AC&D ANTHROPOLOGY, CHANGE, AND DEVELOPMENT

Young People's Daily Mobilities in Sub-Saharan Africa

Moving Young Lives

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with
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Anthropology, Change, and Development

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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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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.

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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

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Children, Young People and the 'Mobilities Turn' in Sub-Saharan Africa

This book is about the everyday mobilities and immobilities of young people in sub-Saharan Africa. Young people's daily physical mobility has received remarkably little attention, in African contexts, despite its crucial implications for young lives and life chances. Given that over half of the population of many African countries consists of children and young people under the age of 18, this has been a serious omission. Indeed, although much has been achieved in Africa over the last 15 years through commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), some of the less successful outcomes for children and young people now being reported, as retrospective evaluations take place, can probably be traced back to inadequate recognition of the vital importance of improved mobility and transport for reaching key MDG targets in health, education and gender equity: UNICEF's (2015: iii) reflection that many countries have focused on 'the easiest-to-reach children and communities' has spatial as well as socio-economic implications.

Past failures to adequately recognise the significance of transport, mobility and spatial access to services in young lives have, in part, been due to limited knowledge of their daily mobility patterns and constraints. Although mobility *per se* in Africa (including migration) has received considerable attention from researchers over the past half a century, published studies of daily mobility with a strong emphasis on children and young people in Africa are rare (Porter 2010) and have mostly tended to focus on single locations—usually cities (Gough 2008 on Lusaka; Lee 2004; Benwell 2009 and van Blerk 2013 on Cape Town; Grieco et al. 1996 and

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Langevang and Gough 2009 on Accra). In this book, the aim is to bring together diverse strands of a complex African youth mobilities picture and thereby contribute towards filling a knowledge gap which has crucial significance for both policy and practice.

The book builds from the limited relevant literature and a series of field studies conducted intermittently over 40 years in diverse rural and urban regions across Africa and beyond, towards recent more extensive research across 24 sites in 3 African countries: Ghana, Malawi and South Africa. While some of this earlier work (particularly research conducted in Borno and the Jos Plateau region in Nigeria, South Africa's Eastern Cape, coastal Ghana and the Western Ghats of India) was essential to the identification and development of key themes and effective methodologies, a more recent phase of work (the Child Mobility project, referred to, throughout, as the CM study) forms the core of empirical data presented here. However, the writing is also informed by a much wider range of Africa-focused literature on mobilities, on children and on youth, and by personal field experience in the CM and other Anglophone countries (notably Nigeria, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Ethiopia), some Francophone countries (Cameroon, Chad, Togo, Senegal) and Lusophone Mozambique.[1]

Details regarding the various research locations and the development of the innovative methodological approach which has characterised more recent phases of the child mobility research are set out (in Chap. 2), prior to the exploration of key thematic areas (education, work, play, health, transport modes), drawing on extensive empirical evidence, in subsequent chapters. Prior to moving to the field, however, it is important to introduce some of the underlying philosophy, themes and issues which have helped shape this book. The approach is strongly interdisciplinary, intertwining perspectives from Anthropology, Geography, Sociology, African Studies and Transport Planning. It draws on diverse literatures, spanning mobilities, children/young people, gender, intergenerational relations, participatory research and transport studies.

There have been significant developments in social science thinking around mobility over the last decade which have had wide cross-disciplinary impact and are helping to bring to the fore some of the key themes explored in the book. These are catalysing new interest in daily mobilities across a considerable span of disciplines and look likely to generate much exciting, innovative new research around the world, including in sub-Saharan Africa. Reflections on this development of the 'new

mobilities paradigm' lead on, logically, to a wider discussion of the politics of mobility, and to the increasing recognition which is being given to the conceptual and methodological importance of walking. These perspectives help illuminate our understanding of African mobility patterns and their wider impact, but further contextualisation is required, not least with reference to the crucial roles played by age, gender and household composition, the focus of a further section. The review which follows thus identifies key conceptual issues, as a base for their interrogation and elaboration within specific field contexts in ensuing chapters.

The 'New Mobilities Paradigm': Building Non-Western, Youth-Focused Perspectives

Transport and travel was an unfashionable topic in the social sciences in the later decades of the twentieth century. The largely quantitative treatment given to transportation issues, especially within transport geography, did not sit comfortably with the prevailing postmodern, critical cultural tradition elsewhere. However, the mostly early twenty-first-century emergence and coalescence of perspectives, which, together, constitute the so-called new mobilities paradigm, concretised by and encapsulated in Sheller and Urry's key paper of 2006, have given a very substantial new impetus to research about movement and travel in all its diverse guises. By offering a new entry point into the academic investigation of movement, it has brought a long overdue reinvigoration of transport-related research in the social sciences (particularly in transport geography, arguably its main social science base).

This re-examination of patterns and processes of social change which encompass movement, whether of humans, objects, technologies or scripts, is still gathering pace worldwide. Sheller and Urry (2006) present it as extending from the corporeal mobility of people travelling on a daily basis (the principal focus of this study), to the possibly once-in-a-lifetime migration of refugees (which lies beyond the scope of this book); from the physical movement of bodies and objects, to the virtual mobility of the mobile phone (both of which are considered in this work; see also Urry 2011). The paradigm shift (there is some debate as to its newness[2]) took off very rapidly in Western (Anglo-American) contexts but is now beginning to impact on research conducted in sub-Saharan Africa: it is reflected, at least to some degree, in the treatment accorded to daily mobilities in this book. While consideration of mobility as a reflection and embodiment

of patterns and practices of socio-cultural change arguably has a longer pedigree in Africa and other Southern contexts than in the Global North,[3] Sheller and Urry's success in developing and promoting mobilities-focused research in the Western academy (discussed further below) has greatly enhanced the profile of the mobilities approach: it is bringing new energies to bear and opening up new avenues of exploration. By drawing together insights into African mobilities built up over many years and reflective engagement with writings now emerging within the 'new mobilities paradigm' in the Global North and South, this book aims to contribute both specifically to a substantially enriched understanding of African mobilities, and—more broadly—to the development of more nuanced understanding of the mobilities paradigm as it is applied worldwide.

The mobilities paradigm, focused on questions, theories and methodologies, as opposed to a 'totalising or reductive description of the contemporary world', puts multiple interacting mobilities at the centre of social change, problematising sedentarist theories focused on bounded places (Sheller and Urry 2006: 210). It ensures that conceptualisations of travel and transport are not reduced to a mere matter of getting between origin and destination but are about the journey as both a space and a process in which *identities are constructed and reconstructed* within a complex nexus of power relations that shape everyday practices, habits and routines (Bourdieu 1990; Cresswell 2010). This concept of identities being reshaped over time and space—whether gradually or suddenly—is crucial to understanding the trajectories of young people's lives in sub-Saharan Africa. Mobilities are performed, experienced through the body and embedded in social life, as is well illustrated with reference to diverse aspects of young people's mobile lives. Their travel to school, social interactions through physical (and virtual, mobile phone) mobility and co-option as domestic load carriers by other family members all offer important insights into a power-laden world in which mobilities encompass much more than a simple journey from A to B. They are rather a process space, in which identities may be fashioned and refashioned, time and time again. The fluid interdependencies of mobilities—physical and virtual—are particularly evident wherever we encounter the growing uptake of mobile phones among Africa's youth (as in Chap. 5).

However, those *moorings* from which movements are undertaken also need careful consideration (Cresswell 2010): point A and point B are still-points in everyday mobilities—places from which the traveller goes to, or comes from, or passes time in (whether voluntarily or forcibly). They are

key contextual elements in our quest for an understanding of mobility meanings. In the life-worlds of African children, home, school, church, market, farm, workshop, grinding mill, borehole, nightclub, video house, assignation spot for surreptitious meetings, hilltop where a mobile phone network can be accessed, distant forest where firewood is available, are all places strongly imbued with meaning in young people's mobility (and immobility) narratives. They are not only origin or destination points of journeys, but may impact back significantly on the pattern and nature of travel which take place between them, not least when they are the source of loads so heavy that our young pedestrians are transformed into little more than beasts of burden. Power and materiality interact with moorings and movements in complex, sometimes unexpected and occasionally terrible ways: the occasional surreptitious journey to an out-of-bounds nightclub or bar can offer the promise of excitement, new relationships, even a new life; the daily journey to collect water may turn into a nightmare when a rapist stalks the route.

Temporality is another important aspect of the mobility nexus (Sheller 2011). Mobilities involve the analysis of change in complex systems, 'neither perfectly ordered nor anarchic' (Sheller and Urry 2006: 216, citing Capra 2002; Urry 2003). Orderly disorder may suddenly disintegrate into chaos and trigger significant change in daily mobility patterns when disaster strikes—the death of a family member, a traffic accident, street mugging and rape all present significant examples. More commonly, we see a pattern of change as a result of small repetitions: gradually, possibly over a period of years, a tipping point may be reached, as will be illustrated with reference to school dropout in Chap. 3.

Contextualising Embedded Daily Movements Within a Politics of Mobility

In the new mobilities paradigm, power relations—the way mobility is socially structured, embedded and coded—clearly play a central role. 'Mobility and control over mobility both reflect and reinforce power. Mobility is a resource to which not everyone has an equal relationship' (Sheller and Urry 2006: 211, citing Skeggs 2004: 49) or, as Cresswell (2010: 21) puts it, it is 'a resource that is differentially accessed'. The politics of mobility is at least as complex in Africa as in other regions of the world, but it offers an effective frame within which to contextualise many aspects of young people's daily movements for education, house-

hold work, livelihoods, health and social interaction. Moreover, seemingly highly local, everyday mobilities need to be considered within broader networks of power relations that potentially extend beyond the local moment to encompass regional, national and global political economy influences.

Core chapters of this book (on education, work, play, health, transport) consider the diverse and sometimes pernicious ways in which power interacts with key factors such as gender, age, socio-economic conditions and household composition to shape mobility potential and practice. Mobility may reflect and confer both advantage and disadvantage. It can be both a source and manifestation of status, as we see in the case of youths who conduct mobility performances on the streets of Accra, Blantyre and Mthatha with substantial flair (Porter et al. 2010; see also Ferguson 1999: 114; Lee 2004), and, conversely, a potential source of exploitation and degradation, as exemplified by young charcoal transporters in rural Malawi (Chap. 4).

In an African context, we also need to give particular consideration to the converse of mobility. Tracking the power of discourses and practices associated with mobility is vitally important if we are to understand how *immobility* is created (Sheller and Urry 2006). As discussed further in the next section, gender is one of the strongest elements interacting with power relations in the African mobility nexus for the production of relative immobility (Porter 2008, 2011). The power relations at play are such that, for many young people, especially girls once they reach puberty, movement beyond the highly localised sphere of the compound and its immediate neighbourhood can be a much rarer event than in Western contexts.

In order to fine-tune accounts of the social relations that involve the production and distribution of power, Cresswell (2010) breaks mobility into six constituent parts, each with a politics which can be used to differentiate people and things into hierarchies of mobility: *motive force* (why the movement is being made; whether it is free or forced), *velocity* (both faster and slower speeds may be associated with exclusivity or the reverse), *rhythm* (as part of the social order; obligation; calculation; an aesthetics of 'correct' mobility; a possible emphasis on temporality), *route* (the channelling of movement; production of 'correct mobilities' through the delineation of routes; connectivity), *experience* (how moving feels) and *friction* (i.e. whether stopping is a forced or free choice). This typology works well for contemporary Africa, where privileged mobile subject positions sit side by side with the underprivileged, with immobility and with

regulation. It will be appropriate to reflect back on the significance of these components for individual strands of the study at various points in the thematic chapters.

Aspects of critical social theory, focused as it is on the oppositions, conflicts and contradictions in contemporary society, can offer some assistance in the theoretical elaboration and conceptualisation of the complex power relations inherent in children and young people's mobility in Africa. It also requires us to consider the diverse ways in which power relations interact with factors such as gender, age, socio-economic conditions and household composition to shape mobility potential and practice in different situations. In a Western context, Kallio (2007) draws attention to young people's autonomous political potential as reflected by their everyday lived experiences and practices and, in particular, the tactics they may employ to promote their own objectives (and for which mobility may be a central enabling feature, especially where it involves escape; see also Ilan 2012). Young people's subversive tactical manoeuvres (following de Certeau's definition, 1984: 29) to avoid surveillance or unwanted tasks can occasionally be uncovered in diverse African contexts, as will be demonstrated, but are more often masked by convincing bodily performances of conformity. In Chap. 4, with respect to porterage, we see how their obedient orderly bodies (laden with pots, packages and bowls), so often observed walking carefully, in line, along bush paths and rural roads, are central to production and reproduction in many African households (whether carrying water, wood, farm produce, waste etc.). Similarly, groups of children en route for school (Chap. 3), can be observed keeping closely together at the behest of parents (who say they do not have time to accompany them).

In some cases—possibly encouraged by threats, stories and rumours in which supernatural forces play a strong role—surveillance appears to be no longer necessary. It has been replaced by internalised self-regulation (of a type which resonates strongly with Foucault's concept of governmentality), such that no external social control seems to be required to police young people's movements (see Vaz and Bruno 2003; de Certeau 1984: xiv, for further elaboration of this theme in Western contexts). The potential sociabilities of travel, which may be lauded in some situations (Lyons and Urry 2005; Urry 2007) are by no means innocent in this regard. Internalised self-regulation is particularly the case for young girls, and may have significant implications for their lives and life chances, a point developed later in this chapter and subsequently (notably in Chap. 5).

Walking: Its Conceptual and Methodological Importance

Although young people take various modes of transport, on occasion, from bicycles to minibuses and taxis (and report on their related experiences and tactics, albeit principally as motor vehicle passengers; see Chap. 8), walking plays a particularly strong part in the mobilities story presented here. For children and young people across Africa, it is usually the dominant mode of travel that encompasses a majority of their mobile experiences: it thus logically forms a key focus of mobility-focused research with children. Walking has very different connotations than those narratives around freedom, agency or its health-giving and anti-obesity value which often prevail in Western societies (at least among affluent, middle-class adults) (see de Certeau 1984; Thrift 2004; Cresswell 2010). Certainly, for most children in Africa, in the absence of alternative modes, it is more commonly viewed as a necessary but wearisome evil than as a health-giving exercise.

The everyday practice of walking, especially outside the city, received little attention as a focus of academic enquiry among social scientists until recently: it has also tended to be marginalised in transport studies. However, studies which set walking within a psycho-social frame have begun to demonstrate its strong potential as a device for social scientists to explore such issues as embodiment, place-making and materiality and the linkages between them. As Ingold and Vergunst (2008: 1) persuasively argue, walking has vital social significance across the globe, since social relations 'are not enacted *in situ*, but are paced out along the ground'. Hodgson (2012) observes (in a UK context) that although walking (and its associated encountering attributes) is often characterised as unskilled, and straightforward, in fact it not only requires practical geographical skills in land-marking and navigating but also social competencies and strategies that are highly dynamic and situated (especially where coupled with use of the mobile phone).

This also applies to the African context, where walking frequently demands additional embodied skills, such as carrying a heavy load on the head (especially for girls). High temperatures, long distances, uneven unsurfaced tracks and footwear issues may add to the texture of the walk and bring significant challenges. The technology of footwear, as Ingold (2004) observes, has a significant place in this walking world. Although the majority of children I have interviewed in recent years have worn shoes, these are not infrequently removed on long walks across uneven terrain,

to conserve their condition for as long as possible. Exhaustion, fatigue and pain are emotions met more commonly in the African walking world.

The unconscious, everydayness of walking may be further jarred by specific, unanticipated and unwelcome, disruptions—'perforation of the ordinary by the extraordinary' (Binnie et al. 2007: 168). While efforts may have been made to identify the easiest and safest travel pattern (pleasant social encounters, safe and agreeable accompaniment), unforeseen interruptions can turn into moments of crisis which require urgent action. Encounters with rapidly rising streams; finding the route blocked by a street gang; meeting a large snake, a witch, a ghost—these are some of the more frightening disruptions of journeys recounted by young respondents.

Because walking dominates the mobile lives of young people, the development of a methodological approach which reflects and can actually benefit from this fact seems logical. Many of the young people one may wish to speak to are extremely busy—they need to go to collect water, take messages, go to farm, hurry home from school. Moreover, they are often (at least initially) extremely shy and find direct eye-to-eye engagement with outside researchers difficult. Having experimented with walking interviews in different contexts and with different age groups over time, this has become a core method when interviewing young people, as will be elaborated in Chap. 2.

Gendered Young Lives in Africa: Thinking About Age, Gender and Mobility in the Everyday

Age is a delineating marker in this book. The focus is principally on children and young people aged from around seven or eight years old up to the late-teens. This age group encompasses a population which is of school-going age, but is also commonly already well integrated into family enterprises in African contexts (Reynolds 1991). It is thus a group for whom mobility seems potentially very important, yet—as noted earlier—one which has received very little attention in the transport literature on Africa. Additional perspective is provided at various points by consulting a slightly older cohort: young people in their early to mid-1920s who, by this stage in their life-course, may be transitioning to adulthood. Here, a life-history approach facilitates some investigation of the extent to which the mobility opportunities and constraints of their earlier years are perceived to be affecting their current lives and life chances.

Definitions of childhood and youth are difficult, especially in an African context where young people are often expected to work and take on social responsibilities from a very early age. The two terms 'children' and 'young people' are used interchangeably in the book. The term 'youth' is used less often, and with some care, because it seems to have become associated in wider African society more specifically with young men, and with an age range which can extend from the early teens into the mid-1930s, that is, to the point at which full adult responsibilities are perceived to have been fully adopted (perhaps because the young man has children of his own). Durham (2000: 116) considers youth relationally, rather than as a specific age group or cohort; a 'social "shifter"', borrowing a term from linguistics that 'relates the speaker to a relational, or indexical, context', thus situating encounters in a 'social landscape of power, rights, expectations, and relationships'. De Boeck and Honwana (2005: 6) suggest that a social category of 'youth', caught between childhood and adulthood, and associated with opposition and anti-structural, counter-hegemonic practices did not even exist in Africa until recently. Certainly, it is only over the last decade that youth has become a clear focus of social enquiry, in conjunction with observed changes in age-related and intergenerational power dynamics (De Boeck and Honwana 2005: 5–7).

Where cultural constructions traditionally tended to emphasise the lowly position of young people in family hierarchies, and the importance of respecting and obeying elders, these are now increasingly interposed with images of unruly and potentially destructive youth, vulnerable to political manipulation, especially in urban contexts (van Dijk 1998; Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Durham 2000). As Barker et al. (2009) suggest, age and mobility can recursively reproduce one another, in the course of young people's everyday lives. Nevertheless, mobility potential and its actualisation, over time, may play an important role in the development of new (age-related) power dynamics in Africa. Mobility is also, very often, a key element in the process by which young people make significant steps forward along their life course towards adulthood, as field evidence will demonstrate.

In a mobilities context, it is not only age per se that is significant but, above all, the intersection of age with gender, for this substantially affects young people's agency. Gender is a factor of central significance in understanding the patterns and underlying politics of mobility operating among young people. Throughout this book, daily movements for education, household work, livelihoods, health and social interaction are contextu-

alised within a politics of mobility, such that mobility is not only socially structured and coded but also pervasively embodied and gendered. As Cresswell and Uteng (2008: 1) observe, the interactions between gender and mobilities are inevitably complex, since both concepts are 'infused with meaning, power and contested understandings. The concept of gender does not operate in a binary form. It is never given but constructed through performative reiteration…. How people move (where, how fast, how often etc.) is demonstrably gendered and continues to reproduce gendered power hierarchies'. How African girls and boys move—their bodily comportment and associated speed—has great significance, being both affected by and affecting the gendered politics of mobility. The body and gender are mutually constituted through the repeated enactment of appropriate gender performance (Butler 1993). As Bourdieu (1990) observed, practices come to be embodied and naturalised as a consequence of learned 'habitus', where gender is embodied through reiterated practices. Men and women's bodily comportment—ways of walking, carrying, demonstrations of bodily deference or disdain—are, for Bourdieu, learned through the body via practical involvement and observation: through the ways in which children imitate the gestures and actions of adults, engage in work or daily practices appropriate to their age, sex, class and so on. Gender habitus can thus be particularly strongly related to the prevailing sexual division of labour.

Internalised dispositions of comportment and speed are impacted not only by gendered patterns of work in the African context—especially load carrying, which is increasingly, with age, a female task—but also by play (which tends to be approached and enjoyed rather differently by the two genders, and according to age). This happens despite the seeming potential in play for chance-taking and disengagement from mechanisms of social control (see Goffman 1967; Punch 2000; Vannini 2011). Bodily comportment and speed of travel, in turn, impact back on social standing and the potential to grow in stature as a community member: the study of load-carrying is especially demonstrative of the damaging role which servile bodily comportment confers (Chap. 4). Following Goffman (1977), one of the key ways in which gender is given significance in society is by the process of institutional reflexivity: the social environment is organised in such a way as to make whatever 'natural' sex differences there are significant. Social situations give gender expression through 'displays', a process that leads to the socialisation and institutionalisation of gender differences. The *performance* of gender, in this sense, is a product of deep-

seated institutional practices taking on a ritualised form which affirms beliefs about the differential human nature of the two sexes (Williams and Bendelow 1998: 60; Flanary 2004). Differences between male and female bodily actions in activities such as load carrying are not simply a show or 'performance', a conscious acting out of femininity or masculinity, but rather they are *embedded and largely subconscious dispositions of the body*, reflecting wider social and cultural expectations. Connell (1987: 86) observes that, 'our bodies grow and work, flourish and decay, in social situations that produce bodily effects' (a point developed very effectively by Flanary (2004), with reference to adult women's load-carrying practices in northern Ghana).

Comportment, speed and regularity of movement are certainly extremely important signifiers of gendered mobility in many contexts; the *where* of gendered mobility adds a further critical dimension with enormous significance for the life chances of young people. The spatiality of girls' travel in Africa can be remarkably different in very many respects from that of boys, once puberty is in sight. At this point, adult suspicions and fears of growing sexuality and desire among their young charges may become increasingly entangled with convenient notions of appropriate behaviour for each sex. Thus, boys' spatial horizons in their teens often expand, while those of girls contract, as Katz (1991, 1993,1994, 2004), demonstrated in her Sudanese village studies.

The reasons for this may not only revolve around the (oft stated) concerns of male family members regarding the vulnerability of girls to sexual and other attacks: suspicions of their potential for promiscuity may also come into play, while gender divisions of labour (which typically place great emphasis on female labour contributions to household reproduction) have widespread implications, particularly for girls' school attendance (Porter 2011). Studies of the constraints on girls' education tend to emphasise factors other than travel to school, but a small number of detailed analyses which include some consideration of travel (notably Avotri et al. 1999, for Ghana) have pointed to its strong significance in both enrolment and attendance patterns. The data presented in Chap. 3 bring further breadth and depth to such analyses through the incorporation of a highly child-centred approach.

Of course, physical mobility is not necessarily desirable of itself: it is often required principally due to the lack of geographical proximity of schools, other services and jobs. One of the more depressing images of rural youth mobility in the literature is of young men in Western Kenya

'tarmaccing': moving endlessly to and fro between village and town in search of work (Prince 2006). Bryceson's (2006) report about the growing incorporation of transactional sex in *ganyu* labour contracts made by Malawian girls and women for basic foodstuffs since the 2001–2002 famine (because these now often entail travel and overnight stays outside the village) also brings to the fore a very negative perspective on mobility. Such lengthy journeys raise particular issues for young girls. Across southern Africa, the high risk to youth of teasing, bullying and rape as they travel, often—but certainly not wholly—directed at young girls, has been widely reported (for instance in Zimbabwe and Eastern Cape, South Africa on the journey to school; see Leach et al. 2000: 15; Potgieter et al. 2006) and is raised by many field informants. Arguably, this is just one manifestation of behaviours associated with a wider crisis of masculinities. While particularly evident in southern Africa, where it exhibits diverse features and challenges, it is of growing concern worldwide (Porter 2013). The extent and ways in which harassment and the threat of gender-based violence influence travel patterns and practices and the implications for gendered life trajectories are explored in depth in Chaps. 3, 4 and 5.

Relationality and the Significance of Household Composition for Mobility Patterns

The relationalities of mobility have particular significance when thinking about African household composition: so much mobility is contingent on the movements of others in the household. Who moves? Who can stay? Who has to stay? These are all key questions that we need to consider carefully when examining the mobility of young people (Adey and Bissell, in interview with Urry 2010). Often the answers will be directly associated with the presence or absence of other household members and their relative power to move or stay put (and consequent requirements of youth to move or stay at their behest). In such cases the so-called gifting of travel time by young people to their elders may be compelled, rather than proffered freely (in direct opposition to Jain and Lyon's concept of pleasurable and pleasure-giving gifting, whether for desired support to social networks or the more intrinsic benefits of a future generation—see Jain and Lyons 2008). It is important to consider relative mobility deprivation and the associated resentments and intergenerational tensions it generates from a young person's viewpoint, though it is also necessary to bear in mind that for older people, especially the very old, a loss of power and growing vul-

nerability with age can also generate tensions with the young (as in Porter, Tewodros et al. 2013, regarding rural Tanzania; Porter, Hampshire et al. 2015).

The relationality between mobilities of youth and old age take on a special resonance in sub-Saharan Africa because so many young people are resident with older carers, as a growing literature illustrates (e.g. Ingstad 2004; Schatz and Ogunmefun 2007; HAI 2007; Kamya and Poindexter 2009; Ssengonzi 2009). As Howard et al. (2006) show for Zimbabwe, foster caregivers of children are disproportionately elderly, female and poor. This is evidenced by survey data from 2007/8 in the CM study (see Chap. 2), when approximately 20 % of 3000 child respondents surveyed lived with people other than their parents. In South Africa, Malawi and Ghana respectively, 14 %, 9 % and 9 % lived with grandparents (usually grandmother alone); the remainder lived with other relatives/foster parents, many of whom were older people.

In many contexts, parents move to town or to another region, to search for an improved livelihood, and will choose to leave their children with grandparents; or, if living in a rural area with limited educational opportunities, may send their children to town for access to better education (Hampshire et al. 2015). The era of HIV/AIDS has also left many grandparents supporting and caring for grandchildren (HAI 2007). There are approximately 2 million orphaned and vulnerable children in Tanzania, for instance: 50 % of these are in households headed by older people, predominantly older women. Here, the intersecting mobilities of the two generations reflect complex interdependencies, as older people care for grandchildren, while locally resident grandchildren assist, in turn, with older people's access to goods and services, including medicines and domestic needs. This symbiotic relationship between generations allows many to cope in Tanzania in difficult situations (notably the need for young adults –the parents—to migrate to the city to find work, and the high incidence of HIV/AIDS; Porter, Tewodros et al. 2013). This pattern is probably reproduced across much of rural Africa, though evidence is lacking.

Fostering, where a child lives in a different household from its mother, has a long tradition in Africa, especially West Africa. It is not only a response to needs for provision of child care in the context of orphanhood or parental migrations as noted above but occurs in a range of other circumstances (Schenk et al. 2008). In West Africa, it is often a means of providing domestic assistance to childless family members and older relatives without family at home, or even to unrelated people. The exchange

of a child is perceived, in some cases, as an important route to consolidating social networks (Bledsoe and Brandon 1992). In urban contexts it may be set within an arrangement to enable the fostered child from a rural area to obtain better (often secondary) schooling than that available in the home location (at least in theory) (Serra 2009). In the CM study we encountered many cases of fostered children whose daily mobility was less beneficial to their lives than that of children who resided with their birth parents, as will be discussed with particular reference to children's porterage work.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has presented some of the key underlying themes and issues which are central to ensuing discussions in this book: its emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach to mobility, drawing on the 'new mobilities paradigm'; the way daily movements need to be contextualised within a politics of mobility; the central role of one mode of transport—walking—to much of the movement which will be explored; and reflections on some of the key contextual factors and relationalities of mobility that we can anticipate will help shape young people's lives and their interactions with other age groups.

The next chapter moves to methodology and field sites, firstly tracing the development of the child-centred approach to mobilities research, which has strongly informed the collection of empirical data presented in ensuing chapters, and then introducing the main research locations. Following on from these two chapters, we can turn to the empirical data and explore how, in various thematic areas, mobility shapes the lives and life course of so many young people. This is a moving issue, not merely in terms of mobility per se, but for the insights it presents into the hopes and fears of an aspirant new generation—and one on whose successful transition to a secure adulthood Africa's future depends.

A Note About Authorship

This book was written by Gina Porter, but the material presented is built from, and around, the work of well over 40 academic and practitioner researchers and 70 'young researchers' (see Chap. 2). While it has not been possible to name everyone as 'co-authors', it is important to recognise their input.

The named co-authors are firstly Kate Hampshire, who worked with me in setting up and conducting the pilot (qualitative and survey) studies and database in the Child Mobility (CM) project and subsequently focused on analysing data relating to health, fostering and sexuality; Albert Abane who first contributed to elements of the Gomoa (Ghana) project, then to the pilot studies in India and Ghana, and subsequently co-ordinated the Ghana CM country study; Alister Munthali and Elsbeth Robson, who coordinated the Malawi CM study; and Mac Mashiri who contributed to the India and South Africa pilot studies, then co-ordinated the South Africa CM study.

In Ghana work on market access, IMT and the role of children (the foundational Gomoa studies), was conducted with Frank Owusu Acheampong and Kathrin Blaufuss (my Research Assistants in the IMT project), with support from Albert Abane.

More recent contributions in Ghana, in the CM study, came from a large number of teaching staff and researchers at the University of Cape Coast (led by Albert Abane): Ekow Afful-Wellington (who sadly died during the project), Samuel Asiedu Owusu, Kobina Esia-Donkoh, Samuel Agblorti, Regina Obilie Odei, Mercy Otsin and Augustine Tanle.

In Malawi, the CM study Research Assistants (henceforth RAs) (led by Alister Munthali and Elsbeth Robson) were Linny Kachama, Bryan Mkandawire, Matthews Nkosi and Bernie Zakeyo, Meya Mkandawire, Faith Hackim, Lucia Desire, Maurice Zulu, Kisinger Chima, Joseph Chiwaula, Chakambira Khaila, Elizabeth Shawa, Susan Liundi, Khetase Chirwa, Albertina Nsongolo.

In South Africa's Eastern Cape I worked initially with Zodwa Phillips-Howard from the University of Transkei (now Walter Sisulu University). The CM study in South Africa (co-ordinated by Mac Mashiri) was assisted by Sipho Dube, Goodhope Maponya, Andisiwe Bango, Nokholo Hlezupondo, Busi Luwaca and Noma Mlomo.

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All of these people have made essential, much valued, contributions towards the research on which this book is based.

Notes

1. A decade teaching in Nigerian universities, a long series of DFID-funded research projects across Africa and two years spent advising on transport services for the DFID-funded African Community Development Programme (2012–2014) have all been enormously helpful in this respect. While mobilities were not necessarily always the prime focus of this work (which has also included field research on diverse topics from agricultural practices, environmental management and decentralisation to market trade, NGO activity and refugee lives), it has been consistently underlain by and threaded

with attention to and observations of mobility-related factors (from their crucial importance in the shaping of individual lives through to their influence on externally orchestrated development practices).

2. For instance, note Clifford's (1997) call for engagement with the 'routes' that connect sites.
3. See, for instance, Porter 1988—'Perspectives on trade, mobility and gender in a rural market system: Borno, north-east Nigeria **Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie** 79 (2): 82–92. This research is discusssed briefly in Chap. 2.

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CHAPTER 2

Identifying Research Gaps and Building a Field Research Methodology with Young People

Introduction

Young people's daily physical mobility in African contexts has received remarkably little attention (as emphasised in Chapter 1), despite its crucial implications for young lives and life chances. This chapter sets out how the various investigations reported in this book came about, including the evolution of the associated field methodology. The core component of empirical work presented in subsequent chapters comprises the findings from mobilities research conducted in 24 diverse sites across three African countries, Ghana, Malawi and South Africa (titled the Child Mobility [CM] study: see www.dur.ac.uk/child.mobility/), albeit interwoven with material from earlier studies. The CM study is embedded in an innovative child-centred approach and associated methodology, in which children are not merely research subjects but pro-active investigators and collaborators. Given the novelty of this truly child-centred approach, it is particularly important to present some specific history of its development and to set it within the context of the earlier work out of which it emerged (and from which empirical data are also presented).

This chapter thus starts by outlining a series of mobilities-focused field studies[1] and tracing how they have fed into the methodological development and research themes of the CM study. The second section of the chapter details the methodologies that have been employed in the field, with particular reference to their application in the CM study (though a majority of the methods had already been used in earlier mobilities

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research in Nigeria and Ghana). It incorporates reflections regarding the individual benefits and disadvantages of these different approaches and the ways in which they have been built into a mixed-method approach in which ethnographic research is central. Attention to the ethics of working with young people, both as co-investigators and respondents, is a linking theme throughout. The chapter concludes with some information about individual field sites where research has been conducted and the logic behind their selection.

Identifying Key Themes for an Exploration of Young People's Mobile Lives

My interest in young people's daily mobilities started in the late 1970s in Moslem Borno, north-east Nigeria, while working on trader mobility patterns. In the course of field research, I interviewed many young hawkers, and was fascinated to discover how the lengthy daily journeys they made, spending long days walking to, and perambulating round, local markets (carrying heavy trays of oranges and cooked foods, in the case of girls, or lighter trays of kolanuts or sweets, in the case of boys), intersected with their wider lives and status in the communities in which they lived (e.g. Porter 1988). This was followed by similar research on mobility, market access and transport services in a series of studies on the Jos Plateau, Nigeria (1990s, through to 2005); in South Africa's Eastern Cape (1994–1995, where it led serendipitously to research with Mthatha's migrant street children, many of whose stories related back to mobility-related issues surrounding difficult home lives in rural Transkei); and in various coastal Ghana districts, from 1996 onwards. For the most part, this research was concerned with young people as a subset of a wider cohort (traders; less advantaged off-road residents and travellers; transporters of goods; people needing to access a range of key services). However, the mixed-method approach adopted in these studies, combining in-depth ethnographic research with large-scale surveys (where funds allowed), facilitated detailed investigation of individual groups, whether by age, gender or location (e.g. Porter 2011).

Over time, the inclusion of young people within these mobilities studies drew my attention to the lack of detailed research specifically focused on children's mobility and transport constraints. Five years of in-depth research into transport and market access in the Gomoa district of coastal

Ghana (1998–2003) was particularly influential in this respect, for a number of reasons. In the first place we undertook intensive traffic surveys in off-road villages, which highlighted the frequency of travel by young people, not only with reference to school, but also their work as transporter-assistants to their parents. Secondly, the loads children were carrying were substantial, and in-depth interviews with children raised questions about load-carrying impacts on both health and education. Thirdly, when we introduced selected Intermediate Means of Transport (IMT) into some villages in an action research study, to investigate whether this would alleviate load-carrying among women and their children, and closely monitored their wider impact over 20 months (with RAs, Frank Owusu Acheampong and Kathrin Blaufuss, resident in the village area), we found that it was families with child labour who adopted the (low credit) equipment on offer and that it was boy children who became the transport operators (Porter 2002a, b; Porter, Owusu Acheampong, Blaufuss 2003; Porter, Blaufuss, Owusu Acheampong 2007, 2011, 2012).

This Gomoa IMT work also encouraged subsequent research in small towns in the vicinity, exploring school children's experiences of travel, transport and traffic, which drew our attention to wider travel-to-school and road safety concerns. It led to a review of the children's mobility literature which confirmed the paucity of information for both rural and urban contexts across Africa (Porter and Blaufuss 2003). The literature review and rural and urban field studies in Gomoa encouraged the development of a set of hypotheses with potential for wider research application (Porter 2009):

1. Likely impacts of lack of reliable, low-cost transport on children's access to regular education and health services (with potential impacts on subsequent livelihood opportunities)
2. Possible education and health impacts of children's widespread (but often hidden) role as pedestrian headloaders
3. The potential role of bicycles to improve access to school and other services (while noting that cultural and other factors might impede their adoption, particularly among girls)
4. The fact mobility constraints on children seemed likely to be higher in rural than urban and peri-urban areas but, even in urban contexts, transport factors or fear of mobility due to violence, were likely to come into play

5. Mobility needs and constraints are likely to vary not only according to age and sex of the child and socio-economic status of the child's family but also according to the broader local context (agro-ecological zone and associated economic production patterns, culture, density of school and clinic provision, access to radio and TV information services, etc.).

These issues subsequently became key themes for investigation in the CM study.

Participatory Research with Young People: Developing More Inclusive Research Techniques

Although young people have increasingly become the subject of research in sub-Saharan Africa, they seem not to have been directly involved as co-investigators in academic research projects (prior to the pilot studies reported below). In fact, much so-called child-centred research (whether in developing or developed country contexts), is actually conducted by adult researchers. They work in a participatory way with child respondents, who are consulted to ascertain their views, but children rarely participate as partners in the research design or as researchers. These studies would probably be more accurately termed as 'child-focused' rather than child-centred (Porter and Abane 2008).

Our approach in researching young people's mobility in Africa might have continued to follow somewhat conventional lines, had it not been for some fortuitous interaction with the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD, a London-based NGO with an extensive international network across low-income countries).[2] When the field research on mobility and market access problems in Ghana (described above) pointed to the little observed, but vital, place that many children play in transporting goods as load carriers for their parents, and a wide review of children's transport in sub-Saharan Africa confirmed the existence of a major research gap in knowledge about children's mobility, I met with Priyanthi Fernando (the then executive secretary at IFRTD), to talk about the potential for an exciting new programme of research. I envisaged this as a cross-country study which would explore children's mobility and transport in sub-Saharan Africa in different environmental, cultural and economic contexts, probably centred on Ghana and

South Africa (countries where I already had substantial field experience and potential research collaborators). The focus would be on building a strong evidence base regarding the mobility constraints faced by children in accessing health, education, markets and other facilities, and developing guidelines on how to tackle them.

In the course of these discussions, Priyanthi recommended that I contact an activist Indian NGO which supported working children and was developing some very innovative and seemingly effective approaches involving children's active participation in their research studies. I duly contacted CWC (The Concerned for Working Children) in Bangalore and learned about their very positive experiences with supporting children as researchers, not least a house-to-house socio-economic survey of over 7500 households in 1998, in which children collected data over a 10-month period and then acted on their findings (Lolichen 2002). CWC were highly persuasive regarding the potential for children to engage in research on children's mobility issues: 'For children to participate effectively in changing their lives and determining their future it is imperative that children are equipped to manage their own information' (CWC 2006:5–6). Their approach clearly offered considerable opportunities for developing a grounded understanding of children's perspectives on their own lives, and with potentially significant advantages in redressing conventional power imbalances between adults and children (Alderson 2000; Jones 2004; James 2007).

Experimentation: Trialling a Child-Centred Approach to Mobilities Research

Following discussion (2002) about how their approach might be adapted to transportation and mobilities research, four people—Albert Abane from Ghana, Mac Mashiri from South Africa, Priyanthi Fernando and myself[3]–travelled to Karnataka, India, in October 2004, to spend a week with CWC staff at their field station. Our aim was to trial some methods focused on investigating young people's mobility patterns and constraints with children as collaborators, and to produce a preliminary methodology/toolkit of techniques for mobilities research for subsequent testing in Ghana and South Africa. This would need to be flexible and robust enough to cope with the very diverse socio-economic, cultural, environmental and institutional conditions we were likely to encounter in our potential research sites.

The field trial in India was conducted with 29 children aged 9 to 18 years and proved very successful. The children were introduced to various data collection methods (individual interview, observation on route transects, accessibility mapping using flash cards, focus groups etc.), which they refined and tested through discussion and role play in the workshop and subsequently through practical work in the field. They also explored modes of analysis and discussed ethical issues, including those involved in using the information they collected. Subsequently, CWC extended the field research in India (involving 149 children over a 4-month period; Lolichen 2007), while small field tests took place meanwhile in coastal Ghana (led by the University of Cape Coast) and in Eastern Cape, South Africa (led by the Centre for Industrial and Scientific Research (CSIR)). Small teams from CWC in India and South Africa (including child researchers in both cases) came to Ghana to work with the Ghanaian team of academics from the University of Cape Coast,[4] review the data collection methods and children's perceptions of their value and ease of use and consider potential solutions to the issues raised. At the end of this meeting, children from the three countries were able to present their research at a workshop where the Ghana Minister of Roads and Highways gave the concluding address.

This pilot proved very successful as a preliminary investigation of child mobility in diverse country contexts; there was clear potential to build on it in a larger, more comprehensive study, which would examine a diversity of contrasting locations (given that there was every likelihood that children's transport and mobilities would vary considerably, according to cultural, socio-economic and environmental conditions). However, the pilot had also highlighted the extremely time-consuming and labour-intensive nature of the child-centred approach adopted, both for the children and the adult facilitators. Ensuing reflection and discussions with the African collaborators in Ghana and South Africa led to a conclusion that the best strategy for a large-scale study would be to put co-investigation at the heart of the work, so that we avoided the 'adultist', Western conceptions of children which can so distort findings (Punch 2002), but to also build in substantial additional research by academics, so that we could cover the diversity of sites across sub-Saharan Africa that seemed essential to a full investigation of different contexts.

This decision was also shaped, to some degree, by recognition of the particular challenges faced by social science researchers who wish to work in, and influence, the transport sector in Africa. The sector is still domi-

nated by male civil engineers trained principally in road construction and maintenance issues: they commonly discount qualitative research methods and many remain highly resistant to integrated, poverty- and people-focused approaches to transport, despite pressures from international donors (Porter 2007, 2014a). The Ghana government Minister of Roads and Transport, who had listened and responded with great care and thoroughness at our workshop to the issues the children raised on the basis of their research and analysis, had also cautioned: 'adults here also don't want child imperialism … do not frighten us with any form of child imperialism' (possibly prompted by CWC's campaigning poster about adult imperialism on the meeting-room wall).

Given these contextual factors (further discussed in Porter and Abane 2008), a three-pronged research plan looked to offer the greatest likelihood of success in achieving the extensive data collection and associated comprehensive statistical analyses which would be required, if our conclusions on child mobility were to be taken seriously in the transport sector.[5] It was this mixed-method plan, centred on the child researchers, but complemented by more conventional qualitative and quantitative academic-led studies, which we were subsequently able to take forward, with funding from the UK Economic and Social Research Council and the Department for International Development. This strategy had the benefit of allowing combined insights from both children and adults—and thus enabling the juxtaposition of emic and etic perspectives. As one of the child peer researchers we worked with subsequently observed: *Working with adult researchers is good because if you combine our findings with the adult researcher findings, it will make a good research* (17-year-old boy, Malawi).

Moving on: Children's Research in the Child Mobility Study

Once funding was in place for the three-country CM study in Ghana, Malawi and South Africa, recruitment and training of young people was a priority. By this time the team had expanded to include Malawi-based researchers, Alister Munthali and Elsbeth Robson (having decided that the inclusion of Malawi sites would add substantially to our understanding of diverse patterns of child mobility in African contexts, see below), and also an Africa-based academic and specialist in child rights, Michael Bourdillon, who was willing to lead the Africa children's training pro-

gramme within the wider research scheme. At the 2006 CM inception meeting in Blantyre, nine young people (two Ghanaians and three South Africans children) together with four newly recruited Malawians joined with the academic researchers to discuss research plans and draft a set of ethical guidelines (further reviewed at every child training session). The Ghanaians and South Africans who had participated in the pilots presented their findings and talked about their experiences as young researchers.

The first Malawian training workshop (for 12 young researchers) commenced directly after the inception meeting, led by Michael Bourdillon. Subsequently, a further five one-week training workshops took place (i.e. two per study country, one per agro-ecological zone selected for research), facilitated by the research collaborators, with support from local research assistants (RAs, see below). The young researchers were all schoolchildren, recruited by contacting local schools, with a focus on working with a mixture of ages (between 9 and 18y) from schools in a mix of settlement types in our study localities: urban, peri-urban and rural (but not necessarily our study settlements, whose selection is discussed below). Where schools approved the project concept, country collaborators presented the project to the pupils and asked for volunteers. In South Africa, an essay on transport/mobility was set to help select children with a clear interest in the research issue. Parental and school approval for the training and subsequent research period was sought in all locations. In total, 70 young researchers were recruited (33 girls, 37 boys, the majority 10–18 years), including 24 from Malawi, 16 from Ghana and 30 from South Africa.

During the (3–7-day) workshops, the children were taught a variety of research methods drawing on the toolkit developed in the pilot study. Working in small groups, they decided on the research methods they were likely to use, the time frame within which they would work, and reviewed the project's ethical guidelines (which had been first drafted at the Blantyre inception meeting). This included training the child researchers themselves in ethical principles, especially the freedom of others to respond or withdraw—a point about which the children occasionally needed reminding as field work proceeded. The facilitators worked through various scenarios with them regarding potential field problems, usually through role play (drawing on experiences from the pilots). After the training was complete, children were encouraged to select research sites close to home (or school in the case of boarders), in order to minimise travel and to enable them

to utilise their local understandings and social networks. Country collaborators, teachers and/or the child researchers themselves, visited relevant community leaders to obtain permissions and explain what the children were going to do and its potential value. Meanwhile, it was important to prepare for each child researcher an identification badge and a summary sheet which they could give to literate community members and respondents as they went around the neighbourhood.

Once the research was underway, children had regular contact with (a mix of male and female) RAs and country academic lead researchers, who visited the child researchers weekly or, where long distances prohibited this, kept in touch between visits by regular phone calls. Mostly the children worked independently or in pairs. They utilised a range of methods, but one-week activity and travel diaries, photographic journals of children's travel to school and at work (using disposable cameras provided), in-depth one-to-one interviews with children and accompanied walks (with mapping or narrative description—see further below) were the most popular choices. Focus group discussions, ranking exercises, counting loads (along routes where heavy loads are commonly carried) and weighing loads carried by children were often less popular, in part because of the difficulties of getting a group to work on this together.

All of these methods were aimed at improving understanding of the places children of varying age, gender and schooling status go, how they travel there and the transport problems they face. The child researchers' findings were diverse, ranging from widespread fear of dogs and snakes on pedestrian journeys to the sanctions imposed by parents and elders (when children arrive home late or travelled to places such as video halls or bars), and the unwelcome attentions of taxi drivers faced by teenage girls. From this work we gained valuable perspectives because these children, interviewing their peers, were not easily misled when children said what they thought people would want to hear: they picked up issues that children were too embarrassed to raise with adults (notably girls' accounts of sexual advances from older men) and issues that children thought adults would not understand or which seemed to be too unimportant (such as biting dogs and arguments with parents). As a young (male) research assistant (RA) from the University of Malawi observed, 'Children know the social networks … and things beyond the adult eye, or which we'd overlook. And these children (are) giving us a fair view of their lived life because they know the politics and dos and don'ts of the community, so it's very important to incorporate them in the research process'.

As field work progressed, the child researchers were helped to write up their findings, employing some of the simple data analytic techniques based around observation, interview analysis, counting and ranking that they had been taught, where this was appropriate. Ongoing and completed work, meanwhile, fed into, and helped shape, questions pursued in the wider adult qualitative and survey research. Many of the children presented their findings at school assemblies, while some participated in the (six-monthly) project Country Consultative Group meetings (CCGs) which were organised as a key means of disseminating research findings to relevant policy makers and practitioners in each country (Porter 2014b).

Late in 2008, 19 of the 'young researchers' (they no longer liked the title 'child researcher' that they had approved in 2006) met together in Ghana at a review workshop. Here, with support from IFRTD's new executive secretary, Marinke van Riet, and University of Cape Coast staff, they decided to work towards their own book of findings. The 19 young researcher representatives made a preliminary draft of the book by reviewing the work folders of all 70 young researchers, according to major themes, and extracting key materials. The young researchers then selected one representative in each zone to coordinate work on subsequent drafts and one adult country-collaborator representative was appointed to assist this process. The subsequent tidying up, conducted in all research countries and UK, included an external review by one of the project's UK steering group members (Janet Townsend) and final approvals from the young researcher representatives. In a few places in the book it made sense to incorporate information from the adult academic researchers, but we took care to ensure this was kept separate from the young researcher voices.

All of this required numerous emails and drafts, then another substantial effort to find financial support for professional design and printing.[6] However, all involved felt that the finished small book well repaid their time and effort: in many respects, it has been one of the most satisfying products of the CM study, since the funding obtained covered not only production but also distribution of 4000 copies to communities, schools, libraries and other institutions in Ghana and Malawi. Many of the young researchers, reporting the sense of personal worth they have achieved from their involvement in the study, point to the booklet as an especially rewarding culmination:

This book will be seen by all people all over the world and it has my name on it. I have written a book! I didn't know it would be so easy to write a book! I am the author of a book![7]

Ethics and Well-Being in Co-Investigation

Clearly, there are enormous responsibilities involved in working with and supporting a team of children working as researchers in a study on this scale. All the adults involved in the research—both the pilot stage and main phase—were concerned, from the start, to ensure not only that no harm came to the child researchers but also that they benefitted substantially from their experiences.

Nonetheless, it was important to ensure the maintenance of a careful watch throughout, especially in the lengthy main CM study. Consequently, in addition to the support provided by country collaborators and RAs, during mid-project monitoring visits to each country, I interviewed individually every participant child researcher available at that time (41 in total) to learn their views on the project, their experience of using the methods they had selected, the support they had received from in-country project staff and any elements they thought might be improved. In South Africa's Eastern Cape this required the assistance of an independent Xhosa interpreter. I also interviewed RAs, separately and in confidence, to gain their views on the child researcher component, on the support they had given and any difficulties and possible improvements. Further monitoring of the project's impact occurred through formal and informal discussions at the end of project workshop, when 19 child participants met in Ghana, and subsequently in a small follow-up study a year after that, when 10 of the Ghanaian child researchers were interviewed by Kate Hampshire (Robson et al. 2009; Porter, Hampshire, Bourdillon et al. 2010b; Hampshire et al. 2012).

The overwhelming experience recorded was one of very positive benefit to the young researchers, though a diversity of issues had arisen, from very practical difficulties in the field with load weighing equipment, the disposable cameras they had been given out and long walks accompanying respondents, to occasional unpleasant interactions with community members, including around photography (where the researcher forgot to ask permission or where payment was demanded). Fitting the work around school demands and home life could also present difficulties, especially in those cases of senior secondary pupils facing examinations, or children in

families where they were expected to undertake a substantial amount of housework (most prevalent in rural households and among girls). In retrospect, we should have ensured that the latter issue was addressed more explicitly at recruitment (rather than simply gaining agreement for children's participation from teachers and parents), though this might have ruled out participation of some children who—though beset by external pressures during their involvement—felt they gained enormously from the project.

Benefits from the project identified by the children included the skills training they gained at the workshops, associated learning experiences and the self-confidence they built up as they worked in the field, certificates they had received at the end of the training period, a wristwatch (used for recording journey times in the project, thereafter for personal use) and the small payments made for their work. Monetary remuneration for the work completed had presented a difficult issue, especially where we involved children below the legal minimum age of employment (14 in Malawi; 15 in Ghana and South Africa) with consequent dangers of contravening local labour laws. However, some of these children were already involved in income-generating activities to help support their families and, with guidance from Michael Bourdillon, the decision was made by the research team to make a small payment in cash to the children for their contributions, calibrated to local labour rates and the quality of work they produced, but irrespective of age (Bourdillon et al. 2009; Robson et al. 2009; Porter et al. 2010b). Subsequently, the work helped a number of the young researchers to obtain entrance to university or work with an NGO (Hampshire et al. 2012); some have subsequently worked with the academic research team in another research project (on youth and mobile phones) and were still engaged on this in late 2014. Nonetheless, working with children and young people does raise many ethical issues, not all of which can be anticipated when academic and funders' ethical clearance forms are completed at the commencement of a study; not only is ongoing monitoring essential but also revisiting of the ethical issues raised at the outset, since—as we found—new and unforeseen ethical questions can arise during the course of a study of this nature.

Another issue concerned the degree to which the child researchers should be involved in advocacy, given that they might be vulnerable to strong criticism for being too outspoken, in cultural contexts where children are expected to be 'seen not heard', or that they could be overburdened or even exploited in a role as 'professional advocates' in what Black

(2004, talking specifically about working children) terms the dangers of the 'child participation star circuit'. In this study, the child researchers identified widespread concerns among their peers around transport and accessibility to services which they were keen to take forward; we tried to support such efforts. Fortunately, they were able to make presentations at the Country Consultative Group meetings in Malawi and Ghana, in which government staff, teachers, relevant NGOs and others participated: a relatively sympathetic audience, sensitised to our aims and methods. Participation in the CCGs in this way, with support from local collaborators, helped to give the children a strong sense of ownership in the study. Moreover, Alderson's observation that children's research reports bring to the fore a 'novelty and immediacy' that can be highly persuasive often proved correct (Alderson 2000:151). However, as noted above with reference to the Ghana Minister of Roads and Highways' comments at the pilot workshop, it was important to keep a careful eye on such interactions, especially in the context of the commonly still quite entrenched negative attitudes, among many transport engineers, to inputs from community users of any age.

Reflecting further on the power imbalances which permeate intergenerational endeavours such as this, even the best intentions at promoting equality of voice and action are likely to be difficult to maintain throughout. To what extent did the young researchers really feel free to decline from participation at the start of the study, or to opt out of it part way through? Adult power—including that of teachers and parents—can be difficult to withstand. Most child researchers were still in school, but all were from relatively poor backgrounds and neighbourhoods: some parents (and possibly some teachers) seem to have been keen to see their children participate, because of perceived advantages of association with university academics and overseas donor agencies. Nonetheless, I find it difficult to disbelieve the very positive tenor of all those one-to-one interviews with the young researchers I conducted towards the end of their research, or their subsequent reflections. The fact that some were still working actively with the research group in late 2014, eight years after the start of the original study, gives some indication of their perceptions regarding the value of this collaboration.

