

FAILURE IS IMPOSSIBLE!



Feminism and Family Studies Section Newsletter
National Council on Family Relations
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Report from the Chair

Greetings! I hope that all of you had a wonderful summer. My two great insights from the summer are that the rejuvenative powers of the beach are remarkable, and four cubic yards of garden mulch is A LOT!

My column this issue is a guide to our section's sessions at the upcoming NCFR conference. I hope you find it useful and many of the sessions very enlightening. But before turning to the conference, I want to celebrate our success in achieving a name change for IMF. Thanks especially to Stephen Marks, who raised the issue, and to Donna Sollie for writing such a cogent statement to the NCFR Board of Directors.

The great news about the conference is that there is a session sponsored or co-sponsored by our section in almost every time slot! We are cosponsoring sessions with many other sections, including Ethnic Minorities, Families and Health, Education and Enrichment, Family Policy, Family Science, and Research and Theory. Especially exciting to me is the strong awareness of feminist issues throughout NCFR. The FFSS icon appears beside all sessions we are sponsoring or co-sponsoring.

Distinguished Lecture

I am very pleased that Linda Burton will be speaking at the conference. At the Pennsylvania State University she directs both the Center for Human Development and Family Research in

Diverse Contexts, and the NIMH-sponsored Research Consortium on Diversity, Family Processes, and Child Adolescent Mental Health. Linda's research explores the relationship between neighborhood contexts, poverty, intergenerational family processes, and mental health outcomes across the life course. Her work embodies many feminist values—attention to the oppressed, elevation of women's concerns, and connections between the personal and the political. She is currently involved in a four-year multi-site collaborative study of the impact of welfare reform on families and children. Her address is titled, "Rhythms, Time, and Social Locations: Variability in the Lives of America's Poor Families." Please come, and encourage your colleagues to join you!

Reception and Business Meeting

A brief reception will follow Dr. Burton's address, after which we will hold our annual business meeting. Please be thinking of ideas for speakers and special sessions at the 2001 NCFR conference, as I will be attending a program committee meeting the following day. Note that the 2001 conference is in Rochester, New York, near historical sites very important to feminists.

More conference news from
Shelley on the next page

Paper Sessions

Work Structures and Family Strategies

These papers focus on family strategies in the context of challenges from the workplace, including commercial fishing, family businesses, shift work, and working class jobs. Anisa Zvonkovic will be the discussant.

Family Strengths and Supports

This session will focus on aspects of family resilience including social support, kin upgrading, and the developmental course of marriage. Mike Johnson will facilitate discussion during this session.

The Many Faces of Motherhood

Karen Blaisure will serve as the discussant of these papers focusing on single mothers, motherhood stages, and mothering in the new millennium.

Gender Ideologies and Roles

Gender ideologies, gender roles and codependency, and the implications of children's gender for parenting are the foci of these papers, which will be discussed by Brenda Seery.

Praxis Roundtables

You might remember that we formed a Feminist Praxis committee last year. Aably led by Lee Ann De Reus and Anisa Zvonkovic, this committee has put together an exciting group of 6 roundtable discussions on Feminist Practice Outside the Lecture Hall. The description in the conference program is pretty cryptic, but this will be an

exciting set of discussions led by able and experienced feminists—plan to attend!

Jessie Bernard Award Roundtable

Yu Hua Chen, who last year won the Jessie Bernard Award for an outstanding and ambitious research proposal, will be presenting her results on Sunday, at the same session as the praxis roundtables.

Poster Symposia

Last but not least, we will feature several posters, including two themed groups of posters. One will focus on adolescence, the other on gender and the media.

Thanks to everyone who submitted and everyone who reviewed submissions for this year's conference. Remember that we are allocated time on the program based on the number of submissions we receive. We are eager to see high quality feminist research featured even more prominently on the NCFR program!

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Interview with Carol Stack November 1999

Carol Stack agreed to be interviewed in an informal setting by Brenda Seery and Anisa Zvonkovic during the NCFR conference last year. Carol's mother Ruth was an active participant in the interview as well. The conversation that follows really focused on the work Carol did in African American communities (in All Our Kin and her more recent book, Call to Home). Our questions came from our interest in reflexive, feminist work, as well as our admiration for the intensity and legacy of Carol's body of work. Snippets of the conversation are presented here, organized thematically. Brenda started by asking a question about reflexivity.

Carol: For starters, I almost can't separate who I am from my research. Specific examples of issues in which I am engaged include politics, changing gender configurations, and notions of social class.

As Carol wrote in her preface to Call to Home: "People whose lives are portrayed here will recognize themselves. Many of them have read and responded to drafts of this book over the years. They see in it not only themselves but me, and in the end they remind me that the book is not only them interpreted but an extension of my own history as well." (pp. xvii-xviii)

Carol: I learned so much from the black community: how to be a single parent, how to utilize resources of friends. In the middle-class, friends keep up an even exchange. A friend baby-sits for you for 1 ½ hours, you need to exchange the same amount. I had to learn uneven exchange. Single parents need an exchange. "I need you to watch my kids for the day" -- they might have 2 kids, you have one, but you don't think about the exchange. I learned about how sharing households makes life easier. [In my research for All Our Kin,] I saw men touching babies. Black men have always

been involved with babies. It raised my expectations for men's involvement.

