

# Family Forum

FALL 2011 ~ ASA SECTION ON SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY

## SECTION COUNCIL, 2011-12

### Chair: Paul R. Amato

Pennsylvania State University  
pxa6@psu.edu

### Chair-Elect: Annette Lareau

University of Pennsylvania  
alareau@sas.upenn.edu

### Past Chair: Jay Teachman

Western Washington University  
Jay.Teachman@wwu.edu

### Secretary-Treasurer: Chris Knoester

Ohio State University  
knoester.1@sociology.osu.edu

### Council:

Lynne M. Casper  
University of Southern California  
lcasper@usc.edu

Philip N. Cohen  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
pnc@unc.edu

Mignon R. Moore  
University of California-Los Angeles  
moore@soc.ucla.edu

Lisa D. Pearce  
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
ldpearce@unc.edu

Linda Marie Burton  
Duke University  
lburtan@soc.duke.edu

Marcia J. Carlson  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
carlson@ssc.wisc.edu

### Student Representatives:

Jennifer Turchi  
University of Iowa  
jennifer-turchi@uiowa.edu

Kriti Vikram  
University of Maryland, College Park  
kritivikram@gmail.com

### Newsletter Editor: Jeremiah B. Wills

Queens University of Charlotte  
willsj@queens.edu

### Webmaster: John Girdwood

Michigan State University  
john@johngirdwood.com

## Message from the Chair

Dear Family Section Members:

Thanks to everyone who participated in Family Section activities at the annual meeting in Las Vegas. What a strange place for a conference! I felt odd walking through the casino every day to reach the paper sessions, although I did appreciate the free booze. I tried gambling a little, but the only time I won was when I put \$2 in a machine and a bottle of Coke came out. Before the conference, I read Hunter S. Thompson's novel, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. That really helped to put matters in perspective.

Next year we will meet in Denver, Colorado—a wholesome destination, to be sure. We will have six sessions in Denver, including one devoted to roundtables and the business meeting.

**Marybeth Mattingly** and **Allison Pugh** will organize the roundtables. **Wendy Manning** will organize a joint session with the Population Section on "New Demographic Data and Research Approaches to Studying Families." She is especially interested in papers that use the American Community Survey, the 2010 Census, or other relatively recent federal data. In addition, **Nicholas Wolfinger** will organize a session on "Relationship Dissolution," **Philip Cohen** will organize a session on "Families and the Great Recession," **Bradford Wilcox** will organize a session on "Family Structure and Children's Well-Being," and **Sharon Sassler** will organize a session on "Sexual and Romantic Relationships in Early Adulthood." The ASA will post a call for papers in the near future, and I encourage you to consider submitting relevant work you may be doing on these topics.

As the new section chair, I would like to thank **Jay Teachman**, who did an outstanding job as section chair last year. He also provided a great deal of useful advice to me during the transition period. I also want to thank **Judy Seltzer** for her earlier work as section chair. We have had some great section chairs in the past, and I will need to be careful that I don't come off as a total loser in comparison. Additional thanks to **Michelle Budig** and **Becky Pettit**, who are stepping down as council members, to **Caroline**



**Hartnett**, who is stepping down as student representative, and to **Sanjiv Gupta**, who is stepping down as webmaster. New officers include **Annette Lareau** (chair elect), **Linda Burton** (council member), **Marcy Carlson** (council member), and **Kriti Vikram** (student representative).

Even as we welcome our new section officers, we need to plan for the next round of elections. **Annette Lareau** (alareau@sas.upenn.edu) will serve as chair of the nominations committee. Please send recommendations to her for the positions of chair-elect, secretary-treasurer, council member, and student representative. We also have standing committees that will be accepting nominations for awards in 2012: the Distinguished Scholar Award, the Goode Book Award, the Article of the Year Award, and the Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award. (See the call for nominations later in this newsletter.)

One item of business during the last year involved updating the section's bylaws, which were seriously in need of revision. For example, they stated that elections will be held by mail ballot. Apparently, our bylaws had not been updated since Al Gore invented the internet. The revised bylaws were approved by the Family Section Council, the ASA Committee on Sections, and the ASA Council.