To conclude, taking on a research study with children as collaborators is not to be undertaken lightly. Many people and organisations have expressed interest in the co-investigation style of approach taken in this study but it is important to stress that it is not simply a novel, eye-catching

approach that can be easily inserted into conventional research. While the rewards of producing co-constructed knowledge can be considerable, for all involved, it requires very substantial time commitment and continual attention to ethical issues; not least—in the case of research with children—the development and maintenance of the positive intergenerational relations which are key to its success (Porter, Townsend, Hampshire 2012). From time to time problems did arise, as for instance when a couple of young researchers in our care at the review meeting in Ghana looked to start a relationship of which their parents would not have approved. On reflection, we all—children and adults—participated in an exciting but occasionally perilous journey: at times, perhaps unsurprisingly, this tested the competencies and capacities of all concerned.

Academic-Led Research in the CM Study

A leading aim, in the CM study, was to apply the successful child researcher model of co-investigation (facilitated by adults) which had been developed in the earlier Ghana and South African pilots, while ensuring the production of substantial and comparable quantitative and qualitative datasets across the three countries. This was achieved by drawing on questions and issues raised by the young researchers in their work in a limited number of sites, together with questions raised from the earlier mobilities research in Gomoa (Ghana) and an extensive literature review, then using this as a base for more extensive qualitative and quantitative academic studies (following small pilots of this academic research component) in all 24 research sites. Thus, a more conventional (adult-led) interview study with children, parents, teachers, community leaders and other key informants was mostly introduced some weeks after commencement of the child researcher component (and ultimately produced a total of around 1000 interviews). We also looked to innovate methodologically in this academic-led component of the study, through an approach which we called 'mobile ethnography', aimed at better capturing some of the mobilities we observed than through more conventional participatory approaches. Towards the end of the field research phase, a survey questionnaire (to 3000 children) was conducted across all 24 sites, drawing on the crucial preliminary work of the 70 child researchers and the adult-led qualitative studies.

Exploring Qualitative Methods Sensitive to Mobility Issues

Preliminary guidelines for the qualitative component of the CM study were very roughly drafted at the inception meeting in Malawi but subse-

quently refined, as data from the children's peer research became available and following pilot studies by the academic researcher teams. Interview checklists were thus constructed based on four themes, education, health, activities (work and play) and transport and migration, and further differentiated according to whether they were to be administered to children (aged c. 8–18 years) or to parents. A separate set of checklists was designed for other adult key informants, and a final checklist for collecting life histories. These checklist interviews and associated observations formed the bones around which the qualitative work was constructed. The aim in the CM study was to produce a qualitative dataset of c. 50–80 interviews for each of the study sites which would subsequently enable triangulation with findings from the child researcher studies and the survey. This qualitative dataset typically included:

- In-depth interviews (including accompanied walks, see below) with children c. 9–18y, including out-of-school and irregular attenders, primary, junior and senior secondary school pupils
- In-depth interviews with male and female parents
- Key informant interviews with settlement leaders, teachers, health-workers, transport operators
- In-depth life histories with youth in their late 1920s/early 1930s
- Focus group discussions with school pupils (male and female separately, primary and secondary separately)
- Focus groups with out-of-school children (male and female separately)
- Focus groups with parents/carers (male and female separately)
- Interviews with children carrying loads along major load-carrying routeways and load weighing where feasible

In addition, the RAs were asked to keep an ethnographic diary, recording their reflections throughout the field period.

Training Research Assistants and Establishing Field Protocols

Prior to the main field phase, it was essential to test the checklists and other methods we anticipated using in the field in each country. This phase was also crucial for training the field teams. Research assistants, male and female (see below for a discussion of gender issues), had been recruited at an early stage, so that they could support the initial child researcher workshops. By

the time they started work in the field on the academic component of the qualitative research, they were already familiar with the aims and objectives of the research and we could be confident that they would be able to work sensitively and sympathetically with children and young people. In Ghana and Malawi the country collaborators were university-based and thus had been able to recruit suitable postgraduates or junior staff. In South Africa, where the country leader was based at a quasi-commercial institute, the Centre for Social and Industrial Research (CSIR), the RAs were recruited from two separate institutions: one in Gauteng Province (Tshwane University of Technology), the other in Eastern Cape (Walter Sisulu University). This was necessary because of the distance between the two regions and the different language skills required.

As project leader, working in the field periodically with each of these different RA groups in turn at different stages of the project was especially important, not only to initially field pilot the methods we proposed to employ, and subsequently monitor their use, but also to ensure comparability of approach across field teams and to learn about the RAs as individuals, how they interacted with respondents, and how this might influence their interviews and interview reports. Although all country academic collaborators involved themselves in small elements of fieldwork, they had time constraints associated with their teaching/administrative/research roles, so much of their input into the study was organisational: the RAs were our crucial field source and resource—not always 'of the field' (i.e. rarely residents of the settlements where we worked, with the exception of the urban sites), but intimately linked to our study communities over periods of three or four years—certainly far more than simply 'fixers, liaisons, and helpers' (Middleton and Cons 2014: 281).

Most of the RAs had some experience of qualitative research, but—like the research collaborators in the study—they came from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, in this case ranging from anthropology, geography and sociology to criminology, computer studies and marketing (though all the Ghanaians were geographers).[8]

In-Depth Interviews: Training and Application

Following a preliminary one to two days of training, Kate Hampshire and I worked with the in-country collaborators in each of the field pilots, accompanying individual RAs as they obtained permission from carers, tried out the checklists (with different age and socio-economic groups

and both genders) and recorded their interviews. Each evening we met with the field team to review the day's work regarding the methods being tested, preliminary findings and individual RA experiences and challenges. It was important to conduct this exercise with the whole group together, since each theme needed to be constantly examined, in the light of its relationship to the other themes. We also tried to encourage the RAs to think reflexively about their field encounters, and to keep an ethnographic diary.

After this preliminary stage, in which each RA tried out the four checklist themes, they were assigned one specific theme (which linked to their wider interests and experience) for the main phase of study. This gave individual RAs some sense of ownership of their theme and the possibility of developing their work into a Masters' thesis or a publication. This was also the phase when it was important to reinforce the key field protocols that had been initially presented during prior RA training meetings, in particular:

1. The importance of not pressurising children and other informants into being interviewed if they did not wish it (but keeping a list of refusals by age and gender)
2. Gaining the parent/carer/guardian's permission for all those under 18 years and assuring confidentiality
3. Once permissions had been obtained, asking if they could move to a quiet spot, where (if a child was the respondent) they were still within sight of the carer, but at sufficient distance that the interview could be conducted without anyone listening in, or any associated interference from others, whether adults or children
4. The need for flexibility when using the checklists, that is, to probe and report beyond basic factual information, such as the distance of journeys to school, and to capture the feelings associated with such issues—perhaps worries over arriving late, or the enjoyment of walking with friends
5. The importance of as full, direct reportage as possible, in order to preserve something of the 'feel' of the exchange between interviewer and interviewee. RAs were asked to write down a direct English translation of the interviewee's words, even if their responses seemed self-evident, irrelevant or wrong. A few RAs experimented with tape recording interview but, for the most part, given the scale of our investigation (i.e. an objective of c. 50–80 interviews per research site, eight sites per country) and standard transcription

times, the often noisy contexts in which we worked, the potential for recording equipment to fail and the possible impact of recording on interactions with shy young respondents, we encouraged them to write notes as they interviewed, in English, in hardback notebooks, which were then typed up, rather than recording in a local language, then transcribing and translating into English later.[9] For the most part this worked well, as RAs became increasingly proficient at note-taking at speed: just one RA in South Africa was clearly unable to manage this work and had to be replaced after a few days' trial

6. Should the respondent experience any unease or distress during the interview, to stop immediately and find an appropriate person who could comfort them
7. To take as full notes as possible during the interview, but then spend a few minutes immediately afterwards, noting reflections on how it had gone and any new questions it raised which ought to be discussed with other members of the team, and possibly then adding them to the check sheet.

From this initial pilot phase the team moved to the main qualitative data collection phase. Given the need to ensure a strong, representative range of respondents, by sex, age, schooling, household status and so on, a purposive sampling strategy was pursued. Country-led academic researchers were asked to keep a careful tally of their RAs' interviews according to these various characteristics until the necessary range of respondents had been achieved in each site. On many occasions children were very keen to be interviewed and would stop RAs in the street to request this; it was important, however, that RAs checked their tally (and, of course, obtain parental or carer consent), before the interview proceeded.

Focus Group Discussions

Once a number of individual interviews had been accomplished satisfactorily in the CM study, it was time to try out some focus group discussions. The aim was to explore key issues emerging from the individual interviews—though not sensitive ones unsuitable to group discussion—with about eight or so individuals, either single-sex groups of children or of adults. Organising the focus groups was time consuming, since potential participants had to be met in advance and a suitable time agreed for all.

Many of the meetings took place in open air settings, in the absence of suitable indoor venues. However, this often meant that it was difficult to control entry and exit from the group. As is frequently the case when conducting focus groups in developing country settings, on many occasions it was necessary to accept that participants (especially in the case of parents) might leave part way through, perhaps to attend to a child or other matters, or that curious by-standers would insist on joining in.

Although some RAs said they had prior experience of running focus groups, it quickly became apparent that they were tending to depend too heavily on the thematic check sheets during the focus groups they ran, treating the whole group as in standard interview mode and asking questions of each person, in turn, as they went round the group. This did not offer any of the advantages commonly associated with focus groups, where observing how participants interact helps to produce data and insights to complement the individual interviews and associated participant observation. Moreover, the children in the group clearly found waiting for their turn to answer intimidating. Although there can be dangers that one or two dominant people can take over group discussions, questioning all respondents one by one was certainly not the answer!

Consequently, we asked each RA to put aside their check sheets and identify two key questions on the theme in which they had elected to specialise. In the focus group, they then worked in pairs, with one RA leading or moderating the discussion and the second RA taking notes (using a numbering system to identify individual responses round the group); half way through they swapped roles and explored the two key themes put forward by the second RA. Gaining a sound understanding of the interplay of two levels of analysis (individual and group) was not always easy for the RAs but, overall, the approach worked effectively and was used in all three countries as a complement to the in-depth interviews.

Experiments With a Mobile Method

In the pilot field phase of the CM study, experimentation with a mobile method also commenced. Mobile interviews and walking practices have been gaining increasing attention in recent years, partly as a response to the so-called mobilities turn (discussed in Chapter 1), though mostly in the Global North (e.g. Lee and Ingold 2006; Ingold and Vergunst 2008; Evans and Jones 2011; but see Walker et al. 2014 for a comparative application in India and the UK). As Watts and Urry (2008: 867) observe,

much ethnography has been *'located at sites of passage, transfer points, where populations and things are temporarily confined and arranged within stations, waiting rooms, baggage systems'*. However, their reflections on the potential of a mobile ethnography which involved, '*travelling with people and things, participating in their continual shift through time, place, and relations with others*' encouraged them to undertake a small UK study on motorised transport that provided an account of travel-time that was rich in social understanding.

In an earlier (resource management) research study in coastal Ghana, walks around village areas had proved invaluable as a simple mnemonic device, complementing stationary interviews (where some key environmental issues had been ignored), but also helped to evoke and capture the social understanding which shaped local people's interpretations of the environment. The potential benefits of applying mobile methods in the current study were obvious, not least because it had become apparent, from early discussions and observation during work with the RAs, that we would all benefit from a fuller appreciation of the long walks which are a daily feature of many children's lives, especially in rural areas. The RAs and academic staff were all urban-based at their respective universities and, even though some had grown up in a village context, they had moved on to the city for secondary education and university many years previously.

Thus, for each team, a rural or peri-urban walking interview was arranged, where the RAs would meet children as they finished school and walk home with them. In discussion with schools in the vicinity of the pilot field sites, it was possible to identify pupils residing in a settlement 4–5 km distant and obtain approval from the head teacher and their parents for this exercise. The walks thus became a key training tool for the adult researchers, sensitising us, in particular, to the very severe constraints faced by children whose lived reality is a 5 km walk to and from school every day. These exercises also opened our eyes to the opportunities which walking offered in developing rapport and building sociality with the children being interviewed. RAs had reported that, in stationary interviews, they had often been finding interaction difficult, especially with younger children (and especially when carers and others were trying to listen in on the conversations). Despite the RAs' best efforts, a one-to-one interview with these young, university-educated, city-based researchers was clearly daunting for our target respondents, especially in the remoter rural areas.

What came to be called mobile ethnographies presented an early solution to these difficulties. Walking together is a shared, embodied experi-

ence: it encourages affective sociality, significantly relaxing social norms around communication and has particular value when the walkers are strangers and of differing social status. Children who were shy did not need to make eye contact with the stranger who remarkably, as it seemed to many of them (in cultural contexts where children's views are rarely sought), had come to talk with them and wrote down all that they said! As they walked together, side-by-side with the RAs, the children seemed to feel less pressure to give immediate answers to every question. If a question proved awkward, there was time to reflect or to rethink an answer, as they negotiated uneven tracks, stumbled over tree roots, or waded across streams: silences were natural, not awkward; narratives unfolded gradually. As Sheller (2007: 180) observes, motion and emotion are kinaesthetically intertwined: these narratives—of both girls and boys—sometimes included very personal, emotional and possibly embarrassing information, unlikely to be tendered in a stationery interview. Children engaged with events, emotions and memories that shaped their interactions with the places we were passing through. (For a full description of the application of this method, in a selection of field sites, see Porter et al. 2010a; also Doughty 2013 regarding the potentially therapeutic spaces that companionable walking provides) Images 2.1 and 2.2.

The RAs subsequently used this 'talking-whilst-walking' or 'go-along' method in different contexts, albeit often across shorter distances, such as when the child they were interviewing needed to collect water or to visit the local shop, especially in cases where the child was shy or ill-at-ease talking to an adult and the interview slow. Often it also proved valuable as a mnemonic device, reminding the child of things associated with their journeys that they might have forgotten to mention. Moreover, it quickly became clear that such mobile interviews not only enabled reflections on the journey itself, but on the moorings at either end—the richest, most vivid accounts and deepest insights into home life or school often unfolded on these walks. Insights into children's daily lives, fears and hopes, gained through these walks, made a very substantial contribution towards building a robust and realistic framework of understanding of children's experiences of mobility in the everyday. They encouraged and reinforced reflection as to how such mundane movements through space are not only dynamic and embodied, but set within a power-laden environment which inscribes complex, deeper mobility meanings.

The RAs made rough notes during the course of these walks. They were directed to note any significant comments in full, especially where

Image. 2.1 Accompanied walks in progress: South Africa

strong emotions were expressed, and to observe and record if there were places that the child was in a hurry or reluctant to pass (a situation often observed near graveyards). They were also to ask for the child's views if they met major mobility barriers or interesting transport events (such as children pushing trucks, riding cycles or carrying heavy loads). While using a tape recorder might have made for a more complete record of these journeys, transcription time would have been substantial and it is possible that some RAs might have focused on filling the recording with their own observations as the walk progressed, especially if the respondent was initially silent, thus potentially changing the nature of the interchanges that occurred.

Image. 2.2 Accompanied walks in progress: Malawi

In all cases, of course, it was essential that the RA had noted key facts such as the respondent's age, gender, family/household background and had permission from the parent or carer before the walk commenced: they were advised to spend about 10 minutes on some preliminary discussion with the child and to then draw a rough map, if possible, as the walk proceeded. It was also particularly important in the case of walking interviews that the child's carer was thanked by the RA at the end and made aware that the child had returned safely. Subsequently, many of our child researchers also adopted this method, as the RAs who worked with them passed on and encouraged this approach. Here again it was very successful, though on occasions they reported similar difficulties to those sometimes

encountered by the RAs: the occasional difficulties of obtaining parental/carer/guardian consent (especially regarding mixed-gender interactions), and the time involved in undertaking long, exhausting walks, especially across difficult terrain.

Exploring Mobility Impacts Through Life Histories

The life history approach has gained increasing interest among researchers working with young people, especially regarding 'critical moments' in the transition to adulthood (Thomson et al. 2002; Langevang 2007). They are less commonly used to specifically explore mobilities, but had been valuable in the earlier transport research in Ghana (Porter et al. 2003). In the CM study they proved to be another useful route to exploring children's mobility/immobility and its impacts. RAs had first tried out this technique with each other in the pre-field training, in order to practise one-to-one interviewing techniques. For most this was a new method, but they quickly came to see why it was a potentially valuable member of the methods repertoire.

In the field, RAs were subsequently asked to conduct life history interviews with a person of the same sex and ideally in their mid-20s. These were people who were likely to remember much of the detail of their earlier years, but who would also be able to reflect on the impact of these experiences on their current position. They were asked to try to build a sort of topical autobiography: that is, an autobiography focused around the theme of our research—mobility, transport and access to services—and consider if (and, in that case, how) this had shaped their access to education, health, livelihood and broader life chances since their early years. This information about the respondent's access to health, education, social networks and so on throughout their childhood (up to about 18 years) was helpful in building a picture about the effects on the way they led their life today and the way they thought it would affect their future life chances. It would hopefully enable the RA to help the respondent make their own assessment of its impact: that is, primarily an insider's viewpoint. The same life history data would then assist us in building wider assessments of the impact of childhood mobility and access to services on current lifestyles, livelihoods and life chances.

While, ideally, a life history interview is an informal interview which requires a number of sessions, so that the researcher can shift from simple questions to more complex questions, and from non-controversial to

potentially more controversial issues and reflections, RAs were not usually able to fit in more than two sessions. However, the second interview was valuable as a means of allowing the respondent to come back to things, if they remembered them on reflection, and to review the conclusions. RAs were asked to interview the respondent, if at all possible, without an audience, in a quiet but familiar place, where interruptions could be avoided but the respondent was relaxed.

Whilst people usually greatly enjoyed talking about their lives, once the interview was under way, RAs were reminded that if the interview brought unhappy memories/issues they were to try to ensure that the narrator was comfortable at the end of the interview and had any support they needed from family or friends. In terms of practical advice, RAs were asked to keep a separate notebook for each person interviewed for the life history component, so that they had space for second and further interviews. As with one-to-one interviews, they were to try to make notes as close to verbatim as possible, using direct speech.

RAs were asked to make notes on their personal perspectives of the interaction, immediately after each interview: if/when the interviewee was uncomfortable; where they hesitated; and which gaps/themes should be followed up in a subsequent interview with the respondent.

The Questionnaire Survey[10]

While in-depth interviews and field observations constituted the heart of enquiry in the CM study, they also facilitated the identification of key questions for a substantial quantitative survey. The survey was designed as a complementary element to the qualitative methods, on the basis that while the qualitative studies would be central to gaining detailed understanding of the research issues, the surveys could help pick up broad trends and variation, including those across the 24 sites, through statistical analysis. They would also aid triangulation with other methods. Consequently, although even in the pilots some trials of a preliminary questionnaire took place, and various field tests were made during subsequent months (outside the field sites), the finally agreed version was not rolled-out until towards the end of the qualitative field research in each location. This was well over a year later, when a good understanding of local issues has been achieved through the qualitative studies conducted by both the child researchers and academic research teams. By this time, the questionnaire had been through numerous modifications to ensure

that it would work in all sites. This involved some reframing of questions (for instance to give adequate attention to differing terminologies where these might affect interpretation, such as local understandings of terms like 'orphan' and 'foster child'), incorporating unanticipated or emerging issues (such as the importance of access to examination centres and the need to document mobile phone usage), improvements to the layout and the refining of instructions for the research team. The survey was conducted in all 24 research sites that had been selected for study (see below) and where prior qualitative work had been undertaken. It was administered to individual children aged about 9–18 years (inclusive) by the RAs. The aim was to question 125 children per site, in order to obtain 1000 completed questionnaires in each country and thus achieve a rich dataset with strong within-country statistical validity. In each country, qualitative research took place over an extended period, throughout the year, whereas the survey was timed to take place in the wetter part of the year when conditions of mobility and access were likely to be more constrained. This was important since my prior experience of collecting rural access data was that, on occasions, people might report a lack of access problems in the dry season, yet when questioned again in the wet season would report access as a massive problem! Seasonality is a vital component in access and mobility, especially (though not only) in rural areas, but one which is often disregarded. In young people's mobile lives in Africa it is of major significance, whether talking about play, courtship, work or travel to school.

In the quantitative survey, a random sampling strategy was employed to select households within each study site, based on a series of transects across the whole settlement/neighbourhood (e.g. first working from north to south across the settlement, then from east to west, etc.), with the RAs interviewing children in residential compounds as they come to them, until sufficient children have been interviewed. The use of transects was to ensure that children from a diversity of residential neighbourhoods were sampled, thus picking up any major variations between different areas, such as ethnicity. It was important to interview in compounds, to ensure children (e.g. disabled children) who were not often on the street were included in the survey and because the first part of the questionnaire was addressed to the child's parent (or adult guardian/carer, if no parent was available). Thus, interviews were mostly conducted in children's homes or home settlements outside school hours (though, in the remote rural sites, where homesteads were widely dispersed and children difficult

to find at home, because of the range of tasks assigned to them, a few questionnaires had to be completed at school).

The RAs were asked to interview only one child in each household selected for study, in the first instance. If more than one child aged 9–18 years was present in the household and available for interview at the time of their visit, they were to select only one, randomly. The selection method, which had been tried out and proved effective in the pilot, was applied in the main survey: every child present was invited to choose from a clutch of pieces of folded paper, of which one piece had a star—the child who chose the paper with the star became the interviewee. Where there was more than one household per compound, the RAs were asked to interview one child in each of the households within the compound. In the remote rural settlements this method was still applied, but subsequent rounds of interviews were necessary, sometimes, to reach the required sample size. Where the only child in a household was an 8-year-old (or even a 7-year-old) who was keen to be interviewed, the RAs were advised to allow this, if it was clear that the child adequately understood the questions.

It was stressed to RAs that they must seek the consent of both the child and a parent or other adult guardian in the compound, before administering the questionnaire. Once the first part of the questionnaire with the adult was complete, the RAs would ask if they might interview the child separately (but in sight of the adult), so that the responses were the child's own, not the adult's. This required tact and, even so, was not always possible. RAs were reminded that they must not try to force children to respond against their will (but keep a count of all refusals by age and sex). They used the same standard introduction at the beginning of each interview as had been employed in the qualitative work. This presented the study to respondents as research into children's lives, rather than as a children's transport and mobility study, in order to avoid respondents focusing very narrowly on transport (especially with the thought that transport interventions might then follow and when they possibly had other, more pressing, concerns). This was important in order to be able to understand mobility issues within their wider context. Despite the length of the questionnaire, once the RAs were confident in its use, it could be completed in about an hour. RAs checked that the child could be free for an hour before they started the interview, and it was rare for children not to complete the questionnaire because of tiredness (or other causes).

In most sites the researchers needed to use a number of different local languages as they questioned respondents; consequently, all the country

teams decided to work with the survey printed in English, rather than working with a formal translation in various languages. This meant that it was essential to check on usage of key terms by all field assistants in each team at the outset, to ensure consistency. Checks on the questionnaire, which included RAs working through all the questions with each other, in pairs, helped this process. Qualitative responses were noted on the survey form in English. RAs were reminded in their instructions to ensure they had asked all questions (never to assume they knew the answer). They were also asked to ensure, with all questions, that the respondent had fully understood the question and, where necessary, clarified and probed (e.g. by asking 'anything else') to ensure as complete a response as possible. Daily checks on accuracy/completeness were made by the academic collaborators.

The questionnaire survey was used to gather information on an enormous range of (over 300) variables. This was far more than the 60 variables initially anticipated, but reflected the vast number of relevant issues that it seemed important to capture, as findings from the qualitative research emerged. They included, for instance, rapidly expanding usage of mobile phones for virtual mobility, an unanticipated development when the study was initially planned. The value of a quantitative study on this scale was also reinforced by the significance that policy makers placed on the survey component, both at meetings of our Country Consultative Groups and at presentations of the project elsewhere, from the World Bank Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Programme meeting in Lesotho (October 2006) onwards. It was clearly from this (early) point that, if the study findings were to have any influence in policy circles, it would be vital to pay it considerable attention.

A Note on Gender Issues in Field Practice: Team Composition and Interviewing

Although it would have been preferable to ensure gender-balanced teams throughout, in some locations it was difficult to find sufficient women RAs (partly because of the requirement to work sometimes in remote rural areas). Consequently, some CM RA teams were composed principally of young men in their 20s and early 30s. A slight gender imbalance also occurred in the child researcher component (i.e. slightly fewer girls than boys, overall). In some cases, it is clear that girls' household duties were a specific constraint on their participation in the project: one 14-year-old

Ghanaian girl who was very enthusiastic and committed initially had to withdraw because her income from regular paid work (selling cassava for her mother) was essential to the household budget. Interestingly, however, among those boys and girls who were able to participate in the study, in some mixed work groups, girls became the leaders, while among the RAs, the young women were often as vocal as their male counterparts.

Among both the child and academic researchers, interviews were often said to be most easily conducted with those of the same gender. Among the child researchers, a certain shyness of the opposite sex was common, especially among the younger adolescent girls and boys. In South Africa, for instance, one 14-year-old girl observed, *it was easier (interviewing) with girls than boys, because I'm afraid, I'm shy of boys*, while a 10-year-old boy reported, *I did accompanied walks with children of 12 and 13—they were all boys. I just didn't like going with girls (laughs) I'm probably a bit shy.* An older (13-year-old boy) pointed to a more specific reason for reluctance on the part of girls, who *wouldn't agree to be interviewed because some are raped before they come to school when walking through the bushes, so they wouldn't want to be exposed about what has happened (in the interview) … The girls, very few were interested*. Overall, the child researchers found people of both the same gender and the same age, or a little younger, the most amenable to interview.

Gender relations also affected interactions between the RAs and the child researchers. Close links were built in some cases, as RAs were co-opted as friends and confidantes by the child researchers, but in almost all cases these were with those of the same gender, as in the following case, where a Malawian girl orphan of 14 is talking about her friend, one of the female RAs*: (she) came to my home to say hello; (beams, obviously very happy about this) … she talked to me about individual interviews—and she (also) asked my problems. I said shortage of fees and sometimes I go to school with no breakfast*. The male RAs found it hardest to communicate with the young girls, as this young man in South Africa confirmed*: with boys it was easy, you could just talk, but the girls could be very shy, look down. I had to keep asking…*

In the academic-led qualitative work, having predominantly male RAs raised particular difficulties where walking interviews were required, so where walks were planned with girls, efforts were made to put together a set of RAs for the walk, with at least one female RA present in the group. Similarly, it was very important for male RAs interviewing girls in other contexts to ensure that they always acted appropriately with

reference to local cultural conventions—this generally meant keeping within full sight of the adult carer or other family/community member at all times.

Load Weighing

Load weighing was included among the research methods because it had been traffic surveys and associated load weighing of goods carried by pedestrian porters, in the accessibility study in Gomoa (Ghana), that had first pointed to children's porterage and mobility as a significant issue for research and set the course for future work (Porter 2002a, b; Porter et al. 2003). The weighing was conducted by RAs, sometimes in conjunction with the child researchers, on major routeways from the study sites, normally over periods of 2 hours, and only on days of the week when loads were likely to be encountered on the route. It was thus by no means a comprehensive traffic survey (unlike the Gomoa dawn to dusk surveys). It was often only feasible to conduct these exercises in the rural sites where there were many pedestrian carriers and limited motorised transport. Records were made of the gender and age of the young person, their body weight and the weight of their load, the nature of the load, how it was carried (i.e. head, shoulder, back or by hand) and where the load was being carried from and to, and any other observations about the activity—whether the carrier was happy, evidently struggling, complaining of its weight and so on. Although these were by no means comprehensive traffic surveys, they still provided useful data.

Issues of Measurement (Self-Reported Subjective Measures of Distance and Time)

In the survey research (and sometimes in the qualitative studies), children were asked specific questions about the distance to certain locations and the time it took to get there—for instance, how far to school if they took their normal route (which might be cross-country, not along roads), how long it normally took to get there and so on. This was often difficult for the child to assess. Where no information could be obtained from the respondent, or where self-reported distances looked entirely unfeasible, an accompanied walk was sometimes used to ascertain this information. The issue of wrist-watches to all the child researchers proved helpful in this component.

As has been observed elsewhere (and from my experience in earlier mobilities research), distance—like time—is affected by diverse factors. Age, spatial characteristics of the journey, journey purpose, means of transport and emotional involvement between the individual and the location can all influence perceptions. Cognitive, estimated or subjective distance can differ widely from objective, measured, real-world distance (Walmsley 1988; Witlox 2007). Drawing on research conducted in the very different context of Ghent, Belgium, Witlox notes that young people and older people report less well than those aged 13 to 55 years; that accuracy improves with socio-economic status; that gender exerts no influence; and that recurring regular trips are more reliably reported. It would be interesting to undertake comparative studies in urban and rural Africa. In retrospect, use of GPS could have facilitated more accurate distance assessments in the study; with increasingly widespread phone ownership among young people, even in remote rural areas, and the phone apps now available, this would be more feasible now than when the main field studies were conducted in 2006–2008. Where distances and journey times reported by children or adults in this book are cited, they have been checked for accuracy or an appropriate note included.

Data Analysis and Triangulation

Given the quantity of qualitative and survey data collected by both children and adults, analysis has been, unsurprisingly, a massive task. For the qualitative data, close reading of the interview notes, ethnographic diaries and related material allowed emerging themes, patterns and variations to be carefully noted, following the principles of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Qualitative data analysis was ongoing from field entry onwards (as in all the earlier mobilities research studies presented in this book); interview data was regularly reviewed by field teams during the field phases and set within the context of wider field experiences and participant observation (discussed further below): the use of checklist interview guides enabled considerable flexibility, including introducing new enquiries as findings emerged. The focus group sessions were particularly useful for obtaining feedback and reflections regarding interim site findings with the participants. Life history interviews, which were undertaken over more than one visit, sometimes enabled further review. Meanwhile, six-monthly Country Consultative Groups (CCGs, which included government staff, teachers and relevant NGO staff in addition to academic

and child researchers, as described earlier in this chapter) provided opportunities for wider review and discussion of interim findings.

The information collected from the qualitative research then suggested hypotheses for testing using the survey data. For the survey data, data entry into SPSS aided statistical analysis. Qualitative data could then be re-examined in the light of patterns which had emerged from the survey data analysis. Moving regularly between the datasets—qualitative and quantitative, child and adult researcher generated—and triangulating between them have been a crucial exercise in building a nuanced understanding of the complexity evident in the field.

Employment of the survey data in that wider triangulation process certainly underlies much of the argument presented in this book, However, given length constraints and the location of this volume in an ethnographically focused book series, qualitative data tends to be foregrounded; specific survey data are mostly drawn on to present the wider contextual frame, helping set the scene for individual chapter themes (education, work, etc.) and to emphasise the most significant country, zonal and rural/urban comparisons. Individual thematically focused journal publications (on health, travel to school, etc.) are available which have drawn more substantially on comparative analysis of the quantitative data (see, for instance, Hampshire et al. 2011a, b; Porter et al. 2011a, b, c, 2012a, b).

Reflecting on Method: The Key Role of Participant Observation

To conclude this section on methodology, it is useful to reflect back on the approaches that have been taken in data collection in the CM and earlier studies on which this book is based, and in particular to consider to what extent the approaches taken might be described as 'ethnographic'. I would argue that participant observation, which lies at the heart of the ethnographic research approach, also sits at the heart of the work presented in this book. While individual field exercises were designed to elicit specific information through interview and survey, these were set throughout within an ongoing close engagement with the study communities concerned. It is that close engagement with the communities on a daily basis that has enabled adequate reflection and interpretation of the interview and survey data obtained—participant observation has been an essential component of the data triangulation process in these studies.

In the early work on Intermediate Means of Transport in five coastal Ghana villages, following a year of baseline field research conducted, two RAs were resident locally and interacting on a daily basis with villagers for 20 months. Although UK-based, I was also working in the villages for half of every month (such that the villagers assumed I simply went to Accra in the intervening periods). It was only through careful participant observation—not interview—that we uncovered how children were becoming key actors in usage of the newly introduced transport modes (and consequently recognised the need to develop a focused programme of child mobility research). Similarly, in the CM study, despite the fact that each country team worked in eight field sites, on-site or local residence during fieldwork and repeated visits to the field sites enabled researchers to establish significant links in the study communities and to build up considerable local knowledge—this was important in facilitating the recruitment of interviewees, the conduct of effective interviews (i.e. including reshaping the checklists, where necessary, to incorporate questions that were emerging from careful observation) and the interpretation of findings. Evening reviews of field interviews and notes from ethnographic diaries encouraged reflection on a daily basis, ensuring that participant observation during the day meshed with interview findings and consequent reflections helped shape the following day's work: the cumulative impact was very considerable. As PI on the CM study, I worked with RAs for a period in each of the 24 sites, firstly during the pilot/training phase and again during the monitoring phase: during those visits close observation of both RAs and the local context was essential in my role of leading on cross-country calibration and analysis. In the case of the child researchers in the CM study, residence within their respective study sites while working with the academic research team brought a remarkably different combination of involvement and detachment, such that the diaries kept by some of these young people offered further significant insights for the wider project.

Country Coverage and the CM Research Context

The argument in this book has been built from a long series of field studies and associated observations conducted over a period of 40 years. In the chapters which follow, I refer specifically to mobilities research studies I have led in Nigeria and South Africa's Eastern Cape, in Gomoa (coastal Ghana) and, above all, to the CM project (in Ghana, Malawi and South Africa). However—as noted in Chapter 1— the work is embedded within

a much broader set of mobility-related observations conducted across sub-Saharan Africa (mostly in Anglophone but also some Francophone countries and Mozambique) and wide reading of potentially relevant literature from across the continent.

In this section I will focus on the CM study because it forms the core component of empirical work discussed in the book. The CM study was conducted in three countries—Ghana, Malawi and South Africa—which were selected not only with reference to the research links I had already established but also because they offered an excellent base for comparative work in Africa due to their differing developmental status. South Africa is the richest and most technologically advanced country in sub-Saharan Africa but has very significant wealth disparities within its population; Ghana has recently achieved lower middle-income status; Malawi is among the continent's poorest countries. The 2014 Human Development Index (which combines social and economic indicators for each country) ranks South Africa at 118th in the world, Ghana at 138th and Malawi at 174th. These countries also differ substantially in size and population. Ghana and Malawi are both relatively small countries with relatively small populations, estimated at approximately 26.4 and 16.8 million, respectively, in 2014, compared to South Africa's 53.1 million and a vastly larger land area (approximately 10 times the size of Malawi and 5 times the size of Ghana).

In each country two contrasting agro-ecological zones were selected: in Ghana, the coastal savannah and forest belts; in Malawi, the southern highlands and central plains; in South Africa, Eastern Cape and Gauteng/Northwest Province. This enabled the exploration of within-country regional variations associated with potentially important differentiating factors, notably climate and agriculture, but also other possible variations including local culture and resource base. Research in Ghana's coastal zone was focused in the area around Cape Coast, the regional capital for Central Region. Fishing, fish processing and agriculture (maize, cassava, plantain and some cash crops such as vegetables, oil palm and cocoa) dominate the regional economy of this largely Fante-speaking area.[11] The forest zone work was centred on Sunyani, an area where agricultural production for subsistence and sale (maize, cassava, cocoyam and other foodstuffs) is conducted both by its indigenous Akan population but also a large number of migrant workers from northern Ghana.

In Malawi, the southern highlands zone research was focused around Blantyre, Malawi's main urban commercial centre and extended down the Shire escarpment towards the rift valley. This is an area of mainly small-

holder agriculture (maize, pigeon peas, irrigated vegetables) with other activities such as charcoal making in rural areas and many mostly informal sector activities (small-scale crafts, trading and other low-paid service sector work) in the city. The dominant ethnic group (according to our survey data) is Manganja, together with substantial numbers of Chewa, Ngoni and Lombe. The central plains research was focused around Malawi's capital city, Lilongwe, further north. As in the highlands, agriculture is mainly smallholder-based (maize, pigeon peas, irrigated vegetables; tobacco as a cash crop), while small-scale informal sector activities dominate in the city. The dominant ethnic group is Chewa in this zone.

In South Africa the physical distance between the two agro-ecological study zones is much greater than that between the study zones in either Malawi or Ghana. The Eastern Cape study settlements are all located in what was once the homeland of Transkei, a major source of male labour for the mines of the white-dominated areas in South Africa. I had previous field experience here and the lead South African collaborator was already undertaking other transport research in the region. Moreover, it remains an underdeveloped area where unemployment rates are extremely high, and temporary migration is still common (and still male dominated, though with increasing numbers of young women participating too). Local populations—principally Xhosa—depend largely on remittances, social grants and subsistence farming (maize, some vegetables, livestock). The zone is now also much affected by very high prevalence rates for HIV/AIDS. The second South African agro-ecological zone straddles Gauteng and North-West Provinces, far to the north. It is ethnically very diverse, by contrast with Eastern Cape, and includes substantial populations of Tswana, Sotho, Venda, Nguni and Shangaan, plus many migrants from neighbouring and more distant countries (Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria). However, as in Eastern Cape, unemployment rates are high and much of the population depends on social grants, despite proximity of the region to the Gauteng industrial zone and Pretoria; in the rural study sites, subsistence agriculture and some cash cropping (of fruit and vegetables) are practised but mostly on a very limited scale.

In each country, four settlements with contrasting access conditions were selected per agro-ecological zone: poor, high density urban (U); peri-urban/small town (PU); rural with basic services (a primary school, possibly a clinic) (RS), and remote rural without basic services (RR). Map 1 gives a rough indication of their respective locations (though on maps of this scale location can only be approximate). All remote rural sites in

the three countries were located (ideally over 5 km) away from an all-season paved or good gravel road and were very poorly served by motorised transport. The rural with service sites were also on unpaved roads, but were better served with transport. In the majority of peri-urban sites, a paved road, with regular transport services, was accessible within about 3 km of most homes. All the urban sites had access to motorised transport services nearby, though the neighbourhood itself could be served predominantly by poor unpaved roads. This gave 8 sites per country, 24 sites in total: an excellent diversity of locations for the comparative analysis which is central to each of the ensuing chapters (Fig. 2.1).

Conclusion

This chapter has presented key contextual background for the discussions which follow: major themes for exploration, the methodological approach and an introduction to the research sites. It has focused principally on issues relevant to the CM study, because this is a core component of each of the following chapters, but includes reference to key elements of the earlier work on which the CM study was built. Throughout, there has been a strong emphasis on moving away from the concept of the researcher as a detached observer, so typical of research in the transport field, towards a more embedded and embodied presence, in part reflecting the methodological consequences of the affective turn in social science. Emotion is inevitably in place, because engaging with emotionally charged issues and dealing with one's own emotional response are essential in work of this kind. This has brought challenges, but also opportunities, for the researchers concerned—whether young and new to the field, or long-experienced—as we have dealt with both anticipated and unexpected emotions.

A brief introduction to ethical concerns has been included in this chapter, but a fuller discussion of issues in working with child researchers is available in Porter and Abane 2008. In a briefing paper on research, monitoring and evaluation with children and young people, Save the Children (2000) stresses that participation is a right, that involving children in research 'more centrally' helps throw light on key issues, that it can then result in children being 'more effectively involved in decision-making and follow-up action' and by taking their opinions into account 'provide a sense of empowerment' (p. 5). It also notes, however, that it is not always appropriate to involve young people in research: there are issues around skills and abilities, and whether the children concerned have more important priorities that need to be observed.

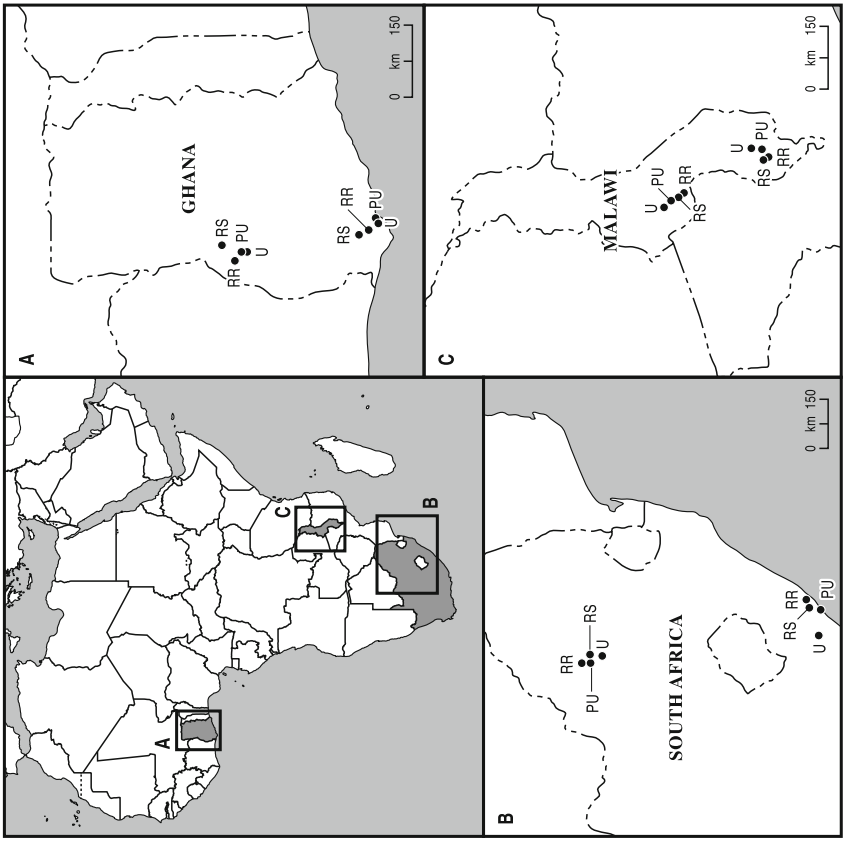

Fig. 2.1 Map showing approximate location of the 24 CM research sites

Some academic researchers may be uncomfortable with the leading role given in this discussion to child peer researchers as co-investigators, not least because of major ethical concerns around the potentially negative aspects of participation, notably the possibilities of manipulation of the least powerful in society by more powerful actors (e.g. Cooke and Kothari 2001; Kapoor 2005): this clearly could apply in the case of work with children and young people. However, as Cahill (2004: 283) reflects (in the very different context of her work with young women in New York), this approach which prioritises insider knowledge also offers exciting opportunities to move 'beyond the thick description of ethnographic tradition, to actually interrogating the spaces between'. We will see how this plays out in the chapters which follow.

Notes

1. All designed and led by the first author. See "A note about authorship" in Chapter 1.
2. In connection with research on women's mobility leading to the book *Balancing the Load*, edited by Fernando and Porter (2002).
3. Kate Hampshire (who had previously researched nomadic populations in West Africa) had by this time joined the project but was unable to participate in this phase.
4. Fortuitously, University of Cape Coast had been a teacher-training institute and all the staff involved in this project had prior experience as teachers.
5. For further reflections regarding the extent to which social scientists can add to studies with children, see Beale (2008) and Alderson (2012). Alderson asks (p. 237) if child-centred researchers are 'too keen to set all processes at a level that young people aged from 12 or 10 or 8 can understand and perform? If so are researchers subtracting vital matters from their work'.
6. I had no success in finding an adult or children's publisher prepared to take on the project. Funding eventually came from DFID's Africa Community Access Programme (AFCAP), after many months of searching for support from numerous organisations. Printing and distribution costs, unfortunately, did not cover South Africa.
7. Two Ghanaian young researchers, interviewed two years after the end of the study (see Hampshire et al. 2012: 225).

8. When I revisited RAs in the field some months later (and interviewed them about their interactions with the child researchers), it was a good opportunity to ask for their wider reflections on the study. By this stage it was clear that they had grown substantially in confidence, both in working with the child researchers and in handling their assigned research tasks.
9. Learning a formal shorthand system (e.g. Pitman's) could be a valuable skill for many academic researchers working in conditions where the recording of interviews is not feasible for some reason.
10. Given length constraints and the location of this book in an ethnographically focused book series, the survey data has been employed in the volume principally to support the wider contextual frame, helping set the scene for individual chapter themes (education, work, etc.) and to emphasise the most significant country, zonal and rural/urban comparisons. Individual thematically focused journal publications (on health, travel to school, etc.) are available which have drawn more substantially on comparative analysis of this survey data (see, for instance, Hampshire et al. 2011b; Porter et al. 2012a, 2012b).
11. The Gomoa study had also taken place within Ghana's coastal zone, but mostly further to the east of Central Region.

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CHAPTER 3

Experiencing the Journey to School: Rural and Urban Narratives

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the intersections between children's mobility and educational uptake and achievement in Africa. It introduces some important pupil experiences which have received little consideration in conventional academic debates about educational access issues and failures across the continent (which tend to focus on what happens in the classroom). Data both from interviews in Gomoa, Ghana, and from the CM study in Ghana, Malawi and South Africa are used to illustrate the lived experience of children's journeys to and from school—their experiential and sensory qualities—in diverse contexts. This also helps highlight the various constraints children face in educational uptake and achievement as a consequence of daily mobility factors. Particular emphasis is placed on findings from the mobile ethnography research employed in the CM study (Chap. 2), because of the rich texture this brings to our understanding of these journeys and the wider setting within which they take place.

The narratives related here demonstrate not only the way mobilities are performed, experienced through the body and embedded in social life but also the significance of the moorings between which movements take place—in this case home and school—and how moorings impact back on the pattern and nature of mobility in intervening routeways and places. Power and materiality interact with moorings and movements in complex ways, as is most strongly evidenced in the diversity of gendered travel experiences reported in this chapter between and within geographical

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locations. The extent and ways in which cultural attitudes influence girls' travel patterns and practices and the implications for gendered life trajectories is a recurrent theme.

Age and prevailing patterns of transport provision interpose further complexity. Socio-economic status, by contrast, plays a much smaller role than might be anticipated, because the empirical urban data reported is from poor neighbourhoods, and, in all the rural locations discussed, poverty levels are almost ubiquitously high. Age might be assumed to present a major factor in school destination, and clarification on this point is necessary. Most children up to the age of about 18 are still attending primary or junior-secondary/middle schools, rather than being in senior secondary education. In the CM study, overall, only 5.3 % of school-enrolled children attended a state or private (senior) secondary school (1.8 % in Ghana, 6.3 % in Malawi, 10.5 % in South Africa; N = 2967).

Only a small proportion of rural children in Africa manage to progress to senior secondary school, outside of South Africa: poor primary school results (especially common in poorly resourced rural schools) and secondary school fees militate against this, but the distance factor is also significant, as the ethnographic data presented in this chapter will show. Senior secondary schools are far fewer in number than primary and junior secondary/middle schools, and, since a majority of such schools are located in major rural settlements or urban areas, this clearly has important travel implications, especially for children residing in remote rural areas. These children, if they manage to gain entry to this higher tier, usually have to travel a considerable distance, incurring substantial travel costs or a long daily walk. Alternatively, they may pay for temporary accommodation at or near the school. Avotri et al. (1999 citing Boakye, 1997) suggest that, in Ghana, the closer the secondary school, the more likely that children will be sent to primary school, because this makes continuity of the child's education feasible, but—as the qualitative data presented below will demonstrate—other factors also come into play, not least gender and the opportunity costs of contributions to household livelihood repertoires. Rural parents regularly put pressure on girls to leave education when secondary schooling comes on the agenda, referring to the dangers of girls having to travel very long distances on foot to secondary school and/or the costs and difficulties of arranging boarding. Self-boarding (i.e. renting a room) is often the only option; a common subtext in this case is the likelihood that they will find a boyfriend and soon become pregnant. When

family funds are sparse, whether in urban or rural contexts, there is also a tendency to prioritise boys' education over girls', since this is perceived as likely to present better future opportunities for wealth creation and the social networks which can advance family status and fortunes.

It is also important to bear in mind, at the outset of this chapter, that many children undertake long and/or difficult daily journeys to access schools where teaching is of very questionable quality (Glewwe et al. 2014). This is a particularly common issue in rural locations where few well-trained teachers may wish to work, as a result of diverse factors, from lack of electricity, poor housing and good quality drinking water, to their low visibility when better jobs come onto the horizon. Many teachers posted to off-road rural schools in Africa prefer to live elsewhere, in a better-connected roadside village, and travel daily to school (increasing the potential to arrive late). Research conducted over five years in four Gomoa (coastal Ghana) villages located away from paved roads provided ample evidence of the poor quality of education available to local children. Teachers—especially those residing outside the villages—regularly arrived very late in the day to teach or simply didn't turn up. One village, for instance, with primary and junior secondary schools had ten teachers, but only one young man lived in the village. He had A-levels but had yet to receive any teacher training. The remainder all lived at the roadside and—since only the headmaster had a bicycle—took at least 45 minutes to walk in to school each day: they frequently arrived late. The teachers themselves proffered stark views regarding life for aspirant teachers consigned to the village. A down-at-heart primary school headmaster, who had been living in one of these very poor villages for six years, observed, only half joking, *it's like a doctor living with the lepers … I'm becoming like them … It's difficult for teachers to come here—when they see the facilities they don't want to come*. He was the only trained teacher in the school. In the previous four years, he had had three teachers, two posted there on national service, and one O-level holder. All had transferred as soon as they could. He had made the decision to move out of the village to a small roadside town, and travel in each day, once he could afford the transport.

In another village, a young man in his twenties from Eastern Region, posted to the junior secondary school in the previous year, explained how he walked to the paved road to catch transport home—just for the weekend—every two weeks. He had to stay in the village, because it was too far from the paved road to travel in daily and there was barely

any local transport: *Living here is not easy at all. I wasn't used to such a place, You don't get access to anything you want (here). You have to go and buy everything (from town) and bring it down … I personally don't want to mingle with them (the villagers). I want to keep a distance. They're not civilised in their speech. I only have contact with the new person here (another recently recruited teacher). I don't speak Fanti—I speak Twi—I find Fanti pronunciation difficult. They can't always understand me … Even the taxi drivers don't like to come to this place, because if they come they have no passengers going back. I generally have to charter (at great expense).* He intended to move back to town, as soon as his two-year posting was completed. Parents and children observed long periods when this young teacher and his friend were absent from the village—they were often away when we were working there. The Gomoa district Director of Education bemoaned the difficulties of staffing rural schools—the simple fact was that '*teachers like an urban location*'. This had encouraged a move to sponsor young people at the teacher training colleges, on condition they then worked in village schools. However, the reluctance of trained teachers to commit to work in remote rural areas, and the evident failure of many to work effectively while in a village posting, is a continuing constraint on many children's education, across rural Africa.

For some parents, the limitations of state education have encouraged recourse to the private sector (Lewin 2007). Low-cost private education has expanded widely in Africa over the last two decades, from city slums to remote villages. The mobility implications are usually limited, since although access may involve slightly longer journeys to school, these can often be accomplished on foot. In three of the four off-road Gomoa study villages discussed above, a few children from marginally better-off families were being sent to private primary schools, which were perceived to offer a slightly better education, including smaller class sizes. A village blacksmith, for example, was sending his 6-year-old daughter to one such school, because 'the teaching here is not effective'. In another off-road village the distance to the private school (c. 25 km) requires access to motor transport. On two days each week, the privately educated children do not attend school at all, because there is no transport leaving the village on the route to the school location on those days: despite this limitation, their mother (niece of the Chief) reckons they receive a better education than is available in the village school.

Journeys to School in Africa: From Statistics to Emotions

Data from the CM survey (see Chap. 2) provide a useful contextual frame for a discussion of children's journeys to school, because it enables a broad comparison of travel patterns to education facilities across 24 study sites, picking out some significant differences between the three countries, and between urban and rural locations within them. Further elaboration then follows, drawing on ethnographic material. This research encompassed 12 rural sites and 12 urban sites: in each country, 2 urban (U), 2 peri-urban (PU), 2 rural settlements with basic services, including at least a primary school but usually also a junior secondary school (RS) and 2 remote rural settlements, selected because they had no primary school or other services (RR).

Over four-fifths of children surveyed in all three countries attend the nearest school to home appropriate for their level. The remainder travel further, particularly in the urban sites, in some cases because they attend a private school, or because allocations of state secondary school places are made without specific reference to home location. Survey data provide a broad picture of basic travel, estimated by time across these different sites (distance estimates were less reliable), as shown in the table below.

While it is important to emphasise that the data are based principally on children's own estimates of journey time (and most did not possess a watch), they give a broad indication of the varied scale of journeys in different locational contexts in each country. They demonstrate how, for children living in remote rural areas, where there is no local primary school, long journeys are the norm, whereas in rural settlements with services (including a primary school), peri-urban and urban areas, a majority of young people's journeys are much shorter.

Analysis by travel mode adds further clarification: walking dominates in all three countries and in all CM research sites (overall, 98 % of respondents in Ghana, 99.2 % in Malawi, 86.4 % in South Africa). In remoter areas of rural South Africa there is some access to dedicated school buses, but even so, over three-quarters of children walk. The CM South African data broadly accord with some rare, detailed national government travel to school data, which show 76 % of 'learners' walking to their educational destination in that country and estimated that almost 3 million out of the 16 million total (especially those located in more rural provinces) spend more than an hour a day walking to and from educational institutions

(2003 South Africa National Household Travel Survey, Department of Transport, 2005). Cycle use on the journey to school is remarkably low across all three countries (0.9 % maximum, for Ghana).

