

---

This item was submitted to [Loughborough's Research Repository](#) by the author.  
Items in Figshare are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise indicated.

## Expanding the scales and domains of (in)security: youth employment in urban Zambia

PLEASE CITE THE PUBLISHED VERSION

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0308518X15613793>

PUBLISHER

Sage (© The Authors 2015)

VERSION

AM (Accepted Manuscript)

PUBLISHER STATEMENT

This work is made available according to the conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence. Full details of this licence are available at: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

LICENCE

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

REPOSITORY RECORD

Gough, Katherine V., Francis Chigunta, and Thilde Langevang. 2019. "Expanding the Scales and Domains of (in)security: Youth Employment in Urban Zambia". figshare. <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/19488>.

**Expanding the scales and domains of insecurity: youth employment in urban Zambia**

Katherine V. Gough

Loughborough University, Department of Geography, Loughborough LE11 3TU, UK,  
[k.v.gough@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:k.v.gough@lboro.ac.uk)

Francis Chigunta

Department of Development Studies. University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia  
[fchigunta@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:fchigunta@yahoo.co.uk)

Thilde Langevang

Copenhagen Business School, Department of Intercultural Communication and Management,  
Centre for Business and Development Studies, Porcelænshaven 18A, 2000 Frederiksberg C,  
Denmark, [tl.ikl@cbs.dk](mailto:tl.ikl@cbs.dk)

## Abstract

Most research on issues of (in)security has tended to have a military/safety angle and focus on global/national scales linked to spectacular events. This paper addresses the overlooked insecurity realities of urban dwellers in the global South through a focus on more persistent and enduring forms of employment insecurities among young people. Building on both quantitative and qualitative data collected in a low-income settlement in Lusaka, Zambia, we explore how young people perceive their employment situation and examine the practices they engage in when seeking ways of making a living. Through analysing their views and experiences we show how employment insecurity is influenced by processes operating at the body, local, national and global scales, and how employment insecurity is closely interconnected with insecurity in other domains of young people's lives including housing, household and education. Although the youth unemployment situation is often viewed as a serious threat *to* human security, we show how the lack of stable employment in itself is a manifestation *of* insecurity.

## Introduction

Young people are visible throughout Chawama, a low-income settlement in Lusaka, engaging in income-generating activities or just hanging out. At the main bus stop, rough looking young men - the *Ng'wang'wazi* - scream for passengers as they hang out of colourful minibuses painted in sky blue and white. Close by, sitting in parked old and battered taxis, young men look for custom, mainly within the compound<sup>1</sup> for fear of being nabbed by the police if they venture into the city centre. Young women operating from open-sided shacks can be seen plaiting hair or selling a wide range of goods from fruit and vegetables to cosmetics whilst young men deal in mobile phones and other electronic gadgets. Loud, deep Congolese *rhumba* music, which is a popular form of dance music in Zambia, blares from loudspeakers hanging outside taverns and bars where young men and women gather. At the entrance and inside the taverns and bars they brush away flies as they roast chunks of beef, pork and goat meat on open air barbecues near anti-AIDS posters, a reminder of the dangers of casual sex. Some shove dirt into potholes on the damaged roads in the hope that passing motorists will give them money for their 'services'. On rainy days when roads are flooded, young men wearing gum boots offer to carry passengers across the water for a small fee while others rent out their gum boots to passers-by. Such spontaneous income-generating activities illustrate the entrepreneurial skills of young people and the insecure nature of the types of work many engage in, as well as the poor service provision that characterises low-income settlements in Zambia.

The above vignette highlights some of the key aspects of this paper which explores employment (in)security amongst young people living in an urban setting in Zambia. As urban economies have become more informalized in the global South, the livelihoods of urban residents have become increasingly insecure. This has led to claims that 'Urban livelihoods are so insecure that for many households ... there is a desperate survivalist need for as many members as possible to work and earn even tiny incomes' (Potts, 2012: 2). The everyday insecurity realities of urban dwellers in the global South, however, have tended to be overlooked by most research on security, which often has a military/safety angle and focuses on global/national scales linked to spectacular events (Lemanski, 2012). This paper contributes to filling this gap by building on both quantitative and qualitative data collected in a low-income settlement to explore how young people perceive their employment situation

---

<sup>1</sup> In Zambia an informal settlement is called a 'compound'.

and examine the practices they engage in when seeking ways of making a living. Through analysing their views and experiences, we show how young people's employment insecurity is influenced by processes operating at the body, local, national and global scales, and how insecurity in one domain of young people's lives (employment) is closely interlinked with insecurity in other domains, including housing, household and education. We thus make an important contribution to discussions of (in)security by revealing the nature of urban youth employment insecurity and showing the interconnectedness of processes operating at a range of scales and in other domains.

### **Conceptualising security and employment**

The concept of human security was introduced in the 1990s as a response to a security paradigm that focused narrowly on state- and military-centred perceptions of security (Lemanski, 2012). The first major account on human security appeared in the UNDP's 1994 *Human Development Report* which critiqued the tendency to limit security to either the global scale, such as security from the threat of a nuclear holocaust, or national scale, for example, protection of national interests in foreign policy, neglecting the concerns of ordinary people seeking security in their everyday lives. As the UNDP claimed,

For most people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event. Job security, income security, health security, environmental security, security from crime - these are the emerging concerns of human security all over the world (UNDP, 1994: 3).

Consequently the UNDP expanded the definition of human security to incorporate two key aspects: first, safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression, and second, protection from sudden harmful disruptions to daily life whether in the home, at work or in communities.

While some commentators believe that the strength of the concept lies in its inclusiveness, others have criticized it for being too broad and ambiguous since "Virtually any kind of unexpected or irregular discomfort could conceivably constitute a threat to one's human security" (Paris 2001: 89).

The word security comes from the Greek word *asphaseia* which means "not to trip up or fall down" and stems from a "metaphysical desire for certitude" (Dillon, 1996 cited in Philo, 2012: 5). Philo (2012: 5) adds a spatial dimension to this understanding of security by arguing that

...attaining security is often about drawing boundaries that fix/fasten a clearly delimited portion of 'stuff' or 'world' whose conditions can be tightly controlled. Within this cordoned-off domain, certainty can supposedly reign; indeed, full and reliable knowledge of what is in the domain can be obtained, and all eventualities pertaining to the domain can be anticipated, precisely because nothing that might disrupt or corrupt its contents is allowed to enter. In this way, anxieties are supposedly allayed about whatever might prompt instabilities or create dissonances; in sum, the security of the 'stuff' or 'world' in question is supposedly accomplished.

Furthermore, as Philo (2012) asserts, while the underlying sources of insecurity might have something in common, such as a financial crisis or climate change, their implications vary

widely for different people in differing places around the world. This assertion resonates with Lemanski's (2012: 63) call for studying "the individualized, local and bottom-up experiences and approaches of humans themselves" when analysing security. Moreover, as Simon and Leck (2010, 2013) have argued, there has been very little consideration of the urban dimensions of human security.

