

International workshop

Framing critical childhood studies and decoloniality to intersectionalise children's rights

K REPORTERS

What an intersectional approach to children's rights studies entail as well as what the intellectual and political project of decolonising childhood studies might mean and look like in field research, theorising, and praxis?

Generative threads

- Research-based knowledge on childhood
- Our understanding of childhoods expands under the lens of intersectionality
- Ontoepistemological questions that decolonisation and intersectionality unlocks
- Ethical openings of the reframing
- Unsettling the dichotomy between the Global North and the Global South
- Decolonising our thinking, the limitation of existing theories
- Practice-based approach of doing politics for social justice
- Addressing children's rights in neoliberal and capitalist societies
- Tactics for decolonising children's rights in research and praxis

Intersectionality is also a counter-hegemonic praxis that seeks to challenge and displace hegemonic whiteness and patriarchy. As we continue to apply this critical theoretical approach and praxis in childhood studies, what do we need to be mindful of? Project play cafe's <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/playcafe/>



Intersectionality in critical childhood studies

Acknowledging the plurality of childhoods to avoid essentialising are key pillars in critical childhood studies. Making use of intersectional and socio-material perspectives in childhood studies affords theoretical, analytical and methodological tools, to think about the multiplicity of childhoods entangled with different realities and look for children/childhood being produced in different assemblages; and they enable to reflect on how age interacts with other categories of difference, and how this might offer a resource for children's agency and activism.

By employing an intersectional and socio-material lens in critical childhood studies we can explore noticeable differences in play depending on the space, the humans, and the play materials. This might erase or highlight differences; what do the play materials represent or not; do the children who play with the materials need to know how to work them; specific competences to play with specific toys; if there is a room for staff and spaces; how do the non-human actors frame the play activity?

When intersectionality met childhood studies: Thinking back and forward

- Decolonising is a continuous process that interrupts colonial thinking and recentres knowledge from the Global South
- Creates allyship to challenge white hegemony and move beyond tokenistic inclusion and diversity. Demands action and impact, and emphasises the need for real structural change
- Engages in participatory approaches to dismantle power dynamics and promotes collaboration. Advocates for structural changes in policy and practice to promote equity, fairness, and social justice
- Reflects on the ethical implications of research and addresses internalised whiteness
- Acknowledges the origins and histories of concepts like intersectionality, ensuring they are not co-opted or misused
- Intersectionality recognises the importance of contexts in childhood studies and the multiplicity of critical views
- Mobilises knowledges from the Global South for research and practice, challenging the racialised nature of Western epistemologies
- Critically questions what counts as knowledge, as research and implements alternative assessment methods in higher education institutions (e.g. oral knowledges/traditions, ancestral knowledges, indigenous knowledges) and embraces continuous struggle for transformation, inspired by thinkers like bell hooks
- Emphasises the real implications of children's rights laws and the need for ongoing, collective efforts to transform both policy and practice in a genuinely equitable manner.

Critical perspectives to studies of children's rights in the Global North and the Global South

Dominant perspectives on children's rights

- Top-down understanding
- Implementation of objective standards
- Cultural, economics, political, and social omissions
- Governmental amendments of the legal frameworks
- Institutionalise education and NGOs programmes
- Try to "guarantee" children's welfare
- Elude the diversity of contexts (in the South and the North)

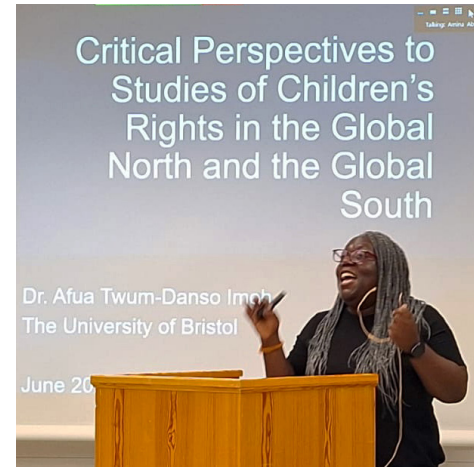
Limitations of the dominant perspectives

- Legalist and technical approach
- Denial of poverty, family sustainability and solidarity
- Children's rights are perceived as anti-cultural in Ghana
- Centrality of individuality in human rights principles
- Invisibilisation of collectivist cultures and the communal
- The imposition of the school-based education model
- Ubuntu alternative: reciprocity of social interactions between adults and children

Contributions of critical perspectives

- Children's rights from below
- Living (everyday) rights and lifeworld approaches
- Duties as central to children's understanding of their rights
- Work is part of what children do
- A wider approach to education
- Reciprocity shapes social relations
- Inherent reciprocity based on concrete fair value
- Intergenerational contract
- Civic responsibility

Afua Twum-Danso Imoh



What is lacking in this field of 'children's rights studies' is a critical perspective, an approach that considers children's rights a 'contested terrain' with different (conflicting) normative foundations and traditions.

