

ASA Section on Aging and the Life Course



News from the Chair



Welcome to our special Spring Edition of the Section on Aging and the Life Course Newsletter. In this issue we are publishing the comments of section members on the proposal made by past chairs Dale Dannefer and Richard Settersten that we change the name of the section [reprinted here following members' comments]. In the

Winter Edition of this Newsletter, I provided my thoughts [also reprinted here following members' comments]. Now it's your turn. Here are the submissions we received, in order by date. Thank you to all who took the time to weigh in. Once you've had a chance to read your fellow members' comments you may have some more of your own. Feel free to share them on our Facebook page, or send them to me for publication on our listserv. Let the discussion continue!

Ellen Idler, Chair

Section Members' Opinions in Order of Submission

Of the 52 current sections within the ASA, at least three others besides our own section of Aging and the Life course possess a split focus, with the polarities not necessarily united in harmony. Peace, War, and Social Conflict is a good example as its membership comprises not only peace activists but also military policy analysts, some of whom are among the most conservative members of our discipline. Collective behavior and social movements is another section with a split focus, with only a minority of its members being students of both collective behavior *and* social movements. And then there is Race, Gender, and Class, a triptych of research concerns, whose parts may not be in conflict yet whose intersection could be claimed by only a small percentage of its membership. The fact that Aging and the Life Course also embraces scholars from different traditions and lineages should

not then be a reason to change the name of the section.

Many of us who voted in the 1990s to expand the name of our section from the Section on Aging to the Section on Aging and the Life Course did so because the change was more inclusive and would certify on paper what was already happening on the ground, so to speak. Life course research had begun to appear and seemed to be a logical and profitable fit with the already existing aging niche. To change the name now to the Section on Age and the Life Course would be redundant and *exclusive*. It is exclusive because the effect would be to exclude from the section those whose work focuses primarily on that fast growing segment of our population, i.e., the aged. The earlier name change expanded the section; this name change runs the risk of shrinking our membership. Why would we want to do that?

I appreciate Professor Idler's offer of a compromise (Section on Aging, Cohorts, and the Life Course) but find the addition of the word, *cohorts*, to add no new information. It goes without saying that we study cohorts, just as we study period shifts, and (pace Dale Dannefer) aging processes too.

So my vote is to retain what is hands down the most descriptive and lyrical name of any section within the ASA.

-Jim Dowd, University of Georgia, 2/17/14

When Matilda White Riley proposed swapping in "age" for "aging" in the section name, the effect would have been to focus attention on age as an elemental basis of social stratification and a key feature of social structure. In the debate that followed, resistance to the proposal, some of it stated by founding members of the section, flowed from a feeling that with this swap we would be abandoning our special interest in older people and the issues of later life. An identification with "aging" was an identification of those were aging. Thinking about it now, I am not worried. There is such momentum in our teaching and research about these matters that I am confident that we will conserve our field's concern for older adults and an implicit advocacy

of their well-being (and policies to promote their well-being). At the same time, the swap gives our section name greater sociological integrity, underlining a strong claim that age is constitutive of social life, unifying theoretical attention toward all of life's stages, and directing interest in the eventual, later-life outcomes of age-organized social experience. So, I favor a minimal but meaningful intervention in our name: Age and Life Course.

-Dave Ekerdt, University of Kansas, 3/10/14

The section's current name meets my needs as a section member and, in my opinion, adequately (though not perfectly) conveys the breadth of our members' common interests. While I recognize that a lengthier title might better signify the multiple meanings of age as a field of study, I prefer shorter section names to longer ones.

-John Reynolds, Florida State University, 3/11/14

As I recall, the section members who originally proposed a change in the section title did so because they were concerned that the term "Aging" in the original title, Section of the Sociology of Aging, was too often interpreted to mean growing old only.

