The 2006 Summer Meetings in Montréal make a fitting follow-up to our Winter Meetings in San Juan, because of some of the similarities between the two places. For example both places have experienced important nationalist movements, have beautiful old historic districts, and many citizens of Québec Province or Puerto Rico feel that the English language and features of English Canadian or U.S. culture, respectively, have been thrust upon them. Come early to learn about this city and the Province's culture and history!

The Summer SWS meetings will open early this year, as we co-sponsor a joint reception and dance with ABS at 6pm on Thursday night August 10th, to be held at the Plaza Hotel Downtown, which is the ABS headquarters. And, we will close with our SWS banquet and awards on Sunday night August 13th from 7-10pm, which will be held at the Restaurant du Vieux Port located in Old Montréal at 39 Rue St. Paul East-close to the river and an easy walk from the Convention Center. This schedule means that we initiate and conclude our meetings with enjoyable social events, while holding many interesting SWS sessions in the intervening days.

We have several co-sponsored and co-operative sessions with other groups. For example, Marianne Noh and the Student Concerns Committee have worked with their counterparts in ABS and Sociologists without Borders (SSF) to organize a "Student Roundtable Paper Sessions: Emerging Scholarship in Sociology," which will be held on Friday, August 11. I also have invited Walda Katz Fishman and others from SSF to present a session for us entitled "Building the Global Justice Movement in the U.S. from the Bottom Up: Join the US Social Forum Process." In addition, there is a co-sponsored SWS/SSF session on the ASA program, organized by Cathy Zimmer, on "Feminism and Human Rights."

The SWS Feminist Lecture will be given by Michael Messner on Saturday, August 12, at 10:30am and is engagingly titled "Acting the Part: The Masculinity of the Governor," We hope that this timing, so centrally placed within our meetings, will allow many to attend.

In addition, our Committees have created other sessions including "The Dissertation Process: Things You Need to Know but Were Afraid to Ask," organized by Astrid Eich-Krohm for the Student Concerns Committee, and "How to Publish Your Dissertation as a Book," organized by Julie Shayne, Meika Loew, and Laura Carpenter for the Career Development Committee.

As always, most of our committees will be holding their own working meetings on Friday and Saturday, while items of current concern to all SWS'ers will be considered at the Business Meeting on Sunday, August 13. Among the items on the business meeting agenda are a report from the ad hoc IT Committee on updating our web site, requests for new Standing Committees, and discussions of how to use our new monies from Sage, perhaps creating a Woman of Color Scholarship.

Pre-register for the SWS meetings now and sign up for the banquet by checking the form on the SWS website! All of our SWS sessions will be held in rooms located at the Convention Center, one of which will be our hospitality suite and the other will be reserved for panels and meetings-look for us there, rather than in the conference hotels.
President's Message:

**Immigration "Reform": Gender, Migration, Citizenship and SWS**

By: Christine E. Bose  
SWS President

As I write this President's Message in late Spring 2006, there have been many demonstrations all over the United States against the various provisions of Congressional proposals for an immigration reform act. Those in favor of a conservative reform try to argue that immigrants are "parasites," a threat to national unity, or pose post-911 security concerns. The opposition has provided data undermining these claims and has made demands that include immigrants' full rights and access to education, health care, and other social services; no deportations or discrimination against immigrants; no criminalization of immigrants or those giving aid to them; resistance to the vigilante tactics of the Minutemen or other anti-immigrant groups; and support for an amnesty program to legalize undocumented workers who are currently in the United States.

I imagine that many SWS members have participated in some of the spring 2006 pro-immigrant demonstrations and teach-ins, including the May 1st "Day Without an Immigrant" strike. Many of us also have joined forces with our colleagues in Sociologists without Borders (Sociólogos sin Fronteras or SSF) to address these issues.

How, as feminist sociologists, do we construct immigration issues? First, we need to remember that immigration to the United States is not new, but now has reached levels previously achieved only in the 1880-1920 period. Unfortunately, then as now, there were anti-immigration or anti-immigrant demonstrations and legal reforms that resulted in the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and the Immigration Acts of 1921, 1924, and 1929, which vastly restricted European immigration. These laws represented a retreat from globalization; a national acquiescence to prejudice and intolerance; and an affront to the basic fabric of a nation built by the labor of many immigrant nationalities.

Second, we should keep in mind that contemporary immigration concerns are not unique to the United States. For example, the uprisings across France last fall, sparked by refusals to permit Muslim girls to wear a veil at school, demonstrated Europe's difficulties in incorporating its Islamic populations. Furthermore, as illustrated by several articles in *Gender & Society*, nations as diverse as Taiwan (Cheng 2003) and Israel (Raijman et al. 2003) have been restricting citizenship rights and immigration in order to control their labor force and to maintain their current racial-ethnic composition or ethnoscape. Of course, just because immigration restrictions are common internationally, does not mean that they are desirable or just.

Many nations have legislation that formally creates a migrant underclass, by recruiting workers from a limited number of developing countries to be hired in limited types of low-wage service, agricultural, or construction work, and often on a limited time contract. Increasingly, those workers are women transnational migrants—women that the receiving country does not want to have stay, marry local residents, have children, or mix in. In essence, this is a transnational "temp service," with no national obligations to the workers who must eventually return to their home countries. This model is one that U.S. conservatives and other anti-immigrant groups would like to follow here.

The anti-immigration argument is founded on many faulty assumptions—the most commonly cited myth is that immigrants cost considerable money in services and contribute nothing towards funding those services. Another myth, less often mentioned, is the sanctity and permanency of U.S. borders. Anti-immigrant rights advocates often forget that the current official southern border was created after the U.S. provoked a war with Mexico in the mid-1840s in order to take over Mexican territory, and the U.S. victory created "immigrant" Mexicans who instantly became U.S. residents, without moving at all. Immigration from other Latin American and Caribbean countries also has been influenced by conditions created by the consequences of a long history of U.S. economic and political intervention in some of these nations, such as the Dominican Republic, Chile, or Nicaragua, or by the economic restructuring dominated by major industrial powers.

There are many contradictions in the anti-immigrant arguments. For example, in signing free trade agreements like NAFTA or CAFTA, the U.S. government expects Latin American and Caribbean countries to open their national markets and foster outside (e.g. U.S.) capital investment, but at the same time these U.S. proponents do not want to see the open flow of labor. This is not just a political contradiction—it ignores the fact that capital and markets would not function without those workers, although government policies refuse officially to acknowledge this necessity. Transnational migrants leave their home countries in search of work because neo-liberal policies contribute to drying up jobs there; they come to developed countries to take on the lowest wage jobs in the economy; and often send much of their earnings back home as remittances to make up for the income lost to their families through International Monetary Fund or World Bank-mandated export-led economies. This labor flow dynamic is similar, whether workers from a particular country are documented or not.

Although many voices supporting or opposing changes in immigration laws are couched in gender-neutral terms, the reality is not gender-neutral. Worldwide, half of those who migrate for work are women, often traveling alone and leaving their children behind in their home country, only to perform transnational, long-distance, motherhood for their own families (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parreñas 2000). In other cases, men migrate by themselves in search of work,
President’s Message...continued on page 3 rendering their wives de facto single mothers for extensive periods of time. How can we use feminist sociology to help? I want to remind you that SWS publishes important and useful research on many of the gendered concerns related to transnational migration and citizenship rights. This is research that we should all be familiar with. Therefore, instead of a traditional bibliography for this essay, I have compiled a list of articles published in *Gender & Society* from February 1995 through June 2006 that address immigration or migration issues in the United States and elsewhere, with the hope that we use our own SWS-materials in teaching, writing newspaper articles, or in other forms of public sociology. I also urge us to continue addressing gendered migration and immigration issues, and to use this list not only for education, but to do the research that will fill gaps in our knowledge of gender, migration, and citizenship.

**Bibliography of Gender & Society Articles on (In)migrants or (In)migration from 1995 through June 2006**


Winter Business Meeting Minutes and Committee Reports Continued

Membership Committee Report

By: Cathy Zimmer
Chair

2006 Winter Meeting
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Committee Members: Cathy Zimmer, Chair (2/07), Marianne Noh, Student Representative; Mary Bernstein, Secretary; Marita McComiskey, Listserv Manager; Heather Laube (2/07); Mary Virnoche (2/07); Anastasia Prokos (2/08); Elizabeth Sheff (2/08)

The Membership Committee has been very active since our last meeting. Thanks to all the committee members for the great work they have done! Special thanks to outgoing members Patti Giuffre, who organized the Hand Program over the last year, and Marcia Texler Segal, who made efforts to recruit and retain retired sociologists in our ranks. We welcome new members, Ana Prokos and Elizabeth Sheff.