Although job insecurity was already recognised as an important phenomenon in the world of work back in the 1960s (van Wyk and Pienaar, 2008), it has recently become a key concern worldwide as highlighted in the World Development Report 2013 simply entitled 'Jobs' (World Bank, 2012). Job insecurity is conceptualised as the "fear of losing one's job" and/or the "fear of losing some important job features" (van Wyk and Pienaar, 2008: 62). Typically, job insecurity is viewed as consisting of temporary disruptions stemming from relatively delimited periods of financial crisis or acute firm crisis. This conceptualisation, however, has developed in relation to economies dominated by formal sector employment and standard employment relationships. In contrast, this paper focuses on the nature and responses to more persistent and enduring forms of employment insecurities in a setting where 'formal' employment is the exception and informal work the norm; according to the 2012 Labour Force Survey (Republic of Zambia, 2013), 83.4 percent of Zambia's labour force is employed in the informal sector<sup>2</sup>.

There is rising concern regarding the employment situation of young people as they have been hit disproportionately hard by the global financial crisis (World Bank, 2012). The ILO (2011) estimated that in 2009, 40 percent of the world's estimated 211 million unemployed people were aged between 15 and 24 years old. As the ILO (2012: 1) argues, the "grim unemployment picture is darkened further by the large number of youth engaged in poor quality and low paid jobs with intermittent and insecure work arrangements, including in the informal economy". The challenges facing unemployed youth has been highlighted in a number of in-depth studies in a range of settings in the global South, for example, Jeffrey (2010) on India, Mains (2012) on Ethiopia, and Sommers (2012) on Rwanda. The issue of youth employment insecurity is especially severe in sub-Saharan Africa, where although many countries are experiencing impressively high GDP growth rates after decades of economic adversity, crisis and structural adjustment, this growth is not leading to adequate, secure jobs for the growing youth population. While policy discourses often consider unemployment to be a major development concern, the focus on unemployment fails to capture the actual challenge since few poor people in Africa can actually afford not to work and many young people are rather under-employed (African Economic Outlook, 2012). Unemployment figures are highly misleading as low rates may be an indication of poverty rather than opportunity. Moreover, delineating the exact boundaries of unemployment/employment can be extremely difficult in economies where much work is irregular, casual and precarious (Gough et al., 2013; Izzi, 2013).

Despite these caveats, youth employment is often described as a 'ticking time bomb' which, if left unchallenged, will explode into open conflict (Garcia and Fares, 2008).

---

<sup>2</sup> Whilst we are fully aware that 'formal' and 'informal' are disputed concepts - see Chigunta (2007) and Potts (2008) for reviews - and that there is a continuum rather than a strict division between formal and informal activities, the terms continue to be widely used as they are useful shorthand for what is a very complex reality and it is in this manner that they are used here.

Correspondingly, in recent years the international peace building agenda has shown increased concern for the issue of youth unemployment (Izzi, 2013). It is argued that if young people are left idle without meaningful employment, they are more vulnerable and thus more prone to become involved in various forms of violence. Providing young people with employment is often regarded as a priority in fragile and post-conflict countries as ‘a bridge between security, peace building and development’ (UN, 2007, 51 cited in Izzi, 2013: 103). This perception, however, is problematic. The issue of youth unemployment is seen as a concern merely because it may lead to insecurity in the narrow sense of the word. Moreover, the proposition that youth unemployment leads to insecurity in the form of violence and conflict is far from documented; although high levels of youth unemployment and violence may coincide, “the causality remains blurred and many questions remain unanswered” (Izzi, 2013: 110). As Argenti (2002: 150) claims, “the remarkable thing to consider is not why some of Africa’s youth have embraced violence, but why so few of them have”.

Using the terms ‘employment’ and ‘work’ in a sub-Saharan African context, is problematic since they are often used only in relation to paid formal employment despite the fact that only a minority of the working population is employed in formal sector jobs. Consequently when researching young people’s income-generating activities we had to be very careful regarding the terminology used. In line with the young people’s own accounts, in this paper we analyse their work experiences in relation to formal employment, informal enterprise ownership, casual work, engaging in alternative/illicit activities, and ‘doing nothing’. Drawing on data collected in Chawama compound in Lusaka, we bring together the concepts ‘security’ and ‘employment’ in order to examine the employment and livelihood insecurities that urban youth face. While existing literature on security tends to focus either on an national or global scale, and the literature on youth employment focusses in particular on unemployed young men, by analysing employment security at a range of scales in this paper we show how these are interlinked and also closely tied up with insecurity in other domains of both young men and women’s lives. First, however, we provide the context within which young people in Zambia are growing up.

### **Zambia’s changing economic fortunes**

At independence in 1964 Zambia inherited what is generally described as a ‘lop-sided’ economy highly dependent on one export commodity, copper (Seidman, 1974). In an attempt to redress this imbalance, the former United National Independence Party (UNIP) government adopted a strategy of state-led development, as pursued in much of Africa during the 1960s and 1970s. Between 1965 and 1974, the country's national output, as measured by real gross domestic product (GDP), averaged 4.4 percent with a GDP per capita close to 1,200 US\$. At this time Zambia was regarded as one of the richest countries in Africa (Seidman, 1974; Wulf, 1988) and in 1975 the World Bank classified Zambia as a middle-income country. Then, as now, Zambia’s economic performance coincided with a favourable external environment characterised by high mineral rents. The government invested the revenue in social and economic infrastructure, especially roads, schools, hospitals, electricity, and telecommunications (Kani, 2000; Todd and Shaw, 1980). During this period, formal sector employment rose, albeit slowly.

By the mid-1970s, however, the flaws in Zambia’s strategy of state ownership had started to show (Craig, 2000). The onset of the 1973 oil crisis, coupled with the collapse of the copper price, adversely affected the fiscal position of the government. Between 1973 and 1984, GDP in real terms declined at an average rate of 1.5 percent per year and GDP per capita in real terms declined by a total of 35 percent (Imboela, 1997). In response, the government resorted

to external borrowing in order to maintain consumption levels. This resulted in serious indebtedness, with the country's external debt rising from US\$0.8 billion in the early 1970s to over \$7.2 billion by 1990.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, post-independence gains in per capita income, life expectancy, education, and health were stalled or reversed between 1975 and 1990, while growth in formal employment contracted (Moser and Holland, 1997).