The term "Life Course" was suggested instead of "Aging" as well as some term to refer to the structural aspects of age as a social phenomenon. In the discussion that occurred at that time Matilda argued in favor of the term "age" to make clear that age has a structural significance that is captured neither by "aging" nor "life course." The title as it was finally adopted, ended up including both "aging" and the "life course" and thus was redundant since both "aging" (as proceeding from birth to death) and "the life course" focus on an individual process. There is nothing in the present title to include structural aspects of age in society --for example, the age-related roles, rules, and social institutions that affect and constrain individual behavior and orientations.

Matilda spoke specifically of age structures; she considered structural aspects of age as key to a full understanding of age as a social phenomenon. For example, in Vol. III of "A Sociology of Age Stratification," she speaks

of social institutions and role structures as roughly organized by age. Further, the whole conception of "structural lag" is predicated on the interplay of structural and dynamic aspects of age in the society.

At this point, I'm not sure what title would clearly point to the structural aspects of age in society as well as aging over the life course-- "Age and the Life Course" seems the most succinct choice. But something that encompasses the full subject matter of the field would be most appropriate. In any case, a title that ignores age structures doesn't do justice to the field.

-Anne Foner, Emerita, Rutgers University, 3/12/14

Age encompasses more than individual processes of aging. Age is also a social construct, manifest in innumerable ways that transcend individual aging – in legal-bureaucratic reliance upon age in law and policy, in culturally pervasive perceptions of age which are the foundation of age norms, age-related perceptions, ageism, age discrimination, etc.

The relation "age/aging" is thus analogous to "gender/sex". Both gender and age reference aspects of social reality *sui generis* that are built upon, yet not entirely reducible to events associated with individual characteristics. Age is thus inscribed in institutions and is an integral and systemic part of the socially constructed order in ways that are often quite arbitrary in relation to individual age-related characteristics and capacities, as well as obviously referencing individual aging.

Because "aging" connotes these more delimited individual-level processes of change, it does not convey these distinctly sociological dimensions of age-related phenomena.

I sincerely appreciate the spirit of Chair Ellen Idler's comments and her suggestion, "Aging, Cohorts and the Life Course". As Ellen rightly notes, such a change, by adding "cohorts", would deal with one problem with the term "aging" -- its association with old age. However, it would do nothing to acknowledge the more fundamental conceptual issue of recognizing age as a force in social structure. Cohorts, while of course important, are not structures. They are subpopulations –

aggregates of individuals. Thus, such a change would underscore the tendency to focus on individual characteristics, thereby risking a further exclusion of a recognition of the role of age in social-structural dynamics. One final note in response to Ellen's comment: the issue of structure should not be confused with the "micro-macro" issue. As Bengtson's classic "cycle of induced incompetence" demonstrated, micro-structures as well as macro-structures are integral to the dynamics of everyday life and shape age-related outcomes.

-Dale Dannefer, Case Western Reserve University, 3/13/14

Thank you for letting me participate in this spirited exchange. I strongly support the change from "Aging" to "Age" and I credit this position with my fortunate background that includes both training in and participation with multidisciplinary gerontology programs and traditional sociology departments. It is through work with teams from multiple disciplines that the true value of a sociological perspective shines through.

For many of us, our work necessarily bleeds into multiple disciplines (psychology, human development, epidemiology, economics, biology) but, as a Section, we must address the question: what is sociology's unique contribution to this inquiry? For me, the answer lies in the fundamental understanding that age is intractably embedded in society. Cross-cultural and comparative historical research has shown how age is socially constructed through macro-level policy and structure down to routinized micro-level interactions. As with other cultural categories that have had variable levels of access and value across differing societal contexts (e.g., race, gender, disability), the experience and understanding of one's age cannot be extricated from the social world.

I encourage us to "take a page" from our colleagues in the ASA Section Disability and Society. From the outset, this Section has distinguished between the corporality of disability and the social experience of disability. As sociologists, the Section is interested in the ways that the practices and policies of the social world serve to exclude, disadvantage, or stigmatize persons with disabilities. In this way, solutions for full

inclusion and citizenship are embedded in society, not in medical cures and rehabilitation. The same way, moving to "age" in our Section name would make explicit that our focus is on the ways that society may organize rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and value for persons based on age, while still including to corporality of physiologic aging.

