

# Parental Alienation International

Connecting you with worldwide developments in Parental Alienation  
from the Parental Alienation Study Group

## pasg

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March 2017

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

– Margaret Mead

## Editorial

### **Are We Seeing An Inflection Point?**



IT IS ESPECIALLY HEARTENING to note the growing activity around the world in which the fight against parental alienation is the major focus. Networks led by and involving PASG members are actively working in the United Kingdom and in Europe to combat parental alienation. PASG members will be making presentations about parental alienation at parenting and family services conferences in Portugal and the USA. In particular, an inaugural international conference specifically on parental alienation will be held in Washington DC, USA 21-23 October 2017. Details of this conference may be found in this edition of the newsletter.

Furthermore, the PASG *Committee for Public and Professional Accountability* is undertaking market-based research to ascertain how professionals in fields concerned with parental alienation prefer to access information. With this knowledge, PASG will know which communications vehicles stand the best chances of being used, so that more information is noticed and absorbed by a variety of professionals. This will help improve education and reduce misinformation about parental alienation.

Perhaps we are seeing an inflection point in the development of social and clinical concern about parental alienation as an important cause for reform. Since Richard Gardner first formulated the concept of parental alienation in 1985, many years have been spent establishing the validity of parental alienation as a clinical concept, to the point in time in which diagnostic categories are now available that address aspects of parental alienation. The problem of parental alienation is being presented, increasingly, as an issue of concern in various public and professional forums, and the need for improved awareness and knowledge is commanding greater professional attention. Perhaps it is a sign of some maturation in our field that we are moving toward better education about parental alienation and increased motivation to change both attitudes and practices relating to this phenomenon.

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## Parental Alienation News

### **Help PASG Improve Education about Parental Alienation with 35 Minutes of Your Time**

PASG's *Committee for Public and Professional Accountability* is launching a market research study to learn how professionals prefer to access information in their work lives. The findings of the study will help the committee, and PASG members in general, better understand the most effective ways to communicate with professionals about PA/PAS-related concerns and information.

Judith Pilla, Chair of the *Committee for Public and Professional Accountability* (CPPA), who has many years experience as a professional scientific and healthcare qualitative researcher, will be interviewing:

- judges
- family law attorneys
- behavioral health providers
- custody evaluators
- legal researchers
- clinical researchers

Do you know professionals who would volunteer approximately 35 minutes of their time to participate in a confidential telephone interview? Participants do not have to be members of PASG nor have any experience with PA/PAS cases. Professionals who are *not* familiar with parental alienation from a professional standpoint are needed especially.

If you know anyone in your circle of professionals, or you are interested in participating in the study yourself, please contact Judith at [drjudithpilla@comcast.net](mailto:drjudithpilla@comcast.net). Thank you!

### **Report on the Board of Directors Meeting**

The Annual Meeting of the PASG Board of Directors occurred on January 29, 2017. The board discussed a range of topics, from finances to the upcoming October PASG conference.

The treasurer, Demosthenes Lorandos, reported that PASG received income during 2016 from several sources. During the course of the year, PASG members contributed about \$3,000 to the organization. Those funds are used for day-to-day operations such as the maintenance of the website and the Parental Alienation Database. We also received a donation from a PASG member that was specifically intended to support the First International Conference of PASG, which will occur in Washington, DC, in October 2017. In addition, we received a donation from a PASG member that was specifically intended to refute widespread and persistent misinformation regarding parental alienation.

Stan Korosi, Editor-in-Chief of *Parental Alienation International*, reported that Louis Pilla is the managing editor of the newsletter. Also, Abe Worenklein has agreed to be the book review editor for PAI.

The president, William Bernet, reported that the Parental Alienation Database was created in March 2016 in collaboration with the library of the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. The databank has about 1,200 entries and appears to be the most comprehensive bibliography in the world regarding parental alienation. PASG members are encouraged to check the entries regarding their own publications for completeness and accuracy.

