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Childing IR

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Parallel to currents of scholarship theorizing gender, race, and indigeneity in global political contexts, a new IR literature has emerged in recent years inquiring into childhood, not as a time of life but for the important meaning-making work the idea of childhood does. These interventions have revealed that much of what is often taken for granted about IR, its subject matters, and core concepts relies on a particular understanding of childhood as a time of innocence, vulnerability, and incapacity. Theorizing this ‘imagined childhood’ in ways analogous to but distinct from other key social categories of identity/difference, they have shown how childhood has never been absent from IR; newly noticed, perhaps, but not new. This scholarship has made crucial contributions on how to think about children in IR. This panel proposes the next steps. More than thinking about children in IR, contributions to the panel ask questions of how childhood is about IR itself. This means thinking about the discipline, its core concepts, preoccupations, and inclinations through the lens of imagined childhood; it means ‘childing IR’, just as feminist contributions have urged us to ‘gender IR’.

Track Classification: Orphan Papers track