(Continued on page 6)

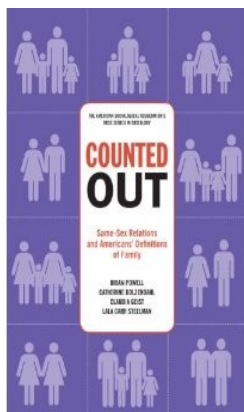
## 2011 Family Section Award Winners

### 2011 William J. Goode Book Award Winners:

This year the Goode award is shared by two wonderful books. Both books are highly topical, theoretically and empirically grounded, and carefully written. They highlight family sociology at its best. Committee members described each book as a “page turner”!

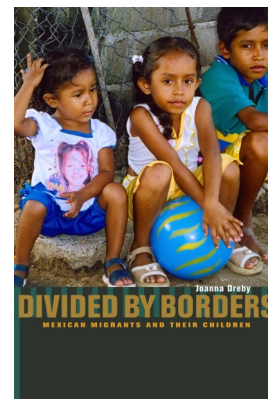
***Counted Out: Same-Sex Relations and Americans' Definitions of Family* (2010) by Brian Powell, Catherine Bolzendahl, Claudia Geist, and Lala Carr Steelman. Published by the Russell Sage Foundation in the ASA Rose Monograph series.**

Most of us think we know what a family is – at least until we teach “Intro to Family Sociology.” Powell, Bolzendahl, Geist, and Steelman address the question of “What is a family?” by collecting data in two national surveys, and combining responses to closed and open-ended responses to shed light on how Americans think about what a family is and how it corresponds to living arrangements like same-sex couples living together or unmarried heterosexual cohabiters. Powell and colleagues uncover the principles people use to determine whether a particular arrangement is a “real” family. Their analysis identifies three broad classes of people: those who think love and commitment define what a family is; those who “count out” same-sex unions and define family based on heterosexual marriage and biological relationships; and those in the middle who define a living arrangement as a family if there is a child present, but take into account other factors such as how long a same-sex childless couple has lived together. The authors show how their findings about the principles important to each of these groups suggest that living arrangements like same-sex couples, an arrangement currently *Counted Out* by most Americans, will be *Counted In* in the not too distant future. Congratulations to Brian Powell, Catherine Bolzendahl, Claudia Geist, and Lala Carr Steelman for their insightful book on a core sociological question that is relevant for contemporary political debates.



***Divided by Borders: Mexican Migrants and Their Children* (2010) by Joanna Dreby. Published by the University of California Press.**

As the title implies, this book looks at another type of division – parents and children divided by the U.S.-Mexican border. The bonds that unite transnational families even though they often live apart are the focus of this sensitive ethnography. Dreby combines field work in Mexico and the United States, with in-depth interviews, and surveys of children to provide an intimate view of the struggles and triumphs of families whose lives span the two countries' border. The book combines Three Gs -- gender, generation, and geography -- to show how mothers and fathers fulfill their responsibilities to children even when they live apart for long periods. Grandparents, especially grandmothers, link the lives of three generations by caring for grandchildren in Mexico while the children's parents live in the United States. Grandmothers mediate the relationship between their own child and their child's children as what Dreby calls “middlewomen” who are emotionally tied to their grandchildren but may also take care of them because they need the remittances sent by the middle generation to support their household. Despite their primary role in the day-to-day care of children, grandmothers recognize their adult child's role as parent, and work to reinforce the middle generation's connection to the grandchild by reminding the grandchild of the sacrifices the parent makes. By describing how the middlewomen “do family,” Dreby helps us understand how families can exist in this cross-border world even though they do not meet the ideal-type image of family all living in the same household. Dreby's portrait of how individual families manage transnational life shows the human face of the global world in which we live. Congratulations to Joanna Dreby for bringing family questions to the fore in this compelling study of migration.



By Judith Seltzer

Goode Book Award Committee: Jacob Cheadle, Nicole Civettini, Mick Cunningham, Meghan Kuebler, Mignon Moore, Jennifer Turchi, and Judith Seltzer (chair).

## 2011 Family Section Award Winners (cont.)



### 2011 Distinguished Career Award Winner: S. Philip Morgan, Duke University

By Judith Treas

The Section on the Family does not lack for distinguished careers, so you can imagine how outstanding a recipient of this award will be. Indeed, our recipient, Phil Morgan, ranks as

one of the world's leading experts on the sociological study of human fertility.

Indeed, you probably know his research on fertility patterns--how many children women want, how many men want, and how many children people actually have. Importantly, his work has pointed to how hard it is for women to combine work and family. Phil Morgan was among the first to observe that women's employment is no longer negatively correlated with fertility at the national level. Rather, developed countries with the lowest fertility are now those with low rates of female labor force participation, probably because they are places where work-family conflict discourages childbearing.