William Bernet also reported that the First International Conference of PASG has been scheduled for October 21-23, 2017.

Judith Pilla, Chair of the *Committee for Public and Professional Accountability*, reported on a major initiative that is planned for 2017 to develop methods to counteract misinformation regarding parental alienation. As plans proceed, additional information will be provided to PASG members. However, members who want to make suggestions regarding this topic can contact Judith or other members of the Committee, i.e., Demosthenes Lorandos, Deirdre Rand, and Lena Hellblom Sjögren.

Richard S. Sauber resigned his position as secretary of the Board of Directors; Abe Worenklein agreed to take on the role. Also, Kathleen Reay resigned her position on the Board of Directors; J. Michael Bone has agreed to take that position on the Board of Directors.

## **PASG Members Will Participate in Events Worldwide**

Parental alienation is frequently a topic at national and international conferences for psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and other mental health and legal professionals. Many PASG members participate and make presentations regarding parental alienation at these events. *If you are speaking at any of these events and are not listed, please send an email to [louispkop@gmail.com](mailto:louispkop@gmail.com).*

**London, England:** Systemic Study of Parental Alienation, February 16, 2017. This meeting was organized by PASG member Nick Child. Participants included PASG members Patricia Barclay, Nick Child, Myrna Gower, Harriet Haworth, and Sue Whitcombe.

**Santa Maria da Feira, Portugal:** [VI Conferência Internacional Igualdade Parental Séc. XXI](#) (VI International Conference on Parental Equality 21st Century), March 21-22, 2017. Participants

include PASG members Edward Kruk and António José Fialho.

**San Diego, California:** American Psychiatric Association, May 20-24, 2017.

**Boston, Massachusetts:** International Conference on Shared Parenting, May 29-31, 2017. Presenters include PASG members Amy Baker, William Bernet, David Curl, Christine Giancarlo, Jorge Guerra Gonzáles, Jennifer Harman, Edward Kruk, Catherine MacWillie, Ian Maxwell, and Martin Widrig.

**Boston, Massachusetts:** Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, May 31 – June 3, 2017. Presenters include PASG members Amy Baker, Rebecca Bailey, and Steven Miller.

**Prague, Czech Republic:** International Congress on Law and Mental Health, July 9-14, 2017. Presenters include William Bernet, Michael Bone, Patrick Braden, Robert Evans, Linda Gottlieb, and Catherine MacWillie.

**Prague, Czech Republic:** European Network of Alienation Practitioners, July 11, 2017. This meeting is being organized by PASG member Karen Woodall.

**Washington, DC:** American Psychological Association, August 3-6, 2017.

**Washington, DC:** First International Conference of PASG, October 21-23, 2017. See additional information in this issue of PAI.

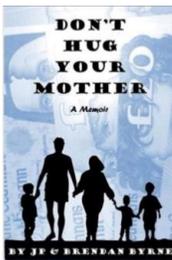
## **Parental Alienation News Roundup**

Here is a roundup of recent coverage of PA in the scholarly and popular press.

- In *Psychology Today*, PASG member Dr. Sue Whitcombe has written a letter about the need for psychologists in the **UK** to be more engaged with PA.

“Parental alienation is not yet universally well understood across the UK,” she writes in the monthly publication of The British Psychological Society,. “In order to ensure that the full spectrum of alienation cases is correctly identified and that appropriate, targeted interventions are offered at the earliest possible opportunity, is it time for us as psychologists in the UK to be more proactive?” The time is right, she says, to collaborate on providing services for children and family suffering from PA. See

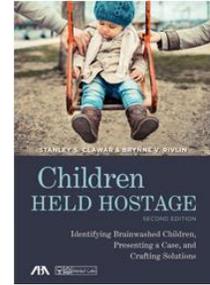
<https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/parental-alienation-time-make-difference>



