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The Oxford Handbook of Human Development and Culture

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE

Edited by

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Cultural-Developmental Scholarship for a Global World: An Introduction

Lene Arnett Jensen

Abstract

This chapter introduces *The Oxford Handbook of Human Development and Culture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, and its hallmark "cultural-developmental approach" to scholarship. The handbook provides a comprehensive synopsis of theory and research on life course development. Experts from disciplines such as anthropology, education, family studies, neuroscience, psychology and sociology integrate findings from cultures around the world, including a focus on historical changes and globalization. The 43 chapters showcase the burgeoning interdisciplinary scholarship that bridges universal and cultural perspectives on human development. This "cultural-developmental approach" is a multifaceted and flexible way to conceptualize theory and research that is in step with the global realities of human development in the 21st century. This chapter includes a description of how the cultural-developmental approach conceptualizes: 1) the entity of analysis, 2) the scope and meanings of concepts, and 3) the nature of theoretical frameworks. Examples to illustrate the argument are drawn from the handbook chapters.

Key Words: cultural-developmental approach, human development, culture, globalization, interdisciplinary, theory, anthropology, education, family studies, neuroscience, psychology, sociology

In 2005, my American husband and I moved from the United States to my native Denmark with our 6-year-old twins for a sabbatical year. Some months into the year, we visited Copenhagen, where we were delighted to find an Indian restaurant. After ordering a selection of our favorite dishes, we were chatting away in a mix of Danish and English when the waiter ambled back to our table. With a friendly smile, he asked in English: "Where we are you from?" Upon hearing a brief version of our saga, he looked at my son, Miles, and said: "Oh, so you are half Danish and half American." Almost instantly, Miles, whom his friends have dubbed the human calculator, rejoined: "Oh no, I am 100% Danish and 100% American."

Our children are coming of age in a globalizing world, where foods, languages, people, ideas, and

identities are swirling across cultures. Either first-hand or through media, children and adults from almost every proverbial corner of the world have exposure to diverse cultures. Movement across cultures is not new, but the current extent and speed of the swirl is (Friedman, 2000; Giddens, 2000; Hermans, this volume). Globalization is erasing, redrawing, perforating, fusing, and reinforcing cultural boundaries among peoples and within individuals. Cultural identifications—where we see ourselves as being "from"—remain central to human psychology, as exemplified by the waiter's question. But, in a globalizing world, cultural identifications are also becoming increasingly complex, as suggested by my son's answer (Jensen, 2003, 2010, 2011b; Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011; Larson, Jensen, Kang, Griffith, & Rompala, 2012).

Aim and Scope

The aim of this handbook is to provide an in-depth and comprehensive synopsis of theory and research on human development, with every chapter drawing together findings from cultures around the world. This includes a focus on cultural change and globalization. The handbook covers the life course from the prenatal period and birth to old age and death. Chapters are written by experts who collectively represent disciplines such as anthropology, education, human development, family studies, neuroscience, psychology, and sociology. The 43 chapters showcase the burgeoning interdisciplinary approach that bridges universal and cultural perspectives on human development.

This bridging of universal and cultural perspectives fits with today's need for a new philosophy of inquiry into the human condition. One-size-fits-all theories, such as those popular in the social sciences of the 20th century, are often too broad and too biased to adequately capture the complexities of human selves and relations across diverse and changing cultures. On the other hand, one-for-every-culture raises the specter of theoretical pandemonium. In my view, as I describe later in this chapter, the challenge and opportunity that we face today is one of conducting research and conceptualizing theories that are *cultural-developmental* in nature (Jensen, 2008, 2011a, 2012b). We need scholarship that is multifaceted, flexible, and dynamic in order to stay in step with the cultural and global realities of human development in the 21st century.

The definitions of development and culture across the handbook chapters are somewhat eclectic. The beauty of interdisciplinary scholarship is that it necessitates rethinking definitions. Development is addressed broadly and descriptively in terms of change that occurs in human beings as they age (Zelazo, 2013). It may involve increase or decrease; it may be quantitative or qualitative; and it may be gradual or stagelike. Culture is defined as the symbolic, behavioral, and institutional inheritances that are shared and co-constructed by members of a community (Goodnow, 2010; Heine, 2008; Shweder et al., 2006). Culture is not synonymous with country or ethnicity, for example, but rather describes communities whose members share key beliefs, values, behaviors, routines, and institutions. As scholars addressing cultural issues have long observed, cultural communities include heterogeneity among groups and individuals (Gramsci, 1971; Salzman,

1981). Variation also exists between cultural communities, including on their degree of heterogeneity, intergroup contest, and change over time (Strauss, 1992; Weisner, Bradley, & Kilbride, 1997; Whiting & Edwards, 1988).

