



Global Transformations

Newsletter of the Department of Sociology at Michigan State University

FAMILY AND GENDER

HIGHLIGHTS

- Family and Gender
- The Family Research Initiative
- Undergraduate Endowment Fund
- Faculty Activities
- Web of Affiliations
- New Faculty Members
- SOC and the City

Around the world, in all societies, the structure of family life and women's roles are undergoing profound changes. MSU Sociology is taking the lead by significantly strengthening its specializations in family and gender studies. The program in Family and Gender Sociology at MSU is exploring the shifting structures of family organization and women's roles from a variety of theoretical perspectives, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. It concentrates on the study of conventional and emergent families in rural and urban settings, and in different countries as well as the relationship of family and gender to extended kin, the larger community and transnational economic and social forces.

In the past two years, we have recruited four dynamic faculty members who are making significant contributions to the Department's already strong reputation in the field. In this issue of *Global Transformations* we feature two of these faculty members, Drs. Maryhelen MacInnes and Zhenmei Zhang, who are focusing on the intersection of family and health. We also highlight MSU's Family Research Initiative, spearheaded by our chair, Dr. Janet Bokemeier.

SOCIOLOGY AND THE FAMILY RESEARCH INITIATIVE

The Family Research Initiative (FRI) is a university wide effort to support and expand a broad range of scholarly work on families. Dr. Janet Bokemeier, chair of sociology and acting assistant vice president for research, heads the FRI. The goal is to create a leading national research program on family that cuts across disciplinary boundaries. Over the next two years, about 10 to 15 faculty members will be hired across the university to directly support the initiative. The initial faculty recruiting effort will focus on aging related family issues including health care, family support and economics.

The initiative will tie in with the Geriatric Center of Michigan, which is based in the MSU College of Human Medicine. The Center recently received a grant of \$1.2 million over three years. It will be used to create a multidisciplinary effort to improve the health and well being of Michigan's seniors. Dr. Bokemeier observed that many people who are aging are very vital while some will need services. Her own research has looked at savings for retirement or a lack thereof. Dr. Nan Johnson, professor of sociology, is tracking the purchases of second homes and how that relates to aging. Drs. Tom Conner and Zhenmei Zhang of the Sociology Department are studying abuse and neglect in long term care and how that affects and is affected by family relations. Dr. Lori A. Post, assistant dean in the College of Communication Arts and Science, who has her PhD in sociology from MSU, is head of a team planning to explore the concept of risk as it relates to the aging population.



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FACULTY ACTIVITIES

Brendan Mullan, associate professor of sociology, was named executive director of MSU's academic site in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. He will be responsible for all academic and research operations. The undergraduate program will include courses in the social sciences while the social science graduate programs will feature human resources and labor relations. MSU faculty will be encouraged to conduct research that mutually benefits the growth of knowledge-based economies, sustains societies and enhances the quality of life in Dubai.

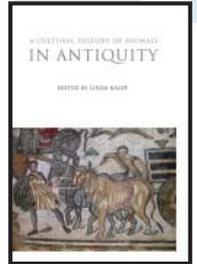
Bernard Finifter retired after over 40 years on the faculty. He earned his PhD in sociology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. His interests included political sociology, social psychology and research methodology, particularly survey methodology and interrelationships between substantive theory and research technology. He conducted extensive research on US out-migration patterns and was a Senior Fulbright Scholar. He received the Judy K. Gentile Award in recognition of his outstanding leadership in developing a spirit of ability to succeed and promoting accessibility for students with disabilities. Bernie keeps up with literature in various areas, and shares his findings and insights on social concerns in thoughtful messages in listserv debates, thus enriching the scholarly climate of our department.

Steven Gold won the 2007 Charles Horton Cooley Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Sociology from the Michigan Sociological Association.

Carl Taylor received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Michigan State Black Alumni, Inc. and the MSU Office of University Outreach and Engagement Senior Fellow Award in recognition of outstanding career contributions that advance engaged scholarship and the quality of campus-community partnerships.

Vladimir Shlapentokh has written a new book, *Contemporary Russia as a Feudal Society: A New Perspective on the Post-Soviet Era*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Linda Kalof had a very productive year in 2007. *Looking at Animals in Human History* was published by the University of Chicago Press. She also edited *A Cultural History of Animals in Antiquity; A Cultural History of Animals*, Six Volume Book Series, with Brigitte Resl; and *The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings* with Amy Fitzgerald. These three were all published by Berg/Palgrave, Oxford, UK.



