

**EDITORIAL – RESEARCHING CHILDREN’S WORLDS
AND LIVED REALITIES IN UNCERTAIN TIMES**

**EDITORIAL – A INVESTIGAÇÃO SOBRE OS MUNDOS DAS
CRIANÇAS E AS SUAS REALIDADES EM TEMPOS DE INCERTEZA**

Ana Tomás de Almeida

Research Centre on Child Studies, Institute of Education,
University of Minho, Portugal

Fernando Ilídio Ferreira

Research Centre on Child Studies, Institute of Education,
University of Minho, Portugal

Pallawi Sinha

University of Suffolk, UK

Sarah Richards

University of Suffolk, UK

‘Researching children’s world and lived realities in uncertain times’ has driven the priority for the present Special Issue of the Child Studies Journal. After the I International Conference on Child Studies, co-organised by the University of Minho and the University of Suffolk, under the same epithet, the second issue remained a venue to all the participating authors to submit original papers related to, but not necessarily presented at the conference.

In addition, the legacy of the I International Conference on Child Studies also welcome the ground-breaking thinking of the keynote speakers.

The contemporaneity of Child Studies as a holistic and multidisciplinary field of study beckons a heightened scientific and social relevance in times of accrued tension and conflict at the highest rank of international organisations, intricate war scenarios involving the world’s major powers, an always-owing climate crisis, increasing devastation, loss, and poverty in all continents, which are today inexorably affecting the lives of millions of children worldwide. Indeed, from the multitude of disciplines devoted to Child Studies it is recognised that research enables new perspectives, many of which come from the children themselves but often on their behalf, invariably directing attention to acknowledge the position of children within contemporary society, its consequences and urging action of all

sectors and political wings. While the *Child Studies*’ journal reflects such concerns, and, simultaneously, the priorities of young and experienced researchers that contributed to this Special Issue, it also made possible looking ahead at topics and issues casting the critical role of *Child Studies* for theory, applied sciences and child-based driven policy. This is very much in tune with the reflective ethos of the I International Conference on *Child Studies*.

The set of papers included in the Special Issue is headed by Professor Spyros Spyrou’s text on the conference’s topic. “A generative, critical child studies for uncertain times” is a short article addressing essential points for enabling a theoretically robust (as his keynote was), transdisciplinarily reflective, open-ended and engaging dialogue among the diverse actors and audiences of childhood studies. Such a critical stance conveys comprehensive approaches to the diverse and complex realities of children’s lived worlds, without dismissing how uncertainty is conditioning the children’s lives in current times and, inevitably, their future trajectories. It nevertheless entailed a breakthrough towards generative theoretical and methodological assumptions, more prone to relate to children’s lives and childhood as global and diverse phenomena. Bearing in mind the necessity to acknowledge and be responsive to the conceptual and empirical challenges, encompasses a decolonising move, which, in the author’s terms, is a corollary of a “generative” and “critical” child studies.

The second paper “Challenges on implementing a screening system with Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-PT) in Portugal”, co-authored by Rita Laranjeira and Ana Serrano, from Portugal, presents a qualitative study of the professional and familial perceptions concerning the use of the ASQ in early intervention centres. Accounting for the novelty of using standardised assessment tools, and its way (is this because it’s been employed in Portugal?), the data analysis explores the users’ insights on the advantages and challenges in the system of early identification of children with developmental needs at primary care services. Issuing the study’s implications for the practice, the authors highlight the changes perceived in the quality of involvement and interaction between families and professionals, which with increased collaboration set a resourceful capital for parenting knowledge and skills.

In the third paper, “Parental practices exercised in the childhood of authors of sexual assault”, Daniela Baldez Diniz and her co-authors, from Brazil, invest in a topic of relevance and little studied, particularly given the difficulty in accessing perpetrators of sexual abuse. In addition, the study of parental practices to which these subjects were submitted in their childhood is important because it allows a greater understanding of developmental aspects and the influence of contextual characteristics, especially the family environment. The inner sights of perpetrators of sexual assaults regarding parental practices are here representing an important line of investigation to understand the factors and contexts associated with the perpetration of abuse and the phenomenon of sexual violence.

The fourth paper “Multimodal narratives in contemporary Brazilian children’s literature” by Diana Navas, from Brazil, focuses on the integrative nature of different

languages shaping narratives that represent an ever-growing portion of the children’s books in Brazil. The popularity of these narratives is analysed through the lens of the synergistic articulation of the literary text with illustration and graphic design. As materiality of these different languages enhance creativity throughout reading as a dual cognitive and communicative process, it adds value to a creative segment of literature targeted to children. On a rather critical vein, Navas’ paper advocates the importance of expanding the literary world of children to create new readers and contributing to their awareness and critical thinking.

The fifth paper “Child Temperament and Child-care Support are Related to Better Mother-child Relationship Quality” by Sumeysra Yalcintas and Alison Pike, from UK, addresses parenting to convey an analysis of causal factors that influence the mother-child relationship quality. Combining observational and maternal self-report measures to report on a multiplicity of determinants associated to the ecology of parenting, particularly when families are in transition to siblinghood. The study raises important issues related to the bidirectional nature of parent-child relationship, as well as the child individual characteristics, such as the child temperament, and maternal personal and contextual resources. Of particular mention was the provision of child-care support to the quality of mother-child relationship quality during pregnancy before sibling arrival. Besides pointing the practical implications of the study to fruitful interventions, the authors underline the importance of parenting to the benefit of positive child outcomes.

The sixth, and last paper integrating this Special Issue, “Novice teachers navigating mentoring relationships in the United States, is co-authored by Jacqueline Snyder and collaborators, from USA. Focusing on retaining novice teachers in elementary schools via support and mentoring, the paper evidences how mentoring experiences are influential processes while becoming a teacher. As the study adds in-depth and rich stories of novice teachers’ experiences, these testimonies mirror the challenges ahead, the concerns and priorities for policy and practices on induction. The topic accrues relevance in the USA and beyond, as teacher shortage and drop-out rates in the first five years of professional activity undergo a critical state, as timely noted by the authors.

The issues and research questions alluded to in this compilation showcases a diversity of themes, conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches comprised under the disciplinary linkages of Child Studies. Although a glimpse of the wide range and extent of works presented at the I International Conference on Child Studies, the topics addressed in these six papers capture the persisting goal of revisiting and emphasising contemporary research that cast generative and practical knowledge to children and all those involved in their wellbeing. A concluding, overarching statement in relation to childhood studies would be great, here.

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