



Maryland Population Research Center

in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
University of Maryland

Fall 2008

Newsletter

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Note from the Director, Fall 2008

Welcome back to Maryland!

I want to update you on activities at the Maryland Population Research Center.

As most of you know, former Director Seth Sanders took a position in the Department of Economics and School of Public Policy at Duke University and left during the early summer. We held a farewell event at MPRC at the end of June.

Former Associate Director Rebeca Wong left Maryland for a position at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas, where she is Professor and Director of the WHO / Pan American Health Organization Collaborating Center on Aging and Health. There she will be pursuing her dual interests in immigration and aging.

I became Director of the Maryland Population Research Center on July 1. I plan to continue my research on work and family issues, including participating in a P01 on how men's relationship with their children influences their health and well-being. I am also interested in children's time use and health and the role of the family in childhood obesity. I continue to expand my skills in latent variable/structural equation modeling and am teaching a course in the Epidemiology of Maternal and Child Health (FMSC850) this Fall, which covers survival analysis using the linked NCHS birth-infant death file.

Over the coming year the MPRC has a full schedule. We host a planning meeting for a set of conferences to be held in late 2009 on marriage and fatherhood.

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Fall Seminar Series Begins

The Center will kick off its Fall Seminar Series with a presentation by Wendy Sigle-Rushton, Department of Sociology, London School of Economics, on September 22. Her topic will be "Family Structure and Children's Educational Outcomes in Norway." Over the course of the semester, MPRC plans to host at least eight speakers, including visiting speakers from Ohio State, UC-Irvine, Arizona State, and Penn State. Topics include implications of China's one-child policy, demographic analysis of marriages between natives of and immigrants to the USA, and two explorations of health and education issues in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Seminar Series presentations, scheduled for noon on Mondays and Fridays, attract a wide range of scholars and the discussion often reflects this eclectic character. These events make it possible for students, faculty, and staff to keep up with some of the latest developments from established scholars and promising new researchers in the field of population studies.



Stephen Buka, professor at Brown Medical School, speaks on lessons from developmental epidemiology during last Spring's Seminar Series. Topics range from demographic methods to cutting-edge theoretical approaches.

New Faculty Associates

Sonalde Desai

Sonalde Desai, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, has research interests which include Gender and Development, Social Demography, Labor Force Behavior, Child Health and Development, and Population and Health Policy. She has been a visiting scholar at the World Bank Development Research Group. Her articles are forthcoming in *Demography* and *Contemporary Sociology*.

Alex Piquero

Alex Piquero, Professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, is co-editor of the *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*. His research focuses on the trajectories of criminal careers using growth modeling and socioeconomic and race disparities in offending and incarceration.

Harriet Presser

Harriet Presser, Professor in the Department of Sociology, was named a Distinguished University Professor in 1999. Her research interests include World Population Policy; Gender, Work, and Family; and Family Demography. She founded the precursor of MPRC, the Center for Population, Gender and Social Inequality in the Department of Sociology, in 1988.

Reeve Vanneman

Reeve Vanneman, Professor in the Department of Sociology, is collaborating with Sonalde Desai to field a youth supplement to the India Human Development Survey (IHDS-Y). His specializations include stratification, gender, South Asia, development, social movements, and quantitative methodology.

Profile

Randi Hjalmarssen

Background

Randi Hjalmarssen discovered her interest in the economics of crime while still an undergraduate in economics and mathematics at Columbia University. She completed her Ph.D. at Yale in 2005, with a dissertation on *The Impact of Arrest and Incarceration on Juvenile Crime and Education*. Her one-year stint as a Financial Analyst at a banking group was enough to demonstrate that her real interests lay in research. She joined the faculty of the School of Public Policy as an Assistant Professor in 2005, associating with MPRC at the same time. She was awarded an MPRC Seed Grant in 2007 and is currently Principal Investigator on a grant from the National Science Foundation entitled *Estimating and Explaining the Intergenerational Nature of Crime*.