As of the end of 2005, we had approximately 1000 members in SWS. However, as of the beginning of these meetings we have only 550 members. We encourage all members to renew their memberships annually as early as possible. The best incentive of all for renewing is that you cannot get SWS travel reimbursement without being a member in good standing. And we want new members to join us - there can never be too many feminists in one place - so take those brochures and put them in students’ and colleagues’ mailbox-es!

To make us more visible as SWS members at the Summer Meetings held in conjunction with the ASA, we have ordered new ribbons. New members (those who join SWS for the first time at a Summer Meeting) will be given lavender ribbons, continuing members will be given purple ribbons, and finally, the Minority Fellowship Program winner will be given a silver ribbon.

Our complete budget request for the year is $800 ($525 for regional/local chapters and $275 for miscellaneous committee expenses).

A. Hand Program: There was no Hand Program at these meetings. However, at all future meetings (Summer and Winter) we will make matches between senior and junior members. Our new Hand Program coordinators are Elizabeth Sheff and Ana Prokos. They will contact Patti Giuffre for information and advice about making matches.

B. The Minority Fellowship Program (MFP): Heather Laube remains the MFP coordinator this year. She let us know that we are able to nominate graduate students for the MFP. However, we did not know this in time to do so this year. Next year a call will be put out for nominees after ASA puts out its call.

C. Chapter Updates: Mary Virnoche keeps track of the regional/local chapters for the Membership Committee. NetworkNews continues to have contact information for the local and regional chapters. Her report appeared in the last issue of NetworkNews (Spring 2006, volume XXIII, no. 1). This year regional and local chapters requested $525 to support their activities.

D. Gift Memberships: A gift certificate template for a year’s SWS membership, designed by Mary Virnoche, remains on the web so copies can be downloaded (http://newmedia.colorado.edu/~socwomen/giftcert.html). Use them to congratulate a student on completing a degree or getting a job! Give them to your colleagues so they can be part of the best organization around!

Marianne Noh will work with the new EO, Jessica Sherwood, to consider whether there can be a check box for giving a gift membership on our membership form. Once a member checks off the box and pays for the membership, the EO can send a letter and certificate to the lucky new member.

One other new gift membership program is one that was established several years ago, but never implemented. Any SWS member, who has maintained membership for three consecutive years, may give a gift membership for no cost. We will initiate this new program this year, so those with continuous membership in 2006, 2007 and 2008 will be eligible to give free gift memberships.

E. Retired Members: Marcia Texler Segal wants to keep retiring members in the fold. Even though she has rotated off of the Membership Committee, she is working on ways to provide consulting opportunity information to retired members. Marcia wants to hear from others who have retired or who are thinking of retiring soon about how the Membership Committee can help them. Her email address is msegal@ius.edu - get in touch!

Task Force on Feminist Transformation of the Academy

By: Abby Ferber and Danielle Currier

The Taskforce has completed the following projects:

1) "Report Card on Gender- and Women-Friendly Sociology Departments" (by Sharon Hays and Barbara Risman)

2) "A Guide to Organizations and Websites Addressing Issues Facing Women in Academia" (by Ronnie Tichenor and Abby Ferber). This guide is on the SWS website, and needs to be constantly updated.

3) "Gender and the Evaluation of Teaching" Report and recommendations completed and now on the website. Additionally, two journal publications are forthcoming from this research (by Kelley Massoni, Joey Sprague, Heather Laube, and Abby Ferber and Heather Laube). Additionally, we proposed a position statement, which was adopted by SWS and appears on the website.

Other points of Discussion:

1. Race was an underlying theme in our...continued on page 6
People and Places

Cindy Anderson has accepted a position in the department of Sociology at Ohio University and will be relocating there this summer.

Pamela Aronson started a new position as Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan-Dearborn in Fall 2005.

Rebecca Bach, Duke University, was recently awarded a Community Action Research Initiative (CARI) grant from the American Sociological Association’s Spivack Program in Applied Social Research and Social Policy. The grant will be used to fund a study of the experience of motherhood among women in violent domestic relationships to be conducted in partnership with the Durham Crisis Response Center. The results of the research will be utilized by the Durham Crisis Response Center to inform the development of appropriate intervention programming.

Lisa D. Brush, University of Pittsburgh, was a recipient of the 2006 New Person Award from the Thomas Merton Center. The New Person Award honors local activists with a commitment to peace and justice. The theme for this year’s award was "Celebrating Academic Freedom: Honoring Activism in Academia." Lisa was recognized both for her research on battered women, poverty, and welfare reform and for her testimony (delivered in her role as President of United Faculty/AAUP local chapter) in support of academic freedom at the hearings held before the Pennsylvania Select Committee investigating "liberal bias" in higher education. She has recovered from her McCarthyism flashbacks.

Leslie Hossfeld, University of North Carolina Wilmington, received the Center for Community Action 25th Anniversary Award for Outstanding Leadership and Contributions to the Well-Being of Community Life. The award was given in the area of the Economy, "For Research Demonstrating that the Economic Pain Felt in the County is not just in our minds and not beyond our power to change."

Susan W. Hinze, Associate Professor of Sociology, won the USG Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Award in the College of Arts & Sciences at Case Western Reserve University.

Anne Lincoln has accepted a tenure-track assistant professor position in the Department of Sociology at Southern Methodist University.

Stephanie Nawyn completed her Ph.D. at the University of Southern California and begins an assistant professor position at Michigan State University in the fall.

Diane Kholos Wysocki has been promoted to Full Professor of Sociology at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.


Race Gender and Class Solidarity Across Borders: Natural and Social Catastrophes

By: Manisha Desai, SWS President Elect

The 2007 Race, Gender & Class Annual Conference will be in New Orleans from Feb 1-4 organized in solidarity with Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS) and the SUNO/UNO Race, Gender & Class Project. The meeting will be held at the University of New Orleans Conference Center located in the Hampton Inn, Downtown/French Quarter Area. We have reserved rooms at the Hampton Inn. The room rates are $129 for single/double and no extra charge for 3rd and 4th persons. All reservations must be made no later than 01/02/07.

Please reserve your rooms as early as possible as we have two sets of members and we might need to reserve more rooms. Guest room reservations are to be made by individually calling 1-866-311-1200 toll free or 504-529-9990 and requesting the group code (SUNO - coded in the reservations computer) and the dates. Reservations may be made by visiting www.nerworleanshamptoninns.com; find the location and type the group code (SUNO).

The theme of the meeting will be RGC Solidarity across Borders: Natural and Social Catastrophes. We will be putting together plenaries that will focus on natural and social disasters across borders. For example, Hurricane Katrina has been called one of the worst natural disasters on US soil. The aftermath of the storm uncovered human-made disasters of equal magnitude. As the world watched, the economic, political, and social systems of the US were exposed and amid this chaos glaring questions about RGC social inequality arose. This Conference proposes to examine these issues across borders (US, Latin America, Asia…).

This is a call for proposals for sessions, names of possible speakers, as well as volunteers to help organize the meeting. As always, the success of our meeting depends on our solidarities. We are looking forward to a flood of emails in the weeks to come.

1) Race, Gender & Class Contact Person: Jean Ait Belkhir, ASA RGC Chair, Southern University at New Orleans, North Main Campus, Department of Social Sciences, New Orleans, LA,70126 Ph 504 280 5468, Fax: 504 280 6302, email jbelkhir@sunou.edu or jbelkhir@uno.edu

2) SWS Contact Person: Manisha Desai, SWS President Elect University of Illinois, 227 Lincoln Hall 702 South Wright Street, Urbana, IL 61801(217) 244-7942, fax: (217) 333-5225, Email: mkdesai@uiuc.edu
Winter Business Meeting Minutes and Committee Reports Continued

...continued from page 4 discussions. Consider co-sponsoring something with the Sister-to-Sister committee. Is there a way for us to organize some "interventions" to deal with issues that are going on within SWS itself? Have a committee that is there for mediation, to focus on issues internal to SWS. Organize a panel session on race.

2. Agreed there is an ongoing need for this Taskforce. How do we differentiate the activities of our Taskforce from the career development committee? We agreed that we are focused on structural changes. We will work on developing a mission statement and agenda.

3. We want to find out what the status of women in academia is. If ASA is collecting the information on people who do gender, we need to see what they are doing and not reproduce it, but get access to that information and see what we can add for them to ask when they do their survey information.

4. Discussion of the issue of attending ASA meetings, serving on ASA Committees, and paying for the conference. For many, it is too much money when you take into consideration all the other organizations that we belong to and the other conferences we go to. If we want more women serving on ASA committees, maybe we could get money to support them getting to meetings and compensating them for doing that kind of service. We need to get information from people who have served on ASA committees about what that looks like. What are the costs and benefits. How much travel? How much money? Where is a good place to start? How do you get your name to the right people? Need to let women know how to actually get involved.

