

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

SPRING 1999

Section Officers

Chair

Sandra Hofferth
Institute for Social Research,
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248
hofferth@umich.edu

Chair-Elect

William Cosaro
Department of Sociology
Indiana University
744 Ballantine Hall
Bloomington, IN 47405
cosaro@indiana.edu

Past Chair

Jeylan T. Mortimer
Fellow, Center for Advanced
Study in the Behavioral Sciences
75 Alta Road
Stanford, California 94305
Tel: 650 -321-2052
morti002@atlas.socsci.umn.edu

Secretary-Treasurer

Sandra K. Danziger
School of Social Work
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor MI 48106
sandrakd@umich.edu

Council Member

Terry J. Arendell
2 Thrushwood Park
Waterville, ME 04901

Council Member

Joel Best
Department of Sociology
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901
joelbest@siu.edu

Council Member

Gerald Handel
The Graduate School
CUNY - Box 375
33 West 42nd Street
New York, NY 10036-8099

FROM THE CHAIR

By Sandra L. Hofferth

Changes in American Children's Time, 1981-1997

How family life has changed. In 1997 two-thirds of the mothers of preschool children were working, compared with 47 percent in 1980 and 12 percent in 1950. This is a remarkable number. The employment of mothers of young children has had a major effect on family life, just as the initial movement of men out of the home and into wage employment did at the beginning of the industrial revolution. We are revisiting this second revolution or "Subtle Revolution," some 20 years after the book announcing it first appeared in 1979. In recent research conducted jointly with Jack Sandberg, a graduate student in Sociology, I focused on changes in children's experience of family life over the 16-year period between 1981, when the first such study was conducted, and 1997. Both studies were conducted at the University of Michigan using the same time diary methodology. For those who are parents with young children, these findings will not come as a surprise; however, they put a number on our experiences and give us direction for further exploration. I have also conducted some initial research on the implications and consequences of this phenomenon.

How do children's lives reflect these dramatic changes in their parents' experiences? The two major findings of our research are that, first, children's free time has declined and, second, that free time is increasingly structured. Let me describe each of these findings in detail, with the supporting numbers. Table 1 shows the estimated mean weekly hours and minutes

children spent in major activities in 1981 and 1997. To obtain the amount of free time children have in 1981 and 1997 I summed discretionary time, defined as time not spent in personal care, eating, sleeping, and school, and divided by the 168 hours in each week. That amounted to 38 percent of a child's week (63 hours) in 1981 and 30 percent (51 hours) in 1997, a 16% decline in free time over the past 16 years. The major causes for this decline are the increased time spent in school, which rose from 21 to 29 hours per week, an increase of 8 hours. As could be anticipated, but not shown here, the largest increase was in the time preschool children spent in school or child care; even so, school-age children also spent more time in school, presumably some before and after-school programs are included by parents in their reports of "school time." An additional increase occurred in personal care time, which

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Table 1 (weighted)
ESTIMATED MEAN WEEKLY HOURS:MINUTES CHILDREN
SPENT IN MAJOR ACTIVITIES, 3-12 year olds, 1981 and 1997

Activity	1981 N=(229)	1997 N=(2196)	Difference 1997-1981
Market work	0:48	0:07	-0:41
Household work	2:27	5:50	3:23
Personal care	5:05	8:09	3:04
Eating	9:08	8:06	-0:58
Sleeping	69:30	71:12	1:42
School	21:22	29:34	8:12
Studying	1:25	2:14	0:49
Church	2:26	1:19	-0:54
Visiting	1:24	3:46	2:22
Sports	2:20	4:20	2:00
Outdoors	1:26	0:42	-0:44
Hobbies	0:13	0:06	-0:07
Art activities	0:27	0:56	0:26
Playing	15:54	12:05	-3:49
TV	15:12	13:17	-1:55
Reading	0:57	1:18	0:21
Household conversations	1:12	0:34	-0:38
Other passive leisure	0:33	3:06	2:33
Total	154:35	166:41	
NA	2:37	1:19	
Percent of time accounted for by Activities	92%	99%	

Notes: Source :PSID-CS 1997; Timmer, et al. 1985.

