Editorial: Childhood, Parenting Culture, and Adult-Child Relations in Global Perspectives

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Whilst 'parenting culture' and 'childhood' are now well-established fields of multi-disciplinary scholarship (James et al 1998: e.g. , Lee et al 2014, Spyrou et al 2019), so far, the tensions and resonances between these two bodies of work have not been significantly explored, particularly in diverse, global contexts (although see notable exceptions in Faircloth et al 2013, Rosen and Twamley 2018).

The reality of this lacuna was brought home to us in 2017, when one of the authors in this special issue (Ana Vergara del Solar) invited both of us to an event at Diego Portales University in Chile entitled *Children's and parents' perspectives on the parent-child relationship.* The conversations we started there established the need for our two fields of work to engage in dialogue. We organized an event at UCL in 2018 (*Parenting culture, childhood, and adult-child relations in the contemporary age*), and subsequently this special issue, in an effort to do just this.

Taking 'adult-child relations' as the locus of interaction between the two fields of study, this special issue brings together novel contributions from internationally-based scholars similarly interested in creating connections between them. In responding to the calls for this SI, the authors take up our challenge to explore the ways contemporary cultures of childhood intersect with parenting cultures, especially as they relate to notions of risk and responsibility which increasingly frame the lives of adults and children. In 'risk societies' (Beck 1992), dominated by constructions of the 'at risk' child, often from 'risky' parents or non-parental adults, questions of responsibility for causing and managing risk loom large. However, how risk and responsibility are understood, and to what extent they inflect social practices in diverse contexts, remain empirical questions. Taking up this challenge, the papers in the SI draw on research from a range of geographical locations (Canada, Chile, Norway, Rwanda, Singapore, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States) to trace recent shifts in the social, political and economic circumstances of adult-child relations.

Our introductory article, 'Adult-Child relations in neoliberal times: Insights from a dialogue across childhood and parenting culture studies', sets the scene for this SI. We highlight the combined contributions of the articles to broader debates about relationality, neoliberalisation, and globalizing childhood and parenting cultures as they relate to adult-child relations, and indicate their implications for future scholarship. By framing the conversation between childhood and parenting culture studies in terms of adult-child relations, we are not suggesting that 'parents' and 'adults' are synonymous. Put simply, only some adults are parents, and both those people positioned as children and those positioned as adults can be parents. We are also not suggesting that adult-child relations should only, or even primarily, be understood in relation to family lives. Instead, our intention is to prise open dominant understandings which conflate adulthood and parenthood as well as those

which naturalise the place of childhood within the (nuclear) family. This allows for consideration of the ways in which contemporary cultures of childhood and parenting are shifting relations not only between parents and children, but also relations with non-parents, the state and its institutions, and supranational bodies.

Much work in parenting and childhood studies has looked at the role of the state in contemporary family dynamics. This scholarship often offers normative critiques of neoliberalism and the antagonisms it produces through the individualisation, privatisation and responsibilisation of care. In looking at the question of responsibility, Chiong's paper ''Teachers Know Best': Low-income families and the politics of home-school relations in Singapore' presents an interesting counterpoint to this, in the context of the 'strong' Singaporean state and low-income, ethnic minority families' warmth towards state involvement in their lives. She presents three reasons for this – competence, care and communication – but unpacks further the politics and power dynamics that underpin these interactions. Benda and Pells' paper 'The state-as-parent: reframing parent-child relations in Rwanda' also addresses responsibility, and does something similar (in terms of challenging ideas of the state) by arguing for a conceptualisation of the state 'as' parent, using in particular post-colonial, relational and temporal lenses to do so.

Again looking at the issue of responsibility, but using a specifically relational lens is Vergara del Solar, Sepúlveda Galeas and Salvo Agoglia's paper 'Parents' economic efforts in the discourses of Chilean children: ethical reflexivity and reciprocal care' in which the authors analyse accounts from children, particularly around economic management within low-income Chilean families, conceptualising these as a form of ethical reflexivity on the part of children and reciprocity in parent-child relations. By contrast, exploring more explicitly the theme of risk, but still addressing the ways identities and subjectivities are formed in a relational way, is Patico's article '"Of course we'll like it, we're kids!" Interrogating Childhood and Parenting through Children's Food'. Here, the author draws on accounts from children and adults to explore how normative constructions of childhood are (re)produced through food practices in a school community, demonstrating how this can obscure and even reinforce class inequalities.

Next, are two papers addressing varying modes and mediums through which ideas about good parents (and properly developing children) are made, again with notions of risk and responsibility at their core. Arzuk's paper 'Accidents Waiting to Happen: News Coverage of Children's Health and Safety in Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s' illuminates discursive changes in the way parent-child relationships and notions of responsibility have been expressed over the last 30-40 years, putting those into dialogue with the emergence of a more risk-conscious, intensive parenting culture. By contrast, Ramaekers and Hodgson's paper 'Parenting apps and the depoliticisation of the parent' is more contemporaneous, in exploring the implications of a more technological management of the parent-child relationship. In it, they argue that this turn has the ability to alter the figure of the parent as a pedagogical figure, with pressing political implications.

Conceptually, Rosen and Suissa's paper 'Children, parents, and non-parents: To whom does "the future" belong?' is helpful in bringing together many of the themes of the SI, notably around the way in which claims to 'the future' are individualised and privatised when issued in the name of the child and with the future as an assumed continuation of the status quo. By offering alternative ways to grapple with the possible futures we may want, they provide a lens to explore contemporary adult-child relations and the inequities they are embedded within. Looking at the impact of this on parent/non-parent relationships (and the way in which this is politicised) forms the subject of their enquiry, something Faircloth takes up in her paper 'Parenting and social solidarity in cross-cultural perspective'. Here, also addressing ideas about 'responsibility' for social reproduction, she looks at the ways in which the political settings of Norway and the UK (with differing orientations to questions of both neoliberalism and the welfare state) adopt, engage with, reject or re-shape contemporary discourses around intensive parenting, as well as how this impacts on notions of social solidarity.

We are also delighted to include three Open Space contributions from eminent researchers from within (and beyond) the academy in this special issue. Brannen's 'The study of childhood: Thoughts from a family life researcher' includes insights from her long career researching children, parenting and families. As she notes, a critical issue for researchers within the two fields (of parenting and childhood studies) is to be part of debates around what the role for the state should be in family life. This is picked up by Val Gillies, in her piece 'Parallels and ruptures in the neoliberal intensive parenting regime', in part a reflection on Vergara del Solar et al's article, and in particular, the incursion of neoliberalism into intimate family life, particularly in cultivating an 'investment' rationale in childrearing.

Finally, we include Newberry and Pace-Crosschild's 'Braiding Sweetgrass Families: A Transmedia Project on Parenting in Blackfoot Territory'. This photo essay, which beautifully synthesises many themes of the SI, uses the 'sweetgrass braid' as a metaphor for the braided character of parenting within families, but also across the many divides (historic and contemporary) that cross contemporary Blackfoot Territory in Canada. The photo essay therefore presents vignettes of parenting, engaged in restorative action among indigenous families in the face of ongoing settler colonialism.

We hope you enjoy the papers in this special issue, and the dialogue between childhood and parenting cultures studies, as much as we have. Looking ahead, we are excited to see the challenges of these papers being taken forward in our respective fields and beyond.

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