



# NEOS

A PUBLICATION OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH INTEREST GROUP

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2018

## ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE

Helen Vallianatos  
(U of Alberta, ACYIG Convener)

Happy New Year! All of us at ACYIG are excited about the initiatives and opportunities planned for 2018, and look forward to continuing to connect with all of the ACYIG community in various ways. Remember to share news and opportunities; this will help us continue to build connections and collaborations within our network. Consider sharing info via our social media network (Twitter: [https://twitter.com/acyig\\_aaa](https://twitter.com/acyig_aaa) and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ACYIG>) or through our blogs (<http://acyig.americananthro.org>) and publication ([ACYIG.Editor@gmail.com](mailto:ACYIG.Editor@gmail.com)).

I would like to thank our outgoing ACYIG Convener, Lauren Heidbrink, who has done a phenomenal job over the past couple of years. These have been exciting years for ACYIG, with increased involvement of students on the ACYIG board and through the collaborative research network for students; cultivating global networks to co-host conferences in the US and beyond (more on this below); evolving opportunities to share ideas and information through social media, blogs, and this publication; and active partici-

pation on the listserv, not just from the diverse anthropological subdisciplines but also other related fields of study. She has left big shoes to follow! I am grateful that she is continuing to provide her guidance in an ex-officio role.

It was another busy year at the 2017 AAA Meetings, with over twenty sessions speaking to child and youth issues and research, including the well-received sponsored session, *Futures in Crisis: Contested Childhoods in Global Discourses and Local Articulations*. Scholars from Europe, South and North America presented their research on how global discourses on children's rights and futures are mediated by international organizations, state institutions, community representatives, parents, and children in the Netherlands, Canada, India, Lithuania, Peru, and Chile. At the ACYIG business meeting, a number of issues were discussed, including the continuation of efforts to build communications and networking opportunities for ACYIG members. Based on feedback, the board will work on incorporating a student mentorship component at the next conference. Our next co-hosted conference will be in Camden, New Jersey in the spring of 2019—details will be shared in the next issues of *Neos*, so stay tuned.

As mentioned above, ACYIG's collaboration with global partners has been increasing, as illustrated by the fact that we are co-hosting, with the African Centre

for Migration and Society in South Africa, a conference focused on youth migration at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in April 2018. One of the exciting parts of this conference is the workshop for early career scholars. For more details on the workshop and the conference, see: <http://acyig.americananthro.org/category/announcements/>. Note that the deadline for abstract submission is January 31, 2018. This is an exciting opportunity and we hope that many in the ACYIG community can participate.

Welcome to the new board members! Elise Berman is filling the role of AAA Liaison. In this role, she will connect with the AAA leadership and represent our interest group's interests. Dori Beeler has stepped into the role of Communications Coordinator, overseeing the

## SHARE!

If you like something in this newsletter, why not share it?

Just click on one of the icons below to share this newsletter on your favorite social media sites. It's that easy!



In This Issue... (linked)

UPDATES

- Advisory Board Update . . . . . 1
- Website Update . . . . . 2
- Social Media Update . . . . . 2
- Membership Update . . . . . 3

ARTICLES

- Methods & Ethics . . . . . 4
- Childhood  
And \_\_\_\_\_ . . . . . 6
- An Ethnography of Children or  
Youth That Has Impacted  
My Work . . . . . 11

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- New Book Announcements . . . . . 12
- Member News . . . . . 14
- Solicitations for  
February 2018 . . . . . 15
- Neos Contributors . . . . . 15



communications team, which includes the Webmaster, Social Media Coordinator, and *Neos* Editor. Scarlett Eisenhauer is the new Webmaster, maintaining and evolving ACYIG’s website.

We are currently looking for a new *Neos* Editor, to take over for the fall edition, October 2018. Primary responsibilities include soliciting items for *Neos*, arranging for peer reviewers, and overseeing the *Neos* editorial team. Note that there are volunteers who assist the editor in collecting updates, member news, and new book announcements, and who provide layout and copy-editing support are interested in serving in this capacity, please email [Vallianatos@ualberta.ca](mailto:Vallianatos@ualberta.ca), indicating your interest and what you can bring to the position. Please ensure that your name, title, affiliation, and contact information are included.

## WEBSITE UPDATE

Scarlett Eisenhauer  
(UCLA, ACYIG Webmaster)

Dear ACYIG Community! I am Scarlett Eisenhauer, and I have joined the ACYIG team as Webmaster. I am currently a PhD candidate at UCLA, examining child and youth development in after-school programs. In addition, I am interested in expanding methods for delving into individual experience within a community context. I have been doing this by utilizing electrodermal activity (a physiological response).

The communications team has some long-term plans regarding the website, including a world map of regions we are working in and an “Ask the Expert” page to showcase the expertise that we have within our own community. Our hope is to start building an active networking process that is open beyond our disci-

plinary borders.

In the short term, I’ll be looking to all of you for blog posts, conference calls, and other forms of web presence to keep our online intellectual discussion thriving!

## SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

Maria Barbero (Florida International U, ACYIG Social Media Coordinator)

Happy New Year from ACYIG Social Media! We closed 2017 with a very active few months on social media and hope that 2018 will be even better. Networking during the AAA meeting helped us surpass 1.5K followers on Facebook and 500 on Twitter. Reflecting back on 2017, our most popular post reached nearly 4,000 people and received dozens of shares.



This year, we are looking to expand our YouTube presence—be sure to check out and subscribe to our revamped YouTube Channel. As always, we welcome all contributions, with special attention to multimedia teaching and research material. Thank you to all those who continually disseminate information through our platforms, and please continue to send relevant teaching resources, opportunities, and news our way via Facebook, Twitter, or email.



## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Amy Paugh (James Madison U, ACYIG Membership Coordinator)

*Please add or renew your ACYIG membership for 2018*

ACYIG Membership is free to members of the American Anthropological Association (AAA)—we encourage you to join or renew today.

