

[Children's Rights and Protection through Decolonial and Childist Approaches](#)

Announcement published by Tanu Biswas on Monday, April 12, 2021

Type:

Call for Papers

Subject Fields:

Childhood and Education, Government and Public Service, Human Rights, Humanities, Social Sciences

This Special Issue of *Societies* will explore interconnected debates regarding children's rights and child protection to broaden understandings of children's experiences of marginalization and empowerment in the world today, as well as orientations towards sustainable, intergenerational coexistence and global futures. We especially call for authors to contribute to this exploration using decolonial and childist approaches.

The past decades saw the proliferation of publications that contest children's rights and policies and practices, which are often understood in the narrow and instrumental implementation of the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Wall (2008) has argued that children will remain second class citizens until the idea of human rights itself is rethought in the light of childhood. Ansell (2015) called to move away from the ritualistic celebration of children's rights to instead understand the complex ways in which diverse processes, policies, and interventions serve to advance or harm children's rights and wellbeing through the lens of social justice. Hanson and Nieuwenhuys (2013) advocate for "living rights", arguing how children, families, and communities make sense of rights not because of their exposure to metropolitan rights discourse but as they struggle to make sense of their daily existence. Abebe (2013) reconceptualizes how children's rights are interdependent with those of households and wider family collectives and that a child's "individual right" is a site where familial obligations, aspirations, priorities, and futures are enacted. These epistemological and political transformations evoked by "interdependence", "living rights" and "social justice" provoke changes in the modern colonial matrix of power, knowledge and practices linked to the human rights of children, childhood, and societal futures. They also call for indigenizing and decolonizing children's rights and child protection practices through the childist lens as well as rethinking them in ways that promote intergenerational connections (Abebe and Biswas 2021).

This Special Issue of *Societies* will critically explore the interplay between ideas of children's rights and the practices of safeguarding those rights by actors/institutions/stakeholders of childhood at multiple scales and contexts. We conceptualize child protection broadly to encompass child protection services, social networks, laws, institutions, discourses, policies, and practices that govern childhood, and children's everyday lives and rights. Not only are children's wellbeing and protection inextricably linked to hegemonic values and ideals of childhood, but also interpretations of children's rights and how they should be operationalized in safeguarding children's wellbeing. Accordingly, we raise the following questions: How could "protection" be understood and practiced from non-paternalistic standpoints? How are child protection and children's rights intertwined, conflated, contradicted, and operationalized by families, communities, children, states, civil society and

international organizations? What are the tensions and (dis)entanglements between the participation and protection rights of children on the one hand, and on the other, “living rights” that come into existence as children, families, and communities envision and struggle to realize their interdependent existence and futures? How can indigenous cultural norms, ideas and practices linked to child-rearing be included in formal and institutionalized practices of child protection? How can emic and indigenous rights of children enhance children’s wellbeing? Can protection be understood as a dimension of intergenerational interdependence and social justice? Do contemporary notions of child protection and obligation to be in school favor children’s sociopolitical marginalization?

We invite interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary engagement with children’s rights and protection, and the ways in which they are linked to debates of intergenerational coexistence and futures, with an emphasis on decolonial and childist approaches. Suggested themes for consideration are:

- Non-Eurocentric understandings of children’s rights and protection
- Who protects children? Who secures children’s rights? In whose care are children’s best interests safeguarded? How?
- Child protection for marginalized and disadvantaged children
- NGOs and child protection
- Rights and protection of refugee and immigrant children
- (Working) children’s rights, social movements, and activism
- Protection as a dimension of intergenerational climate justice
- Child protection and young children’s rights
- Non-paternalistic perspectives on rights and protection
- Rights and global futures
- Indigenous perspectives on childcare and protection
- Protection, education and children’s political marginalization

Contributions have to be one of the three categories of papers (article, conceptual paper or review) for the journal and address the topic of the Special Issue.

We look forward to receiving your contributions.

Dr. Tatek Abebe
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Guest Editors

Manuscript Submission Information

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papers, a title and short abstract (about 100 words) can be sent to the Editorial Office for announcement on this website.

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Keywords

- children's rights
- child protection
- child development
- generation studies
- childhood studies
- ethics of care
- children's migration
- decoloniality
- intergenerational relationships
- participatory action research
- future
- decoloniality
- childism
- interdependence
- sustainability
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- children's marginalization and empowerment

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https://www.mdpi.com/journal/societies/special_issues/Childist_Approaches