



GIRLHOOD STUDIES

An Interdisciplinary Journal

Call for Papers

A Turn to the African Girl: (Re)Defining African Girlhood Studies

Over the last century, girls, long ignored as sources of knowledge, have engaged in activism and creative endeavors to express their visions and aspirations for a future society inclusive of their needs. In the last decade a flourishing of girls' creative agency and incisive voices has given rise to growing and vibrant scholarship on girlhoods and their politics, histories, economics, arts, and cultures. The establishment of *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* in 2008 encouraged scholars to take girls' lived experiences more seriously.

Girlhood studies provides a critical means to counter the historical tendency of feminist scholarship to center adult women and marginalize or even ignore girls. While recent scholarship has shifted from focusing on girls as largely vulnerable and in need of protection, most of the research has been about girlhood in the Global North. Notable exceptions include studies that highlight the resilience and agency of African girls (Moletsane et al. 2021; Mitchell and Moletsane 2018). Additionally, research on girlhoods by Corrie Decker (2010), Abosede George (2014), Sadiyya Haffejee et al. (2020), Jen Katshunga (2019), and Heather Switzer (2018) reflects a range of approaches that move beyond the focus on precarity in Africa.

Ensuring that girls are seen to be knowers and narrators of their own stories is essential. In this issue we aim to bring together a diverse group of scholars in contributions that will analyze critically and present creatively the experiences and agency of girls and young women in Africa and its diasporas.

The focus here will be on the voices of girls in Africa and, more specifically, on how girls as active agents inform our understandings of girlhood and how colonial and post-colonial interventions have shaped and re-defined African girlhood through pseudo-scientific developmental models that were introduced to the continent via missionary education systems that have continued, largely, to operate in the twenty-first century. While contributions might examine how African girls negotiate cultural, gendered, racialized, and/or sexualized identities shaped by underlying issues of African self-determination, genocide, slavery, migration policies, violence, and colonialism we seek contributions that center girls' perspectives, resistance, resilience, and innovation even in the midst of precarity and vulnerability. By turning questions about empowerment away from how we empower girls to those about how societies, institutions, and families can support the ways in which girls have empowered themselves and address the ways in which they have been ignored, we can better understand and deal with issues related to African girls in the twenty-first century.

Contributors to this special issue could address the need to theorize girlhoods across the vast geographies of Africa and problematize how these have been constructed and deployed as the justification for development interventions and anti-poverty alleviation programs. We are particularly interested in analyses engaging different feminisms and Afro-Indigenous studies as well as queer and trans studies, theories, and methods. Authors are invited to examine embodied, political, and conceptual artifacts produced by girls and young women living in Africa. Comparative studies are welcome as are individual case studies that highlight historical and locationally specific processes and events. We welcome contributions authored by young people who identify as girls. The following questions, among others, may be addressed.

- How can we problematize the very category of girl as a deeply colonial heteropatriarchal construct?
- How do colonial politics of deservedness and biopolitics function to position African girls as targets of state violence?

- What influence have African girls had on policy or programs and to what extent have they been mere targets and objects of such policies and programs?
- Which methodologies enable or enhance girls' participation in research and community (or institutional) development?
- What kinds of adaptive regimes, practices, and policies do African states deploy and how do these have an impact on girls' bio-autonomy and shape their relationships with issues of subject formation, nationhood, violence, justice, and solidarity?
- What does disrupting the white, able, heteronormative categories of girlhood mean for analyses of girlhood and for queer, trans, and gender-fluid lives?
- What creative, grassroots, decolonizing, resurgent strategies have young women living in African countries taken up and with what outcomes?

This special issue is to be edited by Catherine Cymone Fourshey, Marla Jaksch, and Relebohile Moletsane. Please direct enquiries to africangirlhoods@gmail.com

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Article Submission

Abstracts are due by 15 March 2022 and should be sent to: africangirlhoods@gmail.com

Full manuscripts are due by 15 July 2022. Authors should provide a cover page giving brief biographical details (up to 100 words), institutional affiliation(s) and full contact information, including an email address.

Articles may be no longer than 6,500 words including the abstract (up to 125 words), keywords (6 to 8 in alphabetical order), notes, captions and tables, acknowledgments (if any), biographical details (taken from the cover page), and references. Images in a text count for 200 words each. Authors are responsible for securing copyright for any images used and they are expected to follow IRB protocols and ethical research standards regarding girls and young women as subjects.

Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal, follows Berghahn's preferred house style, a modified Chicago Style. Please refer to the Style Guide online: journals.berghahnbooks.com/_uploads/ghs/girlhood-studies_style_guide.pdf

For more information, please see www.berghahnjournals.com/girlhood-studies

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