Current Work

"It's a very common labor economics topic to look at intergenerational mobility – how big is it and why does it exist or why not," she notes. In this case she seeks to delineate possible explanations for intergenerational criminal activity incorporating both "nature" and "nurture" mechanisms.

"This is using Swedish data and a Swedish birth cohort from Stockholm from the 1950s. I have a co-author in Stockholm. We're doing a similar project that looks at intergenerational drunk driving behavior, since that actually seems to be more based on inherited traits than other crime behaviors – since it's alcohol related. How much of it is inherited based on the alcohol – the possibility that there is an alcoholism trait – and how much of it is actually a behavioral thing?" In fact, this is a long-term project: "We want to merge national registries with the crime registry."

Advice for graduate students

"Most important is to study something that really interests you. So often you see people study what their advisors want them to study or what their advisors study, and I don't think those people end up succeeding in the long run. The only way you can spend the amount of time that academics do staring at the same datasets over and over again is if it's something that actually interests you: questions that you really want to know the answer to and not questions that you think others want you to answer.

"I think the other thing is to know when to throw a project away. Ph.D. students, I think, often spend too much time banging their heads against a dataset that just can't answer the question they want to answer. So I think this is really a very good skill to learn – before you spend a year and a half doing it.

"If you have a question and you have a dataset they don't necessarily go together." The question needs to fit the data, she noted.

Profile

Sangeetha Madhavan

Background

Sangeetha Madhavan has taken a circuitous route to arrive at her current role as an Assistant Professor in the African American Studies Program, passing by way of Brown University, the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa, Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, Tulane University (just in time for hurricane Katrina), and the Population Aging Center, Boulder, Colorado. She earned a Ph.D. in Demography and Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1998 and is currently co-investigator on an NIH R-21 grant entitled *Measuring Social Connection and Children's Well-Being Using Multiple Data Sources*.



Current Work

"All of my research is in South Africa right now. This grant is specifically geared towards the innovative use of secondary data sources. They don't actually want you to go collect more data but to work with what you have and come up with 'innovative analysis techniques.' So we have two datasets: one is a large, longitudinal database (DSS) situated in northeastern South Africa [with data] since 1992 on a population of about 72,000 people. It covers things like births, deaths, migration history, mobility, labor force participation, and so on." Most importantly, this is a largely black population. "Under apartheid we knew nothing about what was going on in the black population under that regime.... We don't even know who's dying of what." The second dataset comprises "rich ethnographic data on 13 linked households in the same population that the DSS is on. What we're hoping to do with the NSF grant is to bring these two datasets together, mine the ethnographic data to come up with better indicators of connection that could be collected on a much larger-scale population level that could give us one more indicator [for] an important level of analysis on children's health outcomes, education, HIV, all the standard demographic interests."

Advice for graduate students

"When you arrive at the question you are going to pursue, before [going out to] collect data, one should make a really good effort to find whatever has been done on this topic. What I find is that a lot of us think we're the first person who's ever asked this question. Chances are other people have. Admittedly, every Ph.D. dissertation has to be original work. But I think we tend to jump into collecting data. What we risk doing is reinventing the wheel.... But more importantly, and this really impressed me in Africa, to go again and again to a community and ask questions about fertility, and mortality, and so on - that's a lot. It's our responsibility as researchers to make sure that the data don't exist already, or to minimize demands on people, especially people who are in precarious positions."

Welcome Visiting Affiliates

This Fall we welcome two visiting scholars who will be calling MPRC home. Visiting Research Associate **Guy Steklov** is a senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem who will be here until next May. He has conducted research in the Middle East, Latin America, and West Africa, and his interests include the impact of terror on social relations and individuals, fertility in developing countries, and socioeconomic status. **Niels Skipper** is a Visiting Student Affiliate from Copenhagen. He is using a large Danish dataset to investigate variations in demand based on built-in subsidies in the Danish health care system. The dataset is quite rich because prescription drugs are sold by state licensed facilities in Denmark and every purchase is catalogued.



Steklov

Skipper

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With Judith Friedenberg of the Department of Anthropology we are beginning a dialogue on immigration and immigrants in Maryland.