*Total weekly time in hours:minutes =168:00

Weekly times for individuals derived as the sum of 5 times weekday
time + 2 times weekend day time.

Only children who had both wd and we diaries are included;
odd cases missing or visiting all day for one diary also removed from
the analysis

Council Member
Donald J. Hernandez,
Department of Sociology &
Center for Social and
Demographic Analysis
SUNY at Albany
Social Science 340
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12222
Office: 518-442-4666
Fax: 518-442-4936
Internet: DonH@csc.albany.edu

Council Member
David Kinney
Department of Sociology,
Anthropology & Social Work
Central Michigan University
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859
David.Kinney@cmich.edu

Council Member
Jane McLeod,
Department of Sociology
Indiana University
744 Ballantine Hall
Bloomington, IN 47405
jmcLeod@indiana.edu

Council Member
Timothy J. Owens
Department of Sociology
Indiana University
Indianapolis, IN 46202
IOHI100@indyvax

Council Member
Martha B. Power
5060 family & consumer science
Illinois State University
Normal, Illinois 61790 5060
mpower@rs6000.cmp.ilstu.edu

Council Member
Jens Qvortrup
University of Southern
Denmark - Esbjerg
Niels Bohrs Vej 9
DK-6700 Esbjerg
Denmark
Tel: +45-79.14.11.76
Fax: +45-79.14.11.99.
JQ@SUC.SUC.DK

is time spent bathing, grooming, but also includes time spent packing up one's possessions or getting ready to go places. Presumably spending more time out of the home entails more time getting ready to go as well. I should also note that meal-times also declined between 1981 and 1997, a decline of about an hour per week. This is consistent with increased maternal employment. There was a small but non-significant increase in time spent sleeping.

What are children doing in their "free" time and how has that changed over the past 16 years? Children spent about half of their free time playing and watching television in both 1997 and 1981. Given that free time declined, we would expect declines in most activities. Playing dropped by 25 percent, more than the overall decline in free time, and television viewing declined by slightly less, 13 percent. Churchgoing declined by 40 percent over the period and outdoors activities, such as walking, hiking and camping by about 50 percent, though the times were not large to begin with. Finally, household conversations, that is, just sitting and conversing, declined by 100 percent over the period, though again, the numbers were not large to start with.

Children's time in several important activities, in particular, sports, visiting, household work, and other passive leisure, increased. These sports include standard team activities such as soccer, baseball, basketball, and swimming. The time children spent in sports activities almost doubled over the period, from 2 hours and 20 minutes in 1981 to 4 hours and 20 minutes in 1997. Children participated in a wide

variety of scheduled and organized sports activities in 1997. Participation increased equally for girls and for boys; still, in 1997 boys spent twice as much time in sports activities as girls. Visiting increased by 200 percent over the period. This includes time spent on the telephone talking with friends. One puzzling finding was that time spent in household work more than doubled between 1981 and 1997. Finally, consistent with the conclusion that there has been an increase in the structure of children's lives, we see that the time children spend in other passive leisure—going to shows and sports events at which children are spectators not participants—increased five-fold. In 1981 children spent one-half hour in other passive leisure; that figure was 3 hours and 6 minutes in 1997.

What are the implications of these changes for families and children? First, we recognize that families are a lot busier today; with two parents working and children in their own activities, even children need their own personal organizer. Family life requires very tight scheduling. The food preparation industry is a fast growing segment of the work force, with carry-out and restaurant foods substituting for home-cooked meals. Families may spend time running back and forth to stores rather than making goods at home. This is reflected in the increased time children spend in household work, the largest chunk of which is explained as time children spend accompanying parents on errands and shopping trips rather than traditional chores and cleanup.