In exploring travel to school, it is important to consider gender, not least because girls' poorer access to education in sub-Saharan Africa is widely considered a major hindrance to diverse aspects of development, from women's employment opportunities through to fertility rates, child rearing and schooling practices in the next generation (e.g. Ainsworth et al. 1995; Scribner 1995; Diamond et al. 1999; Kabeer 2005; Boyle et al. 2006; Milligan 2014). Enrolment statistics in the CM survey of 9–18-year-olds indicate that fewer girls than boys are enrolled across two of the research countries: 82.4 % of girls compared to 92.6 % of boys in Ghana; 90.3 % girls compared to 95.4 % boys in South Africa. However, the statistics for Malawi—82.2 % of girls compared to 74.2 % of boys—show the reverse. If we look just at figures for children aged 9–15y (inclusive) in Malawi, the particular predominance of female enrolment in remote rural sites is clear (75.8 % girls, compared to 58.5 % boys) and is attributable to the fact that many boys are involved in *ganyu* (casual day labour) and charcoal burning/transport. However, enrolment does not imply attendance. Although primary school enrolment figures, in particular, now tend to be high (in the current era of 'free' basic education, emphasised through the Millennium Development Goals), attendance is often only intermittent at best, given alternative household demands on children, especially girls (detailed in Chap. 4).

These data present the bare bones of the situation; it is only through individual narratives that we can fully appreciate the emotions which characterise school journeys and their wider implications for shaping young lives, both in the moment and also in the longer term, as life trajectories unfold. The following section considers the rural sites, with particular reference to those sites designated remote rural, where—as Table 3.1 clearly indicates—long journeys of over three-quarters of an hour's travel predominate in all three countries. We can then move to the urban sites, where travel experiences are different, though some themes remain as relevant.

Journey to/from School Narratives in Rural Africa

The significance of long distances between home and school as a factor affecting access, persistence and performance in school is a prevailing

Table 3.1 Children's estimated daily travel time to school on the most recent school day (N = 2006)

Location type		*15 minutes or less (%)*	*16–45 minutes (%)*	*46 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes (%)*	*1 hour 31 minutes to 2 hours 30 minutes (%)*	*Over 2 hours 30 minutes (%)*
Remote rural [RR]	Ghana	7.1	35.5	52.1	5.3	–
	Malawi	7.2	18.4	60.8	13.6	–
	South Africa	4.7	18.0	50.0	27.3	–
Rural with services [RS]	Ghana	56.3	22.3	17.5	3.9	–
	Malawi	63.2	33.3	1.4	1.4	0.7
	South Africa	50.8	45.2	1.6	1.6	0.8
Peri-urban [PU]	Ghana	64.7	28.2	6.3	0.8	–
	Malawi	44.2	38.1	16.6	1.1.	–
	South Africa	20.5	49.1	28.6	1.8	–
Urban [U]	Ghana	51.4	38.6	9.5	0.5	–
	Malawi	22.5	61.0	15.5	1.0	–
	South Africa	36.8	52.2	9.6	0.7	0.7

theme in this section. Surprisingly, the distance factor, which is particularly evident in rural contexts, has rarely been examined in any depth in academic education-focused research in Africa. A notable exception is the work by Avotri et al. (1999: 94–95, 165). Their study of primary schooling in Ghana, which included surveys and focus group discussions with parents and pupils from schools across the country, not only emphasised the importance of distance to school but also drew attention to attendant problems of lateness which encourage 'overage' enrolment (especially of girls), truancy and early dropout. Parents were particularly reluctant to allow girls to walk long distances, cross rivers, walk on major roads or unsafe paths to get to school.

More recently, Filmer (2008: 902), a World Bank economist, having observed that 'one of the main costs of schooling is the travel time to school', builds a statistical analysis across 21 poor countries (not only Africa), based on DHS data, regarding the potential impact on enrolment of building more schools. That research (which concludes that school construction needs to be combined with attention to quality) is significant

for this discussion principally because of the rare emphasis it gives, from the outset, to the distance factor in education. Huisman and Smits (2009) also included distance in their 30-country study of factors affecting school enrolment in developing countries (including 16 sub-Saharan countries): their data suggest that living in a rural area reduces a girl's chance—but not a boy's—of going to school.

In the following sections, vignettes are presented from various rural locations where qualitative research was conducted in the CM study on travel to school. Young people's reflections on their school life or school history, including some gathered through mobile ethnographies, are used to illustrate the significance of distance and its wide-ranging implications for individual children in specific rural places. The theme of extreme poverty threads, intricately, through many of these narratives. Some examples from Malawi present a useful starting point for discussion.

In both CM study zones in Malawi (as in Ghana and South Africa), pupils living in remote villages suffer considerably in their travel to (distant) primary schools. One settlement example will suffice. The centre of this remote rural village in the Lilongwe district is located about 8 km from the nearest primary and Community Day Secondary Schools (both located in the same settlement) and about 17 km from the nearest paved road. When we conducted research here in 2007–2009 it looked very poor indeed, with remarkably flimsy housing (though subsequently there has been some evident improvement in incomes and housing fabric, reportedly associated with expanded cash cropping). Nyau clan cult dancers are still common in this region and add more than a frisson of danger to young people traversing routes beyond the village perimeter: dressed in costumes to resemble animals, their occasional presence along the isolated tracks between home and school is viewed as a substantial real threat by both girls and boys: sometimes (as one parent reported) not only are the children chased, but girls are raped.

Simon,[1] *14 years*, is a primary school boy in standard 6. His ethnic group is Chewa. His mother is the head of the household; his father lives in South Africa (he thinks in Johannesburg). He is the first born of seven children and has lived in this remote rural study village for two years; before that he lived in a village nearby. He does not do any work apart from basic domestic tasks, enjoys school and says he wants eventually to work in an office. His father has told him that if he can get some knowledge at school, he'll be able to work with computers.

I go to primary school (in nearest large settlement)—it's perhaps one hour to get there. I go every day (in the dry season, always walking together with friends). (Prompt: is there a closer school?) No, the other school is behind the far mill, the same distance. I'm just back from school. I just walked and came back. I walked with my friends- 8 of them—2 boys, 6 girls. (No dangers encountered along the way today, but) during the rains it's the dambo (wetland) we have to go through—there are some gangsters hiding in the bushes and when they see us they chase us and when you're grabbed they take your private parts … The other problem is when the river is full and it's impassable. We just come back and we don't proceed. We can't go on the main road—it's too far. (It last happened) last year in January. (Prompt: Do you like walking to school?) I don't like walking to school, because I've developed some diseases under my foot which makes it difficult to walk when it's hot or I walk on stones. (Prompt) I always go barefoot. I had shoes but now they've worn out. (He shows me the underside of his feet and I photograph them—it looks as if he has verrucas. Image 3.1)

(Prompt: Do you like walking with friends to school?) Yes. We don't play on the way, but when we're coming back we have time. We keep a ball and throw it to each other. (Do you also fight?) No, it's never happened. (Are you ever late?) Yes, sometimes—last time was last term. (What happened?) We were punished, we had to mop the toilets, and we get slapped. I have been slapped.

Image 3.1 Simon's foot

(Do you know what the main reason is here why children don't go to school?) It's mostly poverty and distance, but that's less important. Once the clothes are worn out or they don't have exercise books they don't go to school.

In the same village, seven primary school boys aged 8–14 years, talking about these issues in a focus group discussion, again emphasised the distance issue, especially on the journey home, by which time it is very hot, and 'our stomachs are empty. We eat sugarcanes during break time at school but that does not help much'. If they are late (mostly in the wet season) they are given punishments (as noted by Simon) or sent back home; punishment is preferred because they can still then go into class. Some boys prefer to hide rather than go home because of the punishment they will also face from parents.

Susanna, aged 20, also Chewa, is still single and lives with her parents. She went to the same primary school as Simon, but as with so many other girls, her school history is short and seemingly unsatisfactory. She expresses no interest in formal education and, in addition to household jobs such as fetching firewood and collecting water, has undertaken paid work since the age of 10. She continued with *ganyu* throughout the time she was in school, picking groundnuts, harvesting maize and drawing water for builders. The work, she observed, was essential to enable her to buy such necessities as soap, clothes and shoes, for herself and food for her seven siblings and her parents.

I started school when I was nine years old (because) the school was far. I would walk over 30 minutes to get to the school. I did my education up to standard 3 (then) I dropped out of school. I was tired. (Was that the only reason?) The school was just too far for me to be walking every day. (What were your parents' reactions?) At first they opposed … At times I was getting whipped (And later on?) They just looked at me. Most of my friends weren't in school.

The village chief's deputy, a 55-year-old woman, who estimates that it takes about three-quarters of an hour to walk to the school from the village centre, when conditions are favourable, confirmed the significance of distance for accessing education and the problems of the river crossing in the wet season, since there is no bridge. The area is flat and there is an area of swampland that can be crossed easily in the dry season, enabling a short-cut to school, but in the rains travel is dangerous, especially for young children. Few motor vehicles come to the settlement, even in the dry season, but in the wet season even local ox-carts frequently get stuck in the mud.

Mobile ethnographies, conducted along routes between school and home, add texture to such pictures. Felt experiences often present themselves more vividly as we trek along the liminal spaces of the route-way, not needing to make eye contact, and comfortable in the frequent silences which accompany our exertions. There is also potential to pick up insights into those moorings from which movements are undertaken—the departure and destination points which can be so strongly imbued with meaning in young people's mobility narratives. Thus, in Malawi, an accompanied walk with three schoolgirls in their early to mid-teens along a 4 km track home which crosses five streams to their village, brought to the fore fears which rarely entered stationery conversations: from fear of farmers as they crossed the fields and wider fears of attack and rape, to concerns about dogs and wild animals, ghosts and witches (Porter et al. 2010a). At the same time, insights into home and school conditions, some of which feed back into travel experiences, also emerged.

Melina is in standard 7, her parents are both dead; she is the middle of 3 children, all from different fathers and now lives with her aunt. Elly is 14 years old, and currently in standard 6. She is the second of seven children, all of whom live with their parents in the village. Eva, a 16-year-old, is in standard 7 and the oldest of three girls. Melina, Elly and Eva's comments about the journey which follow, are interspersed with reflections about their life in the village and wider views of local conditions. The journey took us nearly two hours, so only a small section of the walk is recounted below (the middle section, well away from both school and home):

(Melina) *I am fostered by my aunt—it's really difficult because of the household chores, and the farm work sometimes. And people shout out calling me names. Most girls in this area don't complete school because they have the thought that schools are (too) distant. Guys propose to me—ever since standard 5- but I'd like to become a nurse.* We are walking near the stream, and she warns … *you can fall off here! I did once and my notebooks got soaked.* Then we pass a graveyard: *Once I was passing here and I saw a ghost so I ran back. Sometimes I'm late for school because of all the sweeping, farming—but that's not so much an issue, and collecting water.* Elly now intervenes: *There are bandits, sometimes you have to run away when you meet them—maybe four or five men. It's generally when the maize has grown up and there's a lot of snakes. I'm up before 4 in the morning to see to the chores—sweeping, collecting water. I sometimes step on snakes.* Eva nods in agreement: *Drawing water is what makes me late—five trips before school, and I must wash the plates.*

We stop at a bridge where Melina reflects: *It was built a year ago. Before there were many problems here—one drunk drowned and died and two other adults fell in. I was late returning home from school one day when it had rained heavily—the soil there often collapses due to the wetness—it's dangerous. It's prone to hyenas, they descend from the hills nearby.* On passing a second gully she observes: *This is the place I had to wait for water to subside before I could go on to school.* We reach the second graveyard and all three shudder, while Melina continues: *Ugh, there are many rumours of visitations. I've heard people hide in the graveyard and try to get children's bags, notebooks and suchlike.* Elly chimes in: *when the maize grows I fear the bandits though I've never encountered any. There are so many problems (here). You meet a very long person and I suspect it's a witch. And there are dogs that chase us—and fierce animals, lions and hyenas—and they bit us. Three children were once bitten, one a lion and she died. And two boys were beaten by hyenas, but they are still alive.* Eva follows on: *boys chase us to rape us and (it) happened to me—five older boys chased me, just round here. They tell us to stop schooling—it won't profit us. We should be prostitutes—that's a bit more profitable!*

By bringing together individual interviews from this accompanied walk, focus group discussions and interviews in the villages with children, parents and key informants, the Malawi rural study illustrates the significance of embodied experiences associated with walking long distances to and from school, raising a myriad of issues which are likely to have repercussions for educational trajectories: sore feet; the discomfort of walking on an empty stomach; shoes which wear out as a consequence of numerous journeys, with poverty preventing their replacement; physical dangers associated with rapidly rising rivers and streams; fear of attack and sexual assault (for boys as well as girls); fear of witches, spirits and other supernatural visitations; fear of dogs and wild animals; corporal and other punishments following late arrival at school, even when lateness is due to physical obstacles along the journey; delayed school enrolment; and the exhaustion of walking, leading to a tipping point at which dropout occurs, especially when long walks are combined with the need to undertake many domestic tasks and possibly also paid work.

On the positive side, there may be opportunities to play, particularly on the way home—a more common component of boys' narratives than girls'—and the companionship of fellow pupils, which is valued by both genders (see Chap. 5). Overall, however, the negative weight in the balance sheet where children are making long journeys in remote areas is

clear. As one mother of young boys in the remote rural study village in Blantyre district observed, *the distance to (nearest) primary school is even far for a 13-year-old to travel every day. In the end they drop out*. And as one 15-year-old out-of-school boy living in that village explained, punishment for being late is severe. He had dropped out in standard 3, a few years previously, because of being regularly locked into school when he was late: *I could be locked in class and be released when the other children were knocking off*. The other children would finish at 12 noon, but he stayed locked in for another 2 hours: *all because I am late for school … The treatment I received was unbearable*. Other punishments he had experienced included digging large rubbish pits and collecting sand.

Children who manage to make it to secondary school from the rural areas and have to walk even longer distances each day face similar treatment. A 14-year-old boy living in rural Blantyre with his aunt (his parents are dead) described how he rises at 4 am every morning to walk to his secondary school, starting at 5 am, arriving around 7 am. He talked about punishments for being late (which happens particularly when the river rises suddenly), of digging rubbish pits, grass cutting, carrying stones to fill ditches—all of which tasks had to be conducted when his fellow pupils are in class; *the teachers do not seem to understand. They tell us it's not their problem that we are late. They are there just to observe the time put in place by Government, otherwise we have another alternative which is staying at school by self-boarding arrangement. I do not have money to go for self-boarding. (He had had to wait a year to get his fees together, earned by burning and selling charcoal and working as a house servant in the holidays in Blantyre)*. Only 8 of the 18 children selected for secondary school from his village at the same time as he were still enrolled.

Many of these themes reinforced findings from earlier research in rural Gomoa (Porter, Abane et al. 2011) and recur across the CM rural sites in Ghana and South Africa. Detailed analysis of recent qualitative data from Ghana, for instance, where some children reported walks to school of over two hours, indicates that, despite Ghana's recent achievements in primary school enrolment, distance to school continues to impact strongly on attendance. Similar stories to those reported in Malawi are common: delayed enrolment till the child is considered physically capable of making the journey; physical dangers along the route (as in the Malawi example, principally associated with stream crossings, but in Ghana, also with specific reference in the forest zone to the fact that girls are less likely to be able to swim and thus cross to school); heavy domestic workloads which

have to be completed before departure from home (in Eastern Cape with a specific stock-keeping burden for boys); beatings following late arrival at school; fear of attack among boys and girls (Porter et al. 2010a, c, d; 2012; Hampshire et al. 2011). In rural South Africa, in some cases there is specific scholar transport available, but this tends to disappear in the rainy season. In the North West Province remote rural CM study village, for instance, children are unable to travel to school, at times, in the rains: *There is no transport for learners to school. The road is damaged and also when it rains there are floods on bridges and there are some dongas (gullies) which are difficult to cross when it has rained hard … Sometimes we do not go to school for a week, until the floods have cleared or until the rains have stopped … If you go to school during heavy rains, there will be no one at school. You will be the only one … Children used to be drowned by floods when it rained. So our parents decided that, when there is a lot of rainfall, no children should go to school for their own safety* (Focus group, five primary boys, 7–11y).

Despite the hazards reported, it is remarkably rare to observe parents accompanying their child to school, in any of the rural sites I have worked in. Given the common length of journey time, this is simply considered impractical. In rural Gomoa (Ghana), it certainly only ever seemed to occur when young children were reluctant to go to school (rather than because of any concern about potential journey dangers): *only if the child is refusing to come to school does the parent accompany (them) … the parent needs to pamper the child by buying food before going to school; otherwise parents do not concern their time with that* (roadside village, woman schoolteacher). It is common even for 3-year-olds to find their own way to kindergarten in the off-road Gomoa villages. Education officers in Accra confirmed that few children in Ghana are accompanied by adults to school beyond the age of about 3–5 years (i.e. kindergarten). In the CM (c. 9–18y) survey, no children whatsoever were accompanied to school by adults, in any of the remote rural sites across all three study countries, nor any of the rural with service sites, except for five children (four girls, one boy: 2 % of respondents) in the rural with service (RS) Ghana settlements.

Instead, many rural parents encourage their children to walk to and from school in (preferably single-sex) groups, not only as a safety measure, but also as a means of ensuring co-surveillance (considered especially important by parents of pubescent girls). Everywhere, it is girls who experience the strictest mobility controls. *We encourage that they walk in groups …*

the journey is fearful. Sometimes the children complain of seeing snakes on the way to school. I insist that my daughter walks with other children to school every day. I think that is what other parents do (mother of girl 14y, Ghana forest zone). Survey data show that at least three-quarters of boys, as well as girls, in all the rural CM study settlements, walked to school with other children. For most children, the companionship of siblings and friends along these lengthy daily journeys is one of its few welcome aspects.

Journey to/from School Narratives in Urban Africa

Even in urban Africa, a proportion of children experience long journeys to school over considerable distances but, as Table 3.1 shows, the vast majority do not. Whether the school is relatively distant, in common with rural areas, or close by home, most walk to school, in the absence of available funds for public transport. And while school journeys might be assumed to be relatively pedestrian, by comparison with those experienced by rural children, narratives emphasise many of the themes that were met in rural areas, such as risk of attack from people (including the specific danger of rape), from animals, and heavy workloads as a cause of lateness to school. Traffic hazards, meanwhile, are much more commonly raised as an issue than in rural areas.

In peri-urban neighbourhoods, in particular, some children have to walk considerable distances, especially where there is a preference for a (usually better) school, or where the nearest schools are full. A peri-urban case study from the Gauteng/North West Provinces of South Africa makes a useful starting point for discussion, commencing with two accompanied walks—one with a girl of 17, the other with a boy of 16—that indicate the severity of hazards that can be met in South Africa. The settlement in question is large but dispersed, with the majority of its inhabitants unemployed and dependent on social grants.

Lindiwe, 17 years of age, is a secondary school pupil who lives with her sick mother (who is suffering from TB) in an area about 5 km distant from her school. As I walk with her and a female RA, crossing a large, flat area of open wasteland, yet to be built on, interspersed with occasional wooded depressions (dongas), she points out the refuge these offer for groups of men who go there to smoke cannabis but will occasionally attack schoolchildren on their way to or from nearby schools. We are walking relatively slowly as we talk, but she says she usually sprints across this area as fast as she can:

There is the place where five girls and a boy were ambushed by a big group of those men who come here to smoke dagga. I ran away back to school and reported it—I was on my way home. I fear people who hide in the bush (waiting) for us. They wait for us in the bush and as we walk, especially when you are alone, they grab your school bag with all the belongings that you have with you … The bush is bad, you cannot see people hiding or seeking you. … I love sports but I cannot be left behind (at school for sports fixtures) because I will arrive very late at home. It is even worse to cross the bush at night. There are so many rapists there at night and a lot of drunk people.

Meanwhile, a 16-year-old boy, Vuyo, was walking for about 30 minutes with one of the male RAs, over a distance of about 2 km, across the same wasteland area to his home. He is also a pupil at the secondary school and clearly comes from a more affluent family than Lindiwe. He hopes to become a doctor: *During rainy days, or after it has rained, this path is difficult to walk because it becomes muddy. The donga also fills with water and makes it difficult to cross. (Prompt: Is this the only possible route?) No, but it is the only one that can get me to school quickly. The other paths take me more than an hour to walk. There is a tar road that is mainly used by cars; it can also get you to school, but you could take maybe 3 hours (walking. If the donga is full of water whether I cross it) depends on whether I am in a hurry or not. If I am writing an exam I will have to risk and cross. You can never know (if it is safe to cross). We normally use a stick to measure the depth. If you see that the stick has gone too deep, then you know that you cannot cross. Sometimes I look at how others manage to cross and then I do the same thing … I have not seen it happen, but I have heard some people say if it rains hard, no one can cross there because there is a snake. It is a snake that eats people. But I think they are lying because no one has disappeared from the donga before. But I normally go back home and request money for taxi then take a taxi to school. Even so, I would arrive late. Taxis are very fast (less than 15 minutes and) it is not expensive. We pay three Rand (but there are dangers on the road) On the main road you get people who hijack cars and on this path you get rapists, robbers and people who smoke drugs … it is those illegal drugs. After smoking they fall asleep under the sun and you will think they are dead. When they wake up they ask for food because they will be so hungry. And if you don't have food they ask for two Rand. If you can't give them 2R then they will take whatever you have with you. (Prompt) Many people have reported it to the police and they are doing nothing about it. They just say they have opened the case and the case is still under investigation … I knew a few boys (who ask for money); some of*

them finished school and they have nothing to do. But I don't know the ones that hijack cars—those ones come with guns.

Both walking interviews demonstrate the fear of harassment and attack that (as numerous other interviews also attested) are widespread in low-income urban neighbourhoods in South Africa. On the day following our walk, we learned that a girl from the same school had been raped on the way to school. According to school staff, young boys have also been raped.[2]

In urban as in rural Africa, walking in groups is a common safety strategy though the proportions of children who travel in groups are generally lower than in rural areas, at around 30–50 % of boy and girl children in South Africa and Ghana, but still around three-quarters in Malawi. As one 14-year-old who lives with his uncle and younger brothers in the same South African peri-urban neighbourhood as the interviews above (in an area only 10 minutes' walk from his primary school) observed, *the journey to school is fine because we go in groups … we always go together…. Unless it is raining—and today we didn't have clean clothes (which is why they'd been at home). We go straight to school, we don't play on the way.* Reports of play, companionable chat, and excitement associated with opportunities to operate outside parental surveillance along the journey were relatively sparse in this neighbourhood and subsequent outcomes not necessarily positive, as the following interview with a young woman in a life-history interview illustrates: *(On my way back from school) I used to hide in the bush with my friends. …I was getting to understand and feel the nice time of the world and guys would come and propose at me; it was a nice experience.* But at the age of 22, with a child and no family support, she now faces substantial difficulties, financial and emotional.

The walk with Vuyo (above) referred to accessing motor transport for school travel. For those who can afford it, and live in accessible areas, taxis can have various benefits: *I enjoy my journey to school (by taxi) because I talk with my friends—and sometimes with the girls, who are quiet most of the time* (boy 14y, South Africa U). However, cost and availability of taxis and buses limit their use by school pupils. In some cases in South Africa there is contract transport to school, which is advantageous but requires pupils to keep to a strict time regime. When, as sometimes happens, buses arrive late, the pupils report being punished unfairly.

For girl pupils, moreover, taxi travel raises other issues. Taxi travel was too costly for Lindiwe to consider, but she also prefers to avoid taxi drivers. Many girls in the South African urban study sites reported their rapacious

reputation: *Sometimes taxi drivers harass us; like if you are a girl and the last to disembark, they want to propose to you and they could just drive around with you and pass your home (girl, 17y)*. In a focus group and individual interviews with secondary school girls in urban South Africa, relationships with taxi drivers were a recurrent theme: many of these are older men—'sugar daddies'—who look out for girl pupils as they come out of school and whose offers of money and the status of riding with them in fast cars are too tempting for many girls to refuse (Leclerc-Madlala 2003, 222–3).

In the urban neighbourhoods where research was conducted in Malawi, fear of harassment and attack (albeit slightly less ubiquitous than in South Africa), is still widespread among pupils walking to school. Thugs, thieves, drunkards and cannabis smokers predominate among lists of perceived potential assailants: witches and ghosts are a less common, though not entirely absent, threat. Girls frequently said they face scorn from adult men who call out to them on their way to and from school: *I met a man (in his 1920s) who was very drunk (on the way home from school). He started shouting at me as to why I was going to school. I won't finish school, why don't I just get married. Then he urinated at my skirt … He said it is nonsense and childish to go to school* (girl 14y, Blantyre PU). Consequently, girls and boys of all ages walk nervously, selecting well-peopled routes, even if these add substantially to the journey time, unless they are safe within a group.

In urban Ghana, fear of verbal harassment or sexual attack is far less commonly reported as an issue, though there are occasional references to potential attacks from the spirit-world (often seemingly generated by adults and possibly aimed at controlling their children's mobility, Porter et al. 2010b). Reports of abductions in the Ghanaian press raise parental concerns about young people's travel safety: *Children who walk alone to school can easily be kidnapped. About two years ago a small boy on his way to school was kidnapped, killed and the body was later found with some parts of the body removed* (man, late-40s, shop owner, coastal zone U); *nowadays it's a little scary walking around this neighbourhood in the evenings because there are ritual murderers around* (girl 18y, coastal zone U). Teachers from time to time also warn their pupils about potential child abduction and murder. Here, however, the biggest fear among pupils travelling to school more often concerns negotiating busy routes where drivers in a hurry pose a significant threat. Traffic accidents seem to be especially common in the wet season, after a heavy downpour, when everyone is hurrying to reach work or school and the main routes are so congested that taxi drivers divert and race down what are normally quiet suburban streets (see Chap. 8).

To conclude this section, while journeys to school are for the most part shorter in urban than rural Africa, and a much higher proportion of children attend senior secondary school, the majority of children still walk to school, and this involves traversing what is clearly perceived by many to be a potentially hostile environment. Fear of harassment, attack and sexual assault (for boys as well as girls) is, in most urban sites, a significant specific concern. Not surprisingly then, travel in groups is widely perceived by children—and their parents—as the best strategy for ensuring a safe return home.

Reflections and Conclusion

In the research sites described above, the journey to school is a potentially hazardous venture which takes place between the most significant moorings of many children's mobile lives: on the one side there is home, which—although the focus of family life—is also the locus of children's domestic tasks and associated family control; on the other side there is school—not only the focus of formal education but also another important site of control and potential chastisement. Exploring the everyday mobilities of the journey to school brings to the fore reflection on the moorings which not only define its limits but also impact back on that liminal travelling world.

Gender is the strongest theme threading the whole story. At home, girls commonly experience the heaviest domestic burden (see Chap. 4). They must rise early and perform a myriad of—often gruelling—domestic duties before they can get ready for their day at school: water has to be collected (except in those fortunate urban households which benefit from piped water), the compound swept, dishes washed, younger siblings overseen; pre-school work may also be required in the fields or market. Girls were also encountered in the study countries carrying goods for family members on the journey to or from school—maize to the grinders, tomatoes to market, groceries for home consumption. When they go off to school, family members will often look to take advantage of any opportunities to incorporate useful errands into the journey there or back, especially when they are residing in remote rural areas without transport services, shops and markets. The importance of this factor was highlighted in Gomoa, where girls' load-carrying on the journey to school was, in some cases, very substantial (see Chap. 4). This task tends to fall to girls (in accordance with local cultural norms which commonly assign load-carrying to

females), whose journeys themselves may thus retain significant visible imprint of the household mooring, as it is carried along the route. With the exception of herding in Malawi and Eastern Cape, boys' work tasks were found, by contrast, more commonly focused around weekend activities. Boys often seem to benefit from perceptions that they are both less controllable than girls, and that constraints on their independent mobility are less crucial to family welfare.

Once girls reach puberty, their lives are even more strictly regulated by family members, on the basis that they are not only vulnerable, but also potentially promiscuous (Porter 2011). As a mother put it, very bluntly, in rural Malawi, '*boys don't get pregnant*'. Additionally, of course, there is the matter of menstruation to be taken into account when girls have long journeys to school, lack of access to (expensive) sanitary protection and inadequate facilities at school (Jewitt and Ryley 2014). In a discussion group with mothers, where poverty and lack of soap were initially raised as key reasons why girls don't go to school, the women then moved to this associated point: *if they are grown up they menstruate and this period may take sometimes to a week. During that time they stay at home (from school) until it is over* (Lilongwe district, PU). At puberty, there is increasing concern to ensure that girls travel in (single-sex) groups to school. Many girls residing in remote rural areas who have progressed to the end of junior secondary school will be pressurised to finish their education at this stage, given the dangers of long-distance travel or self-boarding in distant towns. Mostly, girls accept the highly regulated environment in which they grow up, themselves frequently recounting stories of love propositions or attempted rape and emphasising the importance of group travel to keep them safe from human (or supernatural) attack: in a Foucauldian sense, they may arguably become prisoners of their own making.

School, throughout, presents an ambiguous space in which potential opportunity is strongly circumscribed within a wall of regulation and control. A long journey to school from remote rural locations often delays school starting age in the first place. Subsequently, delays in reaching school are likely to be particularly prevalent among girls who have had to first complete numerous tasks at home. They may consequently face severe punishment when they arrive after the school day has commenced. Many girls and boys find such punishment—cleaning the lavatories, sweeping the compound, beatings or, in extreme cases, exclusion from class for the day—highly embarrassing. Frequent lateness often results in children playing truant on those days when they assess that they are likely to arrive late.

A regular pattern of missed days from truancy, or exclusion from class, is likely to lead to an inability to keep up with fellow pupils; failure to pass examinations and failure to proceed to the next form follow; early dropout is a common end result, especially once the child is well above the age of their fellow class pupils. As Sipiwe, an 18-year-old Pondo girl in South Africa's Eastern Cape poignantly expressed this, *When I think about going to school every morning I feel very sad. I feel very sad because most children of my age are supposed to be in High School. I feel embarrassed when I have to stand in the assembly with little children and they laugh at me, saying that I am an "ancestor" of the school. I feel that if there was a school close to home I would have been in Senior Secondary now.*

Returning back to the journey itself, it is often difficult to find redeeming elements. Filmer (2007: 902) writes, *This time can be used neither for productive activities nor can it be used for leisure.* The evidence presented here (and in Chap. 5) suggests that the picture, in reality, is a little more complex. As far as leisure is concerned, journeys home after school has closed for the day allow some pupils a space for unsupervised leisure: for games, for chatting, picking and eating bush fruits, for dalliance and flirtation, despite the possibility of a severe beating or other punishments which may follow late arrival at home. In rural Malawi, the potential in the dry season for flirtation and experimentation with girls on the long journey home, is certainly much valued by many boys. Meanwhile, young girls, who are often overburdened with domestic work before school, sometimes welcome the space that the journey home from school offers to dally a little, chat and play games, before arriving home to attend to their next round of duties. It is probably important to keep in mind this window of opportunity for pupils in the school travel story, given the overwhelming focus on the insecurities which threaten the school journey in the discussion above. Even so, girls are expected home before boys—in rural Malawi and Ghana they need to be there by late afternoon at very latest, before dark, in good time to prepare and cook the family's evening meal, as numerous interviews in both the Gomoa and CM studies attested. If not, they are likely to be shouted at and possibly refused food.

One significant gap in the daily mobility for education story presented above is the issue of disability—especially where this impedes walking (Chataika et al. 2012). Data are very limited, but Filmer (2008) finds that 6- to 17-year-olds with disabilities across the developing world are almost always substantially less likely to be in school than their peers without disabilities. In the CM survey, just 1.5 % of the nearly 3000 children included

had some disability and numbers are too small to identify any statistically significant patterns in school enrolment or attendance. Disabled children were very rarely observed at school, or travelling to school, in any of the research sites discussed in this book. No disabled children were met when the accompanied walks with children on journeys between school and home took place: this fact, in itself, is worthy of reflection.

Finally, to conclude this chapter, it is useful to briefly reflect on the differences between travel to school experiences reported in these very poor African communities and those of children living in Global Northern contexts, where children's loss of independent travel opportunities is widely observed (and often regretted). Traffic hazards, a perceived rise in stranger danger and the increasing availability of private cars are all contributors, to some degree, to the trend to increasing protection of children and their consequent loss of independent mobility in the Global North (Hillman et al. 1990; Romero 2015): meanwhile, knock-on impacts of rising childhood obesity are increasingly recognised (WHO 2010). Despite this trend towards less independent travel, there are some interesting cases reported in the Global North where the journey to school still constitutes, for many, a walking journey without parental accompaniment. Ross's (2007) study in urban and rural Fife, Scotland (a region which had overall higher levels of walking than England and Wales at the time the study was conducted, in the late 1990s), is a particularly apposite case. It documents richly varied experiences of children travelling to school without their parents and brings to the fore stories which have some resonance with the African contexts described above: the coordination with and meeting friends, the potential for impromptu play and developments in competence associated with care and supervision by older children. However, it is important to note that three-quarters of the children in the Fife study lived within a mile of their school and that none of those living two or more miles from school walked. Walks were thus largely of limited duration compared to journeys to school (and the numerous other walking journeys required of children) in many African contexts: Chap. 7 will further explore African children's very negative views of the embodied practices of walking, expressed widely in both rural and urban study sites. Ross interestingly refers to informal surveillance associated with 'a sense of community responsibility for children's welfare apparent in many of the localities studied, both rural and urban' (echoing an earlier reflection by Hillman et al. 1990 regarding cultural differences between Germany and England, such that there was more oversight of unaccompanied children by other adults

in Germany). Over short distances such surveillance may be feasible, but on the long journeys experienced particularly by children in the remoter African sites, external surveillance is much harder to achieve, hence the vital importance of group travel. Moreover, turning back to the moorings between which movements take place—a component of the journey to school story which has figured strongly in this chapter—poor quality of education and the punishments regularly meted out as a consequence of late arrival at school interpose issues which do not figure significantly in journey-to-school stories from the Global North. When these factors are put together with the hazards that many African children encounter en route to school, perhaps the most remarkable fact is that so many children continue to pursue formal education for so many years. However, as Bourdillon and Boyden (2014: 15) observe, although children may learn and benefit little from schools which are insufficiently resourced and poor in quality, schooling remains prized 'for its proffered hope of leading to a better life' (see also Murray 2014): the world of work in prospect, once all schooling is abandoned, will contribute in many cases to that assessment. This is the focus of the next chapter.

Notes

1. Respondent names throughout the book are pseudonyms.
2. South Africa has one of the highest rates of sexual violence in the world, much of it against girls under 18y (de Lange and Mitchell 2014).

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CHAPTER 4

Balancing the Load: Mobility, Work and Income Generation

For many young people across sub-Saharan Africa, work—whether paid or unpaid—is a fundamental element of everyday life. Children's work contributions in the continent are the most extensive in the world, and the vast majority of this work takes place in private households (Andvig 2001).

For some, work demands are so large that they substantially curtail, or entirely rule out, any possibility of formal education (though survey data suggests the vast majority in the CM survey sites are now enrolled in school: 82.5 % girls, 92.6 % boys in Ghana; 82.4 % girls, 74.2 % boys in Malawi; 91 % girls, 95.7 % boys in South Africa). For many, work has to be fitted around school—before it starts, at the end of the school day, at weekends and holidays. The type of work which young people take on is shaped by contextual factors such as household composition (e.g. sibling numbers, birth order), the family's economic status; environmental conditions (which help shape local economic opportunities); locational context (urban or rural settlement) and cultural factors (likely to influence which gender is expected to undertake specific tasks) (Punch 2001). However, mobility and access to transport may also play a significant part, not only in defining the locations available for work, but also in defining labour tasks.

There is a very substantial literature on child labour in Africa, and the debate about the value of work as a learning opportunity—as opposed to seeing school and work as in competition for children's time—continues (Spittler and Bourdillon 2012). The significance of daily mobility as a factor shaping young people's work burdens and opportunities to build

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livelihoods, however, has only recently begun to gain attention. This work has mostly occurred in urban contexts, whether with specific reference to particularly marginalised and nomadic street children (for which see Young 2003; van Blerk 2005, 2013, on Uganda and Cape Town), or to a wider cohort of youth (for instance, Gough on Lusaka, 2008; Langevang and Gough on Accra, 2009). Research on street geographies and children living in poverty in Africa has included early work on their invisibility and more recent studies of their struggles for survival and the need for subversive tactics (e.g. Young 2003; Abebe 2008). In mid-1990s Umtata (now Mthatha) there were many young boys who had run away to town from hard lives in rural Transkei looking for work: based at the Children's Shelter, many pretended to go to school but few attended regularly, spending their days roaming the town streets, vulnerable to abuse and continued marginalisation (Porter and Phillips-Howard 1994).

The wide-ranging physical mobility of unemployed children and youth across African cities in search of jobs and money can also be set within wider tactics of social navigation. Langevang (2008) shows how, in one poor urban neighbourhood in Accra (Ghana), unemployed young men move into and occupy certain street spaces over which they can then exert some control (unlike at home). Hansen (2005), Gough (2008) and Langevang and Gough (2009) take a wider lens on youth mobilities with reference to Lusaka and Accra. In Lusaka unemployed youth 'move around' looking for jobs in the context of neo-liberal market policies and widespread redundancies, while in Accra, within a slightly more positive economic environment, 'moving around' is seemingly a somewhat more optimistic strategy in that there may be potential to strike lucky, by taking advantage of whatever opportunities may present themselves—in the market, in middle-class neighbourhoods of the city or in exploring possibilities for migration to Europe.

In this chapter the discussion not only encompasses work activities that require mobility to reach or conduct work, but also work activities that are specifically generated by Africa's transport failures—the need to carry water in the absence of water pipes, fuel in the absence of electricity, food and other goods in the absence of cheap motorised transport. Discussion is focused on children's journeys to work and on transport as a work activity in itself, including the costs and constraints of mobility, compliance and resistance, firstly in rural locations then in urban locations. This includes specific reflections on children's bodily experiences of load carrying, drawing on the work of Goffman (1977), Bourdieu (1990) and others, in

order to examine the findings in terms of gender habitus, performance and institutional reflexivity—the way gender is embodied from an early age through reiterated practices. Children's bodily comportment—ways of walking, carrying, demonstrations of bodily deference—as they move about, is learned through the body via practical involvement and observation. The ways in which children imitate the gestures and actions of adults, engage in work or daily practices appropriate to their age, sex, class and so on, and construct performances of compliance which have the potential to mask subversive attitudes and activities, can all be viewed within a transport lens. Gender habitus is strongly related to the prevailing sexual division of labour in this transport context.

Obtaining quantitative data on children's work is not always straightforward. When children were asked whether they had an occupation in the CM survey (Chap. 2), the vast majority said they did not have one (92 % of girls, 90.5 % of boys in Ghana; 89.2 % of girls, 73 % of boys in Malawi; 94.9 % of girls 92 % of boys in South Africa). The response was very surprising, in the context of field interviews and observation, but seems to have been answered in the negative essentially because most children understood occupation to mean a formal paid job.

Situating Paid and Unpaid Work

For paid work, employment opportunities have to exist (and be known about); mobility potential and transport availability are likely to influence access to such opportunities, both *directly* in terms of feasibility of travel to work and *indirectly* in terms of access to the social networks which can facilitate information sharing and thus bring those work opportunities into view in the first place. Jones and Chant (2009) observe the importance of social networks in 'vouching for character' in (urban) West Africa and find this is more important than education for obtaining a job: trust and close acquaintance are key, though familial, ethnic and religious contacts will all help—'many employers equate godliness with probity'. Additionally, however, they note that work itself can be a good route into generating social capital and new opportunities. Sadly, particularly for girls, social networking is often inhibited by the time they must spend around home on domestic duties. They are also disadvantaged because, in the informal sector where the vast majority must operate, start-up capital is essential for establishing a new business (ibid). Poverty, the need to 'get by', and a desire to improve their circumstances, often drives the search for patrons

beyond the family. There is thus a significant potential for exploitation, notably when sexual relationships become the route to supporting daily needs (Langevang 2008). Certainly, for too many young girls in Ghana, premarital relationships are an essential source of rent and trading credit (Ankomah 1996: 41–2).

Over the last two decades, global recession has hit sub-Saharan Africa hard, such that some of the principal new formal job opportunities that have become available to people living in poor settlements have come from the NGO sector. As Campbell et al. (2009) observe in a South African context, however, even these relatively sparse but potentially lucrative jobs go to adults. NGOs rarely employ youth outside HIV/AIDS. Young people are expected to volunteer, in the hope of future employment (as was evident in the CM South African urban sites). Moreover, Arku and Arku (2009) (drawing on their research in Ghana's Wassa district) suggest that widespread NGO promotion of women's microfinance enterprises across Africa may have actually increased requirements for children's (unpaid) labour, especially girls. Neither in Gomoa (Ghana), nor in the CM Ghana study sites, was there any specific evidence of microfinance initiatives increasing girls' work or of NGO incentives being appropriated by adults. In rural Malawi, where some NGOs had visited the Blantyre rural with service [RS] research site, their potential 'to keep youth busy' had been observed with anticipation (man 27y, father of two children); their failure to return to the village was keenly felt.

Unpaid work, meanwhile—the focus of the majority of the discussion that follows—is closely dependent on the domestic context. Much unpaid work revolves either around helping older family members in their enterprises or conducting domestic tasks essential to household provisioning and maintenance. The transport gap resulting from widespread absence of water pipes, electricity and cheap motorised transport is felt especially keenly in domestic contexts. In the absence of ready funds to buy in labour, this work is commonly allocated to children, who are perceived, in essence, as a free resource. Bradley (1993) observed how, in many societies, young people's labour tends to be allocated to the activities with lowest returns per hour, such as load-carrying of domestic water and fuelwood. Interrogation of ethnographic data will give a stronger understanding of the mobility/work nexus and its impact on children's lives.

Rural Children, Work and Travel

Intravillage Travel Associated with Domestic Work

From their early years, most children across rural Africa are drawn into assisting their parents, grandparents and other family members in a wide range of domestic tasks: sweeping; carrying messages; carrying small bowls of water or produce; taking tools to the fields; bird-scaring; helping to water plants, gather fruit, feed animals and so on (e.g. Katz 1991, 2004, 2012 for Sudan; Polak 2012 for Mali). In the Gomoa study villages, tiny children of just three or four years were regularly observed practising carrying small tubs of water, and, during a traffic survey, those aged around six years were found carrying loads of up to 7 kg, while children aged seven or eight years had loads weighing up to 12 kg (i.e. boys a maximum of 8.5 kg; girls up to 12 kg) (Image 4.1).

By the time they were about nine years old, most of the children encountered, observed and interviewed in the Gomoa and CM studies were moving confidently beyond their home compound with their friends and siblings, out along village streets, down farm tracks, into the fields and across the pastures, in the course of their daily lives. Some of the tasks they do are simply seen as part of daily life, often fun, certainly not as an 'occupation'. In different sites the precise pattern of activities and range

Image 4.1 Carrying groceries on the way home from school, Eastern Cape

of movement varies, but the overall rhythm of small tasks, often involving carrying smaller or larger loads, is well established. Most children by this age attend school, at least some of the time, but before and after school and at weekends they play an active part in household work. Before school this is mostly domestic work, whereas after school and at weekends there are usually more activities taking place beyond the compound, some of which may bring them into potentially more dangerous environments (Esia-Donkoh and Mariwah 2011).

By the age of nine, gender roles are also beginning to clarify. Water carrying, firewood collection and cleaning in the homestead are basic tasks that girls of nine and over are regularly required to undertake in rural areas, though young boys may also assist. This is seen, particularly for girls, as part of the process of socialisation, learning tasks in preparation for adult life. The CM survey usefully helped pick out gender variations between countries, notably with reference to water and firewood carrying. While in remote rural Ghana almost all girls and slightly fewer boys had carried water every day of the week prior to survey, and in remote rural South Africa 34 % of girls compared to 20 % of boys, in remote rural Malawi the gender difference is substantially bigger: 76 % of girls had done this task daily, compared to only 23 % of boys. (The substantially skewed pattern in Malawi was also observed by Wodon and Beegle 2006: 106–6, in their analysis of Malawi labour shortages and seasonality issues, using the 2004 Second Integrated Household Survey, which remarkably asks all individuals above 4 years of age about their time use.) There is also a considerably wider gender difference in inputs into firewood collection in rural Malawi, particularly compared to Ghana (though girls' burden is still higher than boys').

In South Africa, the variation between the two CM study regions, Eastern Cape and Gauteng/NorthWest, is particularly notable regarding water carrying. In Eastern Cape, water and firewood collections are both major tasks for girls: *the 9 year old (girl) goes to the forest to pick firewood… she uses a 10 litre bucket to fetch water (on her head) … It is important for kids to work because it teaches them to be responsible and know how to take care of things in the house and also when they are grown up (they) can teach their own kids how to do things* (mother of two, RS)*; Here for girls it starts at the age of five. In winter when the nearby streams are dry they are compelled to travel some kilometres to the river to collect water, which on top of that makes them ill* (woman schoolteacher, RS). If there are no girls in the house, or the girls are very young, then boys must participate more fully.

One woman with two boys aged six and nine has no girls in her house so the boys must fetch water, collect firewood and clean. In Gauteng/NorthWest, by contrast, water is often transported by animal cart and thus (because technology and animals are involved, see Porter 2010) has become a male preserve.

Clearly, across much of sub-Saharan Africa, girls' domestic work burdens strongly reflect the widespread transport gap. Females are culturally expected to carry loads wherever motorised transport is unavailable, insufficient or too costly to be employed (Porter 2010, Porter Blaufuss and Owusu Acheampong 2011, Porter, Hampshire, Abane et al. 2012, Robson et al. 2013). While boys up to their mid-teens may be brought in to help with this work, girls usually bear the brunt of the burden. It will be necessary to return to this theme later, with reference to urban contexts.

CM survey data is also useful for demonstrating how farming and herding inputs vary, both across rural sites and between the genders (though with somewhat smaller inputs from girls in all cases). Starting with the two *South African study sites*, inputs into farming appear relatively small in the remote rural locations. Only around a quarter of boys and slightly fewer girls spent any days in the week prior to the survey working in the fields: however, over a quarter of boys spent some days herding. Herding and associated animal husbandry jobs such as collecting cattle feed are generally assigned to boys, across Africa. As Kielland and Tovo (2006: 71–73) point out, herding is a lonely, generally tedious job which has to be conducted 7 days a week and one that most adults prefer to avoid: it does not require any particular skill but does require constant vigilance, given the monetary and wider value assigned especially to cattle. In Eastern Cape, a local teacher noted how many boys miss most of the morning classes because of having to go to dip cattle or work in the mealie fields: *boys have responsibilities of cattle herding before they come to school, because during the planting season your cattle cannot just roam around, otherwise they will feed on the fields. That is why (school) attendance drops for boys (then)* (junior secondary teacher, RS). This echoed earlier findings from my fieldwork[1] in this region in the mid-1990s, when many boys complained that they could only get to school mid-morning, if at all, because of their herding responsibilities. The strategy pursued by Sipho[2], a 16-year-old, is fairly unremarkable, *sometimes I don't go to school if I have to take the cattle to the dipping tank or else I will arrive late to school (and be punished)*. Another boy, the same age, who lives with foster parents, similarly observed, *I don't attend school every day…I take the cattle to the dipping tank for the entire*

day because it is far. He enjoys these days, however, because there is an opportunity to meet with boys from other villages and, if he takes the neighbour's cattle to the tank, he is rewarded with a small sum of money.

In *remote rural Ghana*, even more boys reportedly miss school regularly, because of the competing demands of the farm. Over three-quarters of boys surveyed in these locations in the CM study had worked, at least some days, in the fields the previous week (compared to about two-thirds of girls). In the forest zone, one young man, Yaw, during a life history, talked of the suffering he had experienced when he was pushed into farming as a result of living in a large family with few resources. He had to drop out of primary school because of being *compelled to take care of my father's cattle … I was not happy to work as a herd man. There were some days that I was beaten by some farmers for allowing my cattle to graze in their farms.* Fortuitously, his father then sold a cow so that he could return to school. Another young man, now in his mid-20s, described how in his youth his father decided he should leave school and return with his uncle to their home town, to take care of the family's cattle: *they first of all enticed me with a full chicken, rice and tomato stew … my father realised that that was my favourite. I was very happy, though naïve … I remember they promised me to allow me my further education there (in the hometown). I was disappointed on arrival, because I was, rather, attached to a herdsman for understudy, instead of the promised formal education. I followed him for about one year and took full control of about 25 cattle. I was a herdsman for 7 years. I realised after three years that my education was delaying, so I walked to a school myself for admission. I was admitted alright, but my uncle went to the school to authorise them to sack me with immediate effect, or the school authorities will face his wrath (so) … they drove me away anytime I reported and since he contributed substantially to the finances of the school, he had much influence … I finally gave in … I will wake up at dawn and take the cattle for grazing … and return at 7.30 pm* (Life history, forest zone PU). His mother subsequently took him back to town where he now works as a carpenter.

In *remote rural Malawi*, both boys and girls had worked some days in the fields during the week prior to the CM survey (approximately two-thirds of both genders), and, additionally, about one-third of boys reported spending at least part of the week herding animals. This may help explain both their relatively small inputs into water and firewood carrying and their relatively low school enrolment, noted earlier. They must often spend the whole day keeping watch on the herd and may have to travel widely to find pasture, sometimes alone; school attendance and

other domestic tasks are then simply not feasible. However, there also seems to be a particularly strong resistance to carrying domestic loads among Malawian boys (who considered it a shameful task for males, unless it's water for their personal bathing): this is seemingly widely accepted by their communities.

In areas with high HIV/AIDS prevalence like South Africa and Malawi, girls in particular may also have substantial caring duties (Wodon and Beegle 2006; Evans 2010). A survey of AIDS-affected households in South Africa found that about 8 % of households' children under the age of 18 were caring for a family member with an AIDS-related illness, with girls forming the majority of carers (Steinberg et al. 2002). In such cases, while mobility will still be required for water and fuelwood collection and so on, it is likely that the work will curtail wider mobilities, possibly sometimes including travel to school (Evans 2010). In all rural sites across the three countries, girls tend to be further utilised as domestic anchors, left at home to care for siblings when their mother/carer goes to market or to the fields. As a father with four daughters and two sons observed in remote rural Malawi, *boys have more freedom than girls (why?) they are just boys…girls work hard more than boys, hence boys have more time to move around … Girls ought to stay home and look after the house and cook … There is little for the boys to do, (just) harvesting and cultivating*. Girls, as a consequence of such space-time fixity and associated time-poverty, will be restricted in their potential to access formal education and their livelihood options and opportunities.

Wider Journeys from the Rural Base

Although most work of the types observed above—water and firewood collection, farming and herding—revolve round intravillage mobility, there are some children from poorer families who have to start to take on more concerted (usually waged) work around the age of 9 or 10 years, involve long walks which may take them well beyond the village boundary, usually towards larger settlements at a major paved road.

In *rural Malawi*, some girls and boys at this age are starting to carry goods for money, in addition to their other household duties: casual labour (*ganyu*) is a widespread contributor to family income, essential in some cases to keep the family from starvation: *we even force them to do ganyu sometimes, especially when on holidays, so that they are able to earn some money and meet some of their needs* (mothers' focus group, Blantyre RS).

Young charcoal carriers in remote rural Blantyre district, generally aged about 9 years and upwards, take substantial loads (size varying with age) along a 7 km uphill route to market: this takes some hours, but in many cases the work is essential to cover soap for washing their clothes and for school-related costs. There are many girls involved in this work; they travel in small groups for safety, sometimes staying together overnight when they reach the trading centre. A young girl was proudly sporting a large shiny safety pin on her dress when we (GP and an RA) first met her on the road to her village, just returning from one such expedition to town with another girl and an older boy. The following day we met her for an interview, after church. At 12 years old, Faith has already dropped out of school (the previous year, she said, because of the distance and the uniform requirement). She and three younger siblings live with their grandparents, now that their father has remarried and migrated to another settlement (following the death of their mother). In addition to doing farming and household chores for her grandparents, she undertakes some farming as paid employment (*ganyu*) and also headloads charcoal. She carries charcoal, twice a week, to the nearest roadside market in the post-rains period; once per week, she carries maize to another major roadside market, where there is a maize mill: the maize carrying is for the family, not for payment. She walks with other children; they often carry the load overnight and then sleep outside one of the shops there.

When we first met Faith, she had carried charcoal to market the previous night, slept outside on the veranda of the bottle store, then woke at 6 am, and, with the money received for her load, had bought relish, small fish, shiny gold safety pins (for ornament) and some cooked food—fried fish and pancake—in the market, ate the latter, then started for home with a boy and two other girls from her village. As soon as she arrived home, she went to draw water from the river (two trips), washed plates, then brought more water for her grandparents to bathe. After that, she carried her own clothes down to the river to wash. When all of this work was accomplished, she went off to play ball with other girls (the best part of her day, needless to say). Before darkness fell, she returned home to prepare supper—nsima and relish—a task which she enjoys and, after a short chat with her grandparents, finally went to bed around 7 pm. When Faith carries charcoal the proceeds come to her personally, though she may buy some 'relish' for her grandparents. She often suffers from pains in her legs after carrying charcoal, and then boils water for a warm bath. Very occasionally, her grandmother gives her aspirin and she may take a

day's break to rest. During this interview the village head's daughter-in-law came with a gift of stew for us to eat: needless to say, Faith happily devoured most of it.

