

CHILDNEWS

Newsletter of the Sociology of Children Section of the American Sociological Association

"What is done to children, they will do to society."

-Karl Menninger

FALL 1998

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FROM THE CHAIR

By Sandra Hofferth

Sociology of Children Section, 1998-99

Greetings from Ann Arbor! As the requirements of the daily academic schedule take over our lives again after the relative calm of the summer, I would like to reflect briefly on the annual meeting and what it all means. The Saturday sessions that Duane Alwin and April Brayfield organized were terrific. The roundtables Karin Martin organized were well-attended and lively. I even enjoyed the business meeting, which Jeylan Mortimer, outgoing Chair, presided over so efficiently. After the meeting, several new young sociologists came up and introduced themselves to me. What a pleasure it is to meet the next generation of scholars! For me, the highlight of the meeting was the Sunday evening reception held jointly with the Sociology of the Family section. First, we had a chance to shmooze over a nice spread of food with colleagues from across the country. Then, the section gave the Student Paper Competition award to Lisa Sun-Hee Park, Northwestern University, for her paper "Growing up Too Fast and Not Fast Enough: The Work and Responsibilities of Immigrant Entrepreneurial Children." Finally, the Sociology of the Family section honored Glen Elder for his lifetime contributions to the discipline. Given Glen's focus on children over the life course beginning with his excellent book, *The Children of the Great Depression*, the joint reception was perfect. Glen was eloquent and modest in his acceptance speech. He expressed surprise, humility and gratitude for

the recognition. It was a great moment.

In the glow of the meeting, I promised to write a short note for the newsletter reminding Sociology of Children Section members what they gain from section membership and why it is important that they renew their memberships annually, come to the annual meeting, and get involved. First, section members receive this newsletter with announcements of upcoming meetings, calls for papers, and other important information of interest to section members. Thus, it serves an information function. Second, section members have two additional sessions and roundtables to which they can submit papers to be accepted on the program of the Annual Meeting. Most of us have to have a good legitimate reason to receive reimbursement for our travel

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to the meeting. In addition, being on the program is good because it gives us an incentive to prepare papers and a deadline. We are recognized in the field through participation in the program and, ultimately, publication. Third, the section provides an important networking function. As in most disciplines and in life, generally, relationships are crucial. They come in handy whether we are job-seeking, testing out new ideas, finding out who is doing research like ours, or simply need a favor for a pet project. I require my students to read "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," by Coleman (AJS, 94:S95-S120,1988), an absolutely essential article for young sociologists. Fourth, the Annual Meeting is just plain fun. It is the big annual party that we hold for ourselves, and we deserve it for our hard work over the past year! I hope that you will renew your membership, submit a paper, and join me at the 1999 Annual Meeting, August 6-10 in Chicago.

1998 Annual Report on the Sociology of Children Section by Jeylan Mortimer, 1998 Chair

The Section on the Sociology of Children has conducted a variety of activities during the past year, culminating in the annual meeting. The 1998 annual meeting program, organized by Sandra Hofferth, Chair-Elect, consisted of two paper sessions and a roundtables session. All were well attended. In the first session, "Perspectives on Childhood: Theory and Practice," organized by April Brayfield, four papers focused on the "global empowerment" of children, children's contributions to the family economy, children's interactions, and the implications of inequality for children's development. The second session, "Family Contexts of Children and Adolescents," organized by Duane Alwin, included five papers examining reproductive behavior, poverty, sibship size and

educational performance, corporal punishment, and the relation of parental education and adolescent health. Karin Martin organized seven roundtables, including seventeen papers. A Table President was appointed for each. Section members also had the benefit of the considerable attention to children on the 1998 ASA Program. For example, there were special sessions on the National Academy of Sciences report on the health and adjustment of immigrant children and families, on current research on immigrant children, and on international perspectives on childhood.

The Section Council met early on a Sunday morning, our section day, with a very busy agenda. Thirteen persons were in attendance. After welcoming new section officers (William Corsaro, Chair-Elect, Elect and Council Members-Elect Gerald Handel, Jane McLeod, and Jens Qvortrup), we received reports from Committee Chairs and Section Officers (David Kinney, Nominations; Donald Hernandez, Student Paper Competition; Sandra Danziger, Secretary- Treasurer). Dan Martin, our Newsletter Editor will be joined this year by Patti and Peter Adler who were approved as "Contributing Editors" to the Newsletter. The council unanimously approved two by-laws changes, put forward by Chair Jeylan Mortimer and Chair-Elect Sandra Hofferth. (1) The first change deleted the clause "All officers shall serve a two-year

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term except the Chair who will be on the Council for three years," substituting: "All officers shall serve three-year terms." The rationale for the change is that three year terms promote greater continuity in the consideration of section issues/business.