Despite the economic decline, the government only took half-hearted measures to reform the economy. Although this period saw a gradual return to IMF and World Bank-inspired pro-market economic policies and reforms, it was not until 1992, following a change of government in which UNIP was defeated by the reformist Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), that a more consistent market-oriented economic policy was introduced. Between 1992 and 2001, the MMD government undertook what many observers describe as a 'radical' economic reform programme (Kani, 2000; Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 2001; White, 1997). A critical element of the reforms was to roll back the State's involvement in economic management. In addition, the government embarked on one of the fastest rates of privatisation in Africa, winning donor community praise (Craig, 2000; Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 2001). The privatisation programme, however, resulted in serious job losses with 70,000 formal sector jobs lost between 1992 and 2001.

In recent years Zambia's economy has once again experienced strong growth due to a revival of the copper industry. The country's national output, as measured by GDP, has grown by an average of 6-7 percent annually since 2006. This growth has propelled Zambia back into the ranks of middle-income countries. A major challenge, however, is that the country's recent growth is capital rather than labour intensive hence unemployment and poverty have remained high. Zambia, therefore, faces the challenge of ensuring that the benefits of recent rapid growth reach the population, especially young people. A major demographic feature is that the population, currently estimated at 14 million, is predominantly youthful; according to the 2010 Census Report, almost 70 percent of the population is below the age of 35 years. This bottom-heavy demographic structure poses serious socio-economic challenges, especially the need to create employment for the growing youth population.

Estimates of unemployment in Zambia face definitional and measurement problems making it challenging to assess the scope and trends of youth unemployment. The 2008 Labour Force Survey (LFS) defines youth unemployment as the proportion of economically active persons aged between 15 and 24 who have no jobs but are available for work and/or have been seeking work during a specified period. According to the LFS, 28 percent of the economically active youth were unemployed in 2008 being slightly higher among female youth (29 percent) than male youth (26 percent). The LFS definition of youth, however, is at variance with the official definition of youth in Zambia - 15 to 35 years. Furthermore as there is no official register of unemployed and many young people cannot afford to be unemployed but have to find some way of making a living (Potts, 2013), these figures have to be treated with caution.

### **Researching youth in Lusaka**

As Zambia has long had relatively high levels of urbanization, currently almost 40 percent, many young people have grown up in urban areas. The city of Lusaka is by far the largest urban centre, with a population of almost 2.2 million (CSO, 2012), the majority of whom live

---

<sup>3</sup> Following Zambia's attainment of the 'HIPC Completion Point' in 2005, the country qualified for 100 per cent debt forgiveness under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative.

in poor, unplanned settlements. Chawama, one of 37 informal settlements in Lusaka, lies about eight kilometres south of the city centre. Its origin is closely intertwined with the colonial history of Zambia, starting out as a 'compound' for workers on a settler farm established in the 1940s. Today, Chawama covers an area of eight square kilometres with an estimated 13,000 housing units and around 100,000 residents (2010 census). Despite a World Bank funded upgrading project in the 1970s, which improved access to services, the quality of service provision has declined over the years (Moser and Holland, 1997). Lack of a proper drainage system is a particular problem and the area suffers from severe flooding in the rainy season and associated outbreaks of waterborne diseases. There are very few industries or formal businesses located in Chawama, though a vast number of informal enterprises line the major road arteries and are scattered throughout the compound. Most Chawama residents belong to Lusaka's lower income groups but the general housing shortage in Lusaka, combined with a need for many households to downsize, has resulted in white collar workers also moving into the compound. Consequently, as is typical for Lusaka's compounds (Simon, 1999), Chawama's residents are diverse coming from different socio-economic, ethnic, regional and religious backgrounds.

The qualitative and quantitative data on which this paper is based were collected during two periods of fieldwork conducted in October 2010 and January 2012. In the first phase, a questionnaire survey was conducted to find out the situation of youth in the compound, especially in relation to employment. A group of young people from the settlement itself were trained to administer the questionnaire as this form of participatory peer-led research generates a high response rate and can result in the best insights (Gough et al., 2014; Porter and Abane, 2008; Robson et al., 2009;). Altogether 369 questionnaires were conducted with randomly selected young people aged 15-35 in line with the Zambian definition of youth (Chigunta, 2007). Fifteen months later, a second round of questionnaires was conducted by the same young peer researchers who were set the task of tracking down their original respondents. Drawing on all their resources and ingenuity, they succeeded in interviewing 253 of the same young people, i.e. 69 percent. Given the high mobility of young people in Lusaka (Gough, 2008), this is an impressive response rate.

Qualitative data were also collected during the second phase through focus group discussions and life story interviews conducted by the authors with assistance from the peer researchers. In order to obtain views on youth employment from a range of perspectives, four focus group discussions were held, two with mixed gender groups of young people and two with single sex groups of older people, one male and one female. The groups were divided in this way as older women are unlikely to be very forthcoming in the presence of their male counterparts, whereas the young people expressed a preference for discussing in mixed groups and were not afraid of stating differing opinions. In order to gain a deeper insight into young people's employment experiences, a total of 20 young people in differing work and education situations were selected for indepth interviews. These followed a life story approach where the young people were encouraged to talk about their lives, including details of changes in their family situation, housing, studying and work. All of the focus group discussions were taped and subsequently transcribed whereas, depending on the situation and preferences of the interviewees, this was the case for around half of the indepth interviews, with detailed notes being taken during the other half.

### **Youth employment insecurity in Chawama**

Young people in Chawama compound have a number of options regarding income-generating activities including obtaining formal employment, starting an informal enterprise,



finding casual work, engaging in alternative/illicit activities, or remaining without work. In this section we examine these alternatives in turn highlighting the high degree of insecurity of young people's work, a recurring theme in our discussions with the youth despite the words 'security' or 'insecurity' not being mentioned by the interviewers at any point.

### *Formal employment*

Poor chances of ever obtaining a permanent formal job are part of the reality for youth in Chawama. Although only a few young people were or had been temporarily employed as security guards, office orderlies, and in other low paying jobs in government and the private sector, it is not uncommon for them to aspire to being permanently formally employed. One of the key benefits of formal employment highlighted by young people is the security it provides; in the words of a young man (aged 35),

Employment has the advantage of giving security. People have a lack of confidence to set up a business. If you have a business and you get sick then everything is sick. People are looking for security, that is why they like employment.

In the private sector, however, many young people are employed on temporary contracts hence their security is only short-term, if that. Employment by the state is seen as offering the most secure form of employment as once it has been obtained a person is considered unlikely to be fired. In the view of one young woman (aged 29), 'If you have a government job then it is secure. If you are in the private sector then you are on contract. They can fire you at any time'. This view of public sector employment is rather ironic, however, given the number of people who have lost their government jobs through redeployment associated with structural adjustment programmes; public sector employment in Zambia fell from 72 percent of formal employment in the 1970s to just 30 percent in the 2000s at the same time as the economy informalised with formal sector employment falling from 29 percent to 9 percent of all labour market activity (Bajaj, 2010). The view of public sector employment being secure is strongly associated with being entitled to social security benefits. As one young man (aged 27) explained, 'An advantage of employment is social security. With employment you get a pension, your children's education can be paid for, and you get medical insurance'. These benefits have been reduced in recent years, however, as the state has continually cut back on social security benefits for employees.

