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The dominant/marginal lives of young Tanzanians:
Spaces of knowing at the intersection of Children's and Development Geographies

Geoforum

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Abstract

Development Geography and Children's Geographies have become distinct sub-disciplines in their own right, yet despite a number of cross-cutting concerns, the theoretical and practical insights of both have only more recently become explicitly shared. I use a case study of an environmental education project with young people in Tanzania to illustrate how a perspective that draws from both Children's and Development Geographies can deliver significant challenges to both fields, yet also reveals important insights into the lives of young people in the global South. Young people in Tanzania hold distinct environmental knowledges compared to adults, learnt through projects and schools which are focused on 'conservation' of the natural environment. This raises challenges for critical Development Geographies, as young people appear to hold 'dominant' Western knowledges, yet they are also 'marginal' actors in society. For Children's Geographies, this provokes questions about whether the knowledges of young people should be challenged. Local social hierarchies also govern spaces of knowledge expression. Young people can be more empowered to express their knowledge in the formal spaces of the school compared to the wider community, such that formal spaces may offer more empowering potential. This runs counter to the general thrust of Children's and Development Geographies, often championing informal, local knowledges and spaces. There is a need to re-think education for young people in Tanzania in terms of its potential for their

empowerment, but also to reconsider some of the fundamental assumptions about childhood and local community development which pervade both Children's and Development Geographies.

Keywords

Children's Geographies; Development Geographies; Participation; Empowerment; Local knowledge; Education

1. Introduction: Children's Development Geographies?

Interdisciplinary enquiry has become imperative to current research agendas, yet within the discipline of Geography there are sub-disciplines which should, arguably, be more engaged than they currently are. There is a danger that knowledges within Geography become sub-divided and pigeon-holed such that, despite some important cross-cutting issues, little productive communication takes place (Horton et al 2008). A recent flurry of interest in the intersection of Children's and Development Geographies (Ansell 2009a; Ansell 2009b; Ansell et al 2012; Abebe 2009; Aitken 2007; Porter et al 2010; Punch and Tisdall 2012; Robson et al 2009; Tisdall and Punch 2012) has begun to exemplify the importance of an inter-sub-disciplinary approach to understanding the lives of young people in the global South. This paper forwards the case for more overt dialogue between Children's and Development Geographies. I use an empirical case study of young people's education in Tanzania to establish how an approach that draws from both can produce substantial insights.

Children's Geographies and Development Geographies have much in common, being concerned with marginal groups, their empowerment and participation. Although significant dialogue has taken place (Punch and Tisdall 2012; Tisdall and Punch 2012), still many of the assumptions of both sub-disciplines are significantly challenged by approaching particular topics from the point of view of the

other. In this paper I discuss how different knowledges held by adults and young people challenge assumptions about locally and globally derived knowledges, and their relative positions of power in local development. I explore the significance of local and national geographies of knowledge expression for understanding young people's lives and for development interventions and research which include and act on young people. Finally, I challenge how formal and informal spaces of empowerment and learning have been understood by Development and Children's Geographies. The primary aim of this paper is to drive forward some of the budding debates by illustrating how an approach with an overt concern for both fields can have significant insights which might otherwise be overlooked.

2. Different Geographies?

Poor communication across the sub-disciplines of Geography is not a new nor unrecognised phenomenon (Horton et al 2008), and was, until more recently, particularly evident between Development and Children's Geographies. Of course, there were notable exceptions, including the work of Katz (1986, 1991, 1994, 1996, 2004), who explored the changing nature of children's lives in Sudan and the USA in light of global economic restructuring. Blades et al (1998) examine the mapping abilities of young people in cross-cultural contexts, whilst Ansell (2002) explores how knowledge is produced and resisted by young people in Southern African schools. Although this earlier work illustrated that these sub-disciplines were not entirely divorced, others have noted that poor sub-disciplinary communication remains problematic. Horton et al (2008) suggest that Children's Geographies must engage with other sub-disciplines to better address concerns for young people, yet, interestingly, there is no note of Development Geographies. Within Development Geographies, Briggs and Sharp (2004) illustrate that there has been relatively little communication with other disciplinary areas. Kesby et al (2006) suggest that Children's Geographies must attend more to 'other' childhoods of the global South. Whilst a recent special issue of Children's Geographies explicitly addresses these calls (Payne 2012; Punch and Tisdall 2012; Tisdall and Punch

2012; Van Blerk 2012), the editors appeal for engagement beyond the established norms of childhood studies and development (Tisdall and Punch 2012).

Although there have been calls for inter-sub-disciplinary engagement, significant crossover material does exist. Those with an explicit interest in Children's Geographies have been concerned with themes which are important to Development Geographies, including the place of young people as marginal actors (Pain 2004; Sutton 2009), with attention to 'everyday spatialities' of childhood (Horton et al 2008), the inclusion of young people in planning (Thompson and Philo 2004) and the intersection of childhood and poverty (Sutton 2009). Early Children's Geographies work is founded on concerns for the Geographies of young people which have been overlooked (James 1990; Philo 1992), not dissimilar to the importance in Development Geographies of providing a voice for the marginalised. Recent reviews have acknowledged, however, that earlier work was predominantly concerned with young people in the global North (Kesby et al 2006; Punch and Tisdall 2012). Others suggest that understandings of childhood from the global North have uncritically been transposed onto the global South through development interventions (Hart 2008; Payne 2012).

However, there are contemporary examples of research with an explicit concern for Children's Geographies which engages with childhood in the global South. These have focused on the impact of geographical and societal settings on young people's identities (Van Blerk 2005), their participation in planning (Porter and Abane 2008), their daily lived realities (Robson et al 2009), and ethical issues (Abebe 2009; Robson et al 2009)¹. Some of this research perhaps lacks reflection of the implications for local, national and international development, echoing the lack of attention to wider processes in studies involving young people (Ansell 2009c). Others have contextualised young people's experiences in the global South within global processes. Aitken's (2007) study of young Mexican

¹ Robson et al (2009) consider the ethics of working with young people, and problems of translating the 'rights' of children enshrined in the UNCRC into workable ethics. Abebe (2009) discusses providing young people with opportunities to express thoughts which may be 'risky'.

supermarket packers highlights their connections to global processes. Whilst both Aitken and Katz (1991, 2004) focus on theorising the lived realities of young people within international development processes, they perhaps fall short of offering productive dialogue as to how young people's agency can impact local development trajectories beyond vague notions of 'resistance' to global capitalist forces, nor do they critically question the agency of young people.

Others have begun to make explicit links between local, national and international development and the lives of young people. Ansell (2009a; 2009b) has written explicitly for *Development Geography and Children's Geographies* from research in Lesotho on HIV and AIDS education, discussing how society can act on children's bodies through schooling (2009a), and the international and national influences which act through local education on young people's lives (2009b). Porter et al (2010) connect young people's transport needs with broader development agendas. Punch and Tisdall (2012) and Payne (2012) highlight that, whilst contemporary research has moved understandings of childhood away from the norms of the global North to how childhood is understood in the global South, this has not been reflected in practice. Tisdall and Punch (2012) argue that *Children's (Development) Geographies* must engage critically with the 'mantras' of childhood studies, including assumptions of how childhood is socially constructed, that young people have agency, and that their voices should be valued. Recent work has critically questioned children's agency (Ansell 2009c; Aitken 2007; Porter et al 2010), yet "a nuanced and contextual understanding of the opportunities, limitations and complexities of children and young people's agency continues to be lacking" (Punch as Tisdall 2012, p.246). Indeed, both *Development and Children's Geographies* share a tendency to valorise the marginal actors they seek to champion.

