

Carolina Consortium on Health, Inequalities, and Populations (CHIP) (re)presents at PAA2019

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Past and present converge on PAA 2019

The Population Association of America (PAA) is a scientific organization that promotes research on population issues. It is highly interdisciplinary, drawing from the fields of sociology, demography, public health, economics, and public policy, to name just a few. In April, PAA held its Annual Meeting in one of my favorite cities in the U.S.: Austin, Texas. I spent my sabbatical at the UT Population Research Center in 2015 and two of our current CHIP affiliates graduated from the UT Department of Sociology. More than just these past connections, we were also able to catch up with some former CHIP affiliates like Stephanie Child (UC Berkeley) and Jae Downing (OSSU). We had a blast re-connecting, meeting new people, and presenting our work.

How were CHIP affiliates involved at PAA 2019?

Current and former CHIP affiliates appeared 17 times on the PAA schedule! CHIP affiliates served as session organizers, session chairs, discussants, paper presenters, and poster presenters. Our work spanned the spectrum of population studies. We presented work that examined the effects of 1) out-of-sequence schooling on mothers' health, 2) early educational exposures on trajectories of cognitive functioning, 3) child-related educational debt on parents' mental health, 4) the role of religiosity on race-ethnic and gender differences in cognitive functioning, and 5) women's and men's childbearing intentions on U.S. fertility rates – and these are just a sampling of the topics presented.

PAA 2019 spanned three days of sessions, which included paper presentations, poster presentations, and flash sessions (5-minute talks followed by a poster reception).

First up, the Paper Presentations....

We had 9 papers presented at PAA in oral sessions. Here is a sampling...

I was excited to share my recent work that looked at how borrowing to pay for a child's college education impacted parents' mental health (w/Jennifer Ailshire (USC) and Caroline Hartnett (CHIP, UofSC)). For those of you with college-aged children, pay attention! We found that this debt had trade-offs. Dads who borrowed reported better mental health than dads who didn't borrow, but as the amount of that debt grew, dads reported worse mental health. Moms were not affected by this debt.

A former CHIP affiliate, Daniela Negraia, now at Max Plank in Germany, and her co-author presented in the same session as me (small world!). They wanted to know how moms and dads feel when they spend time with their children in various daily activities – that is, are they happy, stressed, etc., - and if the child's gender influences these reports. Moms and dads reported similar positive emotions, regardless of child's gender, but moms at times, reported feeling more stressed when interacting with their teenage daughters than their teenage sons.

In a session on using linked data sources, Calley Fisk, a CHIP doctoral student affiliate, presented findings from our study where we created a county-level school quality indicators database and linked it to RWJF's County Health Rankings Data. Counties that had higher levels of race-specific school segregation also had higher race-specific age-adjusted mortality. Calley did a great job presenting our paper – it was her first oral presentation and her session chair told me she was a “natural”. Awesome work, Calley!

Fertility is a big topic at PAA and our own Caroline Hartnett demonstrated her expertise in this area throughout the conference. In her first presentation, she examined the declining fertility rate in the U.S. and found that this decline reflects both a change in intentions – women are increasingly more likely to say they do not intend to have children during their lifetime and are also less likely to intend to have large families (4 or more children) – and a change in timing of births – some women are delaying when they have children and may “make-up” those births as they get older. But men are also part of the “declining fertility” story. In another session, Caroline found that men's declining fertility was driven mainly by changes in the number of births they expected to have during their lifetime.

There were so many more papers. . . Jennifer Augustine reported findings from her work on out-of-sequence schooling and mom's health (take away – no change in health for mom's who go back to college). I found that early educational experiences such as learning a foreign language, attending a segregated school, and having a learning problem as a child, were linked to cognitive functioning decades later even after accounting for older adults' educational attainment. Jaclyn Wong and her co-author

examined how imagined futures – ideal fertility versus expected fertility – are connected with future (un)intended pregnancy in Malawi.

And, now the Posters

Poster sessions are well-attended at PAA and our presenters did not disappoint. Stephanie Child, a HPEB alumna and former CHIP affiliate, presented work from a study she has been working on since she graduated from HPEB – the UC Berkeley Social Networks Study. She and her collaborators wanted to know how social networks affected sleep among young and older adults in the Bay Area. What caused sleep disruptions? A chronic break in a relationship and problems with work or school, but these associations seemed to be buffered by the availability of social companions and confidants.

My collaborative work with Connor Sheehan (ASU; first author) and Jennifer Ailshire (USC) also looked at sleep duration and sleep quality – and found that although higher levels of education reduced risk for short sleep and sleep problems among Whites, the direction of this relationship was the opposite for Blacks and Latinos.

Last, but definitely not least, Andrea Henderson wanted to know how cognitive functioning differed at the intersection of race/ethnicity *and* gender. Since she is a religion scholar, she was also interested in the potential buffering effects of religion. Cut to the chase...White men had the highest levels of cognitive functioning in older adulthood, Black women the lowest. But, as religiosity increased, cognitive functioning declined among White men, but improved among Black women. Hmm...why does religiosity provide some cognitive benefit to Black women, but not among White men? We are still working on the explanation...stay tuned.

And, that wrapped up another spectacular PAA!

What to get involved in CHIP? Visit our website to learn how and to find out more about us: <http://chip.sc.edu/get-involved>



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