



**Macrosystem Challenges to Lifespan Human Development:  
*Advancing Conceptualizations, Methodologies, and Strategic Responses***

**Society for the Study of Human Development 2021-22 Conference Series**

## **Program Details by Month**

### **JUNE DETAILS**

Monday & Tuesday, June 13-14, 2022 (All times: EDT; UTC-05:00)

#### **Conference Organization**

Individuals' developmental trajectories and outcomes are affected by personal characteristics, behaviors, and experiences. These individual qualities do not emerge in isolation, however. They are co-created as part of a dynamic system which involves the distal, overarching macrosystem, described by Bronfenbrenner (1994) as "a societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture [including] belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, life-styles, opportunity structures, hazards, and life course options." Macrosystems provide contexts for development, and do so differently across history, lifespans, and social groups.

Our contemporary macrosystem seems especially replete with threats. Some (like COVID) are newly emerging; others (like racism and environmental injustice) are long-standing, but increasingly visible to greater swaths of humankind. The theme of the SSHD 2021-22 Conference Series is designed to share and encourage scholarship that advances conceptualizations of macrosystem challenges; the methodologies that may be used to study them (e.g., new methods for data collection, analysis, or communication); or strategies that may be used to respond to such challenges (e.g., societal interventions, policies, or personal practices aimed at eliminating, reducing, or at least sidestepping negative consequences of a macrosystem threat).

The conference series is distributed across four months each having a Monday-Tuesday pair of events (Nov 1-2, Feb 7-8, April 4-5, June 13-14). Mondays contain Invited Keynote Sessions focused on a particular theme; Tuesdays provide SSHD-sponsored events plus accepted symposia and poster submissions addressing the theme of the SSHD Series, or SSHD interests more generally. Themes for Keynote Sessions are the following:

- NOVEMBER: Conceptualizing Macrosystems
- FEBRUARY: Community Macrosystems
- APRIL: Attitudinal Macrosystems
- **JUNE: Existential Challenges to the Macrosystem**

This document contains **JUNE MONDAY AND TUESDAY DETAILS**. An **abbreviated version of the entire Conference Series** is [here](https://sshdonline.org/21-22-series-program-at-a-glance/) (or paste this URL into a browser: <https://sshdonline.org/21-22-series-program-at-a-glance/>). All events are held on Zoom.

# Existential Challenges to the Macrosystem

*What existential challenges confront humankind and Earth? Do climate movies like [The Day After Tomorrow](#) or pandemic movies like [Contagion](#) inspire people to reduce carbon footprints and increase hand washing, to dismiss real threats as fantasy, or to cope in some other way? How can Earth, environmental, developmental, and learning scientists educate people to reduce or respond to existential challenges?*

## Invited Keynote Session

Monday, June 13, 2022, 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm (EDT: UTC-05:00)

### Overview

The SSHD President, **Lynn Liben**, will begin with a brief welcome to the June (and final) installment of the SSHD 2021-22 Conference Series. **Toni Antonucci** will then introduce the Keynote Session and its invited speakers.

The first presentation is a Keynote Address by **Roger M. Downs**, Professor of Geography at The Pennsylvania State University. He has made major empirical and conceptual contributions to the study of spatial thinking and representation (e.g., Chairing the National Research Council report on *Thinking Spatially*) and to geographic education through authoring, editing, and consulting on educational policies, curriculum, and assessment at federal, state, and local levels (e.g., as a lead author of the *National Geography Standards*). In his presentation, Downs will address the interplay among the developing mind, the environment, and the process of education. He will highlight two categories of contemporary existential threats—one *natural* (e.g., pandemics), and the other *anthropogenic* (e.g., human-induced climate change). He will argue that cognitive and emotional limitations make it challenging for individuals to deal with phenomena that are probabilistic, uncertain, and abstract. Motivated to identify what can be done to enhance understanding and responses to existential threats, he ends by discussing implications for education and demography.