To implement this provision expeditiously (given approval by the Section membership in the Spring 99 election), while retaining the current number of Council members (6), the Council approved the following procedure. One member of the cohort of three elected in 1998 would serve an additional year, beyond the currently established two-year term (this person would be on Council during the 1999, 2000, and 2001 annual meetings). Two members, from the cohort of three elected in 1999, again for two-year terms, would also be asked to serve an additional year. Two new Council members, elected in 2000 and each year thereafter, would serve three-year terms. (2) The second bylaw change was to delete "The Chair-elect will serve in the first year as the Chair of the Program Committee for the ASA meeting the following year," substituting: "The Chair-elect will plan the program, with the assistance of a Program Committee, subject to approval by Council, for the year in which she/he serves as Chair." This change brings the session into compliance with the ASA Section Manual (approved Jan. 1998) which states, "the section chair is responsible for planning the section's program at the Annual Meeting." (p. 6) It will also allow for more time to organize each annual meeting program. Our Chair for the 1999 meeting, Sandra Hofferth, will organize the Section's program for the 1999 meeting. The Year 2000 meeting will be organized by William Corsaro, the 1999 Chair-Elect (who was elected in the Spring of 1998). The Council also considered the implications of the ASA's new membership criterion for section maintenance (300) for the Sociology

of Children Section. Section membership in recent years has been hovering at that level (as of July 1998, 318). In July of 1998, the 1998 Chair of the Section, Jeylan Mortimer, sent letters to 113 former members of the Section, inviting them to reinstate their membership (list provided by the ASA office). The most recent section newsletter was enclosed. At the annual meeting, section members Jens Qvortrup and Marty Powers recruited for new members at the ASA Section information table, and Jane McLeod also did so at the student reception.

During the coming year, the New Membership Committee (Jane McLeod, Gerald Handel, Jens Qvortrup) will work with Chair Sandra Hofferth to increase recruitment efforts. Benefits of membership would be detailed in upcoming newsletters, and current members would be encouraged to sponsor their students and circulate the information to colleagues.

The Council considered the desirability of allowing persons from other countries, and from other disciplines (outside sociology), to join the Section without becoming members of ASA. Given the interdisciplinary character of re-search on children, and our interest in involving non-U.S. social scientists in our activities, the requirement to join ASA was seen as overly restrictive. Jeylan Mortimer was directed by the Council to represent its views at the meeting of Section Chairs with John Williamson, the Chair of the ASA Committee on Sections.

The Council reviewed the 1998 budget presented by Secretary-Treasurer Sandra Danziger, and approved the 1999 budget proposed by Jeylan Mortimer.

The Council also agreed to collaborate with Tim Owens, new editor of the JAI Series, *Advances in Life Course Research*, by sponsoring a special issue to which Section members would contribute. This special issue of the series would be titled, "Children in the Year 2000."

Finally, Sandra Hofferth announced themes for the 1999 program: "Children at the Millennium," and "Children's Social Ties," which will be developed with the assistance of a program committee.

At the Business Meeting of the section, attendants unanimously approved the by-laws changes, the 1998-9 Committee structure, and the budget. Tim Owens announced the new JAI Series, and members came forward to work with him on this venture. The Section's reception was held jointly with the Family Section. The latter's choice of Distinguished Career Award winner, Prof. Glen Elder, seemed especially apt, given his classic work on Children of the Great Depression. Our own award winner for our student paper competition was also announced at this reception.

In closing, let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all the competent

assistance ASA staff have given me during this year, much facilitating the execution of my role as Chair of the Sociology of Children Section.

-Jeylan Mortimer

STUDENT PAPER AWARD

The recipient of 1998 student paper award from the Sociology of Children Section of the American Sociological Association is Ms. Lisa Sun-Hee Park of Northwestern University for the paper titled "Growing Up Too Fast and Not Fast Enough: The Work and Responsibilities of Immigrant Entrepreneurial Children." This innovative study of the fastest growing segment of the child population, children in immigrant families, bridges sociology and child development. It advances knowledge in both fields by using participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups to assess how conceptions of class, race, gender, family, work, and school develop among children with immigrant parents who operate small family businesses. The findings serve to dispel romantic notions of family values, upward mobility, and the myth of the Asian model minority. Equally important by examining developmental processes among children who are marginal to white, native-born, middle-class society, the research effectively calls into question generalizations from past research and highlights the need for detailed studies across a wide range of social,

economic, and cultural contexts. This paper is an admirable first effort in that much needed research enterprise.