An important aspect of difference both within and across cultures pertains to access to power. Power differentials occur along diverse lines, such as class, ethnicity, gender, and religion (Hammack & Toolis, this volume; Heckhausen & Shane, this volume; Kapadia & Gala, this volume). From a cultural perspective, it is important to recognize that North America and the West have remarkable financial and ideological influence, including on scholarly enterprise and publications (Arnett, 2008; Chisholm, this volume; Super, 2010; Super & Harkness, this volume). From a developmental perspective, it is important to remember that children and youth have less power than adults. Certainly, children are resilient and represent their elders' hopes for the future. Also, as compared to the past, youth in their later teens and early 20s may have gained more power today. This is because globalization often entails movements for democratic forms of governance (Giddens, 2000), and rapid cultural change calls for behavioral and cognitive flexibility. Nonetheless, children and youth are vulnerable to neglect and exploitation (Koller, Dutra-Thomé, Morais, Nieto, & Santana, this volume; Raffaelli & Iturbide, this volume; Verma & Petersen, this volume). Meanwhile, at the other end of the life course, elders in many cultures believe that their culture and its treatment of the elderly have declined. Essentially, they perceive a loss of value in today's rapidly changing economic, political, residential, and technological environment (Rosenblatt, this volume). As scholars—and human beings—we need to keep in mind differences between groups in access to power (Miller, Goyal, & Wice, this volume; Nsamenang, this volume).

This handbook owes an enormous debt to the many scholars who have addressed the intersection of development and culture. They are too numerous for me to name here. A perusal of the handbook chapters and their references, however, speaks to the work of manifold scholars over an extended period of time. Although scholarship on the intersection of development and culture has received important attention for quite some time, it has recently taken off and flourished in an unprecedented way. In 1981, Ruth Munroe, Robert Munroe, and Beatrice Whiting edited the *Handbook of Cross-Cultural*

Human Development. In their introduction, the handbook editors emphasized that “not all topics have reached a level of maturity sufficient to allow a ‘state-of-the-art’ review. . . . The volume is therefore a prospectus as much as a review of the field” (Munroe, Munroe, & Whiting, 1981, p. ix). More than three decades later, every chapter in this handbook also includes a discussion of future research directions. This reflects the stimulating fact that many topics still can be taken much further via a cultural-developmental approach. More than three decades later, however, the present handbook also attests to the in-depth and high-quality cultural knowledge that we now have about a plethora of topics in human development. Furthermore, this knowledge pertains to the entire life course.

Crucially, this handbook also attests to the efforts of the many scholars who, over time, have contributed to making our field more inclusive of worldwide diversity. Thus, this handbook includes authors from many parts of the world—something that sets it apart not only from handbooks published a few decades ago, but also from a fair number of current works that address human psychology, development, and social institutions. Here, the aim was to go beyond the boundaries of Europe and North America and represent those parts of the world where the majority of people live. Adequate worldwide representation of authors and research participants still leaves something to be desired, but the 100 or so contributors to this handbook were mindful of the issue of worldwide diversity. For example, no chapter simply refers to participants without specifying the culture and context of the described research. I also asked authors to think about the order in which they listed cultures and nationalities, with the result that most opted to alphabetize. It is all too easy to list the most powerful nations first and thereby unwittingly perpetuate a power differential. Authors also put careful thought into the question of whom they were writing for rather than proceeding to address a small minority of the world’s population without further consideration.

A Cultural-Developmental Approach

As mentioned earlier, bridging of universal and cultural perspectives fits with today’s need for a new approach to human development. A cultural-developmental approach to scholarship requires a rethinking of (1) the entity of analysis, (2) the scope and meanings of concepts, and (3) the nature of theoretical frameworks (Jensen, 2012a).

Here, I provide a succinct argument in regards to each of these three dimensions. This conceptual argument is followed by a more nuts-and-bolts review of the handbook’s organization, along with some of its other innovative features.

