

CSLS (2)

<http://www.forumbiodiversity.com/archive/index.php/t-2946.html>

Short item on ethnic groups in Sierra Leone

<http://maa.cam.ac.uk/anthropological-collections/>

MAA cares for works of art and artefacts from Asia, Africa, Oceania and native America, and those representing British and European folklore. Among the Museum's most famous collections are those deriving from the voyages of Captain Cook to the Pacific in the 1770s. The Museum's founding curator, Anatole von Hügel spent several years in Fiji and assembled the single most important collection of nineteenth-century Fijian art outside Fiji itself, and went on to be highly energetic, soliciting collections and donations from fieldworkers and travelers in many parts of the world. Major field collections include those made by Alfred Haddon during the 1898 Cambridge expedition to the Torres Strait, by **Northcote W. Thomas** from Nigeria and Sierra Leone, by Charles Hose from Sarawak, by Gregory Bateson from the Sepik River, Papua New Guinea, and by Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf from the Nagas.

<http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/sociology/staff/akelly/biography/>

### **Dr Ann Kelly Biography**

I graduated from Princeton University, Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, in 2002 with a major in Social Anthropology and certificates in Creative Writing and European Cultural Studies. I received a PhD in Social Anthropology from Cambridge in 2006 with the support of a Gates Cambridge Scholarship and a grant from the Overseas Research Trust.

After completing my doctorate, I joined the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), where, with the support of a Wellcome Trust Bioethics Fellowship, I pursued a research agenda that focused on the mundane practices of malaria research in East and West Africa. At LSHTM, I was involved in a number of collaborations with natural scientists, health economists and policy experts in the UK and around the world, including contributing to randomized controlled trial investigating the impact of household design on malaria control, a study on how Rapid Diagnostic Technology (RDTs) for malaria is managed by local health actors and communities, the development of socially-acceptable insecticides as an alternative to DDT in Benin and Tanzania, and the outbreaks of Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers (e.g. Lassa, Ebola and Marburg), in Guinea, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In different ways, these projects have provided venues for theoretical and methodological development.

I joined the Department of Sociology, Philosophy and Anthropology in 2012

<http://www.sv.uio.no/sai/english/research/projects/overheating/overheating-blog/lunsar-expectations-in-a-changing-environment.html>

## **Lunsar: expectations in a changing environment\***

Wherever there is change, there also seems to be disappointment.

At first sight, Lunsar resembles many other towns of reasonable size (around 20.000 inhabitants) in Sierra Leone. The town, located in Marampa Chiefdom in The Northern Province of Sierra Leone, has a market place, motorbikes are transporting people, small cookeries can be found on corners, there are a couple of bars, some small shops where you can buy credit for your phone, a can of beer or a coke and two petrol stations.

Photo: Shops along the road at the eye clinic junction in Lunsar

However, Lunsar is not an average town. The town has a history, a history of boom and of bust. Turbulence, change, relative prosperity and crisis are conditions all known to the people inhabiting Lunsar. Presently, it all seems to come together at once, like it has happened many times in the past, nowadays Lunsar is a hot-spot again: a place characterized by accelerated change and an increased density of activities and claims. And yes, again, because Lunsar was the center of Sierra Leone's attention before. From the early 30's to the mid-70's the Sierra Leone Development Company (known as Delco) developed a large-scale iron ore operation and Lunsar was considered to be an important town, attracting many different people and even opening up movement from the capital Freetown to up-country. But it was also hit hard by the closure of the mines, resulting in empty shops and jobless people, and especially by the war that took place throughout the 90's. As one can imagine, this long lasting period of violence and destruction, caused the near-total collapse of Lunsar. Near-total, because mainly through their eye hospital, a secondary and vocational school and a general hospital, as well as various community projects, the Catholic and the Baptist missions are considered to have kept the town alive during this time of crisis.

When I visited the area again in 2003, right after the war, the town was indeed alive, but that was it. The town was breathing the suffering of the last years, houses were burned down, streets were empty and there was very little to buy. During those early years after the war, the town caught up a bit again. But, the re-opening of the mines by London Mining in 2007 really brought new hope to the area and indeed the impact has been felt. All the characteristics of Lunsar described on the top could not be seen five to ten years ago and definitely not to its current extent. Lunsar was damaged, broken down, almost a ghost town. Now there is solar street light at some places, at this very moment the roads are being rehabilitated and the promises of public electricity, water supply in the houses and even wireless internet are lying over the town (the concept of the promise should be another text, for now it is satisfactory to say that promises come with a flexible fulfillment date. Maybe tomorrow, one could say).