To join or verify active membership, go to <http://www.americananthro.org> and log in to your AAA account. Select “Add interest group” from the menu on the left side of the page. Check the box for “Anthropology of Children and Youth Interest Group” and proceed through the checkout process (there will not be any charge). The same box should be checked each time that you renew your AAA membership. Please encourage interested colleagues and students to join as well.

Thank you for helping to make sure that ACYIG remains a robust and visible interest group at the AAA!



## METHODS & ETHICS

Pauline A. Duncan (U Edinburgh)  
& Maureen Finn (U Edinburgh)

Mobile cultures, across the United Kingdom and Europe, continue to experience widespread discrimination in their daily lives (Lloyd and McCluskey 2008). Due to transient lifestyles and tentative relationships with schools and services, children and young people from these communities have few opportunities to share their views on important issues that affect their lives. This article spotlights the children and youth from European Roma and Gypsy/Traveller communities who have collaborated with the University of Edinburgh's Centre for Mobile Cultures and Education over the past two years. These youth rarely participate in research and their voices remain marginalized in Scottish society.

The Romani people arrived in Europe from India over 700 years ago and are thought to be the largest ethnic minority in Europe. Most Roma families (European Gypsies of Romani descent) have travelled with the aim of finding work and to seek a good education for their children. The origins of Scottish Gypsy Travellers may be linked to Romani Gypsies and Irish Travellers, in addition to distinct routes of their own. In some cases, Romani people mixed with indigenous groups in Scotland, some of whom may also have had nomadic traditions.

According to Amnesty International (2011), systemic discrimination is occurring against as many as 10 million Roma living in Europe, including failure of authorities to cease the segregation of education for Romani children in certain countries (Open Society Foundation 2012). In the UK Department for

Education's 2010 report, Wilkin et al. confirmed that Roma and Gypsy/Traveller students have lower levels of achievement than other ethnic groups during all key stages of education; they concluded that this resulted from a complex range of barriers to accessing the curriculum, including high exclusion rates, interrupted education, and negative experiences of school.

Our research works toward addressing current imbalances in representation and contribution of mobile cultures in all aspects of public life, including education and employment, by supporting their participation in services and civic society through democratic, dialogic, and creative approaches. The research involved 20 children and young people ages 6–16, from European Roma and Gypsy/Traveller communities across Scotland (UK), in projects exploring education and identity. We gave considered attention to the ways in which the children and young people's participation in our research encouraged their visibility in the wider community. With the support of artists, translators, and teachers, we facilitated the groups to articulate and reflect on their experiences of education in culturally relevant ways. Drawing on their preference for oral, visual, and kinesthetic modes of expression and learning, we used storytelling, visual methods, and digital technology to support the creation of personal e-books, self-portraits, and iPad walking narratives. Through these methods, layered landscapes allowed an embodied and reflexive process, providing space to share experiences of different social worlds.

We found that many Gypsy/Traveller youth expressed strong Traveller identities: "We're Travellers, and there's more Travellers [in the school]" (David, 7). The young people shared an awareness that they, or their lifestyles (such as mobility and residing in a trailer) were viewed by others as different—resulting in a disconnection to non-Traveller staff and

peers: "Well it's normal to us...innit?!... But different—maybe—to everyone else. The people—they're just annoying. The way they talk and things" (Jennifer, 14). This heightened awareness of "difference" calls for educators to scrutinize how the characteristics of a sedentary education system contribute to a Traveller's identity and sense of belonging. If these are indeed common feelings experienced when entering formal settings, we can begin to understand why these youth feel that formal education is not for them. Traveller youths expressed more positive views toward learning when it clearly linked to their futures: "It's good to have an education...so when you're older you can get a better job" (Thomas, 11); "As you're growing up...you really do need to read...for your driving...how to pay your bills" (Katrina, 14). Nevertheless, most Gypsy/Traveller youth did not attend formal schooling.

The Roma group had clear ideas about career paths, concurring that school played a vital role. Sophia (10) explained: "I'm going to buy a car...and I'm going to be a singer! School teaches you about money...and helps you learn," while Camila (7) revealed that "I want to be a doctor...school helps you learn, write, read, to count, and speak English." All the Roma children attended elementary school and were positive about their school experiences and transitions to further education.

Our findings show that there is a need for initiatives to explore how these pathways can be made more relevant for mobile cultures, and address the common feeling of "other" when entering formal settings. We posit that two central issues can assist in achieving this. The first is the relevance and accessibility of the curriculum. For example, the content and learning approaches must reflect mobile lifestyles, values, and experiences. Many are coming from a setting that has almost no written language (i.e. traditionally an



oral culture, with low family literacy levels) to a setting that revolves around the need to be literate. Practices such as the use of multimodal content, distance learning, and experiential learning opportunities should be considered. Rather than assimilating these communities to sedentary learning systems, schools must work toward delivering an education that resonates with geographically fluid and culturally rich communities.

The second issue relates to pupil voice. Many are the first in their family to attend formal schooling. Scottish Gypsies/ Travellers often withdraw children from school at an early age as a way of maintaining their culture and lifestyles, while Roma families may not have experienced schooling due to historical practices of exclusion and segregation from education systems. However, more recognize the benefits of formal qualifications and literacy to access a wider range of jobs, and as a route out of poverty. Understanding this generation's motivation to learn is necessary. They should understand the power of a "critical" voice (Hadfield and Haw 2001) that can challenge existing practices and contribute to educational decision-making. However, change may never happen unless schools adopt new methods where mobile pupils know that their "critical" voices are listened to and have influence. Teachers must facilitate processes, value pupils' ideas, and challenge them so that they understand their own views in relation to others. The education system must acknowledge that youth are negotiating new and unknown contexts and relationships, even before any learning can happen. The most important thing they can do is support these processes.

## REFERENCES

Amnesty International. 2011. "International Roma Day 2011: Stories, background information and video



material." Available from: <https://web.archive.org/web/20110605090848/http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR01/005/2011/en/bf209ce2-7355-4faf-b1cb-24ae8fd986e0/eur-010052011en.pdf>

Hadfield, Mark and Kaye Haw. 2001. "'Voice', Young People and Action Research." *Educational Action Research* 9, no. 3: 485–502.