5. Tammy brought up the issue that there wasn't a space for her to breast pump at ASA. They offered her unacceptable options that ended up being very public.

6. The following project remains uncompleted: How to find a gender- and family-friendly academic environment and university (Beth Rushing and Kathy Felty?)

Future priorities:

Making this work more accessible and visible. We discussed how to get it on the website in a more accessible and user-friendly way. Additionally, we need to find a way to make sure these reports are "advertised" more so that people can use them in tenure discussions, when talking to journalists, etc.

Recommendations:

1. Create more of an identity on the website. Have a "live link" to email this committee with suggestions and questions.

2. Dissemination: Make contacts with other organizations also working on women in higher education, and contact other disciplines that also deal with women's issues. Laura Carpenter is currently compiling a comprehensive list of organizations that we would like to begin networking with. Send information about SWS fact sheets and other materials to the various list serves we are all on (Teaching Sociology, grad students)

What are the gaps that need to be filled in with the list that Laura did on women's organizations?

Laura is going to write a draft of the letter that will go to the women's organizations in other disciplines. In contact letter, we will ask what issues women in that discipline are facing. Give a summary of what SWS is. We're contacting them to see if there are commonalities between women's organizations and if there are ways to build bridges to help each other and not reinvent the wheel. We can't transform the academy as one discipline alone.

3. Periodic news releases? We recommend SWS hire a public information officer (a paid position) who can disseminate this research and get the word out about it.

Future possible sessions we would like to organize:

1. Susan Ferguson suggested we have a session about professional ethics. Planning this for winter 07, Gail Murphy-Geiss will organize. Ferguson suggested this could be very important to those of us who are at teaching universities because there is a catch-22 involved that we are supposed to be more personal with students, yet they we open ourselves up to being accused to being unprofessional or crossing boundaries.

2. Institutional "best practices"

It's a cyclical problem - women don't get the institutional support from the beginning, from the Master's level to the Dissertation level, to the assistant professor, etc. Then we don't have the confidence, feel like a fraud, then our work doesn't get awards because we don't get nominated as much as men, etc. etc. We need look at places where things ARE working and compile a list of what those things are.

3. Continue with the "culture of silence" forums, to continue to provide a formal outlet for these discussions.

Members’ Bookshelf

Global Dimensions of Gender and Carework

By Mary K. Zimmerman, Jacquelyn S. Litt, and Christine E. Bose
2006, Stanford University Press

Why are women such prominent workers in the global marketplace? Why do so many perform jobs that involve carework? What political forces have made these women key partici- pants in globalization? What are the consequences for the women themselves, for their families, and for societies and international relations in general?

This book offers a provocative examination of globalization, examining the lives of the women at the center of these new global dynamics. Arguing that society is facing multiple crises of care, the authors develop a new framework for understanding the interplay of globalization, gender, and carework. In four original essays, they examine gender, race, and class inequality; migration, citizenship, and the politics of social control; the evolving meanings of motherhood; and new social definitions of carework and the personal transformation of careworkers. Excerpts from the classic works in the field as well as recent cutting-edge research studies support the examination of each of these growing global crises.
The Student Listserv will be implemented at the 2007 winter meeting and may include ways to include students in these committee activities. This will be proposed at the meeting in Montreal. As mentioned above, the transition process into position and the number of positions on the Student Concerns committee have been suggested. The second issue is the idea of increasing student-focused activities at the winter meetings. Thank you Amrita Pande, Rachel Kaish, Kat Jones, and Marcia Hernandez for your input.

2006 Summer Meeting: Upcoming

The Dissertation Process: Things You Need to Know, but Haven't Wanted to Ask Astrid Eich-Krohm is organizing a session where senior students will present their experiences, knowledge, and advice on various topics relevant to succeeding the dissertation. The session will be particularly useful for students entering the dissertation process or thinking about the PhD program. The topics that are expected to be covered include choosing a dissertation topic, choosing committee members, proposal writing, the dissertation defense, and innovative research methods. We are excited about this student-focused session and expect it to be well-informed.

Emerging Scholarship in Sociology

Due to the success of last year's ABS-SWS session, Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS), Sociologists without Borders (SSF), and Association of Black Sociologists (ABS) are co-sponsoring another student roundtable. Emerging Scholarship in Sociology will feature research by students who are in varying stages of their academic career. This session will provide presenters an opportunity to discuss research interests, plans, and goals with others placed at various stages of their own research plans. The main purpose of this session is to create a comfortable and inviting environment where relationships among students with similar research interests can be established. Please contact Marianne Noh (mnn1@uakron.edu) with questions or interests in participating. The other session organizers are Suzanne Slusser, Dave Overfelt, and Regina Dixon-Reeves.

A Student Happy Hour

Student happy hours tend to receive positive feedback and students are expressing a great interest in maintaining this event. The tentative plan is to hold the happy hour before ASA receptions in a conference hotel bar/lounge. Students may expect to engage in getting to know fellow SWSeers, discussing student-relevant topics, and partnering up with others to attend ASA receptions.

I would like to express a special thanks to Marlese Durr for increasing the proposed budget for the Student Concerns committee from $500 to $1000. The new, larger, budget is specifically intended to fund a successful happy hour. I would also like to thank Julie Hartmann, Suzanne Slusser and Aya Kimura for their help in planning this event.

Closing Remarks

Finally, I would like to thank Marcia Hernandez, Nancy Miller, and Chris Bose for answering my questions and easing my concerns. I really appreciate their guidance and selflessness while helping the Student Concerns committee this year.

Opportunities to Participate

The Carework Network will host a reception for US and Canadian carework researchers and advocates during the ASA meetings in Montreal. SWSeers interested in carework are invited to attend. The date and time will be announced on the Network's website, www.carework-network.org. Please check within the next few weeks for details.
It Takes a Department: Faculty Experiences of Arranging a Parental Leave

By: Marjukka Ollilainen
Weber State University

A recently published ASA Research Brief asks, when is "The Best Time to Have a Baby" (Spalter-Roth, Kennelly, and Erskine, 2004) during an academic career. It concludes that perhaps there is no best time but that the experience of faculty parenting can be facilitated, among other things, by institutional resources and family-friendly policies. Such resources and policies are at the center of the current discussion on how universities should deal with the increasing number of women faculty in tenure track positions who also plan families. While there are parental leave policies currently in place in some U.S. universities and colleges, many institutions still rely on makeshift practices and individual arrangements.

Two years ago, I conducted a small study to find what kind of faculty parental leave policies and practices exist in universities and to capture the variety of strategies that faculty members use to arrange a parental leave in the absence of a formal institutional policy. I posted a short survey on the SWS-Listserv to gauge the policies among our members' institutions and encouraged list members to share the survey with anyone "qualified" to respond; that is, if they had a child (born or adopted) during their academic career. In this essay, I discuss some experiences from the 22 responses I received.

My position is that a formal policy that facilitates caregiving among faculty is critical for undoing gender inequalities in the academy. Thus far, few faculty mothers (or fathers) have been able to rely on a university-wide parental leave policy. As a consequence, women faculty members in the past have solved the problem through individual means, without policy intervention. For example, they have timed a birth or an adoption to occur during a school break, returned to the classroom soon after delivery, or forgone motherhood altogether (Wilson, 1999). Although timing a vacation birth may enable women faculty to start a family without disturbing their work, timing attempts are often unsuccessful. Giving birth or adopting during the school year will interrupt teaching and course work. Babies born in the middle of a typically 15-week semester often also complicate the use of the typical six-week maternity leave (Thornton 2003). Therefore, a parental leave policy could potentially help clarify the boundaries between the home and the academic workplace and to help new parents carve out space and time for child care in the early stages of parenthood.

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Policies and protections

The most important legal protections for employed women everywhere, including academe, are the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) of 1978 (which is an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) and the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. In academic work, the former protects a pregnant woman's right to perform her work tasks and her ability to be granted child rearing leave "on terms at least as favorable as those that apply to other types of non-occupational, short-term, medical disability leave" (Thornton, 2003: 162). The FMLA guarantees (with some notable exceptions) protection from job loss for faculty when they take (a maximum of) twelve weeks of unpaid family leave in a twelve-month period.

However, U.S. colleges and universities show varying degrees of compliance with the Title VII and the PDA and some of them clearly fall short of the required benefits. Thornton's (2003) study of maternity leave policies in 81 randomly selected four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. found that maternity policies in 28 (34%) of them "were actually non-compliant or had a high probability of being non-compliant in their implementation" of Title VII and the PDA (Thornton, 2003: 177). What is crucial about these findings is that the "potentially non-compliant" schools are often those universities and colleges where administrators (department chair, dean, or president) without appropriate training implement maternity leave benefits, which increases risk of not complying with the mandates of Title VII. Therefore, Thornton's study also provides an impetus for further examination of real-life situations where academic parents-to-be negotiate parental benefits.