But perhaps memories are sweeter than reality was, for sure expectations are sweeter than reality is.

But, wherever there is change, there also seems to be disappointment. Many people have a job, but many more don't. Many people experience change, but for many the change is not fast enough. Many people see new opportunities, but how to grasp and hold onto to them? How to join in the new possibilities and the promise of a better life? Perhaps

even more accelerated than the change, were the expectations, because after many years of suffering the opening of the mines did bring great expectations. Expectations of employment, being able to buy a phone, a television or even a car, having more to eat or constructing concrete instead of mud block houses. And for quite a few, these expectations are met, but for many others, these expectations remain a promise of the future. Moreover, there is the legacy of Delco. 'Delco was kind to us, but now...', is something that people, especially in the smaller communities around Lunsar, are likely to say when comparing their current situation to Lunsar of the 60's. But perhaps memories are sweeter than reality was, for sure expectations are sweeter than reality is. It is in this vacuum, that I find myself, balancing between encountering memories, expectations and realities. How to interpret stories of sweet memories, how to deal with people's disappointments when expectations are not met, how to explain the gap between possibility and reality? But also, how to contextualize people's problems beyond the most obvious context? Because it would not be fair to simply refer to London Mining, or to large-scale investments in general, as a company, or an activity, that is 'not bringing (enough) development'.

Photo: Shops along the road at the eyeclinic junction in Lunsar

Having been familiar with this area for a long time, I can confidently say that Lunsar is changing and developing positively, that the reopening of the mines was and is a great opportunity for both Lunsar as well as Sierra Leone as a whole. But, although many people are benefitting, some still suffer and the mines provide a framework of contextualizing this suffering. If you don't understand why you have been facing problems for so long, then why not use new contexts as a framework? During the financial crisis in 2009 for example, people in the diamond mining areas in Sierra Leone referred to their difficult situation as being due to 'the global', using this as a framework to interpret their struggles. Even though these struggles started long before the financial crisis. And if you don't exactly know where to go with grievances, why not go to your closest neighbors?

The failure (whose failure and why is there a failure, are fair questions here) to meet expectations is a challenge people encounter, but definitely not the only challenge. 'Money speaks in Sierra Leone', as one lady put it, is likely to be an even bigger challenge in all the varieties in which it is applicable. But perhaps this should also be a story for later.

*\*This text is written as a 'letter from the field', it does not fully represent the complexity of neither Lunsar nor Sierra Leone in general and cannot be considered to be a final analysis on the issue of 'expectations' in my field.*

<http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/secret-societies-in-sierra-leone>

<http://www.e-ir.info/2011/07/28/factors-of-persistent-poverty-in-sierra-leone/>

## Factors of Persistent Poverty in Sierra Leone

[Sharanya Ravichandran](#), Jul 28 2011,

This content was written by a student and assessed as part of a university degree. E-IR publishes student essays & dissertations to allow our readers to broaden their understanding of what is possible when answering similar questions in their own studies.

Sierra Leone has been a nation plagued with civil wars and poverty since gaining independence in 1961. Despite being one of the few countries in the world that has precious natural resources such as diamonds and rare minerals, this nation continues to suffer from extreme poverty. There are several factors that contribute to the persistent poverty in Sierra Leone. This paper will focus on four key factors: corruption within the government, insufficient infrastructure, lack of education and inadequate civil rights. This paper will first examine broad factors of poverty within Sub-Saharan Africa, and then explore the aforementioned specific factors causing steadfast poverty in Sierra Leone.

There are certain over-arching factors that make sub-Saharan Africa more susceptible than the rest to the continuous problem of poverty. Sachs et al. identify four: "Very high transport costs and small market size; low-productivity agriculture; adverse geopolitics; very slow diffusion of technology from abroad." [1] An examination of Sierra Leone through this particular lens shows that it is victim to most, if not all, of these factors. Sierra Leone's economic market is almost non-existent, despite the fact that it has so many rare minerals and is one of the world's top exporters of diamonds. Because infrastructure is extremely weak, transport costs are very high to get supplies and products from one area to another. This also feeds into the authors' idea of adverse geopolitics as difficulty in transport of goods and services for trade has a detrimental effect on the economy. Finally, slow dissemination of foreign technology has failed to develop this country in modern times.

