



CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Gender, Space and Livelihoods

Pathways to Human Flourishing in the Majority World

Edited by Prof. Grey Magaiza and Prof. Narnia Bohler-Muller

An edited volume currently under review by Palgrave Macmillan

Synopsis

Despite decades of investment in poverty reduction, development policy, gender mainstreaming and economic transformation, precarity, inequality and exclusion remain persistent features of everyday life across much of the Majority World. Livelihood insecurity, the feminisation of poverty, dispossession, environmental degradation and uneven access to resources continue to shape the possibilities available to individuals and communities. With a foreword by Prof. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, this volume features contributions from established scholars, including Dr Ben Roberts and Prof Heidi Hudson, as well as a carefully selected cohort of early, mid and senior career researchers.

This edited volume asks a deliberately provocative question: Has development thinking become stagnant in the face of ongoing livelihood insecurity, spatial inequality and gender inequality?

Gender, Space and Livelihoods: Pathways to Human Flourishing in the Majority World seeks to move beyond approaches that treat gender, space and livelihoods as separate analytical categories. Instead, it conceptualises them as constitutively entangled dimensions of development: space shapes livelihood possibilities; livelihoods reproduce or challenge gendered relations of power; and gendered relations shape how people access, occupy, transform and experience space. The collection further asks what becomes possible when these relationships are examined through the lens of human flourishing. Rather than treating development simply as economic growth, income, productivity or measurable progress, the volume considers flourishing in relation to dignity, agency, justice, relationality, collective wellbeing and the capacity to realise human potential. The volume is particularly interested in scholarship that challenges conventional development assumptions and takes seriously the knowledge, experiences and intellectual traditions emerging from the Majority World. We welcome engagement with relational and alternative ontologies, including ubuntu, buen vivir and ujamaa, as well as other Southern epistemologies and philosophies that offer resources for reimagining development beyond dominant Western frameworks.

Themes and Areas of Interest

1. Gender, Space and Livelihoods: The Constitutive Triad

- Theorising the entanglement of gender, space and livelihoods
- The gendered production of space
- Feminist and intersectional approaches to livelihood studies
- Spatial dimensions of livelihood insecurity
- Rethinking livelihoods beyond economic framings

2. Spatial Justice, Land and Uneven Development



- Spatial injustice, uneven development and rural–urban inequality
- Gendered geographies and the right to the city
- Land, territory, belonging and dispossession
- Property regimes, agrarian transformation and gender
- Urban planning, peripheral spaces and exclusion

3. Mobility, Migration and Translocal Livelihoods

- Gendered migration and cross-border livelihoods
- Circular, translocal and multi-sited livelihood networks
- Borders, mobility and spatial exclusion
- Migration and livelihood (in)security

4. Livelihoods, Informality and Political Economy

- Gendered informal economies and informal urban work
- Women's livelihood strategies, survival and resilience
- Labour transitions, entrepreneurship and self-employment
- Capital, state power and livelihood-making
- Alternative and solidarity economic practices

5. Gendered Poverty, Care and Social Reproduction

- Feminisation of poverty and gendered precarity
- Unpaid, invisible and reproductive labour
- Care economies and social reproduction
- Poverty, wellbeing and alternative understandings of security

6. Environment, Climate and Ecological Justice

- Environmental degradation, pollution and livelihood loss
- Climate change and gendered vulnerability
- Extractivism and ecological dispossession
- Gender, community agency and environmental governance

7. Decolonising Development: Knowledge, Power and Agency

- Decolonial approaches and epistemic (in)justice
- Southern epistemologies and African philosophies of development
- Relational ontologies — ubuntu, buen vivir and ujamaa
- Gendered power, constrained agency and “beyond empowerment”
- Collective action, resistance and social movements

8. Human Flourishing and Alternative Development Futures

- Human flourishing as a development horizon: dignity, agency, relationality

- Wellbeing beyond income; the capability approach
- Flourishing as an unfinished process of becoming
- Alternative indicators: measuring what matters to communities
- Post-development, pluriversal and community-centred futures
- Institutions, policy and praxis for a flourishing life