Among the challenges faculty mothers and fathers face is the "tenure clock." Combined with the fact that the average age for a woman completing a doctorate is low to mid-thirties (Thornton, 2003: 167; Wilson, 2003: A7), women who have postponed childbearing until obtaining a tenure-track position are also likely to hear the ticking of a biological clock as they work toward two goals at the same time— to get tenure and have a family. A 33 year-old assistant professor described the situation of the two clocks by noting, "I'd like to have a second child sooner rather than later but I feel I simply can't afford to do that (time wise) before tenure (and thus before my fertility plummets and the risk rate for babies goes up)."

Professional organizations such as the AAUP have responded to the challenge of...continued on page 9
Parental Leave...continued on page 9

combining academic work and family by recommending more family-friendly policies for the academic workplace that recognize "the age-related difficulty of becoming a parent during pretenure years" (AAUP, 2001: 2). The AAUP recommends that a faculty member with "primary or coequal" caregiver duties be allowed (upon request) to stop the tenure clock up to one year for each child (but only twice) "while continuing to perform their other faculty duties at full salary" (AAUP, 2001: 5-6).

Furthermore, the association posits that the faculty parent with a tenure pause should be evaluated according to the same academic standards as a candidate without an extended probationary period in order to safeguard the faculty parent who could easily be perceived to have had more time than others to conduct research and publish (AAUP, 2001: 6). Finally, the AAUP recommends that universities formulate a clear institutional policy rather than operating on individually-based, informal arrangements which may lead to broader civil rights violations (Thornton, 2003).

The Study

My main goal was to map out the processes of negotiating a maternity leave within the context of academic benefit policies and productivity requirements. While the entire experience of balancing academic work and home life deserves more research attention, the focus of this inquiry was rather narrow: making the parental leave arrangement.

The data from faculty parents were collected with a short survey that contained six open-ended questions about institutional parental leave policy, personal leave arrangements, and satisfaction with one's experience. I posted the questionnaire on the SWS-Listserv, with the request for list members to respond and/or forward it to other faculty members who had taken time off from professional activities for the purpose of child birth/adoption and care. Regrettably, yet perhaps understandably, only 22 respondents completed the questionnaire. Of the 22 respondents, 20 were women and two were men (both had recently become fathers). The respondents' ages ranged from 30 to 52 years and 17 of them (77%) were in their 30s. As expected, the majority (57%) of the respondents worked in sociology departments and all but one taught in social sciences. Their affiliations included both private and public institutions and teaching and research universities.

In negotiating a parental leave, a faculty member's academic rank can impact their ability to request time off from work. It is not surprising that these questions are particularly relevant for junior faculty, who comprised about 66% of the respondents (14 of the 22 were untenured, assistant professors at the time of their first birth/adoption). Thus, many of the findings highlight the experiences of junior faculty.

It Takes a Department - Negotiating a Parental Leave

When it comes to faculty parental leave, I found almost as many different arrangements as there were respondents. The arrangements included using (paid) sick leave to care for an infant, dropping all but administrative duties, or simply taking an entire semester off without pay. To make up for teaching duties, some lectured on teaching assistants or taught a distance learning course, while others "banked" by teaching extra courses before birth. Some faculty members were given a course reduction and one even had (an appropriately credentialed) husband substitute in her courses. What is evident in most of these arrangements is that they were a product of a negotiation process that involved administrators as well as faculty colleagues. In fact, the power of an administrator to make policy when no institutional guidelines exist emerged in many experiences. A dean who drops a course for a new mother or a department chair who rearranges a new father's teaching responsibilities can have a lasting impact on the early parenthood experience. For example, generosity and sympathy were expressed through course reductions or other beneficial arrangements: "I was only teaching one course, thanks to the generosity of my chair. I had suggested that I buy out of a course with a grant, but he just gave me a course off" (36 year-old associate professor, research institution).

"I worked out leave with Dean and Chair. We decided I would receive a 1 course load reduction and teach 1 distance learning course. ... They also gave me a course load reduction the semester prior in order to prep the distance learning course. The chair and dean were VERY supportive" (30 year-old assistant prof, teaching/research institution).

"The department chair was INSTRUMENTAL in negotiating with the administration on my behalf. I was not directly involved in the negotiations" (35 year-old assistant professor, teaching university).

However, some faculty members reported an underlying risk in the individualized leave arrangement: benefits such as paid leave or course reduction became, in the long run, a liability for the professor. A few respondents mentioned that "favors" from administrators rarely came without strings attached. More than one respondent mentioned the feeling of "owing" the institution or the department in exchange for the parental benefit they had received. A 36 year-old associate professor who was given a course reduction as she returned from her leave (which she "paid for" using her sick leave), commented:

"I'm grateful for the arrangement that I have, however having to negotiate it has resulted in what seems to be a perception on the part of my Chair that he's done me a big favor and I owe him and/or the department because of this special treatment. It is clear I have "played my card" and should not expect favorable responses should I ask for anything (even minor things) in the future."

A similar situation was described by another faculty mother, who enjoyed full benefits with her first child and found herself in a very different situation with her second child:

"With the first birth, the dean of the college came to my office and declared he wanted to show me how "work and family friendly" [the university] really is so he just said take the quarter off and have your baby. The second birth was quite different. My department chair reminded me of how generous the dean was with my first birth and told me not to expect the same for the second birth. In not so many words she suggested I teach overload courses without pay to make up for the time I would be out after the birth of my second child. This is exactly what I did" (35 year-old associate professor, teaching university).

It appears that the experiences of faculty from teaching and research universities did not differ much. On the one hand, the burden of finding (and paying for) adjuncts to substitute in the classroom falls more heavily on teaching-oriented universities with...continued on page 10
Parental Leave...continued from page 9

heavier course loads; on the other hand, in a research institution, faculty may have to deal with questions about their academic credibility and with graduate students whose theses and dissertations need advising throughout the parental leave. As one faculty mother put it, 

"While NO ONE stated I must continue to work at home on my research, it was clear that a full term off would hurt me--if I missed submission deadlines, lost contact with my field, interrupted data collection, etc. I would suffer--and of course students do not stop asking for your counsel, letters of rec, advising, finishing incompetents, and more" (40 year-old assistant professor, research university).

In addition to administrators, the art of balancing parenthood with academic productivity involved colleagues whose support (or lack thereof) proved influential for the new parents' experience. Some respondents wrote about supportive colleagues who had, for example, offered to take over courses, but others mentioned that colleagues had strongly discouraged any concessions for the new parent. For instance, when a new mother told her department she hoped to ease back into full-time work and come in on the days she was teaching, one colleague made it clear that was "unacceptable."

The flexibility of colleagues in accommodating pregnancy and maternity leave can be further supported by students whose response to a professor's family needs can also influence the academic work environment. While professors in undergraduate-only institutions may not be able to teach from home (given the course load in many of them), faculty in master's and doctoral programs may find it necessary to ask their students to be accommodating. For example, one professor described that she was "on bed rest for part of the pregnancy and the [graduate] students were willing to come to my home for class meetings (12 students!)."

Union Involvement

In some universities (included also in this study), parental leave policy and benefits are shaped by faculty unions that can have a critical impact on a parent's ability to accommodate family demands. For example, a generous family leave policy at the University of Massachusetts, which includes a semester paid leave for both female and male faculty, was negotiated by the faculty union.

"Our union negotiated in the last contract (July 2001) for an excellent policy. All tenure-track, un-tenured faculty can take a year off the tenure clock; you must make this decision within a year of the child's birth/adoption. All faculty are eligible for one semester's paid leave after the birth/adoption of a child" (36-year old associate professor, research university).

She also pointed out that while paid parental leave has been available for faculty fathers (her husband took a paid leave for an entire semester), it appears that the university may change the parental leave provision in our contract in our next round of bargaining; they think too many men have taken the leave and want to target it toward women faculty. Lots of concern than men use the leave to write a book instead of watch the baby.

While there are many different solutions to juggling work and family (especially for a junior faculty with an infant), institutional support is essential. Another "best practice" from the faculty parents' perspective was described by a faculty member at University of North Carolina. She was entitled to take an entire semester off (including service) with full pay and made the arrangement by application, "using their 3 forms; within 1 week the dean and the chair had signed off." Satisfied with the policy, she called it "by far the best perk of my job" (35 year-old assistant professor, research university).