### **Corruption**

One of the most basic factors causing poverty within Sierra Leone lies within the government. Since colonial rule departed, the government has been characterised primarily by either a one-party rule or a military rule [2]: a one-dimensional rule that does not allow for opposition, and breeds corruption. The government has been extremely incompetent in providing its citizens with the most basic needs, because these needs have been usurped for government officials themselves. As Riddell points out, Sierra Leoneans "were not just neglected, uninvolved, or would catch up later in the nation's development. They were actively exploited or 'ripped off', and had been for roughly a hundred years – first by colonialism and then by the policies, plans, and programmes of the government of independent Sierra Leone." [3]

Sierra Leoneans lack basic health care, adequate provision of food and drinking water, and structurally sound housing. This corruption is starkly evident in the healthcare sector, where "drugs and other free health-related items find their way on to the shelves of pharmacies and other outlets not fit for such a purpose to be sold." [4] While the Health Minister, Dr. Soccoh Alex Kabia, has verbally recognised this occurrence, he has yet to take any proactive measures to stop this practice. Free medical assistance provided by donor nations do not reach the poor within Sierra Leone; instead, individuals, both within and outside the government, sell these free drugs for profit. Citizens cannot cure illnesses effectively and quickly because they do not have the financial means to afford even basic healthcare. As a result, they can fall fatally ill and pass away; if an individual who is the sole breadwinner of a family passes away, the family is left without an income, which drives them further into poverty. Alternatively, even if an individual is not fatally ill, they cannot go earn money for subsistence until they feel better, which they cannot achieve with expensive medicine. These unnecessary health-care expenses have played a significant role in propelling and perpetuating poverty amongst citizens. [5]

Funds, both from within Sierra Leone itself and from assistance given by donor nations, have been taken away from projects that could truly benefit the people to bring them out of poverty. Instead, these funds have been used to serve the specific and inordinate needs of government officials and the urban elite, who happen to be government supporters. [6] While the country's budget is a minimal \$500 million a year, senior officials still usurp both aid money and internal funds for luxuries such as plasma-screen televisions and hunting rifles. [7] Funds that could have been used toward improving daily living conditions for impoverished citizens, such as providing free healthcare, adequate salaries for workers, and free education, have instead disappeared amongst the government and urban elite for personal purposes. One significant example of this can be found within the rule of Siaka Stevens, the first President of Sierra Leone. Stevens' regime was infamous for its inordinate level of corruption; he had appropriated a vast amount of government revenue for his personal gain, and along with fellow government officials, he lived in luxury while his

people went hungry. He used up most of the financial resources that were meant for his state and people; as a result, poverty and underdevelopment reigned, and has continued within Sierra Leone. [8] Due to such consistent corruption within the government, Sierra Leone is embroiled in poverty and has one of the lowest GDP figures: as of 2010, it was \$900, even less than previously war-torn countries such as Rwanda. [9]

The diamond industry, one of the main sources of revenue for the Sierra Leonean government, has brought significant income to the country, but the top-down effect is virtually non-existent; lower-class and rural citizens still experience exploitative labour relations and persistent poverty within mining communities. [10] They do not see the money that they worked so hard to bring in, and are still impoverished because the government mismanages the funds. In addition, external factors such as a decreased demand for diamonds worldwide has thrown many Sierra Leoneans out of jobs and into poverty. The diamond industry's slump has slowly picked up in recent years, with a major mine in Koidu rehiring a few hundred workers as the market for diamonds recovers. [11] The government has outwardly taken minimal measures to rehire mine workers. However, the parallel trade of "conflict diamonds" by militiamen and government elites has earned them personal revenues of \$7.5 billion.[12] The loss of such a significant amount of money that could have been allotted toward alleviating poverty within Sierra Leone has instead gone to personal benefit of government officials and militia rebels.

### **Infrastructure**

The infrastructure within Sierra Leone is anything but sound; the money that is meant to build sturdy roads and bridges to enable facilitated transport of goods and basic services goes into the pockets of government officials. Even in colonial times, railroads that were constructed for the explicit purpose of expediting transportation and enhancing trade were ultimately seen as inefficient, and as a financial drain on the state. When the railroad was dismantled, many of those areas were not replaced with paved roads, which was a big problem considering the "corner on the border with Liberia and Guinea produced over half of the country's export agricultural crops and was the site of a major regional market." [13] The lack of paved roads, and the absence of highways, prevented Sierra Leone from trading with this lucrative sector, which could have aided in lifting this nation out of poverty. Sierra Leone does regard areas like Freetown, a major seaport, as significant to their imports and trade activities. However, this does not take importance away from roads; transport of services into rural areas, as well as trade between areas that do not have seaports, is facilitated by roads, which Sierra Leone lacks. As a result, Sierra Leoneans undersell their products, which results in lesser revenue and perpetuates poverty. Lack of infrastructure also leads to easy movement of rebels and militiamen, such as the RUF, to cause violence over a wider range of areas within Sierra Leone to emphasise their objectives. Citizens displaced by rebels face even more poverty as they are forced to flee from their home and their jobs into areas where nothing is guaranteed. Even outside help, such as foreign troops, cannot get into remote areas to provide emergency aid and stop militiamen if there is no solid infrastructure to help them get there.

