Anthropology, Change, and Development

Series Editors

Laura Camfield
University of East Anglia
Norwich, United Kingdom

Catherine Locke
Progress in Development Studies
Development Studies Institute, LSE
London, United Kingdom

Lan Anh Hoang
School of Social and Political Sciences
University of Melbourne
Melbourne, Australia

Mainstream development studies have tended to neglect important aspects of experience in developing countries that fall outside the conventional preserve of development intervention. These neglected phenomena include consumption, modernity, and mobility and ambivalent experiences such as uncertainty, mistrust, jealousy, envy, love, emotion, hope, religious and spiritual belief, personhood and other experiences throughout the lifecourse. They have most closely been addressed through critical ethnography in the context of contemporary developing societies. We invite volumes that focus on the value of ethnography of these contemporary experiences of development (as change), not only to address these neglected phenomena, but also to enrich social science thinking about development.

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Gina Porter • Kate Hampshire • Albert Abane • Alister Munthali •
Elsbeth Robson • Mac Mashiri

Young People's Daily Mobilities in Sub-Saharan Africa

Moving Young Lives

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macmillan

Gina Porter
Department of Anthropology
Durham University
Durham, UK

Kate Hampshire
Department of Anthropology
Durham University
Durham,UK

Albert Abane
Department of Geography and
Regional Planning
University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast, Ghana

Alister Munthali
Centre for Social Research
University of Malawi
Zomba, Malawi

Elsbeth Robson
Department of Geography,
Environment and Earth Science
University of Hull
Hull, UK

Mac Mashiri
Gwarajena Transport Research &
Development
Pretoria, South Africa

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Preface

This book series, 'Anthropology, Change and Development', fosters engagement between critical anthropology and development studies through the notion of thinking about development *as* change. Both applied anthropology and the anthropology of development have made significant strides in building a more critical engagement between anthropology and development, and both are widely acknowledged as pertinent in various ways for students, researchers and, to a lesser degree, practitioners of international development. This recognition inadvertently sustains, on the part of development studies, a somewhat selective engagement with critical historical ethnography, often limited to that which is easily 'legible', as well as a clear disconnect with a wider swathe of critical ethnography about modernity in developing countries (e.g., Burawoy 2009; Li 2007; Roy and Ong 2011). Whilst both can contribute substantially to understanding and valuing change, such ethnographies are mistakenly seen as being less relevant to the concerns of contemporary development. Non-anthropologists and those working from a more pragmatic development orientation may find that they make 'difficult' and 'uncomfortable' reading. However, it is precisely this theoretical rigor and the determination to unsettle conventional perceptions about development that lies at the centre of the value of critical anthropology for development.

This series goes beyond the remit of an 'applied anthropology' framework to include phenomena that have been overlooked by development studies. It focuses precisely on the important aspects of experience in developing countries that fall outside the conventional preserve of development intervention. These neglected phenomena include uncertainty,

mistrust, jealousy, envy, witchcraft, and ambivalent experiences such as love, emotion, hope, consumption, modernity, aspiration, social mobility, religious and spiritual belief, personhood and other experiences throughout the life course. They might also include the sensory dimensions of life, for example, the pleasures of consumption in festivals and malls, the experience of love, and other less celebrated emotions. Other marginal phenomena include the subjective and relational aspects of life in developing countries that contribute to anthropological and sociological critiques of development and modernity. Rich applications of life course analysis to developing country experiences, as well as deeper approaches to experiences of time, and related emotions of hope and aspiration, are offering more meaningful ways of understanding how different individual's experience, influence and are shaped by complex, and often rapid, processes of wider societal change.