Work that has emerged from *Development Geographies* is equally challenged by issues which arise from *Children's Geographies*. Participatory development and 'local knowledges' have become paradigmatic in Geography and of development thinking since the 1990s (Brett 2003; Chambers

1994a, 1994b, 1994c; Green 2000)². Despite attention towards marginal groups, particularly with respect to gender (Mercer 2002; Myers 2002; Sharp et al 2003) and marginalised ethnic/caste/class groups, comparatively little consideration has been given, until recently, to young people (Bourdillon 2004), although their importance to livelihoods in the global South is well recognised (Harpham et al 2005; Mayo 2001). Studies of the participation and empowerment agenda in development (for example: Blomley et al 2008; Twyman 2000; Sharp et al 2003) have also chosen to focus adults to represent the 'community'. More recent work from Dyson (2008) has explored the powerful role of gender and caste inequalities on young people's lives, including how these are entangled with young people's work. Although there is a growing body of literature which is critical of the role of local knowledges in development (Aggarwal and Rous 2006; Briggs 2005; Smith 2011), there has been comparatively little interest in the knowledges of young people. Recent studies have attended to young people's knowledges which, through formal education, are often exposed to both Western and local understandings. Hammett (2009) illustrates how young people in South Africa negotiate local and global cultural influences, whilst Ansell (2009a) explores how young people in Lesotho are exposed to knowledges of HIV and AIDS through formal schooling.

There has been a significant contribution to understanding the lives of young people in the global South from beyond the discipline of Geography. Boyden (2003) and Hart (2008) both explore young people's motivations for participation in political violence, complicating perceptions of young people in the global South as vulnerable victims, whilst also deconstructing normative and universalised ideas of childhood from the global North. Others who have worked on the DFID-funded 'young lives' project, including Camfield and Tagere (2011), demonstrate how girls experience multiple and contradictory transitional trajectories in Ethiopia. These studies have grounded accounts of development within the economic, social and spatial practices of young people.

² Whilst here I consider the participatory turn in Development Geography, I acknowledge that Development Geographies more broadly concerns national and global economies, globalisation, migration, and governance (among other themes).

Contemporary agendas for Children's Development Geographies still require greater cross-dialogue (Tisdall and Punch 2012). Examining how emerging understandings of 'other' childhoods impact on policy and practice at local, national and global development scales requires discussion across and between Children's and Development Geographies. A critical understanding of young people's agency necessitates cross-dialogue, which must include developing appropriate forms of participation. The opportunity for young people to express themselves in development interventions is limited (Bourdillon 2004; Porter and Abane 2008; Robson et al 2009), indicating an important challenge for Children's Development Geography.

Education offers a site of crossover between debates around local knowledges, participation and empowerment, and of confluence between Development Geographies and Children's Geographies, particularly as schooling is a considerable area of investment for international development in Southern African countries (Ansell 2002). The education of young people about the environment raises questions about how local knowledges are 'passed on' both formally and informally, and young people's potential for action. For Geographers, this should bring to the fore questions of space, particularly as there has been a lack of attention to the spaces in which knowledges and empowerment are performed (Cornwall 2002; Kesby 2007; Kothari 2001). Here Children's Geographies can have significant input, as empirical research has paid distinct attention to the micro-spaces of children's lives (Thompson and Philo 2004; Van Blerk 2005).

Here I use a case study of an environmental education project aimed at young people in Tanzania to examine these cross-cutting issues. 'Environmental Education' has been within the lexicon of local, participatory education for some time (Bourdillon 2004; Hoza 2009; Mbuta 2009), and has found its way into national curricula in the global South and North (Bonnett and Williams 1998). Environmental management is a significant area where Western and 'local' knowledges meet (Briggs

et al 1999), and environmental education may inform natural resource management, but debates have largely focused on adults (Blomley et al 2008; Motteux et al 1999; Timsina 2003). As environmental education may incorporate Western knowledges of ecological conservation (Blomley et al 2008), it also offers an avenue to explore how education may be influenced by Western and 'local' forms of teaching. Whilst there is some critical reflection on environmental education in the global North, including the neglect of social dimensions of environmental problems (Bonnett and Williams 1998), and the lack of evidence of changes in adult behaviour as a result of education in childhood (Uzzell 1999), there has been little critical appraisal in the global South.

3. Methods

This research was carried out with the assistance of an NGO in Tanzania, which was conducting an environmental education project in schools throughout the country. The project (2006 to 2011) trained teachers to educate about the environment, alongside limited practical activities with young people. The NGO is an international organisation based in the USA with a national presence in Tanzania, and is primarily concerned with wildlife conservation. Consequently, the principal motivations were to communicate environmental messages to promote conservation. The project trained an estimated 1,500 teachers, and reaching 103,000 children. Summary project documents, and interviews with NGO staff, stated that they aimed to employ a 'participatory' approach to environmental education.

Qualitative and ethnographic research (some of which generated quantitative data) in the form of workshops were carried out with young people of whom some did and some did not take part in the project. Interviews were conducted with teachers, with NGO and Tanzanian state actors, and with adults in the communities around the participating schools. The field research took place over a period of 5 months between 2008 and 2010 in three communities (Fig. 1): Kawe Ward in Dar es Salaam (2 months), an urban area of the principle city; Bagamoyo (2 months), a coastal town; and

three rural villages in rural Rukwa (1 month). The field sites were selected based on broad characteristics (urban, a town, rural), and where the NGO conducted projects with schools.



Figure 1: Tanzanian administrative areas and case study locations. Source: Mike Shand, School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow

The workshops were carried out with young people in primary and secondary schools. Whilst efforts were made to keep the sample sizes similar (Table 1), the groups were based on availability. In each workshop, which lasted around one hour, a series of activities took place to encourage participants to express ideas about environmental issues. They combined several methods, including card labelling, sorting and ranking, in which the participants were asked to define ‘parts’ of the

environment, and then sort these (e.g. elements which caused problems locally). In group discussions participants were asked about activities that either they or local people took part in which they considered environmentally sustainable, what they learnt at school, and to reflect on responsibility for environmental sustainability. A kinaesthetic exercise also required participants to move about to express ideas, for example, participants were asked about how important they considered ‘traditional’ or ‘modern’ methods of environmental management to be. These activities generated data which could be compared across groups (Briggs et al 1999; Kesby 2000). Workshops were conducted in Swahili (some chose to speak English) with a research assistant who acted as a translator. Teachers left the room after introducing us.

Area and School	Groups
Kawe	
Kawe B Primary School	Group 1: 3 female, 4 male, age 13-14 Group 2: 3 female, 4 male, age 13-14 Group 3: 7 female, 1 male, age 13-14
Kawe B Secondary School	Group 1: 2 female, 4 male, age 14-18 Group 2: 5 female, 2 male, age 14-18
Bagamoyo	
Kizuiani Primary School	Group 1: 3 female, 3 male, age 13-14 Group 2: 3 female, 3 male, age 13-14
Bagamoyo Secondary School for Boys	Group 1: 8 male, age 18-20 Group 2: 3 male, age 18-20
Rukwa	
Ilemba Primary School	Group 1: 4 female, 4 male, age 13-14 Group 2: 3 female, 5 male, age 13-14
Sakalilo Primary School	Group 1: 4 female, 4 male, age 13-14
Ilemba Secondary School	Group 1: 3 female, 3 male, age 18-21 Group 2: 3 female, 3 male, age 18-21

Table 1: Details of focus group participants

Semi-structured interviews took place with state actors, NGO employees, and local leadership (12 individuals). 14 teachers were interviewed who worked at the schools. Participants were asked to reflect on the project, to discuss its successes and shortcomings, as well as their own opinion on

local environmental sustainability. To gain views on local environmental concerns from the adult population, semi-structured individual and group interviews were conducted with 288 individuals (Table 2). Questions were on themes including local environmental issues, how individuals acted towards environmental sustainability, and knowledge of environmental education. Interviews took place formally and informally, lasted between 30 minutes to 2 hours, and were usually conducted in Swahili. Recruitment was largely through informal ‘snowballing’, and the sample may not accurately reflect the social makeup³.

