

# Transnational youth mobility trajectories

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Propositions belonging to the dissertation

## **Transnational Youth Mobility Trajectories**

An ethnography of young people with a migration background between Ghana and Germany

By Laura J. Ogden

1. To understand the transnational lives of migrant youth, research must look beyond young people's transnational activities within the country of residence, to also investigate their physical mobility to and from the country of origin.
2. Transnational youth mobility trajectories – which encompass all the moves that young people make, including domestic and international mobility, and moves for various purposes and durations – provide a rich analytical window into the diversity, complexity, and impact of physical mobility in the lives of migrant youth.
3. Research has largely studied youth mobility at a temporal and physical distance from the mobility it investigates. Following migrant youth's mobility in real-time allows researchers to access the embodied, sensorial, and emotional aspects of mobility, and thus to better understand its complexity, dynamism, and impacts.
4. Much research on migrant youth mobility has relied on the viewpoints of adults. A youth-centric approach that puts young people's own experiences, perspectives, and voices at the heart of the research design reveals different empirical realities and stimulates theoretical developments.
5. Migrant youth gain valuable resources through the experiences and relationships in the country of origin. These resources operate transnationally when young people adapt and use them in the country of residence.

6. A mobility trajectories lens reveals that migrant youth's social positioning cannot be adequately understood only by looking at the country of residence. Migrant youth and their families who have low socioeconomic status in the country of residence sometimes occupy higher social positions in their country of origin. The resources and perspectives attached to these diverse social positionings change and influence each other throughout young people's mobility trajectories, complicating the role of social class in migrant youth's lives.

7. When migrant youth are viewed as immobile, their transnational connections appear mostly mediated by their parents. A mobility trajectories lens shows that mobile migrant youth possess and exercise significant agency by constructing, maintaining, and navigating their own transnational resources, relationships, and experiences throughout their mobility trajectories.

8. A richer understanding of youth mobility is achieved when various bodies of research concerned with migrant youth's lives are brought into conversation. Even bodies of research that do not explicitly engage with mobility – such as youth studies and migrant youth education – can both contribute to and benefit from knowledge about youth mobility.

9. Small but significant changes to the way educators acknowledge young people's mobility trajectories can support migrant youth's schooling. These include valuing students' experiences in the country of origin and taking a pro-mobility stance that enables young people to continue benefitting from transnational resources, relationships, and contexts through ongoing mobility to and from the origin country.

10. 'When you are in one place, you don't get the advantage to see a lot or know a lot. But there's a whole lot in this world that you have to explore to find.' – Isaac (21), research participant.

11. Having a baby and working from home during a pandemic is a sure-fire way to ensure an excellent work-life balance while completing one's PhD.