After the Baby: Satisfaction with Leave Arrangements

As I read the responses, it became evident that the only respondents who were unequivocally satisfied with their arrangement were those whose parental leave was protected by some kind of formal policy. However, not all formal policies are equal. Many faculty mothers were quite dissatisfied with a university policy that required them to "pay" for their maternity leave by using their accrued sick leave, thereby leaving them vulnerable in case of future illness.

"I think it's ridiculous that sick time is the only thing available -- what if you get sick??? This clearly penalizes women who are the ones having babies and consequently the ones that drain their limited sick time" (32 year-old assistant professor, teaching/research institution).

"This leave will exhaust all my sick leave. ... but I am not happy about completely depleting my sick-leave accruals. It will take 4-5 years to accrue enough for another pregnancy -- I don't have that kind of time!" (39 year-old associate professor, research/teaching institution).

Some respondents also expressed dissatisfaction with balancing academic and family work. A six-week maternity leave was seen as an insufficient recovery period for mothers who give birth and are expected to return to full-time teaching, research, and service. Although I did not specifically inquire about problems associated with returning to work, some faculty members noted that facing the work load after the baby was, at minimum, difficult. The exhaustion produced by taking care of a new baby while fulfilling academic expectations was evident in many responses:

"I should have been provided a full semester of leave with no consequences. I would have been much better off with a paid medical leave which would not have required me to 'pay back' the department's generosity. Needless to say, I was exhausted when I had my course overload, new baby, husband batting cancer, and writing to publish" (52 year-old full [at the time of first child, assistant] professor, research institution).

"Although I was basically satisfied with [the leave arrangement], I wish I had asked for more time off, even unpaid time. I ended up working 30 hours a week starting when my son was 6 weeks old (and ramping up to 45+ hours by the time he was 6 months). Because of complications affecting both of us, I was barely functioning at 6 weeks post-partum and bonding was just starting in earnest. I wish I had taken the whole semester off (although that would have meant my husband had to work full-time and he was part-time during that semester too)" (33 year-old assistant professor, research institution).

It is not surprising that academic expectations conflict with the family well-being. Although the crises are often temporary, the sense of a ticking tenure clock lends itself to an intensified experience of conflict. The ability to take care of an ailing spouse, bond with a newborn, and continue breastfeeding are examples of reproductive activities that are profoundly influenced by a sense of urgency associated with production...

...continued on page 11
ing academic work against a tenure deadline. To what degree this intensity can be alleviated by a policy, such as stopping the tenure clock, warrants further examination.

Finally, the issue of future fertility can also be understood in the context of academic requirements. The level of satisfaction with the leave arrangement, diminishing fertility, and the success in combining reproductive and productive work in academe are all factors that shape decisions about family size. It became evident from the responses that these questions were important in the lived experience of faculty parents. While one solution would be to postpone pregnancy until post-tenure, this option may not be available to some women who face age-related fertility challenges. The following comments represent various solutions and responses to the situation:

“With the next baby -- which is planned for after tenure -- I will take as much time as I can possibly get, even if it means living on savings for a few months. Ideally, I'd like to be "off" for a consecutive semester and summer, i.e. about 7 months. I might work very well on my research some during the last months of that period, but it would be a joy to have that time where I wasn't feeling torn between different responsibilities but simply enjoying the baby” (33 year-old assistant professor, research institution).

“Taking leave pre-tenure is risky--I am uptight all the time. But my fertility would not wait for tenure, so I had to do it. My only consolation is that if I am denied tenure, I do have a lovely little reason” (40 year-old assistant professor, research institution).

“I would just take leave when you need it and worry about everything else later. I happen to already have tenure, which is the most important thing. But waiting too long is dangerous! I waited too long to try to have children and almost could not! There is no perfect time to have children” (39 year-old associate professor, research institution).

Female-professors, just as male-professors, draw much pleasure and inspiration from research, teaching, and serving their communities. However, these activities constitute, for many, only a part of a full life. The academy is in a unique position because, with a tenure system, employees become life-long contributors to the institution, which makes the quality (in addition to quantity) of a professors’ long-term contribution a significant institutional concern. While some institutions have a formal parental leave policy for faculty, many are yet to develop one. These experiences point to a growing need to address this question in order to assure that women's academic contribution will not become excluded because of their family obligations.

Come share your experiences and thoughts about this issue in Montreal at the ASA’s Employment/Career Workshop session on "Combining Academic Work and Family Experiences and Best Policies" Organizer: Marjukka Ollilainen, Weber State University

University of Memphis. The Department of Sociology invites applications and nominations for the appointment of an experienced scholar to serve as chair of the Department of Sociology. The successful candidate will join a dynamic department in a metropolitan research university. The University of Memphis, a comprehensive, doctoral-extensive state university, enrolls over 20,000 students annually. The department offers the B.A. and M.A. degrees in Sociology and includes 14 faculty positions, 150 undergraduate, and 45 full and part-time graduate students. Faculty research interests include social inequality, comparative social change, institutions and organizations, deviance and social psychology, and methods. For additional information visit the university or department websites at http://www.memphis.edu and http://www.cas.memphis.edu/sociology. A representative from the Search Committee will be available to meet with interested applicants at the annual ASA meeting in Montreal.

Successful candidates should have a national reputation for scholarship, a substantial record of publications, evidence of commitment to and excellence in teaching, a demonstrated capacity for intellectual leadership, and a record of academic leadership and administrative skills. A PhD in Sociology is required. Substantive area of specialization is open. Submit a letter of application (or nomination), curriculum vita and at least three reference letters to: Chair, Sociology Chair Search Committee, College of Arts & Sciences, Scates Hall 107, The University of Memphis, Memphis, TN 38152. Review of completed applications will begin October 30, 2006, and may continue until the position is filled. The University of Memphis is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.
News! News! News!

The Executive Office is moving!

The new address for all SWS communication is as follows:

URI Sociology
Chafee Social Science Center
Kingston, RI 02881
Office: 401.874.9510
Fax: 401.874.2588
Email: sws@etal.uri.edu

Please send membership forms, address/ email changes, and all correspondence to
Jessica Holden Sherwood, Executive Officer, as of June 1, 2006.

Welcome New SWS Members!

Thanks to the Membership Committee, SWS Chapters have awarded Free Memberships to:

Sara Howard, Mills College (SWS West)
Donna King, UNCW Wilmington (SWS Southeastern).
SWS Awards Deadlines

Cheryl Allen Miller Award
May 15, 2007
Contact: Cindy Anderson, Ohio University

Feminist Lectureship Award
February 1, 2007
Contact: Susan Farrell, Kingsborough Community College

SWS Feminist Mentoring Award
March 1, 2007
Contact: Bonnie Thornton Dill, University of Maryland

Barbara Rosenblum Cancer Dissertation Award
April 1, 2007
Contact: Jenny Kronenfeld, Arizona State University

Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship
May 15, 2007
Contact: Myra Marx Ferree, University of Wisconsin
Thanks for Everything Nancy!!!

Editor's Note: As Nancy wraps-up her final duties as Executive Officer we pause to thank her for her guidance, hard work and wonderful spirit in navigating our organization over the last four years. She has left her mark on SWS, and we are all the better having had the opportunity to work with her. Thanks for everything, Nancy.

When asked to run for SWS President, I knew that the job was possible to do because we had this wonderful executive officer who could juggle all the tasks that REALLY need doing for an organization. I didn't know Nancy Miller very well, when I accepted the nomination, but I knew her well enough by reputation to know that she would make my life as president manageable, and that she was fun to be around as well. We've lost a serious recruitment tool for the nominations committee, anyone with good sense would want to work with Nancy.

And Nancy's reputation was well-deserved. As executive officer, she made the ships run on time, and did so with such grace, you didn't even realize you were on her schedule. When I visited the "mother ship" in Akron, I was welcomed warmly by Nancy and all her wonderful colleagues and students, and left fully at ease that the organization was in good hands.

We will all miss Nancy at the helm, but luckily for me, as an individual, and for the organization, Nancy's the kind of committed feminist sociologist who will be with us always. For Nancy was never "just" our executive officer, she has always been a sister feminist traveler dedicated to transforming the academy.

I'm sure everyone joins me in wishing Nancy bon voyage into the next wonderful stage of her life.

- Barbara Risman

Nancy, to us, brings up so many memories and admirable characteristics. First and foremost she is an exemplary mentor. She exudes compassionate professionalism. She is always there for students and colleagues, bringing material items as well as words of comfort and advice. Nancy has become the 'shoulder to lean on' in our department. She understands the complexity of balancing a professional and personal life, especially for women, and is always willing to listen and share in the good and bad times.