Are these changes good or bad for children? I have to say that the jury is

Council Member
Barrie Thorne
Department of Sociology
University of California-Berkeley
Berkeley, California 94720-1980
(510) 542-0659

Contributing Editor
Patricia Adler
Department of Sociology
University of Colorado-Boulder
Ketchum 219
Campus Box 327
Boulder CO 90309-0327

Contributing Editor
Peter Adler
Department of Sociology
2040 South Race Street
Room GCB 433
Denver CO 80208-2948
303-871-2061
padler@du.edu

Newsletter Editor
Daniel D. Martin
Department of Sociology,
Gerontology & Anthropology
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio 45056
martindd@muohio.edu

still out. It has been a relatively short twenty years since fewer than half of all mothers were in the work force. As the present generation of children moves into young adulthood, we may see the consequences in terms of their expectations of home and family life. Certainly, we are seeing in the overwhelming enrollments of young women in colleges and universities that women will be involved in careers in the future. Society will continue to adapt.

The good news is that television time has declined. This decline is exceeded by an overall decrease in free time. Television is a passive activity that, overall, has a small but statistically significant negative impact on children's reading scores. On the other hand, the total time spent reading—only about 1 hour per week—has not changed over the same period. Of the activities we examined, time spent reading is the activity that is associated with better reading comprehension and, therefore, with future success in school and life. While study time increased by 50 percent between 1981 and 1997, the total hours children spend studying is still small, only about 2 hours per week. In addition, increased study time is not necessarily associated with doing better in school because children who study more include those who are having school problems.

Finally, we did not find that children who spend less time playing at home necessarily do worse on verbal or math tests or have more behavior problems. Of course, we focused on home time. Children may be playing in their preschool programs or have some free time at school. Thus, this study provides only a partial picture of children's time. Our current research is examining what

children do at school as well as at home. We have found no evidence that mothers who work outside the home are neglecting their children. A difference of only 3 hours per week in direct parental engagement with children was found in two-parent families with an employed mother compared with two-parent families in which the mother was not employed. We also found that children who spend fewer hours eating meals have higher levels of aggressive behavior problems than those who spend more hours eating meals. We do not yet know, of course, which comes first; however, meal-time is an important time when children and parents can find out what happened over the day. This is not the only time children and parents spend talking, but since just sitting and talking as the main activity also declined dramatically between 1981 and 1997, there may be a basis for concern.

We will be conducting additional analyses over the next few years and conducting a second wave of data collection on these same children and their families in the year 2001.

For more information on the Child Development Supplement to the Panel Study of Income Dynamics or to order a copy of our reports please visit our web site at:

<http://www.isr.umich.edu/src/child-development/home.html>

or

<http://www.umich.edu/~psid>.

References

Hofferth, Sandra and Jack Sandberg. 1998. "Changes in American Children's Time, 1981-1997." Unpublished manuscript. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research, November 9.

Timmer, S.G., J. Eccles, & K. O'Brien. 1985. "How Children Use Time." Pp. 353-382 in F.T. Juster and F.P. Stafford (eds), *Time, Goods, and Well-Being*. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

GUEST COLUMN

By Jens Qvortrup¹

Childhood: A Plea for a Generational Perspective

Let me first say, that I am honoured, as a European scholar, to have been elected as a member of the board of the Sociology of Children Section of the American Sociological Association. I have, with pleasure and interest, been following the activities of the section since its establishment in 1992. Besides, I had an obligation also to do so as I have been chairing the International Sociological Association's childhood section, which was born a few years earlier.

In 1998 we were proud to be designated a research committee. The chair has now been passed on to Dr. Leena Alanen from Finland.

Although I am not an appointed liaison, I would like to see my role, as a member of the research committee, as that of a bridge between the international community of childhood researchers

and the U.S. section on Sociology of Children, even though my platform is primarily a European one. I believe it is worthwhile for Americans to become a member of the RC53², as I encourage RC53 members to take a greater interest in the American section.

It is not my purpose in this article to outline similarities and differences of sociological research in childhood between the U.S. and Europe; I believe all theoretical orientations are effectively represented in both regions. It is, however, interesting to note the difference in name: sociology of *childhood* (ISA) and sociology of *children* (ASA); does this indicate a difference in orientation? I am not sure.

If we look back at the very first issue of *Childnews* (Winter 1992), the founder and then acting chair, Gertrud Lenzer, wrote "... the social category of 'children' is characterized by the circumstance that those who are included in it do not enjoy in full measure the constitutional and legal rights of adults who also legally represent them and upon whom they are dependent. This conception of Sociology of Children in the wider sense has the added advantage of offering a fuller and less fragmented view of a major social group in any society."