The second presentation is the SSHD Presidential Address which will be delivered by the immediate Past President of the Society, **Carolyn Aldwin**, currently Professor of Human Development & Family Sciences and the Jo Anne Leonard Director of the Center for Healthy Aging Research at the Oregon State University. Her work is focused on one of the most salient existential challenges of our time—COVID. This pandemic is not merely a short-lived challenge. It is a challenge which has presented a collective, chronic trauma, ubiquitous throughout human ecology. As might be expected in light of her doctoral training in adult development and aging, Aldwin focuses especially on understanding how older individuals cope with stress. In her talk, she will also examine a developmental paradox: Medically, older individuals are most vulnerable to the pandemic, but psychologically, it is younger adults who appear to be the most vulnerable. The COVID pandemic thus affords a unique window for studying the interplay among developmental stages, ecological sources of stress, and adaptation.

As in prior Keynote Sessions of the SSHD Conference Series, the opening Keynotes are followed by invited presentations which illustrate related research and intervention programs. Given that the Presidential Address includes discussion of specific empirical work related to COVID (an example of a *natural* threat), the illustrations are focused on an *anthropogenic* threat-- climate change.

The first illustration will be presented by **Janet K. Swim**, a national and international leader in research and action on sustainability. In her academic work and action efforts, she uses her expertise in social psychology and environmental psychology to study adults' thoughts and emotions about climate change, and to examine the relevance of these factors for encouraging adults' climate-protecting behaviors and support for related policies. She will draw from studies in which she teaches others about climate change and environmental systems, and from studies in which she surveys adults of different cohorts (e.g., the Silent Generation and iGen'ers) about their environmental concepts, knowledge, emotions, and behaviors. She will discuss the importance of planning education and policies with attention to people's emotional responses to *specific* behaviors and policies, not just to people's responses to *abstract* environmental goals.

The second illustration will be presented by **Victoria Carr** who is also an expert on encouraging environmentally responsible behaviors. Carr's primary focus, however, is on young children rather than adults. She will draw illustrations first, from her academic research and teaching experiences as a faculty member in early childhood education and human development, and second, from her experiences as Executive Director of the Arlitt Center for Education, Research, and Sustainability, a center housing among the oldest early childhood laboratory schools in the United States. A major focus of her current work is on early childhood education for sustainability. She participates in the Transnational Dialogues on Early Childhood Education for Sustainability and, in collaboration with Australian and Swedish colleagues, is guest-editing a special issue on the UN Sustainable Development Goals for the *International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education*.

The four invited presentations will be followed by a ***Closing Discussion***, designed to encourage additional conversation among the speakers, moderators, and conference attendees. It will begin with brief comments from **Merry Bullock** who, as Secretary-General of the International Council of Psychologists, is well positioned to consider global challenges and strategies relevant to the presentations. She will then moderate questions, comments, and discussion involving the session's speakers and attendees (who may comment or ask questions via the Zoom Q&A function).

## Welcome & Introduction

Monday, June 13, 12:00 pm – 12:15 pm (EDT: UTC-05:00)

### Lynn S. Liben

*SSHD President: Conference Series Welcome*

Evan Pugh University Professor of Psychology, Human Development, and Education  
The Pennsylvania State University  
[liben@psu.edu](mailto:liben@psu.edu)

### Toni Antonucci

*Session Chair: Introduction to Keynote Session and Speakers*

Elizabeth R. Douvan Collegiate Professor, Department of Psychology  
University of Michigan  
[tca@umich.edu](mailto:tca@umich.edu)

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Monday, June 13, 12:15 pm – 1:15 pm (EDT: UTC-05:00)

### ***Human Development in a Time of Existential Threat: Understanding the Challenges***

### Roger M. Downs

Professor, Department of Geography  
College of the Earth and Mineral Sciences  
The Pennsylvania State University  
[rd7@psu.edu](mailto:rd7@psu.edu)

### ABSTRACT

For all practical purposes, Earth is the ultimate macrosystem. It is the home of humankind. The sustainability of that home is, however, open to question. The modern world faces multiple existential threats, *natural* (e.g., asteroid impact, vulcanism, ecosystem collapse and loss of biodiversity, pandemics) and *anthropogenic* (e.g., nuclear war, nuclear power plant meltdown, biogenetic manipulation of crops). Two threats stand out because of the degree of threat that they pose and because of the role that anthropogenic factors play in them: climate change is fundamentally anthropogenic, and the COVID pandemic is heavily shaped by anthropogenic factors. Whether, when, and how we choose to respond to these two existential threats will determine the future of human development. Why are we experiencing such difficulty in responding to these threats? I will argue that the difficulty arises from the challenge of understanding the spatial and temporal properties of climate change and the COVID pandemic. Cognitively and emotionally, we are not well-equipped to deal with phenomena that are probabilistic, uncertain, and abstract. What must we do to understand and respond to these two threats? I will close by discussing the implications for education and demography.

