

Beyond Binaries: Exploring Children's Lives Across Worlds

Call for Papers for Proposed Edited Volume

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Binaries have long underpinned studies of childhoods including those relating to: culture vs. nature, structure vs. agency, the industrialised North vs. the Global South, childhood vs. childhoods, global vs. local (James, 2010). In particular, there has been a tendency to divide studies of childhoods and children's lived experiences between what is variably described as the First World, developed countries, the Minority World or the Global North on one hand, and the Third World, developing countries, the Majority World or the Global South on the other. While such a binary can be useful in framing discussions around childhoods due to important differences that exist between these two worlds, the diversity of cultures, economies, political structures and individual experiences is vast. These differences within regions have further been underscored by the emergence of 'rising' economies such as China, India and Brazil and the potential for growth and transformation in other countries such as Mexico, Nigeria and Indonesia. These developments especially in the 'South' raise important questions about the continuing utility of always framing our discussions on childhoods around this binary of the North and South or the Minority World vs. Majority World (see also Punch and Tisdall, 2012; Holt and Holloway, 2006). In addition, the focus on these binaries in our discussions of childhoods and children's lives has led to a proliferation of localised studies of childhoods which is problematic in a number of respects. Firstly, children's lives in diverse contexts are increasingly being affected by the same global processes as well as by local realities that are specific to their contexts (see Ansell, 2009; Stephens, 1995; Punch, 2015; Holt and Valentine, 2000). For example, economic globalisation and the neoliberal principles that underpin it are having similar adverse effects on the lives of certain groups of children in different parts of the world (Jeffrey and Dyson, 2008 in Punch and Tisdall, 2012). Hence, a number of researchers such as Holt and Holloway (2006) and Lund (2008) have called for the 'destabilisation' of the Global North and Global South binary. In addition, such localised studies *within* worlds have implications for the continuing relevance of childhood studies to broader academic debates and policy processes (Ansell, 2009; see also Punch, 2015). In response to this Philo (2000: 253 in Ansell, 2009: 191), writing from the perspective of children's geographies, has called for the need for scholarship to also 'look to the larger picture encompassing many different sets of children spread across many different places', and 'accept the challenge of tackling the macro-scale, structure-based geographies of childhood as shaped by broad-brush political-economic and social-cultural transformations'.

This suggestion is pertinent not only to geographers of childhoods, but to all of those who, in our various ways and from the perspective of our respective disciplines, contribute to the multidisciplinary field of childhood studies. Philo's call to consider the 'larger' picture in studies of childhoods corresponds closely with calls made by various commentators to take a more holistic view of childhoods and children's lived experiences (Pannelli et al, 2007; Kesby et al, 2006; Punch, 2015, Punch 2016; Twum-Danso Imoh, forthcoming). By adopting such an approach we will not only be able to highlight the differences between world areas, but we will also be able to explore commonalities between particular types of childhoods and certain groups of children *across* worlds. Doing this will also underline the diversity in childhoods and children's experiences *within* worlds and even within countries in each world area (Hecht, 1998; Holt and Holloway, 2006; Punch, 2015; Twum-Danso Imoh, forthcoming).

This approach has the potential to stimulate the production of more comparative literature, contribute to combining childhood studies literature in the South and North (Punch, 2015) and pave the way for a more integrated approach to our study of childhoods and children's lives (James, 2010).

Therefore, this proposed edited volume seeks to explore childhoods and children's lives *across* world areas. While we will consider papers focusing on various topics, we would, in particular, welcome papers with a particular focus on the following themes:

- 1) Constructions of childhood/experiences of childhood;
- 2) Intra and inter-generational relationships with different actors and in different spheres of their lives;
- 3) Children's livelihood strategies;
- 4) Children's use of time;
- 5) Children's interactions with various global processes (economic restructuring, economic growth, migration, conflict etc);
- 6) Children's experiences of various spheres in their lives such as family, school, religious institutions etc;
- 7) Children's use of spaces;
- 8) Caring relationships (both children being cared for and children as carers).

Following Punch and Tisdall's (2012: 244) call 'for more work in childhood studies to establish dialogue between Majority and Minority World contexts' the approach of this proposed volume will be unique in certain respects. In particular, while we are happy to accept papers from individuals whose research cuts across the binaries of the North and South, we would like to encourage collaboration between researchers working on similar issues with similar groups of children in different world areas.

The editors of this proposed volume are Dr. Afua Twum-Danso Imoh (The University of Sheffield, UK), Professor Michael Bourdillon (University of Zimbabwe), Sylvia Meichsner (University of Portsmouth, UK) and Dr. Fernanda Wanderley, (Graduate Institute for Development Studies (CIDES-UMSA), Bolivia).

This proposed volume is one outcome of the *Exploring Childhood Studies in the Global South* workshop held in Sheffield in January 2016. The workshop was part of a larger project which aims to foster dialogue, collaboration, learning and exchange between childhood studies researchers focusing on the South. The project is led by Afua Twum-Danso Imoh, hosted by the Centre for the Study of Childhood and Youth (CSCY) at the University of Sheffield and funded by the British Academy (<http://www.southernchildhoods.org/>).

Please submit abstracts of no more than 500 words to Afua Twum-Danso Imoh (a.twum-danso@sheffield.ac.uk) by 10th September 2016