- “Don’t Call Her Your Mother” is the title of a January 2017 article by Brendan Byrne published in *Village*, billed as Ireland’s political and cultural magazine. The article briefly recounts the alienation that Byrne and his brother, both PASG members, suffered at the hands of his father. As a result, the brothers had no contact with their mother for 18 years. The brothers are authors of the recently published [“Don’t Hug Your Mother.”](#)

- The role of cultural stereotypes, brainwashing and group dynamics are explored in [“The Zero Sum Game of Parental Alienation.”](#) a late-December Huffington blog post from noted author Traci L. Slatton. Slatton discusses a TEDx Talk by social psychologist Jennifer Harman, in which Harman explains how stereotypes such as the “deadbeat dad” enables fathers to be alienated from their children. Mothers, meanwhile, can be targeted as

“unmotherly.” “Parental alienation is unmitigated human aggression, and it is often one-sided,” writes Slatton. As for group dynamics, highlighting the targeted parent’s differences from a well-defined group can also be



used by alienating parents, Harman says as she reports on the book [“Children Held Hostage”](#) (Clavar and Rivlin, ABA Book Publishing). The targeted parent can be labeled as “not one of us.” “Everything must add to zero for the alienating parent,” writes Harman. “The winner gets the child’s affection and intimacy only to the extent that the target parent loses it.”

- In the UK, the head of Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service calls parental alienation “undoubtedly a form of neglect or child abuse in terms of the impact it can have.” Quoted in The Telegraph [\(Divorced Parents who Pit Children Against Former Partners ‘Guilty of Abuse’\)](#), Anthony Douglas estimates that PA is responsible for around 80 percent of the most difficult cases that come before family courts. The February 12, 2017 article also quotes Joanna Abrahams, a solicitor who specializes in PA, who says that there is growing recognition of the harm PA can cause. Abrahams spoke about PA recently on [BBC Radio 4](#). --By Louis Pilla, Managing Editor ([louispkop@gmail.com](mailto:louispkop@gmail.com))

## Feature Articles

### **First International PASG 2017 Conference Scheduled for October**

#### **Washington, DC event will address three themes**



**The Cosmos Club, Washington, DC**

PASG IS SCHEDULING ITS FIRST MAJOR CONFERENCE later this year. This event marks a major achievement for the organization.

The goal of the meeting is to develop specific plans that PASG will address over the next one to two years.

The three-day conference will occur October 21-23, 2017 at the [Cosmos Club](#), 2121 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington,

D.C. The Cosmos Club is a private social/ literary/scholarly organization, which makes available accommodations for members and their guests. Washington, D.C., is convenient for travelers from Europe and also for invited representatives from the National Institute of Mental Health, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Psychological Association.

#### **Three themes**

Each day of the conference will focus on a different theme. The program for each day will be developed and moderated by a leader in the field:

Day 1 – Saturday, October 21 – Educational programs for mental health practitioners, trainees, and the general public – Lena Hellblom Sjögren, Ph.D. ([mail@testimonia.se](mailto:mail@testimonia.se)).

Day 2 – Sunday October 22 – Research regarding the causes, diagnosis, and interventions for parental alienation – James S. Walker, Ph.D. ([jameswalker@neuroforensic.com](mailto:jameswalker@neuroforensic.com)).

Day 3 – Monday, October 23 – The use of parental alienation in legal settings and educational programs for attorneys and judges – Demosthenes Lorandos, Ph.D., J.D. ([d.lorandos@lorandoslaw.com](mailto:d.lorandos@lorandoslaw.com)).

The conference manager is William Bernet, M.D. ([william.bernet@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:william.bernet@vanderbilt.edu)), the president of PASG.

All members of PASG are invited to attend the conference. We will also invite other individuals who are researchers and writers regarding high-conflict child custody and parental alienation. Also, the leadership of relevant professional organizations or government agencies. The general public will not be invited to this conference.