In *Eastern Cape*, *South Africa*, as in rural Malawi, poverty in some households forces parents to start involving their children, around the age of nine, in longer expeditions. The woman we met earlier in the remote rural site with two young boys aged six and nine sends them, of necessity, to sell the vegetables she grows at the roadside, some miles distant, during the school holidays and at weekends: *This is the only way we can survive. They sell maize on the tarmac road…the money they get they bring it to me but I give them pocket money. The distance is about 2 hours to get to the tarmac road. If I could afford paying for the taxi they wouldn't walk on foot … the money I get is very little and I use it to buy school fees, uniform and small things … It is important for the children to be taught to work. It teaches them respect. It will help them in future.*

In *rural Ghana* trading is the obvious option for many young people who need to make a living or contribute to family outgoings (including their school uniform, books, etc.): it is common to move in and out of school depending on the availability of funds. Peter, a 15-year-old, living in a forest zone village, has fallen out with his mother and is now fostered with a grandmother, who also looks after two other (younger, girl) grandchildren, also at primary school. He reckons they are all treated equally and very fairly. He wants to become a carpenter, but for now he is helping his grandmother sell bush meat which they buy from local hunters, in addition to farming and helping her to carry water. His grandmother tells him the price he should ask, then he travels around the villages and into Sunyani, the nearest major town, transacting business with chop bar operators. If he can make more than his grandmother's anticipated price, he is allowed to take the difference as his pocket money, and he uses it to buy personal items such as shoes but also books for school and food for the family. This seems to be a very successful arrangement: *I am really satisfied with the work. It does not affect my studies either.*

Restrictions on Girls' Travel

Because of adult perceptions regarding girls' vulnerability and potential for promiscuity (Porter 2011), it is more often boys who are sent on these longer trading journeys: *boys are sent (to town) more than often than the girls. I think it is because boys are hardier and more courageous … the boys*

can also not easily be seduced by anyone, but with the girls it can happen (minibus driver, Ghana forest zone, RS); *my eldest boy started travelling alone when he was 13 years old, because I had to send him to town to buy things … it is not safe for a girl as young as 14 years and below to travel alone on public transport, because some people might steal their money … in town there are people who are naughty and I am afraid that they might do something bad to (my) young daughter if she were to travel alone … Especially at the taxi rank, the drivers are very rude … and there are boys who steal* (mother, Eastern Cape, South Africa, RS).

If girls are sent on such journeys, they have to be very careful to return home as soon as their work is complete, as in 13-year-old Sandra's case: *My mother sent me to Sunyani to go and sell some grasscutters (bush meat). I boarded a taxi … I always go out in the daytime without asking permission from my parents … In the nights my parents do not permit me to go out because, according to them, I can become a bad girl if I go out in the nights. Whenever I return home late in the daytime, my mother … insults me* (Ghana forest zone RS). Similarly in rural Malawi, mothers in a focus group all agreed that they limit young girls' movements more than boys, *because as parents we are always afraid that girls can end up getting pregnant and thus bring other responsibilities to us. Those above 13 years of age have (more) restrictions than those below 13 years … because we fear pregnancies … we feel boys are more responsible and less susceptible to bad company … And, also, girls can get pregnant if not carefully monitored, boys don't get pregnant … Many boy children here think they have the right to do anything, especially those above 16 years of age.* As girls get older, however, they seemingly face less constraint: *It's very easy for a 17 and 18 year old to get married when pregnant—but for those between 13 and 16 … these are concerned young and cannot get married even when pregnant.*

For the most part, rural girls seem to accept this highly gendered regulatory environment in which they grow up. Many stressed the importance of travel in (single-sex) groups to keeping safe from human and supernatural attack; some suggested that boys were cleverer, stronger and more capable, mentally, of making long journeys. Some of the experiences recounted by girls, both in urban and rural areas, support the concerns which surround their travel. In rural South Africa, in particular, rape is seen by many girls as an ever-present threat. A number of rape cases were encountered, even within the limited set of girls interviewed in the CM study. This following story, from a 16-year-old, recounted to one of the young researchers in Gauteng/NorthWest, is by no means unique*: I was*

going to collect firewood at midday. A man said he wanted to have sex with me. I was crying and screaming so that somebody would come to help me. He put a toilet tissue in my mouth and he raped me.

Parental hypervigilance of the sort commonly experienced by children in the UK and USA is seemingly replaced in much of rural Africa by a seemingly classic pattern of vigilance through internalised control and surveillance by the travelling group. In a Foucauldian sense, girls may thus become prisoners of their own making (Porter et al. 2011). This limited independent mobility accorded to girls may, in part, reflect older women's need for assistance at home, as young girls grow and become more skilled in domestic tasks, especially in rural areas. Andvig (2001) argues moreover that, because boys tend to be more unruly and harder to discipline (a view commonly expressed by parents as 'boys will be boys'), this encourages African societies to make girls work more from an early age, since doing so reduces the monitoring costs for women. Thus, the opportunity costs of surveillance are lower in the case of girls! However, it can also be argued that while girls' daily pedestrian mobility (especially in distant locations, where surveillance is difficult) threatens household survival through the risk of sexual liaison, STDs and pregnancy, in some families it has to be maintained because it is essential to household production and reproduction (Porter 2011).

The Limits to Daily Mobility: Moving Away

Dorward et al. (2009: 242) suggest that there are three types of livelihood strategy: hanging in, to maintain current livelihood levels, often in adverse circumstances; stepping up from current activities through investing in assets to expand these activities, to increase production and income; and stepping out, whereby accumulating assets such as stock are sold and used as a launch pad, including perhaps to fund personal migration or build social/political contact. Each of these will have implications for daily mobility. In the more accessible rural sites of the Gomoa and CM studies, getting on is, for the most part, seen as stepping out (Jones and Chant 09: 193). Many rural young people's occupational aspirations are simply unattainable in rural areas. The dream of changing one's life through migration is enormously powerful, not least when the materiality of migration is displayed by visiting migrants proudly flaunting smart clothes and luggage (Lefebvre 2004; Hahn 2010).

In rural Malawi, Tisunge, an 18-year-old secondary schoolgirl who does occasional charcoal porterage work, dreams of a job as a nurse … *I'd rather be somewhere else and not here, just to see how life is in those areas. I can just stay here at the moment but I would need to move for nurse training.* As a secondary school pupil, Tisunge is relatively privileged already, however. As observed in Chap. 3, very few young people in rural areas manage to make the transition to senior secondary school. They face diverse barriers, from inability to pass examinations (given the poor quality of much rural teaching) to secondary school fees, length of journey to the nearest secondary school and the cost of motorised transport to get there (if such transport is available at all). Nonetheless, as young people reach their mid- to late teens and matriculate, or (more commonly) drop out of rural primary or junior secondary school, the limitations imposed by village horizons, associated surveillance, the prospect of a life limited to farming or herding with low returns and youth's lack of voice often irk: they may consequently begin to search more widely for work. This usually entails recourse to assistance from external family. Brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles, whether living in the nearest town or a distant city, will be called upon to aid their job search.

If a job opening is identified and work obtained, migration tends to follow, since daily mobility is usually restricted by limited access to transport in rural areas. There may be a weekly market bus, but there is unlikely to be any regular, reliable and affordable daily transport available for travel into and out of town. Thus, a girl of 18, interviewed when she was back living with her parents in rural Blantyre district, told how she had to leave home some years earlier for work in the city as a housemaid because the hunger at home was so great that she could not concentrate at school: other girls in the district have made similar decisions. In Lilongwe district Amelia, a girl about 14 years old, the first born of six, told us about her return to the village after a year in town. She had clearly been homesick: *I just started standard 1 (at the local school) and then the employer came to pick me up, so no more school. My father has a friend of a friend in town who wanted a worker. That's how I got the job (as a house-girl in Lilongwe). (Prompt) It was just housework because the house had electricity and water—the dishes, sweeping, washing. There were 2 children too in that house…I won't go back to town. The choice of coming (home) was mine … I was a long time there—two years. I got 500 Kwachas per month … It didn't get bigger as I got older—it stayed the same all the time … It cost 600 kw (to get home). My parents went to collect me. (Prompt: How did you let them*

know you wanted to come home?) It was just luck. My parents went to collect me because they thought I had probably started [my periods] and needed to come home for the cultural initiation rite. It's when they make you eat 'kidabwi'—they get charcoal, peel it and you eat that. (Prompt: What happened to the 500 Kwachas?) Every month-end, my father went to collect the money and buy food here, so I never touched the money. The employer bought my food…I was happy—I didn't miss the 500 Kwachas as I didn't see it. My parents thought it better for me to come back, because the money was too little compared to my age now. (Can you earn 500 Kwachas a month in the village here?) It's not easy.

But, of course, for some (especially older teens) the attractions of urban life are of increasing interest and, in Ghana, in particular, the potential for an apprenticeship is often a motivator for urban migration, frequently arranged through family contacts: *(at the age of 16 my mother) arranged for me to start learning the (bakery) trade … we are three learning the trade here (in Sunyani). I have always wished to be a baker … I wish to raise my own money to establish my business when I complete here. I am given food, sleeping place and 25,000 Cedis a day* (life history, woman 25y, forest zone PU). Maintaining and developing contacts with urban-based family members—frequently an essential component in the construction of an exit strategy—has become considerably easier since the advent of mobile phones (see Chap. 5).

Across all three countries, the parents of many rural children perceive migration to town as the only route to a better life: there is a remarkably pervasive discourse of what Quayson (2015: 151) calls 'enchantment'—the self-making and prosperity potential of the city. In rural Eastern Cape, South Africa, for instance, the carer of two children observed: *just like her sisters, I would like to see her migrating to Durban to study there. I think the education system there is so much better than here. When her sisters visit here you can see the difference, they look wise and talk wise words … I would also like to see them grow and work and come home during their holidays.* Another woman, a mother of four, who is also a traditional healer emphasised how unhappy she is *with the quality of life in the village … The future for children here is very bleak. The only way they can prosper is to get an education and move out of this place, otherwise things will remain the same.* Children here mostly felt the same way though, interestingly, some suggested that keeping a base in the village was important.

Remarkably similar negative parental refrains were heard in rural Malawi: *There is nothing good that can be an advantage to my children here*

… I hope they finish school and get jobs and live a good life in town (very poor woman with two sons, Blantyre RR). A group of primary schoolboys here were all keen to get into town, *because this is where you can find jobs in offices; if you finish your school and stay here, people don't want to give you respect unless if you go somewhere and you just come here to visit* (boys' focus group, Blantyre RS). Children who manage to get out may also bring assistance to their rural elders: *I have a son who stays in town. He went as far as form 4 at Madziabango (the nearest major roadside settlement) and now he is working in town and he sends us money and buys us certain things like the phone I have* (grandfather 70, Blantyre RS, Malawi). In both Malawi and South Africa's Eastern Cape, moreover, there appear to be fears that success in the village brings a risk of envy and witchcraft. This issue came up in various discussions: *I want to go somewhere so that I can lead a comfortable life. Here people are bad and they can bewitch you, if they see that you are becoming well to do…If you finish your school and stay here, people don't want to give you respect, unless if you go somewhere and you just come here to visit* (group interview with primary schoolboys). Similarly, in Eastern Cape, a mother of four, who could see no prospects for the children in her village opined: *there is no future here. Even if they succeed, people might become jealous of them and then bewitch them.*

It was in the Ghana rural research sites, however, that the most negative attitudes towards agriculture (and its perceived physical impact on the body) were evident among young people. In the forest zone, one girl talked about being ashamed to shake hands with people, because your 'palms will be thick', while in a focus group with six primary schoolboys aged 13–18 years, it was observed that: *farming work is very difficult and you grow old quick.* All except one of this group of boys aimed at getting out of the village; a move they saw as essential to their future prospects. One 21-year-old man, visiting his village from the regional technical institute, talked about his ambition to be an engineer: *I cannot stay here to achieve my dream because there are no facilities here for such purposes. The environment in this village will always push somebody into farming, so I have to migrate.* Many young girls and boys were very specific about their desire to get out of the village, not at some distant time in the future, but as soon as possible: for many, this was a key reason for continuing with education (despite the low quality of education in many rural schools). A woman with five children, who had lived in Kumasi before her marriage, was planning accordingly: *I do not see any advantages in raising a child here … it would have been good when you give birth you send the children*

to the city so that they will learn how to be refined and sensible … when (my children) become a little bit older I will send them to Odumase (nearby town) to live and school there … I want my children to have a bright future (forest zone RS). On the other hand, a few parents with contacts in town were very reluctant for their children to take up apprenticeships and work opportunities which require migration. In another forest zone village, 18-year-old Mary and her mother have been arguing about this for some time: *I want to become a hairdresser … I will learn the job in Odumase. This implies my relocation from this village because I cannot get the money to be shuttling every day. (Mother) said I should learn the trade from a woman in (the village, but) I do not think this is feasible (for acquiring the necessary) skill.* In this case parental reluctance seemed to include a mix of concerns: loss of labour at home, loss of contact, and worries about the child's safety and well-being in town.

Despite such stated desires to migrate, there remain many young people for whom the comforts of a known village environment still outweigh the potential benefits of a move 'outside'. As one middle-aged mother observed, with evident frustration, in remote rural Malawi, *Some of my children have never travelled beyond (this village): their friends are here. And I believe it is not in them moving out; they are so much used to staying here.*

Urban Children, Work and Travel

Domestic Work and Associated Travel in the City

In urban areas, as in rural contexts across sub-Saharan Africa, many children, whether attending school or not, spend a great deal of time involved in domestic tasks, from an early age. Although access to water and fuel supplies tends, as might be expected, to be somewhat better, overall, in urban than in rural areas, many poor urban neighbourhoods are without piped water. This is especially the case in Ghana and Malawi, but even in South Africa, where the two CM urban study neighbourhoods have water pipes, many were reportedly broken. In peri-urban areas, the domestic burden is often especially high. In Cape Coast, Ghana, for instance, under 1 % of children's households in the CM survey of the peri-urban settlement had piped water into their dwelling (compared to the urban study neighbourhood, where 23 % had this amenity). Water carrying is the main domestic task for children here and, although the vast majority of indi-

vidual journeys to collect water were reported to take less than half an hour, over 70 % of children surveyed made more than two journeys per day for water.

The fuel situation in urban areas might be assumed to be easier than in rural areas, because of the wider availability of kerosene and other fuels. Incomes are low, however, so continuing with the example of peri-urban coastal Ghana, all survey households (and, in the urban site, 82 % of households) were dependent on wood or charcoal for cooking. In peri-urban areas, especially, this often results in lengthy forays into surrounding rural areas to obtain wood, a few days each week (often during weekends). From the age of around five or six years, young children start to carry water and even help with firewood collection, relatively regularly, because of these domestic needs.

If we make a gender comparison of daily water carrying across the three countries for peri-urban areas, it is clear that whereas in Ghana the gender burden is roughly equal (over three-quarters of both girls and boys reported carrying water every day in the CM survey), in Malawi (mirroring Malawian rural contexts) girls' burden is much higher than that of boys (over three-quarters of girls carrying water every day, compared to only one-third of boys). In South Africa, overall figures are much lower (around one-third of children carrying water every day) but the gender burden is slightly higher for boys than girls. Fuelwood porterage tends to follow a similar gender pattern in the case of Malawi, where it brings a disproportionate burden for girls. Boys tend to do slightly more daily carrying of fuelwood than girls in both Ghana and South Africa (though the burden, overall, is small in South Africa).

Urban Porterage and Transport as a Commercial Activity

There is substantial evidence of children undertaking load-carrying outside the household context in urban Ghana and Malawi, for money. These are often boys who simply want to earn pocket money to buy snacks or videos, or perhaps pay for airtime for their mobile phone: very often, the context is market day movements, carrying traders' loads from the lorry park to the market place, or shoppers' loads back to their homes (see Mariwah and Esia-Donkoh 2011). For girls, the reason for commercial carrying is more likely to be family poverty, as is the case in what is probably the best-known example of load carrying in Africa, the girl porters (*kayayei*) of Accra. Their work has received considerable attention from academic

researchers, and NGOs, not least because it involves migrant girls from poor areas of northern Ghana whose decision to travel to Accra to headload goods round the city markets exposes them to dismal conditions, including sexual harassment. Some girls employed are reportedly as young as 8 years old (Agarwal et al. 1997; Opare 2003; Awumbila and Ardayfio-Schandorf 2008; Oberhauser and Yeboah 2011).

In the Ghana and Malawi CM urban study sites, there are similar cases of girls carrying heavy loads, though most here are living with their families. Eunice, for instance, a 15-year-old schoolgirl in urban Blantyre, headloads sand from the river to construction sites regularly and uses the money she earns to buy food, though she also has cooking and dishwashing tasks to perform at home and accompanies her mother to the maize mill a few times each month. She has three brothers, but according to her mother, it is only Eunice who will headload water: the boys refuse, nor do they do any money-earning jobs. After school, Eunice washes dishes and goes to draw water, while her younger brothers go out to play and her elder brother reads.

Domestic tasks such as water and fuelwood carrying, for the most part, are focused on the neighbourhood, but in Cape Coast and Sunyani in Ghana, as in Blantyre and Lilongwe in Malawi, there are often goods to be carried widely around the city, to and from markets and other locations. These are frequently transported along with passengers, in taxis or minibuses, being too small in quantity to merit separate freight consignment. However, even a short minibus journey across the city is expensive and loads attract an additional charge; consequently, many adults instead require children to help in carrying goods associated with their business activities, at least from the main road to its destination, sometimes for longer distances. Thus, a young woman who cooks and sells kenkey (a cooked maize dish) in Cape Coast buys in fuelwood from a settlement about 20 minutes' drive away every 3 days: it is carried to the nearest motorable road junction about 5 minutes' walk from her home by commercial vehicle. From there, her two foster daughters (11 and 13 years) are expected to carry it along the narrow lane to the house. Such recourse to children, their own or others brought in on a fostering basis (often from rural family members), is commonly an important component of urban women's transport solution in Ghana. Unfortunately, the implications for children's education, health and well-being may be substantial. In many cases, those who are fostered will be children who have ostensibly been sent from the village to the city to stay with urban-based relatives so

that they can benefit from the better education perceived to be available in urban schools. This is particularly the case in Ghana, where child fostering is a widespread traditional (and continuing) practice (Goody 1973, 1982; Monasch and Boerma 2004)[3].

Load carrying and other household-supporting journeys usually have to be arranged around school attendance, but sometimes girls, in particular, may be required to attend market with their mothers, or act as household anchors, as in 15-year-old Victoria's case. She lives with her grandmother in one of the urban Ghana CM study sites and goes to school every day except Thursday, when she must stay at the shop while her wholesaler-mother is busy distributing vegetables to retail customers. For Accra, there is stronger evidence of widespread dependence on young girls and elderly relatives working as household anchors,[4] probably because the transport stress is even greater in this capital city than in Cape Coast, Sunyani or the small Gomoa towns.

Young boys, meanwhile, are often employed in loading and off-loading vehicles and pushing hand-carts in and around the market areas and in other transport-related work, including as minibus call boys, drivers' mates and assistants to vehicle mechanics. In the Gomoa study, a number of young boy cart operators were interviewed in various small urban centres. Kwesi's story is fairly typical. He is 15 years old and operates a push-truck daily (having left school aged 12). The truck is hired from a female relation, to whom he pays a daily rental and then keeps any excess takings: *I was staying with my grandmother doing nothing. I can't stay doing nothing, so I walked round the (taxi) station and some of the drivers used me as a collector (as a driver's mate on their minibus services). Then I saw the truck work… the youngest is ten years old. Some do it after school. I carry cassava, maize and cement. And water in the dry season. I start at about 6 a.m. and finish about 7 or 8 at night, every day except Sunday when I go to church … I'm not much happy with this work but it's the only thing that can get chop (food) money. I can't push a truck all my life. I'll have to find another work to do.* Some boys, unlike Kwesi, work without parental knowledge and approval, often through truancy from school.

In Cape Coast, where carting is also a common job among boys and young men, many hope (like Kwesi) to graduate to work driving motorised vehicles. Kwame, a 17-year-old boy living with his widowed mother and younger siblings, carts maize for the market women, to help support his mother and siblings: *the only work I do regularly is pushing my truck. Yes, I am paid for every truckload of goods I carry … I buy clothes for myself and all*

other things I need, keep some as my pocket money and give my mother some to help take care of us. I can't measure it, but I bring my mother foodstuff and money. He himself employs a 10-year-old boy each day to help. Kwame's ambition is to buy his own truck.

Petty Trade, Travel and Transport in the City

In the Ghanaian urban sites, in particular, many young people—boys as well as girls—are employed in the petty trade sector: 22 % of girls and 10 % of boys in the CM survey reported being out selling things most days of the week (with comparable figures much lower in urban Malawi and South Africa, with, respectively, only 5 % for girls and 6 % for boys in Malawi and 4 % for girls and 3 % for boys in South Africa). This work, often conducted as assistance to adult family members, rather than as an independent job, may occur either outside school hours or—particularly on market days—instead of school but in both cases tends to require widespread movement around town, especially for those residing in peri-urban areas. For young people aspiring to become independent traders, mobility is essential, because market stalls have to be rented: mobile hawking is the only possibility for those without capital. Mobility is also the best route to avoid the police, local government or trader associations chasing fees (as Kamete [2012] observes in the particularly difficult context of youth displaced by so-called urban 'cleansing' of informal businesses in Harare's streets).

For others, mobility is essential because the main market for their product, notably snacks such as cooked food, is passing motor trade. This requires particular mobile expertise: petty trading along busy streets can be extremely dangerous. They may be aware of the dangers of hawking in heavy traffic, but the prospect of a sale can encourage young traders, in particular, to move dangerously through streams of moving vehicles: *I hawk with tomatoes from Abura to Essuekyir (30 minutes walk) with a pan. I have not had any accident before, but some of the tooting horns of the vehicles scare me. At times the cars move very close to the edge of the road so you have to go into the bush nearby* (boy 14y, coastal zone U). Non-motorised transport equipment is an additional traffic hazard: *I was knocked down by a bicycle when I was crossing the Abura main road to go and buy some items at the other side* (girl, 17y U).

Running to keep up with 'stop-go' traffic when a sale is in progress; strolling slowly and speculatively alongside moving traffic until a potential

customer is spotted; stopping suddenly to pick up a fallen loaf before it is squashed under a moving vehicle; swerving rapidly to avoid an oncoming bicycle—all typical of the differential velocities and variegated rhythms required of a busy city hawker in an 'intricately moving workplace' (Lefebvre 2004: 16; Edensor 2010: 5; Klaeger 2012: 546).

A Balanced Load or Damaged Bodies? The Head-Loading Issue in Urban and Rural Contexts

Load-carrying, as mobility and employment, has formed a substantial component of the foregoing discussion, in both urban and rural contexts. At this point, some wider reflection on this theme (also taken up briefly in Chap. 6) is probably useful. Casey (2001: 687) argues that the living-lived body is the 'enactive vehicle' of the 'mediatrix between place and self' (cited in Schatzki 2001: 699). Self and place are mutually constituting. The grounded experience of the material environment and the inscription of specific place-based experiences on the mobile body are evident from various elements in the discussion so far: in Chap. 3, sore feet and the potential for attack and rape on the journey to school; in this chapter, hands and bodies thickened and aged by agriculture; daily routines such as the journey to collect water or firewood not only building bodily techniques but also forming deeper layers of bodily memories which may be difficult to unlearn; but above all the pain and potential inscribed injuries and bodily damage associated with load carrying.

The interactions between body and place are probably at their most intense where the body walks regularly through the same spaces, day after day, as is overwhelmingly the case among young people described in this chapter. As we have seen, wherever transport services are deficient, or households lack the economic purchasing power to acquire transport equipment or pay fares, much everyday transport work needed to sustain the family and household is delegated to young people, especially girls. Much of this work is unremunerated.

My attention was first drawn to the scale of this issue in rural coastal Ghana when we undertook the Gomoa traffic surveys, c.15 years ago (Chap. 2). Here, it prompted the preliminary interviews with schoolchildren that suggested potentially significant impacts on educational achievement and health. This led to subsequent inclusion of headloading as an area for investigation in the CM survey (Porter, Hampshire et al. 2012, 2013). The significance of headloading may be far-reaching if, as seems

feasible from the discussion that follows, health and education impacts help delay youth transition to full adulthood.

In the Cape Coast situation described above, while many of the load-carrying journeys are over comparatively short distances, the weights are often substantial. A standard water container, when full, weighs 20 kg; other loads can be far heavier. In the urban site, 65 % of girls and 64 % of boys interviewed in the survey reported suffering pains or tiredness (mostly headache, neck-ache and waist pain) from load carrying in the previous week. In the peri-urban site, the figures were even higher, at 72 % for girls and 86 % for boys. The following observation made by a 12-year-old boy is representative of many similar reported experiences: *My mother sells yam on the street and I carry the load (for about 1 km). I carry big-sized yam at a time, thrice a day. I feel pains in the neck and waist as well. I complain to my mother and she boils water and massages me with elephant ointment*. The impact on education is highlighted, meanwhile, in the following statement: *The following day (after carrying firewood home) you are so tired that you cannot do any meaningful learning at school* (girl 17y, PU).

Reports of pain related to load carrying in the CM study were consistently higher in Ghana than in either Malawi or South Africa. Overall, in the week prior to the survey, 70 % of girls and 72 % of boys in Ghana complained of pain from load-carrying (whether headache, neck pain or waist pains), compared to 38 % of girls and 31 % of boys in Malawi and just 18 % of girls and 12 % of boys in South Africa. Everywhere, moreover, complaints were significantly higher in rural than urban areas. Even in South Africa, however, there were reported cases of severe pain from carrying in the Eastern Cape region, especially in the remote rural site, where one mother described how her 14-year-old daughter goes to town to buy groceries and carries them home on her head because there is no transport: *she complains she has a headache, stiff neck and that her legs are swollen*. Similarly, a schoolgirl of 18 (already a household head) observed, *My legs often swell when I carry heavy loads and walk long distances. I went to the clinic and they gave me medicine but the sores still remain*.

Individual stories from rural Ghana and Malawi offer numerous examples of severe distress as a result of carrying experiences, especially where boys are carrying goods for money. In rural Malawi, for instance (where many children start carrying heavy loads of charcoal for money from the age of about 9 or 10 years), Shadrack, an 18-year-old boy and the fourth of six children, at home for the weekend from secondary school, talked about how he headloads charcoal with his friends to Blantyre, leaving

home at 11 pm at night and arriving in the city at 6 am in the morning. He recalled the first time he headloaded charcoal when much younger: *I had a heart problem and I was feeling pain on my arm*. His parents bought drugs to alleviate the pain, but he was expected to get on with it. He also (unusually) has to collect his own water for bathing: *my only sister is away. If you want to eat you have to go and draw water*. When travelling the 2 hours' walk to the maize mill, he carries c. 25 kg of maize now that his bicycle has broken. Asked what he thinks of porterage, his reply was trenchant: *No. it is like slave trade*! This interview also brought out some general points about porterage and travel, including the fact that having to collect his own water is seen by Shadrack as an imposition (which only occurs because there are no girls at home) and that, like some other boys, he had had access to a bicycle, a mode of transport that is very rarely available to girls (see Chap. 7).

A focus group of mothers in remote rural Lilongwe region, Malawi, accepted that their children (mostly 10y+) experience physical pain from porterage—headache, neck-ache, heart pains, back pains—and even suggested that some children suffer stunted growth due to carrying very heavy loads. Their children certainly complain, they agreed, and in such cases they either take them to the health centre or give them Panadol or aspirin: *we still assist them where we can, because they are doing porterage work because of our poverty. If we were rich they wouldn't be carrying loads.* The benefits of this porterage are not only the things that can be bought as a result—soap and foods considered a luxury (sweets, biscuits, scones)—but also *they learn to become dependants on themselves and not parents at an early stage*. They also noted, however, how some children involved in porterage work stop going to school because of the money they make: *they feel money at this point is (more) important than school.* They suggested that children's porterage work is particularly heavily concentrated in very poor, women-headed households. Even if transport is available, *people can't afford to hire bicycles and ox cart, which are costly—they would rather hire a child whom they will pay less.* These discussions encourage wider reflection around load-carrying performance and embodied skills. Clearly, children carrying heavy loads are perceived by many adults to be performing a natural function of youth.

In Gomoa (Ghana), village women had told how they gradually prepare their daughters for carrying, starting with a tiny bowl of water, when the child is only about 3 years old. Thus, through learning these bodily skills, girls are perceived to build up body capital: flexibility,

muscle tone and strength are developed over years of hard work; their bodily endowments are developed through a combination of 'biological givens, socio-cultural phenomena, and personal projects of transformation of bodies… (such that) they experience physical work differently, experience (and contribute to) discourses of value in work differently, and express agency differently' (Jackson and Palmer-Jones 1998: 24). Subsequently, working with the Ministry of Agriculture, we ran an action research study in the district which brought in transport equipment—in particular, locally built push trucks—as a means of reducing the transport burden. However, the trucks were rapidly taken over by men and boys: women observed that they were not strong enough to push a truck! This may actually be the case, since their body-building efforts have focused principally on strengthening the neck, not the shoulders: consequently, trucks are too hard for girls to push, even though girls are expected to contribute more than boys when it comes to porterage. Bryceson and Howe (1993) note that physical strength is often used as a rationalisation to explain various transport-related tasks that males and females carry out, as we will also see later (Chap. 7) with reference to the use of bicycles. This complex intertwining of perceptions about physical capabilities and gender stereotyping is extremely intriguing and difficult to unravel (Porter et al. 2011, 2012; see also Grieco et al. 1996 on cart pushing in urban Accra, where a contrast was commonly observed between boys who tend to utilise carts, which makes their job easier, and girls who headload).

Subsequently, in the CM study, more load-weighing exercises were conducted in coastal Ghana and further indicate the scale of carrying: a girl of 13y who weighs 35 kg, carrying a 20 kg load of maize on her head over a distance of about 4 km in one of the rural sites (to be dropped off at a local market before she proceeded to school); a boy of 16y with a body weight of 57 kg, carrying two boxes of frozen fish weighing 35 kg—though in this case only over a short distance of ½ km or less. Both in Malawi and Ghana, a number of boys were clearly so keen to earn money from load carrying that they overloaded themselves, which may explain why the CM survey data (above) suggests that boys suffer more pain than girls. Additionally, it is possible that—because they have not been taught careful body management regarding load carrying from an early age, unlike girls—boys are more likely to experience damaging impacts from carrying very heavy loads. As one 14-year-old Malawian primary schoolboy ruefully admitted, *Sometimes when you have head loaded some goods for*

a price you tend to overload more than what you could carry if your parents sent you. As a result you develop body pain.

There is more to the issue than actual physical impacts, however, since load-carriers arguably do not merely perform their tasks but, through the bodily positions they take up, can be seen to enact their social position as servants to their (adult) masters. As Connell (1987: 86) observes, bodies 'grow and work, flourish and decay, in social situations that produce bodily effects'. There is the possibility that girls—unlike boys—over time become disciplined, in a Foucauldian sense, simply to not expect to complain; should they do so, they are unlikely to be listened to. Thus we hear, in remote rural Ghana, how Afua *often carries things on her head. During market days we go to farm and bring some cassava for sale. She carries about half of standard load (c. 30 kg) for a distance of some 3km. It is the norm that she complains of pains either in the neck, back or body attributable to the load carried. I just ignore it and do not give her any medication* (woman 32y, talking of daughter 13y).

Observation suggests that, for girls, bodily comportment is particularly significant as they go about their load-carrying tasks. Girls' way of walking, particularly when they are carrying heavy loads, suggests demonstrations of bodily deference: an embodied, performed and 'naturalised' social position. Goffman (1977), stressed that one of the key ways in which gender is given significance in society is by the process of institutional reflexivity—the social environment is organised in such a way as to make whatever 'natural' sex differences there are significant. 'Displays', learned over time, provide an opportunity to express gender in social situations; a process that leads to the socialisation and institutionalisation of gender differences. Thus, the performance of gender stems from deep-seated institutional practices taking on a, 'ritualised form which affirms beliefs about the differential human nature of the two sexes' (Flanary 2004, citing Williams and Bendelow 1998: 60).

Bodies are inscribed socially (Gross 1986: 139). Consequently, differences between male and female bodily actions are not simply a show or 'performance', a conscious acting out of femininity or masculinity, but rather they are *embedded and largely subconscious dispositions of the body,* reflecting wider social and cultural expectations. This is precisely how they can be interpreted where children are involved in carrying in the study sites. Gender is embodied through reiterated practices (Bourdieu 1990, see Chap. 1). As Domosh and Seager (2001: 112) observe, there is an intertwined reciprocity between spaces, bodies and the social construc-

tion of both. This takes us back to Foucault and the diverse disciplinary practices that power imposes on young bodies (1976, 1977). Gendered practices are learned through the body via practical involvement and observation: through the ways in which children imitate the gestures and actions of adults, engage in work or daily practices appropriate to their age, sex and class, and arguably construct performances of compliance which have the potential to mask subversive attitudes and activities (see Chap. 7). Scarry (1985) argues that pain is central to 'the making and unmaking of the world'. While pain may challenge everyday practices, it is not perhaps unrealistic to also perceive the pain that is endured and embodied in children's acts of carrying also as a rite of passage to the adult world (Scarry 1985; Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987).

Conclusion

While self and place are mutually constituting, the daily mobility which is part and parcel of young people's working lives in Africa further defines that relationship. Mostly, as we have seen, the *range* of mobility is limited, especially for girls, by the scope of the domestic tasks which dominate working hours and the fact that the vast majority of work-related trips take place on foot. However, because of widespread transport deficiencies and high transport costs, many urban and rural young people will, in total, walk many miles each day for repeated visits to collect water, together with less frequent visits to the farm, forest or local market and around the locality, in the course of undertaking a wide range of errands for adults.

For the most part, such journeys will be uneventful and routine yet, nonetheless, strongly shaped by the power relations which prevail in home moorings. Thus, where dangers are anticipated, travel is likely to be conducted in groups, a mode (as observed in Chap. 3 with reference to education) much favoured by adult parents and carers. Mobility surveillance and control are highly gendered, especially once girls reach puberty. In time, however, group journeys often become so habitual that parental stricture is unnecessary.

Many of these journeys associated with domestic tasks also involve carrying loads: water, firewood, refuse, farm produce, groceries and so on, depending on the specific context, urban or rural. Most such individual journeys are likely to be unremarkable in themselves, whatever they represent in terms of social inscription on the body. If loads are heavy and the frequency of carrying high, however, the impact on both health and

educational achievements may also be substantial: for boys, this is often a particular hazard associated with commercial carrying on their own account. Girls may, to some extent, be protected by their early training in headloading, but many appear to simply expect to suffer; pain is accepted with remarkably little contestation, whether the context is rural or urban. So long as Africa's transport gap remains, this situation is unlikely to change. Young people as social actors are often full of hope and agency, but their routes from youth into adulthood in sub-Saharan Africa seem to be becoming increasingly complex, not least where livelihood trajectories are concerned.[5] As this chapter suggests, mobility is intricately woven into those transitions, in ways which are sometimes hard to disentangle, but are certainly far-reaching.

Notes

1. See "A note about authorship" in Chapter 1.
2. Respondent names are pseudonyms.
3. There is ongoing debate about the impact of fostering on education: in Ghana there is some evidence that fostered children in urban contexts are more involved in work than biological children living in the same household (Hampshire et al. 2014; see also Agblorti and Tanle 2011). There is also earlier evidence, for instance, from Munroe et al. (1984) that children not residing with their natural parents work more. Kielland and Tovo (2006: 34) suggest that children are at higher risk today because of the monetarisation of many child placement arrangements. Young and Ansell (2003) provide a useful introduction to fostering in southern Africa related to HIV/AIDS.
4. Grieco et al. (1996), p. 131.
5. Esson (2013) provides a compelling recent example concerning Ghanaian youth dreams of success in professional football.

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CHAPTER 5

Beyond the School and Working Day: Building Connections Through Play, Leisure, Worship and Other Social Contact

Introduction

It is good for children to play, because through that we make new friends.
(Out-of-school boy15y, Ghana)

This chapter explores everyday mobility outside of school and work arenas. Life *beyond* formal education and work is crucial not only to young people's health, well-being and happiness of and in the moment, but will contribute to shaping their identity in the long term, not least through the construction of social networks (and associated creation of social capital)[1]: Piaget (2007) describes play as the most important 'work' of being a child.

In the contemporary Global North much emphasis is put on independent outdoor play/leisure as a route to fostering healthy mental, social and physiological development (Ergler et al. 2013). Here, play, leisure, playgrounds and play environments form a growing strand of academic research on and with children, in part as a consequence of increasing concerns about the decline in child-initiated active free play (often associated with parental restrictions and worries about safety). In Africa, by contrast, ethnographic studies of children's play have tended to focus around socialisation—the idea that play is about imitation, building (gendered) practices for future adult activity—though with some consideration of imaginative play (Schwartzman 1978; Lancy 2015).[2] Schwartzman (1978), reviewing the early anthropological literature on children's play, pointed to the way that involvement in particular games

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and fantasy play over time had often been interpreted as leading to the mastery of appropriate behaviours with functional or culturally useful values—an enculturative mechanism—thus with the potential to support perpetuation of the social order. However, she also observed that this may be an adultist interpretation, noting Fortes' careful reflections on children's play among the Tallensi as more than mere unconsidered imitation. More recently, and drawing on a wide range of literature, Lancy (2015: 24, 28) presents a sustained argument for the so-called chore curriculum as an informal process emerging in the 'interaction of children's need to fit in and emulate those older, their developing cognitive and sensorimotor capacity, the division of labour within the family and the nature of the tasks [chores] themselves', while at the same time emphasising that 'children's motivation to engage in make-believe and object play cannot be attributed solely or even primarily to the desire to learn their culture. The essence of play is its purposelessness'.

Over the last two decades there has been some shift in the study of young people's lives in Africa towards a slightly older cohort of young people, with a particular emphasis on their social interactions, active development of social networks, and the popular culture produced by youth themselves, especially in urban contexts (e.g. Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Hansen et al. 2008). Young people of all ages, however, are involved in a diverse range of activities outside the time they spend directly involved in school or work tasks. This spans religious worship and other aspects of religious life (such as initiation ceremonies and participation in choirs), sport and other leisure pursuits, many of which involve socialising with wider circles outside the family. All of these activities have significance beyond the activity per se, in terms of life-stage transitions and the development of social contacts and networks, with potential long-term influence on young lives and life chances. As Holland et al. (2007) observe (in the very different context of the Global North), it is important not to view young people as passive recipients of social capital (from parents/family): rather, they may be active agents, developing and using social capital to negotiate important transitions and in support of their identity construction. While bonding capital develops from relationships and networks of trust and reciprocity *within* groups of friends and relations, enabling young people to 'get by', bridging social capital is about networks and connections to diverse external groups which will allow them to 'get ahead'. Both types of network are discussed in this chapter, but it is important to note that the link between bridging social

capital and the securing of economic capital is particularly important in African contexts (Bourdieu 1997[1986]).

Mobility is strongly implicated in these social activities which help build social networks and may secure both bonding and bridging social capital. There may be short-distance travel within the settlement neighbourhood to visit a boyfriend or girlfriend, attend the local church or mosque, football field or video house; or longer journeys, probably involving motorised transport, to visit relations or friends living at a distance. But play and related leisure (such as 'girls' chats') may also take place *on the move*—on the journey from school, to collect firewood or water, taking messages for family members and so on. Moreover, in the case of developing social networks at a distance, mobility can take both physical form (in terms of direct travel) and, increasingly, a more indirect form—the virtual mobility of the mobile phone and Internet.

This chapter considers the play/leisure activities of both pre-pubescent children and older teenagers, drawing on data from the CM study and wider literature. Felt everyday experiences of mobility for play, leisure and associated wider social interactions are charted across Ghana, Malawi and South Africa. Following a brief introduction which utilises CM survey data, the remainder of the discussion is based principally on in-depth interviews set within broader participant observation. This is split into four sections: rural contexts, urban contexts, a third section which examines the implications of increasing access to mobile phones as a new element that can leapfrog and thus mediate distance (with potentially significant impacts on social contact patterns) and a final section which reflects on mobility associated with participation in religious worship and related activities.

The chapter will demonstrate how power and materiality interact with movements and moorings in the play/leisure context as insidiously as they emerged in preceding chapters about travel in school and work settings. Gender issues (and associated permissions and restrictions) form a persistent theme, densely woven with concerns around young people's potential for sexual encounter once they approach puberty. Because observation and discussion encompass an age range extending from c. 9–18 years, particular consideration is given to the gendered transition from the types of play commonly enjoyed by children to the 'leisure' activities pursued by an older group of young people (and the role of local/locational context in their shaping). Finally, given the focus of this book on daily mobilities, it is apposite to reflect—in the concluding section—whether and (if so) how a mobilities approach has contributed to the investigation of 'play' and leisure.

Country Variations in Recreational Activities from the CM Survey Data

Data from the CM survey provide a useful outline of variations in 'going to play' (i.e. involving journeys outside the home) by gender and age across the 24 study sites. In all three countries, the vast majority of these journeys took the child less than 30 minutes from home. Unsurprisingly, given the evidence presented regarding gender differences in workload in the previous two chapters, in each country more boys than girls reported being out playing at least once every day, though the gender disparity appears to be greater in Ghana and South Africa than in Malawi. There was no significant difference between frequency of play-related outings across the various settlement types, except in Ghana, where there appeared to be fewer children able to go out to play in urban than rural locations. This issue receives further consideration with reference to qualitative data in the section on urban sites below.

The CM survey also shows a significant decline in those going out every day to 'play', as age rises, as might be expected—the data on play capture patterns of movement principally for the youngest age group (c. 9–11y). By contrast, data on social visits to friends and family capture more of the journeys of older teens (15–18y), especially in Malawi and South Africa. (There was little variation by age in social visit patterns in Ghana.) Most social visit journeys, as with journeys to play, took under 30 minutes, in all locations, and were thus probably relatively local. A majority of children in all sites, with the exception of urban and peri-urban South Africa, had not made any journeys to visit friends or family over the week prior to survey. Gender variation was significant only in Ghana, where far fewer girls than boys had made social visits.

The survey also captured data on *permissions* to go out to play, in this case interpreted quite broadly as a recreational journey (and thus eliciting information from respondents of all ages). On average, the requirement to *always* ask permission before going out to play/socialise was imposed on around one-quarter of Malawian children aged c. 9–18y and one-third of all Ghanaian and South Africans. Gender differences were very substantial with, on average, about 10 % fewer boys than girls required to always obtain permission in each country. For girls, the highest level of 'always requiring permission' was in the remote rural settlements and high density urban neighbourhoods (and highest of all, at 46 %, for girls in urban Ghana). For boys, the highest level of 'always requiring permission' was in

urban sites and, additionally, in Ghana and Malawi (but not South Africa) remote rural sites (with highest permission of all, at 36 %, for boys in remote rural Ghana).

The CM survey gives a broad indication of the level of play/leisure-related mobility in different locations, but it is only once we move to the ethnographic material that we can start to appreciate young people's lived experiences of play/leisure activities and the contexts within which constraints may be imposed. Play which takes place on journeys other than those dedicated to 'play' per se was not captured by the survey data, yet, as Punch (2000) points out (in the context of rural Bolivia), children may skilfully negotiate time for play within spaces *seemingly* assigned to work and school, and thereby enhance their spatial and temporal autonomy. This was also the case in the study sites where, as we shall see, play clearly occupies a specific place in children's efforts to counteract the power and control of adults over their lives.

Children's Recreational Practices in Africa: Ethnographic Perspectives

The qualitative data presented below give some pointers as to the way recreation may be fitted into school or work journeys, thus escaping the adult gaze (which is most in evidence in home or school moorings). The journey home from school is a common key space for play among school-going children in both rural and urban contexts, especially where boys are concerned.[3] Similarly, space/time situations where work is the prime focus do not necessarily preclude play. Much of the literature relating to pre-pubescent children in low-income countries refers to children's games as a precursor and training ground for work, and observes the ways in which play and work activities can overlap (e.g. Mead 1928; Lancy 1980; Bass 2004). Katz's (1993) notable work in Sudan describes how, in the village context she studied, boys and girls *before* puberty build up an extensive knowledge of the local environment, developed in the course of their work and play around the village. More recently Katz (2012) reflects on how children worked playfully and played 'workfully' in this rural context (prior to agricultural intensification in the region): '*work and play were commonly spliced and simultaneous*' (p. 234): herd boys play and swim as their animals graze; girls play while collecting firewood and fruits; children play in miniature at work practices. This resonates strongly with much of

the ethnographic data presented below, and with reference to both rural and urban contexts.

Rural Recreational Activities from Qualitative Data

In the rural research sites, while small children of both genders were often observed at play throughout the day, around their homes, the older children aged 9+ on which the CM study focused were either busy at school or (at least in theory) involved in diverse work tasks around the village area. Later in the day, in the late afternoon or early evening, however, young boys would be regularly observed out playing football: although few villages have dedicated sports grounds, there is often a rough dirt/grass area where boys play games. Young girls, by contrast, were usually busy in the kitchen and thus had already left village public spaces, unless they were on their way to collect water or to procure inputs for the evening meal.

The responses to questions about play, put to children and to their parents, in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, provide important testimony to the significance of leisure time-space, both as a reflection of wider circumstances and context, and their potential to impact on young people's well-being, identity and future life chances. As with the CM survey data (discussed above), the ethnographic data show that this may have a substantial gender dimension.

Recreation in Rural Malawi

Discussions with children and their parents in remote rural Blantyre district present a picture of how recreational opportunities change with age which mirrored field observation. As one mother observed, *The little ones … all they do is eat and play. Up to the age of six or seven, the most they do is to sweep outside in the compound.* Mothers here agreed a rough outline of what they see to be the play patterns for children according to age: above the age of about seven years, they will start to play outside the compound, and may possibly go to play at a friend's house, when they have finished any tasks assigned to them. This is the case for girls until they reach about 13 years old, after which they are then largely restricted to the compound, unless they are travelling out to do work (ideally in groups, to facilitate surveillance), up to the age of about 16. In this region, sexual activity

starts early, around the age of 10 or 11, with sexual intercourse common from about 12 or 13 for girls (Bryceson and Fonseca 2006). The big concern for mothers with girls in their early teens is that they will become pregnant when they are still considered too young to marry. Once they have reached 16–17 years they are at an age where marriage is a respectable option. In rural Blantyre, a traditional birth attendant in her 70s reflected, *teen pregnancy is a big problem indeed and what is happening these days, in contrary to what used to happen during our time. In the past when a girl has reached puberty some years would pass before (she) became pregnant, but these days you even get … to hear that a girl is pregnant even before her initiation*. Moreover, nowadays, associated problems of loss of labour and having another mouth to feed are compounded by the threat of HIV/AIDS. Adolescent girls are often targeted by older men because, as virgins, they are perceived to be AIDS-free. Fear of rape is a very considerable constraint on the leisure options and spaces open to girls. Older out-of-school girls of c. 15–18 years in rural Blantyre observed that girls were very circumscribed, especially at night, but even in daytime: *girls don't just walk anyhow.*

Girls from particularly poor families, however, may be allowed more freedom to move around, simply because of the family's economic needs, but this is unlikely to give them much freedom to play. Faith[4], the 12-year-old charcoal carrier we met in rural Malawi in Chap. 4, is allowed to walk to weddings, if they take place in nearby locations but, otherwise, she has remarkably little time for leisure. A male health surveillance assistant, interviewed in a village nearby, observed that the health of many such girl children is compromised by their heavy work-loads and lack of rest time. Such girls tend to catch playtime when they can: Meya, a 14-year-old primary school girl in remote rural Lilongwe district, talked about playing on her way to fetch firewood as one of her rare opportunities to pursue any form of leisure. Another girl, about 13 years old, observed: *If I get to play, I play 'jingo'—you tie a string and jump up over it, (but) it's a few months since I played*. She is regularly involved in domestic work, helping her mother with five younger children, and also carries charcoal as a commercial job.

By contrast, many boys in these remote rural villages have much more freedom, throughout their youth, unless they venture into potentially dangerous areas (such as was the case of a seven-year-old boy whose mother reported that she whips him whenever he plays round the well or on the main road). Small groups of boys were regularly observed at

play once school had closed for the day. David, a confident 14-year-old boy at primary school, the youngest child in his family, and with aspirations to become a driver when he grows up, will do occasional jobs such as sweeping the yard or making and selling charcoal at weekends when he needs money for soap and clothes, but otherwise he has much freedom. He may borrow his brother-in-law's bicycle, for instance, and ride down to a nearby village until he is tired. His friend, 13-year-old Stephen, says they carry a football to school, so that they can play on the journey home, when there is more time available: then they have fun, racing with friends, playing football or a game called *chipako* (touch). Primary school boys (aged around 12 years) in a focus group in the next village talked about playing after school, but observed that this depended on having reasonably 'well-to-do' parents, as otherwise they will have to be busy earning money. Once they have learned to cycle (from friends), they may then go off on long expeditions—one had cycled around six hours, alone, to visit relatives.

Such journeys, and the time expended, would simply be unfeasible for most—possibly all—girls, given their household duties and elders concerns about their mobility beyond village surveillance. Parents in rural Malawi explicitly acknowledged the gender distinctions in opportunities open to children for leisure, particularly in terms of the spaces in which recreational activities can be performed: *as for the boy I don't know (where he goes to play)—as you know, boys they just go wherever they want … my girls just play and chat around the houses close to our home. (The children are not allowed to go to distant social events—especially the girls because) they can get raped* (father with three children). Reminiscent of the dwarf superstition used as a control mechanism over children's time in rural Bolivia (Punch 2000), witchcraft and supernatural forces are also brought into the picture and are effective in helping to limit young people's recreational spaces. This is especially the case in rural Lilongwe district, where Nyau traditional dancers, who wear frightening masks and costumes, are viewed by non-members of the cult as objects of fear.

Recreation in Rural Ghana

In rural Ghana, boys' domestic workloads (carrying water and fuelwood) are heavier than in Malawi, but they still have more time than girls to play. As in Malawi, boys were frequently observed playing on the way home from school, and may simply continue playing widely across the village

area until darkness falls. *Kofi rarely stays home … after school it is very difficult to locate his whereabouts … Kofi's teacher complains that he likes playing too much … He says he wants to be like Michael Essien –a footballer in future* (father of boy 12y). Joseph, at junior secondary school in the forest zone, plays football during school breaks and wants to become a professional: *I wish to play for Accra Hearts of Oak, because that is my team (or) Arsenal; I have heard of Arsenal team in England from the radio.* Football is extremely popular here, and many boys clearly see it not just as a playtime amusement, but as a potential career. Such desires are remarkably widespread in Ghana, as Esson (2013) illustrates from research with young boys in Accra. Football is perceived to offer a rare opportunity for boys from poor families to escape to a better life and, thus, a significant motivation for them to abandon school and try their luck at professional football, in the context of some remarkable achievements of Ghanaians internationally. More specifically rural pursuits include hunting: one 15-year-old in the coastal zone talked about going out regularly into the bush, trapping grasscutters[5] (for bushmeat) with dogs and a group of his friends. They smoke the rats out of their hole, set the dogs on them, then immediately cook their bounty and eat it.

Boys also often talked of listening to the radio in the evening and, if they are allowed, will go to the video house if there is one in the village, as they get older. Many parents and carers, however, are concerned about what is on offer, and these places are commonly out of bounds: *there's a video centre here and my uncle has warned me not to go* (fostered boy, 15y). This boy also recounted a story about going out to watch (battery-operated) television at a friend's house one evening. He had permission from his uncle, but stayed on late, captivated by the television (of which there were still relatively few in the village). When he arrived back home he found the door locked. Before he was eventually allowed into the house, his uncle made him stretch out his hands and gave him six hard lashes with a cane.

For girls, the constraints on play are usually greater still. Even small girls below the age of six or seven seem to be expected to accompany their older siblings as they do jobs around the village. Load-carrying, in particular, is a skill they are expected to learn from an early age (see Chap. 4). Nonetheless, play still takes place, even as girls' workloads increase over the years: dancing, imaginative games such as imitating what goes on at church or in the market and playing *ampe* (a jumping and clapping game) are popular girls' pursuits. Discussions among a group of 11- to 13-year-old out-of-school girls, most based at home all day (because their par-

ents required their assistance as traders, or domestic assistants), described days full with tasks. Nonetheless, they still manage some play with other (school)girls after school closes and on Saturdays: *our plays involve mock church services and mock school activities and 'ampe'*. But these girls also observed the dangers they ran when playing in mixed-gender groups: *the boys, when you are playing with them, they begin to hold your waist which I don't like; other times when you are playing with the boys, some hold your breast, while some try to kiss your mouth.*

The video centres tempt girls (as well as boys), especially if they have any money from engaging in petty trade. Many are banned from attending by their parents; one girl reported being beaten by her mother for going there. A father of three young girls (the eldest 14) observed: *the video centre is the only place in this community that is totally out of bounds to my children … some even steal from their parents to go and watch … and most of the films … corrupt the children who go* (coastal zone RS). Another parent with a nine-year-old daughter emphasised that her daughter can move freely round the settlement in daytime, *but in the night I do not allow her to go out, because if you allow a child, especially a young girl, to move about in the night, she can become a bad girl in the future* (forest zone RS). At home girls—like boys—listen to the radio (music, news, religious programmes), if it is working. Televisions are still few in number in all of these villages and were rarely mentioned as a source of entertainment. As girls approach their late teens, as in rural Malawi, restrictions on their opportunities to socialise outside the home decrease, including at night.

