

## Guest Editorial

### Why Childhood Matters?

Children are an important section of the human population. They have needs and rights of their own, and unique characteristics and faculties lacking in adults. In an era of information, it is surprising to discover how little we know about children and their childhood. As social scientists specializing in the study of the human species as a whole, we need to acknowledge that our discipline has neglected the study of children, as it had neglected the study of women until very recently.



Almost all conventional studies of children have focused on the status of children as proto-adults, as the objects of socialization and child-raising practices carried out by adults to reproduce the same kinds of adults as non-agentive language learners. Social scientists scarcely recognize the fact that at least some children are capable of exercising effective leadership, and that great technological, social, and cultural innovations often begin in the minds of children. It is a matter of serious concern that the importance of children as social and cultural agents has largely been ignored. Children can be best described as "missing children" in social sciences.

Children are not accorded the full respect to which they are intrinsically entitled as human beings. Children are often treated as marginal people whose activities and experiences matter less than those of adults. They are either conceptualized as minors (compared with adults) or dependent family members (compared with economically active family members).

Modern childhood constructs children out of society, mutes their voices, denies their personhood. Each day countless children are exposed to the dangers that hamper their growth and development. The escalating instances of child abuse and neglect are becoming a major concern in many contemporary societies. Children in challenging circumstances are denied their rights, and rarely do they have protection against abuse and neglect. Therefore, childhood matters should be taken seriously by social scientists and all other stakeholders.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the members of the editorial board of the digital magazine Childhood Matters for this wonderful initiative. I am sure that the magazine will address some of the critical issues concerning children and childhood in the coming days.

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