

# Child and Youth News

The Newsletter of the  
American Sociological  
Association Section on  
Children & Youth

## A Message from the Chair

The most important domestic question these days is how deep the economic downturn will go. As students, scholars, and researchers in the area of children and youth, we know that gloomy economic prospects will mean much more than just economic hardship for the nation's children and youth. The layoffs, of primarily fathers during the first unemployment surge but also both parents in the foreseeable near future, will expose children to increasing psychological stress, domestic violence, and family instability. Shrinking state budgets will reduce support for public education compromising student academic achievement, while cuts in public health programs will allow disease incidence to rise. Rapid increases in the unemployment rate will rock neighborhood and community stability.

Children and youth are the most vulnerable subpopulation to the short and long term impacts of the current economic decline but

adequate attention has not been paid to their wellbeing.

I want to encourage our section members to respond quickly to this large-scale social change. The literature on the Great Depression provides us with the knowledge of the likely impacts on children. But, the current recession is unprecedented since WWII, taking place under a very different global economic structure, and requires its own research endeavor.

Let us design and carry out timely research to document how the current social change affects our nation's children and youth. We need to respond quickly to understand these effects so that our nation's responses are grounded in evidence.

Let us work collectively bringing together both qualitative and quantitative research to provide policymakers with the information they need to establish effective social policies and programs that protect our children and youth.

—Lingxin Hao

## Join the ASA Section on Children and Youth!

The Children and Youth section encourages the development and dissemination of sociological perspectives on children. The Children & Youth Section offers many benefits, including:

- Section reception at ASA with colleagues studying children and youth
- Section sessions and roundtables
- Website and section listserv access: Opportunities posted about meetings, jobs, books, and other developments in the field.
- Distinguished Contribution and Student Awards
- A network of colleagues with research interests similar to yours.

*If you do not belong to the ASA, a prerequisite for section membership, we invite you to join both it and our section. See [here](#) for more information.*

## Winter 2009

### SECTION OFFICERS 2008-2009

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Margaret Hagerman  
*Emory University*

## Featured Faculty Member: Sharon K. Araji, Ph.D.

Dr. Sharon K. Araji is Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Colorado Denver. Prior to coming to UC Denver, she served as Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Her interests in the areas of violence in interpersonal relationships became a main focus of her research and teaching when she completed a NIMH Post-doctoral Fellowship at the University of New Hampshire in the early 1980's. Here she worked with Drs. Murray Straus and David Finkelhor.

Her latest research interest in the area of interpersonal violence focuses on what happens to protective parents, mostly women, who leave domestic violence relationships and become entangled in contested custody cases with their abusers. If one did not hear the same stories repeated over and over by protective parents, where some court cases continue for 10 or more years, the negative effects on protective parents and their children would be unbelievable.

*(See Page 6 for an essay on this topic by Dr. Araji.)*



*Sharon K. Araji, Ph.D.  
University of Colorado, Denver*

**\* See an essay on Page 6  
written by Sharon K. Araji \***

*\*\* If you are a faculty member and  
would like to be interviewed, email  
Maggie at  
Margaret.Hagerman@emory.edu. \*\**



## New Book by Section Member, Allison Pugh!

Title: *Longing and Belonging: Parents, Children and Consumer Culture* (California, 2009, \$21.95 pb) Allison Pugh, Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Virginia

Even as they see their wages go down and their buying power decrease, many parents are still putting their kids' material desires first. These parents struggle with how to handle children's consumer wants, which continue unabated despite the economic downturn. And, indeed, parents and other adults continue to spend billions of dollars on children every year.

Why do children seem to desire so much, so often, so soon, and why do parents capitulate so readily? To determine what forces lie behind the onslaught of Nintendo Wiis and Bratz dolls, Allison J. Pugh spent three years observing and interviewing children and their families. In *Longing and Belonging: Parents, Children, and Consumer Culture*, Pugh teases out the complex factors that contribute to how we buy, from lunchroom conversations about Game Boys to the stark inequalities facing American children.

Pugh finds that children's desires stem less from striving for status or falling victim to advertising than from their yearning to join the conversation at school or in the neighborhood. Most parents respond to children's need to belong by buying the particular goods and experiences that act as passports in children's social worlds, because they sympathize with their children's fear of being different from their peers. Even under financial constraints, families prioritize children "feeling normal." Pugh masterfully illuminates the surprising similarities in the fears and hopes of parents and children from vastly different social contexts, showing that while corporate marketing and materialism play a part in the commodification of childhood, at the heart of the matter is the desire to belong.