As a mentor, Nancy led by example. Rather than telling us what to do, she allowed us to grow professionally on our own. As for certain, we made mistakes. Nancy was there to pick us up and to encourage us during our hard times. Nancy's trust in our abilities helped us to trust ourselves as deserving graduate students, graduate assistants, and as sociologists. This is also an important quality in a compassionate professional. For Aya, the first year in graduate school was a culture shock. "In my first year I was assigned as Nancy's graduate assistant, working in the SWS executive office. While I am sure she caught on to the fact that I was a deer-in-headlights, her trust in me was a source of stability in a time of uncertainty. Her mentorship has been an important element in my professional development."

Nancy has also provided us with numerous professional opportunities. Never forcing, but always encouraging, she brought us closer to such organizations as SWS. For Marianne, she recognizes that without Nancy's support her involvement in SWS would not be to the extent that it is. "Nancy encouraged me to run for the SWS student representative. Although I was unsure of my ability to take on the position, Nancy gave me the courage to run. This experience made me realize that I can be successful in academia. Her respectful nature makes me feel as though I belong in graduate studies and that I can become a compassionate sociologist as well."

Although we could go on and on describing all the things Nancy has done for us and others, we just want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for our mentor and friend. Not only is she leaving the position as executive officer of SWS, she is also leaving our department. We will miss her greatly. Thanks for Everything Nancy!

-Love always, Marianne and Aya

It was a pleasure to work with Nancy for 3.5 years as her Administrative Assistant. Nancy is a genuinely caring person. She never hesitates to let you know your value and always offers encouragement to those around her. She put a lot of time and effort into her role as Executive Officer and always made decisions based on what was best for the organization. SWS was fortunate to have such a compassionate and competent individual at its helm for past 4.5 years! Nancy, best wishes for your retirement - enjoy your family and your time!

-Anita Kurtz

I was lucky enough to work with two wonderful Executive Officers during my years as president-elect, president, and past-president: Meg Karraker helped me learn the details of how we do things in SWS, and Nancy Miller took over the EO office virtually seamlessly.

One of the many things I loved about working closely with Nancy was her calmness when things were discombobulated. She answers questions, even frantic ones, quickly and with a reassuring tone that comes through even on email. Nancy has been smart about how to make SWS's organizational side work more smoothly, whether in processing reimbursements, handling ballots, paying bills, or staffing
Thanks for Everything Nancy!!!

I have had the pleasure of working with Nancy Miller, as Executive Officer, under two different SWS hats of my own-as Editor of *Gender & Society*, and as SWS President. In both instances, she was wonderful to work with! Indeed, brainstorming with Nancy and the Council last summer in Akron helped to concretize a meeting structure that would incorporate all my new ideas for the Winter Meetings and still not overwhelm participants. Her help with meeting arrangements facilitated the Winter Meeting in Puerto Rico, through hotel contract negotiations and follow-ups, pre-registration and registration, and availability to help out with every problem or question that turned up "on site." [In addition, I learned that she is a great dancer!] Nancy was equally helpful with administrative backup when I was our journal editor. As many can attest to, Nancy always responds immediately to queries, with even temper and patience, and with knowledgeable and thoughtful replies to both simple and difficult situations. She is good at finding the best solutions to administrative questions, reminds us of any duties or tasks we didn't know we were responsible for, and has been the voice of SWS experience when one needs to check on issues of past practice. At the same time that Nancy and her University of Akron team facilitated our committee work, they also kept up with the general business of the association and its membership. I, for one, will really miss the whole Akron team---even as I am happy to see them move on to other goals. ¡Muchísimas gracias!

-Christine Bose

For a Job Well Done! I have worked with Nancy Miller in so many capacities that my experience with her is quite broad and deep. Nancy is one of those special people who you get to know slowly. And as you do, you just get more and more impressed by her abilities and her kindness - an absolutely perfect combination in an Executive Officer for a wild and crazy organization like SWS. Whenever I have asked for advice or for information or for something to be done, Nancy's response is the same. She is unfailingly pleasant, helpful, patient, and fun to be with. Nancy balances dancing and laughing with keeping the meetings organized and engaging. I look forward to SWS meetings, winter and summer; because I know she will be there. I hope that will remain the case. SWS would not be the same without her. Thank you, Nancy, for all you have done for me personally and all you have done for SWS!

-Cathy Zimmer

-Nancy Naples.

Nancy, thank you for the excellent service to SWS as Executive Officer. Your proficiency in office management, coupled with sociological insight and strong dedication to feminist principles, provided a solid operational base for SWS upon which guided us all. SWS is a better organization because of you. Thanks also for being a marvelous host during the treasurer visits - I will especially miss the sushi we shared in Akron!

-Best, Cindy Anderson

I consider myself extremely fortunate to have been elected to SWS office during Nancy Miller's tenure as Executive Officer. She was an incredible resource to me in almost every aspect of my work with SWS. The qualities she brought to the job include a patience that is often rare in today's fast paced world, a skillful ability to balance the different demands placed on her by officers and members alike, and her commitment to the organization that went far beyond the job description. Her willingness to continue as Executive Officer when we needed her is a prime example of her dedication to SWS. Her leadership in the area of technology is one that I especially appreciate and SWS will reap the benefits of her work in this area far into the future. Nancy has also touched the lives of so many of us on a very personal level. I have been most impressed with her kindness and generosity of spirit and her ability to anticipate and help navigate problems others are facing. No words can express my gratitude to her nor capture the respect that I have for her.

-Beth Rushing

the registration tables at meetings. She has taken care of our organization -- and us -- with caring, compassion, and a wonderfully wry sense of humor.

Thanks, Nancy, for everything.

-Nancy Naples.

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News from Local Chapters

Tallahassee Chapter: Report by Irene Padavic

The Florida State University chapter, in existence since 1987, had a good year, and is currently planning the coming one. We met three times in 2005-06. In September two graduate students presented their research on body projects, in the spring term we learned about Patricia Yancey Martin's new book, Rape Work, and at a later meeting, we listened to and discussed the presentations of several sociological associations preparing for the Southern Sociological Society meeting. At the first meeting in the coming year the group will make plans for the next academic year.

Lansing Chapter

In April the MSU Chapter of SWS hosted a luncheon lecture by Dr. Zakia Salime on women's movements and Islam in Morocco. Dr. Salime is a faculty member in the Department of Sociology at MSU.

SWS-South: Report by Emily Munson and Lacey Sischo

SWS-South was productive and prosperous at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Meetings in March in New Orleans. We co-sponsored seven sessions, ranging in topics from sociology of the body to 'rape work' to finding a feminist friendly department during the job search.

SWS-South typically hosts a silent auction to raise money for the ASA Minority Scholarship fund. This year, given the meeting's location, SSS President Judith Blau requested that SWS-South organize a larger version of the Silent Auction with proceeds to be donated to the SSS Katrina Fund and Gulf Coast Historically Black Colleges and Universities affected by Katrina as well as the ASA Minority Scholarship fund. All in all, the Auction raised $2,071 to be distributed among the three targeted funds. In addition to the silent auction, a Southern artist, Turbayo Marabou, donated a mural to be auctioned. This mural, which Marabou completed during the conference (with the help from SSS attendees) was purchased by Florence Bonner of Howard University. The proceeds from the purchase of the mural were distributed to The People's Institute for Survival & Beyond and Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center, two local organizations working with New Orleans residents in the rebuilding effort.

Finally, we elected new officers for 2006-2007: President: Michelle Emerson, Kennesaw State University; Treasurer/Membership Chair: Shannon Davis, UNC-Chapel Hill; Archivist: Diane Everett, Stetson University Electronic List Keeper: Beth Rushing, Georgia College & State University. SWS National Liaisons: Emily Munson, University of North Carolina, Greensboro; Lacey Sischo, Florida State University. For more information on SWS-South, including a full list of our officers, membership information, and our recent newsletter, visit our Web site at http://www.irss.unc.edu/cathy/SWS-South/home.htm.

SWS-West Chapter

Thanks to everyone who made the SWS-West breakfast at the Pacific Sociological Association meetings in Hollywood a success. On Friday, April 21, SWS-West held a breakfast social and over 30 feminists came to meet, greet, and eat! We were especially pleased to see so many new faces in addition to long-standing SWSers. Those new to SWS were excited to wear SWS stickers so they could identify their colleagues and maintain their new and existing connections. Several graduate and undergraduate students came to inquire about SWS, and were pleased to find the organization that they knew very little about. We are also pleased to announce that Mary Virnoche is our new president.

We collected names from 25 people who are not members of the national organization, and one interested and lucky person will receive a free membership! This was a great recruiting tool, and a great place to get to know other feminist scholars. We look forward to repeating the event next year at the PSA meetings.