Carol's family growing up:

"I had a nurturant father and a strong mother."

So many feminist studies have had a middle-class perspective. I always had a leg in working-class and African American families. Growing up working class and Jewish in a white middle-class community oriented me to difference. I brought a class lens into the research. I grew up in a working-class extended family. There was an exchange of goods and services across [all members]. I saw women's work. My mother took in ironing, kids, boarders. Her work was visible. When I was 11, 12, 13, I spent summers with my dad on his bread truck. We left at around 3 am and I helped him. Other men brought their sons to work. They asked my Dad "Why are you bringing her?" My dad said, "I want her to learn how to work."

I've seen in my family men in extended families who were natural with babies, who were caring. I recall 4 men who were absolutely natural caregivers. And there are women who are strong. I'm nowhere near as strong as my mother. I have a mother who doesn't even know her own strength.

Ruth Stack: My dad grew up in Harlem. We lived in community with Latino and African American families.

Carol: I am from a family of migrants. They moved up to where they lived.

Carol's experience with family sociology
Anisa: Did you, when you were doing the work reported in All Our Kin, identify yourself as a feminist?

Carol: I went into the black community in 1968. I was in an early women's consciousness raising group in Urbana. I thought I'd study everybody

in the family. It was much easier to spend time with women than men. All Our Kin is really an ethnography through the eyes of women. Men are there but they came later. I've been told that All Our Kin is the first feminist ethnography. Most ethnography was through the eyes of people in power, men. There weren't that many women doing ethnography. In the kinds of societies we study, men tend to hang around with men. At the time, I had no sense of doing feminist ethnography. Later, I saw there was such a divide between working and middle class women and black women. I brought a lens of feminism through working class African-American women and my working class background. I said to my advisor in Urbana that I was keeping a series of notes on the development of my own intuition. He said nobody would be interested. In terms of reflexivity, there's a lot of it in All Our Kin. But it just came out; it wasn't with the existential angst you see today!

[When I think about research I've done in the 60s through the 80s, I realize that] politics and times have changed. Being white was different, it was a period of black power, now we've experienced a backlash. In the 60s, things were more open. I didn't feel like a white woman in the community. There was a belief that social change could occur. When I left the community to write, then I felt my whiteness.

Carol's recent work

When I did research in the rural South (for Call to Home), the white hierarchy was there. I felt my whiteness much more, all the time. People were trying to figure out who they were as returners [to their home communities in the South after having lived in the North]. But when I went to write, it was more seamless.

When I was working on Call to Home, my mother came to visit. She was really a participant observer with me. She observed, participated. My illness brought a different perspective to my finishing Call to Home. A spiritual dimension. I mean, I was a Jewish agnostic, but the spiritual,

soulfulness aspects were there, and it changed the book. [We talked about how the spiritual issues needed to come out and be part of the book; how the book as a piece of work was enriched and how she was benefited by this.]

As Carol wrote in the preface to Call to Home: "Back in the early 1970s, when I was living in The Flats, I was a single parent accompanied by my young son as I did fieldwork among women who were themselves single parents. More recently, as I worked on Call to Home, my son had gone off to college and it was often my widowed mother who accompanied me during my fieldwork. Once again I found myself close in age and life stage to the people with whom I talked. Our closeness should be neither overemphasized nor taken for granted—I remain a white observer—but many of the issues in the book touch on my life, perhaps on everyone's." (p. xviii)

Issues of justice and parental contact:
"I've tried to breathe life into gender configurations by looking at race, class, and gender simultaneously."

Carol: My work in African-American communities has informed me and provided a way of thinking about family dilemmas affecting other families. I can argue up from looking at African-American families in the ghetto to middle-class issues of joint custody. Informal custody arrangements have been done in African-American communities. [These can be viable solutions for other families in other contexts.]

My work has been described as "taking Gilligan to the ghettos" [referring to Carol Gilligan's work, In a Different Voice]. When I looked at race, class and gender as life is experienced in the Flats, I saw young girls and boys [as] almost identical in terms of care and justice issues. Young girls have dealt so often with justice and injustice. And boys have seen men in households not working, intimidated by the white power structure... and men providing care.

Resources and Other Announcements

Women & Social Security (thanks to Judith G. Gonyea). The Gerontological Society of America's Task Force on Women has produced several outstanding documents on the debate concerning Social Security reform and women. These are downloadable PDF files available at the GSA Website, www.geron.org/income.html:

- "Social Security and Women: Some Facts"
- "Social Security in the 21st Century More Than Deficits:
Strengthening Security for Women"
- "Social Security Reform and Older Women"