Attune to the issues cogently outlined by Lenzer, we carefully selected 'sociology of childhood' rather than 'sociology of children' as the name for the ISA section. We hoped to select a name which captured the structural aspects of

this major social group by indicating the nature of childhood as socially constructed reality. We were inspired by Philippe Ariès, who in his seminal book³ suggested that while children have always existed, childhood was a cultural construct created as a result of changes in society.

Since the beginning of this decade, two new theoretical streams have emerged in the sociology of childhood: Agency and Structure. The foci are quite similar to those characterising the sociological discipline and tradition in general. This development is important because its congruence with sociology places the study of childhood in a position to learn from the general body of sociological insight, as well as to contribute to it. There is in other words nothing exotic about children/childhood, that mandates that its study must be conducted any differently than other human groups and categories of human phenomenon.

So what is peculiar about children as human beings and childhood as a social phenomenon? The temptation, of course, is great to *only analyze* variation among children in terms of race, class and gender. While this temptation is perfectly legitimate and enjoys a growing popularity among practitioners in the field, I believe it is also important to ask what it is that children have in common; Lenzer already mentions their constitutional and legal position as different from that of adults. Robert Coles once observed that

"in a sense white and Negro children have more in common with each other than with their parents".⁴

I would add that the concept of *generation* is also crucial. We already have good examples of what a "generational perspective" can provide in: (1) studies of poverty and affluence among different generations of people initiated by Preston⁵, and (2) studies of children's access to space as urbanisation increases. I encourage more co-operation between scholars from different parts of the world on such studies, and I hope *Childnews* as well as RC53's *Newsletter* will be instrumental in promoting this co-operation. In Europe there is a boom of interest in childhood. I have observed a corresponding excitement among American scholars of sociology.⁶ The stage is at hand for mutual support, exploration, and inspiration.

¹Address correspondence to: Jens Qvortrup, University of Southern Denmark Esbjerg, Niels Bohrs Vej 9, DK-6700 Esbjerg, Denmark. e-mail: jq@suc.suc.dk

²Website of Research Committee #53
Sociology of Childhood:
<http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/social/childhood/isa/home.htm>

³Philippe Ariès: *Centuries of Childhood*. New York: Vintage Books, 1962.

⁴Robert Coles, *Children of Crisis*. Vol.I. London: Faber & Faber, 1967, p. 322.

⁵Samule H. Preston, "Children and the Elderly: Divergent Paths for America's Dependents", in: *Demography*, 21, 1984, pp. 435-457.

⁶Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.

⁷There is already much valuable literature on children/childhood in the USA; let me use this opportunity to remind the readers of an apparently forgotten, but excellent American book, which was published before the new wave of interest in childhood studies. It is Richard de Lone's book 'Small Futures' which in my view is one of the best works to understand American childhood in its historical, political and ideological context.

Lone, Richard de (1979) *Small Futures: Children, Inequality, and the Limits of Liberal Reform*. New York and London: Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich.

CONFERENCES

American Sociological Association Conference, Chicago 1999

The Sociology of Children Section of the ASA will hold its annual ASA reception Monday evening, August 9th at 6:30 p.m jointly with the Aging and the Life Course section.

Sociology of Children Section CANDIDATES FOR CHAIR-ELECT

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Elaine bell Kaplan
Aaron M. Pallas
Judith A. Seltzer

Sociology of Children Section Refereed Roundtables on Children Organizer: Loretta Bass, U.S. Bureau of the Census

I. Adolescent Depression and Emotional Distress

Table President: Susan Miller, University of California - Davis

Susan Warner and Nancy Miller, University of Akron, Young Adult Depression: Predicting from Childhood to Early Adulthood

Susan Miller, University of California - Davis, Emotional distress in the United States Youth: A Social Structural Perspective

David Kinney, Central Michigan University, Beyond the Burden of Being a "Nerd": Delineating Successful Trajectories During the Transition to High School Among Urban Adolescents

II. Welfare Reform and Child Care

Table President: Clifford Staples, University of North Dakota

Lori McNeil, Western Michigan University, Welfare Reform: Impact on Child Care

Clifford Staples, University of North Dakota, Child Care Arrangements of Low-Income and Welfare Families in North Dakota

