

Paper Title: Schooling, Intergenerational Life, and Desire for Education after War in Liberia
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In my dissertation, I examine the relationship between schooling, movement, and social regeneration in post-war Liberia. Liberia's fourteen-year conflict (1989-2003) forced a third of the population into exile and displaced another third. As in other post-war settings, schools are seen as key vehicles for social reintegration and moral recovery. Investments in schools are also part of a government initiative to encourage the return to rural areas of people currently living in Monrovia who were displaced during the war. At the same time, the Liberian state presents its drive to expand access to education as a measure of historical redress. My project brings together anthropological literatures on education, social regeneration, and aspiration in order to examine the complex role that schooling and desire for education are playing in the remaking of social and moral geographies in Liberia. I conducted sixteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in Liberia. Moving between households and schools, a rural town and two cities, and the aspirations of young people and adults, I examined how schooling and desire for education entered into, and mediated, social relationships and generational ties. Although schooling is often embraced as a symbol of peace, I found that some effects of the war on family life continue through schooling and relationships to schooling. In this paper, I present ethnographic vignettes and discuss how schooling disrupts and extends intimate economies and moral relationships in post-war life. I will also discuss my work in relation to other anthropological studies that consider the moral significance of schooling through a focus on intergenerational relations and desire for education.