## Schedule and Lodging

Morning events will occur from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Afternoon events will occur from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**The goal of the meeting is to develop specific plans that PASG will address over the next one to two years.**

With regard to meals, a complimentary breakfast will be available for participants who stay overnight at the Cosmos Club. Participants will make their own plans for lunch and dinner either at the Cosmos Club or in the neighborhood. The venue is within easy walking distance of Connecticut Avenue and Dupont Circle, an interesting, vibrant area of Washington, D.C.

Access the Documents area on the [Members section of the PASG website](#) for more information regarding the meeting location, daily schedule, individuals planning the program, lodging, and registration form. Scroll to the document titled **PASG – First International Conference – October 2017**. If you plan to attend, fill out the registration form promptly and mail it to William Bernet, 1313 Twenty-First Avenue South, 209 Oxford House, Nashville, TN 37232 or email it to [william.bernet@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:william.bernet@vanderbilt.edu). The registration fee is \$100.

If you would like to make a presentation at the conference, indicate that on the registration form.

Room reservations can be made by contacting [frontdesk@cosmosclub.org](mailto:frontdesk@cosmosclub.org). First, it is necessary to register for the conference using the attached form. The registration fee is \$100; **deadline for registration is July 31, 2017**.

After that date, registrants can visit the Cosmos Club website ([www.cosmosclub.org](http://www.cosmosclub.org)), select a room (starting at about \$200 per night), and contact the front desk to make the reservation and provide billing information. Also, several hotels are nearby, within one block of the Cosmos Club: The Fairfax at Embassy Row, The Baron Hotel, and the Embassy Row Hotel.

We look forward to a superior event! ■

# Developing Better Understanding of Parental Alienation in Germany

## Deutsche Kinderhilfe Workshop Signals Progress

*By Christiane Foerster, Dipl. Psych, Würzburg, Germany, [christiane\\_foerster@t-online.de](mailto:christiane_foerster@t-online.de)  
Editor: Germany, Austria, and Switzerland*

IN SEPTEMBER 2016, A SIGNIFICANT ADVANCE in the evolving understanding of parental alienation in Europe and particularly Germany occurred when the [Deutsche Kinderhilfe](#) supported a workshop about PA. Deutsche Kinderhilfe is an independent, non-partisan organization that works for children's rights and child protection. In the past, opposing views that discounted PA dominated parent-child relationship dialogues.

On September 13, 2016, the German "Kindergerechte Justiz" conference was held in the House of the Federal Press Conference in Berlin. PASG member Christiane Foerster delivered a workshop titled "Parent-Child Alienation: Identification, Understanding and Assessment."

The subject of this workshop was using scientifically accepted psychological constructs to show how children can be pathologically positioned against an emotionally available parent. An Attachment-Based Model of Parental Alienation<sup>1</sup> (Childress, 2015) was introduced. This theory proposes a pathological model of alienation based upon an alienating parent becoming a disease vector (a "pathogenic parent") by projecting their decompensated personality disorder through their children who are enmeshed in a harsh, rigid triangulated family system. The alienated children then model the decompensation, manifesting as commensurate attachment injuries that cause them to reject a normative parent without due cause.

The comments by lecturer and lawyer Professor Dr. Ludwig Salgo, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main in a lecture preceding the workshop, where he warned against ideologies, "... I am thinking here, for example, of the PAS<sup>2</sup>, which is not a scientifically recognized disease, ..." underlines the importance for professionals to explain the "PA" phenomena using scientifically accepted psychological constructs.

### Case studies

In the workshop, Foerster presented several case studies that demonstrate the long-term adverse implications of alienated children into their adult lives. The case studies show that alienation could be experienced as a lifelong adverse issue. The adults regret the absence of the parent whom they rejected and of the loss of their childhood and young adult period they did not have with the once alienated parent, which can never be recaptured (Boch-Galhau, W., 2012).