## **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

Monday, June 13, 1:15 pm – 2:15 pm (EDT: UTC-05:00)

### ***Developmental Perspectives on Vulnerability and Resilience during the COVID Pandemic***

**Carolyn Aldwin**

*SSHD Past President*

Professor of Human Development & Family Sciences  
Jo Anne Leonard Director of the Center for Healthy Aging Research  
Oregon State University  
[Carolyn.Aldwin@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Carolyn.Aldwin@oregonstate.edu)

#### **ABSTRACT**

Older adults were especially vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic, having much higher rates of mortality than younger adults. Thus, they were strongly urged and sometimes even forced to socially distance and to be in lockdown to prevent contagion, increasing the risk of social isolation and loneliness, with attendant adverse effects on health. However, research from our lab and that of others has shown that community-residing older adults were often surprisingly resilient to the stressful effects of COVID. Nearly all of the older adults we sampled identified stressful aspects of the pandemic, but a surprising two-thirds were able to identify positive aspects as well. Being able to contribute to the larger community was an important source of resilience for older adults. In contrast, younger adults have developed more psychological problems than older adults, as indicated by their sharp increase in mental health problems, including drug overdoses. Thus, we will explore possible reasons why this widespread, systemic trauma can have dramatically distinctive effects at different life stages.

## KEYNOTE ILLUSTRATION #1

Monday, June 13, 2:15 pm – 2:45 pm (EDT: UTC-05:00)

### *Adults' Thoughts and Emotions about Climate Challenges and Climate Solutions*

#### **Janet K. Swim**

Professor of Psychology; Director, Pro-environmental Action Group (PACT)

Chair of the Sustainability Council, College of the Liberal Arts

The Pennsylvania State University

[JSwim@psu.edu](mailto:JSwim@psu.edu)

#### **ABSTRACT**

While the general population has acknowledged the existence of climate change for decades, there is growing concern about the threat of climate change. This concern, often called climate change or eco-anxiety, while not a mental health diagnosis, is related to feelings of stress and, as such, considered a mental-health consequence of climate change. I explore generational differences in self-reported feelings about climate change over the last decade and associations between these feelings and talking about climate change, consistent with people using social support as means of coping with climate change. However, despite increasing concern, there is a gap between beliefs and feelings about climate change and acting to address climate change. To understand the gap and potentially bridge it, I consider adults' understanding and appreciation of interrelated human-environmental systems, their thoughts and feelings when contemplating pro-environmental actions, and their expectations about the consequences of individual and collective responses to climate change.

## KEYNOTE ILLUSTRATION #2

Monday, June 13, 2:45 pm – 3:15 pm (EDT: UTC-05:00)

### ***Appreciating and Sustaining the Natural Environment from the Start: Early Childhood Education for Sustainability***

#### **Victoria Carr**

Professor, School of Education  
Executive Director, Arlitt Center for Education, Research, & Sustainability  
University of Cincinnati  
[victoria.carr@uc.edu](mailto:victoria.carr@uc.edu)

#### **ABSTRACT**

Young children are inheriting a planet in crisis, but many teachers and caregivers are reluctant to acknowledge that children, specifically ages 3-5, can understand or act upon issues related to sustainability. Early Childhood Education for Sustainability, however, builds on children's inquiry and problem-solving, encouraging them to adopt an eco-centric worldview with transformational potential to build sustainable futures in ways that encourage children's agency with respect for their capabilities. For example, in nature environments, children can explore and investigate the web of relationships that occur in a more-than human world. Provocative nature pedagogies can distill sustainability-oriented constructs into theoretical, transformational, and relational practices that serve as models for lifelong learning. I will share pragmatic examples where nature experiences supported the development of children's ethical identities, opportunities to exercise executive function skills, and conditions for making pro-environmental choices. Pathways that transform social-environmental-economic-political systems begin early, calling for a significant ontological paradigm shift in early childhood