The youth participating in the focus group discussions were in agreement that although having a public sector job was the most secure in terms of having a regular income and being unlikely to be fired, it would not bring economic security. Most government salaries are insufficient to live off, hence supplementary ways of making a living have to be found. As a young man (aged 33) highlighted, 'The benefit of working (for government) is having security. But you have to do other business as well while you are waiting for your wages'. And as the young man (aged 27) quoted above, who indicated the advantages of employment being social security, explained 'The disadvantage is that you die poor. You have not been able to invest. If you have your own business you die rich.'

Obtaining a formal sector position is viewed as being a fraught process. Corruption in both the public and private sector has become widespread as employees try to supplement their meagre salaries. One form of corruption relates to the appointment of new employees. The young people were very vocal regarding this issue and, as these quotes illustrate, the need to make payments can be one-off or of a more ongoing nature:

Sometimes when you reach an interview you are told to pay. But you are just looking for a job, where are you going to get the money from? And I experienced that. I went

there looking for a job – I was told to pay money, which I couldn't afford. (Female, aged 23)

And the other thing which I have observed is, sometimes in some companies there are some Human Resources Managers who, when you face them for a job, they tell you to be giving them a quarter of your salary every month. And that's what demoralizes some of us. (Male, aged 31)

Even more disturbing is the extent to which women are expected to offer sexual favours in order to obtain employment. Young people of both genders stated that women can feel pressurised into providing sexual favours at or even before interview stage and subsequently once they have been employed. It was suggested in the focus group discussions with youth that men like to be involved in human resources and play a role in the selection of young female employees precisely because they get to choose the women who are employed. In a context of widespread HIV/AIDS, this potentially has serious implications for young people's health illustrating how employment and health security can be interlinked.

As well as being expected to make payments in money or kind in order to obtain an interview/job, young people highlighted the need for good contacts indicating that nepotism is widespread in the formal sector. One young man illustrated this through referring to a 'family tree' in institutions:

There is what is popular here in Zambia, what is called a family tree in these institutions. You have your father working for a certain organization, so he is going to have his son, his niece, his grandson working in the same organization. That is quite common here in Zambia. (Male, aged 33)

Such nepotism is very frustrating for low-income youth, who typically have few influential contacts, as it restricts their attempts to achieve social mobility. A newer way of attempting to enter the formal workplace, which has also recently been widely reported in a global North context (Hardill and Barnes, 2011), is working voluntarily or in internships for formal enterprises and institutions. Some young people in Chawama, especially those with post-secondary education, reported working for extended periods of time voluntarily in the hope that this will eventually lead to permanent paid positions, though none of those interviewed had as yet succeeded.

Interestingly, despite pointing out the secure nature of formal employment, only around one fifth (21 percent) of the young people said that in the future they would choose to be employed by others. This highlights the extent to which setting up a business and becoming one's own boss has also come to be seen as an attractive option by many young people, both male and female.

#### *Informal enterprise owner*

As formal employment is becoming increasingly hard to obtain, and is not seen as being very lucrative, young people are increasingly setting up their own business as the best way to achieve economic security. Approximately one quarter of the youth interviewed in Chawama were running an enterprise, the proportion being higher for young men (28 percent) than young women (22 percent) – a gender difference that is in line with data for Zambia as a whole (Chigunta and Mwanza, 2016). The vast majority (84 percent) of these businesses involve informal trading with a further 13 percent providing services, whilst only 3 percent are engaged in manufacturing. Whilst some businesses are run by young people of both genders - the most common being grocery stores, bottle stores, brewing *kachasu* (liquor), taverns, night clubs, bakeries, trading *salaula* (second-hand clothes), selling airtime (for

mobile phones) and hairdressers - others are gendered with only men engaging in carpentry, welding, car-washing and shoe mending while selling fresh vegetables, fruits, roasted maize cobs, groundnuts and prepared food from the ubiquitous *tuntemba* (informal stalls) are female dominated activities.

The young people face major challenges in establishing and running their own businesses (Chigunta et al., 2016). The most frequently mentioned problems are lack of capital and small profits. The young people complained in particular about the lack of youth-friendly credit schemes and the majority (51 percent) had to rely on their own savings or support from parents or relatives (21 percent) for start-up capital. The initial investments were generally very low with 15 percent starting out with less than K50,000 and 65 percent starting with less than K500,000.<sup>4</sup> Earnings were also relatively low with more than half (57 percent) making profits of less than K300,000 per month. As young people engage in a limited range of income-generating activities, their businesses are characterised by fierce competition with 60 percent describing the competition in their area of business as being high. Many of the young people's businesses fail highlighting the insecure nature of establishing and running enterprises in Zambia.

Despite the insecure conditions under which young business owners in Chawama are operating, they receive limited institutional support and have to make do with the resources they have at hand. This is at odds with the increased policy focus on promoting entrepreneurship among the youth in Zambia. The government, unable to guarantee a labour market in which there is secure employment in the formal sector, hopes that the youth unemployment problem will be solved mainly through the vigorous promotion of self-employment. In the National Youth Policy (NYP) adopted in 1994 and the National Programme of Action for Youth (NPAY) prepared in 1997<sup>5</sup>, the government has explicitly stated that youth entrepreneurship should be actively promoted as a way of creating employment for young people. Although there are some institutions, including governmental and NGOs that seek to promote youth entrepreneurship in Zambia, their impact is minimal (Chigunta, 2012; 2013). Almost two-thirds (64 percent) of the respondents were unaware of the existence of the National Youth Policy while almost half (46 percent) had not heard of any support programmes for young entrepreneurs provided by the government, NGOs or other institutions. The young people who were aware of the youth programmes were highly critical of them claiming that the initiatives are plagued by nepotism and corruption. As one young man (aged 33) stated, "The levels of corruption in this country are too, too high. Programmes are there, there are adequate policies and programmes, but the corruption really is the major problem".

Despite these hurdles and insecurities, setting up a business of one's own remains the preferred plausible employment option for young people of both genders. Over three-quarters of young people (77 percent) indicated that they would like to run their own business as a long-term employment option. These aspirations are a reflection of the emerging positive public perception of entrepreneurs and the inaccessibility and insecurity of wage work.

### *Casual work*

In an environment of limited formal employment opportunities and difficulties in establishing a business, many young people engage in casual work of various kinds (see also Chigunta, 2007;

---

<sup>4</sup> At the time of the study, one US Dollar was equivalent to K4,000.

<sup>5</sup> Both the NYP and the NPAY are currently under review.