In addition to this research, Phil Morgan has recently headed a major NIH effort to put more "theory" into the study of family and demographic issues, and he has contributed to formulating a new version of the structure/agency question.

For framing fertility as a unique lens for understanding cross-national variation and temporal change in families, the ASA Section on the Family is pleased to recognize Phil Morgan, Norb F. Schaefer Professor of International Studies at Duke University, with the Distinguished Career Award.

Award Committee: Judith Treas (chair), Paula England, Tracey LaPierre, Stefanie Mollborn, Kathryn Yount

### 2011 Article of the Year Award: Susan Brown and Wendy Manning

By Ted Greenstein

I want to thank my committee -- Julie Artis (DePaul), Julia McQuillan (Nebraska), Kei Nomaguchi (Bowling Green State), and Christine Percheski (Northwestern) for their hard work in reviewing the nominated articles.

The inaugural winner of the ASA Section on Family Article of the Year Award is **"Family Boundary Ambiguity and the Measurement of Family Structure: The Significance of Cohabitation,"** (*Demography*, 2009, Volume 46, Number 1, pp. 85 -101) by Susan Brown and Wendy Manning, both of Bowling Green State University.

Brown and Manning examine family boundary ambiguity in adolescent and mother reports of family structure, i.e., the extent to which adolescents and mothers provide discrepant reports of family structure. The concept of family boundary ambiguity has been used in family research for the past few decades but relatively little research has examined this concept with a large-scale national sample. A few studies have documented family boundary ambiguity in stepfamilies, but no research has paid special attention to cohabiting stepfamilies and discrepancy in reports between adolescents and mothers in this family type, despite the increasing prevalence of cohabiting stepfamilies. Using data from the first wave of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Brown and Manning find that, as predicted, a greater discrepancy in reporting occurred among those living in cohabiting stepfamilies than among those living in two-biological-parent families, single-mother families, and married stepparent families.

Brown and Manning raise two important implications of family boundary ambiguity for researchers who study family structure, especially cohabitation.

First, estimates of the distribution of adolescents across family structures vary depending on whose reports they used. For example, over 5% of adolescents lived in a cohabiting stepfamily when mothers' reports were used, but slightly less than 3% of adolescents lived in a cohabiting stepfamily according to adolescents' reports. Second, conclusions for the associations between family structure and family processes differ depending on whether they used adolescents' reports, mothers' reports, or combined reports. For instance, living in a married stepparent family was negatively related to reports of closeness when mothers' reports were used, but the association was not significant when adolescents' reports were used.

In sum, Brown and Manning make a significant contribution to family research by expanding the research on family boundary ambiguity to cohabiting stepfamilies, a form of family that is of great interest to family researchers but has been examined little. More importantly, this article raises a new issue of measuring cohabitation which should stimulate future research in this area. Congratulations Susan and Wendy!

## 2011 Family Section Award Winners (cont.)

### 2011 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award

**Winner: Hyun Sik Kim, University of Wisconsin, Madison, "Consequences of Parental Divorce for Child Development"**

By Jay Teachman

The consequences of divorce for children have long been of interest to social scientists. Finding a way to quantify such consequences, however, has often proven to be difficult to assess because of issues surrounding endogeneity. In his innovative paper, Hyun Sik Kim of the University of Wisconsin at Madison makes a key contribution to our understanding of how divorce affects children. Using data taken from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kim is able to use a framework that includes pre-, in-, and post divorce periods. Kim finds negative effects of divorce on children even after accounting for important selection factors that affect children's characteristics before the beginning of the marital disruption process. His findings help to assuage concern that the negative effects attributed divorce may simply result from the fact that poorly functioning marriages, which may eventually end in divorce, create poor outcomes for children.

