

ASA Family Section Newsletter



SPRING 2024

[HTTP://WWW.ASAFAMILYSECTION.COM/](http://www.asafamilysection.com/)

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

JESS HARDIE



Dear Family Section members,

Happy Spring! And welcome to the new semiannual ASA Family Section newsletter. I am grateful to Ashley Larsen Gibby and Elena van Stee for putting this together and to Teresa Swartz and the Mentoring and Inclusion Committee for their work on the “Dear ASA Family Section” column as well as those who answered these important questions. And thanks to Mia Brantley for sharing her essay highlighting her findings on how Black mothers navigate racism in their mothering, work she conceptualizes as intensive motherwork, from her recently published paper.

I have been reflecting, of late, on our role as scholars in the current political climate and the obligations we have to speak up against attacks on academia and our fellow academics. As many of you may know, Christopher Rufo, the rightwing provocateur who pursued accusations of plagiarism against Claudine Gay, has recently targeted Family Section member and Harvard Assistant Professor of Sociology Christina Cross. The accusations of plagiarism are baseless (you can find a good summary and rebuttal here). But the effects of the attack are deeply troubling; they cast aspersions on the record of an accomplished, well-respected member of our community and scholar of color, one who has won multiple awards from our section. The attacks against Dr. Cross are meant to intimidate and silence. Indeed, scholars who expressed their outrage with this were subsequently attacked on X/Twitter and in some cases threatened with having their work examined.

This can be scary, but it is also the point: to frighten academics into silence and to punish those who cannot be silenced. Actors like Rufo start from the position that academia is dangerous and that scholars of color are not deserving of their accolades. Ignoring these reactionary standpoints is tempting, but it cedes ground and leaves those targeted standing alone.

What can be done? First, we can unequivocally support of Christina against these baseless accusations. I am proud to be a family scholar and sociologist alongside Dr. Cross. I unequivocally reject the claims of plagiarism against her and denounce these coordinated attacks against scholars of color—and in particular against Black women who are now repeatedly a target.

Second, and in concert with calls from ASA President Joy Misra and Executive Director Nancy Kidd to highlight the Value of Sociology (see below in the newsletter), we can be active in our efforts to push back against attempts to dismantle academic freedom and silence critical perspectives on race, gender, sexuality, disability, and immigration. I encourage you to view the “Browse the Index” link at [Pen America's](#) site to get a sense of the depth of these legislative efforts. They include measures to prohibit discussions of sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity, and critical race theory in K-12; limitations on the kinds of content that can be part of required courses at the college level; preventing faculty and staff from sharing their personal perspectives on topics; and more. These educational gag orders are deeply troubling and increasingly ubiquitous.

Lastly, we can continue our scholarship with a critical eye toward the ways family as a concept, rooted in white patriarchal forms such as the authority of fathers, the domesticity of white women, and control over children, is wielded politically. For instance, narratives of “traditional” family life and the protection of women and girls are being used to roll back LGBTQ rights, silence critical race studies, and ban sex education. As family scholars, we are in a unique position to unpack these narratives and critique their underlying assumptions. We can also continue to document ways that other institutions such as policing, the state, and healthcare systems intersect with and wield power over families. And we can measure and write about the ways these narratives and institutional intersections have real consequences for families and individuals.

Thank you for reading,
Jess

VALUE OF SOCIOLOGY INITIATIVE FROM ASA

We wrote to you recently about the assault on sociology in Florida; our challenges there are part of a much bigger attack on our discipline nationwide. Across the nation, politicians are interfering in educational decisions that should appropriately be made by subject matter experts. In Florida, for example, sociology was removed from the general education core course options by the Board of Governors, despite the recommendation of an expert panel of faculty.

Educational gag order laws have been passed in many states, and similar bills are currently under consideration. Several states have executive orders or other forms of policy restricting what can be taught in classrooms. At the heart of these gag orders is the subject matter sociologists teach, including inequality, race, gender, and sexuality. The current political movement against so-called “divisive concepts” is in fact an existential threat to our discipline.

The best way to fight political incursion into academic decisions is to demonstrate to voters and policymakers the value of the work we do. To that end, ASA is launching The Value of Sociology Initiative. We need your help to be successful. This is the moment for sociologists to come together and ensure that sociological content remains broadly available to students. We want teachers to have freedom to teach and do research based on their expertise and students to have freedom to learn with integrity, and we want sociology to continue to be a vital part of curricula across the country. To ensure those outcomes, we need thousands of us to collectively demonstrate the value of sociology for students and our communities.

A full outline of the components of this initiative, with links to resources to help support and defend our collective efforts as sociologists, is provided below. We need your help for this initiative to be successful, and we’ve articulated some specific “asks.” Please join this effort and take advantage of the resources we’ll provide as the initiative progresses.

