

References

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Fay, Franziska: *Disputing Discipline: Child Protection, Punishment, and Piety in Zanzibar Schools*. 248 pp. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2021. ISBN 978-1-9788-2174-3

How do we explain the prevalence of corporal punishment in schools in Zanzibar, despite the programmes developed by international organizations and state policies that aim to quell such a disciplinary practice? Why are those initiatives failing, even when they claim to be fighting for children's rights? What should be a productive approach to child protection in a sociocultural context where Islam structures moral life and remains a predominant source of norms and values? What do child protection programmes and the challenges they face tell us about hierarchies of knowledge and epistemic power structures?

Fay's book, *Disputing Discipline: Child Protection, Punishment, and Piety in Zanzibar Schools* takes on these questions through an elaborate conceptual discussion and theoretical alertness. It also shows a methodological savviness that restores the relevance of the local context in both social-science research and international development programs. The agency of children, the primary subjects of the discussion, is at the heart of Fay's preoccupation. How could we discuss child protection without listening to what children have to say about it? This simple but crucial question has informed Fay's theoretical intervention, as well as her methodological approach.

Building on her work experience with international organizations, an extended period of field research (eighteen months) that allowed her to co-produce her research materials with sixty children, their parents and educators, the book offers seven chapters that cover issues from the construction of childhood in Zanzibar (chapter 1) to engagement with a decolonizing perspective on child protection (chapter 6). The book pays particular attention to the significance of punishment for the formation of personhood (chapter 2) while situating child protection in relation to Islam and gender (chapter 5). Fay also shows how both local and international conceptualizations of child protection constitute discursive universes (chapter 3) whose contradictions and power relations inform the field of intervention. She notes that international views and

programmes are opposed by parents and local groups when they fail to take into consideration children's conditions and social becoming (chapter 4). In general, she argues 'that child protection is much more than what policy agendas ascribe, and it needs to be imagined beyond development discourses' (p. 107). This point serves also a re-assertion of the need to take into consideration children's views and conditions (chapter 7). The discussion Fay offers in these seven chapters makes the case is clear: 'child protection discourse in Zanzibar does not face opposition because people support violent behavior against children, but rather because it is too closely linked to a notion of the "West" and insufficiently inclusive of vernacular cultural and religious norms that co-construct Zanzibari social personhood' (p. 162).

In other words, child protection in Zanzibar is a site of power relations that needs to be critically examined and understood. Fay insists that 'my findings contribute to knowledge about childhood discipline, chastisement, and protection by making plain how power authorizes and deauthorizes knowledge that defines how children ought to be protected' (p. 186). As she elucidates throughout the book, child protection is not only understood differently, but also approached and engaged in contradictory manners. It is contested because policies and interventions fail to capture the social significance of corporal punishment; at the same time, global and universalized approaches to child protection remain rather disconnected and insensitive, overlooking local ecologies of care. While the book substantiates these claims, it also demonstrates both conceptually and methodologically how actually to overcome the disconnect by factoring in the vernacular and, as a result, offering the prospect of integrated protection.

The book insists on the role of religion in the socialization of children in Zanzibar. Learning shapes sociality, while Islam structures life as a whole. Children become social beings through learning, and Islam provides a dynamic culture of learning. For that reason, child protection interventions cannot afford to dismiss these realities and overlook Islam, a major source of norms that informs and structures children's development. However, resolving the equation of child protection, as Fay warns, means not merely factoring in the influence of Islam, but also taking into account the socio-cultural elements that make up Zanzibar's context.

To reiterate one of her major points, Fay claims that 'a more accurate understanding of children's well-being would take into account their living conditions and their own measures by which they conceive of their well-being' (p. 179). To follow up on this particular point, she uses pictures, drawings and poems authored by children to bring into the picture not only children's own ideas and aspirations, but also their agency. As she demonstrates throughout the book, though situated within structures that are mostly dominated by adults, children are the central part of the equation when it comes to their protection. The point is not simply about fairness; it also about the practicability of policies and the efficacy of child protection programs. Otherwise, 'interventions that are aimed to protect them [children] practically fail to do so' (p. 129) or can even end up harming them. Thus, taking into consideration children's

conceptualizations of violence, and social participation, and discipline may help find a way to keep them safe (p. 186).

At this juncture, decolonization invites itself to the debate. Relevant and pertinent, a decolonial approach is also needed to achieve proper child protection and erase the moral superiority that marks programs; it will also help dissipate the concerns about hegemonic discourses and the hierarchy they establish. This 'hierarchy may only be flattened by using a decolonial way of thinking and taking seriously children's and adults' ideas about what being young, growing up, being well mannered, and being safe and protected mean', she argues (p. 186). The book concludes with a series of recommendations intended to improve child-protection policies, governance and effective practice.

For an anthropological intervention, Fay's book takes us into an exercise in situating and listening to children while offering a perspective on international aid, its universalizing discourses, 'civilizing mission' and the issues that ensue. It is a theoretically solid and conceptually well-framed contribution to the anthropology of childhood and youth. It should inspire examinations beyond Zanzibar, in Nigeria or Senegal, for example, where corporal punishment is central to children's social becoming, contributing to what I will call Comparative African Muslim Studies. Its insights feed into debates over raising children and social development across Muslim societies. A critique of international aid, it should be of interest to scholars, policy-makers and development professionals. Those concerned with conceptual and methodological decolonization should also pay attention to Fay's suggestions. Her discussion has the merit of approaching the decolonial debate from the perspective of a Muslim context, international development and child protection. It definitely makes a case for an anthropology that is fully conscious of its modes of production.

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Ungruhe, Christian: Lasten tragen, Moderne befördern: Wanderarbeit, Jugend, Erwachsenwerden und ihre geschlechtsspezifischen Differenzierungen in Ghana.
456 pp. Berlin: LIT, 2018. ISBN 978-3-643-14011-1

This book on young migrants in Ghana provides new insights into current trends in West African circular migration from the migrants' point of view. Yet, it should be placed in a broader context. The anthropology of migration is a long-established thematic focus within the social sciences, with a constant stream of new publications on ever-changing facets of this age-old phenomenon. In the case of migrations from and within Africa, two trends may be detected in recent years: one prioritizes the increasing number of refugees and their political, social and economic motivations in their pursuit