Weak infrastructure has also caused a spike in diamond prices, causing poverty within Sierra Leone. Costs to get diamonds from one area to another are high since roads and highways continue to remain in poor shape. [14] Transport costs, including petrol, are very high to move these diamonds from mining areas to port cities for shipping and trading purposes. For this reason, Sierra Leone cannot price its diamonds as cheaply as other countries can on an international platform. In comparison, South Africa has ensured stable prices, both for producers and buyers, within its global diamond marketing system [15], partly due to the fact that their infrastructure is far more developed than Sierra Leone's. As a result, internal costs to transport diamonds to trading ports are not high, and their revenue outweighs their costs. In contrast, Sierra Leone's costs to transport diamonds are much higher than the revenue that citizens gain; costs outweigh the benefits, and citizens ultimately remain in poverty.

### **Civil Rights**

Oppression and marginalization of individuals, both within and outside of tribal groups, have also led to persistent poverty within Sierra Leone. There is a major lack of basic civil rights within Sierra Leone, which plays a key role in promoting impoverished conditions within the region. Many rural residents do not have the access to basic voting, and when they get a chance to vote, the rural electorate is often discounted. Many of the current ethnic issues amongst tribal Sierra Leoneans are "a symptom of the deeper problems of poverty and competition over access to resources." [16] Most tribal members live in rural areas and do not have access to basic resources as it is. Competition over already scarce resources has caused tribal factions to war against one another, which has exacerbated poverty. Moreover, the government has not taken many proactive measures to find resolution to this conflict, so these tribal groups are left to their own devices to figure out a solution. As they cannot reach compromises, basic resources have dwindled and driven these individuals into deeper poverty. There is also a severe lack of rights for women: they are

viewed as nothing but either mere homemakers or bush wives who serve rebel militia members' (often sexual) needs. [17] As they cannot go into the workforce, they cannot contribute to pulling the country out of its economic failure; it is a waste of human capital. Moreover, in a world where women are generally viewed as equal to men, this degradation of women keeps Sierra Leone from developing as a nation.

Many Sierra Leoneans get less than minimum wage for the amount of manual labour that they perform; it is often not enough for the workers and their families to subsist on. In economic terms, they earn low rates of return on their earnings because they are unable to save any surplus of money after meeting their immediate needs, [18] which are expensive and take up much of their modest paycheck as is. Furthermore, funds that are provided as humanitarian and development assistance from donor nations are not used for the purposes that they were originally earmarked for. As a result, appeals for aid from this impoverished nation are essentially a waste, as the money is provided but does not reach the individuals that the aid is meant for. So many opportunities for Sierra Leone to lift itself up out of its vicious cycle of persistent poverty are thwarted at first level, which is the government. Ironically, it is the government's responsibility to provide its citizens with good living conditions; in Sierra Leone, it is this same government that plays a key factor in pushing them into deeper poverty.

## **Education**

Lack of education has also been a contributing factor to the persistent poverty within Sierra Leone. Many schools in the rural areas were built immediately after Sierra Leone was granted independence. As a result, they do not have many well-endowed alumni to help support the schools and fund them. [19] Since the government funding is not adequate, there is a lack of books and equipment needed to provide basic education to children; overall, there is no monetary support to develop and sustain educational facilities. Adults do not have access to education, either; if an adult, especially a woman, desires to take courses and expand her knowledge, it is impossible for her to do so. Of the total population in Sierra Leone, only 40% of individuals were literate as of 2008. [20] A lack of education feeds into lack of knowledge of civic rights and responsibilities. This triggers a civil war among individuals because they do not know other means of bringing about change. This, in turn, causes the government to divert funds away from sectors such as education and towards mitigating civil war, which leads to further poverty within this region.