With appreciation,

Joya Misra, President
misra@umass.edu

Nancy Kidd, Executive Director
nkidd@asanet.org

VALUE OF SOCIOLOGY INITIATIVE (CONT.)

This is the beginning of our initiative. New components may be added over time and these pieces may be amended as the initiative evolves.

Part I: Demonstrating the Value of Sociology. ASA is collecting and curating stories about the value of sociology that will be disseminated in a number of formats across various outlets, including a special issue of Footnotes and other published collections, advocacy sheets for national and state legislators, social media, podcasts, and more. We're looking for the voices of scholars, current students of sociology, and former students who majored in or took sociology courses as undergraduates. ASA will share these stories with the public and policymakers, and we'll make the stories available to sociologists to use as tools in their own advocacy efforts.

Scholars. We've all done work that has made an impact. Impacts might include influencing policy change at local or broader levels or doing research that has raised awareness about current social problems, such as disparities in access to healthcare or affordable housing. Impacts might also include applying research methods in new ways or giving a talk at your local library that provides members of the community with tools for better managing teen social media use. If you are a sociologist or a sociology doctoral student, please share your impact story [here](#). We are hoping to collect hundreds of these stories that we can deploy for a wide range of advocacy efforts. Help us create a compelling group of narratives.

Current students. Are you a student or do you teach high school students, undergraduates, and/or graduate students? Please participate or let your students know about ASA's [TikTok/Instagram contest](#), which provides students with an opportunity to share specific things they have learned in sociology classes that have helped them better understand our social world or their own lives and experiences.

Former undergraduate students who majored in or took sociology courses. Do you know former undergraduate (not PhD) students who are using their bachelor's degree and sociological knowledge in interesting and productive ways? Please send them [this link](#) and ask them to share their story with us.

Do you have other ideas for how we can demonstrate the value of sociology? Please [let us know](#).

VALUE OF SOCIOLOGY INITIATIVE (CONT.)

Part II: Empowering Sociologists to Advocate and Defend. ASA is providing sociologists with capacity-building tools for both sharing content about the value of sociology with the public and policymakers and protecting themselves when under attack.

Writing op-eds that highlight the value of sociology. This [resource page](#) provides sociologists with tools to write compelling op-eds. It includes a collection of effective examples written by our colleagues. If you have a published op-ed that demonstrates the value of sociology we might include on this page, please send it to communications@asanet.org. ASA staff offer editorial support and placement assistance. And we invite you to join us on March 22, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Eastern (also recorded for future listening), for a [workshop on op-ed writing](#) planned jointly by ASA's Political Sociology Section, Sociological Practice and Public Sociology Section, and Sociologists for Women in Society.

Communicating with legislators and other policymakers. This [resource page](#) provides information about how to track legislation, find your legislators, schedule and prepare for meetings with policymakers, and more. And we invite you to join us on May 9, 1:00-2:00 p.m. Eastern, for a [webinar](#) that is designed to support those confronting attacks on sociology at the state level as well as anyone interested in raising awareness about the value of the discipline for students, communities, or society as a whole. The workshop will feature staff from the [National Humanities Alliance](#) who lead advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill and support advocacy on campuses around the country as well as a campus-based government relations officer with expertise in advocacy at the state level.

Protecting yourself or your colleagues when under attack. We recognize that sociologists have experience harassment, doxing, and other challenges due to their work as sociologists. This [resource page](#) offers practical advice for managing these frightening and overwhelming situations. If you know of other resources we might include on this page, please send them to communications@asanet.org.

VALUE OF SOCIOLOGY INITIATIVE (CONT.)

Learning from our colleagues at the [ASA 2024 Annual Meeting](#). We hope you'll join us in Montreal for a plenary session (which will also be livestreamed and recorded for viewing at your convenience) on academic freedom, featuring experts on the legislative agenda, how attacks on academic freedom have operated in various contexts, and how to respond to these attacks. There will also be a Thematic Session featuring scholars who have experienced challenges to academic freedom, and a PEN America workshop on "Academic Freedom and Inclusion: Tools to Uphold Both" that we encourage you to attend.

Are there other resources ASA might provide that would be helpful in empowering sociologists to advocate for and defend sociology? Please [let us know](#).

INTENSIVE MOTHERWORK: RACISM AND BLACK WOMEN'S MOTHERING

MIA BRANTLEY

SHARED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE CONTEXTS BLOG. FIND THE ORIGINAL ESSAY [HERE](#).



