

Within and Across Borders: Borders and Girlhood Studies

Originally the field of Girlhood Studies focused on aspects of vulnerability and girls-at-risk, and at the same time on aspects of power and autonomy. Nowadays, the field deals with more complex, fluid, multidimensional aspects of being (and becoming) a girl (and a young woman). We ask questions about the changing meanings of the terms “girls” and “girlhood” and how they are negotiated and lived by young women (Aapola, Gonick, & Harris, 2005). Recent studies have introduced this field by illustrating this complexity, while emphasizing the paradox of a far greater range of opportunities accompanied by new, less tangible forms of constraints and subordination (Paechter, George, & McRobbie, 2013).

We regard girlhood as a site of competing narratives and at the same time as an experiential process, grounded in historical and discursive contexts, situated within and beyond borders. Thus, issues like everyday life and practices, sexuality, femininity and feminism, identity construction, and girls in consumer culture are constantly changing, both locally and globally. Girls’ experiences can be viewed as situated (and shaped by) specific communities, regions and culture. Moreover, their experiences are shaped in light of globalization, digital media participation and intensified immigration, that expose them to various possibilities and forms of resistance. The blurred nature of borders calls for identification of barriers and limits in girls’ world, together with a systematic examination of the way girls deal with the opportunities to break (and cross) these barriers and limits.

The notion of border crossing, both material and symbolic, offers a new perspective on Intersectionality, which is central to the field of Girlhood Studies. Borders then provide a fresh lens to Girlhood Studies, one that addresses issues of equality, diversity and inclusion in specific geographies and cultures as well as in more institutionalized spaces related to education and employment. We believe that applying the borders perspective in Girlhood Studies will expand what we know and understand about girls and girlhood even further.

We invite researchers and practitioners, associated with Girlhood Studies, from a feminist (or other critical) perspective, to submit abstracts dealing with (but not limited to) the following topics: occupational aspirations; self efficacy, academic efficacy and physical efficacy; sexuality; body; education and schooling; self-making and identity formation; friends and peer groups; girls and the family; leadership; activism and citizenship; pedagogies and intervention processes and more.

Bibliography

Aapola, S., Gonick, M., & Harris, A. (2005). *Young Femininity: Girlhood, Power and Social Change*. (S. Aapola, M. Gonick, A. Harris, & J. Campling, Eds.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Paechter, C., George, R., & McRobbie, A. (2013). Pedagogical responses to the changing position of girls and young women. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 21(1), 1–3.