-Jessica Kelley-Moore, Case Western Reserve University, 3/13/14

The discussion of the best name for SALC has stimulated an important conversation regarding how we, as sociologists, view the area we work in. I consider intellectual disagreement as positive because it encourages us to think and articulate positions. Trying to encompass the breadth of our work in a few words is challenging.

I prefer the name "Age, Aging and the Life Course. My reason for wanting to add "age" is because this better captures areas that I work in: age segregation, ageism, and age-based policy. These are, I think, structural issues that are distinct from the individual experience of aging or the macro process of population aging.

By adding "age" without subtracting "aging", we can better accommodate the interests of members of the section. I would add, emphatically, that whether or not we change the name will not alter my appreciation for the section.

-Peter Uhlenberg, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 3/13/14

I do not favor changing the section name and would certainly vote against it if it were brought before the membership during elections. I also think that the exercise in arguing over semantics is a futile pursuit. The word *aging* is very general and it suits as a descriptor for both longitudinal and cross-sectional research for most of the work conducted by members of our wonderful section. SALC is part of my academic identity (I "grew up" after the initial name change) and I cannot imagine 1) a better place to raise life course sociologists within ASA, or 2) a better name for that place. Thank you for providing a venue for expressing our views.

-Christopher Steven Marcum, NIH, 3/13/14

I understand the rationale for the proposed change outlined in the memo circulated last year and would not be upset if we voted to change the name. But, having said that, I would use my vote in support of retaining the section's current name. Aging and the life course reflects the focus of my own work very well, I think it also reflects the work of most section members quite well, it clearly indicates the focus of the section, and it very clearly identifies the section as a group addressing a highly relevant set of questions. Relative to aging, age encompasses so much territory that the intellectual focus of the section becomes less clear. Of course, I understand that the desire to encompass more territory is a primary motivation for the proposed change, but my own opinion is that "age" is almost limitless in what it could encompass and that it is not worth sacrificing our ability to signal intellectual focus in an effort to better signal intellectual breadth/inclusivity.

-Jim Raymo, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 3/13/14

Bengtson, Putney and Johnson (2005) on "The New Problem of Societal Aging" observe, "The economic and social implications of ageing and the aged for societies are vast" (p4-5), pointing to the "increasing import of macro-level phenomena and the structural contexts of aging. Structures [have] ... effects on processes of ageing independent of individual aging.... [S]tructures and institutions...have a certain facticity" (O'Rand, Campbell, 1999; Turner, 2003)" (p 17).

An individual attribute or a process, or "cohort" or "period" does not make a society or global order. Nor do they adequately reflect larger forces that co-create, produce, reproduce (or alter) a society in which **being old may be a crime or old age a veneration**. Or the construction, production, perseverance, change, or resistance to social inequalities.

"Age and the life course" are shaped, constituted, constructed, reproduced, altered, deconstructed *in* and *within*, and *of* the larger social surround. It is a truism that the political, economic, and sociocultural conditions, dynamics, and institutions comprising social structure have real consequences for real people, age and the life course.

Social structure is *more* than "context" or "environment"; it merits the lens, the gaze worthy of our sociological imagination.

Does the Name accommodate needed:

- Theoretical and empirical work on age and life course at the level of:
 - Structural Functionalism, Conflict, Symbolic Interaction, and Critical theories, competing with Modernity, Post-Modernity, Globalization, and more?
 - Studies of Institutionalized Racism, Sexism, Ageism, (Dis)abilism, Social Class, LGBTQI, incorporating, yet reaching beyond individual, group, period, cohort, "identities" and intersectionalities?
- Studies of economic, political, and sociocultural institutions (civic society, church, State- racial and patriarchal) *in* and *through* which age and the life course are constructed, their narratives revealed, and the processing and treatment of individuals, their groupings and characteristics, legitimated/de-legitimated, standardized or de-standardized?

