

Citizenship Rights of Sexually Exploited Children: Self, Dignity, Power

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In this research paper, I argue for a re-articulation of children's rights from the normative, formal interpretations of children's rights, as they are presently conceived, within a liberal framework of rights to an anti-racist feminist perspective of citizenship rights. Using the concepts of self, dignity and power I critique mainstream, liberal articulations of children's rights that treat children's self as passive and interprets their rights of equality in terms of children's status as pre-citizens. I position myself within anti-racist feminist models of citizenship rights that are difference-centered and address the rights of citizens, such as children, based on an acknowledgment of their differences and their agency. I focus my theorization of citizenship rights of children by analyzing the rights of sexually exploited children. Central to my analysis, are the narratives of former sexually exploited children, whose voices I incorporate through the use of a retrospective, narrative approach to field research. I conclude by re-articulating the rights of sexually exploited children in terms of their citizenship rights that acknowledge children's rights of participation and belonging in society.