Lloyd, Gwynedd and Gillian McCluskey. 2008. "Education and Gypsies/ Travellers: Contradictions and Significant Silences." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 12, no. 4: 331–345.

Open Society Foundation. 2012. "Czech Roma Still Face 'Educational Apartheid,' Despite Court Ruling Five Years Ago."

Available from: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/press-releases/czech-roma-still-face-educational-apartheid-despite-court-ruling-five-years-ago>

Wilkin, Anne, Chris Derrington, Richard White, Kerry Martin, Brian Foster, Kay Kinder, and Simon Rutt. 2010. "Improving the Outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils: Final Report." Research Report DFE-RR043. UK. Available from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/181669/DFE-RR043.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181669/DFE-RR043.pdf)

## CHILDHOOD AND \_\_\_\_\_ COLUMN

### Childhood, Play, and Funds of Knowledge in the Classroom

Tori K. Flint (U Louisiana, Lafayette)

In today's standards-driven era, time for play is shrinking in early childhood classrooms (Wohlwend 2013) and is nearly non-existent in elementary settings. In many educational and governmental circles, emphasis in early childhood and elementary classrooms is placed on instruction that focuses primarily on children's cognitive and language skills (Smith 2007), as these are often deemed most important to children's growth and learning. These beliefs, along with strict policy mandates and curriculum standards, have resulted in a focus on academic curriculum in many schools and a belief that the way children learn best is through explicit instruction. This has resulted in the devaluation of play as an essential component of children's learning in the classroom context. Consequently, playtime has been marginalized in many preschool and elementary school curricula, and time for it has thus become less of a priority (Pellegrini and Blatchford 2000; Zigler and Bishop-Josef 2005).

The United States' need to compete in a global market is a factor in this emphasis on standards, accountability, and testing. As a result, exploration and play—although they are primary ways that children of all ages participate in and understand their worlds—are replaced with explicit, academic, and rote instruction. This prioritization does not necessarily support children's meaningful application of knowledge, creative thinking, or

in-depth understanding, often leaving the child out of the learning process and disregarding the learning needs of many students (Olfman 2003).

#### “Funds of knowledge” at play in the classroom

Children carry with them their “funds of knowledge” (González, Moll, and Amanti 2005). Moll (1992, 21) notes that these funds of knowledge are the “essential cultural practices and bodies of knowledge and information that households use to survive, to get ahead, or to thrive,” including language, religion, traditions, knowledge, and experiences.

What administrators and educators in favor of limited play and a focus on explicit instruction often seem to overlook is that, just as adults in society utilize their funds of knowledge to successfully navigate their worlds, children also utilize their funds of knowledge as resources for learning, for skill development, and to perform varying tasks within their worlds, including the classroom. Children bring their cultural practices and sociocultural resources with them to the classroom context (Riojas-Cortez 2001) and these resources are often exhibited, demonstrated, and shared by children naturally, through play. Play provides opportunities for children of all ages to invent new learning strategies and to support classroom interactions by allowing them to draw on their varied funds of knowledge (Long, Volk, and Gregory 2007). Because children's funds of knowledge are deeply embedded in their playful interactions, teachers can utilize play as a means to implement children's experiences into the curriculum in relevant forms. Children's experiences and knowledge, demonstrated through their play, can be observed and incorporated by teachers into content and curriculum in ways that can help students develop language, literacy, and school-related skills in meaningful contexts (Riojas-

Cortez 2001).

In the culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms of today, play can also be utilized to refute the notion that children from non-dominant cultures come to school with deficits. The deficit view posits that children from non-dominant cultures are to blame for their educational underachievement. This model attributes students' lack of academic success to “characteristics that are often rooted in their cultures and communities” (Irizarry 2009, 1). Play provides opportunities for children to draw on their cultural experiences in order to add to and support language and literacy interactions in the classroom (Long et al. 2007). Play can also provide children with opportunities to utilize their funds of knowledge to actively participate in personally significant classroom learning experiences. This additive view, as opposed to the deficit view, holds that children come to school with various resources and funds of knowledge, all of which are useful in the educational context.

#### A classroom example

In this excerpt, from my research on children's play in response to storybooks (responsive play) in a first grade classroom (Flint 2016), Julieta and Francisco read the book *Too Many Tamales* by Gary Soto (1992), a story about Maria who helps to make Christmas tamales.

**Francisco:** (Pretending to be a child in the story) Mom, what are you making?

**Julieta:** Tamales...

**Francisco:** Do you have tamales at home?

**Julieta:** Yes! They are in the fridge though.

**Francisco:** I help make them.

**Julieta:** I don't. Mine has olives or something in it though and they don't taste good.

**Francisco:** Let's make tamales!

**Julieta:** Yah! (They begin to stir in make-believe bowls and "make" tamales together)

The two share their funds of knowledge as they relate to the story and as they transact and respond through play, *becoming* the characters. As traditional food preparation, such as the making of tamales, is a common practice in both of their homes and is thus an important part of both of their home funds of knowledge, they discuss this topic as they transact with the book.

The playful transactions with each other and with the text created a space that allowed these two to share their funds of knowledge and link them to the text in personally relevant and meaningful ways as they made meaning and constructed understanding together in the classroom, through play.

### Concluding insights

Children draw from their experiences in order to inform and support their learning and understanding (as well as the learning of others) within diverse classroom contexts, while they demonstrate their valuable funds of knowledge through playful responses and interactions. Accordingly, play can be understood as a "fertile site for cultural renovation and innovation" (Long et al. 2007, 255). Children instinctively incorporate and demonstrate their abundant funds of knowledge through play. Play thus allows children to share their knowledge and to cooperatively create new spaces for learning and cultural practice within the classroom context (Flint 2016; Leander and Rowe 2006).