Bring Society back in!

-Carroll L. Estes, University of California San Francisco, 3/13/14

While this may seem to be merely a semantic issue, I believe it is an important one for the welfare of the section and appreciate the opportunity to continue the discussion. For those of us in the field, "aging and life course" is encompassing for all the reasons Ellen eloquently noted in the Winter newsletter. However, I agree that the general connotation of "aging" is old age, which may be a deterrent for potential members. While we have a thriving section with a great array of talent, we may be missing opportunities to attract new members, particularly junior scholars, who may unwittingly be aging researchers. Therefore, I feel that "Age and the Life Course" or "Age, Cohorts, and the Life Course" would be more accessible to a broader audience. The latter has the advantage of speaking the language of demographers (and of course addresses the issue of dynamic change), further opening the door to researchers from other fields who may

not currently engage with the life course literature but whose work aligns well with the field.

-Georgiana Bostean, Chapman University, 3/19/14

My recommendation is to adopt the following as our section name –Age, Aging and the Life Course. I believe this accurately reflects the section as it is today. An understanding of age in all of its meanings is central to an understanding of both aging and the life course (from birth to death).

- Glen H. Elder Jr., The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 3/19/14

I think the name is fine. However, my second choice would be Section on the Life Course.

-Edythe M. Krampe, California State University, 3/19/14

I hope that we retain the current section title of "Aging and Life Course." First, I think it highlights the approach that most members of our section take to studying later life—that is a process that spans the life course, with the experiences at each point along that continuum being heavily influenced by the cumulation of experiences from the previous points. Second, using the term "age" rather than "aging" sends the wrong message in several regards. It endorses a demarkation between age groups at a time when social science is providing increasing evidence that such demarkations by age, sex/gender, and race are both artificial and detrimental. It is also far less inclusive. Speaking as someone whose identity transitioned from "family" to "family, aging and the life course" only a decade ago, the title "Aging and the Life Course" had the breadth that allowed me to feel that all of my research interests could fit under its umbrella—I am less sure that I would felt comfortable becoming active in a section that identified as "age" or "age, cohorts, and ..." At a point when we are concerned with declining membership, narrowing the identity of the section seems a risky strategy.

-J. Jill Suitor, Purdue University, 3/20/14

I should note that I opposed and successfully blocked the first attempt to add "life course" which led to a second attempt with statements by myself and Ron Abeles in the Section Newsletter arguing the merits. I lost in part because of sympathy with Matilda Riley's retirement from NIH Aging Institute -- don't have access right now to my files of issues of the newsletter. As the founder and first "Founding Chair" of the Section (as the memorial clock the Section presented me years ago reads), I can state that I and other original signers of the petition to ASA always viewed aging as a group or cohort category as reflected in the areas of retirement, pensions, social security, and old age assistance [my major areas of interest]. The very strong program then (the 1950's) in the aging of populations was reflected in the UN's landmark study of the causes of aging populations as rooted in declining birth rates due to the extension of education, especially of women and declining maternal and infant mortality due to adoption of sterile birth procedures and mechanization of agriculture, etc., which led to increased and less expensive food. Thus the aging of populations was not due to individuals "living longer" -- a continued conflation of the presumed biological limit of human life span and the "increasing life expectancy" which is applied to individuals, ignoring that it refers to the average life expectancy of given cohorts -- specific ages, grouped ages, sex or gender cohorts, so-called "races" or "national" origins in a world that has always had various degrees of mixing of groups and constructed categories to reflect cultures, wealth, power, and conquest.

The long chapter in the original 1959 Handbook of Social Gerontology on "Retirement: The Emerging Social Pattern" (which was basically my work, though I deferred first name to my "boss" and mentor in aging, Wilma Donahue, who endured almost two decades of discrimination as a woman PhD, [our names are in alphabetical order]) also reflects this processual constructive group cohort perspective. I have always affirmed this position (cf eg. my remarks in the 10 year anniversary issue of the section newsletter, then edited by the dept chair at Nebraska Danny Hoyt or in the Anniversary booklet mention of my comments at the section dinner at ASA's 100th anniversary meeting in Philadelphia) that we always are essentially working with group cohort data that in

practice -- for those engaged in attempts to alter things -- we apply to individuals in various ways.