One case showed that adults who were alienated as a child by a parent demonstrated contact breaks with their rejected parents that lasted for years. This resulted in significant adverse psychological consequences to the adult alienated children well into adulthood.

### Würzburg study

The case vignettes were followed by results of an empirical study by the University of Würzburg (Hachenberg, 2014). The study compared the collected data from a sample with statements from adults who were "separation" children (ages 18-62). One group had experienced 'only' a conflicted parental separation as a child. This so-called non- "PA" group was compared with another group ("PA" group), which had also experienced parental alienation behavior. The

participants categorized in the "PA" group were always told by the raising parent that the other parent no longer loves them, is dangerous, etc.

**The adults regret the absence of the parent whom they rejected and of the loss of their childhood and young adult period they did not have with the once alienated parent, which can never be recaptured.**

In the "PA" group, significantly more mental disorders were reported and diagnosed, both during the separation phase and in later adult life. Some 85% of the participants had no later contact with the non-custodial parent (contact termination total sample: 35.6%). A quarter of the total sample reported a direct ban from the supporting parent.

The presentation closed with proposed questions about resolving rejected parents' requests for visitation rights in the context that the other parent was alienating the child. From a technical point of view, the following questions must be explained:

- A) Whether there are parental behaviors that alienate the child from the other parent ("parental alienation")
- B) If alienation behavior is identified on the adult level, it has to be determined who is alienating the child (source: caring parent – non-present parent - both parents - external sources in one or both parents' social environment.)<sup>3</sup>
- C) Whether the child is subsumed into the role the alienating parent projected upon them. This will be noted by a sudden refusal of the child to see the other parent

Responding appropriately to these questions may prevent a child terminating a relationship with a parent who has good parenting skills and who is emotionally available to the child.

The positive experience gained from Deutsche Kinderhilfe Organisation suggests that the organization could provide information on and advocate for the consequences, diagnosis, and intervention programs of parent-child alienation.

Following on from the conference, on October 4, 2016, on the International Day of Nonviolence, an online expert advisory service on the topic of parental child alienation was offered by PASG member Christian T. Dum. ■

### Sources

<sup>1</sup> Parental alienation is a set of interrelated observations of parents' and children's behavior that together describes the phenomena of parental rejection by alienation. However these observations do not offer a theoretical explanation for the occurrence of parental alienation or for the behaviors of the parents and children involved.

<sup>2</sup> PAS is parental alienation syndrome and is not yet recognized in DSM-5 or ICD-11 as a distinct diagnostic category. However, new categories are now available that may be applied to explain certain aspects of parental alienation.

<sup>3</sup> Other possible sources: new partners, siblings, half-siblings or other related parties.

## Further Reading

Childress, C. (2015). *An Attachment-Based Model of Parental Alienation*. Claremont, California: Oaksong Press.

Hachenberg, M. (2014). *Elterliche Entfremdung – Diagnose und mögliche Folgen [Parental Alienation – Diagnosis and possible Consequences]* Diploma thesis, Psychological Institute, University of Würzburg, Germany.

Boch-Galhau, W. (2012): *Parental Alienation und Parental Alienation Syndrome/Disorder – Eine ernst zu nehmende Form von psychischer Kindesmisshandlung – mit Fallbeispielen*. Berlin: VWB-Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung.

-siblings or other related parties.

### **Submit An Article to *PAI***

We welcome submissions to the newsletter, including news, case studies, pilot studies, literature reviews, announcements, research, research studies or proposals, advocacy, publicity, promotion, and requests for support or funding. Send your idea for an article to the [Editor in Chief](#) or the Editor in your region.