The Entity of Analysis

From a cultural-developmental vantage point, the unit of analysis is individuals across the life course who are developing in tandem with one or more changing cultures. Three aspects of this definition bear elaboration. First, all individuals develop within particular cultural milieus at particular times in history. The cultural milieus may be multifaceted, for example, encompassing both local and global values, beliefs, customs, and institutions. No individual is culture-free, however. Scholars have for some time highlighted how individuals, from start to finish, live within cultures where they constantly interact and negotiate with people whose behaviors and rules convey cultural beliefs and values (e.g., Brunner, 1990; Cole, 1996; Goodnow, Miller, & Kessel, 1995; Greenfield, 1997; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1996; LeVine et al., 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Miller, 1999; Moghaddam, 1987; Nisbett, 2003; Nsamenang, 1992; Stigler, Herdt, & Shweder, 1990; Wertsch, 1997; see LeVine & New, 2008, for a collection of essays on culture and child development dating back to the early 1900s). For example, their analyses have focused on the “dialectical syntheses” (Valsiner, 2011) and “transactional events” (Rogoff, 1990, 2003) whereby children develop into active and skilled members of particular cultures.

When scholarship is explicit about the cultures under investigation, it adds to our knowledge of the local. When scholarship is explicit about the cultures included, it also makes claims about universal features of human development more credible. It is necessary to be clear about where and when particular individuals were studied in order to build a database on which such claims can be evaluated. In other words, knowledge of what is culturally specific and what is universal comes from studying individuals in specific places and at particular times (see also Haun, this volume). From a cultural-developmental perspective, findings showing cultural differences are just as important and useful as findings showing cultural similarities. Some of the chapters in this handbook include findings from many different cultures, whereas others home in on a few. All authors unite in highlighting both cultural differences and similarities,

and are clear on the empirical basis of their arguments for either.

A second important aspect of the definition of the entity of analysis is that it entails a focus on individuals across the life course. Scholars in developmental psychology, education, and family studies quite often study children. Recently, Paul Bloom (2013) wittily observed that "there's some truth to the claim that a lot of developmental psychology is the study of the interested and alert baby" (p. 25). One reason for this attention to children is the quest to uncover universal origins of human development. Meanwhile, anthropologists and sociologists habitually study adults. One reason is that adults are those members of a society who are the most knowledgeable in the ways of their culture. Another way to put this is that adults, more than children, are enculturated. A specific example that illustrates this is the well-known phenomenon of dissonant acculturation among immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Compared to children, adults who immigrate to a new culture typically adopt fewer of the psychological and social characteristics of the new culture. The explanation is that children are more malleable, less set in their ways, less culturally socialized. The implication is that conclusions about universal development that largely rest on research with children are not taking into account that even if cultural socialization already begins prenatally (Hepper, 1996), cultural socialization becomes far more pronounced with age. In other words, children represent an easier test than adults when looking for universality. Conversely, adults represent an easier test than children when looking for cultural diversity. From a cultural-developmental perspective, the study of individuals across the life course is therefore necessary. Thus, this handbook covers the entire life course.

Research on immigrants also helps to highlight a third aspect of the present definition of the entity of analysis, namely, cultural change (see also Silbereisen & Tomasik, 2010). Although research has demonstrated that adults who immigrate to a new society retain many of the ways of their culture of origin, it is also the case that cultures change. It is an open question, for example, the extent to which an 18-year-old who immigrates to the United States today would be similar in mode and degree of acculturation compared to an 18-year-old who immigrated 25 years ago. Certainly, in a globalizing world, today's immigrant is likely to have grown up with far more awareness of the English

language and American customs long before immigrating. This awareness may entail familiarity with American popular culture, but it may also have other less obvious consequences. For example, research indicates that use of the English language impacts spatial cognition (Haun, this volume; Haun, Rapold, Call, Janzen, & Levinson, 2006; Haun, Rapold, Janzen, & Levinson, 2011). English-language users are more likely to reference objects in relation to the self (e.g., "the cat is to the left of the house" from the perspective of the self) rather than in relation to other objects (e.g., "the cat is between the tree and the house") or by means of a cardinal-direction type system (e.g., "the cat is on the west side of the house"). The point is that human development occurs in tandem with cultural change.