My view is that the original name is the best solution. The ISA Research Committee on Aging -- which I also served as the founder and first President has the name retained all these years.

-Harold Orbach, Kansas State University, 3/21/14

Within my 300 words, I will try to share some thoughts related to the discussion of what our section should be called.

I have no count of how many times I have had conversations with colleagues, as well as non-sociologists, who asked what I am particularly interested in. When I mention the social significance of age, the common response is: you mean aging? So you are a social gerontologist? Often, I respond that some of the most interesting questions related to meanings of age involve children- or issues tied to contrasts between "her and his adulthood". To me, an important part of the sociology of age is not covered by our present name: links between age and social participation. In my view, Matilda Riley was quite "Durkheimian", with a strong interest in how age was related to social integration and society's division of labor. As a sociologist, I am also interested in how age groups relate. Peter Uhlenberg and I have tried to raise the issue of institutional, spatial and cultural age segregation and ask questions about the consequences of such segregation for ageism, socialization patterns, networks and social isolation. The connection between age and social integration is a highly political issue, and in my opinion, we have the responsibility to point this out! There are many critical, yet unaddressed, issues related to age and citizenship, particularly for the youngest and the oldest.

I think we could be an integrative force within the ASA-- initiating and sustaining new discussions across sections- about age and gender; age and families, children and youth in aging societies; time and age; theoretical attempts to bridge micro- and macro levels; connecting observed and experienced life pathways.

Finally:

by making our name Age and the Life course, we remain SALC!

-Gunhild Hagestad, Norwegian Social Research, Oslo, 3/24/14

Reprint of Summer 2013 Newsletter Proposal for Section Name Change

Dear Fellow SALC Members,

This is a brief note to follow up on the issue of changing our section name to the Sociology of Age and the Life Course (recommended) or the Sociology of Age, Aging and the Life Course (also nominated as a possible improvement over the present name).

This issue was discussed in various contexts during the last two years of SALC days at the annual meeting. Section Chair Dale Dannefer first introduced the issue at the 2011 SALC Business Meeting. In 2012, Section Chair Rick Settersten organized a symposium, "What's in a Name? Perspectives on the Sociology of 'Age,' 'Aging,' and 'the Life Course,'" to generate healthy debate and critical self-reflection on the words that signal our Section's vision and guide its priorities and commitments. This session included perspectives from a dozen members—junior, midcareer, and senior alike—and resulted in a lively discussion with the audience.

The concern of many of SALC's leadership has been that the term "aging" does not adequately capture the scope, power, and significance of age as a social force and social construct, and that "aging" alongside "the life course" is to some extent repetitive and less powerful and inclusive than "age and the life course."

Last year, there was considerable sentiment at the session (and in the lingering discussion at the mentoring dinner and throughout the meeting) that replacing "aging" with "age" would therefore capture the mission of our section and the breadth and depth of the interests of our membership.

In brief, the rationale is as follows:

The topic of "age" encompasses the subject matter of individual aging; so does "the life course." Although the term "aging" has a certain appeal because of its familiarity, it is limited in that it generally refers to individual-level processes and does not typically encompass larger social phenomena related to age in areas such as social policy, age discrimination and ageism, age integration and segregation, age relations, and so on.

Summer 2013 Proposal Reprint Continued...

Thus, age refers to features of social structure as well as of individuals. As both a dynamic and structural feature of social life, age operates in powerful ways that transcend or are even unrelated to matters of individual aging. For example, this can be seen in the increasing use of age as a basis of social organization – whether in “age grading” in schools, in the setting of retirement policy, or in other uses of age as an eligibility criterion for role access and exclusion. Behaviorally, one need only look so far as the transition to retirement or the transition to adulthood to realize just how much policy and other social changes over the last century have altered age norms, age awareness and the very meanings of age.