We will host a meeting of the Association of Population Centers, to be held on December 10 at the Bureau of Labor Statistics in Washington, DC.

We are also planning a third American Time Use Research conference, set for June 25-26 2009 on the University of Maryland campus, to continue to provide a venue for scholarly work on aspects of time. This will be sponsored by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (EKS-NICHHD) and the Economic Research Service and will follow a JPSM workshop to train new researchers on analysis of time use data. The call for papers can be found on our web site.

This Fall we will hold a set of seminars by leading demographers visiting campus from across the U.S. and abroad, such as Wendy Sigle-Rushton from the London School of Economics, and we will host seminars by some of the faculty joining campus departments this Fall. The full list is posted on the MPRC web site.

We are also planning a number of occasional methodological seminars designed especially for graduate students and junior faculty.

Our Center is funded by an infrastructure grant from the EKS-NICHHD, Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch. Center funding is designed to support grant recipients in their research. Please see me if you have suggestions for activities that can better help you submit a successful grant application or that can support funded research.

Finally, many of our existing NIH grants are coming to a close. To assist faculty in submitting new grants, we will be holding a series of mentored grants workshops, beginning in early October and extending into the winter. This series is for those

who plan on submitting to NIH in February or June 2009.

New Faculty Associates

This Fall we are delighted to welcome back to MPRC a leading sociologist, Harriet Presser, Distinguished University Professor and the founder of the Center for Population, Gender and Social Inequality, the predecessor of MPRC. Harriet plans to continue her research on work schedules and shift work using the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth and to begin work on issues of low fertility, particularly in Eastern Europe. She will be leading a working group interested in work schedules.

We are also very pleased to welcome sociologists Sonalde Desai and Reeve Vanneman, who have been leading a study of gender and social inequality in India for the past several years. They will expand the Center's international population research capacity in issues of women's health and occupational equality.

Alex Piquero, Professor, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, comes to us from the City University of New York. It's a homecoming for him, as he received his Bachelor, Master, and Ph.D. degrees here.

Other faculty associates who joined MPRC during the Spring 2008 semester include :

Edmond Shenassa, Associate Professor, Maternal and Child Health Program, Department of Family Science; **Sunmin Lee**, Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics; **Laura Mamo**, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology; and **Bo Xie**, Assistant Professor, College of Information Studies.

Miscellany

When you come to the Center please look at the photographic displays from the Spring 2008 PAA annual meeting and the summer Criminology and Popu-

We are delighted to welcome back a leading sociologist, Harriet Presser, Distinguished University Professor and the founder of the Center for Population, Gender and Social Inequality, the predecessor of MPRC . . .

lation Conference.

Two new staff members joined us last Spring : **William Fennie** and **Tiffany Pittman**. A winner of the BSOS College Outstanding Staff award for 2007, William serves as our Information Core Coordinator. Tiffany manages the Welcome Center and provides essential support for the Administrative Core; she comes to us from the Office of Staff Relations. I also want to thank Barbara Hillinger and Bandy, who each have given years of excellent service to the Center. Finally, Huiyan Yeats Ye, who assists in data programming and file creation, and who conducts training in statistical software such as SAS and Stata, has become a regular full-time Center employee.

MPRC collaborates with the Center on Race and Gender. This Center shares our conference room for its seminars held at noon on Thursdays. Please see their web site for a schedule of seminars :

www.crge.umd.edu/events/colloquium.html

- Sandra Hofferth

Help us help you . . .

Checklist for Faculty Associates

Keep your population research profile up to date by making sure we have current copies of :

- Curriculum vitae
- NIH Biosketch
- One-Page Summary
- Photographic portrait
- Working papers