Many children are recruited into the RUF and the national army, pulled away from education and taught to fight and kill civilians as combatants. [21] In times where children are regarded by various nations as its future, Sierra Leone prevents its youth from obtaining an education and, instead, teaches them to be rogue militiamen and to kill at an early age. Since these children cannot gain an education, they cannot get jobs that pay well. They cannot provide for themselves, nor can they help to lift their families out of poverty. Individuals who are lucky enough to obtain and complete their education seldom receive adequate opportunities in the workforce. Unlike citizens of many other Lesser-Developed Countries, Sierra Leoneans do not have the opportunity to go abroad and earn to send money back home to their impoverished families. Many are either recruited to fight by the rebels or government; otherwise, they are sent back home to work in rural areas.

The lack of education with regard to family planning, combined with lack of provision of items such as prophylactics, results in a sharp rise in population within a country already struggling to feed its citizens. The government does not take charge to implement measures at mitigating accelerated population growth. This expansion in population leads to even more of a resource scarcity. Available food resources are not enough for the current population; with newcomers, it is definitely not sufficient enough to feed the rising population. Rural population growth can be attributed to rising birth rates, which is primarily due to a lack of education in family planning. In fact, growth of rural population has gone from 2,727,174 people in 2000 to 3,460,452 in 2008. [22] Furthermore, most farmers are not educated on how to use modern methods and machinery to increase agricultural output, and there are no government policies on these upgrades for better agricultural productivity. [23] Since farmers are still dependent on antiquated technology, there is depletion in agricultural productivity, which causes food scarcity and leads to poverty.

## **Conclusion**

Release from colonial rule has not benefited Sierra Leone; independence has caused vicious cycles of poverty and corruption, especially through vital sectors such as education, civil rights and infrastructure. While minimal reforms are taking place within these sectors to help Sierra Leone grow and prosper, the process is very slow and inadequate, and will continue to be so until the government takes significant measures to rid itself of corruption within all of these factors and lift its citizens out of poverty.

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**Written by:** Sharanya Ravichandran  
**Written at:** University of Edinburgh  
**Written for:** Sabine Hoehn  
**Date written:** April 2011

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/anthropology/staff/academic/?id=11578>

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## Biography

I am a social anthropologist with specialisation in medical anthropology. My research interests include: economies and practices of care; governance; the state; nursing; hospitals; global health interventions (especially around HIV/AIDS and viral haemorrhagic fevers); development; community-based health care; and public health.

## Current Research

My current research work centres on zoonotic diseases and epidemic management in West Africa, with a particular focus on Lassa fever and Ebola virus disease. This work builds upon a longstanding interest in issues around care, health governance, and relationships between institutions, modes of governance and health systems bureaucracies. I have worked extensively in Kenya where I carried out extended fieldwork with health managers in 2011 and in a hospital and community development organisation between 2005-7. My Ph.D. (Manchester, 2010) explored responses to HIV/AIDS in Western Kenya through the modality of care. Following my Ph.D. I spent two years as a research fellow at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine before joining the University of Durham in January 2013.

## Research Interests

- Community-Based Health Care
- East Africa, Kenya
- Epidemics (especially HIV/AIDS and VHF)
- Global Health and Development
- Health Governance
- Hospitals
- Human animal relations
- Science
- West Africa, Sierra Leone
- Work and Management

## Publications

### Chapter in book



- Prince, Ruth & **Brown, Hannah** (2016). Introduction: The politics and ethics of voluntary labour in Africa. In *Volunteer Economies: The politics and ethics of voluntary labour in Africa*. Prince, Ruth & **Brown, Hannah** James Currey.
- **Brown, Hannah** & Prince, Ruth (2015). Introduction. Volunteer Labour: Past and Futures of Work, Development, and Citizenship in East Africa. In *Focus on voluntary labor in East Africa*. **Brown, Hannah** & Prince, Ruth *African Studies Review*. **58(2)**: 29-42.
- **Brown, H.** (2013). "[Home-Based Care is not a new thing](#)": Legacies of domestic governmentality in Western Kenya. In *Making public health in Africa: Ethnographic perspectives*. Prince, R. & Marsland, R. Ohio University Press.

#### Edited book

- Prince, Ruth & **Brown, Hannah** (2016). *Volunteer Economies: The politics and ethics of voluntary labour in Africa*. African Issues. James Currey.

#### Edited Journal

- **Brown, Hannah** & Prince, Ruth (2015). [Focus on voluntary labour in East Africa](#). *African Studies Review*.

