 3.515	€ 48
Others total		€ 11.349	€ 1.100	€ 1.525	€ 0	€ 2.225	€ 0
<i>Average own total</i>		<i>€ 0</i>	<i>€ 0</i>	<i>€ 281</i>	<i>€ 132</i>	€ 104	<i>€ 4</i>
<i>Average others total</i>		<i>€ 1032</i>	<i>€ 100</i>	<i>€ 139</i>	<i>€ 0</i>	€ 146	<i>€ 0</i>

source: own fieldwork data 2003-04

Table 6 also provides evidence of the supportive role that respondents play for members of their social networks in education. Yet most of the expenses derive from investments made in the tertiary and private education of own children. This level of investment also aptly reflects the income disparity between the wealthy urban class and poor(er) classes in rural and urban settings. At the same time respondents of type 3 also supported various expenses in education, health and with funerals of extended family members. Thus while the welfare disparity between respondents and members of their social networks may be evident, it cannot be easily contested as 'unjust' and in need of financial redress when these respondents do show their commitment to their extended families.

Section 4: Conclusions

The introduction of this paper discussed the local perception that livelihoods in Accra are a continual economic struggle to make ends meet, whereas migrants were perceived to have reached a much higher level of economic welfare. This public perception of differences in economic prospects, various respondents admitted, did not necessarily reflect actual differences in the economic situations of migrants and parts of Accra's population; the latter are sometimes in a better situation, both in financial (and social) terms. Nonetheless respondents maintain that there is a difference between their economic situation and those of migrants as related to the limited economic potential of the economy of Accra versus the array of economic opportunities open to migrants in western countries. By proactively linking to migrants some respondents hoped to be able

to also tap into their resources to reduce the geographic confinements of their livelihoods. How do respondents adapt and strategize their use of institutions and relationships to achieve this?

In the first place informal social security arrangements emphasize the symbiotic role of a locally biased social network with one or more transnational linkages, with which immediate and long-term social security can be achieved. Participation in various organisations and institutes, and the maintenance of ties with people in the neighbourhood, a practise maintained especially by respondents of types 1 and 2, ensures that a local network is established on which to rely for support in upkeep should there be a temporary loss of income. Transnational relationships, on the other hand, notably for poorest respondents (type 1) are highly depended upon for overcoming major crises in health, education and family funerals.

In the second place, various respondents, notably type 2 friends to foreign-based migrants, invested considerable resources in conducting various activities in Accra (sometimes also elsewhere in Ghana) on behalf of migrants. This could concern housing projects and business investments of migrants but also concerns crises in the family of migrants in which respondents represented migrants in their absence. Some respondents saw almost immediate benefits from such investment when migrants started to remit money and goods to them. These remittances were meant for personal use by the respondent or intended for Accra investments of migrants (houses, businesses). Nonetheless, with regard to the latter transactions, some respondents indicated that a part of these might be deferred for own use (a practise referred to as 'chopping'). Other respondents were careful not to practise such 'chopping' nor to place any requests or demands with migrants, rather awaiting a moment when the migrant would be most motivated to provide a major investment that would benefit them. This could range from the migrant sponsoring the respondent to migrate to a western country, to making a substantial investment in the business activities of the respondent, to buying a plot of residential land in Accra for the respondent to build a house on.

Thirdly, the analysis of transaction data reveals that most transactions between respondents and members of their social networks were outgoing rather than incoming, even if underreporting of incoming transactions could be accounted for. For the three social security themes of education, health and funerals this pattern recurred. The urban bias in such support and the higher level of outgoing transactions, not only benefiting family but also friends, are all striking findings. They seem to point to changing priorities in affiliations within social networks. At the same time this trend does not imply that urban respondents have, or are abandoning their relationships with rural family, notably their extended families. However the number of rural counterparts they support may have reduced.

How has the participation in formal insurances and the inclusion of friends as recipients of support with crises affected support given to the family, especially those based in the rural hometown from which respondents derive? Respondents are concerned with the their ability to find a balance between meeting the needs of the extended family while, at

the same time, realizing sufficient 'room for manoeuvre' to pursue livelihoods they desire for themselves, for which support to/from urban ties may be necessary. In an attempt to solve this social and economic dilemma less impoverished respondents have chosen to strategically sponsor one individual (or at best a few) in their extended families with education or migration to a foreign destination. This support, even when the family member refunds the costs, would give them credibility and respect whereby the pressure to also support other family members is (at least temporarily) reduced. Their investment in this family member will ensure that he/she becomes a useful economic asset in diverting and diversifying needs of the family. Indeed, this may also explain the relatively low level of support respondents gave to rural family members: in their view migrants need to be seen as the first and foremost 'port of call' for rural family to turn to at times of distress.