Wen-Jui Han, Columbia University, Child Care Choices Among Employed Mothers with Preschool Children

III. Problem Behavior, Welfare Reform, and the Transition to Adulthood

Table President: Loretta Bass, U.S. Bureau of the Census

Alison Burke, University of Virginia, Religion as Family Social Capital: Family Risk, Religiosity, and Adolescent Problem Behavior

Barbara Downs and Loretta Bass, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Growing Up Fast: The 1996 Welfare Reform Act and Teen Sexuality

IV. Children: International Perspectives

Table President: *Ethel Kosminsky*, University of Sao Paulo

Susan Kinnevy, University of Pennsylvania, U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child: Barriers to U.S. Ratification

Ethel Kosminsky, University of Sao Paulo
This is a tree. This is the Sun, this is the Moon. This is a lot of war: The use of Children's designs in Sociology

V. Household Composition, Home Environment, and Children's Well-Being

Table President: *Sampson Blair*, Arizona State University

Sampson Blair and Curt Sebolewski, Arizona State University, Family Composition, Parental Employment and Children's Household Labor

Catarina Eickhoff, Germany, Partner and Conflict Families: Types of Family Climate, Family Communication and Different Risks and Chances of Child Development

Susan Jekielek, Ohio State University
Children's Home Environments in Middle Childhood

VI. Public Policy and Children

Table President: *Teresa Swartz*, University of Minnesota

Teresa Swartz, University of Minnesota
The Problems and Perils of Privatization: an ethnographic exploration of the privatization of foster care in Los Angeles County

Melissa Riba, Michigan State University
Outside the "Norm": Issues in Studying Teenage Childbearing

Session Category: Thematic Session
Session Title: *Childhood and Child Well-Being in Comparative Perspective*
Organizer: Donald J. Hernandez, State University of New York, Albany

President: Ivar Froenes, University of Oslo

Jens Qvortrup, University Centre of south Jutland, Denmark, The Meaning of Child Work: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives

An-Magritt Jensen, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway
Children in Europe: Changing Families

Pia Christensen, University Centre of South Jutland, Denmark, Home and Movement in Family Time and space: Children's Construction of Belonging and Independence

Alan Prout, University of Hull, England
Control and Self-Realisation in Late Modern Childhoods

Juergen Zinnecker, University of Siegen, Germany, The European Voice of Children: Children's Rights Movements, Social policy for and with Children, and the New Childhood Research

Session Category: Special Session
Session Title: *Childhood in International Perspective*.

Organizer: Jens Qvortrup, University of Southern Denmark, Niels Bohrs Vej 9, DK-6700 Esbjerg, Denmark. e-mail: jq@suc.suc.dk

Chair: William A. Corsaro, Indiana University, Bloomington IN 47405, USA; e-mail: corsaro@indiana.edu

Speakers:

Leena Alanen, University of Jyväskylä, Methodologies in researching children's childhoods.

Doris Buehler-Niederberger, Bergische University, Children as moral instance - working out generational relations in public debates.

Manuela du Bois-Reymond, University of Leiden, The role of peers and parents in the leisure activities of young adolescents in the Netherlands and Germany.

Discussant: Donald J. Hernandez, State University of New York, Albany

Section Category: Special Session
Session Title: *A Panel Discussing the National Academy of Sciences and Institute of Medicine Report, From Generation to Generation: The Health and Well-Being of Children in Immigrant Families*

Organizer: Donald J. Hernandez, State University of New York, Albany

President: Nancy S. Landale, Pennsylvania State University

Panel: Susan Gonzalez Baker, University of Texas, Austin

David Takeuchi, Indiana University, Bloomington

David Lopez, University of California, Los Angeles

Session Sponsor: Program Committee
Session Category: Special Session
Session Title: *Welfare Reform: Consequences for Native-Born and Immigrant Children*

Organizer: Donald J. Hernandez, State University of New York, Albany

President: Peter D. Brandon, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Richard Veevers, Statistics Canada
Effects for Children: The Canadian Self-Sufficiency Experiment