The Central Invitation

This volume seeks contributions that do more than document poverty, inequality or marginalisation. We seek chapters that theorise the relationships between these conditions and ask what they reveal about the assumptions underpinning development itself. Contributions might engage with questions such as:

- How do gender, space and livelihoods mutually constitute one another?
- How does spatial inequality shape livelihood possibilities?
- How are livelihood opportunities and constraints gendered?
- How do development interventions produce or reproduce spatial inequality?
- What forms of knowledge are privileged or excluded in development?
- How do communities understand wellbeing, dignity and a good life?
- What might human flourishing mean beyond conventional development indicators?
- Can flourishing offer a meaningful alternative to dominant notions of development as progress?
- What can African, Latin American, Asian, and other Southern philosophies contribute to rethinking development?
- How might development praxis be transformed if communities became central to defining what constitutes a flourishing life?

“What would development look like if dignity, agency, spatial justice, relationality and human flourishing, not simply economic growth or measurable progress, were its organising principles?”

This volume is premised on the proposition that the persistent failure of development to deliver meaningful and equitable improvements in people's lives cannot be understood by examining poverty, gender, space or livelihoods in isolation. We particularly welcome contributions from early-career, established and mid-career scholars working from or with Majority World contexts, and encourage submissions that expand the intellectual and geographical diversity of development scholarship. We invite you to contribute to a critical rethinking of development, not simply by asking how development can work better, but by asking what development should mean in the first place.

Conceptual and Methodological Approaches

The volume welcomes multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and polytheoretical contributions. We particularly encourage scholarship that brings theoretical perspectives into productive dialogue rather than remaining confined within disciplinary boundaries, including but not limited to:

Feminist theory • Feminist political economy • Feminist geography • Human geography • Political ecology • Agrarian studies • Livelihoods approaches • Development studies • Community development • Cultural studies • African studies • Sociology • Anthropology • Political economy • Decolonial theory • Post-development theory • Indigenous and Southern epistemologies • Capability approaches • Relational and ecological approaches



Empirical contributions may employ qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, participatory, ethnographic, comparative, historical or other appropriate methodologies. We particularly encourage methodologies that take seriously lived experience, community knowledge, situated knowledge and the voices of groups whose experiences have historically been marginalised in development knowledge production.

Geographical Scope

The volume has a strong Majority World orientation and welcomes contributions from and about Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean, the Pacific and other Southern contexts. Comparative and transregional contributions are particularly encouraged. We also welcome contributions that critically examine relationships between the Global North and the Majority World, including questions of development knowledge, aid, extractivism, the global political economy and transnational inequality.

What We Are Looking For

We seek chapters that offer a clear intellectual contribution rather than merely descriptive accounts. Strong proposals will:

- Identify a well-defined research or conceptual problem;
- demonstrate engagement with relevant scholarship;
- clearly explain the chapter's central argument;
- connect explicitly to gender, space and/or livelihoods;
- engage meaningfully with the question of human flourishing;
- demonstrate relevance beyond the immediate case study; and
- contribute to wider debates about development in the Majority World.

We particularly welcome provocative, theoretically ambitious and conceptually innovative contributions that challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about development.

Abstract Submission Guidelines

Abstracts of 300–500 words should include the following elements:

- proposed chapter title;
- author(s) and institutional affiliation(s);
- **an author biography of approximately 100 words;**
- the central research question or problem;
- the chapter's main argument;
- theoretical/conceptual framework;
- methodological approach, where applicable;
- empirical context, where applicable; and
- expected contribution to the volume.

Please also indicate which of the eight thematic areas above most closely aligns with your proposed chapter.



Key Dates

Milestone	Date
Abstract submission deadline	10 October 2026
Notice of Abstract acceptance	25 October 2026
Full chapter submission	1 April 2027
Proposed completion	1 November 2027

Full chapters are expected to be approximately 7,000 words, subject to final editorial guidance.

Submission and Contact

All abstracts should be submitted by email to both editors:

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