Many chapters in this handbook discuss changes to cultures. Some authors have worked in particular cultures for long enough to speak to historical changes (Edwards, Ren, & Brown, this volume; Harkness, Mavridis, Liu, & Super, this volume). There are experts on immigration, in which change within and between cultures is part and parcel of the subject matter (Correa-Chávez, Mangione, & Black, this volume; Suárez-Orozco, this volume). Some chapters address cultural tools or contexts, such as media, that are powerful drivers of cultural change (Manago, Guan, & Greenfield, this volume). Also, some authors describe how major economic shifts go hand-in-hand with major cultural shifts in conceptions of the life course (Arnett, this volume) and key developmental tasks, such as work (Schneider, Broda, & Saw, this volume). Finally, a large number of chapters address globalization, with some focusing on its push toward homogeneity (Hatfield, Mo, & Rapson, this volume) and others emphasizing its polymorphous quality (Hermans, this volume).

Broadening and Deepening Concepts

A cultural-developmental approach entails both a broadening and deepening of concepts. With respect to broadening, the study of development in diverse cultures leads to the discovery of new concepts. Based on extensive research on learning, for example, the focus on developmental goals such as questioning, communication, pride, and self-esteem derived from research with European Americans has been broadened to include goals such as diligence, perseverance, moral self-perfection, and contributing to society in research with Chinese participants

(Li, 2011, 2012). Similarly, researchers have proposed that a European-American focus on acceptance of the self needs to be supplemented with a concept of acceptance of the world in research with East Asians (Rothbaum & Wang, 2011; Trommsdorff, in press). With respect to the development of the self, research from African cultures indicates that there the self is understood not only in individual physical and psychological terms, but also in social, ancestral, and spiritual terms (Nsamenang, 2011, this volume; see also Serpell, 1993). Our conceptual categories, then, are expanded when research includes diverse cultures. Munroe, Munroe, and Whiting (1981) wrote of the discovery of "hidden variables" through cultural studies (p. x). These variables may come into view as we study cultures different from our own. Moreover, they may be hiding in plain sight, in the sense that "the variables we do not see or identify in our research are often normative and universal in our culture so that we fail to realize their influence" (Munroe, Munroe, & Whiting, 1981, p. x).

A cultural-developmental approach not only adds to the number of concepts, it also deepens them. Scholarship on the developmental goals of independence and interdependence provides a good illustration. A first step in scholarship on these two concepts was indeed a broadening in which researchers observed that, apart from independence, interdependence is a highly valued goal in many cultures, and it also requires attention (e.g., Triandis, 1995). Subsequent steps have involved a deepening of research on these concepts, for example, addressing how both can be found within cultures (Raeff, 2010), how their intersection depends on culture (Kağıtçıbaşı & Yalin, this volume; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008), how their development involves both similar and different processes (Phinney & Baldelomar, 2011), and how each concept has multiple meanings depending on the cultures studied (Greenfield, 2010; Kağıtçıbaşı & Yalin, this volume).

Essentially, every chapter in this handbook contributes to the broadening and deepening of conceptual categories of relevance to human development. For example, there is valuable broadening in regards to types of secure infant attachment (Morelli, this volume), intelligence (Hein, Reich, & Grigorenko, this volume), creativity (Mourgues, Barbot, Tan, & Grigorenko, this volume), moral values and orientations (Trommsdorff, this volume), and parenting (Keller, this volume; Shwalb & Shwalb, this volume). Chapters also

introduce new multiplicity in regards to processes of language development (Fitneva & Matsui, this volume), social learning (Correa-Chávez et al., this volume; Gauvain & Nicolaidis, this volume), and cognitive aging (Gutchess & Boduroglu, this volume). With respect to deepening of concepts, examples include new elaborations on the meanings of children's play (Gaskins, this volume), adolescents' friendships (French, this volume), transition rituals in adolescence (Schlegel & Barry III, this volume), and sexual behaviors in emerging and young adults (Ferrer-Wreder et al., this volume). A number of chapters also delve deeply into relations between concepts, such as how different understandings of the relation of the self to society have important implications for civic engagement in adolescence and older adulthood (Bhangaokar, this volume; Flanagan, Lin, Luisi-Mills, Sambo, & Hu, this volume) and for generativity and well-being in middle adulthood (de St. Aubin & Bach, this volume; Menon, this volume; Ryff et al., this volume).