\Anne Driscoll, Child Trends, Inc.
Impacts of Public Assistance Receipt on
Children from Immigrant Families

Leticia E. Fernandez and Rebecca L. Clark, The Urban Institute, How Close to the Edge?: New Evidence about Immigrant Children and Children of Immigrants from the National Survey of America's Families

Greg J. Duncan, Northwestern University;
Aletha Huston, University of Texas, Austin; Robert Granger, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation; Hans Bos, Manpower Research Demonstration Corporation; and Vonnie McLoyd, University of Michigan, Milwaukee's New Hope: An Anti-Program That Works

Discussion: Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, Princeton University

Session Category: Professional Workshop
Session Title: *Studying the One-fifth of American Children Who Live in Immigrant Families: Research Issues and Data Sources*

Leader: Donald J. Hernandez, State University of New York, Albany
Workshop Description: Children in immigrant families are the fastest growing child population in the U.S., and they constitute one-fifth of all children. This workshop is intended for sociologists interested in studying the circumstances, well-being, and public policies for these children, compared to third- and later-generation children. The workshop highlights emerging theoretical and empirical issues, and discusses data sets for carrying out research focused on areas including socioeconomic and demographic risk factors, risky behavior, physical health and psychological well-being, cognitive development and school achievement, welfare and health care reform, and the special risks in migrant farm-worker families.

The New York State Sociological Association (NYSSA) Will be holding its 47th Annual Meeting to be held at Nazareth College in Rochester. The Theme of the conference is *Sociology Beyond the Millennium: The Next Generation*. Registration begins on Friday, October 22nd at 1:00 p.m. and sessions begin at 2:30 p.m. On Friday evening there will be a reception and banquet with the keynote address "Reflections on Constructive Conflicts" by Dr. Louis Kriesberg.

Dr. Kriesberg is Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Maxwell Professor Emeritus of Social Conflict Studies at Syracuse University. He was the founding director of the Program on Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts and continues as an affiliate of PARC. Some of his many books include: *Constructive Conflicts* (1998), *International Conflict Resolution* (1998), *Social Conflicts* (1973, 1982), and *Mothers in Poverty* (1970). He was President of the Society for the Study of Social Problems for 1983-1984.

Sessions will resume at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday. The award for best undergraduate paper will be presented at the luncheon on Saturday.

JOURNALS & VOLUMES 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 Analyses 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 of the editors, Timothy Owens or Sandra Hofferth at: towens@indiana.edu, or

hofferth@umich.edu. Submissions due September 15, 1999. All submissions will be peer reviewed.

Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research, strongly encourages submissions. The journal is published by Sage in association with the Norwegian Centre for Child Research. Two members of the ASA Sociology of Children Section -- Jens Quortrup and Barrie Thorne -- recently agreed to become Editors of the journal (along with Ivar Frones, from the University of Oslo; Chris Jenks from Goldsmiths College in England; and Irene Rizzini, from the University of Santa Ursula in Brazil). Section members Peter Adler, William Corsaro, Gertrude Lenzer, and Francisco J. Pilotti are part of the international gathering of scholars on the Editorial Board.

The "Aim and Scope" of the journal reads as follows: "Childhood refers to a life phase as well as to the age group defined as children. Childhood is also a cultural construction, part of the social and economic structure of both local and global communities. Although children and adolescents have been studied in the context of many different disciplines, recent thinking has called for an international, cross-disciplinary view of the culture, economics, language, health and social networks of childhood and children, with an emphasis on their rights and position in society.

Children's development takes place in interaction with a forest of symbols, as well as cognitive and

physiological factors. Studies also include research into the historical background to the concepts of childhood held by various cultures, as well as historical perspectives in general. The development of international communication over the last few decades has stimulated interests in the problems of childhood from a global point of view. We therefore welcome studies from the widest possible variety of geographical, social and cultural settings." Submissions should be sent to the Editorial Office:

Karin Ekberg, Managing Editor
CHILDHOOD

Norwegian Centre for Child Research

N-7034 Trondheim, Norway
or e-mail:

Karin.Ekberg@allforsk.ntnu.no
phone: +47 73 59 62 44/40

Research in Community Sociology Volume X (JAI Press) invites papers on various dimensions of communities: discussions of theoretical and methodological issues, and empirical research, case studies and analyses of micro-macro linkages, and critical studies on community structure/change, problems, policy-planning and related issues. ASR format, not more than 50 pages, three copies. Submit papers before October 15, 1999. Contact The Editor:

Professor Dan A. Chekki
Department of Sociology
University of Winnipeg
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2E9
Fax: (204) 774-4134
e-mail: sociology@uwinnipeg.ca

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Professor Dan A. Chekki
Department of Sociology
University of Winnipeg
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2E9
Fax: (204) 774-4134
e-mail: sociology@uwinnipeg.ca
The Department of Sociology
The University of Winnipeg
515 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2E9

Department Secretary: Lesley Murphy

Ph: (204) 786-9364
Fax: (204) 774-4134

SUMMER INSTITUTE

PSID and CDS at the SRC is holding a Summer Institute in June 1999. A one-week workshop on the Panel Study of Income Dynamics and its Child Development Supplement will be held in Ann Arbor during the week of June 21-25. Participants may choose just the morning session, where the focus is the core PSID, or the afternoon session, where the focus is on the CDS, or may sign up for both sessions. Instructors will be Sandra Hofferth, Hiromi Ono, and Jean Yeung, plus staff of the PSID. For more information please contact the toll-free number 877-880-9389, or the direct number at 734-764-6595 or send e-mail

summers@isr.umich.edu. Additional information may also be obtained from the website, which is: <http://www.isr.umich.edu/src/si/>. This workshop is not offered every year so please note its availability this June. Please contact:
Sandra L. Hofferth
Institute for Social Research
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248
(734) 763-5131
hofferth@umich.edu
<http://www.umich.edu/~psid>

<http://www.isr.umich.edu/src/child-development/home.html>

LETTERS OF PROTEST

From ASA Presidents to sociology graduate students, the response to the proposed revision of Circular A-110 by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has been impressive. By OMB's April 5 deadline, there was an outpouring of letters from researchers working across subfields of sociology, study populations, and modes of data collection. In their own voice, each of these submissions powerfully conveyed both a commitment to principles of data access and data sharing and concrete examples of how the proposed use of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) would have adverse consequences for the research enterprise.

For those unfamiliar with the details, last Fall a provision was attached to the 1999 Omnibus Spending Law (P. L. 105-277) which instructed OMB to revise

Circular A-110 to ensure that all data produced with a Federal grant would be made available to the public through FOIA. (Circular A-110, which has been in effect since 1976, governs the management of Federal grants by institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other nonprofit agencies.) At the 11th hour, the provision was attached to this appropriations bill without any public hearings, scrutiny, or comments. On January 6, H.R. 88 was introduced to repeal this provision by Representative George Brown (D-CA), a key supporter of science. On February 4, OMB issued a proposed revision and announced a 60-day comment period until April 5.

As is widely known throughout the research community, the proposed revision essentially treats all research data obtained through Federal support as if it were a Federal record (i.e., a document or record held by the Federal government) available to the public under FOIA. Even if data access requirements need to be strengthened, FOIA does not seem to be the appropriate framework for issuing such guidance. Moreover, the proposed revision is so broad and so vague that it presents dangers to science and the public good. Left unspecified, for example, is what data are covered, what constitutes publication, when data would be accessible, how confidentiality and privacy of individuals would be protected, how the data would be obtained, and who would bear the cost.

Through recent Footnotes, the ASA homepage, and extensive e-mail lists and listservs, we briefed sociologists and other social scientists about these problems and urged them to comment to OMB by the deadline date. Over 10,000 comments have weighed in to OMB on both sides. Scientific and academic organizations including ASA expressed grave concerns and urged OMB not to issue any final provision until a full study and public discussion can occur. Many scientific societies, educational associations, and academic institutions also called for Congressional hearings or study by the National Academy of Sciences (or a similar group). While it had been expected that OMB would issue a final revision after considering the comments, given the large number of responses, there is some indication that OMB might heed the call for a more deliberative process and post a further revision for comment.