## REFERENCES

- Flint, Tori Kyle. 2016. "Responsive Play: Exploring Play as Reader Response in a First Grade Classroom." PhD diss., University of Arizona.
- González, Norma, Luis C. Moll, and Cathy Amanti, eds. 2006. *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Irizarry, J. 2009. "Cultural Deficit Model." Education.com, December 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.education.com/reference/article/cultural-deficit-model/> Google Scholar.
- Leander, Kevin M., and Deborah Wells Rowe. 2006. "Mapping Literacy Spaces in Motion: A Rhizomatic Analysis of a Classroom Literacy Performance." *Reading Research Quarterly* 41, no. 4: 428–460.
- Long, Susi, Dinah Volk, and Eve Gregory. 2007. "Intentionality and Expertise: Learning from Observations of Children at Play in Multilingual, Multicultural Contexts." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 38, no. 3: 239.
- Moll, Luis C. 1992. "Bilingual Classroom Studies and Community Analysis: Some Recent Trends." *Educational researcher* 21, no. 2: 20–24.
- Olfman, Sharna. 2003. *All Work and No Play: How Educational Reforms are Harming Our Preschoolers*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Pellegrini, Anthony D., and Peter Blatchford. 2000. *The Child at School: Interactions with Peers and Teachers*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Riojas-Cortez, Mari. 2001. "Preschoolers' Funds of Knowledge Displayed Through Sociodramatic Play Episodes in a Bilingual Classroom." *Early Childhood Education Journal* 29, no. 1: 35–40.
- Smith, Peter K. 2007. "Pretend Play and Children's Cognitive and Literacy Development: Sources of Evidence and Some Lessons from the Past." *Play and Literacy in Early Childhood: Research from Multiple Perspectives 2*: 3–19.
- Wohlwend, Karen E. 2013. *Literacy Playshop: New Literacies, Popular Media, and Play in the Early Childhood Classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Zigler, Edward F., and Sandra J. Bishop-Josef. 2004. "Play Under Siege." *Yale's Center in Child Development and Social Policy* 21: 1–4.

---

## Childhood and Restorative Justice in the United States

---

Amanda J. Reinke (Georgia College)

---

In the United States, states such as California and Virginia are tentatively adopting restorative justice as part of their juvenile justice processes and procedures in an effort to fulfill a rehabilitative (rather than strictly punitive) mandate. While there is no precise definition for restorative justice (RJ), its foundation rests upon a participatory ethos of care that addresses the harms, needs, and obligations for both the offender(s) and victim(s) (Zehr 2002).

Implementing RJ processes into the formal legal system is a social justice endeavor to mitigate the state's juridical violence in politically, socially, and economically marginalized communities. However, RJ practitioners working with youth also underscore the need to examine the child holistically. These advocates consider RJ ideal for rehabilitating and reforming youth because this conflict resolution framework may reveal and grapple with underlying causes or contributing factors to crime—for example, rapid community changes, substance abuse, developmental challenges, or home life issues. Interest among RJ practitioners, judges, and lawyers in implementing RJ as part of the juvenile justice system has



surged as these stakeholders recognize that the “tough on crime” policies of the 1980s and 1990s have summarily failed to rehabilitate youth or deter crime, and as evidence mounts attesting to the early manifestation of restorative principles among children as young as three (Riedl et al. 2015). The ongoing work reveals how we think about and perceive children, childhood, and their proper place in society.

The types of RJ programs serving juveniles vary widely—some may work only with previously incarcerated youth (rehabilitative), while others work in schools before youth are in conflict with the law (deterrent). At one of my field sites in Virginia, RJ is implemented in the school environment as part of a weeks-long curricular activity. Operating as a preventative program to keep youth out of conflict with the law, practitioners volunteer their time in the school to transmit restorative values, seeking to reconfigure youths’ perspectives on violations of normative behavior (see Utheim 2011).

Children and youth in conflict with the law are rarely seen or heard; RJ practitioners seek to make them visible to policymakers who are disassociated from the effects of the decisions they make regarding juvenile justice. One practitioner, a former social worker and lawyer now working with a nonprofit in Virginia, highlights the need to see children in conflict with the law in a holistic sense:

**“[I was] involved in the legal arena and just seeing, especially with juveniles, how they get caught up in that system and get those labels put on them and then sort of get written off and just seeing that nobody was really looking at that whole child; they were just looking at that incident, whatever that violation might have been.”**

For her, the whole child includes examining the contributing social, economic, psychological, and political pushes that youth in the area experience, which often land them in conflict with the law at a young age. She works with local schools to transmit values such as empathy, accountability, honesty, and respect to students—the foundations of what RJ practitioners believe builds effective communication and nonviolent actions that will keep a child from being in conflict with the law.

Other practitioners take this a step further by working with children and youth in conflict with the law in an effort to make children visible further up the political decision-making chain. According to a Virginia practitioner and former lawyer, “Once they’re locked up, honey, they [legislators] don’t care.” Despite the fact that they make and shape policy that directly affects juvenile experiences in the legal system, policymakers may have limited knowledge of the myriad ways their policy affects children, their families and schools, and the broader community. RJ nonprofits and the practitioners who work within them thus want to make these issues visible through their programs, public engagements, and solicitations of support.

Despite these implementation challenges, RJ practitioners and advocates see their work as part of broader social transformation efforts to address pervasive issues, such as mass incarceration and the school-to-prison pipeline. RJ practitioners work as volunteers, lawyers, advocates, and community members; they often work within a juridical gray space at the confluence of formal law—considered overly reliant upon ineffective tough-on-crime policies—and the informal legal realm, which emphasizes a community-based ethos of care (Reinke 2016). The boundaries, procedures, and processes of RJ’s existence within this space and its relationship to formal law is being constantly contested and negoti-

ated by state and nonstate actors as they seek to define justice, childhood, and how to appropriately navigate violations against normative behavior.

Juvenile justice and the efficacy of utilizing restorative justice to address youth crime is an ongoing debate. In part, this debate reveals how we think about and perceive childhood, children, and their proper place in society. Children are considered innocent and in need of rehabilitation (righting an educational wrong or poor socialization), and simultaneously in danger because they are malleable and impressionable. Many practitioners recognize this duality and, for those children who need help, try “to put their feet in a different path...and if they go down that path to see if there’s something [else] that can be.” For the other youth, “The only one that’s going to save them is themselves . . . and some of them don’t need saving because they’re doing fine.”