## CLOSING DISCUSSION

Monday, June 13, 3:15 pm – 4:00 pm (EDT: UTC-05:00)

#### **Merry Bullock**

*Discussant and Moderator*  
Secretary-General of the International Council of Psychologists  
[MerryBullock@mac.com](mailto:MerryBullock@mac.com)

*Participants*

**Carolyn Aldwin, Toni Antonucci, Victoria Carr, Roger Downs, Janet Swim  
Conference Attendees via Q&A**

**June SSHD Sponsored & Submitted Programs**  
**Tuesday, June 14, 2022, 10:30 am - 3:15 pm (EDT UTC-05:00)**

**PAPER SYMPOSIUM #1**  
**Tuesday, June 14, 10:30 am - 11:45 am (EDT UTC-05:00)**

**Developments of Personal Religions and Worldviews in Different Contexts:  
Concepts, Methods, and Current Research with a Mixed Methods Approach**

*Chair:*

**Heinz Streib**, *Bielefeld University*

*Discussant:*

**Monisha Pasupathi**, *University of Utah*

**Common Core? Ideographic and Nomothetic Evidence for Mystical Experience in  
Relationship to Religious Styles & Types**

**Ralph W. Hood Jr.**, *University of Tennessee at Chattanooga*

**Integrating Structure and Process in the Study of Religiosity, Spirituality and  
Worldview**

**Christopher Silver**, *University of Tennessee at Chattanooga*

**Negotiating Individual and Social Religious Identities and Worldviews in  
Autobiographical Interviews on Faith Development**

**Barbara Keller**, *Ramona Bullik*, & *Anika Steppacher*, *Bielefeld University*

**ABSTRACT**

The development of religiosities and worldviews across human lifespans is understudied in developmental psychology despite its potential to provide meaning or structure to individual lives and collective histories. Our longitudinal research program addresses individual and social development by studying both cognitive and emotional aspects of religiosity or worldview. Our basic concepts are mysticism and religious styles or types; our mixed methods combine nomothetic and idiographic perspectives using quantitative and qualitative methods. The symposium includes a series of presentations, each focused on particular components of our project. The first presenter examines ideographic and nomothetic evidence which connects mystical experience and religious styles. The second addresses integration of structure and process in the study of religiosity, spirituality, and worldview. The third draws rich narrative data from autobiographical interviews on the development of faith, and sheds light on how individual and social religious identities and worldviews are negotiated. The symposium will close with a discussant who will highlight and extend themes and methods used to follow religious developments in different cultural contexts, consider common concepts and characteristics, and engage efforts aimed at translation and dialog.



**JUNE POSTER SESSION**  
**Tuesday, June 14, 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm (EDT UTC–05:00)**

Posters are listed alphabetically by Last Name of First Author.

How financial scarcity contributes to executive function

*Claire Cameron, University at Buffalo and colleagues Jessica O'Neill, Lucia Leone, Heather Orom*

Resilience to stress across the lifespan

*Michelle A. Chen, Rice University and colleagues Robert Suchting, Julian F. Thayer, Christopher P. Fagundes*

Differential effects of maternal and paternal discipline on young children's ease of excitation

*Yayu Du, University of Rochester and colleagues Hannah Swerbenski, Melissa Sturge-Apple*

"Multiculturalism from below" in Japanese society

*Saki Kinnan, Sugiyama Jogakuen University and colleague Elhadidy Abdelrahim*

Newcomers in a Japanese Laboratory under COVID-19 Conditions

*Kasane Koizumi, Osaka University*

Body Mass Index and pubertal development among adolescents in Kosovo

*Elona Krasniqi, Palacky University Olomouc and colleagues Alexander T. Vazsonyi, Panajotis Cakirpaloglu & Miroslav Charvat*

Coping strategies contributing to mental health of higher education faculty

*Princy Quadros Mennella, Westfield State University and colleague Hui Zhang*

Impact of COVID-19 on family mealtime routines

*Hannah Mudrick, Pennsylvania State University Harrisburg and colleague Molly Pylypciw*