#### Journal Article

- McMahon, S., Ho, L., **Brown, H.**, Miller, L., Ansumana, R. & Kennedy, C. (2016). [Health care providers on the frontlines: A qualitative investigation of the social and emotional impact of delivering health services during Sierra Leone's Ebola epidemic](#). *Health Policy and Planning*
- **Brown, Hannah** (2016). [Managerial relations in Kenyan health care: Empathy and the limits of governmentality](#). *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* **22(3)**: 591-609.
- **Brown, Hannah** & Green, Maia (2015). [At the Service of Community Development: The Professionalization of Volunteer Work in Kenya and Tanzania](#). *African Studies Review* **85(02)**: 63-84.
- **Brown, Hannah**, Kelly, Ann H., Marí Sáez, Almudena, Fichet-Calvet, Elisabeth, Ansumana, Rashid, **Bonwitt, Jesse**, Magassouba, N'Faly, Sahr, Foday & Borchert, Matthias (2015). [Extending the 'social' Anthropological contributions to the study of viral haemorrhagic fevers](#). *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* **9(4)**: e0003651.
- **Brown, H.** (2015). [Global health partnerships, governance, and sovereign responsibility in western Kenya](#). *American Ethnologist* **42(2)**: 340-355.
- **Brown, H.** & Kelly, A.H. (2014). [Material proximities and hotspots: Towards an anthropology of viral haemorrhagic fevers](#). *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* **28(2)**: 280-303.
- **Brown, H.** (2012). [Hospital domestics: Care work in a Kenyan hospital](#). *Space and Culture* **15(1)**: 18-30.

- **Brown, H.** (2010). ["If we sympathise with them they'll relax": Fear/respect and medical care in a Kenyan hospital.](#) *Medische Antropologie* **22**(1): 125-142.

### Other (Digital/Visual Media)

- (2015). [Spotlight: Managing health crises after Ebola.](#) *Sci Dev Net*
- Marí Sáez, Almudena, Kelly, Ann H. & **Brown, Hannah** (2014). [Apuntes sobre el paciente cero: antropología en los tiempos del ébola.](#) *Lamarea*
- (2014). [Ebola in focus: Rapid Response Roundtable.](#)
- Marí Sáez, Almudena, Kelly, Ann H. & **Brown, Hannah** (2014). [Notes from Case Zero: Anthropology in the time of Ebola.](#) <http://somatosphere.net/>

### Research Groups

#### Department of Anthropology

- [Anthropology of Health](#)
- [Social Anthropology](#)

#### Wolfson Research Institute for Health and Wellbeing

- [Conspiracy Theories in Health Special Interest Group](#)
- [Global Health Special Interest Group](#)

### International Collaboration

- Advisor on the project "Lassa fever in Guinea and Sierra Leone: Rodent control and seasonality of human exposure to rodents (LAROCS)".

### Selected Grants

- 2015: Anthropology of Ebola: Transmission Dynamics and Outbreak Socialities (£82967.00 from ESRC)
- 2015: People, animals and infectious disease transmission: A new synthesis (£184889.00 from ESRC)
- 2014: Participatory behavioural change to reinforce infection prevention and control for Ebola Virus Disease in Sierra Leone, Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC) programme (DFID and Wellcome Trust £9155).

[http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/wcaro\\_SL\\_fgm\\_May\\_2008.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/wcaro_SL_fgm_May_2008.pdf)

FGM

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/hss-events/anthropology-seminar-series-3/>

Location

**G217, Gibbs, Headington Campus, Gipsy Lane site**

Details

**'Potato Rope Kinship: Needing and Fearing Family Bonds, in Coastal Sierra Leone'** with guest speaker Dr Jenny Diggins, Oxford Brookes

Jennifer Diggins joined Oxford Brookes in 2015 from the University of Sussex, where she had graduated with a PhD in Social Anthropology the previous year. Her ethnographic research focuses on fishing communities in coastal Sierra Leone. Jennifer's work explores how intimate social relationships have been shaped through histories of migration and economic change, and asks how fishermen and women struggle to navigate precarious livelihoods through contexts of extreme poverty, insecurity, and environmental decline.