## REFERENCES

- Reinke, Amanda J. 2016. “Advancing Social Justice Through Conflict Resolution Amid Rapid Urban Transformation of the San Francisco Bay Area.” PhD diss., University of Tennessee.
- Riedl, Katrin, Keith Jensen, Josep Call, and Michael Tomasello. 2015. “Restorative Justice in Children.” *Current Biology* 25: 1731–5.
- Utheim, Ragnhild. 2011. “Restoring Community in the Era of Mass Incarceration.” *Anthropology News* 52, no. 7: 8, 11.
- Zehr, Howard. 2002. *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing.



## Childhood and Empathic Aid: Educating Others about Child Suffering

Sara E. Lahti Thiam  
(Case Western Reserve U)

As Jonathan Benthall (2010[1993]) asserts, critical studies of international aid to children have long pointed out the ethical dilemma of displaying images of their suffering to garner support. Such images still circulate in NGO and activist realms, with continued justification that the benefits of their tempered use outweigh the potential downfalls, which include the objectification of children, commodification of suffering, and portrayals of children in resource-scarce settings as passive and helpless. Beyond questioning visual ethics, I challenge the assumption that shocking imagery is a “necessary evil” to improve children’s lot in the end. In fact, in the case of aid to Senegal’s Qur’anic school students, called *taalibes*, who beg to support their studies of the Qur’an, shocking images of child suffering have likely had more negative than positive effects over the long term (see also Thiam, forthcoming).

During 12 months of fieldwork in Senegal and Mali in 2010 and 2007 on aid projects targeting the *taalibes*, I saw thousands of children begging in city streets, hundreds of hand-to-hand donations of alms, and nearly as many NGO and other aid projects touting their objectives to “get the kids out of the streets!” Advocates use video and photographs to express outrage at the egregious treatment of helpless children, and nostalgia for their “lost” childhoods.

Human Rights Watch released a vivid, graphic report in 2010 that called an estimated 50,000 begging *taalibes* child slaves and victims of torture. This por-

trayal of Qur’anic students as slaves, and their instructors as human traffickers, directly contradicted popular perceptions in Senegal of *taalibe* begging, despite broad acknowledgement that corruption exists. The Senegalese people are used to foreigners criticizing traditional Qur’anic education. Early 20th Century French colonial reports disparaged the schools’ rote pedagogy and reliance on corporal punishment. Current analyses follow suit, citing global educational standards to deem the training inadequate for modern social life. But popular desire to preserve the floundering institution—through child begging, if necessary—endures.



Begging *taalibe* boys surround a vehicle in Saint-Louis, Senegal.

The resulting momentum within transnational circles after the release of the HRW report was enough to pressure then President Wade to ban begging in Dakar. The ban cleared the streets of beggars, but it was short-lived. A nationwide collective of Qur’anic school associations initiated clamorous nationwide protests, derailing their existing negotiations with state and non-state partners to limit child begging. Opposition press railed against the President’s weakness under foreign pressures, highlighting his hypocrisy for prohibiting begging at home to enhance his own begging to foreign donors. The President reversed the ban, affirming that “almsgiving is a part of [our] religion,” and promising “other measures” to prevent child exploitation. Seven years and

a president later, the *taalibes* are still begging (HRW 2017). This case represents a highly effective use of emotive communications of children’s suffering to get a head of state to react. However, the long-term impact was at best to preserve the status quo.

Transnational advocates’ communications about *taalibe* suffering are often directed toward the Global North, to compassionate adults who open their hearts and their wallets to the *taalibes*’ plight. As I reflect on this foreign audience perspective, I turn to Neil Postman’s (1982) classic, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, to think through the power of graphic images to flatten complexity and incite spectators to process information emotionally. Postman’s provocative claim that the morally protected social space of childhood is eroding hinges on the argument that children can cognitively process images in the realm of emotion much earlier than they can decipher and process meaning from writing, where adult content had been kept separate from children after the invention of the printing press. Rather than gradually gaining access to adult worlds by gaining reading competency, ubiquitous television and film exposes children to adult content and behaviors virtually from birth.

It is ironic that, with respect to that very medium of visual images to which Postman attributes childhood’s demise, we as global spectators are viewing other children’s experiences filtered through our own cultural understandings of what an appropriately protected childhood should look like, and are experiencing intense reactions of empathy. When gazing upon images of *taalibes* scouring streets barefoot with begging cans, audiences in the Global North immediately perceive the stark deviation of this experience from their own visions of ideal childhood. What viewers cannot see are the socio-cultural, religious, and political

factors that converge to make begging a culturally-sanctioned child role in Senegal, and therefore not easily condemned outright. In seeing images of suffering children from afar, we become metaphorical cognitive children in Postman's formulation, reacting to emotive images without the capacity to understand what caused their suffering and how to deal with it.

As researchers, we can reason through the causes and potential short- and long-term solutions to child suffering in distant places over years of study. We can relay this to others with stories and statistics. But to convey nuanced understandings, it first requires audiences be familiar with international economic policies and repercussions over time, cross-cultural variations in social organization, beliefs and practices, regional history and politics, power roles of transnational actors and their local partners, and varying outcomes of development and health initiatives to date. Yet in terms of audience impact, these analytical discourses cannot compete in speed and magnitude with the instantaneous emotional effects of images, where people with no background understanding of the context can feel another's suffering through interpersonal empathy, immediately.

Visceral reactions incited by images of suffering children can be powerful motivators for people to donate money, change their politics, or even become volunteers or activists themselves. Following this logic, advocates who employ such images assume that they are a means to a productive end, perhaps inciting public outrage and collective pressure for changes—but what changes?

If an organization's ultimate goal is to shock audiences to generate money or outrage, the mobilization of images of child suffering in a visible campaign is a highly effective means to that end. But if the objective is to improve the long-



*Begging taalibe boys surround a vehicle in Saint-Louis, Senegal.*

term well-being of the children depicted, organizations should start with that end in mind. This means that in particular cases, such as with the *taalibes* of Senegal, the exhibition of shocking images may fail to bring lasting change. Rather, it may even hinder it. As informed adult actors, we should strive to develop policies and structures that secure children's basic rights as human beings and citizens of nations without the need to first garner empathy for their pain. Indeed, decision-making is likely more sound when these goals are sought in the absence of heightened emotions, which do not necessarily tell a complete enough story to enable useful action.