Now that April 5 is behind us, it is important for individual researchers and scientific societies to continue to make their views known. Hopefully OMB will decide that more input is necessary and "slow the train," as initial signals suggest. Meanwhile, Congressional attention has been heating up. At the time of this writing, H.R. 88 now has over 30 co-sponsors from the Democratic and Republican sides and is before the House Committee on Government Reform.

Keep your letters coming; they matter!

-Felice J. Levine, Executive Officer,
American Sociological Association

Contact Your Representative and Senators Now! Oppose Proposed Use of FOIA and Loan Support to H.R. 88

Oppose the Congressional provision mandating use of FOIA to make available research data supported by Federal grants. Support the repeal of this provision as set forth in H.R. 88. (H.R. 88 is on the internet. It can be found at: http://www.house.gov/science_democrats/member/gb990107.htm).

Key points: Address sociologists strong support for data sharing and access (the issue is not the principle, but what specifically is being proposed); how the proposed change could affect research in your specialty area; and key problems (e.g., definitional problems, when data would be used and by whom, human subjects protection, potential for improper use of data, procedures and costs of obtaining data). See also the ASA homepage (<http://www.asanet.org>).

How to comment on H.R. 88: H.R. 88, currently under consideration by the Committee on Government Reform, has been referred to the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology chaired by Rep. Steve Horn (R-CA). Sociologists are encouraged to write to this Subcommittee, to their Representatives, and to their Senators urging repeal of the FOIA

provisions of the 1999 Omnibus Spending Law and calling for a more deliberative process of assessing the need for further Federal guidelines on data access. Members of the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology are: Steve Horn, Chair (R-CA), Judy Biggert (R-IL), Tom Davis (R-VA), Greg Walden (R-OR), Doug Ose (R-CA), Paul Ryan (R-WI), Jim Turner (D-TX), Paul Kanjorski (D-OA), Major Owens (D-NY), Patsy Mink (D-HI), and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY).

As of April 15, the following Representatives have co-sponsored H.R. 88: Tammy Baldwin (D-WI); Bill Barrett (R-NE); Thomas Barrett (D-WI); Herbert Bateman (R-VA); Ken Bentsen (D-TX); Earl Blumenhaur (D-OR); Dave Camp (R-MI); Michael Capuano (D-MA); Bob Clement (D-TN); Peter DeFazio (D-OR); Norman Dicks (D-WA); Michael Doyle (D-PA); Vernon Ehlers (R-MI); Phil English (R-PA); Bob Etheridge (D-NC); Harold Ford, Jr. (D-TN); Barney Frank (D-MA); John J. LaFalce (R-NY); Maurice Hinchey (D-NY); Peter Hoekstra (D-MI); Rush Holt (D-NJ); Edward Markey (D-MA); James McGovern (D-MA); George Miller (D-CA); James Moran (D-VA); Sue Myrick (R-NC); David Price (D-NC); Lynn Rivers (D-MI); Max Sandlin (D-TX); Vic Snyder (D-AR); James Walsh (R-NY); Henry Waxman (D-CA).

Please send copies of all e-mails or other correspondence directed to members of Congress to ASA: Felice Levine, Executive

Officer, American Sociological Association, 1307 New York Avenue NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005-4701, or via e-mail (levine@asanet.org).

WE ARE SEARCHING FOR AN EDITOR!

The Sociology of Children section seeks a dedicated volunteer to produce CHILDNEWS, beginning fall 1999. This is a great opportunity to meet your colleagues and find out what is going on before anyone else does. The Sociology of Children Section would like to produce 3 issues a year, generally, Fall, Winter and Spring/Summer. Please contact Sandra Hofferth, hofferth@umich.edu or the current newsletter editor, Dan Martin, martindd@muohio.edu, if you would like to explore this further.

RELATED WEB PAGES**Academy of Pediatrics,
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<http://www.asanet.org>

Children's Defense Fund

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

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**Society for the Study of Social
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<http://funnelweb.utcc.utk.edu/~sssp/>

**International Sociological
Association - Sociology of
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<http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/social/childhood/isa/home.htm>

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

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Enclosed is my check (payable to ASA, Re: Children Section) for \$12. Students pay \$6.

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