Age	Kawe		Bagamoyo		Rukwa	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
13 – 17	0	2	8	4	1	0
18 – 19	2	3	3	2	4	0
20 – 29	7	11	12	7	26	13
30 – 39	9	6	9	7	37	8
40 – 49	5	7	8	4	23	9
50 – 59	6	3	3	0	13	8
60+	8	4	1	1	3	1
Total	37	36	44	25	107	39

Table 2: The total sample of participants who took part in both individual and group interviews in localities surrounding sampled schools.

Ethnographic and semi-participant observations were a key method. I was taken on informal ‘tours’ to see environmental problems first hand and was invited to stay in family homes and to ‘help out’. More formal observations took place at environmental education events organised by the NGO. My time spent with the NGO blurred the boundaries between participant and observer, and our relationship was ambiguous. Whilst I attempted to distance my work from theirs in order to assure respondents of my independence, association with the NGO still took place. In collaborating with

³ The sample size for Rukwa is larger, due to the number of ‘group’ interview that took place spontaneously. In Bagamoyo and Rukwa male interviewees outnumber women. The dominance of men in public life meant that gaining access to interview women was at times difficult.

the organisation, I shared my results, accompanied staff to project sites, and even 'stood in' as a representative at one event. This somewhat compromised my critical distance, yet allowed a degree of reciprocity. My perceived association with the NGO will likely have coloured the results, particularly from teachers, yet informants would also use my position as an avenue to feed back critical points to the NGO (Kesby 2005; Mercer 2002).

4. Same place, different knowledge

The environmental problems which young people prioritised in these communities were significantly different to those of adults. Asked to define environmental problems, young people were more likely to focus on those which caused direct observable harm to the 'natural' environment (deforestation, fishing, hunting), whereas adults, although also concerned with these, were more likely to mention problems which were less directly associated with environmental conservation, such as disease, population, infrastructure and education (Fig. 2). This suggests that young people may be more worried about preserving the environment in its 'natural' state than some adults⁴.

⁴ Adults and young people used the Swahili word '*mazingera*', which translates as 'environment', to discuss 'the environment' (a very small minority in Rukwa used Sukuma language). Whilst not addressed in detail here, the research study also included a critical examination of how this term was used by young people, adults and educational materials developed by the NGO and the Tanzanian State. Broadly '*mazingera*' was used by individuals as 'environment' might be in the English language, to describe both the physical and human world which is both proximate and distant to the individual. NGO and state material tended to utilise '*mazingera*' to mean the 'natural' environment, or pre-human nature, in line with conservationist tendencies.

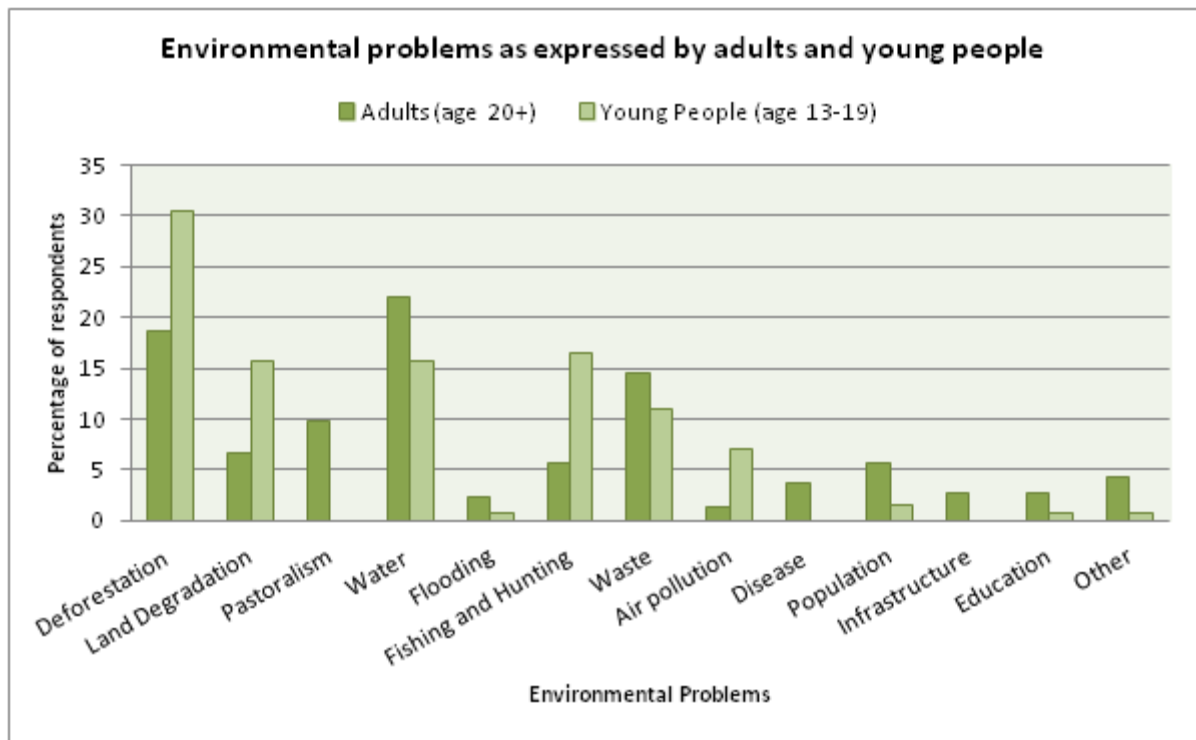


Figure 2: A comparison of adult and young people's responses to describing important environmental problems in their area.

Young people also tended to have a more detailed, 'theoretical' understanding of environmental concerns than adults. This response illustrates how adults would discuss local problems.

"People can come and mine for sand around the area and chop down the trees... People who are coming from far away cause this problem... They do this to earn an income."

Female, age 30-39, Kawe (Dar es Salaam, urban)

This respondent notes two problems, but does not elaborate on the consequences. Their knowledge appears to be based on what they have experienced locally, and there is no evidence of a more 'abstract' environmental discourse. This kind of response was common amongst adults, as these two responses exemplify.

“The biggest problem here is the waste on the beach. The remains of fish are being distributed around the beaches. The cause is the fishermen. They leave waste around the beach.”

Male, age 30-39, Bagamoyo (town)

“In the dry season many people come here from outside to graze their cattle... They don’t have fences so they chop down trees to make these things.”

Male, age 40-49, Rukwa (rural)

An example below, from a young respondent in Kawe, offers a contrast.

“In developed countries and developing countries there is deterioration of the ozone layer. Industries are emitting gasses which are bad for the ozone layer so it gets destroyed. Rays from the sun reach the ground, and eventually this leads to global warming. This is a problem for all countries. Some living organisms cannot survive this, and will die, including humans in some places. Cutting down of trees is linked to this, as they are cut beyond their rate of replacement, and if there are no trees then there is increased pollution.”

Male, age 18-19, Kawe (Dar es Salaam, urban)

This young person illustrates a more ‘theoretically’ detailed knowledge of the wider processes involved in an environmental problem, including links to the global scale, something that was almost completely absent from adult responses⁵. The following examples similarly indicate that young people linked environmental problems to broader scales, and to more theoretical, abstract concepts.

“There is a relationship between trees and rainfall. Trees help with the presence of cloud and this also manifests precipitation. Condensation from the trees forms the clouds through evaporation on the leaves. Clouds give rainfall which gives precipitation. This is why cutting down trees and forests might be a problem for rainfall.”

Female, age 17-19, Rukwa (rural)

“There is a trend in illegal hunting which is a big problem. It has increased a lot, which is a big problem for tourism. For example, elephants are particularly endangered. In Katavi [national park] they have Black Elephants, but these are very rare. Also the Ostrich is becoming an endangered species due to illegal hunting. Many animals will become extinct if this continues.”