CALL FOR PAPERS

1999 Student Paper

Competition

Faculty and students are invited to nominate student papers that meet the following criteria: the author(s) must have been a student(s) at the time the paper was written (co-authored papers are acceptable only if all authors were students when the paper was written); and the paper must have made a "public appearance" in 1998 or 1999, e.g., was submitted for a class or seminar, was presented at a professional meeting, or was accepted for publication or appeared in print in those years. Faculty may submit a paper of one of their students. Students may send in their own papers. Individuals may also nominate particularly outstanding papers that they came across in published form or that were read at professional meetings. Send three copies of the paper by May 15, 1999 to:

Jeylan Mortimer, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, 75 Alta Road, Stanford, California 94305-8090

Annual Meetings of the ASA

1999 Call For Papers

Submission Deadline: January 10, 1999. The Submission Criteria: Members of the Association and other interested individuals are invited to submit papers and discussion topics to be considered

for inclusion in the 1999 Annual Meeting Program.

Nearly two-thirds of the Annual Meeting program is open for submissions. The Regular Session Topics, Open Refereed Roundtables, Open Informal Discussion Roundtables, and Poster Presentations are sponsored by the 1999 Program Committee, and approximately 35% of the available program space is reserved for these sessions. The open Section sessions listed in this Call are sponsored by the various ASA Sections. Approximately one-third of the program space is allocated for Section activities. The remainder of the program is designated by the Program Committee for special types of sessions such as Plenaries, Thematic and Special Sessions, Book Panels, Didactic Seminars, and Teaching and Professional Workshops. Participation in these special sessions is by invitation only.

Both the Program Committee and the Sections sponsor open paper-reading sessions and roundtable sessions. A thorough reading of this Call for Papers should provide the information you need to submit a paper or discussion topic for consideration.

For more information Please visit the American Sociological Association Web page at :

<http://www.asanet.org/>

Session organizers and Topics for the 1999 ASA: Sociology of Children Section... Here is the program listing for the Sociology of Children Section, 1999:

1. Children at the Millennium: Where have we come from, where are we going?

Organizer: Sandra Hofferth
Institute for Social Research
University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248
(734) 763-5131

hofferth@umich.edu

2. Children's Friendships

Organizer: Rob Crosnoe
Department of Sociology
Building 120, 450 Serra Mall
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-2047
(650) 917-8843

crosnoe@leland.stanford.edu

3. Sociology of Children Section Roundtables (to be held during the first half of business meeting slot)

Organizer: Loretta Bass
Family Branch, Rm. 2353-3
Population Division
Washington, DC 20233-8800
(301) 457-2465

Lbass@census.gov

A Call For Papers: *Children at the Millennium: Where have we come from, where are we going?*

Advances in Life Course Research (formerly Aging and the Life cycle), published by JAI Press, invites submissions for the year 2000 volume, subtitled *Children at the Millennium:*

Where have we come from, where are we going? This volume is being produced under the auspices of the Sociology of Children section of the American Sociological Association.

Contributions from all methodological orientations are welcome. The issue is conceived broadly and includes focus on children and adolescents.

Examples that would be pertinent include but are not limited to:

- *Demographic Analyzes and projections
- *Qualitative aspects of children's lives
- *Children in Historical Perspective
- *Issues of development in social context
- *Children and public policy
- *Social and psychological dynamics of childhood

Potential authors are encouraged to submit abstracts to the corresponding editor. Initial inquiries can be directed to either editor, Timothy Owens or Sandra Hofferth: towens@indiana.edu or hofferth@umich.edu. Submissions due September 15, 1999. All submissions will be peer reviewed.

A Call for Papers: *Advances in Life Course Research* (formerly *Aging and the Life Cycle*), published by JAI Press, invites submissions for its inaugural issue, subtitled *Identity through the Life Course in Cross-Cultural*

Perspective. Contributions from all methodological orientations are welcome. "Cross-cultural" may be conceived broadly, including intranational subcultures based on gender, ethnicity/race, age, or other categories. Life course emphasis could be in relation to the special identity issues and

dynamics of a particular phase, or changes as persons move across stages.