President, Mary Virnoche, Humboldt State University; Vice President, Anastasia Prokos, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Secretary, Kathyn Haubeck, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Midwest Chapter: Report by Trina Smith, Marybeth Stalp, and Denise Copelton

At the annual meetings of the Midwest Sociologist Society (MSS) held in Omaha, Nebraska, from March 30th to April 1st, Midwest for Sociologists for Women in Society (MSWS) members made an impact and had a great time presenting feminist scholarship, conducting workshops, doing business and electing officers and committee chairs, and of course, socializing.

MSWS co-sponsored 20 paper sessions, workshops, and special sessions at the conference. The paper sessions included Gender & Work; Doing Feminist Research; Gender, Health, & Medicine; Gender, Race, & Justice; Gender & Sport; Gender, Race, & Sexuality; and Women and Aging, to name just a few. Workshops included Talking in Sound Bites - How to Talk to the Media; Creative Coping; The Art of the CV; The Art of the Job Search; and Feminists in the Classroom - Negotiating a Chilly Climate. An alternative "Stitch-n-Bitch" session was held in the MSWS hospitality suite, where conference attendees brought crafting projects to work on and visit with others. All events were well-attended with great dialogue between participants and audience members. Furthermore, the feminist scholarship and mentoring of Martha Thompson, retiring professor at Northeastern Illinois University, was honored and celebrated at a special session in the MSWS hospitality suite.

MSWS members also partook in their annual dinner on Saturday night of the conference held at Michael's, a local Mexican restaurant, in the Old Market. Around thirty people attended the dinner. Many burritos, fajitas, and margaritas were consumed alongside great conversations among feminist scholars. Two business meetings were conducted early on Saturday and Sunday morning. We discussed many issues including increasing communication among MSWS members throughout the year, how to make MSWS more accessible, increasing membership, and possible time changes for MSWS business meetings. New officers and committee chairs were elected. Current officers and committee chairs are: President, Cheryl Childers, Washburn University; Program Chair Denise Copelton, SUNY Brockport; President-Elect, Angie Moe, Western Michigan University; Secretary,Gayle Rhineberger, University of Northern Iowa; Treasurer. Julie Harms Cannon, Texas Tech University; Membership, Sheri Hink; Communications, Trina Smith; Honors and Awards, Susan Wortmann; Networking, Michelle Hughes Miller; SWS Liaison, Marybeth Stalp; MSWS Task Coordinators: Hospitality Suite Coordinator, Sheri Hink and Trina Smith; Midwest Feminist Papers Currently seeking an editor. The committees are always looking for volunteers. Please contact Trina Smith (sm1603@umn.edu), communications chair, if you are interested.

Please plan ahead for the annual MSS and MSWS meetings next year. They will be in Chicago from April 4th - 7th, 2007. The meetings will be held in conjunction with the North Central Sociological Association Annual Meeting. Fellow scholar, Helen Moore, from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is the in-coming president of MSS and is working hard to make these meetings a success! MSWS has submitted over 30 co-sponsored sessions, workshops, and panels for these meetings. If you are interested in organizing an MSWS co-sponsored session please contact Denise Copelton, the Program Chair (dcopelton@yahoo.com).

MSWS business meeting times for the 2007 Chicago meeting are: 7pm during the conference and Friday, during the lunch break, typically from 12 noon to 1:30 pm, there will be an MSWS Brown Bag Welcome and Business Meeting. Friday from 6:00 - 6:45 pm will be the MSWS program planning meeting where we discuss ideas for MSWS co-sponsored sessions at the next year's meetings. Lastly, our annual dinner will be Saturday evening at 7pm at a restaurant to be determined. All members and those who are interested in MSWS are welcome to attend any and all of these events.

Lastly, some goals of MSWS this year are to increase membership, make the organization more accessible, to increase communication, and make the organization work for members by gathering information from current and potential members about what they would like to see from the MSWS. Stemming from these goals, a website and email list serve are in the works. If you would like to be on the list-serve, would like more information about the organization, or have any ideas, please contact the communications chair, Trina Smith (sm1603@umn.edu). We are also looking for new members and to re-connect with past members!
Career Development Committee

Happenings in Montreal

Are you thinking about publishing your dissertation as a book, but unsure of where or how to begin? Then plan to attend the session on "How to Publish Your Dissertation as a Book" sponsored by the Career Development Committee. Organizers Julie Shayne (Emory University), Meika Loe (Colgate University), and Laura Carpenter (Vanderbilt University) have put together a panel of experts who will offer advice and share their experiences. The panel includes several assistant professors who have recently published dissertations who will describe the various scenarios they encountered. Senior professors on the panel will discuss outside reviewing and issues related to article publication versus book publication.

Panelists include (in alphabetical order):
Laura Carpenter, Vanderbilt University
Judy Howard, University of Washington
Meika Loe, Colgate University
Nancy Naples, University of Connecticut
Jennifer Reich, University of Denver
Patricia Richards, University of Georgia
Julie Shayne, Emory University

Announcement from the Feminist Lecturer Award Committee

By: Susan A. Farrell, Chair
The SWS Feminist Lecturer Award Committee wishes to announce that SWS Feminist Lecturer, Michael Messner, will be visiting the University of Maine at Orono and New College in Sarasota, FL this Fall. We thank all the universities and colleges who applied (there were six) and we hope that both Michael and the campuses chosen will have a fruitful and engaging visit. I'd like to thank the committee, as well, for all their hard work in making this decision. Feminist Lecturer Award Committee Members: Kecia Johnson, Michael Kimmel, Vicki Smith, Tre Wentling, and Mary Zimmerman.

Announcement from the Activism Award Committee

By: Shirley A. Hill, Chair
Members of the Activism Awards Committee had some very tough decision-making to do as the pool of applicants for a campus visit from our current Feminist Activist, Dr. Patricia Martin, was strong and competitive. After much deliberation and exchange (we wanted to say "yes" to everyone!), the two campuses chosen for feminist activist visits are Wake Forest University and St. Louis University. We also reviewed a slate of applicants for the next year's Feminist Activist, and chose Dr. Marita McComiskey. I want to extend a hearty thanks to those who took the time to apply for a campus visit and/or make nominations for the new Feminist Activist, and I want to especially thank the members of the Activism Awards Committee for their service -- Erin Anderson, Andrea Miller, Jean Peterman, and Sarah Sobieraj. Thanks everyone!

Announcement from the Feminist Lecturer Award Committee

By: Susan A. Farrell, Chair
The SWS Feminist Lecturer Award Committee wishes to announce that SWS Feminist Lecturer, Michael Messner, will be visiting the University of Maine at Orono and New College in Sarasota, FL this Fall. We thank all the universities and colleges who applied (there were six) and we hope that both Michael and the campuses chosen will have a fruitful and engaging visit. I'd like to thank the committee, as well, for all their hard work in making this decision. Feminist Lecturer Award Committee Members: Kecia Johnson, Michael Kimmel, Vicki Smith, Tre Wentling, and Mary Zimmerman.
Disaster sociologists see natural, technological and human-induced disasters as fundamentally social events reflecting human decisions about the organization of social life in the physical environment. Not the physical hazard (e.g., spring flooding) but the socially constructed vulnerability to it (e.g., low-income women living in mobile homes on flood plains) is at the heart of the process of “designing disasters.” Unsustainable development, environmental degradation, urbanization, coastal population growth and climate change are significant root causes of modern disasters as it grows social inequality within and between societies.

The risk of exposure to the effects of disasters is not distributed equally but reflects the fault lines of any society. Students of disaster see disaster risk as a function of people’s relative exposure to hazards, the degree to which the effects of hazards have been reduced (e.g., through risk assessment and mitigation, risk communication, preparedness and community organization) and people’s vulnerability to disaster, understood as the relative ability to anticipate, prepare for, survive, cope with, and recover from the effects of disasters or events. Social class, race and ethnicity, age, and physical abilities are generally recognized as determinants of vulnerability but gender is conspicuous by its absence. This gender blindness may reflect the urgency of immediate need in humanitarian relief and the misperception of disasters as social level events. Emergency management also continues to be dominated by men. A 1998 study in Australia found just 5% of participants in emergency management courses were female; while more women are entering the field, that same year just 10 of the 67 counties in Florida that had emergency management offices employed female directors.

The new gender and disaster subfield developed over the past 15 years examines not only how gender puts women and men differently at risk but the gender-based life experiences, skills, capacities and resources of women and men’s groups in disaster contexts.