**Photo Credits:** The author retains all rights and credits to submitted photographs.

#### REFERENCES:

Benthall, Jonathan. 2010[1993]. *Disasters, Relief and the Media*. Wantage: Sean Kingston Publishing.

HRW, Human Rights Watch. 2010. "Off the Backs of the Children': Forced

Begging and Other Abuses Against Talibés in Senegal." April 15, 2010. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/04/15/back-children/forced-begging-and-other-abuses-against-talibes-senegal>

HRW, Human Rights Watch. 2017. "I Still See the Talibés Begging': Government Program to Protect Talibé Children in Senegal Falls Short." July 11, 2017. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/07/11/i-still-see-talibes-begging/government-program-protect-talibe-children-senegal>

Postman, Neil. 1982. *The Disappearance of Childhood*. New York: Delacorte Press.

Thiam, Sara. Forthcoming. "The Limits of Shock and Shame: An Ethnographic Case Analysis of the Naming and Shaming Technique to Promote Human Rights for the *Taalibe* Qur'anic School Students of Senegal." *Human Rights Quarterly*.



## AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN OR YOUTH THAT HAS IMPACTED MY WORK

### **“What if the Kids Don’t Like Me?” Using Ethnography to Guide Future Child Researchers**

Robyn M. Holmes (Monmouth U)

As a child researcher and anthropologist teaching in a quantitatively oriented psychology department, one goal I have is to introduce our students to diverse ways of knowing and studying children. Ethnographies are excellent teaching tools to help students learn to appreciate the value of qualitative approaches and how rich, substantive, contextual information informs our understanding of children and their lived realities. Ethnographies also help students come to terms with the concerns they have about the research process and researching children. The title of this piece was a comment from a student during a class discussion before beginning her fieldwork project. It highlights the concern and anxiety novice student researchers have about their entry into the field and ability to establish rapport with child participants.

One ethnographic collection I find particularly useful in helping students process the cultural variability of children’s experiences is Catherine Allerton’s (2016) edited work, *Children: Ethnographic Encounters*. This volume contains firsthand fieldwork accounts that explore children’s lived experiences in commu-

nities on the continents of Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, and South America. Each of the chapters gives voice to the children’s experiences and in their own terms. Also, Allerton’s volume works well in concert with other ethnographies. Her text helps students understand children’s agency and how children construct meaning from their social interactions across diverse cultural settings and communities.

At our institution, psychology majors design an original, empirical research project to fulfill their thesis requirement. Most of these projects are laboratory studies that utilize university students as participants. My thesis students pursue fieldwork projects working with children primarily in school settings. To help my students learn about the technical and subjective aspects of fieldwork, I use Allerton’s collection along with H. Russell Bernard’s (2018) *Research Methods in Anthropology* when we discuss the methodological issues that arise when working with child participants. The chapters in Allerton’s collection highlight the decision-making processes, conflicts, successes, challenges, failures, the position of the “other,” and the choices child researchers make with respect to roles in the field. The firsthand accounts help students think critically about the nature of the research process and how subjectivity plays a role in that process.

I use Allerton’s text for teaching fieldwork methods to highlight the bi-directional nature of researching children—the impact children have on the researchers who study them and what researchers learn from their fieldwork experience with children. The text is versatile because the ethnographic cases transverse the lived realities of vulnerable children, the cultural variability of parent-child interactions, the pitfalls and successes of methodological approaches, and schooling. When discussing methods, I typically integrate Cindy Dell Clark’s (2011)

*In A Younger Voice*, with Heather Montgomery’s chapter in Allerton’s volume on child prostitutes. Dell Clark’s discussion of methodological approaches and how child researchers might modify these to make them child friendly blends nicely with Montgomery’s honest account of working with vulnerable children. Montgomery’s chapter helps frame our class discussions regarding ethical concerns such as the protection of child participants and children’s rights.

I follow Montgomery’s chapter with Maja Haals Brosnan, Catherine Allerton, James Johnston, and Peggy Froerer’s contributions to the Allerton collection. Each of these chapters provides material that helps students learn how fieldworkers establish relationships, make decisions about method choices, and navigate their social roles. For example, Allerton discusses her fieldwork in Malaysia and the ease with which she connected with some children and the difficulty she experienced establishing relationships with children she initially found difficult to get to know. This concern resonates with my students who are anxious about connecting with their child participants. This chapter also gives me the opportunity to share my fieldwork experiences and how I connect with children.

Johnson’s work in Chinese schools leads to discussions about how researcher characteristics and qualities shape the fieldwork experience. This chapter generates student questions and discussions on reducing adult authority, minimizing adult-child social distance, distancing oneself from the teacher, the advantages of taking on the friend role, and learning about the social role of “the other.” This chapter helps students think critically about the different roles they might experience in the field, including researcher, friend, and substitute caregiver. I use Froerer’s work with Indian children as it provides information on the decision-making processes regarding the physical



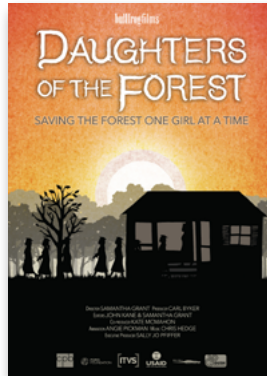
positioning of the fieldworker on school premises. As most of my students engage in fieldwork in school settings, this work generates class discussions and student questions regarding how to know where, when, and what to observe.