Flexible and Multiplicitous Theoretical Frameworks

When the entity of analysis is individuals across the life course who are developing in tandem with one or more changing cultures, and when psychological concepts are broadened and deepened, the result is a need for new kinds of theoretical frameworks. Theories need to add multiple kinds of concepts. They need to encompass multiple meanings for these concepts. They need to incorporate how the development of concepts may follow divergent developmental trajectories in different cultures (Jensen, 2008). They need to account for the fact that cultures change. And the idea needs to be considered that some developmental phases may only appear under certain historical circumstances, such as emerging adulthood in cultures with economies that necessitate lengthy education (Arnett, this volume).

While this may seem like a rather tall theoretical order, it is also an invigorating one. It opens up the possibility of much-needed new theoretical conceptualizations. Generally speaking, I think we need to move toward *template models* that propose life course trajectories for multiple kinds of concepts (Jensen, 2008, 2011). The trajectories need to be seen as templates, in the sense that they have the flexibility to allow for cultural variability. For each concept, this flexibility pertains to whether or not it emerges, when it emerges, and the slope of its development. For example, it seems likely that a concept

that is highly emphasized within certain cultures will emerge earlier in development and increase more rapidly in quantity and quality as compared to cultures where the concept has minimal importance. Also, it seems likely that some concepts may be subject to more cultural variability than others depending on the impact of biological inheritance. From a cultural-developmental perspective, then, ontogenetic development is not determinative nor is there a limitless cultural range.

To give a specific example, I have proposed a cultural-developmental approach to moral psychology (Jensen, 2008, 2011a, in press). Building on a large body of assorted research on moral reasoning from different cultures, this theoretical approach charts patterns of moral development across the life course in terms of three Ethics: Autonomy (e.g., fairness, individual needs), Community (e.g., responsibility for others, social harmony), and Divinity (e.g., injunctions from sacred texts, concern with spiritual purity; see Figure 3A in Jensen, Chapter 15, this volume). The Ethic of Autonomy, for example, is predicted to emerge early in development and to stay relatively stable across adolescence and into adulthood even if the specific types of Autonomy reasons that persons use are likely to some extent to change with age (e.g., more focus on individual rewards and less on individual rights by children as compared to adults). To give another example, the Ethic of Community, according to the cultural-developmental approach, rises throughout childhood and into adolescence and adulthood, both in degree of usage and in the diversity of types of reasons.

The developmental trajectories for each ethic are conceptualized as templates, however. They accommodate to the prevalence of the three ethics and the hierarchy among them within cultures (see Figures 3B and 3C in Jensen, Chapter 15, this volume). For example, there is a more pronounced emphasis on the Ethic of Community in Taiwan than in the United States and a stronger emphasis on the Ethic of Autonomy in the United States than in Taiwan (Miller, Fung, Lin, Chen, & Boldt, 2012; see also Li, 2011, 2012). These different hierarchies interact with development. Thus, the Ethics of Community and Autonomy are likely to emerge at different points in childhood in Taiwan and the United States, develop along somewhat different slopes, and reach different endpoints in adulthood. With respect to cultural change and historical time, the cultural-developmental theory of moral psychology includes a prediction that,

in cultures where an emerging adulthood phase exists, one might expect an uptick in autonomy due to the self-focused nature of this period (Arnett, Ramos, & Jensen, 2001). The theory, then, aims to capture how moral development and culture co-modulate. It does this by incorporating conceptual breadth (e.g., three kinds of ethics), depth (e.g., diverse types of reasons within each ethic), and developmental trajectories that accommodate to cultural variability and cultural change. A recent series of empirical studies conducted in diverse cultures by scholars from different disciplines has provided substantial support for this theory (Jensen, in press).

Going forward, I think that cultural-developmental approaches that employ template models provide a new conceptual framework for building theories to inspire new research and findings on many topics. The charge of authors contributing to this handbook was not to put forth new theories. In fact, I asked authors to ensure that they were inclusive of the key theories within their topic area and that they balanced coverage of their own scholarship with the contributions of others. That said, I think that the assembled chapters provide a wealth of findings that constitute raw materials ready to be built into new theories of human developments. Manifold phenomena would benefit from being reconceptualized through a cultural-development approach; these include emotional and cognitive abilities, identity and interpersonal relations, contexts of development, and phases or stages of the life course.