Hansen, 2010). The practice of drifting in and out of casual work is referred to as *kubaza-baza* in local parlance. In Chawama, young people obtain casual work both within and outside of Chawama. This work is gendered with young men doing what they see as male work (*nchito ya cimuna* in Nyanja) while young women engage in what they consider feminine work (*nchito ya cikazi* in Nyanja). Hence, young men typically work as ‘parking boys’ or ‘car watchers’ in Lusaka’s overcrowded CBD while others work as ‘call boys’ and ‘loaders’ at the Inter-city Bus Terminus and main city market where they also clean and watch buses for long distance bus crews. Young men who watch or wash cars are known as *bamuselebende*, a term that initially only applied to street children who roamed the streets begging for money and food, which indicates how this work is perceived. Much of the casual work done by young men located in Chawama is in construction where they work alongside bricklayers to build new houses, particularly in the overspill area of the settlement. Their working conditions can be precarious and accidents on building sites are not uncommon, indicating how insecurity can be manifest at the scale of the body.

In contrast, few female youth work in casual activities in the streets or public domain in general, which remain male-dominated spaces. Young women tend to engage in casual work as domestic servants and child minders or work as bar maids, waitresses, etc. Some young women and children can also be seen collecting empty bottles for re-sale to bottle store owners and formal companies like Zambia Bottlers Plc. Despite the gendered nature of casual work and street space, the adverse economic situation in Zambia has led to a transgressing of gender norms, as Overå (2007) also found in Ghana. Hence women engaged in stone crushing, previously regarded as men’s work, has become a common sight and young men are increasingly seeking jobs as domestics, cooks, washing dishes and hairdressing, traditionally seen as female domains.

By its very nature, casual employment is insecure. The work is highly irregular and young people can easily go for a month or longer without being employed. All of the young people engaged in casual employment complained of challenging work environments and irregular, or even non-existent, pay. Many complained that they make very little money each time they work, hence earnings and possibilities for accumulating capital from casual work are minimal.

#### *Alternative/illicit activities*

Some young people in Chawama engage in livelihood activities that cannot easily be categorised as ‘casual work’ and/or are officially deemed ‘illegal’. Some young men, locally referred to as *Kuwait boys*, illegally deal in diesel/petrol paying to siphon it off public sector trucks and then selling it on to other, often taxi, drivers. It was also claimed in the focus group discussions that some young men have become ‘professional’ mourners moving from one funeral to another, where they eat and drink alongside ‘genuine’ mourners, thus meeting their basic needs (see also Chigunta et al., 2005). Young people tend to regard these types of illicit activities as a form of ‘self-employment’ or ‘business enterprise’. This not only points to different notions of ‘licit’ and ‘illicit’, or even ‘morality’, but also highlights changes in norms of legitimacy and illegitimacy in income-generating activities in Chawama. It also points to the way young people are adopting “hyper-entrepreneurial language to rationalize their actions” (Jeffrey and Dyson, 2013: R2). In a situation of economic hardship, illegal actions are justified with the argument that conventional income-generating activities are no longer feasible, as young people “have to constantly move about, hustle and find novel lines of approach to get things done” (Jeffrey and Dyson, 2013: R2). The notion of ‘zigzagging’ is apt at capturing these young people’s practices of making do with what is at hand and seizing opportunities as they unfold with little concern about the legitimacy of the economic transaction

involved (Jeffrey and Dyson, 2013; Jones, 2010), highlighting the insecure nature of attempts to earn a living.

An alternative strategy is to rely on financial support from parents, a relative or even a friend. Younger youth are more likely to receive pocket money from parents. Female youth, especially older ones, tend to rely on a spouse or boyfriend for financial support. Having multiple boyfriends is for some young women a key survival strategy. As one focus group participant narrated:

You would find they [young women] call their boyfriends names; someone as the Minister of Communication, that is somebody who buys her talk time, and the Landlord for somebody who rents accommodation for her, and the Transport Officer for travel money and stuff like that. She'll also have somebody who takes care of her hair, somebody who buys her lotion, somebody to get her a nice good phone. (Male, aged 29)

Although there was laughter at this comment, there was general agreement amongst the young men and women that this was the case. They also claimed that it is no longer only a female strategy as young men are befriending older women for financial gain. As a young woman (aged 23) stated, 'This time it is gender equality for both. Even men, you go for sugar mummies so that they will give you money. They will even buy a car for you so that you will be driving with your girlfriend.'

These examples show how, due to difficulties generating income through more conventional means, young people are resourceful and draw on a wide range of alternative and/or illicit strategies in order get by. These strategies are not without their difficulties though and inevitably are very insecure. Working on the edge of the law carries with it inherent dangers of being detected and enduring subsequent penalties, and patrons can decide to withdraw their support from one day to the next. Moreover, some of the risky, illegal and/or destructive practices contribute not only to the insecurity experienced by the individual but also reinforce insecurity more broadly within society.

#### *'Doing nothing'*

By their own accounts, about half of the youth in Chawama indicated that at the time of the interview they were 'doing nothing' or 'just sitting' when asked to state their main source of livelihood. This has been reported elsewhere with Jeffrey (2010) writing about young men in India 'just waiting', Ralph (2008) showing how young men in Senegal are 'killing time' by making and drinking tea (*attaya*), while young men in Egypt counter boredom by smoking hashish (Schielke, 2008) and young men in Ethiopia pass their excess time by chewing khat and watching videos (Mains, 2012). Such accounts have resulted in young people, especially in an African context, being portrayed as 'stuck' (Sommers, 2012) in a period of suspension between childhood and adulthood that has come to be referred to as 'waithood' (Honwana, 2013). It is important to recognise, however, that there appears to be both a gender and class dimension to 'waithood' with it being more applicable to young men and generally those of some means.

Young people who claimed to be 'just sitting' in Chawama, when questioned further revealed that they are rarely idle but rather may be assisting family members in their businesses or, especially young women, may be doing household chores or looking after younger siblings (Hansen, 2010). Moreover, especially young men may not physically be 'doing nothing' or 'just sitting' in the space of the home, but rather hanging out elsewhere such as in the business spaces of friends or relatives (see also Weiss, 2009 in relation to barbershops in

Tanzania) or in the ubiquitous bars (Gough, 2008). As these activities are not income generating, they are not seen as 'work' by the young people who call them 'fake work' or simply say they 'get by' or *kuwaya waya* in Lusaka street lingo, and are not perceived as contributing to the possibility of obtaining a more secure livelihood in the future. At times, however, young people pick up skills and build up social networks while 'doing nothing', as the tales of Joseph and Elizabeth demonstrate below, and as Langevang (2008a) also shows in a Ghanaian context.