Male, age 15-17, Kawe (Dar es Salaam, urban)

⁵ However, this more ‘theoretically detailed’ knowledge is only partially correct. It is not ozone depletion which is ‘letting in’ more thermal infrared radiation (which causes warming). Instead, greenhouse gasses (water vapour, CO₂, methane) reabsorb thermal infrared and emit it back towards the Earth’s surface. This individual’s knowledge is, compared to those of local adults, more ‘detailed’ and linked to the global scale, yet it is interesting that their understanding is incomplete.

Young people's understandings of the environment were therefore sometimes at odds with adults in their own communities. Instead their knowledge appeared to be far more in line with the Tanzanian state and NGOs, apparent in environmental education literature and syllabuses, which were focused on matters of conservation (NEMC 2004). It is likely that young people have been influenced by the formal education system. Indeed, their responses appeared to mirror the focus of NGO and state education material on environmental problems including human use of resources, over-hunting and over-fishing in 'fragile' environments, and wider concerns such as global warming⁶. Although it is significant that young people conform to an 'environmentalist' approach (Leach and Fairhead 2000), this is not to suggest that their knowledges are in any way 'better' or 'worse' than those of adults. Young people did not express detailed solutions to environmental problems, or the social and economic consequences of particular actions, suggesting that their more 'formal' knowledge may lack practical, local applicability.

"People should be taught not to cut down trees."

Male, age 13-17, Rukwa (rural)

"For fishing in Rukwa people can do what they want to, so there should be rules and regulations to monitor them."

Female, age 17-19, Rukwa (rural)

"I know about digging holes to put rubbish into, and also needing to clean and sweep the environment, which is very important."

Male, age 17-19, Kawe

The above quotes highlight the simplistic nature of young people's solutions. They recognise problems which should be 'stopped', but do not mention the social consequences, nor do they suggest how their solution might be practically achieved. Adults did tend to engage with local socio-economic realities, as the respondent below demonstrates in relation to fishing.

⁶ Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, this study further revealed how NGO and Tanzanian state discourses constructed the 'environment' and environmental problems through a particularly Western conservationist discourse (see also Leach and Fairhead 2000).

“The nets we use which are between 1 inch and 3 inches are prohibited by the government... The government wants us to use advanced methods of fishing but this is very expensive... We are willing to stop fishing, but we need an alternative. This is the only way our families survive so how can we stop? ... I’m willing to declare openly that no one is in need of destroying their own environment. The problem is that our lives necessitate this.”

Male, age 30-39, Kawe (Dar es Salaam, urban)

This level of detail in framing solutions was largely absent from the responses of young people, who generally failed to offer practical, tangible solutions to local environmental issues. The apparently more utilitarian understanding that adults have may be due to their heightened attention to their daily responsibilities, likely to be greater than those of young people⁷. Through their attendance at school, young people have access to knowledges that adults do not, and with this come different (and conflicting) ideals concerning environmental management.

These ‘gaps’ between the knowledges of adults and young people further interplayed with, and were differentiated by, the spatial locations in which the respondents were situated. Fig. 3 shows that, for adults, as the study areas became more rural and less urban, national scale environmental problems (deforestation, wildlife hunting) or global concerns (climate change) are mentioned less frequently, although overall local issues dominated. Fig. 4 shows that this trend is far more pronounced amongst young people. In Kawe and Bagamoyo (urban areas), the percentage of young respondents discussing national and global environmental problems is significantly higher than for adults, whereas in Rukwa young people and adults are more similar.

⁷ Young people participate significantly in family livelihoods in Tanzania, yet they do not commonly have the same responsibility as adults. This trend is not always the case, particularly with the impact of HIV/AIDS in Tanzania on the numbers of child-headed households (Kesby et al 2006; NBS Tanzania 2006).

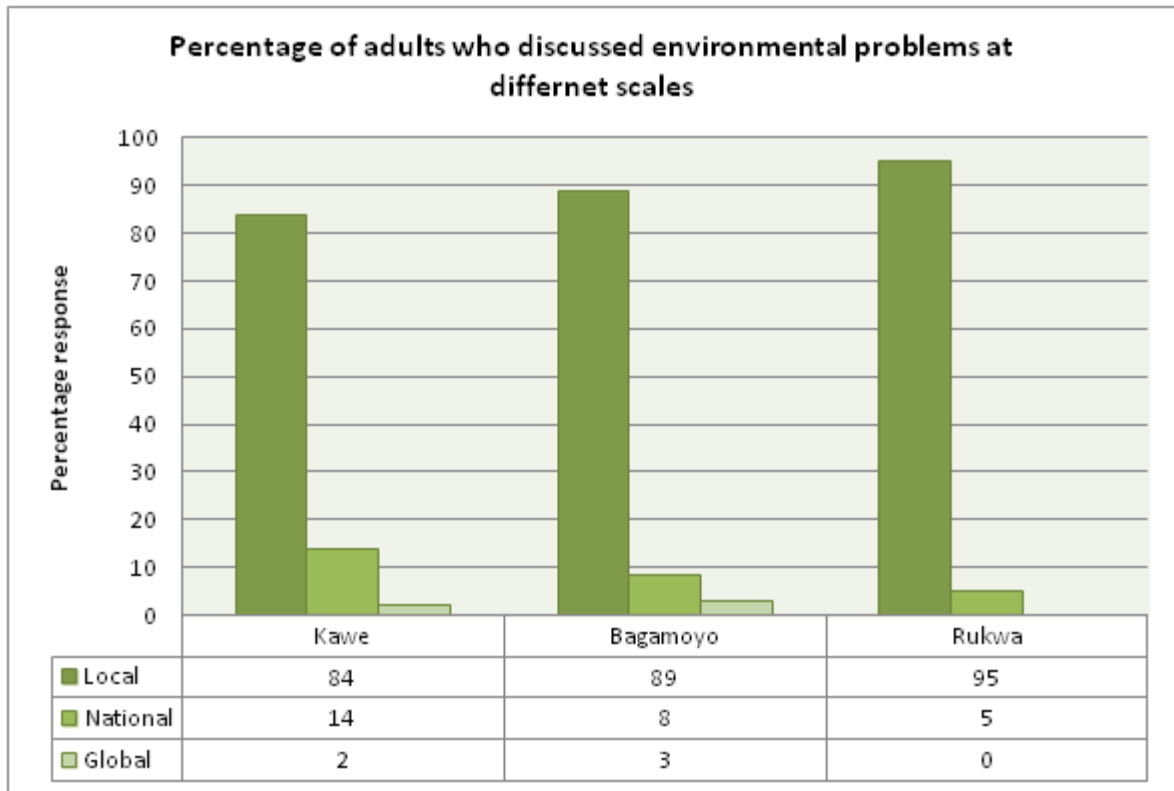


Figure 3: Percentage of adults who discussed environmental problems at different scales.