We plan to make this a first-rate series of original, innovative, and cutting-edge research with enough space allocated to give authors the freedom to explore theoretical, empirical, and substantive themes in more depth than usually allowed in other venues. Each volume will be a combination of invited and author initiated papers. In order to maintain the highest standards we cannot guarantee all submissions will be published, however, we do promise careful and considerate editing and an expeditious decision and publication lag. The anticipated due date for papers to be published in the 1999 volume is February 1999. Inquiries are welcome and should be directed to the series editor, Tim Owens, at Tel: (317) 274-2517, or e-mail: towens@indiana.edu.

International Sociological Association

Call for Papers for Edited Volume on "Symbolic Childhood"

In social practice and in social policy, children and childhood stand for things other than themselves. Descriptions of childhood--whether found in religious doctrine, educational theory, political rhetoric or everyday talk -- inevitably involve prescriptions for children. How or whether parents should discipline children, what the appropriate length of social dependency is or should be, whether children are to be seen as already complete

persons or as developing persons: these vary over time and across cultural context. Prescriptions invoke moral positions and imply a cosmology. They offer stated and unstated views about the nature, origins and direction of humanity as a means to evaluate conduct.

Children enter childhood and thus social life through and in discourse. Meanings of childhood are multiple. They arise in a field of signs, symbols and metaphors that are necessarily subject to interpretation and challenge. Children and childhood are particularly malleable social objects and cultural categories because children lack the ability to resist semantic association in any significant way. Their participation in the field of discourse is effectively blocked or made inconsequential. Childhood is a social status unlike any other in this regard because children must pass through it into adjudicated "adulthood" in order to represent it with any authority to a public.

Publicly, however, the social meaning of childhood tends to be treated as given and relatively stable. Childhood as a time of innocence and children as sacred, perhaps endangered, beings are widely shared symbolic currencies which are often used as alibis for the most embracing social and political projects and interests at least in the late modern world. Children often serve as symbols of domesticity and subordination, as icons of progress and "the future" as well as emblems of poverty and

social decline. They can be presented as the personification of a national identity to be nurtured and protected, as ideal consumers or unchecked hedonists, as signs of parental virtue or irresponsibility. In public formats, representing children often registers race, class, gender and sexual concerns implicitly even as the image of "the child" pretends universality. Symbolic childhood is ideology most often cloaked in a veneer of sentiment.

Papers are now being solicited for an edited volume on "Symbolic Childhood" by Dan Cook at the University of Illinois. Cook's historical work examines how depictions of "the child" served a growing market for children's goods, especially clothing, in the 20th century. Papers can be theoretical discussions as well as empirical demonstrations. For purposes of this volume, the age which constitutes childhood can range from representations of "the fetus" to those of persons around 12 or 13 years old (i.e., not "teenagers"). Historical, anthropological, sociological, feminist and literary approaches are welcome, as are studies dealing with popular culture, the material culture of childhood and media. Papers should deal in some way with how "the child" and/or "childhood" are deployed publicly as instruments of some identified interest or group. These may include child advocates, academicians, social classes, marketers, politicians and governments.

Papers should also deal with the modern (or late- or post-modern) historical period.

A letter of interest and a one- or two-page description (or drafts or completed papers) of your project should be forwarded by December 15, 1998. Currently several presses have expressed interest, including Duke and Rutgers. Send inquires and project descriptions to:

Dan Cook,
Departments of Sociology
and Leisure Studies
University of Illinois
104 Huff Hall
1206 South Fourth Street
Champaign, IL 61820, USA
Tel: 1-217-244-3887;
fax: 1-217-244-1935
Email: dtcook@uiuc.edu

Post Doc Announcement

National Research Service Award Mental Health and Adjustment in the Early Life Course

The University of Minnesota is pleased to announce a postdoctoral position, a National Research Service Award, sponsored by the NIMH, on the psychosocial determinants of mental health and adjustment in childhood, adolescence, and the transition to adulthood. Full-time, 12-month research training will be provided for a 2-year period. This interdisciplinary program emphasizes the changing social contexts of development; early life course trajectories of mental health and behavioral adaptation; longitudinal assessment and analysis; at-risk population; and social policy. A series of core seminars and a research apprenticeship are key

program elements. This interdisciplinary program includes core faculty members from Sociology, the Institute of Child Development, and the School of Public Health's doctoral program in Health Services Research, Policy and Administration. U.S. citizens or residents are eligible. The award provides an annual stipend in accordance with NRSA guidelines, tuition, fees and medical insurance. Postdoctoral candidates, who have received a Ph.D. in a social science discipline or an equivalent degree, such as an M.D., public health, or nursing degree by September 1999, should provide a letter describing current research interest, a complete vita, university transcript, three letters of recommendation, and samples of written work. For full consideration, send postdoctoral application materials to Professor Candace Kruttschnitt at the Life Course Center, Department of Sociology, 1014 Social Sciences Building, 267 19th Avenue South, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455 by January 5, 1999 for admittance in September of 1999. The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