A small number of young men who hang about on the street, known locally as the *imimbulu* or 'wild dogs' in Bemba street lingo, are also 'doing nothing'. High on drugs and/or alcohol they are too 'wasted' to engage in *kubaza - baza* 'proper' or any form of income-generating activity. They have a very precarious existence and are looked down upon by other young people for their perceived lack of 'street manners'. In a different context, Mains (2012) similarly shows how the khat chewing young men who hang out in video houses in urban Ethiopia are not respected by others who do not engage in such activities.

### **Linking scales and domains of employment insecurity**

Having explored the range of income-generating activities young people engage in and the inherent insecurity of these, we now turn to analyse how employment is interlinked with changes in the nature of households, housing and education. Returning to interview the same young people after 15 months gave us the opportunity to discover how their situation had changed in the intervening period. Of those that we were able to trace, 41 percent of the young people who were working in 2010 had changed the nature of their employment during this period. Short-term contracts, temporary casual work, dissatisfaction with working conditions, poor or no pay, and critical incidents (such as death of employer or fire) are some of the key factors that had forced or compelled the young people to change their work activities highlighting the insecure nature of their work. During the same period, 30 percent of the young people had experienced some form of change in their household, and at least 27 percent had changed the house they were living in, the latter being likely to be much higher since it was impossible to track down 31 percent of the youth from the initial survey. To illustrate the complexity and insecurity of youth employment, and how this is linked to the changing nature of young people's households, housing and education, the experiences of two young people (Joseph and Elizabeth), whose stories are typical for Chawama youth, are presented in detail here. Both end up as hairdressers but the paths they take to reach this point vary greatly.

Joseph is a 27 year old young man who lives and works in Chawama. He was born in Lusaka, the youngest of six children. After both of his parents died when he was aged 12, he was sent to live with his grandparents. Unaccustomed to village life he became very sick so two years later his sister brought him back to Lusaka where he attended school to grade 9<sup>6</sup>. Unable to continue in school due to lack of funds he became a houseboy for his uncle. A couple of years later, on seeing that Joseph was 'doing nothing', his cousin suggested that he come to work for him in his hardware store. Joseph did so requesting that the cousin keep most of the money he was earning for him as a way of saving. When after three years he asked his cousin for his accumulated wages, however, it transpired that nothing had been put aside for him. Demoralised he left the job, despite having developed a liking for it, and became an employee in a bakery.

---

<sup>6</sup> School in Zambia extends from Grade 1 to Grade 12. Grade 9 marks the end of Junior Secondary School.

After six months of what he described as ‘hard work for little pay’, Joseph had saved enough to establish himself as a trader in second-hand clothes, a common activity across much of sub-Saharan Africa (Brookes, 2015), operating from a stall on the edges of City Market (central Lusaka). He subsequently lost all of his stock, and hence his capital, when a fire broke out in the market. Joseph believed that the fire was started deliberately and that the police were implicated as they had been trying to get traders who had set up in unregistered locations to move. Then, in Joseph’s own words, he was ‘just sitting’. Some of this sitting took place in a friend’s hairdressing salon where he picked up some of the basics of hairdressing by watching and helping out. The skills he gained enabled him to subsequently obtain work in another hairdressing salon. Following the death of the owner, the salon was closed so Joseph decided to set up his own business. He paid for a small piece of land along a pathway in Chawama on which he built a basic shack from where he was working specialising in dreadlocks. By this point he had married and had a young child. The money he was earning from his business enabled him to rent a room and support his young family. His aim though was to save up enough money to set up his own hardware business having never lost his passion for that trade.

Elizabeth was also a hairdresser in Chawama when we met her but her employment trajectory was quite different to Joseph’s. Elizabeth was born in Lusaka as the fifth of eight siblings. Her life changed substantially when, without warning, her father left the family while she was in grade 7. With the support of an uncle, she managed to study until grade 9 but then lacked funds to continue in school. Elizabeth became a housemaid and worked for a family for one year but stopped because the pay was too little. On the suggestion of a Ward Councillor, she worked for him as a shop assistant in exchange for which he funded her to train as a pre-school teacher. On graduating she got a job as a pre-school teacher in an Islamic School but after working for 5 months without any pay she stopped disillusioned.

Through the church Elizabeth found out that the South African supermarket chain Shoprite was looking for security personnel. She applied and obtained a contract to work for two years in Kitwe in the Copperbelt. When her contract was not renewed she returned to Lusaka where, with the help of her sister, she found work in a take-away restaurant. Although the pay was low, she felt that she was learning a lot and enjoyed the work. After marrying, however, her husband did not like her working such long hours nor being in contact with so many people so he asked her to stop. At this point Elizabeth was unsure what to turn to but as she had learnt some hairdressing skills from a sister-in-law while ‘sitting’ in her salon, she set up her own business in the home, as is common for women living in low-income settlements in sub-Saharan Africa (Gough, 2010). Her business went well until she lost everything in a fire. When we met Elizabeth she was 29 years old and was just starting a new hairdressing business in a wooden shack alongside the marketplace where she was working with two other women. Her aim, however, was to set up her own restaurant and she had attended numerous short training courses in catering and business management in preparation. After seven years of marriage and three children, Elizabeth’s husband now trusted her and would allow her to follow her dreams and run a restaurant.

As the stories of Joseph and Elizabeth highlight, young men and women change their income-generating activities frequently as they try to find more secure ways of making a living. Their experiences also illustrate how employment insecurity is tightly bound up with insecurity in other domains of their lives – the household, housing and education. For many young people, their insecure life paths begin at an early age with the break-up of families either due to the death, which is particularly high in Zambia due to the prevalence of

HIV/AIDS, or separation/divorce of parents. As has been shown in a Zambian context (Ansell et al., 2011; Day and Evans, 2015; Locke and te Lintelo, 2012) and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa (Langevang, 2008b), these are vital events that come to have a significant impact on young people's housing, educational and consequently employment trajectories through having to move household and/or house and being unable to pay school fees. Getting married, and for some the subsequent untimely death of their spouse, affects where young people live and their income-generating activities.

While household changes affect young people's employment opportunities, limited income-generating opportunities and low earnings in turn impact on household size and composition and where young people live. Already in the 1990s, Moser and Holland (1997) observed an increase in household sizes in Chawama to accommodate unemployed young adult men who were unable to become economically independent. As the opportunities for these young men to secure jobs are constrained, they have developed a coping strategy of moving between various extended households of relatives. Although some may remain in one household for long periods, especially if the host household is relatively well off, many are forced to shift households frequently moving when the hosts can no longer support them. Young men who can afford to form 'nominal households' with friends jointly renting a room, an option not open to young women for fear of being considered prostitutes. For women who do engage in sexual activities for money, there is a high risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, highlighting how employment insecurity can impact on the body in the form of health insecurity. Renting is only an option for young people who have an income; young people reported having to return to their parental home in situations where they had lost their job and hence could no longer afford to pay the rent, which in one instance had contributed to marital breakdown after the young man and woman had to return to live with their respective families.

