

What is Childhood?

Age?
Biology?
Behaviour?
Activities?

Children at Work

- Biological Theory**
- Children should not work.
 - Work takes children away from the proper activities for childhood – school and play.
 - Children are exploited at work.
 - Hard physical labour is bad for children's health and physical development.
- Social Theory**
- Children around the world engage in many kinds of work.
 - Children make important contributions to their families and communities.
 - Work can aid children's development.
 - Not all children's work is harmful.
 - Taking away children's work can be detrimental.



LEDC Case Study: Bolivia

Children at War

- Biological Theory**
- Children are innocent and must be protected from war.
 - Children are not political actors.
 - Children's participation in conflict is always a result of manipulation and force.
- Social Theory**
- War and conflict always affect children.
 - Some children choose to fight, for varying reasons.
 - We need to tackle the causes of conflict, rather than focusing on child soldiers.



LEDC Case Study: Sierra Leone

Children in the Family

- Biological Theory**
- Children need to be socialized.
 - Parents are responsible for children's moral and biological development.
 - Adults "know best".
 - Children go to school to prepare for adult life.
- Social Theory**
- Children negotiate with adults within the family.
 - Children around the world have many responsibilities.
 - Some lead their households.
 - Having responsibility can be good for children's development.
 - Children in MEDCs have been disempowered and devalued.



LEDC Case Study: Lesotho

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Global Childhoods

Lydia Marshall,
University of Warwick

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Biological (Traditional) Model of Childhood

Childhood is universal:

- **A biological lifestage (UN = <18)**
- **Characterised by physical, cognitive and emotional immaturity**

Children are

- **Immature**
- **Vulnerable**
- **Innocent**
- **Weak**

Children need

- **Protection**
- **Provision**
- **Guidance**
- **Socialisation**

Social (Critical) Model of Childhood

Childhood is a social construct:

- **Invented by society**
- **Geographically and historically specific**

Children are

- **Capable**
- **Knowledgable**
- **Articulate**
- **Human beings, not just "becomings"**

Children can

- **Participate in social life**
- **Change the world**
- **Create knowledge**

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Why does it matter?!

The way that we define children and childhood affects:

- **How we research children and childhood**
- **How we treat children**
- **How we campaign for children's rights to protection, provision and participation**