Recreation in Rural South Africa

In rural Eastern Cape very similar themes about play prevail to those in rural Ghana and Malawi. Football, again, seems to be a favourite boys' pursuit; netball (played at school) and games of touch and run—*icekwa*—are popular with girls. For girls, leisure has to fit around work, which is often extremely time-consuming, especially since many children live with older, less fit, grandparents: *at home I don't have time … I sometimes play with my sister at the house but it is only for a while and then my grandmother calls me to say 'do this, do that'. I don't mind helping … but sometimes I feel it is too much for me* (girl 17y). School often involves a long walk, which certainly limits the opportunity for leisure activities, but—as in Ghana and Malawi—girls try to use their journeys home from school, and when collecting water or firewood, to fit in more pleasurable activities. One

16-year-old, on an accompanied walk to a nearby well, said how much she enjoys this, *because I get to talk with my friends on the way.* Carers here (as elsewhere) rarely had anything to say about the importance of play, with the following notable exception: *playing is part of growing. I used to play … Mine, they play after school, but there is hardly play, since they walk a long distance to school* (grandmother-carer of girl 12y, boy 11y).

Even boys with cattle to look after find opportunities to play. A 15-year-old herd-boy described how they combine playing with their work, taking it in turns to watch the cows to ensure they don't *graze in the gardens.* Boys' play in Eastern Cape was generally observed and reported to extend over a far wider spatial range than girls (mirroring recent observations of children 9–15 years in this region by Alexander et al. 2015): *They (girls) usually play in the compound but the boys play far away from home. My boys like to go hunting in the forest* (mother c. 50y, son 17y, daughter 14y). However, as another mother pointed out, while playing around her remote rural settlement is fine, *I don't want them playing far away from home because there are places where there are dogs and they might get bitten.*

As children move into their mid-teens the nature of 'play' changes. The journey to and from school offers not just play time but valuable opportunities (as in other rural sites) to engage with the opposite sex and establish relationships: *I enjoy the journey (to school) when I am with my friends as we get to chat to girls* (16y boy, RS); *Loitering around the school gate … that is where most girls wait for their boyfriends* (15y girl, RS). Young people also attend social events like weddings and sometimes other traditional gatherings, but teen pregnancy is common (as in all rural sites), and a number of young girls talked about the consequent curtailment of their social activities—*I used to play with other girls before I got pregnant. N*ow *I don't have time to play,* is a common refrain. One 18-year-old who had loved playing volleyball at school typically finds, *there is very little time for me to socialize with friends, because I'm always busy at home … on top of that I have to take care of the baby.*

In rural Gauteng/NorthWest Province, work figures less in young people's stories than in rural sites elsewhere (across all three countries) and there seems to be more time for play. Water, in particular, is usually transported in carts pulled by draught animals (see Chap. 4), which greatly reduces the time and effort entailed in water collection. Girls play netball, boys play soccer: however, the farmsteads in the rural sites are often widely dispersed, so most of this type of play occurs in school time, on the school site. Because the distance between homesteads limits chil-

dren's play together after school, boys and girls play on the journey home, whenever they can walk together. Once they reach home, children then mostly just play around the house, and (because there is electricity widely available in this region), listen and dance to music on the radio, or watch television if there is a working set. These Gauteng/NorthWest sites have a remarkably high incidence of access to working TVs in their home (80 % of respondents in the rural site, 75 % in the remote rural site)—the highest among all the rural sites (and far higher than in Eastern Cape, where the respective figures are just 10 % and 2 %). Apart from school, the other main meeting place for young people is church. As the boys get older, however, parents observed that some go out hunting in the bush for deer, smoking and drinking in quiet bush areas or 'roaming' on the streets, all of which activities—except for hunting—are considered problematic. In both study zones there are occasional school trips, to other schools for sports meetings, or sometimes further afield, but not all young people have funds to enable them to participate in these.

Urban Recreational Activities from Qualitative Data

In African urban contexts, the majority of leisure-related research has focused on the development of social networks and popular culture among young people in their late teens through to the mid-30s (e.g. Langevang 2008; Gough 2008; Wildermuth 2008), thus spanning the now commonly defined age group of 'youth' in Africa (Durham 2000, 2004; see Chap. 1). So far as younger children are concerned, one principal area of urban research with children has focused on street children who, albeit disadvantaged in many respects as they 'get by', also play and socialise, though not necessarily in particularly positive ways (e.g. drug use). Nonetheless, even seemingly negative activities, over time, may be significant contributors to the construction of social networks (see Young and Barrett 2001; van Blerk 2013).

In the case of both street children and older youth, the discourse of recreation in urban environments often concentrates on the hazards and temptations faced—drugs, bars, nightclubs, video houses and so on—and the potential of young people to transgress adult conventions and traditions in their search for the thrills of a modern city life. The mobility performances of youth who strut along the city streets of Cape Town or Zambia's Copper Belt—young men with 'attitude', loud in both dress and

talk; girls in revealing clothes and heavy make-up—reinforce elders' concerns (Ferguson 1999, p. 114; Lee 2004; Adams 2009). Such images of youth as unruly and potentially destructive, cross-cut with perceptions of their vulnerability to political manipulation, are widespread across Africa (Durham 2000). Mobility plays a leading role in this story, since it is key to young people's access to many urban leisure activities, but it can also generate strong suspicions of undesirable actions: 'moving around' in Africa widely implies not only physical mobility but also sexual promiscuity (Ferguson 1999). The kind of surveillance that is brought to bear in efforts to restrict undesirable types of mobility in village contexts is more difficult to achieve in cities with fluid populations, where neighbours can change rapidly and young people have greater access to motorised transport for rapid flight to distant neighbourhoods.

Recreation in Urban Malawi

In the urban and peri-urban CM research sites in Lilongwe and Blantyre districts, the temptations for young people are certainly greater than in rural settings. While young children were observed playing around the compounds, by the time they reach the age of nine or ten, wider movements are common among boys. Carers often present a somewhat depressing picture of the male youth scene, in which older schoolboys and particularly out-of-school youth drink beer, smoke *chamba* (weed) and frequent the mushrooming shacks where Nigerian films (possibly screening violent Kung Fu movies and pornography) and football matches are shown.

Many young boys play truant from school to earn money so that they can go to watch videos. The attractions and dangers of video houses were a particularly persistent theme in interviews with parents and other elders: *most of them* (children who watch) *have turned out bad … most of them dress just like what the people in the movie wear … miniskirts for girls and plaiting hair for boys* (father 45y, working as watchman). An accompanied walk with a 12-year-old out-of-school boy, to a video house, led to a long discussion about their advantages (exciting films—cartoons and suchlike) and the inappropriateness of girls going there: *watching films is men's business,* he proclaimed! Certainly, the houses are mostly frequented by men and boys. They are open all day, from early morning through to late evening, but this boy mostly goes around midday, with money he says he has been given by his parents. He often goes along with a small

group of friends. During this interview, a number of school pupils carrying notebooks were observed entering the video house: they were clearly playing truant.

The bars, meanwhile, are viewed by many elders as a specific danger for boys in terms of alcoholism (and for older girls as a key entry point to prostitution). But when adults advise against these activities, they are often ignored: (one child) *actually told me—this is my time. I have to enjoy my life. Yours is gone* (focus group with mothers, Lilongwe U). Boys are usually in a stronger position to negotiate their use of space than girls, as elsewhere, because they are perceived to be more able to take care of themselves. In the Lilongwe sites (where, as noted above, the Nyau cult is fairly widespread), watching Nyau dances is, however, one prohibition even imposed on many boys: *the Nyaus will catch us … they (will) shave our head and make us one of them* (boy 13y, focus group U). For the most part, though, boys do have more freedom: *if we really want to go, (we) continue to ask for permission, we reason with them and explain how important the journey is. In other words we force them to allow us to go, and then they say "aaah go!"* (boy 16y, focus group, Blantyre PU).

Nonetheless, some boys recounted stories which suggest the dangers they face of attack. This usually refers to school journeys where bigger boys or men who are high on cannabis steal their money and other possessions. A similar group travel strategy to that used on school journeys is often adopted in the pursuit of leisure activities: *Mostly I like hanging out at a popular drinking joint called 'Chief Abiola' (and) I chat till 11 p.m … and at Baghdad. (It is not dangerous to be moving at such a late hour) because most of the time we move in (a) group* (out-of-school boy 18y, Blantyre U). However, he goes on to observe that he doesn't like *to go to street bashes* (popular street parties) or football matches. As a result of earlier misdemeanours, he had had serious arguments with his parents and was forced to rent a place for some months. He is now living with his uncle but observed, *the main* (challenge to growing up in this neighbourhood) *is that there is a strong possibility for a child to get involved in bad behaviour or become destitute as opposed to what would happen if the child was being raised in the village … There is a lot of peer influences (here) that are influenced by movies and the great mixture of people of different cultures and customs.*

More innocent popular pursuits for boys include casual play on the way home from school, football (often played at school or any small spaces available in the home neighbourhood) or listening to the radio. TV is less

commonly mentioned and often seems to involve getting permission to view television in neighbours' homes. (A working television was present in the home of only 12 % of peri-urban respondents and 28 % of urban respondents at the time of the Malawi CM survey.) Parents tend to see radio, in particular, as a positive influence because there are many programmes focused on HIV/AIDS, religion, or wider educational issues and these are seen to promote positive values. Occasionally, children talked about the radio in such terms too.

By contrast with boys, there is very substantial constraint on girls' mobility across all four Malawi urban and peri-urban sites. One father of ten children in Blantyre succinctly observed, *To raise a girl child properly, you need to have a keen eye on her always.* As in rural areas, from an early age, girls are regularly warned of the dangers of walking alone and are widely expected to be home from school and engaged in domestic chores by around 4 pm. Play for girls seems to revolve round netball, listening to the radio (mainly music and religious programmes) and chatting. Continued repetition of stories, whether real or merely rumour, also encourage the same form of self-regulation among girls apparent in Malawi's rural areas. A girl who does not take the precaution of travelling with others may herself be blamed for any unfortunate consequences. Those who arrive home late are also likely to feel the wrath (and possibly beating) of parents and carers who fear they are turning to prostitution.

In Blantyre, a local bar called Baghdad is avoided by most girls because *… almost all girls who go there are commercial sex workers so what would you do there if you are not one of them*? (out-of-school girls 13–18y, Blantyre U). Nonetheless, tight regulation from puberty onwards is often greatly resented: *Boys can even come home very late at night but not us … Parents always doubt our movements. They fear we might get pregnant … (If we are late) parents shout at us, we are not allowed to enter the house, we are whipped by our guardians* (out-of-school girls 16–18y, Blantyre U). Another 18-year-old, the youngest child still at home, told how her parents monitor her movements. She is not allowed to stay out overnight, even with relatives: *My movements are strictly monitored at home, hence my parents feel (staying elsewhere for a visit) would mean getting off their grip of me*. However, as young people reach their later teens, parental constraints inevitably become less effective in urban areas, and older children of both genders reported attending weddings, parties and (same gender) initiation ceremonies in the neighbourhood. Even so, wedding celebrations and dances held at night are regarded with suspicion by parents.

Recreation in Urban Ghana

In the Ghanaian urban and peri-urban CM sites, parents, children and teachers discussed similar themes around children's play/leisure to those raised in Malawi, including the perceived dangers of video houses: *There is a video cinema centre in this area. I have warned them not to go there* (grandfather 72y, carer of boy 12y, girls 10 and 9y, forest zone U); *The worst thing* (is) *this new entertainment centre called Sahara. They go about in the evenings in vehicles with loud speakers announcing their programmes for the night … I overheard them inviting the children* (female teacher, coastal zone U). Television is now relatively widely available in these settlements: in the Ghana survey, 61 % of urban respondents and 31 % of peri-urban respondents said there was a working television in their home. In the context of constraints associated with night travel and video houses, watching television is, unsurprisingly, a very common evening pursuit for children of both genders.

For boys, the football theme is even stronger in boys' narratives of play than in Malawi. As in rural Ghana it is widely perceived not only as a leisure activity during and after school, but also as a potential route to fame and fortune: *I want to be a footballer in future. Being a footballer I can easily acquire a lot of property such as houses, money and cars* (boy 13y); I *want to be a goalkeeper in future … there is much (more) money in football than any other job* (boy 12y, father dead, works as second-hand clothes seller). Other interests include imaginative play as two boys (9y and 12y) living with their grandmother and out of school (apparently due to the family's shortage of funds) described. They go out to farm from their peri-urban home with their grandmother and enjoy making bird traps and playing there; *we create our own (imaginary) market and sell food.*

Girls, generally, have far more to do than boys, whether they are attending school or not, and this greatly restricts their opportunities for play. Once school closes (if they attend), they are expected to reach home promptly: *The reason for Adua doing more tasks is that she is a female … She does not get time to play. After school she goes to the house to start the domestic chores with my mother. The only time she gets is on Saturdays and Sundays when she goes to friends around to play* (boy 12y, talking about his 14y sister, forest zone PU). Another 12-year-old reported, *I only play when I am at school. I am always busy. I fetch water and cook after school. Before I complete my chores, it's almost dark* (forest zone PU). As in rural areas, if there is time in the early evening after they have finished work in the kitchen, younger girls may then try to fit in games such as *ampe.*

For the most part, however, girls' leisure activities are expected to take place much closer to home than boys, as the following narratives amply demonstrate:

> *I do not allow the girls under my care to move about, whether daytime or night … If you allow young girls to walk about, they could easily get into problems such as teenage pregnancy or pick any bad habits. With the boys, because most young boys are interested in football, I allow them to go out in the daytime to play football with their friends but, in the nights, I restrict their movement to the house. This is because if they go out in the night they could join bad boys and cause problems such as smoking or stealing, or they could even impregnate some girls. I allow the older boy to attend funerals within the community. I allow all the boys to go to the football field to play but I do not allow … them to go and roam in the Sunyani market or other places, because they could bring troubles home*.
>
> (father 41y, caring for eight children, four his own, forest zone U)

> *It is difficult to get the male children. In the house they mostly fetch water in the morning and, if there is school to go, then they go. After school, they come home, eat and that is the end of it till they come in the evening, very dirty and happy. But their female counterparts would be at home … For example I am always with Grace* (16y daughter), *teaching her how to cook … The male children are biological hyperactive—you don't get them at home*!
>
> (mother 41y, forest zone PU)

Many boys also have the confidence to simply ignore demands for work inputs when they are at play (see also Chap. 4): *the boys too are stubborn and would not mind (you) even if they are called to work in the house. They prefer to play and be beaten than to go to the house when needed without beating. If you give birth to a male you are in trouble. They are all stubborn!* (mother, mid-30s, son 17y, daughter 9y, coastal zone PU).

The references to 'roaming' and 'moving about' in the first of the extracts above are widely used as short-hand for negative, potentially corrupting experiences, and a particular propensity to promiscuity widely associated with youth mobility (as noted above with reference to Ferguson's research in Zambia; see also Langevang and Gough 2009; Adams 2009 on Harare's 'playful daughters'; Porter et al. 2010). The terms crop up regularly in the urban and (to a lesser extent) peri-urban sites, particularly in Ghana's coastal zone. It is especially difficult to restrain older boys as they reach their late teens, as this 18-year-old—who has left school—makes clear: *I use my free times to roam town, at times watching football or other games …* (but in the evening) *any time I delay in getting to the house*

my guardian will rain insults on me (and then various tasks have to be completed before he is allowed food). By contrast, most girls in all the sites are careful to at least appear to conform to parental requirements, whatever their age, if they are still living at home. In the following case an 18-year-old girl, who already has a baby and works as a petty trader, always requests her parents' permission to go out: *If they are sure that I am not visiting a boyfriend elsewhere, they will allow me … There is a drinking bar close to our house here but my parents do not allow me to go there … Any time I return home late in the afternoon, my parents always insult me.*

Recreation in Urban South Africa

In Gauteng/North West Province, gender contrasts in recreational pursuits are a little less strongly drawn than in the CM urban sites elsewhere, in terms of time availability, though the activities clearly vary: *Most boys just play soccer. Girls like sitting and chatting about things that bother them as girls* (mother with girl 12y, boy 9y). For boys, since there are no cattle to herd, there is little to do—they may help with washing dishes and participate in visits to relatives, but football in and after school, followed by watching TV programmes such as wrestling, or listening to music on the radio in the evening, appear to be standard activities on most days. In the holiday periods, they often visit one another at home, a leisure pursuit which is less open to girls, given common parental concerns about daughters' movements.

Young girls talked about (and were occasionally observed) playing ball games and *kgati* (a skipping game) in the street close to home. Girls of similar age (c.11–12y) in a focus group, who play netball at school and on Saturdays, bemoaned the lack of grounds and sports facilities. In the evening they commonly watch television—cartoons, gospel channels and so on—listen to radio and either play music or chat on their phones, using the popular chat facility Mxit (of which more later). Saturdays are spent visiting family, followed by church on Sundays. They talked about chatting with other girls about 'girls' stuff' while walking home from school but also about having to watch out as they walked, in case they encountered boys who have been smoking dagga (cannabis) and might attack them.

For many children, girls as well as boys, if there is money available, trips run by school or church—perhaps a choir competition or a church convention—are a welcome interruption in the monotony of everyday life. However, as girls get older, some of the mobility restrictions on girls

observed in other sites come to the fore. One mother of a 17-year-old, for instance, talked about how reluctant she was to pay for her daughter to participate in church-organised bus trips to Cape Town and Durban: *since I am afraid that she would be exposed to boys far away from home. Right now I have noticed that she has a boyfriend and she is hiding him from me. If she goes too far from home, she would get all the time with him and I fear the worst … She likes TV more than anything … Sometimes she watches TV and she comes back saying she would like to become something she saw*. The potential for such media to alert young people to new ideas is considerable, but where educational opportunities are limited, this may be more a precursor to frustration than fulfilment.

The journey to and from school often presents opportunities for socialising and, in particular, meetings with the opposite sex—which may lead to relationships similar to the one noted in the quotation above. Some girls are also not afraid to contravene parental restrictions and venture out alone, if opportunities arise: *I don't have to explain to everyone about where I want to go … If I want to see my friends I don't have to be accompanied by anyone* (17y girl, Gauteng/NorthWest PU). Active resistance to carers' efforts at preventing sexual adventures is hardly unusual, but outward expressions of defiance among girls are rare (Campbell, Foulis et al. 2005: 813; see also Reddy, 2005; Harrison, 2008: 182).

Many young people once they leave school, are unemployed and reported by parents to *just sit around doing nothing; they start doing crime* (father with teenage children). Reminiscent of the concerns associated with undirected 'roaming' reported above in urban Ghana, a mother talked about her children (a boy 16y, a girl 9y) only being allowed to go to visit known friends or to the shops: *I don't want them to be roaming around this place like lost cows*. Some attend local youth centres, where activities such as drama are available, but boredom, gambling and drugs are all-too-present threats. One married out-of-work 18-year-old, living with her father-in-law, used to enjoy netball when she was at school and sometimes still plays in the afternoon, when her friends return from school: *I was asleep most of the day … there is just nothing to do and the day gets boring* (PU). She hopes to start a small vegetable trading business—following information she has heard from the radio and friends—but is constrained by lack of capital.

In Eastern Cape, parents appear to be similarly concerned about young people's undirected movements on urban streets and associated dangers of being attacked and robbed or, through boredom, turning to crimes, drinks, drugs and promiscuity. A 17-year-old boy, a school dropout, talked

freely about moving up and down the streets with his friends before he goes off to deliver dagga to customers: such activities are a major concern for many boys' families. Thus, it seems to be standard practice not only to ensure younger children are safe within the house or compound, especially towards evening, but also to try to keep older children occupied at home. Stories from parents about young children being tempted with sweets and then abducted resonate with those recalled by children in urban Ghana. Roaming as a cause of unwanted pregnancies is also widely observed: *There are some girls who are getting pregnant at an early age … They are allowed to go anywhere they feel like and the end result is pregnancy* (father, caring for son and niece). High incidence of rape, coupled with high HIV prevalence, presents significant concerns for parents and daughters alike in South Africa, where it is estimated that one in three women will be raped in their lifetime (Moffett 2006:129: see also Wood et al. 2007; Hampshire et al. 2011; Porter et al. 2010).

Play, Leisure and the Mobile Phone

The expansion of mobile phone use in sub-Saharan Africa over the last decade has been remarkable. Operator competition has provided important incentives to the poor (prepaid airtime in low denominations, free off-peak minutes and SMS etc.), while handset prices have reduced rapidly due to the availability of cheap Chinese imports. Youth ownership and (in particular) usage of phones has consequently boomed, with significant implications for youth leisure activities, particularly in urban locations (Porter et al. 2012; Porter et al. 2015).[6] During field research in the CM study, mobile phones (and, to a much lesser extent, computers), were found to figure substantially in many youth narratives: they clearly form an increasing component of youth leisure time/space, especially in urban locations. Younger (pre-teen) boys and girls tended to use their parents' and siblings' phones principally to play games, or listen to music, but among teenage children, direct communication by phone was of considerable significance, especially in South Africa, where phone ownership and use among young people had had most impact in terms of youth levels of ownership and use.

CM survey data provides a clear indication of levels of youth phone ownership and usage (Porter et al. 2012). Usage figures are particularly relevant because there is so much sharing of phones with family members and friends. In urban and peri-urban South Africa, in the week prior to

the survey, over two-thirds of all children interviewed had used a phone, as had over half the children living in rural with service settlements and over 40 % of children in remote rural locations. In Ghana, over one-third of children in urban areas and nearly one-quarter of children in peri-urban sites had used a phone over the same period, though figures in rural sites were extremely low, by contrast (3 % at most). In Malawi, the poorest of the study countries, usage figures were similarly low to those for Ghana, in rural areas, and in urban areas were substantially below them (i.e. well under one-quarter of children had ever used a phone).

Phone usage expanded considerably with age across all three countries, with maximum levels of usage in the (oldest) 15–18y age group, as might be expected. More intriguing is the gender pattern of reported use: higher for boys than girls in sites where the technology is relatively new (all of Malawi, rural Ghana); higher for girls than boys in higher usage areas (urban Ghana, all South African sites). It is also in South Africa alone, where girls' ownership of phones (23 %) exceeds that of boys (17 %). In the survey, children were asked about their principal reason for using a mobile phone in the past year. Just over 10 % of children in South Africa and under 5 % in Ghana and Malawi said playing games was their *principal* phone usage: the dominant reason given, in all three countries, was social/chatting to family and friends.

Qualitative data throws much more light on these bare statistics. Many pre-teen children clearly take any opportunity they can to play with phones owned by family members, whether simply experimenting with the buttons or actually accessing games or listening to music, but their use is widely constrained by owners' (who are especially concerned not to have the battery wasted in locations where there is no mains electricity). Older children have more access to phones, and chatting among friends by phone after school is a common pursuit. However, it is also among this age group that issues around phone use as a communication tool come to the fore: in particular, widespread parental concerns are expressed regarding its use to facilitate boy/girl courtship and associated sexual relationships.

The cell phone offers enormous potential for the 'connected' management of relations beneath the radar of adult surveillance (Licoppe 2004).

In South Africa, many interviews both with parents and children, referred to the use of mobile phones by teenage girls to escape parental control and surveillance in their leisure hours: *Children can use them to go behind your back. I think she (18-year-old granddaughter in her care) has a boyfriend … when we are sitting she would get out when she is receiving this*

anonymous call. Ever since she had a mobile phone she has been acting weird (grandmother, 66y, G/NW RS); *It makes young girls call their boyfriends. It happens that you are at home with your parents and your boyfriend calls you and tells you that he is near your home; you will then go to him. At the end of it all we start seeing a stomach growing—pregnancy!* (focus group, girl 14y, Eastern Cape RS).

An associated concern for many parents and carers in South Africa was the high level of ownership of mobile phones among girls (as noted in the survey), most of whom clearly had no personal resources to buy them. The use of gifts of mobile phones and airtime as a lure by older men—sugar daddies—in the pursuit of young girls was an issue raised by numerous adults: *Many children in the school have mobile phones … you wonder to yourself that many of these children come from poorer backgrounds. How do they afford a mobile phone? Yet they even carry those expensive phones. It is mystery to me … children are getting pregnant because of these phones* (woman junior secondary school teacher, Eastern Cape RS). These stories mirror similar cases reported widely across Africa (e.g. Burrell 2010 for Uganda; Smith 2006 for Nigeria; Archambault 2013 for Mozambique; Stark 2013 for Tanzania). In Ghana and Malawi, where phone ownership and usage was much lower than in South Africa, while similar concerns were expressed about the potential for girls to be seduced by men offering phone-related inducements, there was a lack of reference to specific cases at the time of this study: however, a considerable number have emerged subsequently.[7]

Mobility, Religion and the Construction of Social Capital

The final section of this chapter considers daily mobility in the context of young people's religious practices. Rituals, belief and spirituality have figured substantially in anthropological studies in Africa, but mostly outside the daily mobility lens. The CM survey provided some basic information on religion and on travel for religious activity. The vast majority of children interviewed in all sites profess themselves to be Christian. The highest proportion of Moslems was in Ghana (11 % overall, mostly located in the forest zone). Those who said they had no religion formed under 3 % of respondents in each country, with the highest proportion (5.2 %) in rural with services (RS) sites in Malawi. Those belonging to a 'traditional' religion were even fewer, at under 2 % of respondents in each country, with

the highest proportion in South Africa (still just over 2 %) in rural with service and peri-urban sites.

Children were asked how many days, in the week prior to the CM survey, they had travelled to a mosque, church or other site of religious teaching: in Ghana, over three-quarters of children had been at least once (with little variation across settlement type), compared to only around half in Malawi and South Africa (in both cases with highest proportions in urban sites). The higher propensity to travel to church in Ghana and in urban sites in Malawi and South Africa probably, in part, reflects the shorter time/distance of such journeys to the place of worship—three-quarters of the journeys in Ghana, for instance, took under 30 minutes, compared to two-thirds in Malawi and just half in South Africa. In remote rural sites in Malawi and South Africa, there is often no church of the respondent's denomination and the walk to church may take an hour or more in such cases. Even in urban areas, however, the walk to church can be long and potentially dangerous, as we will see below. Significantly more girls than boys had travelled to a religious meeting in all three countries but, across all 24 CM research sites, a majority of both boys and girls always need permission to make a journey to the church or mosque.[8]

Qualitative data puts a little flesh on this rather skeletal picture. In Malawi and South Africa, a number of young men referred, in passing, to making journeys for traditional initiation ceremonies, but the tenor of comments around initiation is generally negative: *boys rush to go to initiation ceremonies, even if their parents don't allow them … When they come from these initiation ceremonies, they don't listen to what their parents tell them. They wouldn't want anyone to direct them or advise them* (31y father of two boys, 4y and 9y, Blantyre PU); *after initiation (boys) are obliged to go for dances whether it is school time or not; they have to go. Therefore they fail to go to school or even to write exams* (girl 15y, Lilongwe PU); *in no instance was I allowed to go to the initiation school because there are some children who die (there)* (boy 14y, Eastern Cape PU); *many boys from our school go to traditional school which is in winter … when they come back they have attitude problem because they think they are much older and they start smoking dagga, they lose respect for others* (boy in 16–18y focus group, high school pupils, Gauteng/NorthWest PU).

In urban and rural areas, weekly religious worship appears to provide many children with a respite from the daily round of domestic tasks, though the walk to church can be lengthy and tiring. The journey to church is usually made together with other siblings; sometimes with par-

ents or grandparents. Additional journeys may be made on weekdays, especially in urban areas: choir practices after school, for instance, may require another three visits or more per week, according to some Malawian and Ghanaian girls. An 18-year-old schoolgirl in urban Blantyre observed how she attends intercongregational youth fellowship gatherings, where youth groups travel to sister churches. Although she has no problem getting permission for these activities, it is clear from other interviews that, for some children, church activities present a good opportunity for interaction with the opposite sex without incurring parental disapproval. Apart from school, they may be the most important youth meeting points.

Church or mosque has much potential for young people to build social networks beyond the family, especially if they need to establish a reputation to enable them to participate in activities where community assurances of probity are likely to be important, such as trade or microfinance (as observed by Jones and Chant 2009) though there is occasional reference to certain churches not allowing attendance at traditional ceremonies which might affect wider network construction in some regions. In rural Blantyre district, this seemed to affect the Seven Day Adventists: 1 father with 2 children, an 11-year-old boy and a 15-year-old girl, for instance, said that his children do not attend social events because of their religious beliefs. Consequently, it is a long time since they last attended a wedding, or any social event, where there was music and dancing.

Little detail was reported or observed about journeys made in connection with religious worship, but one interview from a peri-urban site in South Africa stands out because it presents a horrifying picture of a rape, on the way to church. This came from a 17-year-old girl when she was being interviewed by one of the young researchers, a girl about the same age, in Gauteng: *I was raped going to the church. The man said to me, 'Please sister, can you wait for me?' … He said, 'Keep your mouth shut until I say you can open your mouth. After that he raped me and he beat me.'* This story emphasises, once again, a key reason why many parents—and girls themselves—are so very concerned about lone travel by girls, whatever the journey purpose.

Conclusion

Young people's play/leisure clearly sits in a different space in sub-Saharan Africa from the one it occupies in the contemporary Global North. It is very often intertwined with the journey from school, or with a growing

initiation into work activities, in ways that are entirely at odds with current Western views of childhood and the place of play within this phase of life. In Africa, play is often observably a mobile, moving feast—something to be fitted in on the way to other places and activities, rather than being situated in a fixed space, dedicated to this activity alone. It is perhaps unsurprising then that playgrounds are so rare, outside the school compound.

In the chapter introduction, the question was raised at whether and (if so) how a focus on mobility adds to current approaches to the investigation of 'play' and leisure. On reflection, it was sometimes through observations on the move, accompanying young people on their daily journeys, that preliminary ideas about everyday play and leisure activities in the community were picked up. However, these generally came from casual observations of *other* young people along the way, not the accompanied subject. Mostly, when young people were being accompanied on a journey (especially by an adult researcher), they tended to focus on discussing what they perceived to be significant issues around school and work travel; they were very unlikely on such occasions to break the journey to play, though they often pointed to places where—on other occasions—they might stop to play or chat with their friends. Perhaps there should have been more emphasis on accompanying young people on those serendipitous movements associated with play or visits made to places such as friends' houses with a purely social purpose. However, given the need for prior parental permissions, these were generally requested (and would be easier to obtain) when the proposed walk had a clearly defined purpose and a specific destination with obvious significance to children and community life. Nevertheless, casual observations around play and leisure, gathered during mobile interviews or other travel around and within the settlements, have clearly contributed to the accretion of contextual understanding crucial to sound data collection and analysis.

Observations and enquiries about play and leisure—whether undertaken in mobile or sedentary contexts—tended to incorporate attention to both gender and age. The transition from the types of play common among pre-pubescent children—typically observed as active games of catch, running, skipping, ball games (though imaginative games are also reported)—to the 'leisure' activities pursued by an older group of young people has been picked out at various points in this chapter. As children grow older, gendered patterns of play become increasingly differentiated and, as girls approach pubescence, their spaces for play and leisure are increasingly constrained. At this time, in both urban and rural areas,

daily mobility becomes increasingly intertwined with issues of sexuality and parental fears of children's (but especially girls') potential promiscuity. Girls and boys may both begin to look for leisure spaces where they can meet the opposite sex and have fun, perhaps including experimenting sexually, without attracting parent/carer and community attention and condemnation. Journeys home from school, choir practice and community activities like weddings are all potential sites of flirtation and more. Boys in rural Malawi spoke about the fun of journeys home from school in the dry season, when they hope to entice girls into the long grass. While boys' experiments often appear to be tacitly condoned, girls are seen by their elders as vulnerable and consequently increasingly watched and their mobility constrained and controlled. Surveillance becomes intense, especially in rural contexts where it is more easily achieved (at least within the confines of the village) than in the city.

Indeed, the reduced surveillance and the liberation offered by urban contexts is, unsurprisingly, a key attraction of the city for many young rural migrants:

> *there are lots of things happening here and everybody is busy … I am a free person here, nobody watches the moves I make here. In Thyolo (my birthplace) people are always noticing what you are doing while here everybody is busy doing their things.*
> (man 22y, life history, Malawi U)

In rural areas, where an ensemble of mechanisms can be brought more easily into play, gossip and myth help inculcate self-surveillance (Foucault 1980: 71). While boys are discursively presented as 'strong' and 'brave', girls are perceived not only to be 'weak', but also easily persuadable and potentially promiscuous (Porter 2011; Porter et al. 2011). The bottom line, of course, in urban and rural areas alike, is that boys do not get pregnant. Night time 'roaming about' is thus particularly highly censured, especially among girls: it is more difficult to police and is widely associated with promiscuity. In most urban sites, television now provides a major source of leisure activity for those older children whose parents and carers ban them from bars, video houses and nightclubs. In rural areas, radio often plays a similar role. And into this well-established pattern of parent/carer—child cat-and-mouse—the mobile phone has introduced a new agentic tool for obfuscation and deceit, in pursuit not only of fun but also—potentially—of routeways to a new, more exciting life.

Notes

1. Social capital, in this chapter, is taken to be 'the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Holland et al. 2007 citing Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 119).
2. A recent example is Benwell's 2009 Cape Town study with (mostly white) children.
3. Interestingly, in Western contexts the walk to school as a space for play and fun is now beginning to attract attention as a route to improving child health (Romero 2015).
4. Respondent names throughout the book are pseudonyms.
5. Ghanaian term for the **greater cane rat** (*Thryonomys swinderianus*).
6. The pace of phone adoption has continued, prompting further research: www.dur.ac.uk/child.phones/.
7. Phones research in progress at the time of writing.
8. In terms of religious affiliation, while a lower proportion of Christians than Moslems interviewed attended a religious meeting in Malawi, a higher proportion than Moslems did so in Ghana and South Africa.

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CHAPTER 6

Mobility and Health: Young People's Health-Seeking Behaviour and Physical Access to Health Services

Introduction

Chapter 4 (on work) has already raised some key issues around young people's mobility and potential health concerns with reference to excessive load carrying. This chapter is more specifically focused on young people's access and travel to health services (for personal consultation and treatment), but situates the discussion, where feasible, with reference to the wider therapeutic landscapes (material, symbolic and virtual) within which their health-care practices and experiences are played out (Leach et al. 2008; Hampshire et al. 2011).

So far as detailed studies of young people's health-seeking behaviour and associated physical travel to health services in Africa are concerned, the published literature is sparse. Of particular value are a small number of studies which show the importance of emergency transport for sick children (e.g. Duke 2003) and the significant role that many school-aged children in Africa take, regarding responsibility for their own health care and treatment (without necessarily consulting parents or carers: e.g. Geissler et al. 2000 and Prince et al. 2001 for Kenya; Geissler et al. 2001 also with reference to Uganda; Hampshire et al. 2011 and Owusu and Amoako-Sakyi 2011, both for Ghana, based on data from the CM study). However, with the exception of the latter two studies, young people's actual movements to access health services—whether through physical or virtual mobility—and the ensuing outcomes have received little attention in African contexts. This is hardly surprising, since it is only in recent

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years that health researchers have started to give intensive attention to the potential significance of mobility and transport constraints in Africa for health outcomes (and mostly with reference to maternal health).[1]

Unlike the regular daily movements which characterise young people's mobility for education and work purposes, health-seeking is usually a less frequent motivation for young people's travel: health information, advice and treatment tend to be sought only at occasional (unpredictable) intervals, when sickness, pregnancy or wider health concerns are assessed as of sufficient significance to merit external advice or intervention beyond the family sphere. Widespread poverty and the state's limited ability to provide adequate, effective health care in Africa are key contextual elements within which young people and/or their carers must make decisions regarding whether, when and where to seek health advice and treatment. Gender and age factors also come into play. Many children beyond the age of about 10 years—especially girls—take active roles in domestic work, sibling care and income generation, yet have extremely limited access to financial resources. Many girls also experience childbirth at an early age, such that there is a raised probability of obstetric complications.

Before young people (or family members, on their behalf) make a decision as to whether or not a health-seeking journey should be undertaken, a range of factors may have to be taken into account: the distance to what is deemed the most appropriate (or, at least, adequate) health service; available access to and cost of transport (for longer journeys, and especially if the child is young and must be accompanied); the availability of an older person to accompany younger children; the opportunity costs of travel-time to the health centre (versus other essential activities) for both the child and any accompanying adult; the potential financial costs of consultation and treatment; possibly also, issues such as negative attitudes of health staff. Given that many common medicines (whether appropriate, or not, for the purpose for which they are obtained) can be purchased close to home, over the counter at local grocery-stores, or in the market place, these (or home herbal treatments) are, unsurprisingly, likely to present a first line of action when health care is required in constrained circumstances.

Another factor of growing significance in the health-seeking behaviour of young people is increasing access to mobile phones. While this chapter focuses on physical mobility in health contexts, the virtual mobility afforded by the mobile phone (discussed in Chap. 5) is considered briefly in the concluding section. Young people predominantly use phones

for social/chatting to family and friends, but the potential of the mobile phone, as a source of health information, advice and assistance, is increasingly coming into play in both rural and urban areas (Hampshire et al. 2011, 2015).

The intersection of poverty with poor physical access to health services can be extremely pernicious, especially where children are concerned. Limited mobility of mothers and health staff, and high transport and time costs to health services from remote locations, for instance, will contribute to low immunisation rates (Bosu et al. 1997; Hampshire 2002; Metcalf et al. 2015). The lack of vaccination protection may then expose young children to risk of serious illness and death, especially in areas with poor sanitation and water supplies, characteristic of those rural contexts. Delays in access to health care, associated with distance and lack of emergency transport, is particularly dangerous for young children, especially if they contract cerebral malaria or meningitis (e.g. Meerman et al. 2005). In a study in Malawi, the majority of children (presumed) suffering from these illnesses died while waiting for transport, or within a few hours of delayed arrival at hospitals (Cullinan and Pieterick 1998).

Fieldwork in off-road areas of northern Nigeria from the late 1970s and in Gomoa (Ghana) from the mid-1990s demonstrated the scale of this problem. In rural Borno and on the Jos Plateau (where there was much evidence of child malnutrition), visits under Nigeria's then-current immunisation programmes were extremely sporadic, typhoid was common, government clinics were few in number (and rarely had drugs) and transport services were very sparse—inevitably, infant deaths and deaths from complications in child-birth (especially among very young girls) were shockingly common (Porter 1997, 2002a, b). Similarly, in the four off-road study villages in Gomoa (Ghana), many children suffered from a range of water-borne diseases (associated with lack of access to clean drinking water), lack of vaccination and a tendency across the villages to take sick children to their nearest basic (state) clinic (in this case between 5 and 9 km distance) only when they were seriously ill. Home herbal remedies, patent medicines from the market or a local hawker, and traditional and spiritual healers were first ports of call before contemplating a long walk to the clinic (and the distinct possibility that the necessary drugs, personnel or equipment would be lacking there) (Porter et al. 2011). These studies pointed to the importance of exploring physical mobility and its impact on young people's health-seeking behaviour. The CM study, across 24 sites, has provided the opportunity to investigate a wider range of health issues

in diverse contexts. The findings are discussed below, firstly using survey data, then with reference to the qualitative research.

Variations in Health-Seeking and Associated Travel from CM Survey Data

Young people require access to health services for a wide diversity of reasons, both curative and preventive in nature: in Ghana and Malawi, malaria and diarrhoea (and associated digestive problems) were reported as the most common illnesses precipitating health-seeking travel, while in South Africa respiratory problems dominated. This section draws on the CM survey data to examine the broad patterns of young people's physical access to health services, whether biomedical or traditional.

Table 6.1 shows the variations between countries and across the different study settlement types regarding young people's reported use of health services (and thus associated travel). Use of health services is clearly higher in South Africa than in Malawi, and lowest in Ghana. However, in Ghana and Malawi, there is also a distinct difference between urban and rural areas, in that rural-based young people are far less likely to use facilities than their urban counterparts. This is as might be expected, since health service provision is far sparser in rural areas and average distances to the nearest service point much greater. Young people in remote sites usually have to travel outside their home settlement for treatment, especially if they intend to use biomedical health services (as opposed to consulting local traditional healers or purchasing over-the-counter medicines, such as painkillers, in a local market/store for self-medication). So far as gender is concerned, in all three countries, more girls reported using health services

Table 6.1 Reported use of health services (at any type of health facility) in the last 12 months

	Ghana (%) N = 943	*Malawi (%) N = 940*	*South Africa (%) N = 859*
Remote rural	13.5	35.7	56.1
Rural with services	15.4	36.2	55.2
Peri-urban	30.8	60.6	57.9
Urban	42.8	53.2	52.6
All settlements	26.5	46.3	55.3

than boys (29 % of girls, 23 % of boys in Ghana; 48 % of girls, 44 % of boys in Malawi; 60 % of girls, 48 % of boys in South Africa).[2]

When young people were asked in the survey about whether they faced *travel difficulties (excluding costs)* in using health services when they were ill (Table 6.2), unsurprisingly, this was more often raised as an issue in rural than urban sites but, overall, was much more of a constraint in Malawi than either Ghana or South Africa. This relates to the fact that motorised transport is much more available in Ghanaian and South African rural sites than it is in Malawi (see Chap. 8). Regarding gender, interestingly, slightly fewer girls (14 %) than boys (19 %) reported travel difficulties in Ghana, and similarly fewer girls (36 %) than boys (48 %) in Malawi, but slightly more girls (20 %) than boys (19 %) in South Africa. In Malawi and Ghana, this goes against typical travel patterns, whereby girls are more likely to experience problems than boys (Chaps. 7 and 8). There was no significant difference in perception of travel difficulties as a problem by age.

C*ost of travel* as an impediment to accessing health services followed a very similar pattern to difficulties of travel in Ghana and South Africa, but was reported as a much lesser issue than difficulty of travel throughout the Malawi sites, presumably because there is simply no motorised transport to access: walking (without monetary cost[3]) is the dominant mode of transport. In all Malawi sites, over half of young people had walked to the health centre on their most recent visit.

User fees payable to see a doctor, or to pay for drugs, are often found to be the most significant constraint on access to health services in Africa, substantially outweighing travel difficulties and costs (Airey 1992; AU/UNECA 2005; Porter et al. 2013). The CM survey shows this was also the case across all the Ghanaian research sites (where 36 % raised this as an issue, and the problem outweighed travel difficulties, even in the

Table 6.2 Percentage of young people c. 9–18y reporting difficulties in travel to health services

	Ghana (%) N = 922	*Malawi (%) N = 990*	*South Africa (%) N = 877*
Remote rural	34.7	56.5	38.9
Rural with services	27.2	57.3	13.7
Peri-urban	7.4	31.3	17.9
Urban	4.0	18.0	6.6
All settlements	16.8	40.8	19.8

remote rural sites). The annual insurance premiums required for inclusion in Ghana's National Health Insurance Scheme are beyond many poor people.[4] By contrast, health service fees were only reported as an issue among a very few young people in Malawi (4 %) and South Africa (5 %): in both countries, primary care at government health facilities is free. While there was no significant gender difference regarding reportage of health service costs as a problem, in any country, in Ghana there was a significant increase in concern about health costs as a problem with age, which can be attributed to increasing requirements of young people, especially in the 15–18 age group, to contribute to making such payments.

Young people were also asked about other potential constraints on use of biomedical health services. *Poor quality of biomedical health service* was only raised as an issue in Malawi (for around one-fifth of respondents), while under 10 % of respondents in all countries indicated a *preference for alternative (traditional) treatments*. However, the qualitative data discussed below suggests that parental preferences, wider cultural factors and widespread use of biomedical and traditional treatments in tandem lead to higher usage than this figure suggests. There is an ample literature observing the way traditional healing concepts and practices run alongside the biomedical model, with high demand for traditional/faith healing services even in urban areas with good access to biomedical services (e.g. Lwanda 2003, for Malawi; Friend-du Preez et al. 2009, for South Africa; Hampshire and Owusu 2013, for Ghana).

Lacking someone to accompany them to a health service was rarely listed as a significant constraint in Ghana or South Africa, though in Malawi it was raised as an issue by 14 % of girls and 18 % of boys (yet without any significant difference by age group). Here it probably relates to heavy dependence on pedestrian transport and consequently lengthy journey times. Across the 24 survey sites, around one-fifth of young people said they had been accompanied on their most recent visit to a health facility—this included the vast majority of 9–14-year-olds; two-thirds (Ghana and Malawi) and one-half (South Africa) of 15- to 18-year-olds.

Narratives Around Health-Seeking

Interview data from the CM study offer further insights into health issues in individual research sites. Strong narratives around young people's health-seeking journeys are rare, however, perhaps because these are irregular movements, but also because illness is such an emotive issue that

respondents' emphasis tends to fall on treatments and their outcome. For similar reasons, it was not possible to accompany any child on their journey to a health centre. Nonetheless, in-depth interviews with children, their parents and health workers, plus focus groups and life histories, add some texture to the patterns outlined above.

Narratives from Rural Africa

The rural research sites are obviously particularly disadvantaged in terms of access to health services: this section illustrates how the young people who live there cope with health issues in every day. There were no health services in any of the remote rural sites, but even within so-called 'rural with services' (RS) settlements, many children lived some kilometres from the nearest regularly operating health facility. By the time they reach their teens, their lives and life chances may have already been adversely affected as a consequence. Life here can be precarious, as in-depth interviews with children and their carers in all three countries illustrate (see also Hampshire et al. 2009 re Niger).

Rural Ghana: In rural Ghana (where Table 6.1 indicates particularly limited access to health services among young people), there are many health hazards. In the CM survey, diarrhoea (with other gastro-intestinal problems) was the most common reason for the most recent use of health services, followed by malaria. Both conditions can require emergency treatment, but emergencies pose particular difficulties in the remote rural sites, since here there are no government health facilities and no motorised transport is based in the settlements. In these sites, in emergencies, people of all ages are carried to the nearest main road, where it will be necessary to then wait for a passing vehicle. The only alternative is to cycle to the nearest village with motorised transport (c. 25 km in the forest zone; only about 6 km in the coastal zone) and bring a vehicle back to the village.

In the rural with service settlements, conditions are little better. In the coastal zone the nearest government clinic is 11 km away. In the forest zone, there is a government clinic but it is only open once a week (on market day), when a community nurse travels in from town and provides basic treatments (including some anti- and post-natal services and family planning). Here, in emergencies, it is usually necessary to transport patients directly (25 km) to town, but because the road to town is unpaved, the cost per kilometre is high and doubles at night. The recent availability of a small number of mobile phones in this village means that there is some

possibility of calling for transport in an emergency, *but the issue is whether you will get a driver who is prepared to drive from [the city] to this village in the middle of the night* (father with small children, RS).

Unsurprisingly, there is a widespread tendency to first buy over-the-counter medicines at the village grocery-store, or try to treat the sickness with local herbs. Frank[5] was on his way to the farm when he encountered a snake: *The snake bit me twice on the leg so my head-load fell down. My aunt came for me (and) used fresh palm frond to tie … my leg … They caught a frog, added some (herbal) medicine to the spot and pressed (the) live frog against that spot for some time* (boy 17y, coastal zone). In the forest zone a middle-aged man reflected on his actions when one of his 10-year-old twin sons had fever: *I immediately prepared some local herbs for him to drink. It was my father who taught me the herbs. My desire was to take him to the hospital, but I did not have money … He was fine after two days. (I use herbs as) first aid when there is an emergency situation, especially those that happen in the night. We have to wait till the following morning for a vehicle to carry the person to the hospital. We cannot do anything aside the herbs. That is all that we have to cure illnesses. If the person is destined to die, he or she will die.*

Many references were also made to consulting traditional and spiritual healers, especially in the coastal villages (and particularly if the first line of treatment did not work). This often appears to be a highly lucrative business, but with small children is potentially very risky. In the forest zone RS settlement, a middle-aged woman who deals in bush-meat, talked about moving recently into treating convulsions in small children. She had had successes, she said, with five children in recent months, but emphasised that she had also 'rejected' two cases because of the severity of their condition and was clearly wary of intervening (or, perhaps, of *saying* she intervened) in potentially dangerous cases: one child was sent directly to the city hospital, while the other, who had fallen sick on market day, she referred to the nurse in attendance at the clinic that day.

Most of those giving birth in these villages depend on the local TBA. In the forest zone rural with services (RS) settlement this was a woman of about 50, who had received some training from Ghana Health Service. Without prompting, she identified her main problem as lack of transport availability, recounting the sad death of a 15-year-old primary 6 girl, 3 years earlier, following obstructed labour: *I needed a car badly to take her to the hospital (but couldn't find one). She gave birth eventually, the following morning, but the pain was too much for her to bear.*

Rural Malawi: In rural Malawi many themes echo those encountered in Ghana's rural sites. A review of conditions in the Lilongwe zone study settlements will suffice, since conditions in rural Blantyre are very similar.

The remote study village (RR) has no government health facilities, though a monthly mobile clinic visits a nearby village, and there is a TBA and a grocery-store selling drugs. The nearest permanent health centre is 10 km distant, and vehicles rarely traverse the track which links to it: in the wet season the route is particularly difficult, even by bicycle. The study village with services (RS) also has no permanent government health facility, though there is a monthly mobile clinic for under-5s and this village is just 5 km from the nearest health centre. Here there are also a number of TBAs, traditional healers and grocery-stores selling basic drugs. Hospital treatment from either settlement requires a lengthy journey to the paved road, where motorised transport can be picked up for travel into Lilongwe city, 33 km away, but this is costly and rarely undertaken, unless occasioned by serious illness, when referral is by (free) ambulance from the health centre. Not all children here are vaccinated, in part because it is difficult, in the rains, to reach the clinic. In emergencies, if they can afford it, people hire ox-carts (which are very slow) or bicycles (a faster mode, if it is feasible to carry the patient in this way) to transport children to the clinic. Otherwise, they may simply walk, carrying the child on their back. The Nyau add to travel dangers in the dry season, if met *en route* (see Chap. 5).

While the (free) government clinics are patronised, both parents and children expressed discontent with the limited clinic opening hours (mornings only), rude staff and shortages of medicines. Children said they are refused treatment if they attend without an adult, and even when parents are present, staff attitudes can be extremely off-putting: *some doctors just shout; when my mother took me to the clinic the nurse shouted at my mother, because we got (there) late* (focus group, boys 10–14y, RR). One 18-year-old primary school boy described how, when he had malaria, he was taken by cycle to the health centre by his uncle, but was only given aspirin because they had no medication left for malaria, so his uncle then had to travel many miles further to obtain it. There were also a number of allegations regarding illegal sale of clinic drugs by staff to local traders. There is one private clinic in the vicinity, but this is further from the villages than the government clinic, and although treatment is considered to be much better, it is costly.

In these circumstances, and especially given the distance to the nearest government clinic, self-medication with drugs purchased from the

grocery-store, or home herbal treatments, are often the first line of action, as in rural Ghana (though expired medicine is reportedly a hazard when purchasing drugs from the grocery-stores). Mary, a 17-year-old secondary school girl who had been suffering from a severe headache recounted her successful treatment with herbs: *my aunt gave me mfutsa (leaves commonly used in traditional medicine) which she administered in my temples. She used a razor blade to make cuts in my temples, then crushed the leaves and then put some in the cuts.* Subsequently, however, when Mary had a headache while at school (located in the same settlement as the clinic), she went directly to the health centre because, she pointed out, it was in easy reach (but possibly also because the school directed her to go there).

Traditional healers in the vicinity offer another alternative to government health facilities and are considered extremely important for healing a range of perceived witchcraft-induced illnesses, that is, especially when no clear cause of illness can be discerned: *if you suspect being bewitched, you go to the traditional healer* (fostered schoolboy 15y, RS). They are also consulted when people feel they need to protect themselves from witchcraft. One 15-year-old out-of-school boy who farms and does occasional *ganyu* (casual labouring) work in the remote rural village, explained how, when he had a cough recently, he walked straight over (with his parents) to a nearby village where a traditional healer operates, for a consultation. However, when he had malaria, his parents made him go directly to the government health centre on his father's bicycle, because they assessed this as potentially more serious than the cough.

Rural South Africa: Here, health-seeking revolves, most commonly, around treatment for respiratory infections. HIV/AIDS prevalence is also high (as in Malawi) but generally subsumed under other illnesses when respondents talk about their access to health services: as one woman community health worker observed, *most are in denial of HIV status.* One man, when asked about the social events that his children attended, remarked despondently, *There are only funerals—almost every weekend. People are dying like flies* (Eastern Cape, RR). Many rural households in this region are headed by older people as a consequence of migration to the cities or AIDS-related deaths.

Unlike the situation in rural Malawi and rural Ghana, the rural service (RS) centres in South Africa have clinics but, given the dispersed nature of all the rural settlements, many people still face long walks to reach them. In the *Eastern Cape* remote rural study settlement (RR), the nearest clinic is located 9 km away (in the RS settlement) and the nearest hospital is

30 km distant. There is, however, a weekly mobile clinic which provides ante-natal services, and a few village-based health workers with a particular remit to support AIDS patients. Many people consult the numerous local traditional healers when they deem this appropriate: *they will cast out an evil spirit* (grandmother c. 60y, caring for 4 children under 18). Much recourse is also made to local herbal remedies, whether villages have a clinic or not. This tends to be the first point of action, as opposed to purchase of over-the-counter medicines because, although patent medicines are available at local grocery-stores, in these highly dispersed settlements, even the nearest grocery outlets can be a long walk away (and there were similar complaints to those in Malawi regarding sale of expired drugs). The 9 km walk from the remote Eastern Cape rural site to the clinic, by the most direct route, requires a long walk across uplands, through dense woodland. When streams are in spate it is extremely difficult—and potentially dangerous—to traverse this route (which is also the main path which children take daily to school, see Chap. 3).