New theories aiming to bridge universal and cultural perspectives might fruitfully draw on new and emerging work on evolution, genetics, and neuroscience (e.g., Friedlmeier, Corapci, & Benga, this volume; Gutchess & Boduroglu, this volume; Morelli, this volume). Scholars are addressing how biological mechanisms operate in tandem with culture at a number of levels (e.g., Tomasello, Carpenter, Call, Behne, & Moll, 2005). For example, culture-gene coevolutionary work includes consideration of how culture (such as dairy farming) can influence gene frequencies in groups (such as the selection for the genotype for adult lactose absorption in dairy farming communities; Laland, Odling-Smee, & Myles, 2010; Richerson & Boyd, 2005). Work on probabilistic epigenesis addresses how infants are born with a repertoire of possible developmental trajectories (each with different end states) and how interactions with the environment lead to the pursuit

of some trajectories over others. Not only does this create differences between individuals, but it also creates differences between cultural groups (Gottlieb, 1998, 2007). Also, recent work on biocultural constructivism further proposes that human evolution has selected for “plasticity” (e.g., Henrick, 2008) of trajectories. Even when a person is launched on a developmental trajectory (as a result of gene–environment interactions), there is still room for some alteration of both the path and the end state. Li (2007) argues that genetic activities and neural mechanisms themselves possess “remarkable plasticity awaiting sociocultural context to exert reciprocal influence on them and to be ‘coauthors’ of mind and behavior” (p. 540). As will be clear from all of this handbook’s chapters, the understanding is that humans share a variety of inherent tendencies or propensities. In turn, these co-modulate with culture in regards to the timing of their exact emergence and the extent and nature of their development.

Organization and Innovative Features

This handbook comprises six sections covering (I) Development and Culture in a Global World: Overarching Issues; (II) Birth, Infancy, and Toddlerhood; (III) Early and Middle Childhood; (IV) Adolescence; (V) Emerging and Young Adulthood; and (VI) Middle and Older Adulthood. By and large, this chronological organization allowed experts to write on those sections of the life course with which they are most familiar. Chapters are also interlinked; authors reference topically related information found in other chapters in the handbook.

The division of the life course into these sections is a heuristic that I think scholars across the world will recognize, even if the life course is divided in many other ways within specific cultures. No division, whether chronological or topical, can avoid being a heuristic of a certain kind. Here, I asked authors to include discussions of indigenous conceptions of periods of the life course when it was relevant to the information in their chapters.

As described earlier, I think we need theories of human developments. Scholars have begun to write of “childhoods” (Nsamenang, 2011), “adolescences” (Larson, Wilson, & Rickman, 2009), and “emerging adulthoods” (Arnett, 2011). For example, Larson and his colleagues (2009) argue that adolescents across the world face important common psychological tasks, including identity formation and emotional preparation for adult

roles. At the same time, important psychological characteristics and processes that surround these tasks vary widely across cultures, including the extent of emotional upheaval, the degree of separation from parents, and the nature of relationships with peers. The present life course divisions are put forth and used in this spirit of multiplicity and flexibility.

This chapter started with a family experience from my sabbatical year in Denmark. That was not a coincidence. I asked authors to provide a pertinent and succinct personal example from their scholarly experience to open their chapters. The intent is to illustrate in a captivating and distinct way how it is important to pay careful attention to the intersection of development and culture in peoples’ lives. Of course, any example can only capture part of a larger story. As should be clear from my opening family experience, my son is not growing up short of positive cultural identifications. But that is not always how it is. For some years, I have returned again and again in my writings to Liechty’s (1995) description of Nepalese youth and one young man, “Ramesh,” in particular. When Liechty was conducting his early ethnographic work, Nepal and especially its largest city of Kathmandu were undergoing an abrupt and rapid transition into the world of global trade, Western tourism, and electronic mass media. Although youth enjoyed media and imagining a broad range of possible selves, these unattainable media ideals eventually collided with the realities of their local lives. Ultimately, many felt marginalized: alienated from their local culture but not truly part of the global culture. In the memorable words of 21-year-old Ramesh (p. 187): “You know, now I know sooooo much [from films, books, and magazines about the West]. Being a frog in a pond isn’t a bad life, but being a frog in an ocean is like hell. Look at this. Out here in Kathmandu there is nothing. We have nothing.” As I was finishing this chapter, I contacted Mark Liechty to ask if he knew what had become of Ramesh. They had lost contact after Ramesh’s life spiraled into serious drug use (Liechty, personal communication, June 3, 2014).

While each of the personal and research examples recounted by authors is unique, I have found them to be remarkably illuminating. Each tells something about the authors and conveys something central to the purpose of this handbook. I hope readers find the examples as thoughtful and moving as I have.

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