## Meet the Grad Student!: *Laci A. Fiala Ades*

Maggie Hagerman (M) interviewed Laci Fiala Ades (L), a student at the *University of Nebraska--Lincoln*:

**M: Hi Laci! I haven't spoken to you since ASA. How is the dissertation?**

L: The dissertation is going well. Sometimes it is really hard to get the motivation to just sit down and write, but I love my topic and see a lot of potential for the answers to the questions I'm putting forth. Some minor methodological and measures issues held me up until a few weeks when I had an epiphany concerning my focal independent variable. Everything is rolling along great now. I'm looking forward to a May defense and an August graduation .

**M: What is your topic again?**

L: Yes, I am using the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development longitudinal data to look at the effect of maternal employment in the first year of a newborn's life to assess the direct and indirect effects on breastfeeding duration, attachment, and problem behaviors in early childhood.

**M: Are you working on anything else?**

L: A colleague and I are about to submit a paper focusing on the breastfeeding-attachment link with the same data as my dissertation. I also recently presented at ASC (American Society of Criminology) on the effects of school violence prevention policies, violence, and educational outcomes. I also have a project in the works using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to assess both school-level and student-level violence on educational outcomes. I am really a statistics and methods junkie.

**M: Wow! Really?**

L: I love working with new data sets and finding new ways to model the concepts I am interested in from HLM to Structural Equation Modeling and good

old regression. Overall, no matter how all over the place, my research has always been focused on children and youth!

**M: Do you also teach?**

L: I love being in the classroom and working with students. I started out in graduate school teaching recitation/lab section for our mass Introduction to Sociology course. My second year in the program I was given my own class to teach and have been doing so ever since. I have taught Intro, Sociology of Crime, Social Problems, and Statistics. The last two years I have been teaching two courses each semester. It definitely keeps me busy!

**M: Do you have a favorite class to teach?**

L: That's tough. As much as I love both the Crime class as well as the ability to recruit students into our major in the Intro class, one of my favorites has probably got to be the statistics class. Most people would think I am crazy, but I truly did love it and can't wait until I can teach it again.

**M: Why did you decide to pursue a Ph.D. in Sociology?**

L: As an undergraduate major in Sociology at Northwest Missouri State University, I was fortunate to have an amazing advisor, Dr. David LoConto. As a Freshman, he told me that he thought I would go far and do well. While he left after my Sophomore year, another Sociology professor, Dr. Roger Neustadter, left a huge impression on me. He taught one of the best and my favorite classes I ever took. How appropriate for this interview that is was a Sociology of Childhood class! Having such great teachers, people, and Sociologists guiding me, I became inspired to want to teach. In grad school, I fell in love with data



Laci Fiala Ades, Graduate Student  
*University of Nebraska—Lincoln*

analysis and statistics.

**M: What are your plans for the future?**

L: I am mostly focused on finding a job in academia as I have been on the job market this year. I want to be somewhere where I can both teach and do some research. I am not opposed to a job outside of academia though. I have data analysis skills that could be put to good use elsewhere if the right opportunity presented itself.

**M: What do you do outside of graduate school?**

L: That's easy. I am a huge Yankees fan, and I have had season tickets for UNL men's baseball for the last five years. I am slowly teaching my two and half year old to love it, as I drag her and my husband to the ballpark every other weekend in the spring and early summer. I also, of course, love spending as much time with my daughter as possible.

**M: Well, I hope to see you at ASA!**

L: Yes, definitely. I had so much fun with everyone last year, so I really don't want to miss out this coming summer!

**M: Thanks for the interview, Laci, and good luck with everything!**

*\*\*If you are a graduate student and would like to be interviewed, email Margaret.Hagerman@emory.edu. \*\**

## Bank of America Child and Adolescent Policy Research Institute

The University of Texas at San Antonio has a relatively new Institute that promotes research, conferences and collaborations related to children and youth. It was initiated in 2005 as a result of an endowment from the Bank of America based on the collaborations Harriett Romo, Ph.D. has developed in working with schools and agencies in the San Antonio Community.

The Bank of America Child and Adolescent Policy Research Institute (Bank of America CAPRI) is a university wide institute that supports the study of topics such as pediatric obesity prevention, infant cognition and language development, school readiness and dropouts, early literacy, juvenile justice and child abuse prevention.

The Institute fosters cross-disciplinary collaborations within the University and with research partners from the community, and will translate research results into policy recommendations.

The Institute is directed by Dr. Harriett Romo, Department of Sociology. Other faculty are affiliated with the Institute as Faculty Associates. A \$500,000 endowment from Bank of America funds graduate fellowships and undergraduate scholarships for students participating in the San Antonio Independent School District/UTSA Child Development Center at the Navarro Academy in downtown San Antonio. The

Navarro Center is a collaborative project of the San Antonio Independent School District and UTSA and is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to Dr. Harriett Romo.