The purpose of this series is to bring ethnographic research on these phenomena into conversation with contemporary development discourses and debates and enrich social science thinking about change and development. Contributions to this series such as Cooper and Pratten (2015), Jakimow (2015), Flynn and Tinius (2015) and Hoang and Yeoh (2015) show that these phenomena *matter* in contemporary developing societies and in doing so offer new theoretical insights for anthropological engagement with contemporary change and development. Whilst development debate over time has substantially opened up discussion about phenomena previously considered as being beyond its preserve, such as rape, taking a step back from the 'development lens' (Jackson 2012) makes visible core elements of everyday experience that are still not spoken about within development. Factors like envy that, as any practitioner can confirm, are a well-recognized reality in poor communities, are rarely seen as a fit subject for theoretical analysis within development studies. Placing these phenomena outside the frame of investigation, rather than as analysing them as central dynamics of situated developing contexts, severely undermines the capacity of development studies to develop rigorous theoretical explanations about change. This series makes a contribution towards focusing more direct empirical and theoretical attention on these various kinds of social phenomena.

In doing so, the series deliberately aims at extending the conversation between anthropology and development in ways that will deepen theoretical frameworks and raise questions about development. This is an intrinsically critical endeavour that involves close attention to multi-sited power

relations, including those of gender and reflexivity. Readers will need to look elsewhere for development 'solutions', policy 'recommendations' or visionary 'agendas': Instead, the series offers a serious ethnographic treatment of hitherto neglected phenomena that are central to contemporary experience in developing contexts. The series encompasses contributions from anthropologists, other social science researchers and development practitioners using anthropological and ethnographic methodologies to engage with processes of change and raising questions about what they mean for development.

In the fifth volume in the series, Gina Porter and her colleagues offer poignant insights into the everyday mobilities and immobilities of young people in sub-Saharan Africa—an important, albeit strikingly under-researched topic in a continent where more than half of the population are under the age of 18. Drawing on extensive research across 24 sites in three African countries of Ghana, Malawi and South Africa, the authors reveal the diverse ways in which power intersects with gender, age, poverty and kinship to shape mobility potential and practice. Mobility, they point out, can be both a boon and a curse, enhancing the social status for some while subjecting others to exploitation and degradation. Through the actualization of mobility, power dynamics and gender inequalities are produced and reproduced, with enormous significance for the life chances of young people. With rich narratives and an eye to the bigger picture of development policy and practice, the book will be an important resource for not only scholars and students in sociology, anthropology, migration, development studies and African studies, but also development practitioners and policy makers across contexts.

Laura Camfield
Catherine Locke
Lan Anh Hoang

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Contents

1	**Introduction: Children, Young People and the 'Mobilities Turn' in Sub-Saharan Africa**	1
2	**Identifying Research Gaps and Building a Field Research Methodology with Young People**	23
3	**Experiencing the Journey to School: Rural and Urban Narratives**	65
4	**Balancing the Load: Mobility, Work and Income Generation**	91
5	**Beyond the School and Working Day: Building Connections Through Play, Leisure, Worship and Other Social Contact**	123
6	**Mobility and Health: Young People's Health-Seeking Behaviour and Physical Access to Health Services**	153
7	**Negotiating Transport, Travel and Traffic, Part 1: Walking and Cycling**	179

8 Negotiating Transport, Travel and Traffic, Part 2: Motor-Mobility, Traffic Risk and Road Safety 203

9 Conclusion: Reflecting on Theory and Method, Practice and Policy 227

Erratum to: Young People's Daily Mobilities in Sub-Saharan Africa E1

Index 245

List of Figures

Image 2.1	Accompanied walks in progress: South Africa	44
Image 2.2	Accompanied walks in progress: Malawi	45
Figure 2.1	Map showing approximate location of the 24 CM research sites	59
Image 3.1	Simon's foot	73
Image 4.1	Carrying groceries on the way home from school, Eastern Cape	95
Image 7.1	Only a few boys are able to cycle to school	189
Image 8.1	Crossing the road can be a hazardous business	217

List of Tables

Table 3.1	Children's estimated daily travel time to school on the most recent school day (N = 2006)	71
Table 6.1	Reported use of health services (at any type of health facility) in the last 12 months	156
Table 6.2	Percentage of young people c. 9–18y reporting difficulties in travel to health services	157