Schoolteachers' attitudes toward gender roles in Japan

*Akihito Nakamura, Osaka University*

The relationship between intentional motherhood and fatherhood versus enjoyment to first time parenting

*Clarielisa Ocampo, University of California at Irvine and colleagues Holly Cesena, Edwin Duran, Amada Cispres, Kayla Nunes, Stephanie Reich*

Well-being of early childhood intervention service providers

*Jillian Pierucci, St. Mary's University*

The moderating role of mentoring on critical consciousness and vocational identity

*Luke J. Rapa, Clemson University and colleagues Edmond P. Bowers, Candice W. Bolding*

How touchscreens change children's play: Contemporary artifact ecologies and child development

*Robin Samuelsson, Uppsala University*

Parental employment of cultural moments as socialization opportunities  
*Kingsley Schroeder, Springfield College and colleagues Lacey Hilliard, Jessica LaFontaine*

Cultural brokerage among American elementary school students: A social network analysis  
*Matthew Stapleton, Springfield College and colleague Hui Zhang*

The benefits of life stories to trauma research through an Ecological Perspective  
*Shira Taube-Dayan, University of Haifa*

An exploration of sexual harassment among Irish adolescents  
*Michelle Walsh, Rape Crisis Network Ireland and NUI Galway*

Romantic relationship beliefs and interest among emerging adult college students  
*Nicole K. Watkins, Wesleyan University and colleague Patricia M. Rodriguez Mosquera*

How does building relationships work in regular classrooms with paraprofessionals?  
*Yoshi Yamakawa, Osaka University*

Academic achievement and friendship networks of Chinese adolescents  
*Hui Zhang, Westfield State University and colleague Charles Matthew Stapleton*

**PAPER SYMPOSIUM #2**  
**Tuesday, June 14, 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm (EDT UTC-05:00)**

**Social Relations, COVID, and Well-being**

*Co-Chairs:*

**Toni C. Antonucci**, *University of Michigan*

**Kristine Ajrouch**, *Eastern Michigan University & University of Michigan*

**Social Disconnectedness and Links to Well-Being during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Noah J. Webster**, *University of Michigan*, **Simon Brauer**, *University of Michigan*, **Jess Francis**, *University of Michigan*

**The Psychosocial Impact of COVID-19 on Aging Arab Americans**

**Linda Sayed**, *Michigan State University*

**Calling to Check in: Changes in Social Contact During COVID-19 Pandemic in the United States**

**Ji Hyun Lee**, *University of Michigan*, **Martina Luchetti**, **Damaris Aschwanden**, **Amanda A. Sesker**, **Jason E. Strickhouser**, **Antonio Terracciano**, and **Angelina R. Sutin**, *Florida State University College of Medicine*

**The Relationship between Social Interaction and COVID-Related Stress among Older Adults**

**Rita Xiaochen Hu**, **Jasmine Cooper**, & **Toni C. Antonucci**, *University of Michigan*

**ABSTRACT**

These papers represent diverse samples with special attention to social relations and the COVID experience. Webster et al. examine how social disconnectedness prior to the pandemic influenced individual's pandemic experience. Results indicate a complicated relationship in that some forms of disconnectedness were associated with worse outcomes; while others, e.g., less rather than more confidants, was associated with better outcomes. Sayed focuses on older Arab Americans in Metro Detroit, particularly recent refugees and immigrants. She hypothesizes based on early work that this population is both most vulnerable and most negatively impacted by the COVID pandemic because familial and institutional support systems have been restricted or are no longer available. Hu and colleagues examine social interactions before and during COVID and their association with COVID-related stress. Using data from the Detroit Area Social Relations Study findings indicate that increased social interactions were positively related to stress at the beginning of COVID but negatively related with change in stress one year later. Similarly, people who report becoming closer to their family are less likely to become more stressed over the pandemic. Lee et al identified three social interactions profiles: slightly restricted in person/slightly more technology assisted interactions; high technology use group; isolated group, i.e., less in-person and technology assisted interactions. The first group reported the best mental health over time. The high technology group reported more depression and anxiety while the isolated group became lonelier. Findings indicate that social relations can help understand who and how people adjusted to the pandemic.

**Conference Farewell . . .with thanks, and with hopes for an increasingly equitable, peaceful, and sustainable macrosystem.**