The Child Development Center serves as a research/demonstration site to determine and model the best practices for working with children in both English and Spanish. The Bank of America CAPRI also serves as a resource for research services and professional development training for professionals in child and adolescent development and related careers. Research projects under way include a study of how infants learn language in bilingual homes in collaboration with the University of Washington, Seattle; a Summer Institute for Head Start teachers to help them earn degrees; a study of housing needs of foster care youth who age out of care; a study of Mexican immigrant entrepreneurs and their children who live transnational lives; and a study of working class family financial security.



*Harriett Romo, Ph.D.*

**Check out the Section of Children & Youth's website!!!**

<http://www2.asanet.org/sectionchildren/index.htm>



### Upcoming Conference

The third annual Professional Development Conference for Undergraduate Seniors Interested in Graduate Training in Family and Child Sciences is being hosted by the School of Social and Family Dynamics at Arizona State University.

This conference brings together students who plan to pursue doctoral graduate education with a focus on the health and well being of families or children to learn about research-oriented graduate training in family and child sciences and related areas of study, including sociology. Students selected to attend will be provided with funding to cover all travel-related expenses.

Applications are due March 1; conference is in September 2009.

For more information, visit: <http://www.asu.edu/ssfd/conf>

## 2009 ASA Meeting Paper Session Feature: Following Our Children in the U.S. and Around the World

The 2009 ASA Annual Meeting will be packed with many exciting debates. Without doubt, our section will host many of those.

Thank you to the organizers for putting together five excellent sessions (two of which are co-sponsored with the *Section on Aging and the Life Course*) that both reflect the current debates and issues of today's children and also address the theoretical and methodological advancement in the discipline.

One of our organizers, Elizabeth Cooksey, will put together a group of scholars to discuss: "Longitudinal Research on Children and Youth: U.S. and International Perspectives."

The Sociology of Children and Youth is indeed flourishing with the availability of new datasets that follow children over time. Today's availability of datasets is unprecedented some of these following children from birth (like in ECLS-B), or when they start kindergarten (as in ECLS-K), and sometimes even following them beyond childhood and adolescence into adulthood (like NLSY or Add Health). We encourage all of you to use these sessions not only to produce a lively and productive debate, but perhaps also to start collaborations across countries and across continents.

—Elizabeth Vaquera



## Contribute Your Expertise to Youth and Society

We are creating a pool of researchers to serve as occasional reviewers of manuscripts submitted to *Youth and Society*, a multidisciplinary, international, refereed journal. We are soliciting reviewers in all areas of research involving or about youth (elementary school to young adults) utilizing a variety of research approaches (qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, participatory action research, etc.).

To express interest, advanced doctoral students and Ph.D. level researchers should email areas of expertise and a vita to [Youthand-Soc@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:Youthand-Soc@mail.montclair.edu). The subject line should indicate "Reviewer".

## National Longitudinal Study of Youth Workshop

The 2009 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America will hold an NLSY workshop at the Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center Hotel on Wednesday, April 29 from 2:00-5:00pm. The 3-hour workshop, conducted by staff from the Center for Human Resource Research at The Ohio State University, is designed to introduce PAA members to the NLSY.

• Elizabeth Cooksey, PI of the NLSY79 Child and Young Adult data collection, will provide an overview of the various NLSY data-

sets and highlight some of the unique research opportunities made possible by the use of these data.

• Steve McClaskie, CHRR staff member in charge of User Services, will tutor potential users in how to download data from each of the NLSY datasets through the use of the Web Investigator.

• Canada Keck, Archivist of the NLSY79 Young Adults, will guide participants through exercises designed to provide experience with using the data to answer various research questions.

This workshop will be valuable for anyone planning on attending the Child/Young Adult Workshop or the general NLS Workshop to be run concurrently July 13-16, 2009, in Columbus, OH, or for anyone who has not used the NLSY data in several years and would like a refresher course. To register for this April 29<sup>th</sup> training seminar, please send an e-mail to [us-ersvc@chrr.osu.edu](mailto:us-ersvc@chrr.osu.edu) and include your name, address, contact telephone number, and area(s) of particular interest. Space is limited.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, CONTESTED CHILD CUSTODY AND THE COURTS: HEAR VICTIMS' VOICES *by Sharon K. Araji, Ph.D. [Extended article available here.](#)*

When victims of domestic violence (mostly women) leave abusive relationships and become entangled in contested child custody issues with an abusive parent, the type of abuse and violence that occurs in contested child custody cases has not been recognized as a social problem nor given adequate attention. Attempts to gain public recognition of this issue and promote necessary changes in laws, policies and practices have been going on for years.