Committee: Jay Teachman (Chair), Sarah Damaske, and Spencer James

## Family Section Sessions for 2012 Annual Meeting

### New Demographic Data and Research Approaches to Studying Families

Organizer: Wendy Manning, Department of Sociology, Bowling Green State University,  
[wmannin@bgsu.edu](mailto:wmannin@bgsu.edu)

### Relationship Dissolution

Organizer: Nicholas Wolfinger, Department of Family and Consumer Studies, University of Utah,  
[nick.wolfinger@fcs.utah.edu](mailto:nick.wolfinger@fcs.utah.edu)

### Families and the Great Recession

Organizer: Philip Cohen, Department of Sociology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill,  
[pnc@unc.edu](mailto:pnc@unc.edu)

### Family Structure and Children's Well-Being

Organizer: Bradford Wilcox, Department of Sociology, University of Virginia, [wbw7q@virginia.edu](mailto:wbw7q@virginia.edu)

### Sexual and Romantic Relationships in Early Adulthood

Organizer: Sharon Sassler, Department of Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University,  
[ss589@cornell.edu](mailto:ss589@cornell.edu)

Roundtables will be organized by Marybeth Mattingly, University of New Hampshire, [beth.mattingly@unh.edu](mailto:beth.mattingly@unh.edu), and Allison Pugh, University of Virginia, [apugh@virginia.edu](mailto:apugh@virginia.edu).



## Call for Nominations for 2012 Section Awards

**Attention all Section Members! Please consider submitting nominations for our four annual section awards. Award winners will be honored at the 2012 ASA meeting in Denver.**

**Distinguished Career Award.** This award recognizes the collective body of a person's work as it relates to the sociology of the family (not a single publication). Award winners may be selected on the basis of distinguished contributions to either research or service. Service to the field includes developments (such as data sets, analytic techniques, or highly-cited scholarly publications) that have had a substantial impact on family research. Send a one-page justification with your nomination. The nominee's CV is helpful but not necessary. The deadline is **March 2, 2011**. Please send nominations to Lisa Pearce (ldpearce@unc.edu).

**William J. Goode Book Award.** This award is for a book published on the family in 2010 or 2011. To nominate a book, send a one-page justification. Self nominations are appropriate. Textbooks and edited volumes are not eligible. The deadline is **January 13, 2011**. Please send nominations to **Jay Teachman** (Jay.Teachman@wwu.edu).

**Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award.** Graduate students are invited to submit an article-length paper on the family. The paper should represent a finished product rather than a proposal for future work. The submission can be based on a course paper, a recently published journal article, a manuscript under review at a journal, or a conference presentation. Co-authored papers are acceptable if all authors are students, although the prize will be shared. The paper must have been written when the author was enrolled in a graduate program. Please send the paper by **March 2, 2011** to **Paul Amato** (pxa6@psu.edu).

**Article of the Year Award.** This award recognizes a journal article that has made a significant contribution to the field of family sociology. The award committee will accept nominations for articles published in 2009, 2010, or 2011. Nominations may be made by the author or others. To nominate an article, please send a letter of nomination (not to exceed one page) that details the contribution of the article to the field of family sociology, as well as an electronic copy of the article, to the chair of the award committee, **Ted Greenstein** (Ted\_Greenstein@ncsu.edu). The deadline for nominations is **March 2, 2011**.

## Upcoming Conferences

**Head Start's 11th National Research Conference.** Theme: *Research on Young Children and Families: Effective Practices in an Age of Diversity and Change*. **June 18-20, 2012** in Washington, DC. More information can be found here: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hsrc/>.

**Inaugural meeting of the new Work and Family Researchers Network.** Theme: *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Work and Family*. **June 14-16, 2012** in New York City. See conference details here: <https://workfamily.sas.upenn.edu/content/conference>.

**National Council on Family Relations' 73rd Annual Conference.** Theme: *Families and the Shifting Economy*. **November 16-19, 2011** at Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando, Florida. For more information, please go to: <http://www.ncfr.org/ncfr-2011>.

## Message from the Chair (cont. from page 1)

You will have an opportunity to read and vote on these amendments in the Family Section ballot during the ASA election this spring. (Note that these revisions did not involve major changes in policy—only updating procedures to make them consistent with current practices.)

Our previous newsletter editor, **Mary Noonan**, stepped down after several years of excellent service to the Family Section. The incoming newsletter editor is **Jeremiah (Jay) Wills** from Queens University of Charlotte. Also, our new webmaster is **John Girdwood**, from Michigan State University. I thank them in advance for making our newsletter and web page look great during the coming year!

Paul R. Amato  
Chair, Family Section

**Renew your American Sociological Association membership online:**

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

**Be sure to join the Family Section. Section fees are only \$12 per year (\$6 for students).**

**Visit our section website:**

<http://www2.asanet.org/sectionfamily/>