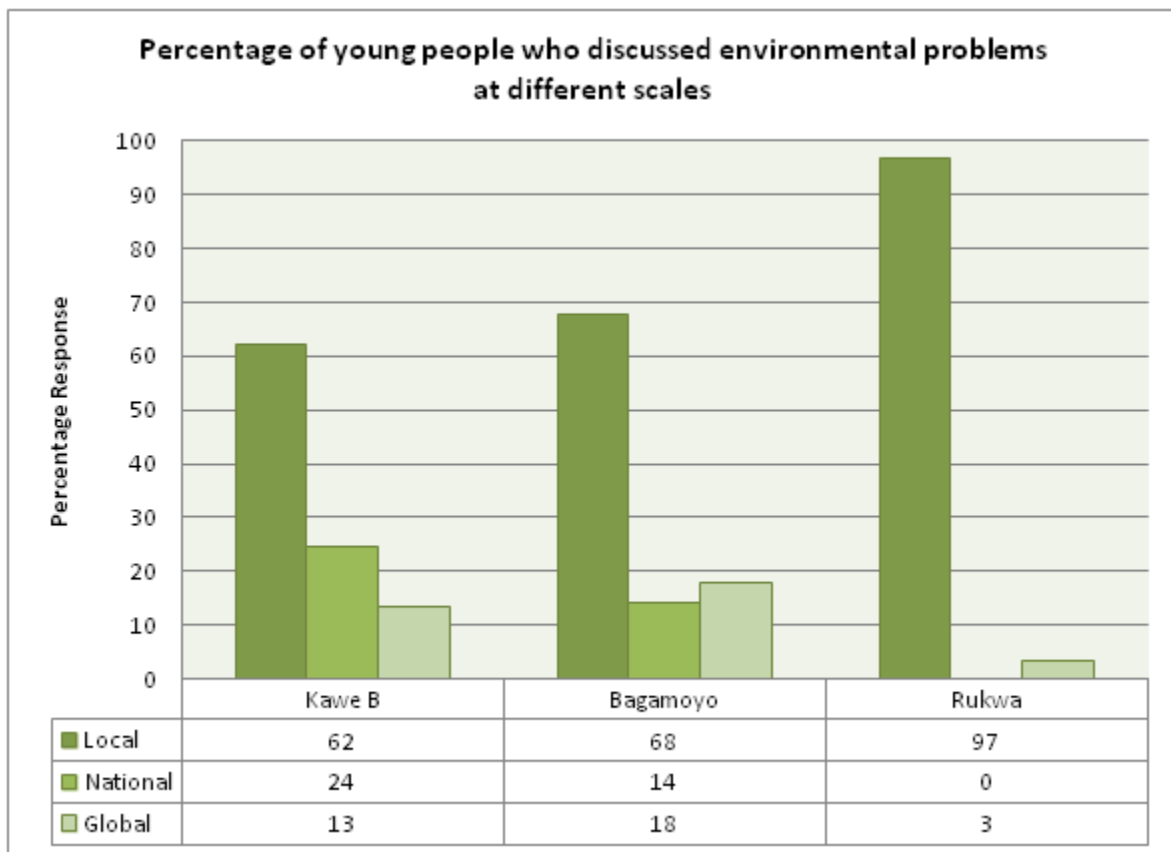


Figure 4: Percentage of young people who discussed environmental problems at different scales.

In terms of their knowledge of, or discursive prioritisation of, environmental problems, the gap between adults and young people appears to be more significant in the urban areas than in rural Rukwa. The availability and quality of schooling, and higher NGO activity, may have contributed to a greater awareness of national and global issues in Kawe and Bagamoyo amongst young people. The differentiation of adult and youth knowledges across space hints at the greater exposure of young people to more 'globalised' environmental knowledges in places which are themselves more networked within global processes, such as urban Dar es Salaam. Whilst others have shown that formal education can expose young people to 'globalised' knowledges (Punch 2004), the evidence from these communities indicates a need to spatially contextualise the uneven effects of globalising knowledges on young people's lives.

The divergences between the environmental knowledges of adults and young people, within and between these communities, also adds to the critical literature on local knowledges, highlighting how the 'local' knowledge of a community is not shared, but rather can be divided and conflicting (Diawara 2000; Leach and Fairhead 2000). Whilst several studies have demonstrated the unequal distribution of environmental knowledge within communities, particularly with respect to gender (Goebel 1998; Myers 2002; Sharp et al 2003), the role of young people has thus far been neglected (Bourdillon 2004; Mayo 2001), yet here it is of importance as they appear to have quite different environmental understandings to adults. The evidence also suggests that NGO and state attempts to put environmental concerns into the curriculum have been somewhat successful in instilling a particular kind of environmental knowledge in young Tanzanians.

Interestingly, this division between the knowledges of young people (modern, 'scientific' knowledge of conservation) and adults (local, practical, and 'traditional') potentially upsets the usual politics of the critical (Western) researcher in Development Geographies (Smith 2011), who habitually appears to valorise 'local' knowledge whilst being suspicious of the role of Western/scientific knowledge in

local development (Briggs 2005). If this stance is maintained, that 'Western' knowledges should be challenged, then this would prompt a response which contests the environmental knowledges of young people, which largely reflect Western conservation ethics. Such a response would counter the usual thrust of research in Children's Geographies which tends to valorise the knowledges of young people (Horton et al 2008; Thompson and Philo 2004), and, almost paradoxically, also run contra to the normal stance of critical development literature, which champions the 'voices' of the marginalised (Chambers 1994a, 1994b, 1994c; Escobar 1995).

Such an analysis exposes the paradox of critical research from the global North into local knowledge in development, and perhaps, Western critical research more generally. There is an apparent necessity to champion the marginalised in order to give them 'voice', but what if that 'voice' does not chime with (Western) liberal, radical, or critical sentiments? Would it be right for adults from the global North to challenge the knowledges of young Tanzanians because they reflect what those adults perceive as a parroting of Western conservation discourses? It is easy and popular in critical academia to challenge the knowledges of those who are powerful, though much more difficult, and less popular, to challenge those who are more marginal. This generates questions about whether Children's Geographies should contest the knowledges of young people, or if Development Geographies should rethink the stance of solidarity with the marginal, in light of the existence of marginal actors (young people), who hold dominant (Western conservation) knowledges.

5. Spaces of knowledge expression

Instilling knowledge and changing behaviour are different processes, as is 'having' a particular knowledge and being able to express it. Having knowledge, and feeling empowered to act on it, are of importance not just for young people's empowerment, but also for the success of NGO and state efforts in Tanzania towards environmental education, as the aims are to educate and to change behaviour (NTEAP 2009; NEMC 2004). During this field study it became apparent that young people's

distinct environmental knowledges are rarely expressed within the wider community. The workshops conducted with young people took place within schools, in which young respondents would often articulate their opinions eloquently and confidently. Although power relations were still operating during these workshops, directed by the researcher and assistant, nonetheless in the space of the school young people were confident to express their environmental knowledges.

In other public and private spaces within their wider community, young people were more restrained. Focus groups conducted in communities took place in homes, public places of work (shops, fields, pastures), and public spaces (streets, forests, beaches). Young people were often present, particularly in adult respondents' homes when family members would frequently 'join in' with interviews. In these spaces, social hierarchies delineate who can and cannot speak. Observations suggested that it is normally the oldest male who answers first, followed by more senior men, and occasionally older or more senior women. Women would usually only speak once the leading man has given them indication to do so. Young people are typically at the bottom of this hierarchy, and in the family they will only speak up when they are invited to. Although these observations reflect the geographies of the focus groups, it could be deduced that analogous micro-sociospatial hierarchies are played out in the day-to-day life of the family, which informal observations of families appeared to support. As a result of social hierarchies operating in 'public' and 'private' spaces, young people can be socially marginalised in the home and community (Fig. 5 and 6).



Figure 5: In the space of the school, young people are empowered to express their knowledge. The photograph illustrates young people communicating their ideas about the environment through the workshops. The photo is from a secondary school group in Rukwa.



Figure 6: Illustrates typical focus group interviews held at respondents' homes. Note how young people and women (highlighted) sit separately from men. The photo is from a home in Rukwa.

These examples intimately tie the expression of knowledge to space, as well as the power relations which are entangled through them. This is not only apparent in differences between spaces within the community, but they are also reflected in the micro-spaces of the home and the school classroom. Social, gender and age hierarchies in the home determine where individuals sit, which impacted upon how they might respond during an interview. Fig. 6 illustrates how the subservient relationship of women and young people in this home is reflected in the way they sit together and on the floor, apart from men who sit elevated on seats⁸. Notice that a young man is sitting with the men (3rd from left), illustrating how older sons can be elevated in status, yet still must be invited to speak.