Sick people of all ages in these villages have to be taken to the clinic by ox- or donkey-cart, wheelbarrow, or are carried. Poverty levels are such that transport fares are beyond the reach of the majority of families, except in dire emergencies, when their preference is to go directly to hospital and by-pass the clinic (where facilities are limited). However, not only are taxi costs high, but children are expected to pay the adult fare. One woman observed that, while she manages to take her children to town when they are seriously ill (as when her 10-year-old son contracted chicken-pox recently), for others this is impossible: *young children die unnecessarily in our community.* Another woman, a widow with three young children (the eldest a boy of 10), who lives in very precarious circumstances, observed bitterly that she had lost faith in government*: It is because of distance that we cannot access clinic. We have been forgotten. They think we don't exist. The only people important to them are those living on the road*. She noted, in particular, the difficulties faced by disabled children, in the absence of wheelchairs.

When field work was being conducted in the remote rural site, the bridge connecting the village with a just-motorable (albeit longer) track to the main road had collapsed, so that emergency transport was unable to reach it. Some could call for an ambulance from the nearest urban centre by phone, since many more families had access here to mobile phones than in Ghana and Malawi. However, they then had to carry the patient down to the ambulance which, on occasions, reportedly took 5–7 hours to

arrive: *Our souls as parents would be relieved if the clinic and hospital were closer to us. Our children would not die in our arms* (grandmother-carer).

Complaints about the clinic echoed those heard in rural Malawi: shortages of staff, long waits in the sun, rudeness of some nurses to patients and limited opening hours. The story of a 22-year-old woman, in charge of six younger siblings since her mother's death, including a child of seven who is being treated for TB at the clinic, indicates the problems which can arise: *You go to the clinic and you wait there in the sun for the entire day without any help. The next thing they tell you is that 'come back tomorrow' … The nurses say they have enough patients for the day and that they won't be taking any extra. I tried to explain to them that I had brought a child but they refused to take my story. We walked … In the shop they sell expired medicines. They will make us sick. I use home remedies for minor illnesses such as colds and flu. For that you don't need to go to the clinic … My mother used to take leaves from the bush and boil them and then make us drink the liquid (and I now do the same)*. The clinic is open from 7 am to 4 pm (weekdays only), and women are afraid to walk through the forest. Certainly, no one travels alone, child or adult. When Sipho, an 11-year-old boy was sick with influenza, it was necessary for his older (19-year-old) sister to accompany him: *It started with a fever, and then they brought the medicine lemon for him at the shops … (then) he went to the clinic with his sister and they gave him a cough mixture and tablets … They had to walk to the clinic. They are used to walking … although it is not safe to walk through the bushes, we have no choice … my health is too weak that I can accompany any child to the clinic unless there is real need* (so younger children are generally sent with the older girls) (grandmother-carer, late 60s).

In *Gauteng/North West Province*, similar health problems prevail in rural areas to those in Eastern Cape. The nearest government clinic to the remote study settlement is c. 21 km distant and only open in day-time on weekdays; it sometimes runs out of drugs. Fortuitously, it is also the location of the high school attended by many local children. There is a bus service each morning at 6 am which runs into this town, but if people miss the bus and take the second daily service, they reportedly arrive at the clinic too late to get attention. On one occasion, when one of the child researchers on the CM project was bitten by a snake, he had to wait until morning for the bus, because there was no ambulance service available in the area. The clinic appears to be well-regarded, but the facility manager was concerned that teenagers (in her view, especially boys) seemed to be reluctant to attend, despite the contraceptives freely available there.

As in Eastern Cape, many households are female-headed, especially by older women, and unemployment rates are very high, so few people have resources to own a vehicle or pay for transport. Children have to be accompanied if they attend the clinic (at least the initial visit, according to a number of respondents). In the middle of the month, parents tend to lack funds to pay to travel with their children by bus, so young people simply have to *struggle with their health problems* (grandfather-carer, c. 60y). There is also a mobile clinic which comes once each month to the remote rural settlement, except when heavy rains make the road impassable, but it reportedly suffers serious shortages of equipment and staff. Nonetheless, it provides vaccination and contraceptive services, the latter well used by young girls (but again, disturbingly, not boys). The nearest hospital is around 60 km distant, and requires referral from the clinic.

There are many traditional healers living in this area, though they seem to keep a lower profile than in Eastern Cape and children reportedly only visit them if accompanied by adults: *such doctors are normally associated with witchcraft. Many people go to these doctors day and night but will never tell you … There is a lot of stigma around the use of traditional doctors* (schoolboy 17y, RR). The clinic practice manager confirmed the widespread recourse to, and belief in, traditional healers: *the clinics are normally considered secondary while the traditional ways are primary. This means that when there is a disease in the family, some people would rather start by trying traditional methods first* (even though the traditional practitioners charge, whereas the clinic is free).

There is also much recourse to home herbal treatments: *I went to the traditional doctor (an old friend who did not charge) to check whether (the illness) was man-made (i.e. witchcraft) or not. I was told that it was Xilungulela (a digestive disorder) and, because I knew how to treat it (with herbs), I was able to help him* (elderly man caring for 11-year-old grandson). A mother with three children similarly observed, If *my child gets a cold fever in the evening or on a weekend, I do not need to wait for the next time to go to a clinic; I would prepare some traditional medicine to take away the cold. In most cases, my children heal faster, even before I take them to the clinic. If the sickness persists, I then take them to a clinic, but it is rare for such to happen … traditional medicines save me time and money … if I had to wait for a mobile clinic that only comes once in a month, my children's sickness would have developed into something worse.* If the woman decides her 9-year-old son needs to attend the clinic, she sends him with her 17-year-

old daughter, who is a pupil in the town and has a monthly bus ticket, in order to save on transport fares.

In the rural with service settlement (RS) there is also no clinic (just a primary school) and conditions are very similar to that in the remote rural settlement. The nearest clinic is just c. 7 km distant, but the nearest hospital is 70 km away. As in the remote rural settlement, inhabitants depend mainly on the local buses (though they are slightly more frequent here). Occasionally, in an emergency, or if they have no money for transport, mothers said they walk to the clinic. However, they meet long queues and medical supplies sometimes run out. The facility manager here observed (as in the remote rural site) that it is mostly girls who attend and collect male condoms for their boyfriends. Here, as at other clinics in this region, a mobile phone had been provided for clinic staff, but since phone networks in the rural settlements are poor, and there was little likelihood of an ambulance reaching patients rapidly, reported phone contact with the clinic was low, despite the free 112 number available to call an ambulance.

Narratives Around Health-Seeking in Urban Africa

Table 6.1 showed that, in urban and peri-urban study sites in Ghana and Malawi, there are far higher proportions of visits to health services by young people (well over 50 %) than in the respective rural sites, whereas in South Africa the variation in usage between rural and urban sites is much smaller. Qualitative data, however, again suggest the likely complexity of factors influencing individual decisions regarding whether to access health services and which kind of service, in specific places at specific times.

Urban Ghana: In the poor densely populated areas of urban and peri-urban Ghana, the main illnesses requiring treatment were reported as head/neck-aches, malaria and diarrhoea, that is, similar to rural Ghana. Also (as in the rural sites), pregnancy among very young teenagers (and associated obstetric problems) is reportedly a major issue. A peri-urban settlement leader in the coastal zone attributed this to poverty, lack of knowledge of reproductive health, peer pressure and cultural influences: *At a certain age, if you don't give birth after JSS and you are not in SSS and without a child or pregnancy, you are considered barren so the girls give birth as early as possible*. A local TBA confirmed the high rate of pregnancy among young girls but says she will not risk treating them, because they *may have not got well-developed pelvis* and complications are common.

In the urban sites, there are nearby government hospitals, and various private clinics, so physical access to health facilities, in theory, is far better than in the rural sites. Even so, first recourse—as in the rural areas—is often to self-medication with home-prepared herbal treatments, or over-the-counter medicines from drug stores, which are numerous in the urban areas (though rather fewer in the peri-urban sites).

Drug stores offer the advantages of proximity and lengthy opening hours: *one can just walk in to buy drugs, unlike hospitals or clinics* (girl 13y, coastal zone U). For those without an NHIS card, or who do not want to spend time queueing at the government hospital, and without experience and confidence in using herbal remedies, they are the first line of treatment, unless the condition is considered serious*: I had a severe catarrh that led to some serious migraines. I went to the drug store to buy some medicine … I narrated my situation and the druggist gave me the medicine to use. It worked perfectly … I did not go to the hospital because I did not have money* (girl 18y unemployed, forest zone PU). However, being able to identify the severity of a condition is not necessarily straightforward and dependence on drug stores can then be dangerous: *some of the children die because the parents don't seek early treatment … some of them are too young but give birth, so they are not aware of certain symptoms and therefore rely on drug stores till they lose the child* (mother with young children, forest zone PU). Some stores employ qualified pharmacists; one observed how they provide advice on STDs, and are registered by NHIS as an outlet. However, she was reluctant to attend to any child under the age of 16 coming alone and noted these were few, in any case, *due to the fear of the cost and the inability to pay* (forest zone PU).

Home herbal treatments are also widely employed and may enable even lower-cost treatment than at the drug-store. In a focus group with teenage girls in the forest zone, there was general agreement that fewer people resort to herbal treatments now, because of the NHIS. However, all of them had received herbal treatment at home for fever, and it appeared that moving between biomedical and traditional treatment was common, according to circumstances and, in particular, available resources. Thus, a 14-year-old girl who has no funds, either for school or medicines, has to rely on herbal treatments: *I am suffering from fever. I am managing it through the drinking of a herbal preparation made of teak leaves and some other leaves. I learnt about this preparation from my grandmother.* She collects the leaves from the family's farm on the city periphery. Similarly, another girl around the same age (this time a schoolgirl) described how,

when she experienced fever, *my aunt prepared some herbs for me to drink. I was fine and healthy again the following morning … I wish I had been taken to the hospital, but my mother said she did not have enough money.*

Traditional healers and faith healers are particularly widespread in the coastal zone: *if you are cursed the herbalist will treat that* (boy15y, in-school focus group, U); *We also have an 'nkansan sofo' (priest of a local spiritual church) who also combines prayers and herbs to heal people. He handles such cases as convulsions* (boy 16y, PU). The priest, interviewed subsequently, observed that people tend to come to him when the hospital has been unsuccessful in treating their ailments.

The availability of biomedical treatment in urban sites has much improved with the institution of the NHIS (in 2003). For those with insurance it is often now the first, instead of the last, line of treatment, since with the NHIS card treatment is free. However, many families cannot afford the annual premium: *the NHIS has made the provision of health care very affordable; it is quite unfortunate that my father has not registered for the NHIS. He does not have the money to do so. He takes me to a drug store instead when I fall sick … (but) any child whose parents have registered for NHIS can walk to any hospital in the municipality unaccompanied* (schoolboy 13y, forest zone U). Many young people expressed a distinct preference for biomedical treatment, if their family can afford it. Patience, a 15-year-old, reflected: *it is only when doctors cannot help that you seek (the faith healer's) assistance.* When she woke one day with neck pains, her mother first massaged her neck, but at school the pain increased so, *I sought permission from my teacher and went straight to the house to pick my NHIS card and went to the hospital myself in a normal taxi. My mother was in the market at the time so I went unaccompanied.* She was treated, did not pay because of the NHIS card, and further emphasised, *I was also confident going through the process because of the NHIS. The scheme has allowed more children to go to health facilities alone, because the authorities will not ask you to pay for the service. It is a good scheme for us children.* Other young people in their early teens recounted occasions when they had attended hospital without an adult and had been treated without any issues, because they had the NHIS card. (There is possibly more reluctance in rural Ghana to treating unaccompanied young people, precisely because so many lack NHIS coverage or the funds to pay for treatment.)

Even with NHIS coverage, however, reaching the regional hospital can be costly and sometimes difficult, especially at night when, in the absence of ambulances, emergency treatment depends on people finding a taxi

driver (and taxi-fare) to transport them. Even in daytime, a number of children whose families are registered with the NHIS talked about having to walk with their parents to hospital, when very ill, because they had no money for transport. Moreover, some parents observed problems of long queues in the government hospitals (reportedly growing since NHIS cover has increased access) and rude treatment of patients, including children, by nurses.

It is clear that therapeutic pluralism prevails widely in urban Ghana, not only as a response to constrained resources (for payment of services and transport) but also, for some young people, because their beliefs regarding the complex causes and potential remedies for ill health, suggest the advantage of a multi-pronged approach to treatment, when this is available. This is well exemplified by the case of a girl who went to the faith healer for prayers, after she had been treated for snake bite at hospital (as recounted by her 13-year-old younger sister), *because she could not understand the circumstances surrounding the bite.*

Urban Malawi: In Malawi, in contrast to Ghana, primary care in government health centres is free. Nonetheless, poverty levels are such that, even in urban and peri-urban sites, transport costs to health centres are a significant issue for those who are ill. There are a few ambulances operating in the urban and peri-urban sites, and while some of these are free, they are seemingly mostly dedicated to emergency referrals from the health centres to the main hospitals: it is not uncommon for people to be transported by bicycle or wheelbarrow when they are very ill. Emergency transport to the health centre was reported to be a particular challenge at night, when transport fares rise substantially.

Once the patient arrives at the health facility, queues can be dauntingly long: *Some children taken to the health centre die while on the queue* (mothers' focus group, Blantyre U). Many young people and their parents also experienced difficulty in their relations with the medical staff: *(if we attend alone) sometimes doctors shout at us* (boys' focus group, 10–17y, Lilongwe U); *Sometimes, doctors are very rude … nurses shout at people* (boy focus group, 12–16y, Lilongwe PU); (the) *proudness of nurses makes people here to just buy medicine in shops (*father, Lilongwe U*); they talk too much abusive language at government hospital. As a result we go to the 'azamba' (faith healers)* (fathers' focus group, Lilongwe PU).

In both urban sites, as in rural Malawi, there were references to government facilities running out of medicines (while clinic staff reportedly sell drugs that they are supposed to provide free-of-charge in the clinic).

However, peri-urban Blantyre benefits from the availability of low-priced drugs, including malaria treatments and oral rehydration salts for diarrhoea, from a community pharmacy. Run by a local village women's committee, this is supplied under the government Drug Revolving Fund by the local health centre. It seems to be common practice there to buy drugs from the pharmacy and, only if the condition doesn't improve after two or three days (for instance in the case of malaria), to then attend the government health centre.

Given the disadvantages associated with using government facilities, the grocery-stores selling common medicines are a widespread first-line source of low-cost, rapid, treatments for headaches and colds (despite the dangers of obtaining expired drugs): *It's a faster way of getting medicine than queueing at a line* (mother 22y, PU). Since malaria treatments are relatively expensive, however, some prefer to go to the government clinic for these.

Especially in the peri-urban sites, traditional healers are also consulted (despite often being located further than the government clinic), particularly where witchcraft is suspected. Many young people said they have been taken by their parents or older siblings, if they see a need to redress magic, and despite the high charges: *I accompanied my sister to the traditional healer … She had stomach pains … She was given some roots to boil in water and drink* (secondary school girl, 16y, PU).

Herbal remedies also seem to be more commonly used in the peri-urban than urban sites, probably because it is easier to obtain them close by, in the bush. Isaac (11y), a primary schoolboy, explained how his *mother cuts tattoos (kutemara) around the forehead, if it is headache that continues for some days … but first we go to the hospital for treatment. The tattoo comes in if the treatment from hospital is not working … you heal quickly. If tattoos are cut today, the following day you will be going out to play … (but) the cutting of tattoos hurts a lot.* His mother has to find the herbs, which takes time, so Isaac prefers medicine from the grocery-store. Similarly, a young farmer with a 4-year-old daughter described how, when his daughter was ill with 'kapamba' (infection of the spleen, as diagnosed by a visiting friend), *I just dug out the roots of acacia tree and boiled them. Then I gave her the herbal tea … I did not have the money (to buy medicine) but I also knew that tea from acacia roots cures … I learnt this from my mother-in-law.* However, when his daughter had pneumonia he walked, carrying her, directly to the private clinic, even though this was further away than the government health centre*: I knew that (government) hospital staff would*

shout at us and they would also give her medicine that would not be relevant since the hospital lacks medicine. Unsurprisingly, private clinics are widely preferred in the urban and peri-urban sites, especially in emergencies, but are accessible only to those who have funds to pay for travel and treatment: *one gets treated very well. They test you before giving you medicine; they talk nicely to the patients too … if I had more money my children could have been going there* (mothers' focus group, Lilongwe PU).

As in urban Ghana, parents and children alike commonly take a mix-and-match approach to health care, balancing available resources with an assessment of the most appropriate treatment for a specific condition.

Urban South Africa: In the poor, densely populated areas of urban and peri-urban South Africa, health-seeking is principally focused around resolving respiratory problems just as it is in rural areas. HIV/AIDS is widespread and more openly reported than in the rural study sites. Teen pregnancy is high (as in all 24 CM research sites).

In the *Eastern Cape* urban study site, there is a community health-care centre which provides basic care and family planning services, within about 10–30 minutes' walk, but the nearest hospital is about 5 km distant and, while ambulances are available for the seriously ill, others are expected to pay for a taxi to hospital if they are referred from the health centre. As in rural South Africa, children are often treated with over-the-counter medicines from the local grocery-stores and herbal home remedies; there are also many traditional healers. There is much dissatisfaction with the (free) local clinic; complaints about queues and nurse attitudes, common in the rural sites, emerged here too: *the nurses are rude and they help you when they feel like (it). Sometimes they can give you wrong medicine … The problem is that people are not being referred to the hospital in time. They will only refer you to the hospital when they see that you are dying. Some people who are poor would rather use the traditional healers because they cannot afford to go to the (private) doctors (all living outside the area) or to the hospital because they don't have money for transport* (woman 50y, caring for grandchild).

The situation in the peri-urban site is even more difficult, because there is no fixed clinic, though a mobile clinic visits weekly. Home herbal remedies or basic medicines from the grocery-stores are a widely used first course of action. Andisiwe, a 17-year-old schoolboy described how when he had flu, *I didn't go to the clinic but I went to the shop to buy some Disprins … Usually if there is somebody sick at home with flu', mom buys the Disprins and Medlemon and they, if you take, you will sweat throughout the night and*

after three days you will be OK. However, the danger of buying expired medicines was observed yet again.

The nearest clinic is about 5 km distant, queues tend to be long and there is the usual complaint that nurses are rude to patients, the clinic has limited working hours and medicine shortages occur. Visiting the clinic can turn into a major expedition, as Andisiwe went on to recount, when he had to accompany his mother recently: *she was ill and weak so I had to go with her to the clinic … we left in the morning. I didn't go to school that day. So we took a taxi … we arrived before the clinic was opened and waited for two hours in the queue before the nurses started to attend on us. Then after two hours finally my mother was attended by the nurse … We left the clinic after staying … for five hours. We didn't have any problems of transport when we were going to the clinic, but the problem was when we were going back home, because there are no taxis that take passengers from the clinic. We have to walk to the taxi rank in town to catch a taxi that will take us back home.*

It is not possible to attend the (distant) hospital without referral from the clinic. Moreover, the cost of a taxi to travel to hospital (for non-emergency cases) is prohibitive for many (especially when travelling with a child, for whom a fare must also be paid). One father (c. 50y), a security guard who is living alone with his 14-year-old daughter since his wife died, has weighed the options carefully: *I felt that instead of wasting money going to the hospital, I would rather use the same money that I would have used for transport to pay for her to be seen by a private doctor in town.* (Those on ARV treatment, however, obtain a grant which can be used to support their transport costs for regular hospital visits.) Emergency cases are transported by ambulance, and many people here have mobile phones available to call them, but since the ambulances reportedly often take some hours to arrive, they look for private transport instead.

A number of young people in this peri-urban site had never attended the clinic, but had been treated by the traditional healers. The traditional and faith healing services (particularly favoured, for instance, for persistent headaches, widely considered a witchcraft-related illness) are reportedly relatively cheap, by comparison with the private doctors in town. Moreover, their services can be obtained on credit (a specific advantage also noted by Leach et al. 2008 in Guinea), they are accessible 24-hours-a-day and will even make home visits. Perhaps their biggest advantage, however, is that a number are located within the neighbourhood and thus there are no transport costs entailed in visiting them: *they won't ask for a lot of money and some of their medicine works. They live with us and it is easy to access them*

(mother 45y, 2 children under 18 in her care). This woman, however, also went on to reflect: *Look, before there were cars and buses, we used to walk and never complained, but now because there are buses and cars, people can't walk!*

In the urban and peri-urban study settlements in *Gauteng/North West region*, similar conditions prevail, and the same array of local health-care options is in place: local clinics, local stores selling over-the-counter medicines, traditional healers, faith healers and private doctors. There are reportedly long queues at the clinics, rude nurses, medicines may run out, and there is some general unease about the quality of service provided (mirroring perceptions across all the South African, Malawian and Ghana research sites). Adolescents find the clinics particularly unfriendly: *Sometimes when we girls go to the clinic feeling sick in our stomach, they will say you are pregnant without checking you, and she (nurse) will say all these nasty things to you and this give us low self-esteem* (girls' focus group, 16–18y high school students, PU). Those who have resources prefer to use private services, even though this often requires longer journeys: *you will be surprised that people come from the free government clinics straight to us. It's because people get treated like people here* (doctor, private NGO-supported primary care clinic, PU).

In the Gauteng/North West peri-urban research site, journeys to the government clinics can be lengthy, because the settlement is dispersed. Poverty also impacts significantly on people's ability to pay transport fares. One woman who undertakes home-based care for an NGO explained how she writes referral letters for her patients so that they can go to the clinic but, *They stay with the letters and never go.* She went on to relate the plight of the many immigrants (especially Mozambicans) living illegally in the community without ID cards, including some child-headed households. They are frightened to attend the government clinics, in case they are asked for their card. Because of this, even if they live close to the clinic, she is concerned that they don't take their children to the immunisation sessions and frequently have home births when a clinic birth would be safer. A teacher at one of the local primary schools similarly emphasised the poor health status of the Mozambican children whose families are living there illegally, in extremely impoverished conditions. She observed that the clinics do not discriminate against them—they can obtain clinic cards without supplying any credentials—but many do not know this, and growing xenophobia across the country makes them nervous. Moreover, as a Zimbabwean immigrant father (c. 40y) with a 15-year-old son reflected, *When hunger strikes you do not think of a clinic; you think of getting food.*

One of the clinics in the peri-urban area is open for emergencies at night (which is rare for government clinics across the study sites). However, travel is problematic then, even in emergencies, since there are few taxis operating due to the security situation: *At 7 pm you cannot get taxis because late at night they get hijacked … it is even worse in winter. Taxis are being followed by thugs; when you come out of a taxi they rob you of all you have with you* (focus group with parents, PU); *I once had my hand broken … It was very late at night when I tripped … we had to wait (until) the following morning* (boy 14y, PU).

The nearest hospital (which requires referral from a clinic, except in emergencies) is some 20 km from the Gauteng/North West urban study site and about 30 km from the peri-urban site, which raises similar problems regarding transportation costs as in Eastern Cape (unless there is a health emergency, in which case an ambulance can be called): *you need to take a taxi and if you don't have the money then you can't … there are so many people who are very sick and some people do not go to hospital because they don't have money* (primary schoolgirl 11y, U). Some taxi drivers, moreover, expect to be paid for empty seats in the (chartered) vehicle. There is also an issue here around access to ambulances in emergency situations: *We are still falling under North-West (i.e. beyond the Gauteng provincial boundary) and therefore it is very hard to call an ambulance from this side* (focus group with mothers, PU).

The traditional healers, meanwhile, do a steady business. Many people here have such staunch faith in their efficacy that they are the first point of health-seeking, even if the government clinic is very close by, as in the following case related by an 11-year-old girl: *When my problem started, my mother visited (the sangomas) and they could not find the solution to my illness. Instead, they told my mother that I was bewitched … It was only at the beginning of last year when my mother decided to try the clinic* (which is free, within walking distance, and was seemingly successful in treating her). As in urban areas in Ghana and Malawi, relatively good physical access to biomedical services does not necessarily make them the first or preferred line of treatment, even where the service is free.

Conclusion

The felt everyday experiences of health-seeking among young people, across the rural and urban sites, are complex and challenging. The narratives presented in this chapter demonstrate the disturbing fragility of entanglements between physical movement, representation and practice. In many rural

areas, basic government biomedical services are largely inaccessible to what are often highly dispersed populations, living in places with poor road infrastructure and limited (and costly) transport services. Even in urban and peri-urban areas, however, there is frequent reference to use of diverse informal health services, sometimes consecutively, sometimes in tandem with government biomedical services. Informal services include not only the grocery-stores that sell everyday over-the-counter drugs, but also the use of traditional herbal remedies at home and consultations with traditional healers and faith healers. Government clinics are often located at some distance from the individual's residence and long walks are difficult, especially for sick children. Transport costs and (particularly in urban South Africa) security at night present substantial constraints on their use, but there are other barriers to access too—notably long queues, especially where services are free; seemingly arrogant, unsympathetic medical staff; and sometimes a lack of adequate medicines in stock. Moreover, for some complaints, notably those suspected to have been generated through witchcraft, recourse to traditional healers or faith healers is widely considered essential to treatment.

In this convoluted and often painful world, young people or/and their parents/carers have to make difficult decisions, balancing available (financial and human relational) resources, not only with mobility opportunities and constraints but also with assessments of the severity of the illness or health service need and cultural perspectives on appropriate treatments. Across all sites, it is rare for children under the age of about 14 years to consult either biomedical services or traditional healers without an accompanying adult: this may sometimes be a matter of ensuring any necessary payments can be made, but medical staff are clearly unwilling to treat young people who arrive unaccompanied, even in government clinics where services are free. Parents frequently point out that younger children need help to explain their health issues to medical staff, but they often also say they are too busy to spend hours in queues waiting for their children to be seen and cannot afford transport costs (for accompanying travel). Meanwhile, for adolescents, there are often particular difficulties associated with asserting their needs for access to reproductive health services and information: contraceptive services were rarely mentioned by young people during interviews. However, exclusion from contraception (whether because of health staff attitudes, distance and journey costs, or other possible factors, such as shame, stigma, ignorance, gossip) certainly exposes many girls to unwanted pregnancies, potentially risky abortions and HIV.

These are some of the reasons why, for so many young people, in all sites, the first line of health-seeking is via self-medication with herbal rem-

edies or over-the-counter medicines bought from the local grocery-store. However, this raises other questions: although some grocery-store staff offer advice to young people who come to buy common medicines (see Van der Geest 1999), do all children who are self-administering potent drugs adequately appreciate the specific treatment regime required or its potential dangers? Certainly, many of the young people interviewed in this study displayed a surprisingly wide knowledge of common infectious diseases (and the different health services available), but it will not always be easy for them to identify the most suitable over-the-counter treatment, given the barrage of advertisements across the media for health services and products, many of dubious quality.

Since the CM research was conducted, the research team has embarked on another study of young people in the research sites focused on their phone usage (www.dur.ac.uk/child.phones/). This suggests that, particularly in urban areas, they not only obtain health-related information and advice by physically accessing clinics, but are also now regularly accessing health-related websites through their smart phones to find *information* about specific symptoms, medicines and healers, and *advice* especially relating to HIV/AIDS and other areas of sexual and reproductive health. This is, increasingly, a significant element of the therapeutic landscape, along with the growing number of radio and television health-focused chat shows and phone-in programmes and mass advertisements for biomedical and traditional practitioners, and their pharmaceutical and herbal treatments, across the media. While this virtual mobility afforded by mobile phones, in particular, enables access to much additional health information, its quality often appears questionable. It is of considerable concern that few young people may have sufficient expertise and knowledge to avoid being duped or unnecessarily alarmed by misleading/biased information (Hampshire et al. 2015).

Notes

1. Also see a small networked health research study led by the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development: http://www.ifrtd.org/index.php/issues-2/24-ifrtd/issues-related/103-mobility-and-health-an-international-networked-research-programme
2. Reflecting a widespread pattern for females to seek more health care than males across the world.

3. Though there will still be economic opportunity costs of time expended.
4. In 2008 the cost typically ranged from 12–35 Cedis per adult (with children under 18 covered by their parents' insurance by paying a 2–5 Cedi processing charge). The official minimum daily wage was 2.25 Cedis.
5. Respondent names throughout the book are pseudonyms.

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CHAPTER 7

Negotiating Transport, Travel and Traffic, Part 1: Walking and Cycling

Introduction

Young people's transport and travel practices are rarely considered beyond the journey to school in Western contexts and, for the most part, are simply not considered at all where Africa is concerned. As observed in Chap. 1, transport and travel have been, until recently, unfashionable topics in the social sciences and, while the new mobilities paradigm is generating a long-overdue reinvigoration of research in this field, this has only just begun to touch Africanist scholarship. Cresswell's (2010) disaggregation of mobility into constituent parts, each with a politics which can be used to differentiate people and things into hierarchies of mobility introduced in Chap. 1, is helpful in indicating issues of particular importance in Chaps. 7 and 8: *velocity* (both faster and slower speeds may be associated with exclusivity or the reverse), *rhythm* (as social order, obligation, calculation, an aesthetics of 'correct' mobility; emphasising temporality), *route* (the channelling of movement, connectivity), *experience* (how moving feels) and *friction* (whether stopping is a forced or free choice). These all need to be firmly set within the wider context of *motive force* (why the movement is being made), the factor which has been central to previous chapters looking at movement in relation to education, work, leisure and health.

Thus the focus now moves to felt everyday experiences of specific travel modes and the journeys which take place using them. It is useful to reflect at this point on Clifford's definition of ethnographic fieldwork as *'travel*

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encounters … spatial practices of moving to and from, in and out, passing through' (1997: 67). As Watts and Urry (2008: 867) observe, much ethnography has actually been *'located at sites of passage, transfer points, where populations and things are temporarily confined and arranged within stations, waiting rooms, baggage systems*'. By adopting a mobile method within the CM study (see Chap. 2), it has been possible not merely to ask young people about their travel experiences but, in the case of walking journeys, often also to travel with them and, thus, to some extent, share those experiences.

This chapter starts with a brief comparative review of young people's overall transport and travel practices across Ghana, Malawi and South Africa, based on the CM survey data. Following this overview, however, the discussion draws intensively on ethnographic data from the Gomoa (Ghana) and CM research to interrogate identified patterns, contrasting travel practices in diverse rural and urban locations and exploring the implications of travel mode for lifestyle and identities. Chapter 7 covers walking and cycling, while Chap. 8 explores travel by motorised transport and associated issues of traffic risk and road safety. Gender and age-related differences are highlighted wherever relevant, in these closely linked chapters, leading to wider reflections concerning young people's embodied practices of travel and transport experiences.

Country Variations in Transport and Travel from CM Survey Data

Data from the CM survey of c. 9- to 18-year-olds provide useful broad context regarding some key aspects of transport and travel by gender, age and location across Ghana, Malawi and South Africa. In all three countries, there is, unsurprisingly, a significant gradual decline in accessibility to all-season roads and regular public transport as one moves progressively from the urban study sites, to peri-urban, rural with services, and remote rural sites. However, whereas over three-quarters of young respondents in remote rural Malawi lived over 15 minutes' walk from an all-season road with regular public transport, this reduced to just 57 % in South Africa and 37 % in Ghana. Even in urban contexts, 23 % of Malawians lived over 15 minutes distant from public transport, compared to just 3 % in South Africa and 2 % in Ghana. The Ghanaian research sites were clearly more advantaged in terms of access to roads which are open year-round and to

regular public transport than either the South African or the Malawian sites.

However, potential physical access at the research sites does not necessarily equate with young people's access to transport, apart from walking, as other data clearly emphasise. Questions in the CM survey about young people's means of transport indicate that even usage of bicycles is remarkably low: 31 % of respondents in Ghana, 47 % in Malawi and a massive 78 % in South Africa said they do not use a bicycle in their daily lives. In terms of motorised transport, there are substantial differences across countries which can be related to basic accessibility conditions, national income, associated transport stock and government policy. Thus, in the poorest country, Malawi, very few respondents had ever used any form of motorised transport, with the exception of minibuses (which had been used at some point in their daily lives by around two-thirds of respondents). Similar levels of minibus use prevailed in Ghana and South Africa, but in these countries this was complemented by access to other forms of transport as well. In South Africa, scholar transport services are available in some rural areas, in particular, and thus bus transport had been used at least on some occasions by one-third of respondents living in remote rural areas and a quarter of respondents in rural with service settlements (though they will still commonly have a long walk between the bus stop and home). In Ghana, by contrast, it is the motor taxi which forms the dominant motorised transport mode for respondents: three-quarters or more, in all sites, used motor taxis from time to time, compared to just a few per cent in all sites in Malawi and South Africa.[1]

This broad comparative country picture offers a useful overview, but for a more nuanced understanding of young people's practices and experiences of travel, within the broad context of overall patterns of usage, it is necessary to incorporate ethnographic data into the discussion (while also drawing on CM survey data, where these add value through data triangulation). Individual transport modes provide the framework for the discussion which follows: walking, cycling and (in the following chapter) motor-mobility—are explored in some depth, with reference to felt everyday experiences, likes, dislikes, perceived dangers and any identified usage tactics associated with individual modes. Urban and rural variations are highlighted where necessary, rather than making a primary distinction between rural and urban contexts (the pattern of the previous four chapters). This makes particular sense in considering transport, where mobility and connectivity—including *between* rural and urban areas—are

key themes. Gender is a strong connecting theme throughout these two chapters because access to, and experiences of, travel and transport are commonly highly gendered across the world, and especially so in Africa.

Walking: A Central Component in Young People's Embodied Practices of Travel

In earlier chapters we have seen how much walking dominates young people's lives, both in urban and rural contexts. To briefly recap, the vast majority of children walk to school (98 % of respondents in Ghana, 99 % in Malawi, 86 % in South Africa; see Chap. 3); domestic work is similarly dominated by pedestrian travel, though commercial employment in urban contexts (largely in the informal sector, see Chap. 4) may entail use of some motorised transport. For this reason, walking occupies a crucial conceptual and methodological place in the study. While walking tends to be characterised as a tactical practice of the weak (de Certeau 1984), unskilled and straightforward, as Hodgson (2012) emphasises, it requires a set of practical geographical skills and social competencies and strategies that are both dynamic and situated. In many of these African research sites, for girls in particular, one practical competency, rarely—if ever—required in Western contexts, has particular significance: the ability to balance a load (of potentially diverse shape, size and weight) while in motion and possibly when travelling through extremely uneven terrain (see Chap. 4). Because young people are often so heavily involved in household activities, in addition to work or schooling, walking interviews became a key field method in the CM research, including among the young peer researchers (see Chap. 2), and presented significant insights into young people's walking worlds, from the pilot research phase onwards (Porter et al. 2010).

Relatively few young people expressed a specific enjoyment that they associated with walking. In the CM survey (where respondents were asked to list the things they liked—and disliked—about walking) this amounted to a mere 2 % of girls and 1 % of boys, 1 % of both genders in Malawi and 4 % of girls and 6 % of boys in South Africa. However, nearly a quarter of South African respondents, male and female (compared to less than 5 % in Ghana and Malawi), said that its one advantage was the opportunity it gave to chat with friends. As we saw in Chap. 5 on play, this was often associated with the journey from school. The most positive thing that

many young people could say about walking was that it offers exercise and a way of strengthening the body, as observed by just under half of respondents in Ghana, but well under a quarter in South Africa and only just over one-tenth in Malawi (where, as noted above, access to regular public transport is poorest of all).

Small insights into potential enjoyments associated with walking also emerged very occasionally in in-depth interviews: a group of girls in rural Lilongwe, for instance, said the most positive thing about walking was their daily journey together as a group: *the interaction aspect is the one that makes the walk an exciting thing*. Most references to enjoyable aspects of walking, however, tend to be concerned primarily with activities punctuating the walk, such as forbidden sexual encounters, rather than the journey per se:

> *during the rainy season the ground is wet and maybe the boy doesn't have a house. (Then) girls don't allow it if their boyfriends tell them to have sex. But during the dry season, aaaah (laughs) you just do it!* (boy 18y, Blantyre, Malawi, PU)
>
> *I used to hide in the bush with my friends* (when returning from school) … *I was getting to understand and feel the nice time of the world and guys would come and propose at me; it was a nice experience*. (22y unmarried mother, life history interview, G/NW, South Africa, PU)

Overall, the embodied practice of walking was viewed very negatively. At its most innocuous, it was presented as tiring and uncomfortable, especially for children living in rural areas who often had long distances to cover to reach school or other key locations: (Our route goes) *through lots of grass. The dew makes your clothes wet and upon reaching school*—(they laugh)—*you look as if you have wet yourself* (focus group of out-of-school boys, Blantyre, Malawi RS); *the paths are muddy and parents do not buy us shoes to use* (girl 13y, Lilongwe, Malawi PU). Carrying heavy loads, however, adds substantially to this discomfort. In Gomoa (coastal Ghana), regular observations of young (in some cases pre-teen) children from one off-road village, perspiring heavily as they trudged along carrying heavy loads of firewood to sell in a nearby town before school (a 10 km round trip), were particularly depressing. The track was narrow and uneven and falls inevitably common. Subsequent fieldwork in diverse CM study sites reinforced this picture, though never perhaps on quite the same scale. In peri-urban Blantyre, an RA walking with a young male respondent met

a group of (about eight) young girls aged between six and eight years old, on their way to the maize mill. He noted in his diary how tired they looked: *One of them slipped, fell to the ground and dropped her sack of maize. The ground they were walking on was slippery.*

Human, supernatural and animal hazards figure widely in many walking accounts, both in rural and urban areas. In the CM study, animal hazards ranged from rumours of a python in the river which children have to cross to get to school (Blantyre Malawi RS), to ants, bees, scorpions and being chased by dogs: *they have rabies and I was once bitten by a dog* (boy 14y, South Africa Eastern Cape PU). Snakes, however, appear to be considered the most significant animal danger and were specifically noted as such in the CM survey. Supernatural hazards are a prime reason for children of all ages to hurry past graveyards and avoid night travel: (there are) *ghosts and people who do witchcraft … If I have to go at night, then I need somebody to accompany me, because I am scared* (girl 17y, Eastern Cape RR).

Human hazards include traffic accidents and harassment; the latter can range from catcalling through to rape and murder. Young pedestrians are extremely vulnerable to traffic injury (see Chap. 8): unsurprisingly, the danger of traffic accidents was rated, in all countries, and by both genders, as at least of equal significance as all other potential travel dangers in the CM survey. In Lilongwe, Malawi, a 28-year-old father of young children stressed (with particular reference to a bridge crossing) how the danger comes not only from cars but from bicycles: *some bicycle operators do not have bells on their bicycles and it is easy to hit children on the way … I tell my children to refrain from fighting and give way to bicycles when they hear a bell.* This particular bridge is weak and had been damaged by an overloaded lorry*: one end of the bridge is almost collapsed and the space which people are using is very small and both pedestrians and cyclists press each other for that space, and hence cause threats to small kids … During rainy season, parents escort their children to school because, without that, kids cannot pass through* (fathers' focus group discussion).

For girls on the way to school, jeering and catcalls from men and boys—or, occasionally, women—were widespread in both Malawi and South Africa and, for some, caused clear distress. The bridge in Lilongwe, mentioned above, is a prime spot where men congregate and mock girls as they walk to school, telling them they are wasting their time: *they say we should just marry; some say we should just start brewing beer* (12–15y girls' focus group). The strong impact of such calls was stressed by a 20-year-old

woman who is head of her family (following the death of her parents), but still persevering with school. She observed how boys smoking cannabis shout at her, saying she won't finish school: *the scornful words are echoed in our minds and when the teacher is teaching we don't understand* (Blantyre, Malawi, U). A group of primary schoolgirls (15–17y) in rural Lilongwe offered similar stories, but in this case also implicating women: *Some people mock us, saying why do not we just marry, rather than wasting time at school, (men) … drunkards who swear at us. They say we are going to school but there is nothing we are going to achieve because there are others who have been to school, but looking at what kinds of lives they are living, they are not enjoying it … (also) we have fears that we are going to meet women who are always backbiting saying we are just wasting our time by going to school.*

Boys drunk or high on drugs were a problem in both South African study regions: *I don't like to travel to school because there are boys who mock us on the way to school. They wait for us on the road where they smoke dagga* (cannabis) *and then they follow* (girl 13y, Eastern Cape U). Mocking and other forms of harassment are feared not only in themselves, but because of the danger that they may transform into something worse—in particular, rape. Walking at night was identified as particularly dangerous: *in the evenings I am always accompanied by one of my siblings because there is no light here* (girl 16y, Ghana coastal zone RS). This girl, a Moslem, helps her mother trade: she emphasised that she had no fear of walking anywhere alone around the village area in daytime.

But even in the middle of the day, walking can be dangerous, especially in South Africa. Fear of attack often induces circuitous journeys to avoid bushy areas and quieter spaces where potential attackers might lie in waiting. Thus, in rural Eastern Cape, the father of a 14-year-old girl reported how she is harassed by boys from the neighbouring village: *She says when she comes back from school somebody holds her hand and they force her to tell one of the boys that she loves him … Because she is scared, she ends up taking the longer route.* In the same area, a17-year-old girl observed, *I wouldn't go to fetch firewood alone … because there are boys … who chase us and want to rape us.* Walking in remote areas to collect wood is particularly dangerous: one of the child researchers in the Gauteng/NW region interviewed a girl who recounted the terrible experience she underwent in this context: *I was going to collect firewood at midday. A man said he wanted to have sex with me. I was crying and screaming so that somebody would come to help me. He put a toilet tissue in my mouth and he raped me* (Gauteng/North West RR). A 12-year-old girl in urban Eastern Cape meanwhile identified *places*

we do not dare to go. There is a small shack where these boys smoke their drugs. It is a short cut but I will not use it because these boys can hurt you … There are some places … where I have to go with my sister or my friends because of the boys in the settlement. They always want to stop you and propose love to you, so it is better to walk with somebody. This is a significant constraint on her activities: *Whenever I want to go to the library in town I have to walk and I feel it is unsafe to walk such long distances on foot.*

Generally, the safest procedure is to walk in a group (see Chap. 3): this applies especially to girls: *We have to walk in groups because there are boys who are not schooling who take our money and mobile phones. If we walk in a group it is better, because some are known by other learners* (girl 18y, Eastern Cape U). During one accompanied walk through maize fields in peri-urban Blantryre, Malawi, the respondent, an 18-year-old boy, observed how the girls walked past in groups, because men hide in these fields to steal maize from passing pedestrians—but only from females: *They couldn't do that to men or boys. They can always fight back.* A 14-year-old secondary schoolgirl, walking through another such field, described how the danger increases as the maize grows: *people meet bandits or other people who want to rape you … they are mostly older men … Last year when the maize grew tall around this area, my friend (14y) met a man who raped her. She recognised that man … and told her mother. They went to the police where after she was taken for medical check-up … then the police looked for this man … caught him and now he is in prison.*

So far, these stories of group travel, necessitated by danger of attack, have related to girls. Indeed, the 18-year-old boy above, who observed that men and boys are not attacked because they can fight back, echoes a persistent theme, that girls are vulnerable while boys are tough and resilient: *At least boys can run away, but girls are too scared—they will even be afraid to run away* (mother 40y, Eastern Cape U); *Girls are vulnerable and people always take advantage of them, because of their weakness* (boy 18y, Eastern Cape PU).

However, boys can also face harassment, especially in urban areas. Some of the young peer researcher diaries, particularly those written by boys living in urban Blantyre, recounted stories which suggest boys may be almost equally at risk as girls from attack by bigger boys, who try to steal their money and other possessions on the way to school or market and by boys and men who are high on cannabis. A group travel strategy is consequently adopted, even by older boys: *we wait for each other so that we can walk in groups. This prevents attacks from bad people … Sometimes they beat us and tell us not to let anybody know about it … (or) they will skin us to*

death (boy 16y, Blantyre U). *We still regard walking in a group safer … one pupil can walk to school unaccompanied comfortably, during the morning, because the road is busier in the morning, unlike in the afternoon when we are knocking off* (boy 16y, Lilongwe PU).

Similar fears were reported by boys in urban South Africa: *it is not safe to walk at night alone. You can be mugged by the tsotsis. Even during the day there are boys who smoke dagga and sit at the street corner. If they don't know you, they will stop you and ask for 2 Rand. If you don't give them they will slap you on the face* (boy 12y, Eastern Cape U). A middle-aged woman who works as a traditional healer in this neighbourhood observed, *Walking from the taxi rank to this house is a mission, because you don't know what your child will encounter on the way!* Even walking with an older person may not necessarily offer protection. An 18-year-old boy, who lives with his grandmother in the peri-urban location in Eastern Cape, was walking home from church with his aunt one night when they passed four boys who greeted them. However, a few minutes later the boys started to follow: *they chased me and my aunt and when they were some distance away from us we managed to get in somebody's yard and then they went away. My heartbeat was beating so fast because we were told that recently there were boys hiding and mugging people at night*. Occasionally, rapes of boys were reported by teachers. Just the day prior to an accompanied walk in which I participated in Gauteng/North West, a boy had been raped on his way home from a peri-urban school by an unknown man. But such reports are very rare: almost all accounts of sexual violence (threatened and actual) in relation to daily mobility related to girls. However, boys may be less likely to report such occurrences (given the potential shame/stigma of homosexuality).

There is always, of course, for both girls and boys, the danger of simply being in the wrong place, at the wrong time, especially in South Africa: *when I was walking in our street one day, I saw one boy being shot by some boys who belong to a gang from the other location in Kwezi. I was terrified and ran into one of the houses* (boy 12y, Eastern Cape U). The potential to encounter violence while walking in these areas is considerable: *sometimes we see dead people on the way to school and that also disturbs our performance* (girl 15y, Eastern Cape U).

Some Conclusions About Walking

Returning to Cresswell's (2010) disaggregation of mobility into constituent parts, in terms of '*velocity*', we see walks varying with the heat, the nature of the surface (wet and slippery/dry) and with reference to poten-

tial dangers, but mostly taken at a relatively gentle pace, unless dangers are at hand; '*rhythm*' reflects the way girls walk in groups 'correctly', in daytime, their pace sometimes hampered by heavy loads; '*route*' suggests the need to keep to safe spaces and avoid dark, quiet, unkempt bush and the dangers that may lurk there; '*experience*' comprises mostly negative perspectives shaped by fears—of animal, human and spirit threats; '*friction*' is mostly a forced choice, shaped by wider household demands and strictures. When it comes to walking, the gift of travel time is clearly, for the most part, an unwelcome one!

Young People's Embodied Practices of Travel: Cycling

Howe and Dennis (1993: 9) observed that 'despite a somewhat proletarian image, the bicycle has always in reality been the prerogative of the relatively affluent in Africa due to its price'. This remains the case: in many areas bicycles are still relatively of high cost and highly valued and thus may not be available to their owners' children.[2] In Malawi, nearly half of the young people surveyed in the CM study said there was a working bicycle in their home, compared to only just over one-third in South Africa and under a quarter in Ghana. However, the personal access of young people is low throughout all the study sites and very few are able to travel to school by bicycle.

The gendered nature of cycling also requires comment. CM data on knowledge of how to ride a bicycle show a (statistically significant) gender divide in all countries: in Malawi 44 % of girls said they knew how to cycle, compared to 72 % of boys; in South Africa 48 % of girls, compared to 82 % of boys; and in Ghana 58 % of girls, compared to 87 % of boys. The lack of knowledge of how to cycle can be attributed in large part to lack of access to a bicycle: about a quarter of girls in Malawi and South Africa said they had no access to a cycle to practice on, as was the case for 14 % girls in Ghana. Fewer boys than girls lacked access to a bicycle in all countries (c. 14 % in Malawi and South Africa; just 5.5 % in Ghana) (Image 7.1).

Most young people surveyed said they like the idea of cycling (even if they don't own a bicycle and haven't learned how to cycle). Being able to cover a good distance in a short time and at speed were seen as particular advantages in Malawi and, to a lesser extent Ghana, whereas in South Africa the pure enjoyments of cycling—freedom, exhilaration—were the

Image 7.1 Only a few boys are able to cycle to school

paramount benefits according to nearly half of all young people (especially girls). Dislikes of cycling, meanwhile, focused principally around fears of falling off, or of traffic accidents (the latter especially in Ghana, where motorised transport is common in most sites). A review of qualitative data, country by country, helps in unpicking this cycling story, its gender aspects and wider implications.

Malawi

In all the Malawi research sites, from remote rural to urban, young boys play around with bicycles, often simply learning how to ride among themselves, even where the topography might seem to substantially inhibit cycling. In this very poor country, the bicycle is still a major means of transport, whether used for personal locomotion, for carrying loads, or as a (formal, registered) taxi service for passengers who travel on purpose-built pillions. Unlike either Ghana or South Africa, bicycle-taxis are widespread across Malawi, and a potentially lucrative income source: *if there are happy people in this village it is the people that operate bicycle taxis. They are able to drink beer every day because they make money every day* (bike taxi operator 23y, Lilongwe PU).

Knowing how to ride a bicycle, and having access to one, is crucial to making a living for many boys and young men, though few would go so far as to agree with the 12-year-old boy who borrows his father's bicycle, prefers bicycles over motors, has a good working knowledge of diverse aspects of cycle repair and proclaimed, *bicycles are just in my blood!* A 15-year-old out-of-school boy in rural Lilongwe district is one of many in Malawi who are desperate to own their own bicycle: *the moment I get a bicycle I would start to carry firewood from here and selling it in town, in that way I'd be having money (Prompt: any negative impact?) The only*

negative effect is that it will be easy for me to sleep with many girls. They cannot refuse me because I have money.

Many boys don't wait till they can afford a bicycle of their own, but start out by learning to ride one—paying to hire, if it is necessary to do so, and possibly continuing to hire a cycle if this will give them work as a goods transporter or bicycle-taxi operator. In response to a question about why he had paid to learn to ride a cycle, a 17-year-old boy, living with his divorced mother and doing casual labour observed, *I have always wanted to be a businessman. I know a bicycle is very crucial in running businesses* (Blantyre U). He doesn't yet have enough money to buy a bicycle (3–5000 kw—c. £11–18 in 2008—for a nearly new cycle), but he frequently borrows a cycle in order to take multiple (up to three) 50k sacks of maize to the mill for people in his area. (Needless to say, carrying these quantities, any cycle is unlikely to last long.)

Many boys, in both rural and urban locations, are employed carrying sacks of maize, fertilizer or groceries by bicycle for a fee. One 14-year-old boy living in rural Blantyre district, for instance, explained how he earns his living by riding his cousin's bicycle to town, at least three times a week, to buy groceries for shopkeepers in the village—this is a three-hour journey there, then four hours on the return, because of the load he carries, estimated at 60 kg. He described how, in the rainy season, he is hampered by the mud: *the bicycle tyres go deep into the ground and that requires extra effort to push the bicycle*, while in the dry season it's just very hot. Durable brakes are clearly essential, given the steep slopes that have to be traversed up the escarpment on this journey. Meanwhile, a boy of 18 from peri-urban Blantyre, whose ambition is to be a driver, had cycled 12 hours to Mozambique, carrying maize with his uncle for sale: although they had rested every two hours, it had clearly been, for him, an epic journey.

Ludovic[3], a young (15-year-old) charcoal maker in rural Blantyre, who is considered one of only a few 'reputable' bike transporters in his village, learnt how to cycle by paying the bicycle owner through collecting grass (since the owner was thatching his house at the time). When he took a sick man from his village to hospital, he borrowed a bicycle, but needed another boy to help push them on the slopes. In such cases it is not considered appropriate to charge, despite the effort involved: nonetheless, this is a crucial community service in the absence of motorised ambulances able to reach the remoter villages. Surprisingly, however, many of the boys interviewed have little knowledge of cycle repair and, if damage occurs

and funds are short, the cycle may wait a long time before it can be put back in working order. Routine maintenance seems very limited.

For girls the situation is often very different: many reported that, even though there is a bicycle in the house, their father will not allow them to learn to cycle. In the Lilongwe field-sites, 59 % of girls know how to cycle, compared to 84 % of boys, but in Blantyre field-sites a mere 27 % of girls know how, compared to 63 % of boys (CM survey data). Only boys are (albeit rarely) seen cycling to school. Many boys do casual work to earn money for learning to cycle, but it seems to be less a matter of money than of cultural constraints that inhibit many girls from being allowed to cycle. In urban Lilongwe, one woman stressed, *it is a boys' business to cycle*.

The issues around girls' cycling were particularly clearly articulated in a discussion group held with fathers in the Lilongwe remote rural research site: *Girls sometimes feel ashamed in riding bicycles. There is not much concern on boys cycling, the only worry is about how they take care of these bicycles, because some of them are too careless, hence they broke them. (but) a lot of girls feel ashamed to ride bicycles, because it makes them expose their legs when cycling … This also makes some men to start admiring them when they come in contact. A lot of men are full of 'chilakolako' desire to have sex with these young girls, hence they avoid cycling. (Prompt: why don't they put on trousers then?) This is a typical village and if a girl is seen putting on a trouser, she will be mocked. (Why not let them use a girls' bike without a cross-bar then?) These bicycles are only for prestige, you cannot use them for business* (a position strongly emphasised in the Gomoa IMT study, where women only purchased cycles with cross-bars, saying they were much stronger for load-carrying). A mothers' focus group in the Lilongwe remote rural site reiterated the importance of girls not showing their legs: they thought that it was acceptable for girls to ride but only *As long as they dress long clothes when riding the bicycles. Yes, or wearing a chitenje (wrapper) to cover their legs.* In a mothers' focus group in the less remote Lilongwe rural site, women said, *they (girls) are afraid that they will be called a prostitute if (a bicycle) has been borrowed from a boy;* (moreover) *the girls can meet somebody … they can be abused*. (By contrast, their concerns with boys' cycling centred round accidents, and the thought that they may 'carry girls', leading to courtship.)