<http://su-se.academia.edu/ChrisCoulter>

Gender Issues

<http://www.bu.edu/anthrop/alumni/s-carpenter/>

### **Matriculated September 2000; Defended Dissertation June 4, 2010**

Shelby Carpenter's research has focused on Sierra Leonean refugee youth identity and the therapeutic function of *Odelay*—hunter's lay societies. These young men's secret masquerade societies, based on the original Yoruba associations from Nigeria, conduct various ceremonies, initiations, masquerade processions, and iremojhe (specialized funeral dirges for deceased hunters). Over ten years of atrocious indigenous warfare have forced many of the youth of Sierra Leone to flee into the Gambia or to Freetown, where they live impoverished and marginal lives as refugees. Shelby spent three years studying how participation in Yoruba-style masquerade societies (*Odelay*) helps these young refugees cope with their grief, poverty, and "cultural bereavement." Much study has been done of urban refugees, but there has been no comparable study of displaced Sierra Leonean youth, nor has there been an equivalent study of the therapeutic function of the rituals and organization of *Odelay*. Both are very important topics, not only in the field of African studies, but in the larger theoretical framework of contemporary anthropological studies of identity and its maintenance under conditions of stress and violence. Expanding on classic work by I.M. Lewis on the zar cults in Somalia and Victor Turner's research on ritual, Shelby's research combines the insights and methods of medical/psychological anthropology with a symbolic analysis of performance to develop an innovative model of ritual healing. Within the context of the hunting societies, these traumatized young men not only find solidarity, but a chance to act creatively and re-imagine their lives.

### **Awards**

- Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship
- Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Grant
- Mellon-MIT Program on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Forced Migration Research Fellowship
- Ford Foundation's African Urban Process: Movement Challenging Categories Research Fellowship
- Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen Junior Visiting Fellowship (Spring 2009)

- Cora Du Bois Charitable Trust Writing Fellowship

<http://www.africafiles.org/article.asp?ID=11149>

Religion in Warfare

<https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/djh13/21288/129093>

### **Danny Hoffman**

Associate Professor  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Washington

My scholarship, teaching and civic engagement are based primarily on ethnographic research in West Africa and on my background as a photojournalist working in Southern and East Africa.

Since 2000 I have conducted fieldwork in Sierra Leone and Liberia on issues of youth mobilization during and after those countries' recent wars. The resulting research explores how young men participate in regional networks that make them – and their capacity for violence – available for various forms of work. These include labor in the region's resource extraction industries, labour on battlefields across West Africa and the labour of violent political campaigning.

My work in visual anthropology concentrates on the scholarly, artistic and popular representations of violence in still photography. The aesthetics so often used to represent African conflicts make simplistic portrayals of the continent unavoidable. In response I experiment in my own scholarship with the aesthetics of visual and literary ethnography, researching the work of African photographers and artists in an effort to develop alternatives for the representation of violence.

<http://www.worldcat.org/title/essays-on-the-economic-anthropology-of-liberia-and-sierra-leone/oclc/6477298>

<http://eth-mpg.academia.edu/Ana%C3%AFsM%C3%A9nard>

I have recently completed my PhD at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. My doctoral research focuses on autochthony discourses in Sierra Leone, Freetown Peninsula. With a case study on Sherbro identity which, due to its particular history plays an important role as a mediating force in interethnic and rural-urban relations, I explore the flexibility of ethnicity in a post-conflict context, its relationship with national identity and how claims of autochthony reveal past and present integrative processes of national cohesion. I address three focal points of autochthonous discourses: the relationship between Krio and native identities, land disputes resulting from different conceptualizations of citizenship, and dynamics related to traditional secret societies. The analysis of the changing host/stranger relationships in these three cases show that claims of autochthony hide social mechanisms of integration between groups that are usually described as separate and/or antagonistic. As a result, my research highlights the relevance of ethnic identities in the making of the larger nation.

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<http://www.scidev.net/global/ebola/opinion/disease-outbreaks-epidemic-anthropology-IDS.html>

**The Ebola epidemic shows the value of social science for emergency response and planning, says Annie Wilkinson.**

The [Ebola epidemic](#) in West Africa has been fundamentally social, spreading through people's [networks](#), and affecting those caring for the sick and dead. Much has been written about the social resistance to control strategies, but previous Ebola outbreaks show that local people draw on a [wealth of knowledge](#) to devise control strategies that are effective and that break with social and ritual norms. Evidence from this outbreak also shows adaptive behaviours occur rapidly.

Local action...

Ebola hit urban Monrovia, Liberia, with full force in July 2014. By early September, communities were organising task forces for neighbourhood surveillance, and families were planning how to deal with sick loved ones. [1] Using plastic bags as makeshift personal protective equipment (PPE) was a local innovation that diffused rapidly through social media and word of mouth. [2]

In Sierra Leone, villagers are now familiar with Ebola transmission pathways and many have changed their care practices. [3] People report sickness and death to village chiefs or helplines, and generally comply with [measures](#) such as quarantine and safe burial practices. Unlike during the first months of the crisis, most Ebola alerts are now dealt with quickly and smoothly. Bodies are buried, cases investigated and most quarantined houses receive food rations.