Whilst some participatory development discourse has assumed that education is 'empowering' for young people (Andersson et al 2003; Bonnett and Williams 1998; Boudillon 2004; Easton et al 2000), and the NGO project aimed to 'empower' young people to take action, in this study young people expressed frustration at their inability to bring their knowledges into the wider community space.

"The environment is the duty of everyone... but because of my age now though I cannot just talk to elders, so I cannot tell them what to do in the environment."

Male, age 18-19, Rukwa (rural)

"Parents don't want to be taught by their kids! We need to provide education to the parents as they are very reluctant to be taught by their children."

Male, age 13-16, Bagamoyo (town)

"My parents at home are not caring for the environment. I told them to sort out the rubbish but they never sorted out this problem."

Female, age 13-16, Kawe (Dar es Salaam, urban)

⁸ This example is from rural Rukwa, where traditional patriarchal relations are more pronounced. Indeed, the image should not be taken to suggest that women are entirely enveloped in patriarchal hierarchies in rural Tanzania, as Mercer (2002) also demonstrates. There were instances throughout this study where women did speak their minds.

Young people's environmental knowledges remained 'trapped' in space (the school), whilst the rest of the community 'missed out' on this knowledge because there was no avenue for its expression. Of course, knowledges expressed in school were equally entangled with the power relations imbued through those spaces. It therefore cannot be guaranteed that these were more 'authentic' knowledges. At schools, young people reproduced learning from the classroom, which may not reflect their 'genuine' thoughts. However, perhaps more significant were the performances and enactments of reproducing that knowledge. Whilst the content may reflect what young people perceived the 'listeners' wanted to hear, their enthusiasm to speak, forthright manner, and expression of strong opinions signified an empowered performance which betrayed greater levels of confidence, conviction and authority, than their typical performances in the home. Although direct comparisons between the school and the wider community cannot be made, as young people participating in school-based workshops were not observed at home, the evidence suggests that space (and social-spatial relations imbued through it) is important locally in terms of governing knowledge expression, just as much as it is important nationally (Figs. 3 and 4). Young people are likely to express different knowledges at school than at home, as well as alter the nature of their knowledge expression.

Development Geographers have emphasised the empowering potential of local knowledge (Briggs et al 2003; Chambers 1994b), whilst others have stressed the need for a careful analysis of the concrete spatial and temporal context through which processes of participation take place (Hodgson and Schroeder 2002; Williams 2004; Williams et al 2003). A focus on the micro-spatial geographies of children indicates that it can be equally disempowering when a young person's knowledge is ignored, or fails to be socially powerful, within community spaces. Environmental education projects enhanced young people's environmental knowledge (in particular ways). However, without a mechanism for young people to engage their knowledges with those of the community, 'having' this knowledge fails to empower them within the local space (London et al 2003). The result is an

enhanced feeling of disempowerment, particularly as young people's knowledges become increasingly distanced from those of adults due to their participation in formal education. However, the 'marginal' status of some of these young people is complex and multi-faceted. Attendance at secondary school may indicate privilege and status for young people in Tanzania, with only 16% of 18-19 year olds still at school (NBS Tanzania 2006), yet they can remain marginal in community and family decision-making.

Previously neglected in the literature on local knowledge and participation, it is apparent that space, and power relations enacted through particular micro-spaces, has a defining effect on knowledge expression for young people. Although Davidson (2010) usefully highlights how cultures of knowledge expression can govern what people 'select' to speak, she only hints at how this might be governed by the spaces in which the act of expression takes place. The term 'norms of knowledge expression', which Davidson uses, might be rephrased as 'spatial norms of knowledge expression' to describe how types of knowledge are governed by the spaces in which expressive acts occur. Within local space there are partially discrete places in which power relations of knowledge expression operate differently, making knowledge, space, and power relations inseparable in any analysis of local knowledge. In this case, the hegemony of age over youth is maintained through control of the knowledges that young people express, thus also maintaining the dominance of one scheme of knowledges.

The focus of participatory debates on the 'community' scale is only likely to empower those who can express their knowledge in particular spaces, and thus perhaps further marginalising young people. The power-knowledge critique has been applied largely to Western versus local perspectives (Blaikie et al 1996; Escobar 1995; Mohan and Stokke 2000) and rightly so, but it has not been sufficiently directed to the local scale. The geographies of knowledge expression for young people reveal that deferring to local knowledge in order to 'reduce' power relations or to generate 'empowerment' is

dangerous, because local knowledge is an important site for the reproduction of local power relations (Diawara 2000; Green 2000). In community spaces it is 'local' knowledges that dominate everyday practice, marginalising the 'Western' knowledges of young people. The assumptions of certain knowledges being 'dominant', often discussed at the global scale as the hegemony of Western knowledges over 'others' (Leach and Fairhead 2000; Sillitoe 1998), does not hold water at the local scale.

6. Spaces of learning and participation

Several studies have illustrated the importance of informal learning in the global South (Easton 1999; Easton et al 2000; Kesby et al 2006), in reference to traditional knowledges (Easton 2004; Pence and Schaefer 2006), and through considering ways of integrating local knowledges with formal, often decontextualised, state education (Easton and Belloncle 2000; Lucarelli 2001). Yet it is important to question if this valorisation of the informal, along with the local and traditional, is legitimate when considering young people and their empowerment. Whilst studies have more recently taken a nuanced position towards local knowledges and informal spaces which avoids romanticising either (Briggs and Sharp 2004; Briggs et al 2007; Davidson 2010), there remain questions about whether these academic developments have been translated into practice, or indeed if they are reflected in the attitudes of communities. During this study, it became apparent that formal and informal spaces of learning are discursively constructed by local people as distinctly different. Parents and young people were modest about what they learnt at home about the environment. Only 28% of adults said that they taught their children about the environment at home. The topics that were discussed at home were also revealing (Table. 3).

Topics discussed with young people as a percentage of adults who did discuss the environment at home (28%).	
Topic	Percentage response
Cleaning	24
Conservation and planting trees	14
Looking after the home	12
Farming	5
Fetching water	5
Showing 'safe environments'	2

Table 3: Environmental topics discussed with young people at home.

Only a small percentage of adults indicated that they taught children about activities which interacted with the 'natural' environment, such as farming. However, observational evidence assembled a different picture. Young people did have practical environmental knowledge accumulated informally through contact with their parents, relatives, friends and siblings, which they did not attribute discursively to being about 'the environment'. Young people took part in activities which required 'environmental knowledge'; collecting water, tending animals, farming and fishing. That this evidence comes from observation should not be surprising, as such knowledge may be more readily expressed as embodied performance (Briggs and Sharp 2004; Katz 2004), or represent a skill rather than spoken 'knowledge' (Agrawal 1995; Sillitoe 1998). However, both young people and adults did not consider these performed knowledges as 'environmental knowledge' when asked to discuss what was learnt at home (Table 3). It is also significant that these practical activities were not taught at school as 'environmental education'. Additionally, there was a lack of necessity amongst respondents to discursively link what was done 'practically' at home, and what was learnt 'theoretically' as formal education. Adults constructed this divide by delineating between 'practical' and 'theoretical' knowledge.

“Yes I heard about [environmental education] but they have no practical education. The kids are also destroying the environment so practically this kind of education does not exist. They are just learning about it theoretically.”

Male, age 50-59, Bagamoyo (town)

“It is important for children to be given more practicals, not just theories because these can be forgotten quickly. But if it is a practical activity then they can remember. Sometimes just touching and seeing things in the environment can be enough.”