As I chatted with Asia over a video call, it was evident how much she loved being a mother. Her face lit up as she described the accomplishments of her 17-year-old son and 13-year-old daughter; both were excelling in school, and her son had just started a new job. However, as we transitioned to discuss how race shaped the experience of mothering, her shoulders dropped and I could see the sadness in her eyes. It became abundantly clear to me that race—and more specifically, anti-Black racism—significantly shaped Asia’s experience of motherhood. When I asked explicitly how she thought the anticipation of Black children experiencing racism impacted Black mothers, Asia responded: “Honestly, I think it makes our mothering—” she paused, eventually finishing the sentence, “our motherhood experience to be less fulfilling.”

Although both popular and scholarly discourse often construes motherhood as a universal experience, Black feminist scholars challenge this claim, asserting that Black women’s experience of motherhood is unique. Grounded in this Black feminist perspective, my research investigates how Black mothers protect and empower their children and themselves in the face of anti-Black racism.

In a [recently published paper](#), I draw on the stories of 35 predominantly middle-class Black mothers to reveal how anti-Black racism affects the lives of Black families in insidious and unrelenting ways. The mothers I talked to were living in the continental United States and were raising at least one child between the ages of 10-24.

Through talking with these Black mothers, I discovered that they engaged in a set of mothering practices that I collectively term intensive motherwork, encompassing their exhaustive efforts to protect and empower their children and themselves amid pervasive anti-Black racism. This intensive motherwork is necessary for the physical, mental, and emotional survival of Black mothers and their families.

The mothers in my study discussed three primary aspects of intensive motherwork. First, they engaged in protective mothering, which involved practices to assist their children in navigating and/or mitigating anticipated experiences of racism. Mothers' protective strategies included delaying or restricting milestones (particularly for sons) and teaching and encouraging agency (particularly for daughters). For example, one mother described how she delayed taking her son to get his driver's license due to concerns over his physical safety, while another discussed instilling the importance of speaking up for yourself in her daughters to mitigate the emotional toll of and lack of control experienced within racially hostile environments.

Second, mothers engaged in resistance mothering as they educated their children about Black American culture to help them develop a positive racial identity. In doing so, mothers also experienced personal empowerment and fulfillment. Resistance mothering is exemplified by the words of one mother who stated that her children's awareness of anti-Blackness came "specifically from my mothering." This mother explained that she tries to counteract harmful narratives about Blackness by teaching her children "self-love, self-promotion, and Black excellence."

Finally, I use the term encumbered mothering to describe how the constant need to be aware of anti-Blackness, and its impact on their families, limits Black mothers' experience of motherhood. In short, combatting racism becomes a part of mothering. This unique aspect of Black women's mothering constrains their capacity to experience the joys of motherhood.

Intensive motherwork helps illuminate how the experience of Black mothering intersects with anti-Black racism and impacts both Black mothers and their children. It underscores that Black mothers' intensive parenting practices are not solely concerned with children's achievements, but with their basic safety and well-being. In solely centering the experiences of Black women in motherhood discourse, I illustrate the destructiveness of anti-Black racism and its potential consequences for Black maternal well-being.

Interested in writing for the Contexts Blog? Send pitches to ASA Family Section member Elena van Stee at blog@contexts.org.

DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

The following is part of a new series from the Mentoring & Inclusion Committee called Dear ASA Family Section. It's a Dear Abby style Q+A where more advanced family sociologists answer questions from members.

- Dear ASA Family Section -

Q: How do you know when you are ready to go on the academic job market?

A: For me, feeling ready was contingent on two things: 1) knowing what I wanted to do after grad school and 2) planning my approach. I decided early on that I wanted to do a postdoc because I wanted protected time to focus on my research agenda. I attended job market workshops...and met with people.... My two biggest takeaways were: 1) the job market is wildly unpredictable, and 2) well-crafted job market documents are a must! Since I could neither control nor predict the market, I focused on putting together solid documents & felt ready

Best of luck on your search!

Tia M. Dickerson, M.S.
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Howard University



Got a question? Send us a DM!
[@ASA_Family](#)

DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

- Dear ASA Family Section -

Q: How do you know when you are ready to go on the academic job market?

A: I decided to go on the job market in my 6th year of my PhD and I aimed for a faculty position. There were multiple criteria to judge whether I was ready to be on the job market. First is publications. I don't think you need multiple publications, but it does not hurt. Second, you need a strong job market paper. I presented a published paper in my job talk because this was the one I was most confident with. Third, your advisors need to be ready for your job market too. Talk to faculty in Spring, this helped me to think about my readiness for the market. Lastly, you need time preparing job market materials, the job market is stressful and time-consuming.

Fumiya Uchikoshi

Ph.D Candidate, Dept Sociology
Princeton University



Got a question? Send us a DM!