Turning to education, young people consider that their inability to further their education, in particular to complete secondary school, primarily due to a lack of funding, contributes to their employment insecurity. The follow-up survey in Chawama showed that a third of the out-of-school youth had dropped out of school or had failed to enrol in further education because of lack of funds to pay fees. As one focus group participant explained:

In Zambia the challenges we can cite are lack of quality education. Because few of the people can afford to have access to education ... it is too difficult for them to have the skills needed to do the job to become employed maybe in government. The youth don't have capacity because they have not gone to school to qualify to do that job. (Female, 26)

Young people's path from school to work is by no means straightforward. Many move in and out of school depending on their ability to find a sponsor who will pay their fees or they may leave school for some years to work and save up money. Many young people who have managed to complete secondary or even tertiary education are still unable to find work that matches their qualifications, as has been found elsewhere (Jeffrey, 2010).

### **Concluding comments**

Young people in Lusaka are resourceful and resilient showing an ability to be highly adaptable in the range of work they are willing to undertake, seeking new opportunities when they experience failure or when more promising possibilities appear. Linked to this, the gendered nature of the businesses they establish and the types of casual work they engage in is becoming less distinct (see also Overå, 2007). As this paper has demonstrated, however,



both young men and women experience widespread employment insecurity regardless of whether they are formally employed, an informal enterprise owner, engaged in casual work or partaking in alternative/illicit activities. This insecurity is displayed in a myriad of forms including insecure wages/profits, fierce competition, no/temporary contracts, expectations of financial/sexual favours, nepotism/corruption, unhealthy/dangerous activities, and limited institutional support.

Taking heed of assertions that it is important to analyse security in all its scales (Philo, 2012), young people's employment insecurity has been shown to be affected by processes that operate from the global down to the body. At a global scale, neoliberal policies have influenced Zambia's economic policies resulting in an increased focus on liberalisation and entrepreneurship. At the national scale, economic and youth specific policies, or the lack of, alongside corruption affect youth employment opportunities; at the same time, the increasingly youthful population results in greater competition for jobs and between businesses. At the local scale, where young people are living (in this case Lusaka) affects the income-generating opportunities they can take advantage of. At an individual scale, personal circumstances affect the young people's ability to complete schooling, their home environment and the likelihood they will pursue certain forms of employment. Finally, having to engage in risky income-generating activities, such as prostitution, can affect security at the scale of the body. These processes do not operate in isolation but affect and are affected by each other and together greatly influence young people's employment security.

Importantly, this paper has shown how in a sub-Saharan African context, insecurity in one area of young people's lives affects their (in)security in another; to fall behind in one domain has implications for the other domains. Household and housing insecurity have manifested in a high degree of mobility which in turn impacts on young people's employment opportunities. At the same time, young people's inability to find secure employment is impacting on the size and composition of households and hindering their ability to set up independent households. Being unable to complete school, moving in and out of school, and not having the possibility of enrolling in further education impacts on young people's opportunities in the job market and their employment trajectories, though completing secondary school (or even having a university degree) is by no means a guarantee for secure employment (Bajaj, 2010; Mains, 2012). In order to understand and address youth employment insecurity, it is necessary for both academics and policy makers to also have knowledge of young people's housing, household and education insecurity. Moreover, as this paper has shown, although the youth (un)employment situation is often viewed as a serious threat *to* human security, the lack of stable employment in itself is a manifestation *of* insecurity.

## References

African Economic Outlook, 2012, "Africa Economic Outlook Report 2012: promoting Youth Employment", [www.african-economic-outlook.org/en/](http://www.african-economic-outlook.org/en/) (accessed January 2013).

Ansell N, van Blerk L, Hajdu F, Robson E, 2011, "Space, times, and critical moments: a relational time-space analysis of the impact of AIDS on rural youth in Malawi and Lesotho" *Environment and Planning A* **43** 525-544

Argenti N, 2002, "Youth in Africa: a major resource for change", in *Young Africa: realising the rights of children and youth* Eds De Waal A, Argenti N (Africa World Press, Trenton) pp 123-153

Bajaj M, 2010, “Intergenerational perspectives on education and employment in the Zambian Copperbelt” *Comparative Education Review* **54**(2) 175-197

Brookes A, 2015, *Clothing Poverty: The hidden world of fast fashion and second-hand clothes* (Zed Books, London)

Central Statistics Office (CSO) 2012 *Population and Housing Census 2010: Population Summary Report* (CSO, Lusaka)

Chigunta F, 2007, *An Investigation into Youth Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship in the Urban Informal Sector in Zambia* DPhil Thesis, Oxford University

Chigunta F, 2012, “The Youth and Labour Market Needs in Zambia”, Report to British Council, Lusaka

Chigunta F, 2013, “Review of the Effectiveness of Youth Employment Policies, Programmes, Strategies and Regulatory Framework”, Report to ILO, Lusaka

Chigunta F, Gough KV, Langevang T, 2016, Young entrepreneurs in Lusaka: overcoming constraints through ingenuity and social entrepreneurship, in *Young entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa* Eds Gough KV, Langevang T, (Routledge, Abingdon)

Chigunta F, and Mwanza V, 2016 “Measuring and promoting youth entrepreneurship in Zambia” in *Young entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa* Eds Gough KV, Langevang T, (Routledge, Abingdon)

Chigunta F, Schnurr J, James-Wilson D, Torres V, 2005 “Being ‘real’ about youth entrepreneurship in Eastern and Southern Africa” SEED Working Paper No. 72 International Labour Organization, Geneva

Craig J, 2000 “Evaluating privatisation in Zambia: a tale of two processes” *Review of African Political Economy* **85** 357-366

Day C, Evans R, 2015 “Caring Responsibilities, Change and Transitions in Young People's Family Lives in Zambia” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* **XLVI** (1) 137-152

Dillon M, 1996 *The politics of security: towards a political philosophy of continental thought* (Routledge, London)

Garcia M, Fares J, Eds 2008 *Youth in Africa's labor market* (World Bank Publications, Washington)

Gough KV, 2008 “‘Moving around’: social and spatial mobility of youth in Lusaka” *Geografiska Annaler* **90**(3) 243-255

Gough KV 2010 “Continuity and adaptability of home-based enterprises: a longitudinal study from Accra, Ghana” *International Development Planning Review* **32**(1) 45-70