Alan P. Rudy, Dawn Coppin, **Jason Konefal**, Bradley T. Shaw, **Toby Ten Eyck**, **Craig Harris** and **Lawrence Busch** have collaborated on *Universities in the Age of Corporate Science: The UC Berkeley-Novartis Controversy*, published by Temple University Press, 2007.

Harry Schwarzweller recently attended a conference on "Academic Peer Reviews: Standards, Problems, Ethics" at Imam University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia where he did an introductory keynote address and presented a symposium paper on "Dissertation Research: Challenges, Responsibilities, and Contributions to Knowledge." He and Liz visited several former MSU students.

Zakia Salime presented a paper, "Women, Freedom and Democracy in the 'Greater Middle East': The Civil Society Mandate" at a conference showcasing innovative research from across the social sciences and related disciplines, on themes of particular relevance across Asia. The conference was held in Dubai, UAE and sponsored by the Dubai School of Government and the Social Science Research Council.

Lawrence Busch recently published "Performing the Economy, Performing Science: From Neoclassical to Supply Chain Models in the Agrifood Sector." *Economy and Society* 36.3 (2007): 439-468.

Toby Ten Eyck and four undergraduate students are involved in a project on socially engaged art and the role of art in urban sustainability. They convinced two Lansing art galleries to hold socially engaged art shows this June. They will also travel to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to attend a lecture and collect images of public art. The MSU Provost Undergraduate Research Program provided funding for the students' participation.



Faculty Retreat, August 2007

FACULTY SEARCHES

The Department is excited about the possibility of adding several new assistant professor positions this academic year. We are interviewing for sociologists in the areas of quantitative methods; Southeast Asia focusing on Islamic cultural studies; the African diaspora focusing on race, ethnicity, gender and/or urban studies; a joint position with Lyman Briggs College in medical sociology; a joint position with Chicano/Latino Studies, and a joint position with the Environmental Science and Policy Program.

STUDENT AWARDS

Deborah Wilson Lowry received a Dissertation Completion Fellowship through the MSU Center for Gender in Global Context. Her dissertation title is "Relative Expectations in Rural China: Later Life Distinction, Duties, Dreams, and Discontents."

Laurel Hilliker was the 1st Place Winner of The Robert Fulton Student Paper Competition of the Annual International Death, Grief, and Bereavement Conference. Her paper, "Social Psychological Perspectives on Altruism In Care Giving: The Schiavo Case and Beyond" was published in *Illness, Crisis, & Loss* 15.1 (2007): 3-24.

M. Francis Abraham (PhD '70) won the Bobbs-Merrill Award for most outstanding PhD candidate in sociology in 1969. He was a professor of sociology and director of International Studies Programs at Grambling State University. He authored 10 books and served as a consultant on Fulbright programs. He retired early and has been doing volunteer work with a major NGO in India engaged in rural development.

Beverly Hampton (BA '71) is now retired from a career in health care administration and living in Minnesota. She fondly remembers Drs. Useem and Sower.

Wendy Jean (Kropp) Silvers (BA '77) is busy multi-tasking. She has worked for the Department of Defense in Battle Creek, is co-owner of Text Connex, that does text message advertising, and USA Savings Club. She is also a Girl Scouts leader, Jr. Achievement mentor and does fundraising for schools and causes.

Marietta Morrissey (PhD '77) is professor of sociology and associate dean of the College of Arts and Letters at the University of Toledo. She recently returned from a Fulbright lecture research appointment in Costa Rica.

Gregory J. Coil (BA '84) earned a masters in social work from New York University, and is also a credentialed alcoholism and substance abuse counselor. He is senior executive director of the Staten Island YMCA Counseling Services and was the recipient of a Distinguished Service Award.

Undergraduate Endowment Fund

The Sociology Department has launched a fund to provide undergraduate majors money for professional development opportunities that will allow them to further their skills and enhance their scholarship by attending professional meetings, participating in sociology study abroad programs, and supporting opportunities to work on research projects. This was the idea of a group of sociology emeriti faculty including Drs. Maxine Baca-Zinn, Harry Schwartzweller and Bo Anderson.

A sustainable endowed fund requires a base of \$30,000 to be collected within five years. So far the emeriti and current faculty have contributed approximately \$2,500 towards the endowment. All contributions are tax deductible. If you would like to speak with someone directly about giving to this fund or other Department funds, please contact Sarah Blom, Senior Director of Development at (517)432-1802 or at blom@msu.edu.