...and reaction

Yet some aspects of control efforts remain problematic. Resistance, at times violent, continues in Guinea. In Sierra Leone, an upsurge in cases followed when residents of a fishing community scattered to evade quarantine. Records show low but persistent resistance: hiding of sick people, suspect cases going 'on the run', illicit medical care and bodies being washed before relatives call burial teams.

The reasons for such incidents are not well understood and are often dismissed as selfishness, stubbornness or the result of deeply ingrained traditional culture. But dismissing them or framing them in 'cultural' terms amounts to a misdiagnosis, and it limits the scope for understanding and working collaboratively with people who are at risk.

To be effective, the response system needs to recognise how local groups respond and organise to contain an [epidemic](#), and to support these groups. It must also address fear and distrust.

Mistrust and assumptions

Social science and anthropology can help to recognise how behaviours reflect culture and politics. This applies as much to the culture of the response mechanism as it does to the culture of local people.

As this outbreak has shown, mistrust and assumptions can damage interactions between response workers and communities. Officials might assume ignorance on the part of rural people, while marginalised populations might suspect officials of ulterior motives — their suspicions sometimes reinforced by evidence of misappropriated Ebola [funds](#). [4] Community outreach workers in Sierra Leone have complained anecdotally that one of their biggest challenges has been people not taking them seriously, because they thought they were just out to make money.

Indeed, there is much that can look suspicious: 'volunteers' who are paid a stipend; conflicting messages that at first emphasised bushmeat and certain death from infection, but then avoiding body contact and seeking hospital treatment; and clumsily applied one-size-fits-all solutions.

Take the example of a blanket [policy](#) in Sierra Leone that all burials have to be conducted by burial teams. Some villagers interpreted this 'safe burials' rule as meaning the authorities were claiming all deaths were from Ebola. A policy borne out of precaution was contested because it reached remote villages without a proper explanation of its rationale, and led to doubts about the [disease](#).

Seen in this light, remaining resistance to Ebola measures may have less to do with traditional culture or ignorance than with inconsistencies that breed distrust.

Long-term view

So social science offers insights that can strengthen short-term epidemic response. It can also offer long-term perspectives on the origins of local judgements.

Ebola has found fertile ground in West Africa because distrust and suspicion are rooted in a history of exploitation by

elites and 'outsiders' — for slaves, land or minerals. Such logic cannot be easily undone. But being aware of it allows better understanding of how some interventions (such as trials that require blood samples) may be misinterpreted, so that negative reactions (such as accusations of blood theft) can be avoided

<http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/93/2/15-030215/en/>

Cheikh Niang tells Fiona Fleck why listening to people and helping them adapt their customs are essential in the fight against Ebola in western Africa.

Cheikh Niang has spent the last three decades studying the way human behaviour interacts with health issues and the environment. His studies in Sierra Leone and Mali last year contributed to a better understanding of how the Ebola virus disease epidemic spread and why it was different to previous Ebola outbreaks. Niang is a professor of social and medical anthropology at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal, where he graduated in philosophy in 1980 before going on to earn a Master's degree and two Doctoral degrees in sociology and environmental sciences. He studied medical anthropology as a Fulbright visiting scholar at the departments of sociology and anthropology at Michigan State University in the United States of America from 1990 to 1991. He is a temporary technical advisor for the WHO Ebola Science Committee and a member of the Task Force on Immunization in the WHO African Region. Niang has done many multisite studies on the human and social aspects of health issues including ground-breaking research on reaching men who have sex with men with health prevention and care for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections in Africa.

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/degrees/index.php?action=subject&code=21>

*There are some very interesting and engaging courses at honours level, which address current political and social issues, making the courses very current and relevant to national and international affairs. For my dissertation research I went to Sierra Leone for six weeks and conducted research.*

*Tabitha Gould MA (Hons) Social Anthropology graduate*

<http://muse.jhu.edu/article/183219>

Warscape Ethnography in West Africa and the Anthropology of "Events" - [Danny Hoffman](#), [Stephen C. Lubkemann](#)

<http://peacecorpsonline.org/messages/messages/467/2025261.html>

Peace Corps volunteers discuss issues related to Sierra Leone