- Gough KV, Langevang T, Namatovu R, 2014 “Researching entrepreneurship in low-income settlements: the strengths and challenges of using participatory methods” *Environment and Urbanization* **26**(1) 297-311
- Gough KV, Langevang T, Owusu G, 2013 “Youth employment in a globalising world” *International Development Planning Review* **35**(2) 91-102
- Hansen KT, 2010 “Changing youth dynamics in Lusaka’s informal economy in the context of economic liberalization” *African Studies Quarterly* **11**(2&3) 13-27
- Hardill I, Baines S, 2011 *Enterprising Care?: Unpaid Voluntary Action in the 21st Century* (Policy Press, Bristol)
- ILO 2011, “Policy options to support young workers during economic recovery” International Labour Organization Policy Brief (ILO, Geneva)
- ILO 2012, “Policy options to support young workers during economic recovery” International Labour Organization Global Jobs Pact Policy Brief no 14 (ILO, Geneva)
- Imboela LB, 1997 “New forms of economic activities in the informal sector after 1990: an investigation of the socio-economic characteristics of the tuntamba operators and their role in household survival strategies in Zambia” Serial No. 50, Department of Development Studies, University of Zambia, Lusaka
- Izzi V, 2013 “Just keeping them busy? Youth employment projects as a peacekeeping tool” *International Development Planning Review* **34** 103-17
- Jeffrey C, 2010 *Timepass: Youth, Class and the Politics of Waiting in India* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA)
- Jeffrey C, Dyson J, 2013 Zigzag capitalism: youth entrepreneurship in the contemporary global South, *Geoforum* **49** R1-R3
- Jones JL, 2010 “‘Nothing is straight in Zimbabwe’: the rise of the Kikiya-kiya economy 2000-2008” *Journal of Southern African Studies* **36**(2): 285-289
- Kani FC, 2000 “Structural adjustment and economic reform programmes, labour market institutions, employment and the role of social partners: the Zambian experience” SAMAT and Social Dialogue Discussion Paper No. 5, (ILO, Harare)
- Kayizzi-Mugerwa S, 2001 “Explaining Zambia’s elusive growth: credibility gap, external shocks or reluctant donors?” in *From Crisis to Growth in Africa?* Ed. Lundahl M, (Routledge, London)
- Langevang T, 2008a “Claiming place: the production of young men’s street meeting places in Accra, Ghana” *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* **90**(3) 227-242
- Langevang T, 2008b “‘We are managing!’ Uncertain paths to respectable adulthoods in Accra, Ghana” *Geoforum* **39**(6) 2039-2047

- Langevang T, Gough KV 2012 “Diverging pathways: young female employment and entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa” *The Geographical Journal* **178**(3) 242-252
- Lemanski C, 2012 “Everyday human (in)security rescaling for the Southern city” *Security Dialogue*, **43**(1) 61-78
- Locke C, and te Lintelo D, 2012 “Young Zambians ’waiting’ for opportunities and ’working towards’ living well: lifecourse and aspiration in youth transitions” *Journal of International Development* **24** 777-794
- Mains D, 2007 “Neoliberal times: Progress, boredom, and shame among young men in urban Ethiopia” *American Ethnologist* **34**(4) 659-673
- Mandela MM, 1991 *The informal sector and youth unemployment: prospects for labour absorption in Zambia* Ph.D. Thesis, Sussex University
- Moser C, Holland J, 1997 “Confronting crisis in Chawama, Lusaka, Zambia” Household Responses to Poverty and Vulnerability Volume 4, Urban Management Programme, UNDP/UNCHS (Habitat) World Bank
- Overå R, 2007 “When men do women's work: structural adjustment, unemployment and changing gender relations in the informal economy of Accra, Ghana” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* **45** 539-563
- Paris R, 2001 “Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?” *International Security* **26**(2) 87–102
- Philo C 2012 “Security of geography/geography of security” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* **37**(1) 1-7
- Porter G, Abane A, 2008 “Increasing children’s participation in African transport planning: reflections on methodological issues in a child-centred research project” *Children’s Geographies* **6**(2) 151-167
- Porter G, Blaufuss K, Acheampong FO, 2007 “Youth, mobility and rural livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa: perspectives from Ghana and Nigeria” *Africa Insight* **37**(3) 420-431
- Potts D, 2008 “The urban informal sector in sub-Saharan Africa: from bad to good (and back again?)” *Development Southern Africa* **25**(2) 151-167
- Potts D, 2012 “Urban economies and natural resource-based economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa: the constraints of a liberalized world economy” *Local Economy* **28**(2) 170-187
- Ralph M, 2008 “Killing time” *Social Text* 97 **26**(4) 1-29
- Republic of Zambia 2013 “Preliminary results of the 2012 Labour force survey, Lusaka” Central Statistical Office, Lusaka

Robson E, Porter G, Hampshire K, Bourdillon M, 2009 “‘Doing it right?’ working with young researchers in Malawi to investigate children, transport and mobility” *Children’s Geographies* 7(4) 467- 480

Schielke S, 2008 “Boredom and despair in rural Egypt” *Cont Islam* 2 251-270

Seidman A, 1974 “The distorted growth of import-substitution industry: the Zambian case” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 12 601 - 631

Simon D, 1999 “Rethinking cities, sustainability and development in Africa”, in *Sacred spaces and public quarrels: African cultural and economic landscapes* (Eds) Zeleza PT, Kalipeni E, (Africa World Press Inc., Eritrea)

Simon D, Leck H, 2010 “Urbanizing the global environmental change and human security agendas” *Climate and Development* 2 263-275

Simon D, Leck H, 2013 Cities, human security and global environmental change, in *A changing environment for human security: transformative approaches to research, policy and action*, (Eds) Synga L, O’Brien K, Wolf J, (Earthscan from Routledge, Abingdon and New York) pp 170-180

Sommers M, 2012 *Stuck: Rwandan youth and the struggle for adulthood* (The University of Georgia Press, Athens and London)

Todd D, Shaw C, 1980 “The informal sector and Zambia’s employment crisis” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 18(3) 411-425

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 1994 *Human Development Report* (Oxford University Press, New York)

van Wyk M, Pienaar J, 2008 “Towards a research agenda for job insecurity in South Africa” *Southern African Business Review* 12(2) 49-86.

Weiss B, 2009 *Street dreams and Hip Hop barbershops: global fantasy in urban Tanzania*, Indiana (University Press, Bloomington)

White H, 1997 Zambia in the 1990s as a case of adjustment in Africa *Africa Development Review* 9(2) 56-87

World Bank 2012 *Jobs: World Development Report 2013* (The World Bank, Washington DC)

Wulf J, 1988 Zambia under the IMF regime *African Affairs* 87(349) 579 – 594.

### **Acknowledgements**

We are very grateful to the Consultative Research Committee for Development Research (FFU) of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Danida) for providing the funding (project number 09-059KU) which made this collaborative research possible. The young people in Chawama who acted as our research assistants not only did a great job but also added considerably to our understanding of young people’s lives and made the data collection an enjoyable process. Thanks are also due to Wisdom Kalenga for his assistance with the data

analysis, and to Mette Fog Olwig and three anonymous reviewers who made helpful comments on the manuscript.