Irving B. Harris Fellowship in Child Development and Public Policy

The Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago is seeking candidates for a one-year A.M. program providing expertise

in childhood development and skill in policy research and analysis. Full tuition and \$10,000 stipend awarded, no research requirements. Fellowship period is one academic year beginning September 1999. Applicants must hold graduate degree in early childhood development or related field. Apply by January 15.

Contact Ellen Cohen, Director of Admission, (773) 834-2576, or via e-mail, eb-cohen@uchicago.edu.

For more information, visit the School's website at:

<http://www.HarrisSchool.uchicago.edu>

CHILDSTATS 1998

Health Indicators

Most children in the United States are healthy. In 1995, about 81 percent of children were reported by their parents to be in very good or excellent health, and this percentage remained stable between 1984 and 1995. Child health varies by poverty status. In 1995, about 65 percent of children in families below the poverty line were in very good or excellent health, compared with 85 percent of children in families living at or above the poverty line. In 1996, low birth weight rates were the highest in two decades. However, despite the frequency of low birth weight, infant mortality continues to decline, primarily because the likelihood for the highest-risk infants to survive has improved substantially. Black infants continue to be at much higher risk of low birthweight and infant mortality than infants of other races. In 1996, 77 percent of

children ages 19 to 35 months were up to date with their immunizations. Children in poor families were less likely to be up to date with their immunizations than children with family incomes at or above the poverty level (69 percent compared to 80 percent). Death rates among adolescents ages 15 to 19 are on the decline after increasing during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Firearm deaths, mostly homicides, which increased during this period and peaked in 1994, accounted for the growth in death rates in earlier years. Birth rates among adolescent females declined between 1991 and 1996. This drop in adolescent birth rates was especially large among black females ages 15 to 17. In 1996, 85 percent of births to 15-to-17 year-olds were to unmarried mothers, compared to 62 percent in 1980.

Facts From

The Children's Defense Fund

Among 25 industrialized countries, the United States ranks:

- 1st in gross domestic product
- 1st in the number of millionaires and billionaires
- 1st in health technology
- 1st in military technology
- 1st in military exports
- 1st in defense spending
- 10th in eighth-grade science scores
- 16th in living standards among the poorest one-fifth of children
- 17th in reducing low-birthweight births
- 18th in reducing the income gap between rich and poor children

- 21st in eighth-grade math scores
- 25th in protecting our children against gun violence
- Compared with children in 25 other industrialized countries combined, U.S. children under the age of 15 are:
- 12 times more likely to die from gunfire
- 16 times more likely to be murdered by a gun.
- 11 times more likely to commit suicide with a gun
- 9 times more likely to die in a firearm accident

The State of America's Children, 1998 Yearbook

Issue-Related WEBSITES

Academy of Pediatrics, Advocacy Page

<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/advohome.htm>

American Sociological Association

<http://www.asanet.org>

Children's Defense Fund

<http://www.childrensdefense.org>

Children Now

<http://www.childrennow.org>

Child Welfare League of America

<http://www.handsnet.org/handsnet2/cwla/>

Coalition for America's Children

<http://www.usakids.org>

Families USA

<http://epn.org/families/html>

Idea Central: Welfare and Families

<http://epn.org/idea/welfare.html>

Society for the Study of Social Problems

<http://funnelweb.utcc.utk.edu/~sssp/>

All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.

- Martin Luther King Jr.

1999 Sociology of children Section
Membership Form

(Please note that you must be a current ASA member to join)

_____ I am already a member of the ASA and wish to join the Sociology of Children section for 1999.
Enclosed is my check (payable to ASA, Re: Children Section) for \$12. Students pay \$6.

_____ I want to join the ASA and The Children Section. Please send me a 1999 application.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ FAX _____

E-Mail _____

Mail to: American Sociological Association, Membership Services, 1722 N Street, Washington D.C. 20036-2981