Send your information to William Fennie at wfennie@umd.edu

An important Center benefit

Seed Grant Opportunities

With funding from the National Institutes of Health, the Maryland Population Research Center invites proposals for projects that will enhance research activity bearing directly on the Center's population research mission. All Faculty Associates are eligible to apply. The proposal must discuss how the project will lead to increased competitiveness in obtaining extramural funding. Applicants who request funding are expected to prepare and submit a grant application within 12 months of the end of seed grant funding. Seed grant projects will be for a 1-year period, and project budgets can not exceed \$15,000 in direct costs. Investigators may request support for any activity that directly relates to the successful conduct of the project. Highest priority will be given to proposals submitted by November 1, 2008. Proposals submitted at another time during the year will be reviewed as received. *You are encouraged to contact Center Director Hofferth about your idea prior to submission.* For complete details, please review the proposal solicitation online at:

www.popcenter.umd.edu/resources/seed.shtml

Seed Grants funded in 2008

Social Context, Crime, and Educational Outcomes

David Kirk, PI

HPV Risk Perceptions and Barriers to the Gardasil Vaccine: A Qualitative Analysis of Mothers, Girls and Health Care Professionals

Laura Mamo, PI

Property Division upon Divorce and Women and Children's Subsequent Behavior and Wellbeing

Judith Hellerstein, PI; Melinda Sandler Morrill, co-investigator

When Government Isn't Enough: Public and Private Responses to Population Heterogeneity

Tracy Gordon, PI

Official Records of Juvenile Delinquency in An Epidemiologically Defined Cohort of Predominately Urban and Minority Youth

Hanno Petras, PI

Seasonal Learning Differences in Neighborhoods, Social Class, and Race

Odin Johnson, PI

Grant Activity

Center scholars have been busy during the first part of the year. So far, MPRC proposal assistance resources supported the following proposals :

Sonalde Desai, PI

Reeve Vanneman, co-investigator
R01 submitted to NICHD 07/08
Transition to Adulthood in India

Judith Freidenberg, PI

Submitted to NSF 01/08
Congruence of Provider-Patient Expectations of Clinical Consultations in Low-Income Immigrant Neighborhoods

Sandra L Hofferth, PI

Submitted to Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) 02/08
Small Conference on Intergenerational Research Methods

Joan Kahn, PI

Submitted to the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Wisconsin Longitudinal Study) 05/08
Gender and Caregiving at Older Ages

Frauke Kreuter, PI

R03 Submitted to NIH 07/08
Submitted to NSF 08/08
Using Observational Data to Improve Nonresponse Adjustments

Peter Reuter, PI

R21 Submitted to NIDA 02/08
The Consequences of the Aging of the Cocaine and Heroin Dependent Populations

David R. Segal, PI

Submitted to the Army Research Institute (ARI) 05/08
Social Trends and Social Change in the United States: Impacts on Army Manpower, Personnel, and Operations

Center Seminars

Here's a look at events scheduled at the Maryland Population Research Center this Fall. Schedules change frequently. The most recent information is always available on the Center web site : www.popcenter.umd.edu

Monday, Sep 22

Wendy Sigle-Ruston, Dept. of Sociology, London School of Economics & Political Science
"Family Structure and Children's Educational Outcomes in Norway"

Friday, Sep. 26

Zhenchao Qian, Dept. of Sociology, Ohio State University
"Status Exchange? Marriage to a U.S. Citizen (and Access to Green Card)"

Monday, Oct. 6

Susan Greenhalgh, Dept. of Anthropology, University of California at Irvine
"Just One Child: Population Science and Politics in Contemporary China"

Tuesday, Oct. 14

Victor Agadjanian, School of Social and Family Dynamics, Arizona State University
"Labor Migration, Reconfiguration of Marriage, and HIV / AIDS in Rural Africa"

Monday, Oct. 20

Parfait M. Eloundou-Enyegue, Dept. of Sociology, Pennsylvania State University
"Effects of Demographic Transitions on Schooling: The Case of Sub-Saharan Africa"

Friday, Nov. 21

Guy Stecklov, Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, Hebrew University
TBA

The Consortium on Race, Gender, and Ethnicity will hold a series of seminars this Fall using the MPRC Conference Room. Complete schedule information can be found on the CRGE web site at : www.crge.umd.edu/events/colloquium.html

Maryland Population Research Center

0124 Cole Student Activities Center
College Park, Maryland 20742

301-405-6403 tel.

301-405-5743 fax

www.popcenter.umd.edu



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MARYLAND