## Did You Know?

Each issue of PAI contains a question about parental alienation. The two-part question (and answer) from the January issue of PAI was:

**Q: The seminal paper by Richard Gardner, in which he described parental alienation syndrome, was published in 1985. What was the name of the publication in which the paper appeared?**

**A:** The name of the publication was *Academy Forum*.

**Q: Was that paper published in a peer-reviewed journal?**

**A:** No, the *Academy Forum* was not peer reviewed in the usual sense! At the time of publication, the *Academy Forum* was the newsletter of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry. The newsletter had an editor, who reviewed and approved articles for publication, but submissions were not reviewed blindly by a panel of editors. The original article by Gardner, "Recent Trends in Divorce and Custody Litigation," can be found in the Documents section, located in the Members Only part of [www.pasg.info](http://www.pasg.info).

*Here is the new two-part question. If you know the answer, send it to Stan Korosi at [info@dialogueingrowth.com.au](mailto:info@dialogueingrowth.com.au).*

**Q: In what country did the Supreme Court accept the reality of parental alienation?**

**Q: What was the name of the advocacy organization (founded by PASG members) that was involved in some way with that case?**

Submit a Puzzle: No doubt our readers can think of interesting and challenging questions that pertain in some way to parental alienation. Send your puzzle proposals (consisting of two questions, related in some way) to Stan Korosi.

## Books and Book Reviews

Please contact the [Editor-in-Chief](#) or the [Editor](#) in your region to include books or book reviews.

## Announcements

### Media Editor Needed for PAI

Your newsletter, *Parental Alienation International*, continues to develop and expand thanks to your increasing readership and interest. We want to keep bringing you more in-depth news, articles, analyses, and discussions about parental alienation. To this end, we need more volunteer help to supplement our regional editors in the form of a **Media-graphics-photo editor**.

*Parental Alienation International* visually conveys the PASG concept, and the themes of the newsletter across each edition, fostering recognition and a sense of affiliation between PASG members. The media-graphics-photo editor will be responsible to the managing editor for the graphics layout and design of Parental Alienation International as both an online and print publication. This person will be responsible for the appropriate graphics, photography, social and other media sources to support each edition. Furthermore, the media-graphics-photo editor will actively seek out media and photographic opportunities involving PASG members. If you are interested in these roles, contact [Editor-in-Chief, Stan Korosi](#).

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## Events

Please contact the [Editor in Chief](#) or the [Editor](#) in your region to list events.

## About the Parental Alienation Study Group (PASG)

### Mailing address

1313 Twenty-First Avenue South  
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### Who Are We?

Parental Alienation Study Group, Inc. (PASG) is an international, not-for-profit corporation. PASG has roughly 300 members – mostly mental health and legal professionals – from 40 countries. The members of PASG are interested in educating the general public, mental health clinicians, forensic practitioners, attorneys, and judges regarding parental alienation. PASG members are also interested in developing and promoting research on the causes, evaluation, and treatment of parental alienation.

### Board of Directors

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## Contributor Guidelines

**How to contribute:** Please send all your contributions to your local editor or to the editor-in-chief.

**Format:** Submit manuscript as a Word file (.doc, .docx ) as an email attachment.

**Style:** news, case studies, pilot studies, literature reviews, announcements, research, research studies or proposals, advocacy, publicity, promotion, requests for support or funding.

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**Editorial Policy:** PASG seeks to lead and promote the scholarly discussion and debate concerning Parental Alienation practice, research, education and advocacy to promote development of informed practice and policy in this field.

Articles may be subject to editing. Authors will be consulted and will be sent their final article for proofing and approval prior to publication.

The editorial team may solicit information

and articles for publication and will appropriately consult contributors about the article to be prepared based upon their contribution.

Contributors may submit articles or links to articles that are already published or considered elsewhere. It is the responsibility of contributors to obtain the necessary permission where required to submit their article to *Parental Alienation International* and to appropriately acknowledge prior publication.

The PASG retains the final decision of the suitability of articles and which articles are selected for publication in *Parental Alienation International*.

### Advertising and Editorial

PASG will maintain differentiation between advertising content and editorial content. *Parental Alienation International* will not publish 'advertorial' material.

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