

Sociology of Children & Youth

Section Newsletter

Spring 2016

A Note from the Chair, Grace Kao:



Dear Section on Children and Youth Members:

Happy Spring! This year marks the 25th Anniversary of our section. Our founding chair, Gertrud Lenzer, has offered recollections about our founding in this newsletter.

I am excited about the upcoming ASA Meetings in Seattle, WA. We will have three paper sessions and one roundtable session, all on the first day of the meeting. Our reception will be on the first day of the ASA Meetings (Saturday, August 20, 2016) from 6:30-8:30pm at the **Alibi Room** (in the Pike Place Market), 85 Pike Street, #410 (in Post Alley). This restaurant is 5 blocks away from the hotel. Please join us for drinks and appetizers. In addition to our usual business of presenting awards, we will also celebrate our anniversary. If you know anyone who was involved in our section in the past, please extend a warm invitation to the reception to them. I hope to see all of you at our panels and reception!

I encourage you to donate section memberships to your students or to our general fund. While we often have a push for increasing our membership numbers just after the ASA Meetings, you can donate memberships at anytime. From our Membership Chair Chelsea Smith:

- 1) Faculty members can directly fund students' section memberships. In your ASA home screen/portal, under Contribute/Give, click "Purchase a gift section membership." Select the Section on Children and Youth, search for and add your students who are ASA members, and proceed to check out. Students can also ask faculty members to sponsor them and share these instructions for the online system.
- 2) At this year's meeting in Chicago, members contributed \$264 which will fund 44 student memberships. The first 44 students who email Chelsea Smith (chelsea.c.smith@utexas.edu) will be gifted those memberships.

Inside This Issue:

Interview with Gertrud Lenzer	Pp. 3-4
Call for Papers	P. 5
Upcoming Conferences	Pp. 6-8
Publications by Members	Pp. 9-11
Meet the Graduate Student Interview: Daniela Negraia	Pp. 12-13

If you have any questions about this process or would like to help, email the section's student representative, Chelsea Smith, at chelsea.c.smith@utexas.edu.

If you have not yet done so, please subscribe to our Facebook page.

Best,

Grace

SECTION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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.

2015-16 Section Officers:

CHAIR:

Grace Kao
University of Pennsylvania

CHAIR-ELECT:

Amy Schalet
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

PAST CHAIR:

Allison Pugh
University of Virginia

FOUNDING CHAIR:

Gertrud Lenzer
*Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center,
CUNY*

SECRETARY-TREASURER:

Jeremy Staff
Pennsylvania State University

PUBLICATIONS CHAIR:

Ann Beutel
University of Oklahoma

COUNCIL:

Paula Fomby
University of Michigan
Christopher Wildeman
Cornell University
Jennifer March Augustine
University of South Carolina
Kristin Turney
University of California, Irvine

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Chelsea Smith
University of Texas, Austin
Jordan Conwell
Northwestern University

NEWSLETTER CO-EDITORS:

Sara Gill
Colorado State University
Nicholas Adams
University of New Hampshire

SOCIAL MEDIA CHAIR:

Nancy Marshall
Wellesley College

WEBSITE EDITOR:

Matthew Rafalow
University of California, Irvine

CELEBRATING THE FOUNDING OF THE ASA SECTION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH: AN INTERVIEW WITH GERTRUD LENZER

In Memoriam: Carla B. Howery

In honor of the 25th anniversary of the Sociology of Children and Youth section (originally called the “Sociology of Children Section”), founding chair **Dr. Gertrud Lenzer**, Professor Emerita, Brooklyn College and The Graduate Center, The City University of New York, offered reflections and answered questions from CY Publications Committee Member Ann Beutel.

Ann: What was your impetus for forming the Sociology of Children Section?

Gertrud Lenzer: My major fields were the history of social and political thought and philosophy, and I was very interested in social policy developments nationally and internationally. In this connection, I wrote to Washington for a report by the Committee on Ways and Means of the US House of Representatives on *Children in Poverty*, May 22, 1985. In the following semester, I decided to give a seminar on “Children and Social Responsibility” and discovered that we as sociologists had forgotten about an entire class of human beings, children, and so had the other social sciences. (Of course, we had socialization, and deviant behavior, and education and the family.) It was then when I told my friend, the chair of the department, that I would start the “Sociology of Children” once our little son was somewhat older.