In conclusion, my students express concern about their ability to establish rapport with child participants and these chapters provide talking points for their concerns. In class, I share my fieldwork experiences with children, provide helpful suggestions, and reassure my students that even seasoned fieldworkers think about their experiences in similar ways and have similar concerns as novice fieldworkers. The reflexive tone of the chapters in Allerton's collection helps students personalize the fieldwork process and the children with whom they will work. They learn to view children as active agents who creatively construct and extract meaning from their daily social interactions, and that the relationship between fieldworker and children is a bidirectional one. In their fieldwork experiences, my students come to discover knowledge about themselves and the children with whom they worked. Allerton's work helps my students think critically and reflexively about their experiences in the field, and shapes their conceptions and understanding about children.

## REFERENCES

- Allerton, Catherine. 2016. *Children—Ethnographic Encounters*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Bernard, H. Russell. 2018. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 6th ed. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press/Rowan & Littlefield.
- Dell Clark, Cindy. 2011. *In a Younger Voice: Doing Child-Centered Qualitative Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

## NEW BOOK ANNOUNCEMENTS

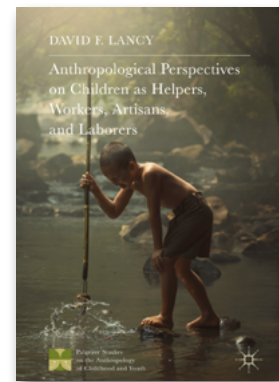


*Daughters of the Forest*  
Samantha Grant (director)  
US Release Date: 2017  
Bullfrog Films  
\$295 (purchase with public performance rights)  
\$95 (classroom rental)

The film *Daughters of the Forest* tells the uplifting story of a small group of girls in one of the most remote forests left on earth who attend a radical high school where they learn to protect the threatened forest and forge a better future for themselves.

Set in the Mbaracayú Reserve in rural Paraguay, this documentary offers a glimpse into the Mbaracayú Forest Girls' School, a place where 150 girls are becoming some of the most financially literate young people in South America—not just because they learn economics along with all of the other traditional subjects, but because they are putting what they learn into practice.

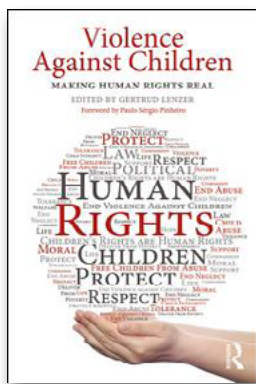
Filmed over the course of five years, this film follows the girls from their homes in indigenous villages through the year after their graduation.



*Anthropological Perspectives on Children as Helpers, Workers, Artisans, and Laborers*  
David F. Lancy  
Palgrave Macmillan  
2018  
\$99 (hardcover)  
eBook and Paperback forthcoming

The study of childhood in academia has been dominated by a mono-cultural or WEIRD (western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) perspective. Within the field of anthropology, however, a contrasting and more varied view is emerging. While the phenomenon of children as workers is ephemeral in WEIRD societies and in the literature on child development, there is ample cross-cultural and historical evidence of children making vital contributions to the family economy. Children's "labor" is of great interest to researchers, but widely treated as extra-cultural—an aberration that must be controlled. Work as a central component in children's lives, development, and identity goes unappreciated. *Anthropological Perspectives on Children as Helpers, Workers, Artisans, and Laborers* aims to rectify that omission by surveying and synthesizing a robust corpus of material, with particular emphasis on two prominent themes: the processes involved in learning to work and the interaction between ontogeny and children's roles as workers.





*Violence Against Children: Making Human Rights Real*

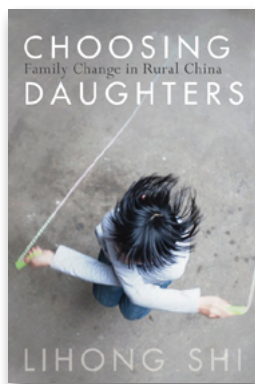
Gertrud Lenzer  
Routledge

January 2018

\$165 (hardcover) \$39.95 (paperback)

\$35.96 (eBook)

Drawing on the experience of scholars and practitioners from a wide range of disciplines, *Violence Against Children: Making Human Rights Real* is the definitive resource for anyone seeking to understand and combat all forms of child maltreatment. Firmly rooted in a holistic, public health perspective, each chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the data and research relevant to different forms of violence, from physical and sexual abuse to poverty, homelessness, racism, and youth incarceration. The chapters also offer compelling proposals for prevention and intervention, covering policy, systemic, and programmatic solutions.



*Choosing Daughters: Family Change in Rural China*

Lihong Shi

Stanford University Press

July 2017

\$27.95

China's patrilineal and patriarchal tradition has encouraged a long-standing preference for male heirs within families. Coupled with China's birth-planning policy, this has led to a severe gender imbalance. However, a counter pattern is emerging in rural China, where a noticeable proportion of young couples have willingly accepted having a single daughter. They are doing so even as birth-planning policies are being relaxed and having a second child—and thus the potential to have a son—is a new possibility.

*Choosing Daughters* explores this critical, yet largely overlooked, reproductive pattern emerging in China's demographic landscape. Lihong Shi delves into the social, economic, and cultural forces behind the complex decision-making processes of these couples, unraveling their life goals and childrearing aspirations, changing family dynamics and gender relations, and the intimate parent-daughter ties that have engendered this drastic transformation of reproductive choice. She also reveals a leading-edge social force that fosters China's recent fertility decline: namely, the pursuit of a

modern family and successful childrearing achieved through having a small family. Through this discussion, Shi refutes the conventional understanding of a universal preference for sons and discrimination against daughters in China, and counters claims of continuing resistance against China's population control program.



## MEMBER NEWS

### Conference Calls for Papers

#### CALL FOR PAPERS— STORYTELLING CONFERENCE

University of Suffolk  
July 10–11, 2018

We are excited to announce that the call for papers for our Storytelling Conference is now open. We invite papers that theoretically and empirically engage with a broad range of disciplines reflecting the diverse nature of storytelling and stories, substantively and methodologically. The conference aims to bring together established academics, early career researchers, PhD candidates, and students. We welcome traditional presentations of 20 minutes with additional time for questions, pre-formed panels of speakers, and posters, as well as alternative modes of presentation including performance, film, photography, etc. **Please send 250-word abstracts for a 20-minute presentation, 500-word abstracts for panels, and 150-word abstracts for posters to [storytellingpapers@uos.ac.uk](mailto:storytellingpapers@uos.ac.uk). The deadline for submissions is March 30, 2018.** We look forward to receiving your submissions. For more information, please visit <https://www.uos.ac.uk/content/storytelling-conference-2018>.