Male, age 20-29, Kawe (Dar es Salaam, urban)

A number of adults understood the knowledge young people learnt at school to be ‘theoretical’ rather than ‘practical’, and whilst this was not a significant number in each area, the sentiment is important in its link to previous observations, and suggests that some see this ‘theoretical’ knowledge as lacking use value outside of school. This opinion was partly well founded, as environmental education programmes, and the state curriculum, were principally based on classroom learning and practical activities were limited. It was also typical for parents, adults, and teachers to undervalue the ‘informal’ knowledges of the community. Teachers were critical of the environmental knowledge of communities, suggesting that parent’s acted against conservation practices learnt at school. Some teachers believed that parents knew little about the ‘environment’, or of ‘modern’ practices, thus excluding particular environmental knowledges from the nexus of what should be taught about the ‘environment’.

“There is a low level of awareness in the community... The kids might plant a tree, but the parents might pull it out!”

Male Teacher, age 30-39, Rukwa (rural)

52% of all adults interviewed suggested that the school was the ‘correct’ place for young people to learn about the environment, whereas only 28% said that the home was the correct place. Not only are adults’ informal knowledges undervalued, the place of the home as a site of learning is also rejected. The quote above juxtaposes the space of the school against the space of the home, where in the latter the practices of young people are rejected by their parents. This discursive binary is not

solely the construction of actors associated with the formal system, but also one which is repeated throughout the everyday lives of adults and young people. Within the community there is an uneven geography of the 'modern' versus the 'traditional'. The school represents an expression of modern knowledges within the community; it is mapped out as a distinct island of the 'modern' or 'theoretical' by local people, yet this mapping is also reproduced by the 'modern' systems and actors which place the school, and what is learnt within it, 'inside' the community without facilitating the exchange of knowledges with the local.

At the micro-level there is a reproduction of the uneven geographies of 'modernity' and the uneven geographies of knowledges in development. Scientific, modern and theoretical knowledges are confined to particular places, 'islands' of development, amongst the broader sea of traditional, local, un-development. The local reproduction of this map of modernity occurs as much as a result of the development imaginaries of local people as it does because of the work of other actors beyond the local, suggesting a need to challenge these as much as the reproduction of uneven development at the global scale. For young people, there is an evident production of uneven social geographies of knowledges which casts them as holders of 'modern' or 'theoretical' knowledge. This perhaps serves to marginalise (rather than make hegemonic) such knowledges as not useful to everyday lives, thus also reinforcing the place of the child as not the decision maker. This somewhat parallels the work of Punch (2004), who finds that formal education in Bolivia is unlikely to increase young people's livelihood alternatives within their local context. This work and the findings here both highlight the uneven effects of globalised knowledges and educational discourses, which have the potential to increase intergenerational conflict as well as enhance an uneven process of detachment from traditional forms of social reproduction. Thus, for some young people, whilst education may be a privilege, it also places them precariously between complex global and local processes and knowledges which remain in tension. Contradictory forces are also at work in these communities. Whilst young people's voices remain marginal in the wider community, at the same time this space

is commonly rejected as a place of formal environmental learning, valorising the formal space of the school. This apparent contradiction perhaps reflects that adults may understand formal education as potentially liberating, but in the same instant they may be fully aware of the lack of practical 'use' value such formal education has for their children in the present and immediate future.

In part because of this local reproduction of the uneven geographies of knowledge, where formal spaces embody Western knowledges (which have supposedly 'failed' in development, e.g. Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1994), local informal spaces have been valorised as important for local empowerment. For young people, there are significant social-spatial differences in the way knowledges are learnt and enacted, particularly in the way in which young men and women act and are 'taught'. This was apparent during observations in rural Rukwa. Here, the spaces of the home compound were highly gendered, and typically young men and women worked separately (Fig. 7).



Figure 7: Young men sitting together to strip maize. Although this activity was conducted by young men and young women, they would tend to sit separately to do this, rather than together.

In the home, young women typically cooked and cleaned, whilst young men would herd cattle. Some tasks were conducted by both, for example stripping maize; however this was still done separately by men and women (Fig. 7). In the space of the home, young people are learning different environmental practices through their typical gender roles. To some degree this is in agreement with the work of Bourdillon (2004); that young women are 'doubly marginalised', and with the work of Briggs et al (2003; 2007), Goebel (1998), Katz (2004), and Sharp and Briggs (2006), all of whom point to how spaces of knowledge reproduction are distinctly gendered. However, gendered spaces of knowledge production and expression are different in the school, where observational evidence suggested that learning and expression were more gender equal; young men and women were more egalitarian in taking turns to speak (Fig. 5). The responses of young men and women during workshops illustrate this trend (Fig. 8).

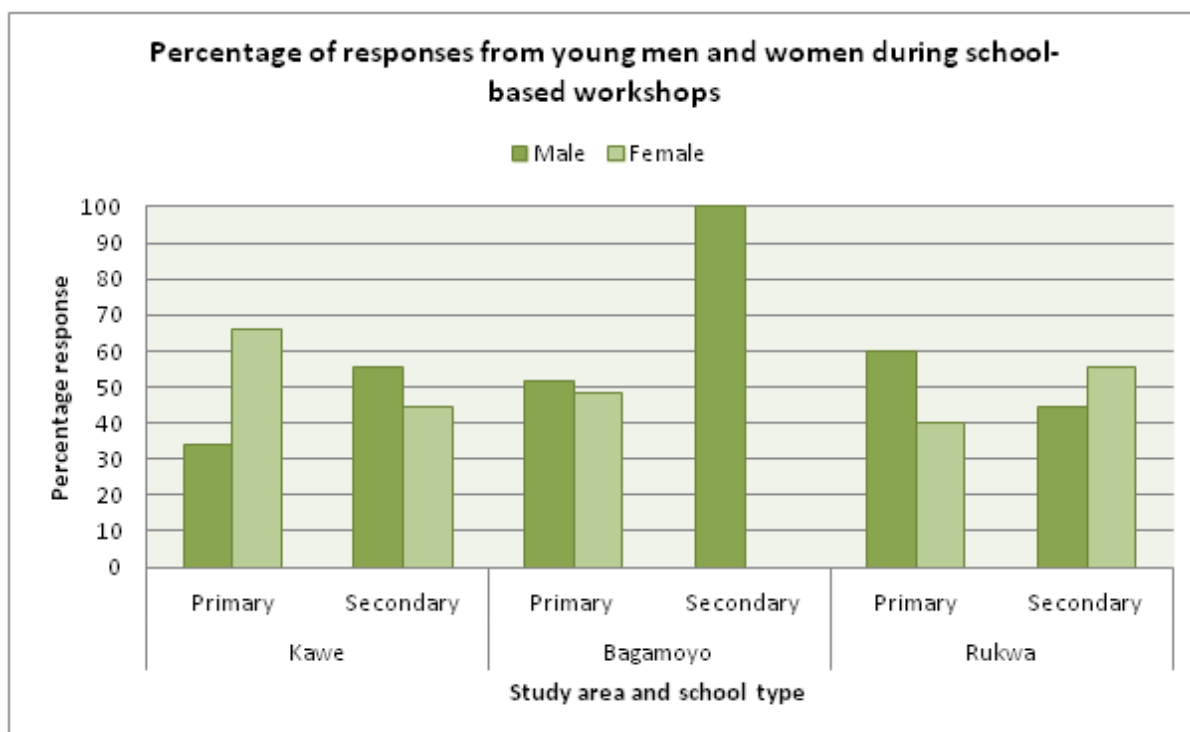


Figure 8: Percentage responses of young men and women during workshops (based on the number of questions answered, and the number of contributions to discussions).

Percentage responses were largely equal between young men and women. The outstanding anomaly is the Bagamoyo secondary group, where an all boys secondary school was the only one available. Excluding this school, young women accounted for 52% of responses and young men 48%. Although spaces of learning can be divisive along gender lines⁹, there are still notable differences in the way in which young men and women learn through formal (school), and informal (home) spaces.