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DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

- Dear ASA Family Section -

Q: How do you know when you are ready to go on the academic job market?

A: In thinking about being "ready" to go on the market, you probably should be able to imagine completing your dissertation by the spring or summer before you'd start your job in the Fall. It may be helpful to have a publication or two, but not required and depends on the type of job you are seeking. That goes for teaching experience as well. It would be beneficial to have at least one empirical chapter written to use as a writing sample and for a job talk.... Discuss timing with trusted others and remember external situations may influence decisions about timing.



Teresa Toguchi Swartz
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DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

- Dear ASA Family Section -

Q: Can you share some tips and tricks for putting together a high-quality grant proposal?

A: A few tips for writing a strong grant proposal:

- Have clear aims
- Pay close attention to the application guidelines
- Develop the significance of your question or topic (drive that point home!)
- Include some pilot data to support proof-of-concept and the study's feasibility
- Read a successful application example
- Meet with a program officer
- Workshop the application, seek feedback, & revise

Good Luck!



Sarah Halpern-Meekin
Professor
Human Development & Family Studies
University of Wisconsin

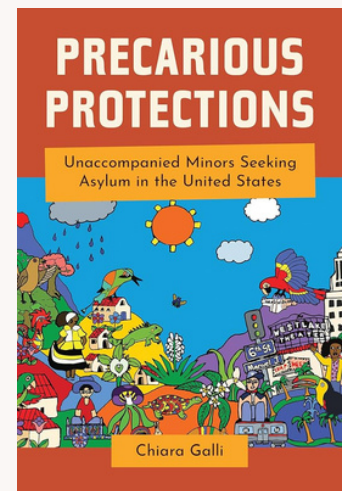
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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

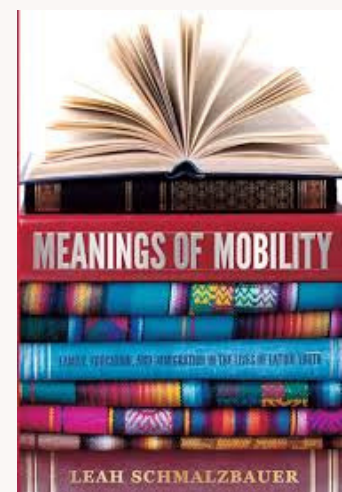
BOOKS

Galli, Chiara. 2023. Precarious Protections: Unaccompanied Minors Seeking Asylum in the US. Oakland: University of California Press.



Rodriguez, Cassandra. 2023. Contested Americans: Mixed-Status Families in Anti-Immigrant Times. New York University Press.

Schmalzbauer, Leah. 2023. Meanings of Mobility: Family, Education, and Immigration in the Lives of Latino Youth. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.



RECENT PUBLICATIONS (CONT.)

Articles & Essays

Flores, Gabriela, Elena G. van Stee, Ariel Chan, and Angelica Qin. 2023. "Getting Both Sides of the Story: The Benefits of Dyadic Interviewing in Studies of Young Adulthood." Contexts Blog.

Qian, Yue, and Yang Hu. 2024. "How Couples Meet and Assortative Mating in Canada." *Journal of Marriage and Family Early View*. doi: [10.1111/jomf.12967](https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12967).

Letiecq, Bethany L. 2024. "Theorizing White Heteropatriarchal Supremacy, Marriage Fundamentalism, and the Mechanisms That Maintain Family Inequality." *Journal of Marriage and Family Early View*. doi: [10.1111/jomf.12971](https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12971).

Stone, Amy L., Allison Powell, Chiara Pride, Guadalupe Rivera, and Pekam Njowo. 2024. "What Happens When Family Is Forced Together: Conflict, Intimacy, and Distance in Queer and Trans Youth's Family Relations During the Pandemic." *Journal of Family Issues Ahead of Print*:0192513X241237613. doi: [10.1177/0192513X241237613](https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X241237613).

van Stee, Elena G. 2023. "No place like home?" *Contexts* 22(3):12-17.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call for papers

Blood Ties and Politics: The Influence of Political Polarization upon Family Life (Special Volume)

Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research, an annual series which focuses upon cutting-edge topics in family research around the globe, is **seeking manuscript submissions for a special volume** which will focus on the theme of: 'Blood Ties and Politics: The Influence of Political Polarization upon Family Life.'

The deadline for initial submissions is April 30, 2024. Read more [here](#).

Faith and Non-Faith Worldviews in Understanding Family Relationships (Special Issue)

International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy is having a special issue on "Faith and Non-Faith Worldviews in Understanding Family Relationships." Submissions are due Sept. 15, 2024.

See more information here:

<https://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/calls-for-papers/faith-and-non-faith-worldviews-understanding-family-relationships>

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