We have found it useful to consider the analogy between *aging/age* on one hand, and *sex/gender*, on the other. In each case, the former term refers to a specific characteristic anchored in the body (in biological sex and chronological age), whereas the latter includes such individual characteristics but also includes social constructs that have varied and changing significance and meaning in different contexts.

The recommended name change—to the Sociology of Age and the Life Course—is therefore proposed because, as sociologists, it is a name that encompasses these inherently *sociological* aspects of the subject matter as well as the social aspects of individual aging.

It is not our intention to outline all of the nuanced arguments for, or against, a name change in the proposed direction. However, we hope that these brief comments convey the essential rationale for the recommended change.

A name change requires an amendment to our Section's by-laws. Council will deliberate this issue at the annual meeting this August and invite input at the Section business meeting. If a change is recommended by Council or via a signature initiative, it will move through a process at ASA and Section members will have an important opportunity to vote on the amendment in the spring election.

Respectfully yours,

Dale Dannefer
Past Past Chair, SALC

Rick Settersten
Past Chair, SALC

Reprint of Winter Newsletter Editorial and Call for Thoughts

"Should we change the name of the section?"

As chair of SALC this year, it falls to me to continue the conversation that began at the 2013 Annual Meeting, when then-past-chair Rick Settersten (and past-past chair Dale Dannefer) initiated a proposal to change the name of the section from the Section on Aging and the Life Course to the Section on Age and the Life Course. The minutes of the 2013 SALC Business Meeting (thanks, Janet Wilmoth!) record the relatively brief discussion that took place:

Continuing dialogue about the name of our Section: A discussion was opened about changing the section name. Dale Dannefer began by advocating for changing the name to "Sociology of Age and the Life Course," which built upon the statement was circulated in advance of the meeting. In the brief discussion that followed multiple, strong opinions were raised both in favor and against that proposed change. Given the limited time, it was agreed that the discussion should continue in the section's newsletter and on the listserv, with position statements and other mechanisms for debating the relative merits and concerns associated with these and any other potential name options. Ellen Idler, as incoming chair, will coordinate these forums.

As a long-time member of the section, I can remember the *original* debate about changing the name of the section, back in the 1990s, when we were known simply as the Section on Aging. At the time, I thought the debate about adding "and the Life Course" to the name was intellectually interesting, and appealingly self-reflective, but something that other, wiser people would decide.

This time is different. I care very much about the future of the Section and feel a big sense of responsibility for its welfare.

So although I have spoken out previously *against* the name change, today I find myself of two minds. On the one hand, I think that the term *aging* (a verb) brings a vital sense of the dynamic and shifting basis of all social life. At the individual level we are aging continually, beginning at birth and throughout the life course. At the societal level cohorts are continually replacing each other, renewing the social institutions they populate. Aging is a process, and the dynamism it contributes to the structural functional perspective constitutes the core of Matilda White Riley's profound contribution to American sociology – this may be my idiosyncratic interpretation of her work but I really believe it.

Winter Editorial Reprint Continued...

However, on the other hand, I am aware that the term aging carries with it -- for some at least -- the strong connotation of *old age*. And while some of us in SALC also (and perfectly happily) consider ourselves gerontologists, we value our SALC identity precisely because it brings with it the perspective of the entire life course -- in other words, we know the difference. So what I'm concerned about is the identity of SALC for other ASA members. If students and new ASA members perceive our section to be exclusively, or even primarily, focused on old age, then we are misrepresenting our scholarship, and possibly harming the growth and development of our section.

So do we need to change the name of the section? Maybe, yes. Hence, I would like to propose an alternative name for the section that will meet both of my own values and concerns. I believe that this name will retain the element of dynamic change inherent in the verb-form, while also addressing the issue of age as a stratifying feature or social location relevant to every member of society. My proposal is that we rename the section the Section on *Aging, Cohorts, and the Life Course*. This new name would have the additional benefit of underscoring both the macro and micro levels of analysis that characterize the scholarship of our members, and bring the dimension of historical change to our identity.