Millions of children experience family break-ups from divorce, separation, and desertion. Many of these children witness and/or become victims of abuse while living with their parents. A fairly recent body of literature reveals that if violence exists in relationships and victims attempt to terminate a relationship, custody disputes may be employed by abusive partners to maintain control of victims. Abusive parents tend to win custody and/or visitation battles in the courts, but when domestic violence victims try to use the legal system for protection and redress of harm, instead of winning the battles, they frequently experience secondary victimization by such professionals as judges, attorneys, child custody and psychological evaluators, among others.

Fear of the abusive partner getting custody of children is a deterrent to women leaving battering relationships. Judges are often untrained and may have misconceptions and misunderstandings about the impact of domestic violence on children. Some women believe that the court minimizes harm to children, placing more importance on settling cases as fast as possible. Judges with inadequate training may mistakenly believe that batterers should be awarded visitation or custody without realizing the best predictor of subsequent child adjustment is when the child is no longer exposed to violence.

Following separation, batterers may threaten to report women to child welfare as unfit mothers, kidnap the children and take them out of state, threaten child abuse, or verbally, physically, or sexually abuse the children. When women are on immigrant status, batterers may threaten them with deportation or when child welfare is involved, women may not disclose child abuse because they fear the batterer will turn them in to immigration authorities.

[Bogus] psychological disorders are also used by attorneys to get custody or visitation rights for abusers. In 1985, psychiatrist Richard A. Gardner coined the term parental alienation syndrome (PAS) to describe a disorder whereby children are programmed by one parent to alienate the other parent. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges note that PAS diagnoses and allegations of

'parental alienation' are invalid. When expert witnesses who lack knowledge about the dynamics of domestic violence make recommendations to the courts, perpetrators may be successful in gaining custody of children after making claims of PAS. This allows perpetrators to continue having power and control over victims and their children. In my research, I have come across many cases where this is happening. The results are frequently disastrous for the protective parent and the children.

The friendly parent concept, like PAS, was created by Richard Gardner and may also be used in contested child custody cases. Basically, this concept focuses on friendly parent provisions which favor the parent who appears most willing to support and maintain a relationship between the other parent and the children. Women who have been battered may be advised to encourage a relationship between the perpetrator and children, even when this places them and their children in danger. In order to remedy this situation, some states have overcome these provisions by enacting legislation which recommends that frequent and continuing contact between an abusive parent and children places children at risk, and the safety and welfare of children should take precedence over other factors.

I recently completed a study comparing my results from Alaska to studies undertaken in Arizona, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and California. All five studies showed the extreme harm being done to women and children as a result of being engaged in contested custody battles, where domestic violence was a factor. Weekly, I hear from women who have incurred bankruptcy and/or homelessness because of long term litigation to get their children from abusive partners. In all cases there was documentation of child neglect, physical abuse and/or sexual abuse, children running away, attempting suicide, etc. Some of the protective parents have been thrown in jail for attempts to protect their children. Many of the cases have been ongoing for 10 or more years.

Abuse and violence that occurs in contested child custody cases following domestic violence is a widespread social condition that appears across the United States and other countries. It is one where we need increased awareness, so as to elevate this to the level of a social problem. For interested readers, I have contributed to a forthcoming (2009) edited book by Mo Hannah and Barry Goldstein, entitled, "Domestic Violence, Child Abuse and Child Custody: Legal Strategies and Policy Implications".

***Sharon K. Araji can be emailed at:  
Sharon.Araji@ucdenver.edu***

### ***Section Information:***

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### ***Next Issue:***

The Spring issue of *Child & Youth* news is scheduled to be published in June, 2009.

Please send submissions to Lara at [larap@uchicago.edu](mailto:larap@uchicago.edu). And, if you would like to be interviewed, please let the publications committee know! We would love to feature you. Also, please check out and submit material to the website!

<http://www2.asanet.org/sectionchildren/index.htm>



### ***Mission Statement:***

*The purpose of the Section on Children and Youth is to encourage the development and dissemination of sociological perspectives on children in the areas of research, theory, policy, practice, and teaching. Here, the term "children" includes every human being from infancy through the transition to adulthood.*

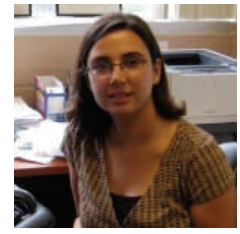
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Lara Perez-Felkner (Chair)  
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Elizabeth Vaquera  
*University of South Florida*

### ***The Importance of Writing In***

Dear Section Members,

We hope that you have enjoyed the Winter edition of *Child and Youth News*. Our newsletter and website serve as venues for sharing valuable knowledge about each other's achievements and opportunities for advancement. Further, these section publications should facilitate future collaboration between members through the sharing of new ideas, data, and methods to study the sociology of children and youth. Sharing your knowledge and achievements thus builds upon the strength of the section. Please continue to share updates, opportunities, and ideas with us. Thank you to all those who wrote in and contributed to another fine newsletter.

- Lara Perez-Felkner