In town, similar views seemed to prevail among some of the older generation. A male secondary school teacher raised similar issues around cultural mores which preclude girls showing their legs: *Girls should ride those bicycles that are meant for them … I am sensitive about gender. I am looking*

at the biological make up of women … they can fall because when they cycle other bicycles with cross-bar, they tend to pick up clothes or (are) constantly making sure that their legs are not showing. Unless they put on trousers they cannot ride the bicycles with cross-bars (Blantyre PU). A health surveillance assistant here, who has her own bicycle, admitted that she does not use it, but was reluctant to explain why not. However, in urban Lilongwe, an outspoken elderly woman in her 70s, in a focus group, made the point that girls are actually made to feel ashamed to cycle*: girls are told that they were not made to cycle … it's just a way of discouraging them … they are refused when they try to borrow. They are told that girls don't cycle. They feel that it is a shameful thing for girls to cycle.*

Girls, asked about the issue directly, everywhere in Malawi, tended to put the emphasis on wearing appropriate dress. A young girl (an orphan in standard 8, who hires a bicycle-taxi occasionally) observed, for instance, *I feel it's not right for girls to be cycling (prompt) due to the kind of dresses they wear. One can always see what's under the dresses when they mount on the bicycle … I feel it proper for girls to put on cycling clothing (but) unfortunately, very few girls I see riding put (this) on* (15y, Blantyre PU). An 18-year-old girl here was similarly negative: *Being a lady, I feel bicycles belong to boys (prompt). Because they put on a pair of trousers ideal for cycling*. Again, in Lilongwe district, the same theme arises: *Bicycles are not good for girls. We struggle when cycling. You really need to dress properly when cycling* (17y urban secondary school girl)*: girls are afraid to learn how to cycle … but sometimes it's just for a mere reason … that a bicycle can easily undress a girl when cycling if proper care of clothes is not considered* (female primary head teacher, RS).

The point about girls and dress also came up very occasionally among boys: *it is hard for (girls) to ride when boys are in front because of their dressing* (cars are better for girls—if it's a bike then) s*omebody should pick them* (out-of-school boys focus group 14–16y, Lilongwe PU). For the most part, while boys observed girls being laughed at if they cycled (especially in the rural areas), they often simply blamed girls' inability to cycle on their ineptitude, or their lack of financial resources to buy a bicycle: *girls lack confidence when doing things, they can easily be hit on the road* by motor vehicles (while cycling) (secondary schoolboy 17y, Lilongwe U). A 12-year-old boy, expounded, with authority: *girls easily fall off the bike as they ride compared to boys … they are not as stable as boys when riding … They lack concentration. This is what they forget: that the bicycle riding needs someone who is stable* (Blantyre PU).

There are, however, indications that conditions are gradually changing. Many girls who knew how to cycle were encountered during the qualitative research, even if they did not very often get access to a bicycle, or had experienced occasional accidents. Occasionally, girls were required to cycle simply because there was no one else available in the family. This was the case in rural Lilongwe district, where a 70-year-old man allowed his 18-year-old foster daughter to use his bicycle to carry loads (of nearly 40 kg) to a distant maize mill, because she was the only child available to do this. More positively, however, a mother with a girl of 11 and boys aged 13 and 16 observed, with evident pleasure*: there are girls in this community who can cycle. I am very proud of them. I feel happy for them … because riding bicycles in the past used to be only for boys … those … with girls who know how to ride … send children to the maize mill … and that eases load carrying* (Blantyre PU). Similarly, a woman trader in urban Blantyre, who cannot cycle herself, remarked that she was '*very proud*' when her eldest daughter (10y) was taught how to cycle by boy cousins. Another woman trader, who had herself taught her girls to cycle observed, again with some satisfaction, that her daughters had learnt to cycle before her son (who didn't learn till he was 15): *my boy child is very quiet. He actually learnt how to ride a bicycle out of the pressure he received from his sisters*!

Even in remote rural areas, perceptions seem to be changing. A relatively wealthy farmer (he owns his own ox-cart) in Lilongwe district observed that his daughters certainly learn how to cycle, albeit generally later than the boys in the family: *I must admit it as different in the past when people regarded cycling as men's business. That is now water under the bridge*. Some boys also now see the benefit of having their sisters learn to cycle. One 14-year-old, who has to ride his father's bicycle regularly to the maize mill, carrying 15–20 kg, argued that his sisters should be taught to cycle so they can go to the mill when he is not available. The bottom line is clearly that cycling, for the most part, is not for fun—it's for business or doing chores.

Ghana

Cycling is far less commonly perceived as a key to livelihood success in the Ghanaian research sites than it is in Malawi, because of the greater accessibility of motorised transport. Indeed, in Accra, it is reportedly viewed by children from southern ethnic groups as a 'furtive if thrilling experience' which will merit a beating if discovered (Grieco et al. 1994: 7).

When working on the Gomoa action research project with the Ministry of Agriculture, I was frequently told cycles were more suitable to the 'less-developed' far northern regions of the country.

The Gomoa project, focused on improving market access for rural women, involved introducing and monitoring the impact of a range of Intermediate Means of Transport (including bicycles) in selected off-road villages. Pre-intervention discussions with women and girls showed they lacked any knowledge of cycling, but considerable interest was expressed in obtaining and riding bicycles (despite urban opinions to the contrary). However, when cycles were made available, these were simply handed over to male family members. Subsequent investigation into children's cycling in urban and rural areas in this district showed remarkably low levels of access to bicycles, especially among girls. In the villages, few people were rich enough to own a bicycle, but boys learned to ride after school, through hiring bicycles (with funds obtained from weeding for farmers, which would enable them to purchase a few minutes hire). The bicycles were brought in by young men from nearby towns as a small business, called kobo-kobo. Girls were expected to be busy at home, preparing the evening meal. If seen trying to ride bicycles in the villages, girls were called names and told they should be in the kitchen: *if we want to hire it they will tell us we are girls to work at the kitchen not to ride a bicycle … boys shout at us to leave the bicycle* (Gomoa JSS girl pupil, 15y)*; We don't have time to learn how to ride because we close school at 2 p.m. and use our time to 4 to cook, so normally girls don't have much time. Since there is no light here … we must finish our chores and then it's dark … Normally boys [just] fetch water in the house, so after school they will quickly fetch water and go to play* (Gomoa girls' focus group). Time seemed to be more of a constraint on cycling lessons for girls than funds for hiring the bicycles, since here the girls argued that they could earn money through petty trade. However, concerns were also raised among women and girls about the gynaecological impacts of cycling.

The pattern of cycle use observed in Ghana in the CM project presents a very similar story. Across the Ghanaian research sites, as in Malawi, boys play around with bicycles from a relatively early age, if there is one available, often simply learning how to ride among themselves, even where topography might seem to substantially inhibit cycling. Hiring is the main route to learning how to cycle for many children, as observed in Gomoa. An 8-year-old recounted: *I have no bicycle on my own but … I learnt how to ride through hiring bicycles anytime l had money. My grandparents encour-*

aged me to learn how to ride a bicycle. At times they give me money to go and hire a bicycle. They (grandparents) wanted me to know how to ride a bicycle so that they could occasionally ask me to run some errands for them (schoolboy, coastal PU). Young men, standing beside a dozen or so bicycles, waiting to hire them out, are often to be seen at weekends, both in the forest and coastal zone study sites. One teacher in a coastal zone urban school stated that their students are not allowed to come to school on bicycles, precisely because they would be hiring out their cycles to other pupils in class time!: *If we do allow students to bring bicycles to school we will be soon faced with the problem of these students hiring out the bicycles to their colleagues on campus and, instead of staying in the classrooms to learn, the students will prefer riding the bicycles* (24-year-old male teacher, coastal zone U).

Elsewhere, a few boys were observed cycling to school, but overall statistics indicate this is rare. A driver in the coastal rural study settlement, pointing to a local private junior secondary school, remarked that in the past *some white people came here to teach in that school and they taught them (boys and girls) how to (cycle) and they gave them bicycles so that they will ride it to school in order to reduce the cost of transportation,* but few bicycles were in evidence. The head teacher at another (peri-urban) school in the coastal zone observed that students who come to school by bicycle complained of tiredness: *they pass through the rains and the sun as well and there are all inconveniences. The dust especially between the community and the junction is also an enemy to them … The children are not late to school. They set off early on their bicycles so they get to school early. But you always see them sweating and tired. They sweat at times (and) make the books even wet.*

The inference here is clear: as noted earlier, for many southern Ghanaians, bicycle travel is considered much inferior to vehicular movement for daily journeys, a view which seems to become increasingly ingrained as children grow to adulthood in the coastal zone (though riding sports bicycles for pleasure is becoming common among middle-class children). However, a few teachers could see the potential benefits of bicycle provision for the journey to school, especially for children living in remoter locations: *Generally, provision of bicycles to those who travel from outside the settlement will improve their schooling tremendously. There is one girl who rides a bicycle from one of the surrounding villages, so I think provision of bicycles will benefit both males and females equally* (30-year-old male teacher, coastal PU).

The livelihoods theme rarely emerged in discussions about cycling in Ghana. Everywhere, the emphasis is on learning to cycle for personal transport or simply for fun, not as a business operation. There are no

bicycle-taxis operating in any of the study sites (and only very rare references to informal cycle-taxi arrangements in remote locations in the study zones). However, occasional stories arose around using a cycle in health emergencies, similar to those encountered in Malawi. In the following case, the bicycle is being used to bring in a taxi rather than carry the patient directly: *Last year one of my cousins got sick and needed to be rushed to the hospital. If it had not been for the fact that there was a bicycle at home and someone who knew how to ride, something bad could have happened. Because of the bike, when it happened one of my relatives rushed and rode the bike to the station and got a car that came to pick the sick person to the hospital. I believe if he was to walk to the station he would have taken a longer time to reach and the person could have died* (17-year-old out-of-school girl, coastal PU).[4]

More commonly, in Ghana, the emphasis was on the hazards of cycling with respect to traffic dangers, in both rural and urban areas. Complaints and concerns came not only from children's parents and family members (directed usually at drivers), but from drivers (directed at cyclists): *The cyclists also disturb us on the way. They do not check whether there is a vehicle approaching and by the time you (the driver) realise they are right in front of you. Just last week a young boy held iced water in one hand and rode a bicycle at the same time. He quickly dashed across the road without checking if there was a vehicle close by. Fortunately I had already spotted him and was able to stop, just in time to avoid hitting him. I just moved on quietly away without commenting on the incident, even though onlookers at the scene started to chastise the boy* (25-year-old driver, forest zone PU); *I do not like children cycling and this is because some of these children ride in the night and their bicycles do not have any light. If you are not careful you can kill someone. The other time, I nearly knocked one of them down* (33-year-old taxi driver, coastal U).

References to girls as regular cyclists in the Ghana CM study are very rare (see Amoako-Sakyi and Owusu 2011). As in Malawi, there is a clear gender divide in the cycling arena in Ghana, though it is stronger in the coastal than the forest zone, mirroring wider patterns of cycle usage across these two zones. In the CM survey, 54 % of girls in the coastal zone said they know how to ride a cycle, compared to 62 % in the forest zone, while in both zones around 87 % of boys know how to cycle. As noted earlier with reference to Gomoa, in the coastal zone there is still an extremely strong perception, including among girls themselves, that *it is not good for girls to ride cycles … you can easily fall down and you can get scars on*

your legs (schoolgirls focus group, RS). Similarly, a girl of 16 who helps her mother sell cooked foods here observed, *It is not good for girls to learn how to ride bicycles, because girls are delicate and when they ride it they can become all muscular like the boys, or they might fall down and hurt themselves. With the boys it is good for them to learn how to ride since they are hardier. Also they can use it to run errands.* Gynaecological concerns were also specifically raised: *I think bicycles are good means of transport for boys because it keeps them busy and also make them available in the community at any time. Bicycles are not good means of transport for girls because, according to one of my friends, if a girl rides a bicycle very often she may not be able to give birth in future and I believe her story* (17-year-old girl, coastal urban). Another view which also came out strongly in the Gomoa study, as noted above, relates to male views of girls' place in society, and the pressures on girls to rush home from school to help in the home, which precludes opportunities to learn how to cycle and is especially strong in rural sites: *girls are supposed to be at home and help their mothers with the household chores. If they know how to ride they will always be out in the street playing* (boy 15y, coastal zone RS). The view expressed by an 18-year-old boy in this settlement, that only a few girls know how to cycle primarily because of the hire cost (which girls, unlike boys, cannot afford), is—as in Malawi—only a very small part of the story.

Some girls in the coastal zone, however, are clearly keen to learn to cycle. Sentiments similar to the following, made by a 14-year-old out-of-school girl, *If I knew how to ride I could have used it for errands and it would have made my journey easier. I could have even ridden it to my hometown which is just here and it would have helped me in saving money* (coastal U), were echoed by a number of girls in the urban and peri-urban areas, in particular. One very determined girl in the city had clearly decided to defy her family*: I ride it around this area and to places where there are no busy roads. I learnt to ride at school from my friends. I got hurt once when I was learning and my father asked me not to ride it again because bicycle riding is for boys and not girls. I still learnt it anyway. I don't own one personally; I hire one when I want to ride* (18-year-old out-of-school girl, coastal U).

In the forest zone (where there is a larger Moslem population than in southern Ghana), many girls—both Moslems and Christians—reported learning to cycle at school or through friends. There is clearly much less cultural constraint here on women's cycling. Girls in this area tended to have much more general knowledge about cycles than girls in the coastal zone, noting a preference against 'big bicycles' which they find difficult

to manage, but still appearing to have little understanding of maintenance and repair. One 15-year-old girl in the peri-urban site, whose brother taught her to cycle, has carried maize to the mill by bicycle. She prefers bicycles without a cross-bar, because these are more comfortable to ride, but observed that males are generally 'smarter' than females at cycling. Another girl of 17 preferred to have the cross-bar so she can give people lifts, but noted that *boys can carry more than girls on bikes* (forest zone U).

Males in the forest zone tended to restrict their view of girls as cyclists to comments about their lack of strength to cycle long distances, their (in)competence or their poverty (which would restrict their opportunity to purchase a bicycle). 1A 41-year-old father of two children in the urban site, for instance, whose three fostered nephews and his niece all know how to cycle, was particularly concerned about the girls: *because they are not always as courageous as boys and therefore there is the tendency for girls to be involved in accidents when riding bicycles.* Similarly, an out-of-school boy opined: *it is good for girls (as with boys) to learn to cycle because, if let's say the maize mill here breaks down, she can ride the bicycle and send her maize to the next village for grinding if her husband has one, otherwise she has to walk … But for boys it is a must because, as for the females even if they learn to ride, they will not get the money to buy a bicycle. Even if they have the money they will not buy it, since they usually do not like riding it as the males do and—even if they ride—they just ride it around, they do not send it on long distances. They do not have the strength to ride long distances. Even if they have the strength, theirs is not like the men; they therefore cannot have the strength to ride to places like* (town 20 km away) (boy 18y, RS).

Lack of funds as a constraint restricting girls' cycling practices was also raised by rural teachers in the forest zone, who pointed out that boys can earn money for buying bicycles from farming. They emphasised that no girls will own one, since girls are expected to contribute to domestic chores and have less time for money-earning activities (see also Chap. 4). Finally, converse to the concerns about gynaecological impacts on girls expressed in the coastal zone, one 18-year-old girl (a Brong) in the forest zone observed that it was not good physically for *boys* to cycle, *because when they sit on the bike it exerts a lot of pressure on their penis and it can lead to them having problems with it in future (whereas) due to the nature of (girls) sexual organs, there is not so much pressure on their organs as the boys* (forest zone U).

South Africa

In South Africa, cycling is often seen principally as a leisure activity and it is important to bear in mind that 78 % of young people in the South Africa survey said they never use a bicycle in their daily lives (compared to just 47 % in Malawi and 31 % in Ghana). However, there has been some government interest in promoting cycling among schoolchildren, notably through the Shova Kalula campaign (started in 2001), but with limited success (Mahapa 2003; Department of Transport conference presentation 2014).[5] Indeed, in remote rural North West Province, one settlement leader referred to this project with considerable disappointment: *When I tried to introduce the project to this community, they rejected it, saying that they needed more buses and taxis and the road to be better. So that's how the project ended, even before it could start*. In the urban study site, meanwhile, a primary school administrator related how his school, like many others in the area, was presented with (ten) bicycles by a Chinese donor. The school chose to allocate these bicycles to distant learners but the whole project failed. His view was that the failure was probably due to the fact that learners were told that the bicycles didn't belong to them: consequently the learners, *abused bicycles, some lost the bicycles, some broke and God knows what happened to others.*

In the Gauteng/North West region, the general view seems to be that bicycles are fine, but just for playing, as a group of young boys observed: they play with their bicycles every day and enjoy them tremendously, unless it rains or they get a puncture. But for travel over long distances to school, bicycles are less welcome: *(bicycles) make us sweat a lot; by the time we get to school we are sweating and that is not good* (7–8y boys' focus group, PU). Meanwhile, fewer girls know how to cycle than boys (74 % of girls, as opposed to 96 % of boys—yet these are the highest percentages of any region for both boys and girls, across all six agro-ecological zones). And although girls may initially learn to cycle, they are rarely seen out cycling. A mother in urban Gauteng observed that most girls don't ride bicycles, while a woman in her 20s, interviewed in a life history in the peri-urban site, proffered the view that cycle riding is 'gross for girls'! Girls who ride a bicycle while dressed inappropriately are viewed as particularly likely to attract trouble: *So you can imagine a girl riding a bike wearing a mini-skirt? It is not good at all* (mother 45y, PU).

In Eastern Cape, where fewer boys (66 %) and far fewer girls (just 19 %) than in Gauteng/North West said they know how to cycle, respondents

had much more to say about bicycles, mostly with reference to the benefits for boys and their inappropriateness for girls. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that girls' ability to cycle here is the lowest percentage recorded for any of the agro-ecological study zones. In the remote rural site, one mother simply observed, *bicycles are for boys*, while a 17-year-old girl felt that *girls do not have the right clothes to dress for riding a bicycle*. The comment from a 14-year-old boy, in the peri-urban site echoed sentiments frequently heard in coastal Ghana: (bicycles) *are not good for girls because African girls are not supposed to run around. The only time when they should go out is to school. They ought to be taught how to cook, clean the house, wash and do laundry, preparing them for when they are older to be married*.

In the urban site, boys' comments mostly referred to girls' cycling or perceived wider incompetencies, in what is clearly a difficult environment: *girls are slow and they can't ride. Girls won't be able to defend themselves when some thugs want to take their bicycles* (boy 14y); *boys are good and are used to bicycles. Girls are not good at cycling* (boy 12y). Another boy, who borrows his uncle's bicycle regularly to play, to go to the shops and to school, observed that his sister can't cycle: *boys are tough. They can handle bicycles and do most of the work at home using a bicycle. Boys learn quickly how to ride … girls cannot ride bicycles as they will fall.* He had some basic bicycle maintenance skills and would love to own a mountain bike with gears, but feared older boys would steal it: *It has happened before. Some boys I don't know told me to get off the bicycle and they took, but we managed to get the bicycle back the same day, as one of the boys was caught*. Another boy (15y) opined that girls *fall easily from the bike*. He rides a (borrowed) bicycle *for fun. When my mother sees me riding the bicycles she says I must be careful not to be knocked off by cars, because there is no pavement to ride the bicycle. We have to ride on the road*. Clearly, across all the urban sites, traffic is a major hazard for cyclists.

Girls in Eastern Cape urban sites seem to have absorbed similar views concerning gendered cycling: a 12-year-old girl talked about trying to learn, but, *I am scared that it will make me fall … My cousins say that only boys can ride cycles and it is not for girls … I would prefer a bicycle without a cross-bar which means that girls can cycle whilst wearing a dress … Boys will bully* (girls with bikes) *and take away their bicycles.* The dress issue arose also in another interview with a girl of the same age: *some bicycles are not good for girls because girls wear skirts and it is uncomfortable to ride a bicycle while wearing a skirt.* She also observed that, if boys see a girl with a bike, they will take it. Theft seems to be an even greater concern for girls than

boys. Just one girl, an 18-year-old, spoke up about girls' need for bicycle access in this urban setting: *girls who ride bicycles are seen in a different way, because bicycles are mostly associated with boys … but I think they are good … because girls also need to get to school early and they also need to go and buy things from the shop*.

Some Conclusions About Cycling

If we return to Cresswell's (2010) disaggregation of mobility into constituent parts, cycling clearly varies substantially from walking in some respects, but resonates in others, notably in terms of the importance afforded to cultural interpretations of appropriate gendered mobility practice, and the specific dangers associated with entanglements with traffic. Regarding *velocity*, topography plays a critical role in cycling practices—in Malawi, where cycling is essential to many young men's livelihoods, we see them toiling slowly up the escarpment to the Blantyre highlands from the Lower Shire valley, for instance, laden with goods. *Rhythm* emphasises the way boys start to cycle for fun, learning in the afternoons after school, particularly in Ghana, but subsequently—especially in Malawi—often using their cycle on long expeditions, hampered by heavy loads. *Route* suggests the need, as with walking, to keep to safe spaces—in this case spaces safe from traffic or, in urban South Africa, potential thieves. *Experience* is often built, for boys, around the thrill of speed; for girls, the fear of exposing one's legs and of falling is a more prevalent emotion, but there is also the experience of dust rising, sweat dropping, vehicles passing too close for comfort, whatever the gender. Finally, as regards *friction*, girls face forced disengagement from cycling, shaped by sexual innuendo, household demands and community disapproval, while for most boys there is usually little more friction than occasional personal and parental unease regarding traffic dangers, not dissimilar to that associated with pedestrian travel, unless a *tsotsi* arrives to demand the machine.

Notes

1. For definitions of the various motorised transport types common in each country, see Chap. 8.
2. They may also be too large: smaller bicycles designed for children tend to be uncommon and expensive.

3. Respondent names throughout the book are pseudonyms.
4. Now, with more extensive mobile phone communication, there is usually an opportunity to phone through to the local taxi station rather than cycling there.
5. https://www.environment.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/theme2_economicbenefitsofcyclingcommunities.pdf

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CHAPTER 8

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

This chapter follows on directly from Chap. 7, as the transport theme moves from walking and cycling to motor-mobility, but it brings to the fore a very different set of mobility experiences. The shared space of the vehicle—what an elderly Malawian (below) so aptly describes as a 'container'—not only enables extended spatial reach, but introduces an environment rich in potential for both welcome and abhorrent interactions: squeezed bodies, wandering hands; a soundscape of pleasurable conversations, the heavy beat of the latest popular music, raucous laughter, rude jokes and sexual innuendo, argument; a smell-scape of petrol, dust, body odour, alcohol, somebody's hastily prepared travel snack. And, for many, the ever-present, nagging fear that forces—human or occult—may bring the journey, the container and all its occupants to an untimely end.

The threat of injury from traffic accidents is substantial: it represents a major risk factor in young lives. Thus, while the first section of the chapter explores young people's views and experiences of travelling on motorised transport in each of the three CM study countries, it is appropriate to follow this with some discussion of young people's perceptions of risk and their experiences of traffic-related accidents (including as pedestrians). In this UN Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011–2020), consideration of young people's vulnerability to traffic accidents and means of reducing these is a key concern. WHO's 2014 global health estimates put road traffic injury as the highest of all causes of death for 15–17-year-olds, worldwide and third highest cause for the 10–14 age group (after HIV/AIDS

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and diarrhoeal disease). Boys account for nearly twice as many road traffic deaths as girls worldwide. So far as sub-Saharan Africa is concerned, as we will see, the situation is particularly dire.

Young People and the Twin Thrills of Motor-Mobility: Music and Speed

There are significant differences in young people's experiences of motor transport across the CM study countries, associated with overall motorised transport access and local modes available,[1] with age and with gender. However, at the outset it is also important to point to some of the common themes which permeate their narratives, notably music and speed. Loud music is, for many young people (girls and boys), one of the great pleasures of motor travel, but speed commonly brings to the fore emotions of both thrill and fear, as evidence below from all three study countries will illustrate. This latter emotion is hardly surprising, given that Africa has the highest accident rates in the world.

Yet, despite the evident dangers, driving a motor-vehicle is a prime aspiration (albeit rarely yet met) for many young men not only in all the CM research sites but far beyond, across Africa. For a majority, this will mean, at most, driving as an occupation—widely perceived to endow financial and social status. But driving also has a deeper, intangible mystique in which (male) identity is complexly bound up with an automobility-enabled potential and freedom that is hard to adequately define[2]: *I always dream about owning and driving my own car, but for commercial purposes … a taxi-cab and my choice of cab is to drive a Tico because it is quite small and cute* (boy 13y, Ghana, coastal zone RS). The story of Kwaku, and his ancient Ghanaian taxi, 'God never fails', vividly presented in an ethnographic study by Verrips and Meyer 2001, encapsulates the struggles that so many men will make to keep their dream on the road: the patched vehicle which regularly breaks down, dubious passengers, envious relatives, evil spirits to be assuaged along the road, and the police and other road-related authorities to whom 'presents' must be proffered. In the Gomoa study, on Nigeria's Jos Plateau and in rural Tanzania, where numerous young men working as mechanics, push-truck operators, minibus call boys, lorry-, motor taxi- and motor-cycle taxi drivers have been interviewed about their road experiences and aspirations, many comparable stories have emerged: dreams of endless motoring along smooth, shining tarmac roads so often rudely

interrupted—if realised at all—by major breakdowns, terrible accidents (in one case directly caused by the need to avoid a chameleon—perceived harbinger of death), exorbitant fines, even—in northern Nigeria—violent highway robbery facilitated by police collusion. The following narratives of the young passengers who frequently travel in these vehicles (supported by a small number of interviews conducted with transport operators—taxi and bicycle-taxi drivers—in the CM sites with substantial transport operations), give a flavour of how they may also share and suffer such experiences: 'passengering', as an active process, can have complex implications (Cresswell 2014).

Malawi

Young people in the CM research sites in Malawi lived further from regular public transport services on an all-season road than those in either Ghana or South Africa: over three-quarters lived more than 15 minutes distant. As noted in Chap. 7, even in urban contexts, 23 % of Malawi survey respondents lived over 15 minutes distant from public transport (compared to just 3 % in South Africa and 2 % in Ghana). Minibuses rarely penetrate beyond main roads in the high-density low-income areas, especially in Blantyre, where the steep hills become impassable in the rains. Inevitably, this limits young people's potential to experience public transport to the degree found in either Ghana or South Africa. A few children sometimes travel to school by minibus in the urban areas but, in the remote rural sites, young people were encountered who had never travelled by motorised transport in their lives. As one 15-year-old out-of-school girl in the Lilongwe district peri-urban study site put it, *(motor vehicles) are too expensive for a poor person like me … using a motor vehicle seems to us as a wishful thinking.* She, like many of her peers, male and female, is entirely dependent on travel on foot. A 15-year-old boy in rural Blantyre described cycling over 50 km to buy shoes, leaving at 4 am to arrive in town by 10 am, because he didn't have money for the minibus fare. However, he actually went on to say that he prefers the (borrowed) bicycle to a minibus because *once you get into a minibus, the first thing that comes into your mind is an accident.*

Fear of accidents was a very common theme among young people. Many, in both urban and rural settings, observed that while minibuses—the main form of motorised transport available in Malawi—are 'comfortable and fast', the danger of accidents is substantial: some had personal

experiences to relate. One (18-year-old) girl described how she was on the road to Blantyre in a minibus when a lorry coming in the opposite direction lost control and hit them; fortuitously, on this occasion, there were no injuries. A 14-year-old (primary) schoolboy who had only once been on a minibus (to visit his sick uncle in Blantyre) feared *that Satanists at times board minibuses and cause accidents … my parents told me that … They told me of a certain minibus which was involved in an accident due to the same thing* (Blantyre RS). Other seeming links with the supernatural were suggested by two boys who want to be drivers: a 16-year-old schoolboy was certain that staying in his village to pursue this occupation was not an option: *there are plenty of witches here and it is not good to stay here when you finish school … witches kill people*. Similarly, an orphan boy of 16, living with his brother in the Blantyre urban site (whose ambition is to be a Shire Lines bus driver), saw the biggest obstacle to achieving this as witchcraft: *I fear to be killed by works of witchcraft. There are lots of witches at my home* (village). The concept of supernatural forces as a key factor in the creation of accidents is remarkably widespread across Africa, but especially in rural areas (Masquelier 2002).

When young people manage to access a motor vehicle, various problems can arise, apart from traffic accidents. A small number of both boys and girls talked about being tricked by minibus conductors. An 18-year-old girl, who is studying at a private secondary school in the Blantyre peri-urban site, was distressed when she travelled by minibus to visit her family in the city and had to argue with the conductor over payment: *he did not give me change but insisted he did, so we ended up quarrelling …* Fortunately, passengers in the minibus took her side and forced the conductor to give in. Another girl complained, *there are always tussles with minibus conductors when I travel, especially when I am with my mother … my mother insists she should pay half the minibus fare, saying I am a child and need not to pay full fare* (18y, Blantyre U). (This latter case suggests that it is not only young people who can be harassed—but they, and women, seem more often to be prime targets than adult men.) Sometimes, it was simply the hassle of travel in overfull vehicles that was disliked. A 14-year-old boy compared the freedom of travelling by bicycle with the minibus where, *People are always pushing you around. You are heavily packed*. Meanwhile, the girl who found travel with her mother so difficult (above) described how, *you do not need to struggle with balancing when you are in a minibus* (as opposed to a bicycle, but) *I feel like vomiting … it must be the smell that comes from fuel*.

Most girls, in particular, appeared to need parental permission for any motorised journeys. Parental perceptions regarding the (gendered) variability of safety in independent travel on public transport were common, and seemingly based on a mix of concerns: firstly, specifically regarding the possibility of girls being attacked (as noted by a group of mothers in the Lilongwe urban site: *they are vulnerable to abuse … we fear that they can be raped);* but also wider concerns about girls' (supposedly lesser) ability to simply find their way in distant places. Thus, in interviews with parents, both mothers and fathers argued that girls need to be older than boys to travel alone on public transport. A mothers' focus group in remote rural Blantyre observed, for instance, that boys need to be about 13 to travel alone on public transport, but girls should be 16—but qualified this by saying that it would also be determined by *whether the child is able to read and write, because if the child knows how to read, chances of him getting lost are very slim. He or she will be able to read road signs.*

A subtext of female incompetence was common in these discussions: when a young mother proposed that while boys could travel alone, if they were 10 years old or more, girls should not be allowed to do so till they were at least 12, and was asked why, she baldly stated: *girls are less intelligent than boys!* (woman 24y, Lilongwe U). A rural-based father even pronounced that, while boys need to be 15 to travel on public transport alone, girls should be 28: *girls may look matured when you look at their stature, but they may still be too young to make good decisions!* Again, however, he observed that literacy was more important than age—he would worry about young people getting lost, unless they can read. Literacy is not, of course, necessarily a fail-safe: one 17-year-old secondary schoolboy described how he had travelled along to Mzuzu to visit a sick brother: *I needed to board a minibus. Call boys surrounded me and I was confused and ended up boarding a wrong minibus. I realised later when I had covered a distance, for which I was asked to pay.* He still proffered the view that boys need to be 14 before they travel alone, whereas girls should be 18 because *girls are less courageous than boys!*

Ghana

In Ghana, the motorised transport context is very different from Malawi. Even in the Gomoa small towns study conducted over a decade ago,[3] it was evident that many young people had some experience of motor travel, albeit usually outside of school-going. There were also some par-

ents sending children to private schools on the schools' own minibuses, even though this was remarkably expensive, with transport costs in some cases adding an additional 50 % to the school enrolment fees per term. However, these minibuses were frequently observed to be in very poor condition, overcrowded and without seatbelts (mirroring Vasconcellos's (1997) observations regarding the hazards of children's travel on poorly maintained public transport, driven by poorly trained drivers, over poorly maintained roads in rural Brazil).

In the CM survey, two-thirds of young people in the Ghana sites were found to live within 15 minutes' walk of an all-season road with regular public transport. At least three-quarters, in all sites, used motor taxis from time to time (compared to just a few per cent in all sites in Malawi and South Africa). Half to two-thirds (depending on site) also sometimes used minibuses. While few schoolchildren use motor transport to get to and from school (apart from a few children who—as in Gomoa—travelled to one of the private schools on the school's own minibus), for after-school work such as petty trade, visiting family and other such activities, motor transport is often an option.

The taxi is widely preferred to the minibus because of its potential for speed, relative comfort, music, conversation and new friends, especially if the journey is along smooth, interurban tarmacked roads: *I do not like the (roads) we have here; the coaltar roads do not shake the car (but) makes the journey smooth … [And] travelling is boring if there is no friend or relation on the car. There is no one to talk to. But if there is … the journey becomes very interesting [with] someone to talk and laugh with* (girl 17y, forest zone RS). For short rural journeys, however, travel discomfort is the norm: *the taxis that ply here take up to eight passengers and leave no room for comfort … (They) are old and they often break down* (focus group, forest zone RS).

The following discussion, which took place among a small group of friends, all young men in the forest zone peri-urban site, gives a flavour of common taxi-travel themes:

> Bicycle repairer (20y): *I am not happy if my* (taxi) *car is overtaken by another car. I wish I am in that car. I then perceive my driver as being lazy. I do not like cars that do not speed.*
>
> Unemployed (18y)*: I am also thrilled by the music in my car but I am not happy about boarding over-speeding cars.*

> Farmer (17y): *I also like music in the car but I abhor frequent stoppages and the sight of accidents by the wayside. I am also not happy with the drivers that do not blow horns, especially when we are curving* (i.e. cutting the curve by driving on the wrong side of the road).

This group is clearly thrilled by speed and the throb of heavy beat as their taxi shoots down local roads, but, at the same time, the fear of overspeeding lingers in the background, especially when they encounter the (not uncommon) sight of traffic accidents.

Fear of accidents, when travelling on public transport, was widespread in all the CM Ghana research sites. As in Malawi, some respondents had personal stories to illustrate their concerns: *I fear travelling because of accidents. Some time ago we were returning from our farm by a land rover vehicle but, because the passengers were many, one passenger laid on top of the vehicle. In the course of the journey the vehicle veered off the road and was about to enter into a gutter and, at that moment, the passenger at the top of the vehicle fell off and his leg was broken. During that accident I was very frightened because I thought I was going to die* (out-of-school boy 12y, forest zone RS). In this case the problem seems to have been more due to overloading than speeding, but many other cases were raised where speed was an issue (as, for instance, the girl who described her horror when the tyre burst on the minibus she was travelling in to Burkina Faso for a funeral).

Minibuses were widely observed to regularly exceed safe speeds: *with the minibus, those who load at the station are a little better, but it is very dangerous to pick those who do not load at the station- those drivers are always in a hurry … so they speed unnecessarily in a bid to pick all the passengers on the way before their counterparts* (boy 15y, coastal zone U). This point about minibuses racing to pick up passengers, overloading and carelessly overtaking, was made by many young people across Ghana. The youth of many drivers was also noted as part of the problem: *most of their drivers are young, so they drive anyhow and get accident* (girls' focus group, 13–18y, coastal zone). However, while this group of girls expressed a strong preference for taxis over minibuses, in terms of travel safety, observing that *taxis are light in weight so in accident situation less people die,* another schoolgirl, a 13-year-old, whose father owns a taxi, observed that *with the small vehicles, if you are in and an accident happens and you survive, you really have to thank God* (RS).

By contrast, the bus is observed to get you safely to your destination, and on time: *drivers are matured people so they drive very carefully* (boy 15y,

coastal zone U). The long-distance intercity buses operated by government are particularly favoured: *it is very fast, safe and does not stop on the way* (boy 18y, coastal zone RS).

Various other issues, not dissimilar to those encountered in Malawi, were raised around travel on public transport in Ghana, but seemed to be widely regarded as relatively insignificant compared to fear of accidents. They included arguments over the fare, such as the boy who complained that a driver's mate collected 3500 cedis when 3000 was due; the girl whose taxi driver had increased fares before the official notification (*I told him I could only pay the old price … but he refused to take the money. We both got angry and exchanged some hard words)*; complaints about being cramped (*some of these vehicles take so much cargo that even the place to put your feet is a problem*); clothes getting dirty or torn; and occasional trouble with the police. In one case a girl who helps her mother in trade, but had never travelled alone, described her confusion when she and her mother were en route to a nearby town in an overloaded car*: we were about half way to the place (when) we met a police barrier so we had to stop … the driver was told to show them his documents. I think he did not have the right (ones) so our vehicle had to be at the barrier … till all the passengers pleaded and pleaded with the police, before they allowed us to go* (girl 13y, coastal zone RS). Most of these troubles are not specifically limited to young people, though the practice of letting small children pile onto transport after school, overload it, then allow those without any money to stand instead of paying (as described by a coastal zone driver, RS) is clearly specifically child-related and of considerable concern. It reinforces earlier observations of extremely dangerous practices on Gomoa district's private school minibuses.

As in Malawi, travel on public transport by young girls alone is not encouraged anywhere. Occasional concerns were expressed about potential rape: an 18-year-old, in the forest zone, for instance, who said she likes travelling alone on public transport, because *I get to meet new people and make new friends*, at the same time expressed fear *that the driver might take me to somewhere to either rape or kill me*. However, she then reflected that she had only once had a problem with a driver, and that was merely about the fare being charged. Similar concerns about potential rape, based on hearsay rather than specific events, were raised elsewhere. One story, though, was recounted in some detail of a boy who had taken a lift in a private car, in this case being offered payment for sex: *the boy asked the driver to drop him immediately which the driver did, and sped off the scene for fear of being caught* (mechanic 34y, forest zone PU).

When people were asked about a suitable age at which boys and girls could travel alone on public transport, a similar pattern to that in Malawi emerged whereby girls need to be older than boys: *boys need to be 15 years old to travel alone, girls 20* (boy 18y, forest zone RS); *18 years for boys, 20 for girls* (focus group, boys 17–20y, forest zone PU). Just one girl made a bold, contrary suggestion that girls need to be 17 but boys 18, because *girls generally grow faster than boys.* The over-riding importance of being able to read signs was frequently emphasised, however, as in Malawi (and also as in the earlier Gomoa study, where both parents and children perceived literacy and 'cleverness' as the crucial passports to extending spatial autonomy).

South Africa

In South Africa, young people offered similar stories to those in Ghana about enjoying the music and the excitement of seeing new places and meeting new people on journeys by motor transport: *I enjoy the minibus taxi because it is comfortable and they play music…. when you are travelling on the taxi you meet people and you end up being friends just because you met in the taxi* (girl 17y, Eastern Cape RR). Children *like music and they dance and make noise in the taxis … To get more customers you have to play loud music* (driver 28y, Gauteng/North West U). Some older children also pointed to the benefits of being able to get to places their parents may not wish them to visit, if opportunities arise to travel independently: *I like travelling because I get to see new and interesting places … I can manage travelling alone because I am old enough and won't get lost. I like to travel alone so that I can go to places I feel like going, without my mother seeing me* (boy 15y, Eastern Cape U).

By contrast with Ghana and Malawi, fears about speeding and traffic accidents were less frequently raised in qualitative interviews, perhaps in part because other travel risks, associated with harassment and violence (discussed below), are of more immediate concern. Rare examples in the Gauteng/North West urban site included a 15-year-old girl (who regularly takes minibus taxis to school) who noted the high risk of accidents when it rains, while a mother reported the stark fact that three children had been killed outside the local school gate by hit-and-run minibus taxi drivers during the year. In Eastern Cape sites, traffic is lighter, and the potential to speed higher, but again, concerns only occasionally emerged: *The disadvantage* (of minibus taxis) *is that there is high chances of having*

an accident because they speed … one day when I was travelling (in) the van, it hit a dog that was crossing the road and the car swerved and turned the opposite direction, but fortunately the car didn't collide with oncoming traffic. I was so shocked (secondary school girl 17y, RS)*; I know of people who have died in car accidents with taxis that speed* (girl 13y, PU). In the CM survey, however, where young people in South Africa were specifically asked about the potential risks associated with different modes of transport they used, the danger of traffic accidents associated with travel in motorised transport came out much more strongly than in qualitative interviews: 64 % of all those surveyed in Gauteng/North West and 61 % in Eastern Cape who used minibuses raised traffic accidents as a significant travel danger (compared to slightly lower figures of 56 % for Ghana and 58 % for Malawi), while traffic accidents associated with bus travel were rated a travel danger by 59 % in Gauteng/North West (the only one of the six study zones where buses form a significant transport mode).

Since there is significant variation in available transport modes between the two study zones in South Africa, young people's transport experiences inevitably differ somewhat. In *Gauteng/North West Province*, for instance, many school pupils have access to local bus services, and 40 % of those interviewed in the survey used a bus at some point; a quarter ride in one at least once a week (compared to virtually none in Eastern Cape). The great advantage of the bus is the money it saves; its major disadvantage and danger, the potential for traffic accidents. Others travel to school by minibus taxi: *I enjoy my journey to school (by taxi) because I talk with my friends—and sometimes with the girls, who are quiet most of the time* (14y boy, Gauteng/North West PU). During the week there are discounts for schoolchildren here, though they have to pay full fare at weekends. Outside school hours, the minibus taxi is still a widely used means of transport. The following description from an 11-year-old girl, who generally travels by minibus taxi with her mother or brother, gives some flavour of motor travel as experienced here by a child: *you have to share seats and space with other people … some people do not bath and they smell, others want to smoke and others are coughing and they are sick. Sometimes there are passengers who are drunk and they lie on your shoulders or they are talking about nasty thing … I just like the kombis.*[4] *I think the music is good and entertaining. If you are really travelling a long distance, you will not be bored. But sometimes there are older people in the taxi and they hate loud music. In that case you find we are getting very bored!*

In *Eastern Cape*, by contrast with Gauteng/North West, buses and minibus taxis are relatively sparse and young people often hitch lifts on lorries in all except the remote rural site. There is an occasional bus in

the peri-urban and urban sites, but it tends to be slow and stops regularly, dropping and picking up people. By contrast the kombi minibus and 'stallion' (a 12-seater car) are popular because they are faster and more comfortable. In the rural sites the 'bakkie', an open vehicle/pick-up truck with a canvas top, is widely employed for passenger transport, but is considered both dangerous and uncomfortable, although it does have the advantage of accommodating large loads: *but we don't have any choice here because that is the only means of public transport that is available* (boy 18y). The operators may also take advantage of the young ones on the bakkie: *if they see that you are young, the conductors will tell you that you should sit on somebody's lap, although we end up paying the same fare. (We need minibus taxis) and not bakkies, because they are very uncomfortable and bumpy, and by the time I get to school my back is painful and I have a headache* (girl 15y). Minibus taxis are rare in this site and a woman who has sent her son since he was 13 to the town to sell goods observed that her main concern was that he didn't have things stolen en route on the transport, and to ensure that he caught the last van home to the village at night, as otherwise he could end up sleeping at the taxi rank, which would be very dangerous.

In both regions, many interviews with children (and some parents) emphasised the vulnerability of girls to harassment on transport. In rural Eastern Cape, a young girl of 12, who, following the death of both parents, is the head of her house and carer of children aged 9 and 6 years, described how she travels from this village down to the peri-urban site to sell guavas at the taxi rank there, a job she has been doing for 2 years, since her mother first fell ill. She described how much she dislikes the journey, not only because her head bumps uncomfortably against the roof of the bakkie, but also because, as a very young girl known to be poor and without any family protection, she is particularly vulnerable: *We girls are under a lot of pressure; you have to dress nicely when you go on public transport. In the taxi there are people who want to propose love to you and I don't like that because, every time I sit next to a boy they want to tell you that they love you.*

Minibus taxi drivers are a particular source of harassment in South Africa. Similar complaints came from all sites:

> *Sometimes taxi drivers harass us; like if you are a girl and the last to disembark, they want to propose to you and they could just drive around with you and pass your home.* (girl 17y, Gauteng/North West U)
>
> *I have this problem with taxi drivers- they don't care who you are. They want us to be their wives, and I am not interested. Sometimes if you are the last one*

to get out, they would drive very slow proposing love to you. Some of them are even 15 years older than me. (girl in 11–14y discussion group, Gauteng/North West PU)

The thing that I fear about travelling on a minibus taxi is that the drivers propose love to us and they say they want us to be their girlfriends. I am afraid they might kidnap or rape me if I am alone in the taxi … the taxi conductors are very rude. Just because we are girls they talk trash and vulgar language to us. They don't have respect. One time I was travelling with my friend from town and when we were disembarking the taxi, the conductor touched my friend's back (buttocks). When we asked him what was his problem, he started talking vulgar language to us and the driver was laughing. (girl 12y, Eastern Cape U)

Some drivers want you to be their girlfriends by force. I don't like sitting in the front with the driver because they always make love proposals to you. (girl 18y, Eastern Cape U)

Girls in the urban and peri-urban sites who have the option of bus transport unsurprisingly tend to prefer this, especially at night, despite its slower speed and tendency always to be full: it is deemed much safer than travelling by minibus kombi. Very young girls seem to be at particular risk of attack: one mother in the Eastern Cape urban site observed that girls shouldn't travel by minibus taxi till they are at least 16 years old: *if they are younger they will be raped by taxi drivers.* There was a widespread view among parents and children (as in Ghana and Malawi) that girls needed to be older than boys to travel safely alone, but in South Africa with much stronger associated evidence of harassment of girls.

Minibus taxi drivers' (seemingly well-founded) reputation for preying on girls (also see Chap. 3) appears to be reinforced by local meanings of masculinity. Moreover, as occasional respondents observed, some young girls fall for these (often older) men, attracted to the potential status and benefits that sexual liaison with a taxi driver may bring—and apparently oblivious to the potential dangers (Leclerc-Madlala 2003: 222–3; Luke 2003, 2005): *we have a lot of them at school. In fact, dating a taxi driver has now become a life style for many girls. These girls like 'sugar daddies' or boys who drive nice cars (but they) use these girls sexually* (girls' focus group, Gauteng/North West PU). Meanwhile, one 40-year-old father, himself a minibus taxi driver, observed: *Girls are actually dating these drivers (who) promise them money. It is shocking as you will see a 16-year-old girl having an affair with a taxi driver* (Eastern Cape U).

Minibus taxi drivers form very powerful, often feared, collective groups in South Africa and relations with them are typically negotiated with care, not only by young girls but by passengers of all ages and both genders: *One thing you must learn is never to have an argument with a taxi driver. We as passengers are at their mercy and they can do anything they feel like doing to you at any time* (middle-aged mother, Eastern Cape U)*; The taxi is far more relaxing than the bus … The disadvantage of travelling by taxi is that drivers are rude and they talk vulgar language … I don't back-chat taxi drivers. If they say you must do this you must do it, otherwise they will make you disembark their taxi* (boy 12y, Eastern Cape U). Even older boys need to be very careful: *I am scared of* (minibus taxi drivers) *because they are very rude and they disrespect the old people and us school children, but I have never back-chatted with them because they will stop and make you jump off the taxi* (boy 18y, Eastern Cape PU).

While the vulnerability of young girls to propositioning and attack on public transport dominated transport-focused interviews in South Africa, other issues were also raised about young people's treatment: a 13-year-old girl in the Eastern Cape urban site complained that the bus, in particular, is *always full. The old people say that we must stand so that they can sit even though we have paid the same amount of money.* She went on to talk about being cheated by the transport operators: *one of my friends, when she was going to school, somebody in the taxi did not pay, so the driver said it was my friend who did not pay, so he stopped the taxi and forced her off … she had to walk.* She argued that a school bus was urgently needed because *some of the taxis refuse to stop for us school children, because they say we want to pay half price.* These complaints and concerns mirror those that young people raised in Ghana and Malawi and, in some respects, they suggest valid issues, though the 'rights' which young people are increasingly identifying as theirs, especially in South Africa, can conflict with the arguably stronger needs of older, infirm passengers.

Overview of Young People's Motor-Mobility Experiences

Returning to Cresswell's (2010) disaggregation of mobility into constituent parts, following the pattern of Chap. 7, motor mobility clearly varies substantially both from walking and cycling, though certain themes continue to resonate, not least the importance afforded to cultural interpretations of appropriate and safe gendered mobility practice. Regarding

velocity, speed is a paramount consideration for many young people as their taxis hurtle down tarmacked roads and screech around corners—the experience can be thrilling, but it also widely induces tangible—and justifiable—fears of immediate extinction. *Rhythm* emphasises the way the minibuses and buses so often trundle along, stopping frustratingly often to allow passengers to embark and disembark. *Route* might suggest the need, as with walking and cycling, to keep to safe spaces, but for the most part, where motorised travel is concerned, it is the spaces where people alight and are set down and—above all—the space within the vehicle itself, where unwelcome bodies can press excessively into personal space, that are seen as contentious and potentially dangerous, rather than the routeway itself. *Experience*, meanwhile, tends to be built around the thrills of loud music and speed, new people, new places, contrasting but often coincident with fears of accidents, contestations and physical attack. Finally, as regards *friction*, girls are faced with widespread—and seemingly sometimes justified (at least in South African contexts)—concerns around their independent travel. To travel safely on motorised transport, they are widely regarded as needing to be older than their male peers and constantly on guard from male predation: this can be very demeaningly presented—usually (but not only) by boys and men—as a matter of girls' incompetence and naivety. Some girls, themselves, seem to suggest they need to be older than boys to travel alone; arguably a Foucauldian-style internalised conditioning observable in so many other aspects of female mobility practices. For most boys and young men, by contrast, there is usually little more friction than occasional personal and parental unease, principally regarding traffic dangers, not dissimilar to that associated with cycling and pedestrian travel.

Traffic Risk and Road Safety

Traffic and road safety issues are now of major concern across sub-Saharan Africa. A recent World Bank report (Marquez and Farrington 2013) observes that although this region is the least motorized in the world, it has the highest road traffic death rate, proportional to its population: an estimated 24.1 people per 100,000 population are killed in road crashes each year, and with continued rapid expansion in motorised vehicle numbers, road traffic deaths are predicted to rise by at least 80 % by 2020. South Africa (along with Nigeria), has the highest fatality rates (31.9 deaths per 100,000 per year). Moreover, pedestrians, cyclists and users of motorized two-wheelers constitute more than half of all those killed on roads, and

more than 40 % of road injury deaths are among pedestrians. The authors suggest that, by 2015, road traffic injuries will have become the number-one killer of children aged 5–15 in Africa, outstripping malaria and HIV/AIDS, a sobering conclusion, while for young men, they are already the second leading cause of premature death after HIV/AIDS.

The latest WHO report (2015) notes that, as far as road traffic death rates of children under 18 years of age are concerned, Africa's low- and middle-income countries face by far the worst situation, at 15.6 per 100,000 population (World Health Organization, Global Health Estimates, 2014). It also emphasises how younger children are more vulnerable in road traffic than adults due to their physical, cognitive and social development stage: this includes possible difficulties in judging the proximity, speed and direction of moving vehicles, impulsivity and shorter attention spans which may affect their ability to cope with simultaneous events, while their small stature makes it difficult for them to see surrounding traffic and for drivers and others to see them. If they are involved in a road traffic crash, their softer heads make them more susceptible to serious head injury than adults. Children of adolescent age, meanwhile, are especially prone to take risks, compromising their safety on the road (WHO 2015) (Image 8.1).

In Ghana, Malawi and South Africa, and between research sites within each country, the potential for serious traffic accidents varies, according to factors such as prevailing transport modes, levels of vehicular traffic and road surface quality. In the CM field sites in Malawi, where cycling is particularly widespread (see Chap. 7), it is often bicycles that are the key cause of accidents. In a life history in rural Blantyre district, for instance, a young man recounted his three serious travel accidents, all of which were cycle-related—the first his bicycle chain came off while he was travelling at high speed down a steep slope—he lost his balance and fell off. On the

Image 8.1 Crossing the road can be a hazardous business

second occasion, he was cycling while looking behind, then had to cycle into the bush alongside to avoid collision with pedestrians and fell off. In the third case he was cycling down hills and the rear brakes failed—this time, he diverted into the bush and then fell off*: I thought that if I will let the bike come down the slope, then the accident would have been fatal*. In each of these incidents, the injuries seem to have amounted, essentially, just to scratched elbows and knees, but the young man concerned was lucky: had he experienced a serious injury on this track, the likelihood that he would reach hospital and survive is low.

However, it is often as pedestrians (rather than while riding a bicycle), that children's cycle-related accidents occur. Many parents expressed fears of their children being hit by bicycles: a mother with two small girls (one just starting school) noted, *cyclists ride fast and can hit a child when passing*. (It happened here) *three weeks ago … a boy of 13* (though fortunately) *he just had some bruises* (Blantyre zone PU). Even in remote rural Lilongwe district, bicycles were perceived as the key danger for children—in this case those who play on the main dirt track which passes through the settlement. In urban Lilongwe parents and children observed the danger of the bridge connecting this low income neighbourhood to the town: *some bicycle operators do not have bells on their bicycles and it is easy [for them] to hit children* (father 28y). He warns his children to *refrain from fighting and give way to bicycles when they hear a bell*.

Motorised traffic, meanwhile, is a growing danger as vehicle numbers expand. Key causes of high levels of Road Traffic Injury (RTI) in Africa, across all age groups, according to the report by Marquez and Farrington (2013), are poorly regulated (privately operated) public transport, poor vehicle maintenance, limited law enforcement, poor road infrastructure, high traffic mix and little separation of vulnerable road users from high speed motorized traffic. Lack of seatbelts, overcrowding/standing passengers and very hazardous road environments are widespread issues: in Ghana, they found over half of reported crashes in urban areas involved buses and minibuses, with most of those injured being their passengers or pedestrians (which often includes, for instance, young people trying to sell goods to slow moving vehicles in traffic jams at the roadside). And this is all without taking into consideration the wider damage to young people's health in urban and peri-urban areas induced by vehicle-generated air pollution.