BoA of Affiliations

ALUMNI NOTES

Abdullah Al-Otaiby (PhD '89) teaches sociology at Umm Al-Qura University in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Mohammed Al-Bakr (PhD '90), is in a government position in Riyadh, teaching and researching problems relating to business administration and entrepreneurial motivation.

Andrew Davidson (PhD '90) has taken a position in Karthoum with UN FAO as chief technical advisor for a rural capacity building project. Andrew's dissertation research was in the Nuba Mountains, Sudan and he speaks fluent Arabic.

Jonathan B. VanGeest (MA '91) is chair of health policy and management at Morgan State University. He earned a PhD in medical sociology at the University of Illinois, Chicago and worked as a program director at the American Medical Association. His research interests center on racial and ethnic disparities in health care, quality of care, and professional and care outcomes associated with structural changes in medicine.

Abdulrahman Asseri (PhD '91), is professor of sociology at Imam University, Saudi Arabia, and is actively engaged in research and teaching.

Mohammed Al-Wahid (PhD '92), is chair of the department of sociology at King Saud University, the largest university in Saudi Arabia, with over 100,000 students.

David Niemi (BA '94) is a surveillance officer with the Maricopa County Adult Probation in Glendale, AZ. He just started his new career in criminal justice/probation.

Kieko Tanaka (PhD '97) is an associate professor with tenure in the Department of Community and Leadership Development in the College of Agriculture at the University of Kentucky, Lexington.

Karen L. Lambourne (PhD '98) teaches at Clackamas Community College and Portland Community College in Oregon. She also works with teen parents receiving welfare and helps them identify their strengths and to change their lives.

Ken Crane (PhD '00) is an associate professor of sociology at Ancilla College in Donaldson, IN. He is the co-author of *Apple Pie and Enchiladas: Latino Newcomers in the Rural Midwest* published by University of Texas Press, 2004.

Michael Skladany (PhD '00) is a lecturer in the department of sociology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He is still interested in fisheries, aquaculture and social movements.

Jeanne M. Lorentzen, (PhD '00) is an assistant professor of sociology at Northern Michigan University.

Chien-Juh Gu (PhD '04) is an assistant professor of sociology at Western Michigan University.

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For information on giving to the MSU Department of Sociology, please visit the alumni page on our website www.sociology.msu.edu or call Sarah Blom toll free at (866) 678-2005.

PLEASE MAIL COMPLETED CARD, FAX TO 517-432-2856 OR EMAIL TO CONTACT@SOCIOLOGY.MSU.EDU

NEW FACULTY MEMBERS



Dr. Maryhelen D. MacInnes is an assistant professor interested in family studies, demography, and how health impacts the well-being and family structure. She earned her PhD at Brown University in 2006. Her dissertation explored the subsequent fertility of mothers of children with disabilities. She found that mothers whose firstborn children are disabled choose to delay or forego subsequent childbearing because children with disabilities have extensive needs.

She is working on a study of health service need and utilization among the uninsured and underinsured residents of Montcalm County, Michigan with Drs. Cliff Broman of Sociology and Renee Canady, Ingham County Deputy Health officer of Nursing and Special Services, who is a recent MSU sociology PhD. The study will explore the degree to which residents are aware of available services and their use of such services as well as uncovering barriers to accessing services. She is also working with Dr. Broman on a study of distress among young adults.



Dr. Zhenmei Zhang came to Michigan State as an assistant professor after three years at Bowling Green State University. Originally from China, she earned her PhD in sociology and demography at Pennsylvania State University in 2003. Her areas of research focus on family and health in later life in both the US and China. Her dissertation looked at the relationship between marital history and cardiovascular disease in late midlife.

She currently has a research grant to look at how early life conditions influence cognitive well being later in life. She is also a co-PI of a study "Vulnerable Medicaid Populations" funded by US Centers for Medicaid/Medicare, which looks at elder abuse in long term care facilities in Michigan. She has published in the *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, *The Gerontologist*, and *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SOC and the CITY!

NEW YORK AND BOSTON

SAVE THE DATES

August 1 - 4, 2008

The special reception, *SOC and the City*, was held last August in New York City during the American Sociological Association annual meeting. Alumni, faculty and students came together to reconnect, share experiences, and hear about the future of the Department. About 50 people attended ranging from recent graduates to alumni from the late 1950s who are still active in sociology. The Department will hold the second annual *SOC and the City* during the ASA annual meeting in Boston this coming August.

To be notified of reception details, please submit the enclosed card with your e-mail address.

