

Rhetoric of Colonialism and Globalisation as defence mechanisms for the normalisation of child labour among fisher folks in a fishing community in Ghana.

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This is a theoretically driven research that seeks to provide a psychosocial insight into how fisher folks in Ghana use rhetoric of colonialism and globalisation to justify the enlistment of children into their fishing activities. The study was conducted using critical ethnographic design that draws on the lived experiences of 24 fisher folks. Attempts were made to explore the fishers' experiences using psychoanalytically informed method (FANI) in addition to other conventional methods of data collection.

In this paper I draw on Stephen Frosh (2013) (hauntings), Sigmund Freud (1923) (disavowal), and other psychoanalytic perspectives to argue that fishers in Ghana still harbour pain, frustration and rage with the fact that their ancestors were colonised. As a result the fisher folks might have developed powerful defensive responses to the child labour phenomenon through the processes of projections, rationalisation, and splitting. Be that as it may the fisher folks put their challenges and problems on the colonialists and globalisation. They hold the belief that child labour was not part of African way of life until they encountered colonisation. This paper suggests that it is through narratives of slavery and colonisation, being supportive of child labour, that generation of fisher folks have come to employ children in both onshore and offshore fishing activities in Ghana. Fisher folks from generation to generation have grown with the understanding that child labour makes economic sense drawing on the experiences of their elders and ancestors and how they experienced colonialism. The paper further demonstrates how child labour mainly persists because of the profit motive wrought by globalisation, in spite of all the laws passed to abolish it in fishing communities in Ghana.

The findings imply that solutions to child labour need to be approached paying equal attention to both the psyche and the social life of the fisher folks. They speak to the imperative for a critical review of policy making processes, taking into account the unconscious processes that might help psyche and attitudinal changes.