Although Development Geographies research has highlighted how local knowledges can be distinctly gendered (Kesby 2000; Klooster 2002; Sharp et al 2003), the process of learning can be played out differently in different spaces, depending on how gendered roles are structured in each space. Formal spaces here offer a more gender equal space of learning (particularly in rural Rukwa), where roles are not so well defined. The environmental knowledges acquired in informal settings are more structured by gender roles, highlighting again how the school embodies more 'modern', in this case egalitarian, values, which are somewhat spatially isolated from the 'traditional' gender relationships of the community. Formal spaces of learning in Tanzania may therefore have more potential for the empowerment of young women in rural areas than informal spaces, somewhat contrary to local knowledge, participatory and local education literature.

This evidence draws attention again to the importance of 'micro-spaces' within the community. There are structural differences between how power relations are played out for young people in these distinct spaces. This is a significant finding for Children's Geographies too, as 'informal' spaces of childhood have often been valorised by research as important for young people's empowerment (Thompson and Philo 2004). I do not wish to contradict these other findings. In Western countries (Thompson and Philo 2004), and in the global South, schooling can reproduce power relationships between adults and children. In Tanzania, harsh corporal punishment is still used in schools, and pedagogic methods tend to be highly didactic, such that, for many, the space of the school is just as

⁹ Young women are marginalised in Secondary education in Tanzania in terms of attendance compared to young men (NBS Tanzania 2006).

likely reproduced age hierarchies. Yet evidence from this study still suggests that young people may feel more empowered to express knowledge in formal educational spaces than they do in the wider community, illustrating, as others do (Williams et al 2003), that existing power relationships can still engender forms of empowerment in particular spatial contexts. The operations of power that act through these spaces appear to challenge the assumption that young people are simply 'conforming' in the formal space of the school. They may even be 'using' these spaces to enact empowered performances which cannot take place elsewhere.

It is equally impossible to disentangle these empowered performances from the presence of the researchers, the context of the research activities, and young people's broader experience of environmental education. These opportunities for knowledge expression may have significantly differed from young people's day-to-day experiences of schooling, and without longitudinal observations it remains difficult to make definitive judgements. Incidental observations in schools offered a complex picture. Young people did appear, at times, to illustrate the same empowered performance during school time, yet also experienced authoritative teaching methods. This raises the question as to whether it is the 'unusual' nature of the research which constructs these empowering spaces, or whether it is the norm of social-spatial relations in Tanzanian schools.

This is just one example of the 'other childhoods' (Kesby et al 2006) which challenge Western assumptions about the experience of childhood (Tisdall and Punch 2012), but also liberal assumptions about development. In Tanzania, young people's experiences of learning, and the knowledges they gain in school, are distinctly different from those of their parents and therefore at odds with what is practised and learnt at home. This is a quite different scenario from young people in the global North, whose parents often have had comparable experiences of education. The gendered differences of knowledge expression between the spaces of the community/home and the school are also likely to be different for young women and men in the global south than in the West.

The focus of this case study has taken both a Development and Children's Geographies approach, and as such highlights a common challenge. The radical and liberal sentiments that run through both sub-disciplines tend to valorise the informal, marginal and local, potentially blinding them both to the possibilities that arise from the formal, dominant and the global (Bebbington 2000; Brett 2003). The assumptions that Development and Children's Geographies attach to particular types of knowledges (Western/local, or of young people/adults) and particular spaces (formal/informal) are clearly flawed in particular contexts, born out of romantic sentiments about the power of the radical, informal and local. For Development Geographies, young people in the global South illustrate that the marginal can also be the local holders of 'dominant' knowledges because their lived experiences of learning intersect the dominant/marginal. Local informal spaces are entrenched with the reproduction of local power hierarchies, and a focus on the role of young people and their 'other childhoods' (Kesby et al 2006) illuminate this. For Children's Geographies, the implicit assumptions that the knowledges of young people are beyond challenge, and that formal spaces are restrictive to their empowerment, should be rethought. The underlying liberal attitude that the marginal should be championed 'against' the formal, dominant and hegemonic in society is at odds with the actual spatial experiences of these young people. Their experiences and knowledges lie across the artificial boundaries of knowledge, power and space which have been constructed by both Development and Children's Geographies.

7. Conclusions

If the expression of young people's knowledge is governed by local social-spatial relations of power, such that education is not necessarily empowering, then questions need to be asked about the potential for education to empower. Contrary to the Development and Children's Geographies literature, which has highlighted participation in informal, local spaces (Cornwall 2002; Kothari 2001; Thompson and Philo 2004) formal spaces can be important in reconfiguring local power structures.

To envisage empowerment through education for young people in the global South, a practical process that operates through both formal and informal spaces must be introduced which makes use of the existing power dynamics in these spaces, rather than arbitrarily resisting them. Equally, focusing on the 'community' as a site of empowerment (Mayoux and Chambers 2005; Cleaver 1999; Binns et al 1997; Motteux et al 1999), may be disempowering for young people. Formal spaces have potential to offer young people opportunities to rehearse empowered performances. In this respect, environmental education projects that use formal spaces are helpful, and more should be done to create opportunities for young people to enact challenging performances. The separation of these spaces is therefore, up to a point, empowering.

However, there must also be mechanisms through which young people can translate these performances into the wider community. This might include space for constructive dialogue between young people and adults, such as social fieldwork which allows young people to understand the social implications of their conservation-based knowledges, and for some adult practices to be challenged. Indeed, Porter et al (2010) envisage such spaces through accompanied walks with children, where the environmental knowledges of both can meet in innovative ways. NGO projects, and schools engaged in environmental education, should examine how bridges can be built between practical and theoretical knowledges of the environment.

Children's Development Geographies should aim to consider how such a challenge can take place without simply reinforcing age hierarchies. Poststructuralist understandings of power as dispersed, ubiquitous, and inherently productive suggest that power can be used to positive effect, rather than favouring outright resistance as a strategy for empowerment (Kesby 2005). This is particularly important for young people, who are rarely in the privileged position to resist, and who benefit positively from relationships of power in their daily lives, including relationships of care and responsibility with parents and teachers. Distinct spaces in communities and the power relations

which govern them can also be used in a positive way to build empowered performances. Kothari (2001) argues that participatory development 'purifies' space, suggesting that within the spaces of participatory interventions particular performances are included and other excluded. Such a critical approach is overly negative in assuming that the separation of 'participatory' intervention space from community space is inherently problematic. A more positive approach identifies how the social and material separation of space provides opportunities for empowerment. However, empowered performances must also be translated across space, a process which may break down the reproduction of uneven local knowledge geographies.

There are a number of implications here for future research agendas which draw from Development and Children's Geographies. For Development Geographies, the discourse of participation may not be appropriate for young people. Adults have responsibilities towards their care and development (Kesby et al 2006), such that mantras about 'reversing' power relations may be inappropriate. There is need for inter-sub-disciplinary research which explores ways of understanding what constitutes empowerment for young people, whilst maintaining a focus on how power relations are structured through families and communities, and how these relationships are entangled through space. Knowledge expression for young people is inherently tied to space, both locally and nationally, and this has implications for research with young people. Researchers must carefully consider where research is conducted with young people, and be aware of how the spatial location in which their knowledge is expressed may be significant for what is said and done. Analysing the relationship between knowledge, knowledge expression and space may be significant for understanding what empowerment means for young people, and how space and the linkages between spaces govern their daily lives.

There is also a need to rethink empowerment agendas which tend to romanticise the marginal. Researchers and policy makers must consider how they might go about opening up a dialogue with

the voices of the marginal, rather than seeking to 'represent' them, a more 'radical' engagement rather than a 'liberal' one (McFarlane 2006). There is a need to continue to critically engage with childhood in 'other' contexts (Tisdall and Punch 2012), and to reconceptualise the place of young people and their knowledges. Longitudinal research exploring the processes of generational learning may be important in clarifying what empowerment really means for young people.

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