Dr. Gertrud Lenzer

And so it happened one day in May 1991 that I had a discussion with Barbara Fields, an African American historian from Columbia University, about what was happening to minority children. I told her on the spot that I was going to start the Sociology of Children that very day. I went upstairs and called Jonathan Cole at Columbia and asked him what he thought. He thought that it was a splendid idea, and I called the ASA in Washington and spoke with Carla B. Howery. She was the Deputy Executive Director of ASA. She was most receptive and wonderful and suggested that I write a piece for *Footnotes*. (In fact, I would like to dedicate this interview to her memory.) Carla Howery and I stayed in touch for the following months until the Council voted for “Section-in-Formation” in January 1992. By the way, numerous other colleagues across the country helped with recruiting members for the section, and after all these many years I would like to thank them again for their active involvement.

Ann: Your article entitled “Is There Sufficient Interest to Establish a Sociology of Children?” appeared in *Footnotes* in August 1991. In the article, you wrote that having “Sociology of Children as a new special field of study within sociology would promote new theoretical perspectives, facilitate the synthesis and integration of existing research interests and provide better opportunities for sociologists to contribute to and play a role in the shaping of public policies as they affect children.” What was the reaction to your article? I know that James Coleman wrote an addendum that appeared next to your article in the August 1991 issue of *Footnotes*.

Gertrud Lenzer: Then President-elect Professor James S. Coleman supported the formation of such a section even though in personal communications (*continued on the next page*)

AN INTERVIEW WITH GERTRUD LENZER

he indicated to me that this might perhaps not be necessary, since we already had the fields of the Sociology of the Family, the Sociology of Education, and the Sociology of Generation.

It was interesting that within a week or two of the publication of the *Footnotes* article, I received numerous letters from colleagues from across the country and abroad, all supporting the foundation of such a section and new field. (Only one colleague felt that it was unnecessary.) In fact, many colleagues wrote that they had no home for their research and publications and warmly welcomed the formation of this new special sociological field. Within a few months, the numbers of interested colleagues increased so that by January 1992 the Sociology of Children was officially declared by the ASA as a "Section-in-Formation." By Spring 1992 the number of members had increased that we were allotted two sessions during the August 1992 meetings of the ASA. It was also then that during the organizing meeting at the annual meetings the first Section officers were elected. Fortunately, the Section was so successful that we were able to hand it over with more than 400 members two years later. By then, we also had instituted the newsletter – *Child News* – invited foreign members to our board and meetings including those who established the Sociology of Childhood in Europe.

It should be noted that it was the intention that "children" like in all official and national accounts of United States departments and statistics—were meant to be the generational class from zero to 18 years of age and not merely young children. Also, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as "every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier." In other words, this is what we had in mind when we called the section and new field the "Sociology of Children."

Ann: Is there anything you can tell us about the founding of the Section that most current Children and Youth Section members might not know?

Gertrud Lenzer: Perhaps it might be of interest to our current members that the Section was meant to have a major human rights perspective and framework by including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the bylaws which we wrote in 1992. In other words, the Section was also seen as a contribution to this international treaty which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 20, 1989. I believe, and unfortunately so, this human rights dimension was subsequently omitted from the bylaws and also as a major focus of the Section and new field.

Ann: Looking back over the 25 years that the Section has been in existence, do you have any particular thoughts or reflections that you would like to share with the current members of the Section? Is there anything you would like the Section to do in its next 25 years?

Gertrud Lenzer: Much important work has been done by members of the Section over these many years. However, as I indicated earlier, I firmly believe that the human rights of children should become a major framework of the work of the Section for the next 25 years. Even though the United States is the only country which has not ratified the children's rights treaty, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should help inform the work of the Section. Also, it would be wonderful if the Section were to get more involved in national and state policies affecting children and youth. Children need a voice and our Section could have more of a representative function of the interests and concerns relating to children and youth in our polity.

To conclude, I would like to congratulate the Section and all its many members on this, its 25th anniversary, for all the fabulous work it has done, and I wish it much success in the future.