So let us continue our discussion, begun at the meeting, by digital means -- an option not available to section members in 1995!

In order to fully air your thoughts, we will publish a special Spring SALC newsletter devoted entirely to this issue. The discussion can then be continued in the regular Summer newsletter, and/or on the Aging Announce listserv, prior to the annual meeting. We want everyone's thoughts on the subject of changing the name of the section, to

Age and the Life Course
 Age, Aging, and the Life Course
 Aging, Cohorts, and the Life Course
 Some other name
 OR not making a change at all!

Ellen Idler
 Chair, SALC

MEMBER PUBLICATIONS

Dale Dannefer (Case Western Reserve University) published an invited essay in *Contemporary Sociology* in November entitled "Age and Sociological Explanation: Expanding Horizons in the Study of Aging and the Life Course."

<http://csx.sagepub.com/content/42/6/793.pdf> extract

Deborah Carr (Rutgers University) has a new book coming out entitled *Worried Sick: How Stress Hurts Us and How to Bounce Back* (Rutgers University Press).

Comments like "I'm worried sick" convey the conventional wisdom that being "stressed out" will harm our health. Thousands of academic studies reveal that stressful life events (like a job loss), ongoing strains (like burdensome caregiving duties), and even daily hassles (like traffic jams on the commute to work) affect every aspect of our physical and emotional well-being. Why do some people withstand adversity without a scratch, while others fall ill or become emotionally despondent when faced with a seemingly minor hassle?

Worried Sick answers many questions about how stress gets under our skin, makes us sick, and how and why people cope with stress differently. Deborah Carr succinctly provides readers with key themes and contemporary research on the concept of stress. In addition to examining individuals' own sources of strength and vulnerability as an important step toward developing personal strategies to minimize stress and its unhealthy consequences, Carr looks at stressors that we face in everyday life which are symptoms of much larger, sweeping problems in contemporary society.

To readers interested in the broad range of chronic, acute, and daily life stressors facing Americans as well as those with an interest in the many ways that our physical and emotional health is shaped by our experiences, this brief book will provide a clear introduction to the issues. Included within are several stress and coping checklists, allowing readers to gauge their own stress levels.

MEMBER PUBLICATIONS

Madonna Harrington Meyer (Syracuse University) has published *Grandmothers at Work: Juggling families and Jobs*, NYU, 2014.

Young working mothers are not the only ones who are struggling to balance family life and careers. Many middle-aged American women face this dilemma as they provide routine childcare for their grandchildren while pursuing careers and trying to make ends meet. Employment among middle-aged women is at an all-time high. In the same way that women who reduce employment hours when raising their young children experience reductions in salary, savings, and public and private pensions, the mothers of those same women, as grandmothers, are rearranging hours to take care of their grandchildren, experiencing additional loss of salary and reduced old age pension accumulation. Madonna Harrington Meyer's Grandmothers at Work, based primarily on 48 in-depth interviews conducted in 2009-2012 with grandmothers who juggle working and minding their grandchildren, explores the strategies of, and impacts on, working grandmothers.

While all of the grandmothers in Harrington Meyer's book are pleased to spend time with their grandchildren, many are readjusting work schedules, using vacation and sick leave time, gutting retirement accounts, and postponing retirement to care for grandchildren. Some simply want to do this; others do it in part because they have more security and flexibility on the job than their daughters do at their relatively new jobs. Many are sequential grandmothers, caring for one grandchild after the other as they are born, in very intensive forms of grandmothering. Some also report that they are putting off retirement out of economic necessity, in part due to the amount of financial help they are providing their grandchildren. Finally, some are also caring for their frail older parents or ailing spouses just as intensively. Most expect to continue feeling the pinch of paid and unpaid work for many years before their retirement. Grandmothers at Work provides a unique perspective on a phenomenon faced by millions of women in America today.

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