In the CM study, in Ghana, South Africa and Malawi's urban and peri-urban areas, the traffic hazard issue was raised, not just as a danger for

passengers in motor vehicles (discussed in the first half of this chapter), but especially as an issue for pedestrians. National speed restrictions are often not well enforced, and many vehicles are badly maintained and operate with inadequate brakes and so on.[5] Police are still commonly lax in their attitude to traffic offences and small bribes are often sufficient to avoid further proceedings. As elsewhere, in Ghana, drivers (who often operate without a valid driving licence, insurance or certification of vehicle road-worthiness) avoid reporting accidents if at all possible, in order to avoid encounters with the police (Ghana National Road Safety Commission, 2001; interviews with road safety officials, Accra).

Other factors may also contribute to prevailing traffic hazards. Thus, in Malawi's Lilongwe peri-urban site, the group village headman pointed to absence of road signs contributing to the potential for children walking to school being hit on the M1 road (which leads to both a primary school and the community day secondary school from the main residential areas): *one child was hit by a car and died while two did not die* (but nothing has been done). *Unfortunately efforts to put road sign posts on the road are frustrated by vandalism … They use the metal for making hoe handles and chips fry pans!*

In Ghana and South Africa, where nearly two-thirds and almost half (respectively) of young people in the research sites live within 15 minutes of regular public transport and an all-season road, road accident issues are very strongly focused around motorised transport dangers, as discussed earlier, but to give just two examples: *the tipper trucks, in particular, over-speed even when they are in town. They knocked about 5 children down last year*[6] *and an uncountable number of goats* (out-of-school boys' focus group 17–20y, Ghana forest zone PU). *When we go to school we don't have a path where we can walk. We walk on the same road as the cars and the cars are always speeding. My mother says that we should watch out for the cars* (girl 13y, South Africa Eastern Cape PU).

Information from the CM survey is helpful in exploring this wider issue of accident incidence and risk in the research sites, since respondents were asked whether they had experienced any injury from road accidents, and—if so—to provide some information about the most recent accident. Across the three countries, 688 young people (23 %) out of the total (2967) survey population aged c. 9–18y said they had experienced an injury from a road traffic accident at some point in their life: the highest proportion was in Ghana, with a massive 36 % (28 % of girls, 45 % of boys), compared to just 26 % in Malawi (17 % of girls, 36 % of boys)

and 6 % (5 % of girls, 6 % of boys) in South Africa (i.e. in all cases following the global pattern of more boys being injured in road traffic accidents than girls). However, a breakdown of data regarding the *most recent* incident indicates that the vast majority of such accidents were very minor bicycle-related injuries (albeit painful, nonetheless). Gender was statistically significant with regard to most recent road traffic injury incidence for both Ghana and Malawi, which is hardly surprising given that most of the injuries related to cycle riding and it is mostly boys who ride bicycles extensively (see Chap. 7).

Traffic-related injuries experienced specifically as a result of walking along the road, by contrast, were much lower, and figures for injury as a motor vehicle passenger even lower still. Among (the 688) children who had experienced any injury from a road accident, walking along the road was the cause of that injury for 10 % of children in Malawi's Lilongwe zone, 6 % in the Blantyre zone, 3 % in Ghana's forest zone and 2 % in the coastal zone. Figures were lower in South Africa, at 1.2 % in Gauteng/NW and just 0.4 % in Eastern Cape. These data, unfortunately, do not tell us how the injury was sustained, since this was towards the end of a very long survey questionnaire where it was necessary to limit questions. However, respondents were asked whether the latest accident they suffered was very serious and life-threatening: out of those 688 young people who said they had had a traffic-related injury of some sort, in the survey, 6 individuals in South Africa (4 girls, 2 boys), 5 in Ghana (2 girls, 3 boys) and 3 in Malawi (1 girl, 2 boys) categorised their injury as life threatening.[7] While we cannot make any observations on gender patterns of severe injury for such small numbers, overall, these injuries must be of concern, however, and to whosoever, they were sustained.

Road Safety Training

During interviews in schools across the CM study sites, teachers were asked about road safety teaching. Their evidence suggests that (whatever national programmes may be in place) many children in school obtain little quality road safety training: this mirrors conditions across much of Africa (see Salmon and Eckersley 2010, for Ethiopia).

In Malawi, the head of a peri-urban secondary school reported that they give *'a little bit'* of road safety training, especially during school assemblies: *in the past there was civic subject which included road safety training but not now* … (now they do it) *because some pupils experienced road accidents. For*

example, one boy in form 1, 15y old, will not be able to walk again (after an accident a few months ago). A primary school head in rural Lilongwe suggested that *pupils here at school learn about road safety in subjects like social studies and life skills* (and observed that there haven't been any accidents with pupils), while the secondary school head in the same site, observed that since two boys had been injured by speeding vehicles the previous year, they teach road safety in social studies, but this seemed—on further enquiry—to merely amount to teaching pupils *to ride bikes on left hand side of road, not to over speed and to avoid accidents!* There was no clear indication of any sustained, well-thought-through pupil—education for road safety in school in Malawi, though many parents said they warn their children regularly about traffic dangers: *we tell them to walk on one side every time and not keep crossing the road* (mothers' focus group, Blantyre RR). Children, when asked about road safety training in in-depth interviews, were more likely to talk about road safety lessons from parents at home than school lessons: *Parents say we should be watchful on the road. They tell me I should not cross the road before checking whether there is any car approaching* (Lilongwe PU).

In Ghana, road safety training seems to be focused at primary level in CM study site schools: *yes we do (road safety training). We teach them how to cross including road signs. Part of the English reading curriculum* (primary teacher, forest zone U). Once children move to secondary school there appears to be no further training: *In social studies, a teacher can chip in something on road safety, but it is not a thing we teach or train them on. If we begin to get cases of accidents we may think about training them* (male secondary school teacher, forest zone U). A female teacher at another secondary school in this site confirmed that there was no road safety training done at secondary school level, because it is done in the primary schools and they had had no pupils involved in road accidents. In one of the private schools, meanwhile the assistant head observed: *(road safety training) is not a regular thing. Only some time ago some road safety people came to talk to our students on signs and how to use the road, but the school does not give such training.* As discussed in Chap. 9, more attention needs to be given to sustaining road safety training and its key messages in secondary school, and, in particular, in the burgeoning private education sector.

In South Africa, the situation seems a little better, insofar as road safety education in school is concerned. While a primary school administrative clerk, interviewed in the Gauteng/North West urban research site, clearly felt that the road safety training was inadequate in schools across his area,

his observations suggest that there is—potentially—far more road safety equipment and training available to schools than in Malawi and Ghana: *almost every six month interval a learner will be knocked dead by a speeding taxi … many learners fill the road and are careless of where they walk … five years ago a scholar patrol project was about to be introduced in our school. This has never come to fruition … we have retro-reflective gears, hand operated stop sign boards, caps and other material. We have never received any training in scholar patrol (though) other schools have been trained … We have been bugging the Metro office of the transport department so that they give us the training and they have been promising but they never came.* In Eastern Cape, many pupils, unlike in Malawi or Ghana, referred to the specific class in which they had been taught about road safety, though this varied from Standard 3 to Grade 4 to 6 and 7. Just one boy of 12 (in the urban site) said he had never received any road safety education at school, but had rather learned from her mother: I *am scared of being knocked off by a car in town because some of the streets do not have traffic lights. When I am walking with my mother she teaches me about the traffic lights and road signs. She says I must always look at the traffic lights before I cross the road.* Many parents, however, in this Eastern Cape urban site, were very concerned to emphasise the dangers of poor infrastructure: *the traffic lights that we used to have in the past are old and they haven't been replaced. This is a danger to our children. We don't have adequate pavements and children run into the road and we have accidents involving school children due to some part on the irresponsibility of drivers and the lack of proper traffic signals* (father/taxi driver 40y, U); *This settlement is not good for children. There have been children who have been killed by cars because the cars here speed and there are no traffic lights or speed humps. Children like playing on the road because they have nowhere to go, there are no recreational parks. Our area is neglected* (father 35y, U).

Reflecting on Traffic Risk, Road Safety and the Broader Political Economy of Road Use

This takes us firstly to wider issues around the design of urban and peri-urban environments and their associated road and transport systems. Increasingly, in wealthier areas of the study countries (but not, as yet, to a great extent in the sites where this research was conducted), observation suggests that parents send their children to and from school by vehicle, rather than on foot or bicycle, precisely because of such traffic dangers.

National policies are urgently needed to implement more sustained (physical infrastructure and educational) road safety interventions. Otherwise, as motorised vehicle ownership expands, the dangers for children will become increasingly severe and there will certainly be little likelihood of retaining current patterns of walking and/or cycling as key travel to school modes: the potential knock-on implications for health and levels of childhood obesity are clear.

Moreover, while much of this discussion on road safety has focused on in-school children, it is important to bear in mind the large number of children who either never attend school, or leave before the year in which road safety training is introduced. As the WHO (2015) report so firmly emphasises, *many of the children who are victims of this man-made calamity are poor. Attempts to address road safety for children are, therefore, inextricably linked to notions of social justice, and should be part of global efforts to reduce poverty.* It is apposite to refer to Lamont's (2010) reflections on the politics involved in road safety engineering, enforcement and education in Africa, and to wider issues around the political economy of road use and vulnerability on the road, at this point. Lamont observes the way public health professionals and educators have appropriated the language of epidemiology, such that road death and injury are re-presented as an 'epidemic on wheels' or a 'disease of development'. His suggestion that this medicalisation of the problem not only essentialises road death in Africa but depoliticises its injury politics requires us to reflect, yet again, on the complex nexus of power relations (stretching well beyond the African continent) that help shape everyday mobility practices. The symbolic and real manifestation of freedom that automobility presents downplays the scale and reach of its negative consequences (Wells and Beynon 2011), but the implications of lack of equality in Africa's road travel arena are, depressingly, only too evident.

[Possible interventions around road safety (along with other relevant interventions to improve children's mobile lives) are explored in the concluding chapter.]

Notes

1. The modes most commonly met and discussed in this chapter are as follows:

   Taxi: in Ghana this is a saloon car licensed to transport passengers in return for payment of a fare (but, unlike in the Global North, not

typically fitted with a taximeter and not usually hired by individual passengers). [In South Africa the term 'taxi' is used mostly in the context of the *minibus taxi* which is larger and equates to the Ghanaian 'tro-tro': the metered taxi in South Africa is a separate mode.] In Malawi, the term taxi barely enters children's motor travel stories and the minibus reigns supreme.

Minibus: This is usually a large van, adapted to seat c. 10–14 passengers. In Ghana these are known as 'tro-tros'. In South Africa the larger 'kombi' minibus may carry up to c. 15 passengers. Minibuses usually operate on fixed routes for set fares, but not to a timetable (they usually set off when full).

Bus: a larger vehicle with up to c. 60 seats.

Bakkie: a small pick-up truck (i.e. with an open body, usually covered by a canvas or metal canopy) often used for transporting passengers and goods in rural South Africa.

2. Though being a footballer is now starting to make strong inroads in the aspiration stakes—see Chap. 5.
3. Introduced in Chap. 2—see also Porter and Blaufuss 2003.
4. Here referring to the larger minibuses.
5. In the Gomoa (Ghana) study, where children's traffic accidents were investigated, the local police headquarters reported that most accidents were caused by vehicle mechanical faults.
6. This claim is not substantiated by survey accident data for the site but of course much depends on who was interviewed in the survey and who was not available for interview (if a fatality resulted); there is no clear indication of the severity of these reported accidents.
7. The difference in RTA incidence between countries is statistically significant.

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CHAPTER 9

Conclusion: Reflecting on Theory and Method, Practice and Policy

The 'new mobilities paradigm' which puts multiple interacting mobilities at the centre of social change, problematising sedentarist theories focused on bounded places, arguably no longer merits the epithet 'new'. There is no doubt that, over the decade since Sheller and Urry (2006) published their seminal paper on this theme, take-up of their central argument has been enthusiastic and widely sustained (as reflected in, at latest count, over 700 citations recorded for the paper in Web of Science, and approaching 2000 citations in Google Scholar).[1] While migration-focused mobilities research, in particular, has a long history in Africa-focused scholarship, the new mobilities approach fostered by Sheller and Urry is encouraging new initiatives here too,[2] not least among an emerging group of younger scholars (e.g. Langevang 2008; Benwell 2009). As indicated in the introduction to this book, by drawing together insights into African mobilities built-up over many years, and reflective engagement with writings now emerging within the 'new mobilities paradigm' in both the Global North and South, the aim is to contribute both specifically to an enriched understanding of African mobilities and—more broadly—to the development of a more nuanced understanding of the mobilities paradigm as it is applied worldwide.

Regarding understanding of African mobilities, the focus in this book has been on young people's daily mobilities (as opposed to migration), and is principally built around in-depth field research in a small number of Anglophone sub-Saharan countries (with a specific emphasis on poor

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communities, albeit in very diverse research sites). However, as noted in the introduction, writing has been informed by reference to a much wider range of Africa-focused literature and by extensive personal field experience extending over 40 years (principally in Anglophone countries, but also parts of Francophone and Lusophone Africa), From this vantage point, it is perhaps justifiable to offer (albeit tentatively) some wider reflections that have relevance beyond the specific research sites on which so much of the detail of this book is set. At the same time, of course, it is important to reiterate the fact that every site is unique and generic observations (so often required by development agencies keen to roll out major interventions) have potential for dangerous consequences.

The previous chapters have demonstrated how the daily movements of the young people in poor communities who occupy centre-stage in this book are complex, contingent and, for the most part, undeniably circumscribed—not only by their immediate families but also by wider cultural and economic constraints. This is especially, but not only, the case for girls (among whom unequal access to speed, routeways, rights and status is widely in evidence). Mobilities, as social constructs, are experienced and imagined very differently, not least according to age and gender. Reciprocal responsibilities to families and communities, which form part of the intergenerational contract, produce daily mobilities that are complexly intertwined with those of elders, peers and younger siblings. Young people in this story recognise that relationality and often benefit from it, but they also have to use agency and creativity to circumvent and ease its more pernicious impacts, fitting their own wishes and aspirations into the small interstices and tight corners of required routines and space-time fixity constraints (as is particularly evident in the chapter about play and leisure). Mobility and immobility, throughout, are strongly entangled with emotions—hope, frustration, despair, happiness, elation, resignation—as has been evident in each of the core thematic chapters (on education, work, leisure, health, transport and travel). The tensions and practices which are part and parcel of mobility and stasis not only shape young people's identities and lives but also the places within which they live and move. Each research site is thus differently and uniquely shaped by—and shapes—the mobilities of those who travel within and around it.

Perhaps the most significant contribution the findings in this book bring to wider understanding of African mobilities is the evidence they offer of the way the small *everyday* constraints, concerns and hassles experienced by young people in their efforts at (and requirements for) daily

mobility contribute to life trajectories—and, furthermore, the potential implications beyond their own lives in terms of the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage. Access to formal education presented a prime example of this theme: Chap. 3 demonstrated how power pervades all aspects of the journey to/from school experience, in both rural and urban areas, whether the power to shape and disrupt journeys is experienced en route (as with fears around harassment, potential encounters with would-be thieves and rapists, wild animals and the spirit world) or is associated with likely chastisements in school or home 'moorings' (especially should the child arrive late). Range, regularity, speed, comportment and emotion may all be affected, whether any unwelcome 'perforation of the ordinary by the extraordinary' occurs on a particular journey or not (Binnie et al. 2007: 168). For girls, the potential of mobility factors to contribute to curtailing formal schooling is particularly great across much of sub-Saharan Africa, especially where family resources are sparse and schools are located some distance from home. While efforts to improve girls' enrolment in primary education have expanded substantially, in line with efforts towards achieving the MDGs, primary school completion still tends to be lower for girls (as also reported, for instance, in Ethiopia by Murray 2014) and the likelihood of their successful graduation from secondary school remains very low. Rising opportunity costs coupled with parental views as to girls' vulnerability and perceived potential for promiscuous behaviour tend to conspire to rapidly close off educational opportunities once pubescence is reached, especially in contexts where a long journey to school without external surveillance is entailed (see also Porter 2011; Huisman and Smits 2009). Meanwhile, in some locations (including remote rural Malawi, parts of South Africa's Eastern Cape and Lesotho) boys' educational opportunities may be curtailed even more comprehensively than girls', commonly because there are cattle to be herded—in this case, however, it is the required supervised mobility of their animal charges that is likely to be the significant constraint on school attendance.

Whatever the cause of constrained mobility in educational contexts, and even when the quality of schooling is very poor, it is likely that very limited exposure to formal schooling will be highly disadvantageous to life trajectories. Despite the increasing concerns expressed internationally about the low quality of education on offer to poor people across much of Africa, in reality it is often not so much the specific knowledge that has been gained in school but the acquisition of a paper certifying successful completion (of any particular stage) of formal education which is key to

advancement, especially in the formal employment sector. Dreams built around the potential rewards which can accrue from education encourage many aspiring children and parents in constrained circumstances to put enormous efforts into finding school fees and/or associated costs such as school uniform; it also lies behind many of those long, arduous, potentially hazardous journeys that are made to school. Moreover, success in the job market is likely to feed through into the next generation, their educational opportunities and life chances. Where girls are concerned, evidence shows that influences of schooling extend to fertility rates and child-rearing practices and thus to child health, child survival and schooling patterns in the next generation (e.g. Ainsworth et al. 1995; Kabeer 2005, Boyle et al. 2006, Bird 2013).

Beyond Africa, this study has relevance for research being built around the mobilities paradigm, most particularly with reference to how mobilities are investigated. Given the central focus in this paradigm on the journey as a space and process in which identities are constructed and reconstructed within a complex nexus of power relations, methods which can assist in excavating the nuances of such interactions as they shape the lives of vulnerable people are essential. Some significant global advances in participatory research approaches have arguably been initiated in the South (from the early work of Robert Chambers onwards): this book hopefully contributes to that stream. Chapter 2 described how an innovative co-investigation approach to children's mobility was first piloted in India, Ghana and South Africa, then subsequently applied in the CM study. These studies, which proved highly successful in bringing to the fore children's perspectives and ensuring that subsequent academic-led research investigated key issues that the child peer-researchers had uncovered,[3] are already attracting interest from researchers working in Northern contexts (as has been apparent from diverse invitations received to present and discuss this work). Nonetheless (as emphasised in Chap. 2), the commitment and time investment entailed in sustaining an ethically sound research co-investigation programme should not be underestimated.

Another (related) contribution to the mobilities participatory methods repertoire is the so-called mobile ethnography, also described in Chap. 2. The walks which form the core of this method were enormously valuable in building rapport with children who, for the most part, had seemingly never been consulted before about their journeys, and were often clearly daunted in initial stationary interviews with adult strangers. Interestingly, the potential of the approach for building accounts rich in social under-

standing was recognised not only by the adult academic researchers in the CM study but also, subsequently, by some of the child peer-researchers who, having observed the RAs at work, also put it into their tool-box of research techniques. The value of sustained application of the mobile ethnography approach—firstly as a training device and then as a significant tool for understanding both young people's mobile lives (not only the journeys themselves but the contextual moorings between which their journeys took place)—arguably takes it well beyond the simple 'walking or go-along interview'. Perhaps conferring the term 'mobile ethnography', in recognition of this point, will promote its fuller application (and further development). However the approach is named, hopefully its usage in this book will contribute to highlighting its value and encouraging interest in its application in mobilities research globally. While there has been interest in the Global North in walking interviews, these are often seemingly limited 'one-off' elements, rather than being adopted as a core technique for application in the sustained way described here.

Practical Mobility-Related Interventions to Help Reduce Young People's Current Mobility Concerns and Constraints

Moving back to the lived lives of the young people who form the core of this book, it is important also to reflect on some practical mobility-related interventions which might help address young people's reported concerns and constraints. These are not necessarily about improving mobility per se, of course, since in some contexts *less*, rather than *more* mobility could be beneficial: not all movements are equally meaningful and life enhancing (Salazar and Smart 2011). A denser network of schools and health centres, and water piped to household compounds (to avoid frequent repetitive trips to collect water) are obvious examples of this (though even in the latter case, there will be some young people who would miss the opportunities for social interaction beyond the adult gaze). However, improved mobility—especially easier, wheeled (cycle- or motorised-) mobility can be highly beneficial, not only for fulfilling currently unmet health, education and livelihood needs, but also in terms of physical energy- and time-savings, and the opportunities then available for pursuing a wider range of preferred activities, whether education-, work- or leisure-related. Most significant of all is the issue of gender equality, which permeates the mate-

rial reality of so many mobility stories. Since gender equality underpins much of the discussion which follows, it is considered first.

Improvements in Gender Equality and Reduction of Gender-Based Violence

Lack of gender equality and fear (perceived or real) of gender-based violence is a persistent theme through much of this book. These are fundamental, cross-cutting issues, widely relevant not only to girls' diverse journeys (for education, work, health, leisure) but also to life in the moorings (including school) between which those journeys are made. In a mobilities context, lone girls walking along remote routes or travelling in taxis are a particular target of predatory men. While parents/carers (and often girls themselves) tend to focus narrowly on group travel as an evasive tactic, this merely scrapes the surface of their mobility-related difficulties and dilemmas.

For really significant change, the reduction of gender-based violence and improvement in female status across societies is essential. This is a complex issue, bound up with a crisis of masculinities particularly evident in southern Africa, but of increasing concern globally (Hampshire et al. 2011; Porter 2013). Widespread training and associated community dialogue is essential, both towards the achievement of more sustainable sexual citizenship and for improved gender equality, but this is a tall order, of course, albeit a growing focus of NGO-activity. Participatory approaches which support community collaborations between young people of both genders and their elders would appear to have particular potential (as described, for instance, by de Lange and Mitchell (2014), in a pupil-teacher-community initiative in South Africa) but need long-term funding to ensure their sustainability.

The time-scale within which we can hope for widespread impact is dauntingly long (despite the specific inclusion of gender-based violence among planned targets for the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2015–2030; see below). In the meantime, some possible smaller—but still potentially significant—steps towards improvement in young people's lives are considered in the following sections.

In the EDUCATION sector mobility-related interventions are needed (within a wider context of improvements in education quality), above all, for pupils who experience long, hazardous journeys, particu-

larly those residing in remote rural areas, where the prospect of improved transport or a denser network of (especially secondary-level) schools is small. Here, interventions might include an expansion of safe boarding provision, together with self-boarding mentors, walking buses and teacher sensitisation.

Boarding Provision and Mentors: formal school-boarding is usually limited to better-provisioned senior secondary education and entirely absent in most primary/junior secondary schools. More supervised formal school boarding is certainly required at all levels, especially for girls who otherwise face particularly dangerous school journeys. There is ample evidence in all three CM study countries and elsewhere in Africa (for instance, Ethiopia and Tanzania[4]) to show that rural girls who have to self-board to access school (i.e. stay with relatives or find a room in town) are very vulnerable to advances from predatory men, especially if they are short of money for their personal maintenance. Many girls become pregnant not long after they move to town in these circumstances, resulting in school dropout and a return to the village. Despite the fact that in many countries schools now allow mothers to return to education after their babies are born, various factors including poverty and stigma limit recommencement. In order to support self-boarders some kind of mentoring, involving older women providing supervision, advice and emotional support, could be extremely helpful, especially if this were organised and provided by education-focused NGOs. In one Ethiopian district, NGO plans are reported for a training and registration scheme for landlords, in partnership with the local community, which would also support this approach.[5]

Walking buses: an adaptation of the Western-style walking bus may present an opportunity to improve safety on particularly dangerous routes to school, whether the danger is traffic or human attack. Pupils would register to join a bus, supervised by adults (perhaps unemployed literate parents, paid a small fee), who would escort them, recording their entry and departure from the bus each day. In Africa, there has been some experimentation, notably based on preliminary work by the University of Cape Town (and followed up by the South African Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Global Road Safety Partnership in Western Cape).[6] However, this concept needs more sustained trials with pupils living in poor neighbourhoods who cannot afford public transport or where there is no transport available (and, if successful, development of programmes focused on those locations).

Teacher sensitisation about lateness and follow-on actions: Beatings and associated punishments by teachers following late arrival at school are a significant factor in many children's decisions to drop out. Teachers need to be reminded that not all pupils are late because of their ineptitude. As a starting point it is important that teachers first learn where their pupils with long school journeys live and the nature of those journeys. This might involve: setting a class exercise in which children write or talk about their journey from home to school; planning an activity where they walk with a class group along one pupil's route home and the pupils make a detailed analysis of the route, environments, potential hazards and so on, then discussing the problem with parents, fellow teachers and pupils, perhaps also considering solutions such as a slightly later starting time for classes; early release if heavy rains threaten the safety of walking home; a short extra *free* lesson for locationally disadvantaged pupils after formal school; expansion of school boarding provision; if river crossings are involved, swimming lessons to improve safety, especially for girls (who are much less likely than boys to be competent swimmers) or lobbying with communities for foot-bridge provision; a review of punishments imposed on late pupils and assessment of their appropriateness. In Ghana, where the University of Cape Coast held a workshop on this theme for teacher trainers and teachers across the country and the Ghana Education Service (as a follow-up to the CM study), the GES Directorate is now committed to curriculum interventions to reduce harsh school punishments for pupil lateness, and there is ongoing effort to put this into action (though budgetary constraints continue to limit progress).

WORK- and income-generation-related interventions: While recognising the potential diverse benefits children may gain through work (Bourdillon 2012), interventions are needed in contexts where children's work burdens are clearly excessive, and have potentially harmful impacts on their health or education. Load-carrying, a factor of Africa's transport gap, is a case in point.

Researching and publicising the harmful impacts of excessive load-carrying on children's health: Much more consideration needs to be given to the potential harm to children through carrying *excessive* weights. Information from children on the pain they experience when load-carrying indicates that research on its health impacts is urgently needed (Chap. 4; Porter et al. 2012, Porter et al. 2013). It may then be possible to produce and publicise guidelines regarding appropriate load weights (by gender, age etc.) and to sensitise adults to the dangers of children carrying exces-

sive loads. Realistically, however, given the scale and significance of children's current inputs and the low potential for adequate regulation of any ergonomic guidelines developed, it is likely to take many years before much impact is felt.[7] Interventions based on the provision of Intermediate Means of Transport (IMT—see further below) may well prove a more fruitful line of investigation, though there has been much piecemeal (often 'hobbyist') IMT promotion in the past (Porter 2014).

Reduction of domestic load carrying through non-transport interventions: *Water* tends to be children's most regular daily load. Improved village water supplies—even if not to every compound—would reduce children's time inputs, especially those before school, which often result in lateness; they would also reduce the danger of rape/assault/harassment when girls go to collect water at distant streams. *Fuelwood* is often the heaviest (painful, potentially harmful to health) load carried; fuelwood-collection takes girls (and sometimes boys) into remote areas where they are especially vulnerable to attack. Planting of wood-lots close to settlements and greater availability of affordable, culturally acceptable, fuel-efficient stoves would reduce the carrying burden. There is some movement in this arena, particularly as energy and climate change debates gather pace in Africa: upscaling of NGO interventions looks significantly more feasible now than in the past.

Substitution of pedestrian load carrying by improved transport services: In domestic contexts, increased availability of hand- or animal-drawn carts (technology which encourages transfer of carrying tasks to males) could substantially reduce load carrying with particular benefit to girls. The role of animal carts use for water transport in South Africa's Gauteng/North West rural sites, reported in Chap. 4, is encouraging in this respect, but in many regions animal transport is uncommon and resistance to its use can be considerable (Porter 2014).

Meanwhile, the improved availability of cheap, regular, reliable motorised transport services is crucial for movement of heavy commercial loads (agricultural produce, charcoal etc.). This is important because commercial work encourages some children to carry loads well beyond their capacity and may require expeditions which take them far from home, into unsafe environments. Unfortunately, so long as it is cheaper to employ children in such tasks, the practice is likely to continue.

HEALTH-related interventions (for improved access to health services): Continued expansion in the availability of affordable, high-quality youth-friendly health services and improved referral services is

undoubtedly a pre-requisite for improved health care for children and young people in Africa and beyond (WHO 2002, 2012; Chandra-Mouli et al. 2013). However, without addressing physical barriers to access (through safe, reliable and free transport), as well as other ongoing issues in public facilities (e.g. long queues for treatment; insufficient medical supplies; unsympathetic attitudes of medical staff; cost of health insurance in some countries), change is likely to be unacceptably slow. In the meantime, it is crucial to start from young people's medical realities (Geissler et al. 2001; Hampshire et al. 2011), which means recognising and addressing the difficulties and potential dangers associated with young people's consequent widespread use of the 'informal' sector: self-medication, over-the-counter treatments, unlicensed healers and, increasingly, recourse to phone-based services. In this regard, a two-pronged approach could be beneficial: firstly, improved availability of informed local professional advice to young people via schools and grocery-stores selling drugs (i.e. requiring training of all relevant staff, including around sourcing health information from the internet); secondly, improved state regulation of commercial advertising and internet-based commercial health messaging, especially where directed at young people. However, such interventions would need to be developed in close collaboration with in-country Ministries of Health, Families and Communities (Hampshire et al. 2011, 2015). Further research in this field is currently in progress; in-country and international donor interest appears to be growing significantly (Hampshire, pers. comm.).

TRAFFIC-related interventions revolve principally around improving road safety for pedestrians. Evidence from the research sites suggests that, whatever national programmes may be in place, many schoolchildren obtain little quality road safety training. WHO's (2015) ten key points essential for reducing the current high accident statistics among children worldwide (1. Controlling speed; 2. Reducing drinking and driving; 3. Using helmets—including for cycling, not just motorcycles; 4. Using effective and appropriate child restraints in vehicles; 5. Measures to enhance children's visibility; 6. Improving road infrastructure, particularly to facilitate safe walking and cycling; 7. Adapting vehicle design, including measures to improve 'pedestrian friendly' safety; 8. Specific measures to protect novice drivers, including graduated driver licencing, lower BAC[8] levels and night-time curfews; 9. Improving post-crash care, recognising the specific and different needs of children; 10. Ensuring supervision of young children on the road), all have some application in the research sites

described in this book, especially the urban sites, but most are a long way from implementation.

Ensuring better supervision of young children on the road (point 10) is key, but difficult to achieve if this entails dependence on adults, as few parents/carers accompany their children to school unless traffic dangers are considered extremely high (notably the Malawi bridge context; see Chap. 7): supervision normally tends to be left to older siblings who are not necessarily concentrating on this task. However, a school-based programme around personal road safety training could be extremely useful, were this tailored to local conditions. Salmon and Eckersley (2010: 729) argue that to become skilled pedestrians, children need to move 'beyond a view of traffic as rule-bound and develop dynamic adaptable strategies for crossing roads': unfortunately, dominant modes of child road-safety education are imported from the Global North (where they are also not necessarily particularly effective). They present positive experience from developing a local programme in Ethiopia, based on the UK Kerbkraft concept which, through practical exercises on local streets, enables children to develop techniques for identifying safe crossing-places. This has considerable potential for application elsewhere across Africa: South Africa's Safe Schools project takes a similar approach (http://www.fiafoundation.org/media/45780/safe-to-learn-report.pdf.). However, finding means to bring road safety training to the many children who either never attend school, or leave before the year in which road safety training is introduced, is also vital. Here, road safety NGO interventions which support short courses for groups such as young traders (at particular risk as they rush to vehicles to sell, darting across roads and within the path of other vehicles) would be extremely valuable. (The NGO AMEND has trialled a small project, following on from our research, in Dar es Salaam.)

From observation and CM survey evidence, another key issue is to find means to effectively separate pedestrians from other road users on major routeways, but this requires substantial infrastructure investment. Introducing speed humps and other traffic calming measures and enhancing children's visibility (as, for instance, by providing children with reflective schoolbags, an approach taken in Tanzania by the road safety NGO AMEND in a DFID AFCAP-funded study) are potentially effective and relatively low-cost interventions, by contrast. Cycling helmets could be valuable, though evidence in Western contexts suggests that wearing a helmet may actually encourage motorists to drive closer to cyclists—there is also the issue of helmet quality: in Tanzania, AMEND discovered that

many (motorcycle) helmets are ineffective because of the poor quality of manufacture and thus may actually give their wearers a false sense of security. Helmet cost is also another issue in the context of families who struggle to buy their children school uniforms and the widespread practices of hiring and sharing cycles (though hirers could be required to provide helmets to their customers).

Putting the Suggested Interventions into Practice: Working with Government Ministries and NGOs

Having suggested a range of practical interventions which might help reduce young people's current mobility concerns and constraints, it is important to flag up issues likely to affect the feasibility of putting them into practice. Political context and the ways in which political demand for specific interventions might be built have been touched on at relevant points but, as a general point, it has to be said that achieving clear positive action is enormously difficult. While in-country government ministry staff have often expressed strong interest in the findings of studies reported here and the potential solutions discussed below (as, for instance, during the course of project Country Consultative Group meetings), movement from expressions of concern to significant intervention is rare. Budgetary constraints and competing demands from higher profile issues and associated political exigencies are often blamed. In the transport ministries the focus is typically on road construction: transport services of any kind tend to be neglected and appropriately trained staff are sparse (Porter 2014).

Consequently, alliances with NGOs have often seemed a more feasible route to early action, albeit usually on a small scale. A connection with the NGO International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD), which started with joint work on women's transport (Fernando and Porter ed. 2002) and subsequently facilitated introduction to the concept of child-led research (described in Chap. 2), is a case in point. Work in tandem with IFRTD has continued, where feasible, since that time, with formal collaboration on a series of research projects and promotion of academic research findings through their networks and newsletter (which reaches policy makers and practitioners in c. 90 countries worldwide). More recently, appointment as transport services advisor on a DFID-funded (research and capacity-building focused) Africa Community

Action Programme (AFCAP), from 2012 to 2014, has brought opportunities to encourage debate among policy makers and practitioners across Africa regarding the constrained mobility of young people and other vulnerable groups. This has included facilitating development of a transport services course incorporating attention to these issues (run by the UK Transport Research Laboratory in collaboration with African university partners). Courses have been run in eastern, western and southern Africa, with participants from a wide group of Anglophone and Francophone countries. Nonetheless, progress is slow and much still seems to depend on NGOs developing interventions as proof of concept before governments will think to commit. The shortage of local and international NGOs with relevant expertise remains a significant constraint.

Some Final Reflections: Policy, Practice, the SDGs and Beyond

Despite the (politically informed) reflexive ethnography approach taken through much of this book and its concern with multiple styles of meaning-making (including those resulting from macro-micro interactions), the focus on daily mobilities has encouraged an emphasis on local context, local occurrences within the continent. However, the influences of the international sphere on wider in-country policy decisions and practice also merit final reflection.

The findings from the mobilities studies with young people reported here have been presented to local, national and international policy makers and practitioners at regular intervals over the last 15 years, as evidence has accumulated. However, it has been frustrating that, even with such a strong body of evidence, the importance of making relevant mobility-focused interventions has so often fallen on deaf ears. On reflection, perhaps the precise coincidence of timing of so much of this work with the era of the UN Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015) has been unfortunate. The MDGs, from the outset, failed to give mobility the specific recognition that it deserves as a key enabling factor and catalyst for development, despite the fact that mobility is an essential requisite for achieving many goals (notably universal primary education, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, and reduced child mortality). As noted in Chap. 1, this was a serious omission and may well be implicated in some of the failures now being reported: UNICEF (2015:

iii) notes that many countries have focused on 'the easiest-to-reach children and communities'.

Pirie's (2009) conceptualisation of a mobility charter formulated in Africa, for Africans, with minimum mobility standards aimed at equality, fairness, justice and dignity in transport and travel (including for children), to help redress the MDG transport/mobility omission (or in his terminology, 'concealment'), has sadly attracted little attention. The needs of young people are still not at the forefront when transport policy makers approve investments in Africa; mobility issues still fail to garner the attention they deserve in ministries of education, social welfare, or women's and children's affairs (though their improved visibility in the health sector is encouraging). Vergunst (2011: 216) suggests that, in the mobilities field, policy unfolds as people move, 'according to how they meet, walk, talk, and make decisions about movement'. This was in the context of describing how walking with Scottish civil servants enabled them to share insights and a feel for ethnographic methodology, perhaps making research results more useable and accessible. This approach could also have some relevance for Africa (especially regarding work towards a mobility charter). However, getting policy makers out of their offices and air-conditioned 4X4s into the field in Africa, so that they adequately engage with the issues that mobility/accessibility-deprived populations face in the everyday, is—from experience—a major challenge. Nonetheless, perhaps one small example of change in a village in Eastern Cape, South Africa, following the CM project, offers a glimmer of encouragement. On the first accompanied (5 km) walk in this region with young people in the CM study, a local councillor agreed to walk with the group from the school, over a mountain, to the remote off-road village in which they live. He walked, talked and engaged with the schoolchildren who led the research team and—by the time we reached the village—was fully appreciative of the difficulties they faced on a daily basis. To our great surprise, returning to the village at the start of a new study in November 2012, we found a simple mud and rubble constructed primary school (opened in January 2011) fully in operation through to Grade 5, with a qualified teacher and 136 children. Moreover, a motorable single-lane surfaced track linked the school to the main paved road. Of course, these interventions have resulted from a political process, but perhaps the absorbed experience generated during that walk (as in Vergunst's example), played some small role in their realisation. Encouraging policy makers away from the 'easy mobility of privileged people' (Pirie 2009: 23), so that they experience,

at first hand, young people's mobility deprivations, would be a significant first-step towards promoting investment in the many small, low-cost interventions that could help improve young lives and life chances.

As planning for the MDG's successor, the Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030), gathers pace,[9] it is useful to reflect on the stated key objectives (UN 2015). Of greatest direct significance for the theme of this book are Goal 11 and Goal 5. Goal 11: 'Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable' includes target 11. 2: 'By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons'. Goal 5: 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' includes reference to gender-based violence in target 5.2: 'Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation'. These targets, if implemented effectively, would bring enormous benefit. However, it is extremely unfortunate for the many young people residing in remote rural locations that specific reference to any rural transport target is absent (despite enormous efforts from many in the international transport community over the last few years to secure its inclusion). Thus, while this new SDG-era looks promising in its urban mobilities agenda and apparent commitment to improvements in gender equity, the missing rural component (where mobility challenges are greatest) is extremely disturbing. Young people in rural areas deserve better, not least since a failure to support improvements in their daily mobility potential may well either promote further rural stagnation or simply fuel city-ward and international migration.

Finally, on this latter point, it may be relevant to reflect on the recent exponential growth in long-distance international refugee migrations from Africa to Europe, where mobilities are so intimately bound up with motives and emotions. Given that Africa's history has been shaped by numerous migrations, and that everyday daily mobilities are increasingly situated in global networks and flows, it is perhaps not too far-fetched a contention to suggest that daily mobility frustrations in rural and urban Africa are fuelling this quest for escape. Widely accessible international media (even in rural areas) present to young Africans the vision of a frictionless world in the Global North where everyday mobility is not only accessible to all but presents a tangible promise of jobs, wealth, health, happiness and the prospect of successful transition to a secure adulthood.

Africa may now be losing a significant tranche of entrepreneurial young people to the European migration project, yet (more localised, daily) mobility is also surely one of the key foundations on which Africa's own future development will depend.

Notes

1. Web of Science categorise it as a 'highly cited paper' which by late 2015 'received enough citations to place it in the top 1 % of its academic field based on a highly cited threshold for the field and publication year'.
2. 28 Web of Science citations to date refer to their work in Africa-related contexts—more will certainly follow.
3. Some of which—such as impact of widespread fear of biting dogs on routes and routines—the academic team had not sufficiently appreciated prior to the children's investigations.
4. For example http://allafrica.com/stories/201308050263.html: a report of rural secondary schoolgirls in Tanzania in rented rooms being attacked and raped by 'assailants who take advantage of the dilapidated condition of the rented houses'.
5. http://for-ethiopia.com/projects/education/girls-access-to-secondary-education
6. http://www.grsproadsafety.org/news/south-african-pupils-get-walking-bus-school
7. The South African department of labour has recently published a pamphlet of 'Guidelines for acceptable household chores' which refers to problems associated with heavy loads of water and fuel-wood: effective regulation, however, will remain a significant issue. Seehttp://steelburgernews.co.za/22401/department-introduces-new-acceptable-household-chores-for-children/
8. Blood Alcohol Concentration.
9. At the time of writing in August 2015.

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

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

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The original version of this book contained an error which has now been corrected. The correction is given below:

The series preface of this title was inadvertently missed in the previous version of this book and it has been included in this version

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Index

A

access (to)
  health services, 153–77, 235–6
  livelihoods, 46, 99
  schools, 25, 67, 233
  transport, 91, 104, 181, 204, 236, 241
age, 1, 3, 6, 7, 9–15, 24, 26, 31, 34, 35, 38–40. 45, 49, 51–3, 66, 74, 78, 79, 81, 84, 85, 93, 96, 97, 99–103, 105, 107, 108, 113, 115, 117, 125, 126, 128, 129, 131, 134, 135, 137, 140, 142, 143, 146, 147, 154, 157, 158, 166, 167, 175, 180, 194, 203, 204, 207, 211, 217, 228, 234
  for lone travel, 146
agency, 8, 10, 115, 118, 228
agro-ecological zone, 30, 56, 57, 199, 200
ambulance services, 164. *See also* traffic, accidents

B

bakkies, 213. *See also* transport
bicycle. *See also* cycling; 'shova kalula'; transport
  dress for, 191, 192, 200
  hazards, 111, 196, 200
  helmet, 237
  hire, 114, 190, 194, 195, 197
  theft, 200
bicycle taxis, 189, 190, 192, 196, 205
body, 4, 11, 12, 52, 65, 82, 93, 106, 112, 114–17, 183, 203, 224, 239. *See also* gender habitus
  bodily comportment, 11, 93, 116
Bourdieu, P., 4, 11, 92, 116, 125, 149n1
buses, 69, 81, 104, 141, 164–6, 173, 181, 199, 206, 209, 210, 212, 214–16, 218, 224n1, 233. *See also* transport

Note: Page numbers with "n" denote notes.

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G. Porter et al., *Young People's Daily Mobilities in Sub-Saharan Africa*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-45431-7

C
carers, 14, 37–39, 40, 42, 45, 46, 48, 52, 99, 105, 117, 131, 133, 135, 137, 138, 141, 144, 148, 153, 154, 159, 164, 165, 175, 213, 232, 237. *See also* grandparents
carts, 74, 97, 110, 114, 115, 133, 161, 163, 193, 235. *See also* transport
  animal-drawn, 235
  push-carts, 110
check-list interviews, 37, 53
child-centred research, 15, 26–9
childhood and youth definition, 10
Child Mobility (CM) project, 2, 16
child researcher(s), 16, 28–37, 45, 47, 50–2, 54, 55, 58, 61n8, 164, 185. *See also* 'young researchers'
  booklet, 16
  co-investigation with, 36
  interviewing, 43
  recruitment, 29
  remuneration, 34
  training, 16
co-investigation, 28, 33–6, 230
Concerned for Working Children (CWC), 27
consent to participate/interview, 40, 49
Country Consultative Groups(CCGs), 32, 35, 50, 53, 238
Cresswell, T., 4–6, 8, 11, 179, 187, 201, 205, 215
critical social theory, 7
cycling, 179–203, 205, 215–18, 223, 236, 237

D
De Certeau, M., 7, 8, 182
disabled children, 48, 86, 163
dogs, fear of, 31, 76

E
elders as carers, 14
embodiment, 3, 8. *See also* body
emotion, 9, 43, 44, 58, 69–83, 201, 204, 228, 229, 241
empowerment, 58, 239
ethics, 24, 33–6
ethnography
  ethnographic diaries, 37, 39
  mobile ethnography, 36, 42, 65, 230, 231
everyday practices, habits, routines, 4
exhaustion from work, 76

F
facilitation of child researchers' work, 30
farming, 57, 75, 97–101, 104, 106, 198
field sites, 15, 24, 42, 43, 47, 55, 191, 217
focus groups, 28, 31, 37, 40–1, 53, 71, 74, 76, 78, 82, 99, 102, 106, 114, 128, 130, 136, 140, 144, 145, 159, 161, 167–9, 171, 173, 175, 183, 184, 191, 192, 194, 197, 199, 207–9, 211, 214, 219, 221
fostering, foster child, 109, 110
Foucault, M., 7, 117, 148
fuel (wood and charcoal) carrying, 109, 130

G
ganyu, 13, 70, 74, 99, 100, 162
gender
  and field practice, 50–2
  imbalance in research teams, 50
  performance, 11
gender habitus, 11, 93

girl child, 81, 129, 151
  vulnerability, 213
Goffman, E., 11, 92, 116
grandchildren, relation to grandparents, 14, 101
grandparents, 14, 95, 100, 132, 146, 194, 195. *See also* carers
Grieco, M., 1, 115, 118n2, 193
groups, for safety, 100

H
harassment
  of boys, 186
  fear of, 8, 82
  of girls, 109
head-loading, 112–17. *See also* load-carrying; porterage
health services
  Ghana NHIS, 167–9
  opportunity costs of travel to, 154
  private clinics, 161, 167, 170, 171
  staff attitudes to young people, 161, 176
  user fees, 157
herding, 84, 97–9, 104
  impact on school attendance, 97, 98
HIV/AIDS, 14, 57, 94, 99, 118n1, 129, 137, 162, 171, 176, 203, 217
household composition, 3, 6, 7, 13, 91

I
identity(ies), 123, 124, 128, 204
illness
  emergency travel, 155
  over-the-counter remedies, 175
  phones for information/advice, 155
  self-medication, 156
  therapeutic pluralism, 169
  traditional/faith healing, 158, 172
  transport delays to health services, 155, 156
immobility, 1, 5, 6, 46, 228. *See also* mobility
Ingold, T., 8, 41
institutional reflexivity, 11, 93, 116
interdisciplinarity, 2, 15
intergenerational relations, 2, 36
  power dynamics of, 10
Intermediate Means of Transport (IMT), 16, 25, 55, 191, 194, 235
internalised self-regulation, 7. *See also* surveillance
International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD), 16, 17, 26, 32, 238

K
Katz, C., 12, 95, 127

L
leisure. *See also* mobile phones; play; 'roaming'
  hazards and temptations, 134
  nightclubs, 134, 148
  video houses, TV, 125, 134, 138, 148
life chances, 1, 7, 9, 12, 23, 46, 124, 128, 159, 230, 241
life course, 9, 10, 15
life histories, 9, 37, 46–7, 53, 81, 98, 105, 148, 159, 183, 199, 217
literacy, as key to spatial autonomy, 211
livelihoods, 6, 10, 14, 25, 46, 66, 92, 99, 103, 118, 193, 195, 201, 231. *See also* work

load-carrying. *See also* head-loading; porterage
  bodily technique, 112
  pain, 113
  physical capabilities, 112
load-weighing, 33, 37, 52, 115

M
masculinities, 12, 13, 116, 214, 232
materiality, 5, 8, 65, 103, 125
menstruation, 84
migration
  international, 241
  local, 104
  migrants' visits, 103
  urban migration, attractions of urban life, 105
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 1, 70, 229, 239–41
minibuses, 8, 109, 181, 205, 206, 208–10, 212, 216, 218, 224n1, 224n4. *See also* transport
mobile phones. *See also* virtual mobility
  as lure, 144
  ownership, 144
  usage, 48
mobility(ies)
  daily mobilities, 1–3, 5, 15, 24, 65, 85, 91, 103–7, 117, 125, 144, 148, 187, 227, 228, 239, 241, 242
  deprivation, 13, 241
  embodied mobilities, 11, 43
  gendered, 12, 201, 215
  meanings, 5, 43
  politics of, 3, 5–7, 10, 11, 15
  virtual mobilities, 3, 50, 125, 153, 154, 176
moorings, 4, 5, 43, 65, 75, 83, 84, 87, 117, 125, 127, 229, 231, 232
motor-mobility
  music, 204–15
  mystique, 204
  speed, 204–15

N
new mobilities paradigm, 3–5, 15, 179, 227
'Nyau' in Malawi, 72, 130, 161

O
orphans, orphanhood, 14, 48, 51, 192, 206

P
pain, 9, 100, 112–18, 160, 168, 170, 234. *See also* head-loading; load-carrying; porterage
participant observation, 41, 53–5, 125
participatory research, 2, 26–7, 230
permissions, 31, 33, 38, 39, 45, 102, 125–7, 131, 136, 137, 140, 145–7, 168, 207. *See also* play
petty trade, 111–12, 132, 194, 208
photography, 33
play. *See also* leisure
  football, 118n3, 125, 128, 130–2, 135, 136, 138–40
  imaginative play, 123, 138
  increased gender differentiation with age, 126
  on the move, 125, 147
  permissions and restrictions, 125
  as socialization, 123
porterage. *See also* gender, performance; head-loading; load-carrying
  as commercial activity, 108–11

in domestic contexts, 108
poverty, 29, 66, 72, 74, 76, 84, 92, 93, 99, 101, 108, 114, 154, 155, 163, 166, 169, 173, 198, 223, 233
power, 4–7, 10, 11, 13, 27, 35, 43, 65, 112, 117, 125, 127, 223, 229, 230
promiscuity, 12, 101, 135, 139, 141, 148
puberty, 6, 12, 84, 117, 125, 127, 129, 137

R
rape, 5, 13, 75, 76, 79, 84, 102, 112, 129, 142, 146, 184–7, 210, 214, 235
relationality, 13–15, 228
religion
church/mosque attendance, 125, 145, 146
initiation ceremonies, 124, 145
social networks, 93, 124, 146
research assistants
field protocols, 37–54
focus group work, 40–1
gender imbalance, 50
role, 38, 41
training, 37–54
research sites, 27, 30, 36, 39, 48, 58, 59, 69, 83, 86, 94, 106, 128, 135, 145, 157–9, 171, 173, 176, 180–2, 189, 191, 193, 194, 204, 205, 209, 217, 219, 221, 228, 236
river crossing hazards, 234
road(s)
gravel, 58
paved, 58, 67, 68, 72, 99, 161, 240
safety education, 221, 222, 237
'roaming', 92, 134, 139, 141, 142, 148. *See also* leisure

S
scholar transport (South Africa), 78, 181
school
attendance, 12, 97, 98, 110, 229
distance and lateness, 71
drop-out, 98, 104, 234
enrolment, including over-age, 71
performance, 70, 187
private education, 68, 221
progress to senior secondary school, 66
punishments for lateness, 76, 77, 234
quality of education, 67, 87, 106, 229
self-boarding, 66, 77, 84, 233
truancy, 71, 85, 110
sexuality, 12, 16, 148
Sheller, M., 3–6, 43, 227
shoes, feet, 76
'shova kalula', 199
snakes, 9, 31, 75, 79, 80, 160, 164, 169, 184
sociabilities of travel, 7
social competencies, 8, 182
spatial horizons, 12
'sugar daddies', 82, 144, 214
supernatural forces, 7, 130, 206
surveillance, 7, 81, 86, 87, 103, 104, 117, 128–30, 135, 143, 148, 192, 229
opportunity costs, 103, 229
survey questionnaires
procedure, 47–50

survey questionnaires (*cont.*)
sampling, 48
transects, 48
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 232, 239–42

T
tape-recording, 39
taxi drivers, 31, 68, 81, 82, 174, 196, 204, 205, 210, 211, 213–15, 222
taxis, 8, 80, 81, 109, 172, 174, 181, 189, 199, 208, 209, 211–13, 215, 216, 232
teachers, 31, 34–7, 42, 53, 60n4, 67, 68, 77, 82, 97, 138, 144, 168, 173, 185, 187, 191, 192, 195, 198, 220, 221, 233, 234, 240
sensitisation to lateness issues, 23
teen pregnancy, 129, 133, 171
traditional birth attendants (TBAs), 129, 160, 161, 166
traffic
accidents, injury, 5, 82, 184, 189, 203, 206, 209, 211, 212, 217, 219, 220, 224n5
hazards, 79, 86, 111, 218, 219
risk perceptions, 193
transition to adulthood, 46
transport. *See also* bakkies; bicycle; bicycle taxis; motor-mobility; porterage; taxi; traffic
access to, 91, 104, 181
driving as aspiration, 204
embodied practice, 180, 182, 183
fares, 163, 166, 169, 173
hazards, 218
motorised, 42, 52, 58, 92, 94, 97, 104, 111, 125, 135, 157, 159, 161, 180–2, 189, 193, 201n1, 203–5, 207, 212, 216, 219, 235
supernatural hazards, 184
transport gap, 94, 97, 118, 234
travel
security, 172, 174
speed, 11
triangulation, 37, 47, 53–4, 181

U
Urry, John, 3–7, 13, 41, 180, 227

V
violence, 13, 25, 87n2, 187, 211, 232–8, 241
virtual mobility, 3, 50, 125, 153, 154, 176
vulnerability, 12, 101, 135, 203, 213, 215, 223, 229

W
walking
competencies, 8, 182
as method, 8–9
walking bus, 233
water carrying, 96, 107, 108
witchcraft, 106, 130, 162, 165, 170, 172, 175, 184, 206
work
domestic tasks, 94
fitting round school, 33, 91
gendered division of labour, 11, 93
payment, 33, 34
value as learning opportunity, 91

Y
'young researchers', 15, 17, 30, 32–6, 61n7, 102, 146. *See also* child researcher(s)