Reciprocity from migrants (or others), in whom respondents invested resources, may also be forthcoming to respondents in Accra at times of crisis, even when transactions characterizing their relationship thus far concerned another economic theme, e.g. an investment in housing. Beyond feelings of friendship, respect and concern the support of the migrant can also be explained in terms of his/her dependence on the respondent to overcome the crisis incurred to continue with the investment benefiting the migrant.

When examining the issues raised in the second section of this paper it emerges that various kinds of overlap exist: One overlap concerns the role of social networks, especially migrants but also others, in various types of activity of respondents. These activities may include social security themes and one or more investment activities. Respondents and their network members strategically effectuate such involvement of social ties in a cross-range of economic themes as a way with which to relate risk management *and* investment strategies to each other. These network ties may range from relating to certain informal institutions such as that of 'the trusted friend', to more formal institutions such as the church, the 'old boys' school network, or the extended family. Transactions between respondents and network members, especially migrants, may ultimately also benefit the extended family. This shows that new social ties that have an urban or transnational bias, do not necessarily lead to a discontinuity of rural ties and related traditional institutions (the extended family, affiliation to the hometown), but may, instead, redefine the roles these institutions play, also in the provision of informal social security.

Overlap may also be found to exist in the coverage provided by various formal and informal social security arrangements to which respondents have access. The continued support of the more wealthy respondents to family members, friends and others in their social networks, regulated through various informal mechanisms, despite also having access to formal insurances and being relatively secure of their future livelihoods, shows that formal and informal social security measures are not separable in the livelihoods of urban respondents. While this finding could be linked to the limited utilization of formal social security measures in Ghana due, amongst others, to the changing political climate, this still does not explain why respondents with high levels of participation in formal social security measures. In any case it vindicates the need for research on policy

development regarding social security in Ghana to take both formal and informal arrangements that exist at present, as a starting point, and explore the interrelationships between these. Given the inter-linkages maintained through transnational networks between these rural, urban and foreign domains, such analysis should not be limited to urban Ghanaians but also focus on rural residents and on Ghanaians staying abroad.

References

- Adelman, H. (2005) *Governance, Globalization and Security: The Harmonization of Immigrant Policy. Canada and the United States*. Paper presented at the 'IIGR 40th Anniversary Conference: Looking Backward, Thinking Forward', Kingston: Queen's University, 12-14 May 2005.
- Anders, G. (2005) Chapter V: "Distance Saves Me" –Civil Servants and their Kin (154-185). In: Anders, G. *Civil Servants in Malawi: Cultural Dualism, Moonlighting and Corruption in the Shadow of Good Governance*. PhD dissertation. Leiden.
- Appiah-Kubi, K., Oduro, A.D. & B. Senadza (2004) *Understanding Poverty in Ghana: Risk and Vulnerability*. Paper presented at the International Conference 'Ghana's Economy at the Half Century'. Accra: July 18-20, 2004.
- Baden, S., Green, C, Otoo-Oyortey, N. & T. Peasgood (1994) *Background Paper on gender issues in Ghana*. Report prepared for the West and North Africa Department, Department for Overseas Development (DFID, UK. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.
- Beal, J. & N. Kanji (1999) *Household, Livelihoods and Urban Poverty*. Background Paper for the ESCOR Commissioned Research on Urban Development: Urban Governance, Partnership and Poverty. London: London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Berry, S. (1997) Tomatoes, Land and Hearsay: Property and History in Asante in the Time of Structural Adjustment. *World Development*, 25 (8).
- Bortei-Doku, E. (1993) *Profile of Women in Ghana*. Accra:CIDA.
- Caldwell, J.C. (1969) *African Rural-Urban migration. The movement to Ghana's towns*. London: Hurst.
- Cichon, M., Tumwesigye, D., Karuna Pal, F.L. & D. Vergnaud (2003) Linking community initiatives to national institutions: Ghana. *International Social Security Review*, Vol. 56 (3-4):59-71.
- Clark, G. (1999) Negotiating Asante Family Survival in Kumasi, Ghana. *Africa*, 69 (1):66-86.
- Dam, J. (1998) *Geboden of gegrepen kansen? Een onderzoek naar bestaansstrategieën en –netwerken van Ghanese migranten*. Unpublished (and undated) M.Sc. thesis, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.
- Dekker, M. (2004) *Risk, Resettlement and Relations: Social Security in Rural Zimbabwe*. Ph.D. dissertation. Amsterdam: Tinbergen Institute.
- Dercon, S. (2003) Risk, Insurance and Poverty: a review. In: S. Dercon (ed.) *Insurance Against Poverty*. Oxford.
- Dijk, R. van (2002) Religion, Reciprocity and Restructuring Family Responsibility in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora. In: D. Bryceson & U. Vuorela (eds.) *Testing Boundaries. Transnational Families and Social Networks*. Oxford, Berg, 2002.