Family Development Programs in Colombia (thanks to Professor Dalia Restrepo). At the University of Caldas in Colombia, South America a critical theory, research and praxis perspective has been implemented in graduate and undergraduate programs. It has a twofold character: first, a new conceptualization for looking at family and development; and second, a participatory strategy of intervention for attaining not only changes within the family group but also for contributing to changes in other social settings. The FD approach, which we have called the OTHER FAMILY DEVELOPMENT (to distinguish it from the North American traditional family development perspective) is worked at two levels: an undergraduate 4 year program (since 1984) and a Master's program in Family Studies and Development (since 1996). Both programs are implemented in an inter-disciplinary, theoretical, research and applied basis. The innovative feature of the approach is the conceptualization of families as self-directed units, capable of shaping their own well-being and contributing to positive social change, combined with the development of a participatory methodological intervention strategy that advances families' ability to take greater control over their lives. There are 22 faculty from different disciplines working on teaching and research in both programs. We have over 300 graduates, many of them working in different public and private institutions around the country, particularly in institutions related to family and socio-economic development issues. There are other undergraduate and graduate programs on family and related issues around Colombia. However, ours are the only ones oriented towards creating a theory and practice of including families explicitly and consciously in development efforts. People interested in learning more about our Colombian Family Development perspective can do so by reviewing an article (in English) published in the Family Science Review in 1996 (volume 9, No 3/4: 153-169). Further information on both programs (particularly in Spanish) can be obtained at the following address:

Departamento de Estudios de Familia
Universidad de Caldas
Calle 65 No. 26-10
MANIZALES, CALDAS, COLOMBIA, S.A.
EMAIL: efamilia@cumanday.ucaldas.edu.co or dalia@cumanday.ucaldas.edu.co.
Fax Number: 011-576- 8862520 or 8851712

Job Opportunities

University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The Department of Sociology seeks a promising research scholar for a tenure-track assistant professor position to begin August, 2001. The candidate's primary research area must be family. Secondary research areas are open as are teaching interests. Requirements include a Ph.D. at time of appointment and promise in scholarly research and publication and classroom teaching. Responsibilities are to maintain a strong research program, teach undergraduate and graduate courses, supervise graduate student training and research, be an active part of the department's intellectual community, and serve on departmental and University committees. The base teaching load is 2 courses per semester. Salary is commensurate with experience. All applications must include: current vita, letter describing research agenda and teaching philosophy, samples of research work, evidence of teaching effectiveness (if applicable), and three letters of reference. Consideration of applications will begin October 15 and continue until a suitable candidate is found. Materials to: Lynn White, Department of Sociology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln NE 68588-0324. The University of Nebraska is committed to a pluralistic campus through Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity and is responsive to the needs of dual career couples. We assure reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act; for assistance, contact the Search Chair at 402-472-6005.

University of Missouri-Columbia. The Department of Human Development and Family Studies is seeking as assistant professor with interest in family diversity and/or multiculturalism to fill a tenure-track position beginning August, 2001. Candidates should have a Ph.D. in human development and family studies or such related fields as sociology, psychology, anthropology, communications, social work, or gerontology. The successful applicant, who has demonstrated exceptional promise in both research and teaching, will teach undergraduate and graduate courses emphasizing multiculturalism, family diversity, and/or diversity in development across the life course. Mentoring both undergraduate and graduate research efforts is also expected. The department focuses on families as basic units of society and emphasizes the development of individuals and families across the life cycle. Family diversity and multiculturalism are the department's unique niches, and it seeks to strengthen that focus with this hire and eventual development of a graduate degree option in those areas. Currently, the department has eleven tenure track/tenured faculty members, and approximately 160 undergraduate majors and 50 masters and doctoral students. Faculty are productive scholars studying such areas as childcare, development across the lifespan, family interaction and relationships, divorce, and remarriage. In recent years the department has housed the editorship of both the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, and *Family Relations*—the top two journals in the family field—and currently houses the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*. The department also runs a laboratory preschool, rated among the top ten in the country, and enrolling over 100 children. Department faculty also direct The Center for the Study of Family Policy and Research. The current position offers a competitive salary and research start-up costs. Screening of applications begins November 1, 2000. A letter of application describing research and teaching experiences and interests, a curriculum vitae, and three letters of reference should be mailed to: Dr. Teresa M. Cooney, Chair of Multicultural Search Committee, 304 Gentry Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211-7700. The University of Missouri is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Millsap Professorship of Family Diversity and Multicultural Studies. The Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Missouri-Columbia is recruiting for the endowed Millsap Professorship of Family Diversity and Multicultural Studies. The department has identified multiculturalism and family diversity as its foci and seeks an individual with expertise in racial and ethnic issues in human development and/or family studies. The starting date for the 9-month position is Aug., 2001. Preferred rank is advanced Associate or Full Professor. Duties include teaching undergraduate and graduate courses; advising undergraduate, master's and doctoral students; conducting an active program of research; participating in the department's new Center for Family Policy and Research; and engaging in University and community service. Women and minorities are especially encouraged to apply. The Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Missouri-Columbia does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, disability, status as disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam era, or sexual orientation. Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. Send a cover letter addressing qualifications and interests, a vita, reprints, and 3 letters of reference to: Mark Fine, Ph.D., Search Committee Chair; Dept. of Human Development and Family Studies; 314 Gentry Hall; University of Missouri-Columbia; Columbia, MO 65211. Email or phone questions to: finem@missouri.edu; 573-884-6301

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and/or comments to:

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