#### CALL FOR ARTICLES— GIRLHOOD STUDIES SPECIAL ISSUE “QUEERING GIRLHOOD”

This Special Issue of *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* takes up the project of bringing the queer girl from the margins to the center of girls' studies by inviting articles from various disciplinary perspectives that explore the

experiences and representations of queer girls, as well as the impact of queer girl cultures on the understanding of girlhood. When they appear in public discourse or popular representations, which happens far too infrequently, queer girls usually act as representative of a problem to be solved, a phase to grow out of, or a minor point within a larger debate about young female sexuality. Because they are so obviously marginalized by and/or resistant to normative constructions of gender and sexuality, queer girls provoke a number of important critical questions for definitions of youth and of girlhood. **Please direct inquiries to Barbara Jane Brickman ([bjbrickman@ua.edu](mailto:bjbrickman@ua.edu)) and send expressions of interest and/or abstracts to her by February 19, 2018.** Full manuscripts are due by July 16, 2018. For more information, see [www.berghahnjournals.com/girlhood-studies](http://www.berghahnjournals.com/girlhood-studies).

### Calls For Applications

#### SUMMER INSTITUTE IN MIGRATION RESEARCH METHODS

June 17–28, 2018

The Summer Institute welcomes applicants from all of the social sciences. The purpose of the Summer Institute is to train a new generation of US migration researchers to leverage existing datasets and learn best-practices for rigorous new data-collection projects, as well as to provide instruction in cutting edge methodologies particularly relevant to the study of mobile populations. Participation is restricted to PhD students, postdoctoral researchers, and untenured faculty within 5 years of receiving their PhD. Most participant costs during the workshop, including housing and most meals, will be covered, and most travel expenses will be reimbursed up to a set cap. We

expect that about 30 participants will be invited. We anticipate a large pool of highly qualified applicants and plan to make final decisions quickly, so **complete applications must be received by the deadline, February 23, 2018**—no extensions will be granted. **Inquiries can be sent to [jasmijnslootjes@berkeley.edu](mailto:jasmijnslootjes@berkeley.edu).** Please mention “Inquiry Summer Institute in Migration Research Methods” in the subject line or check the website <https://www.russellsage.org/summer-institute-migration-research-methods-june-17-28-2018> for regular updates.

## SOLICITATIONS FOR OCTOBER 2018

We are soliciting the following articles and features from ACYIG members for the next issue of *Neos*:

### PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES (1000 WORDS OR LESS, INCLUDING REFERENCES)

**Methods and Ethics in the Anthropology of Childhood**, in which members explore the methods and ethics associated with doing research on, or with, children.

**Childhood and \_\_\_\_\_** (you fill in the blank!), in which members discuss a topic of interest to their research.

**My Experiences/Intersections with Interdisciplinary Research on Children and Youth**, in which members investigate the value, pitfalls, and lessons associated with combining anthropological research with that of other disciplines to study children and youth.

**An Ethnography of Children or Youth that has Impacted My Work**, in which members discuss their favorite classic or contemporary ethnography of children or youth. Note that this should NOT be written as a book review, but rather as an account of how a particular ethnography has impacted your theoretical or methodological approach, or how it might be used in your teaching.

**Children and Youth in Our Lives and Our Work**, in which members discuss the challenges and triumphs of balancing their own lives with their research, focusing particularly on the fieldwork stage.

## FEATURES

**Letters to the Editor** (250 words or less), in which members comment on *Neos* and/or its contents.

**Obituaries** (250 words or less), in which members share memories of an anthropologist of children and youth. Please notify the Editor of your intent to submit an obituary.

**Photos from the Field**, which should be accompanied by a caption of 30 words or less explaining the context of the photo.

**Unsung Heroes of ACYIG** (1000 words or less), in which members interview an important contributor to ACYIG. Please notify the Editor of your intent to submit an interview. See the February 2016 issue for an example.

**New Book Announcements** (250 words or less), which must include the title, author, publisher (and the book series, if applicable), date of publication, and listing price of the book, in addition to a description of the contents. If possible, please send—as a separate attachment—a digital image of the book cover.

**Member News** (200 words or less), in which members may submit job announcements and research opportunities; grants/prizes available; calls for papers and conference announcements; recent appointments; grants received and/or prizes awarded; publication announcements; and other professional achievements.

**Correction Notices** may be submitted to the editor if *Neos* has printed an error in a previous issue.

Please refer to the General Submission Guidelines and Author Agreement for Publication on our website for more detailed information. All material should be sent to [ACYIG.Editor@gmail.com](mailto:ACYIG.Editor@gmail.com).

## NEOS CONTRIBUTORS

**Editor:** Véronique Gilbert  
(Independent Scholar)

**Layout Editor:** Álvaro Vargas  
(Rongo Media)

**Copy Editor:** Nicole Gallicchio  
(U Chicago)

**Assistant Editor for New Book Announcements:** Anne Pfister  
(U of North Florida)

**Assistant Editor for Member News:**  
Krista Billingsley  
(U Tennessee, Knoxville)

**Assistant Editor for Updates:**  
Matilda Stubbs  
(Northwestern U)

### ACYIG Newsletter Advisory Board:

- Jaycee Bigham  
(UC Santa Barbara)
- Caroline Compretta  
(U Mississippi Medical Center)
- Rebecca Grunzke  
(Mercer U)
- Anne Karabon  
(U of Nebraska Omaha)
- Jen Tilton (U of Redlands)

## STAY IN TOUCH

### Website and Blog

<http://acyig.americananthro.org>

### Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/ACYIG>

### Twitter

[https://twitter.com/acyig\\_aa](https://twitter.com/acyig_aa)

### Neos Editor

[ACYIG.Editor@gmail.com](mailto:ACYIG.Editor@gmail.com)