Critical conversations II

Rethinking children's rights studies

Discussion: Tatek Abebe

Since ratification of the UNCRC, moral regulation of children's rights along with developmental and liberal capitalism of nations have dislocated childhoods. Then, subversive forms of globalisation to reflect multiple childhoods on the right of future generations are necessary:

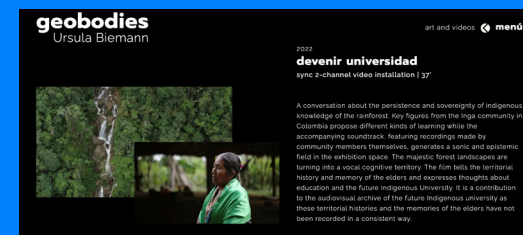
- Vernacular versions of children's rights could provide an emic understanding of reciprocity and intergenerational rights, as well as the recognition of mutuality, collective life, and the possibilities for kinship formation
- As the dichotomy of children-as-careereceivers and adults-as-caregivers decentres life experiences, rights should be reconceptualised as the outcomes and the means of relationships, where the community is the starting point to reconceptualise what rights might mean and could look like
- Some frictions will be addressed: between children's perceptions and experiences around children's work; children's social relations and responsibilities bringing cyclical and intergenerational visions; and questioning the ontological reasons that separate the rights of children and ones of other citizens.



Verónica Pacini-Ketchabaw

How to address children's rights in the context of the devastation of the Capitalocene in the Global South? How can we think about childhood at a time when children are witnessing violent extractions in their own territories? What to do when the proliferation of extractive activities and the violent forces of global capital increasingly challenge children's rights agendas?

Critical conversations III Decoloniality in education



Discussion: Montserrat Rifà-Valls

I. From new materialist and decolonial childhood studies, we get entangled with a posthumanist vision of children in symbiosis where 'being is the space-time-mattering' to reflect on "how childhood is generated within the political and ethical contexts" [*Veronica's words].

II. Co-creating narratives for the insurgent earth follows up the question "what do we compose with".* Aligned to this, some artists like Ursula Biemann explore ethnographically how people embody and resist the extractivist (mine) capitalist landscapes as zones of conflict. Theoretically, geontopower, governmentality, necropolitics and cosmopolitics are significant in childhood studies knowledge production to think and transform the ways we inhabit the earth while constructing an "emergent common account" (Stengers 2005).

III. In the end, weaving research as an anticolonial praxis aims to decolonise disciplinary knowledge, approach children's lives from the "unknow", and use multisensorial feminist methods. Worlding worlds in life-making pedagogies works against current violences perpetuated by imperial capitalistic power relations.

Worlding worlds with children in extractivist colonial times

I. Southern childhood studies: researching children's lives from the epistemologies of the South. A rights-based and development approach primary rely on the state's protection of children and childhood in racialised capitalist societies. When rupturing the romanticised child in the Global North that emphasises the "saving" vulnerable childhoods in the Global South, we reconceptualise children/childhoods as being negotiated and subjected to the multiple temporalities and relationalities. Here Andean-child-land relations require the research attention.

II. Materialist anticolonial analysis of extractivist capitalism.

Beyond biopolitics, geontopower overcomes the dychotomy between life and non-life. Due to geology establishes the norms for materiality we ask how the practices of extraction and racial subjugation create "geotrauma" and dispossession by reproducing a colonial earth's destruction of worlds and life forms. Insurgent geologies of subaltern children provide for a black onto-aesthetic grammar that transforms oppressive geologic regimes.

III. Creating anticolonial narratives with children. The arts explore how politics might be practiced through multisensoriality to produce anti-colonial gestures of imperial narratives in Ecuador. The anticolonial research maps the conditions of decolonisation, and simultaneously, can contribute to create "materialist pedagogies of anticolonial praxis" or the pedagogies of life-making:

"This life-making is profoundly inventive and far from predetermined. We do life through the mundane, everyday gestures of co-composing through rituals, encounters, exposures, working at dissensus, interrupting hegemony and normativity, working through rather than intervening in problems."

DIFFRACTION ASSEMBLAGES WHO ARE WE? COALESCENCE UNLEARNING THE FUNAMBULIST SCALING

Participatory creative assemblages I

Diffraction emphasises producing difference, reading one theory through another. Science Friction: political tensions arise from frictioning, knowledge production as decentring process.

Assemblages as ontological, cultural and materials associations piece together the plurality of childhoods, research assemblage methods and researchers' bodies.

Who is we? This polyphony and plurality [as a result of encompassing all human and more-than-human] creates the relations and interactions essential for building resilient and inclusive societies.

Coalescence. Multiplicity and coexistence bring together separate entities to create new forms without homogenizing them, understanding "we" through active processes and frictions.

Unlearning. Decolonisation means unlearning, be aware of racialisation and pushes us outside the comfort zones in pedagogy and art (Carrie Mae Weems and Lorna Simpson as examples).

The Funambulist is a platform engaging with the politics of space and bodies. Is also a metaphor for our research identities.

Scaling inspired by Anna L. Tsing (2004) refers to interconnections, collaborative relationships and magnitudes. [Watch the documentary *Powers of Ten* 1977].

Cartographying intersectional childhood studies and children's onto-politics

Discussion

Arts-based diffraction made possible to think on:

- Space utilisation: Understanding and experimenting with space to enhance conversations and collaborations
- Interdisciplinary reading: Finding ways to read through, rather than against, different disciplines in childhood studies
- Travelling concepts: Exploring how concepts move in, through, and out of childhood studies
- Methodological approaches: Rethinking tools and methodologies based on re-assembling (re-attachment)
- Construct of children: Situating and reading different experiences of childhood across localities
- Addressing assemblages of oppression (Nancy Fraser) and the political positions of terms
- Reflecting on care and childhood within intersectional and assemblage frameworks
- Viewing intersectionality as a process that relates to the world and traces journeys to understand agency and responses
- Conceptualising the intersection of different factors and their impacts on childhood studies.

SCALING



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