- Ghana Statistical Service (1995) *Migration Research Study in Ghana: Volume 1, Internal Migration*. Accra.
- Ginneken, van W. (2003) *Extending Social Security: Policies for Developing Countries*. ESS Paper No.13. Geneva: ILO.
- Haas, H. de (2005) *Migration, Remittances and Regional Development: The Case of the Todgha Oasis, Southern Morocco*. Paper presented at the CERES Summer School 'Governance for Social Transformation', The Hague: 27-30 June 2005.
- Hanson, K. (2005) Landscapes of Survival and Escape: Social Networking and Urban Livelihoods in Ghana. *Environment and Planning A*, 37(6)
- Haruna, P. F. (2003) Reforming Ghana's Public Service: Issues and Experiences in Comparative Perspective. *Public Administration Review*, (63(3):343-354.
- Hoogeveen, J.G.M. (2001) *Risk and Insurance in Rural Zimbabwe*. Ph.D. dissertation. Amsterdam: Tinbergen Institute.
- IRINnews (2004) Ghana: National health insurance scheme launched. *IRINnews*. 18 March 2004. http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=40136&SelectRegion=West_Africa&SelectCountry=GHANA
- Jamal, V. & J. Weeks (1993) *Africa Misunderstood: Or Whatever Happened to the Rural – Urban Gap?* London: Macmillan.
- Kaseke, E. (2000) Social exclusion and social security: The case of Zimbabwe. *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 2003: 18(1):33-48.
- Kaseke, E. & T. Butare (2003) Inherited Burdens. Future Priorities. *International Social Security Review*. 56 (3-4):3-9.
- Kumado, K. & A.F. Gockel (2003) *A Study on Social Security in Ghana*. Legon: University of Ghana.
- Kunfaa, E. Y. (1999) *Consultations with the Poor*. Ghana Country Synthesis Report, Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP), Kumasi. Accra: World Bank
- La Ferrara, E. (2003) *Kin Groups and Reciprocity: A Model of Credit Transactions in Ghana*. Discussion Paper No. 3705. London: Centre for Economic Policy Research.
- Leliveld, A. (2004) *Research on Social (in)security in developing countries*. Paper presented at the WOTRO/CERES workshop 'Social (In)Security in the Third World', Amsterdam: Artis Conference Centre, 16 December 2004.
- Maxwell, D., Levin, C. Armar-Klemesu, M., Ruel, M., Morris, S. and C. Ahiadeke (2000) *Urban Livelihoods and Food and Nutrition Security in Greater Accra, Ghana*. IFPRI publication.
- Mazzucato, V. (2000) *Transnational networks and the creation of local economies: Economic principles and institutions of Ghanaian migrants at home and abroad*. Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek, grant number 410.13.010P.
- Mazzucato, V. & D. Niemeijer (2000) *Rethinking soil and water conservation in a changing society: A case study on eastern Burkina Faso*. Wageningen: Wageningen University

- Mazzucato, V., Kabki, M. & L. Smith (2004) *Locating a Transnational Funeral: Decision-making and remittance flows and the influence of migrants in a Ghanaian funeral*. Paper presented at the International Conference 'Ghana's Economy at the Half Century'. Accra: July 18-20, 2004.
- Meyer, B. (1998) Commodities and the Power of Prayer: Pentecostalist Attitudes Towards Consumption in Contemporary Ghana. *Development and Change*, 29:751-776.
- Osei-Akoto, I. (2003) *Demand for voluntary health insurance by the poor in developing countries: Evidence from rural Ghana*. Paper presented at the CEA 37th Annual Meetings, Ottawa: Carleton University, 29 May 29 – 1 June 2003.
- Owuor, S.O. (2004) *Urban households ruralizing their livelihoods: The changing nature of urban-rural linkages in an East African town*. Paper presented at the African Studies Centre Seminar Series, Leiden, 16 December 2004.
- Schrieder, G. & B. Knerr (2000) Labour Migration as a Social Security Mechanism for Smallholder Households in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Cameroon. *Oxford Development Studies*, 28(2): 223-236.
- Simone, A.M. (2003) *Moving Towards Uncertainty: Migration and the Turbulence of African Urban Life*. Paper presented at the 'Conference on African Migration in Comparative Perspective', Johannesburg, 4-7 June 2003.
- Skeldon, R. (forthcoming) More than remittances: Other Aspects of the Relationship between Migration and Development. In: *Emerging Issues of International Migration*. Geneva: Population Division.
- Tacoli, C. (2002) *Changing rural-urban interactions in sub-Saharan Africa and their impact on livelihoods: a summary*. Working Paper Series on Rural-Urban Interactions and Livelihood Strategies, Working Paper 7. London: IIED.
- Tiemoko, R. (2003) *Migration, Return and Socio-Economic Change in West Africa: The Role of Family*. Sussex Migration Working Paper No.14. Brighton: Sussex Centre for Migration Research.
- Witte, M. de (2003) Money and Death. Funeral Business in Asante, Ghana. *Africa* 73(4): 531-559.