**GENDERING HURRICANE KATRINA**

When hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, 25.9% of the women residing in the City of New Orleans lived below the poverty line; 41.1% of female-headed families with children were poor. Over a third (35%) of African American women in Louisiana were officially poor, the worst record in the region and nation. Yet the stubbornly “gender neutral” approach of disaster studies and disaster management was evident in the de-gendered discourse around race, class, age and disability in the 2004 US Gulf Coast hurricanes. For alternate views, see:

*Katrina and Her Gendering of Class and Race*, Zillah Eisenstein, Sept. 12 2005 commentary:
http://www.wrr.net/docs/issue-katrina.html

*Noticing Gender (Or Not) in Disasters*, Joni Seager, editorial comment in the Chicago Tribune, September 2005:
http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/seager-geoforum-katrina.doc

*Women and Girls Last? Averting the Post-Katrina Disaster*, Elaine Enarson, Denver Post op-ed, October 2005,
republished on the Katrina webpage of the Social Science Research Council:
http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Enarson/

*A Feminist Perspective on Katrina*, commentary by Loretta Ross for Sistersong, October 2005:
http://weblog.law.ucla.edu/crs/archives/2005/10/a_feminist_pers.html


**Mitigation and preparedness**

The literature demonstrates that women tend to be more risk averse and more likely to try to prepare for disasters and take self-protective measures such as evacuation. Unfortunately, they may not receive early warnings, for example when men control radios or risk communicators target people in the formal labor force and overlook women’s social networks or preferred means of communication. In one California study, more
SELECTED FINDINGS ON GENDER AND DISASTER

Risk perception
- Gender norms foster more "risk taking" among men and "risk avoidance" among women, with implications for preparedness and safety in disasters;
- Women express higher levels of concern than men, on balance, about environmental hazards likely to affect their families.

Preparedness Behavior
- Women seek out information about hazards;
- Men prepare the external household areas while women prepare family members;
- Women volunteer more for local preparedness programs, e.g. in schools;
- Women are more likely than men to take part in community organizations addressing local environmental or technological hazards.

Warning Communication and Response
- Women's networks provide them with more information and warnings;
- Emergency warnings from local disaster managers are more likely to be found credible by women than by men, and women are more likely to act upon them;
- More men than women disregard evacuation orders; women with children evacuate earlier.

Emergency Response
- Women with children are the least likely to help others outside the family, men are more likely to assist strangers, e.g. through search and rescue efforts;
- Women offer more sustained emotional support to disaster victims, e.g. as volunteers and within the family;
- Women are more likely to warn others and to assist in long-term recovery, e.g. as crisis workers and human service professionals;
- Men more often than women hold leadership roles in established economic and political organizations responding to disaster and are highly visible in male "first responder" roles


women than men were found to have responded positively to earthquake aftershock warnings on virtually every indicator, from seeking out more information to securing household items and developing family emergency plans. Women often report that this desire to act is minimized by the men in their lives as "panic" or frustrated by lack of funds or social power to take decisions for the household. Typically, women are more represented in neighborhood and community preparedness campaigns and grassroots mitigation strategies such as "drought proofing" through rainwater harvesting or monitoring water levels in flood-prone rivers. Women are also active volunteers in emergency preparedness campaigns. In an innovative collaborative project on disaster preparedness, women in sister cities in Ukraine and Oregon worked together in both countries for two years, capitalizing on women's traditional roles as community and family risk educators. In less developed countries, women's groups are increasingly involved in grassroots vulnerability assessments and community preparedness and mitigation campaigns that save lives. The toll was high in nearby villages during Hurricane Mitch, but no deaths occurred in Masica, Honduras where an explicitly gender-inclusive approach to hazard mitigation had been adopted.

Vulnerability and impact

Context-specific gender analysis is needed as women are not universally or automatically more vulnerable to the effects of all disasters in every society. But the gendered division of labor often puts women at increased risk, for example during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami when male fishers were able to ride out the waves at sea while women waiting on shore with nets for the catch were swept out to sea. Women jeopardize their own safety to save children and other dependent persons, and in some cases biological factors such as advanced states of pregnancy or the frailties of advanced age come into play. Case studies indicate that gender inequalities more than gender differences explain the disproportionate impacts of disasters on girls and women. High poverty rates, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the global "maid trade," migrant farm work and other patterns moving women across boundaries, often as undocumented workers, combine with lack of political power, low literacy rates, exposure to gender-based violence and other pressures to reduce women's resilience to disaster in the short- and long-term. With significant differences among and between women in different social locations, women on balance are more likely at the time of an extreme environmental event to:
- live below the poverty line
- rely upon state supported social services
lack savings, credit, insurance
lack inheritance rights, land rights, control
be unemployed or work in the informal economy
be self-employed, home-based, contingent workers
reside alone, be rearing children alone
depend on functioning caregiving systems
depend on public transportation, travel with dependents
reside in public housing, mobile homes, rental housing, informal settlements
live at risk of assault and abuse, be displaced into domestic violence shelters
be responsible for others (family, kin, neighbors) as paid and unpaid caregivers
physically depend on others due to late pregnancy, recent childbirth, age, chronic illness
be living with disabilities, chronic illness
be subject to gender norms controlling mobility and use of public space
be subject to male authority in the household regarding use of emergency assistance assets and key decisions about evacuation and relocation.

These patterns are all too evident when disastrous events unfold. In the Indian Ocean tsunami, an Oxfam report found that in one village male survivors outnumbered female survivors by three to one. Eighty percent of all deaths were female in the worst affected village. Lack of sanitation and medical services jeopardizes the physical and emotional health of pregnant women who may have also lost homes, livelihoods, and families in the quake. In the US, studies generally find that women express more mental health problems while men are more likely to suffer the effects of substance abuse. Violence against women may also increase. In Grand Forks, ND, requests for temporary protection orders rose by 18% over the preceding year and counseling with on-going clients rose 59% after the Red River flooded the entire city in 1997; similar patterns were reported in a study of women’s organizations responding to the tsunami in Sri Lanka. Women’s family work expands under much more difficult conditions and their home-based livelihoods are disrupted or even destroyed. They also tend to remain in temporary accommodations longer than men; in the first weeks after hurricane Mitch, the proportion of families headed by women living in shelters in Tegucigalpa was already 41% and rose to over half (57%). The post-disaster “flight of men” increases the number of women heading households in the wake of destructive social and environmental events.

**Emergency response and recovery systems**

Women often have less access to what disaster managers consider to be key assets for survival and eventual recovery, e.g. diverse income, health and safety, time, information, transportation, language skills, citizenship status and social support. The urgent need to meet family needs in the aftermath also increases their dependence on external aid. Women are far more likely than men to seek help over the long-term from outside agencies despite their resistance to “charity” and such practical obstacles as lack of transportation or child care to access disaster assistance services. Gender norms in some cultural contexts also restrict their ability to publicly seek help or use emergency shelters in which they come into contact with unrelated men. Poor and marginalized girls and women are least likely to receive needed assistance, as are women whose everyday lives diverge from the norms embedded in traditional emergency management systems about male headship, heterosexual marriage, and women as caregivers not earners. For example, the Sri Lankan government offered $480 (about $40 US) to families affected by the tsunami but, as only male-headed households were recognized in some parts of the country, many widows went without. When hurricane Andrew hit Miami, FEMA still adopted the head-of-household approach to relief. Even simple sanitary packs for women were reportedly hard to come by in the wake of the tsunami. Men also tend to have more access to paid reconstruction jobs while women’s home-based livelihoods take second place in the rebuilding process.

While women are primary users of emergency help systems, male-dominated planning and relief systems typically exclude their voices and concerns. International organizations working toward gender-sensitive disaster response identify these and other concerns in project planning and implementation:

- the need for consultation with women’s groups and material support of women’s advocacy groups
- women’s organizations and networks as resources through the disaster cycle
- the need for culturally competent and gender-aware staff in humanitarian relief
- livelihood recovery projects recognizing women as environmental resource users and managers
- barriers to women receiving and acting on emergency communications and warnings
- women’s increased risk of gender violence in the aftermath of disasters
- women’s need for income and the restoration of their livelihoods after disasters
- the need to provide child care so women can access relief resources and seek employment
- the need to support women in their formal and informal roles as caregivers to disaster-impacted children, partners, and dependents
- reproductive health care in emergency and temporary shelters
- women’s need for gender-aware psychosocial support
- women’s increased risk of forced or early marriage (e.g., “tsunami marriage” to older men)
- the likelihood of early school-leaving or truancy among girls
- the need for gender-specific data as a planning, budgeting and evaluation tool

Especially in less developed countries, women’s grassroots organizations are often engaged in disaster mitigation, preparedness, relief and reconstruction efforts. In India, the Self-Employed Women’s Association [SEWA], a union for women in the informal sector, provides disaster insurance to poor women through women’s banks as well as training in seismically-resistant construction. Local SEWA chapters helped governmental authorities direct relief supplies and provided resources to help women begin to earn again while still in tents following the 2001 Gujarat quake. The Foundation for the Support of Women’s Work in Turkey built an existing center to provide safe space for women after a major earthquake, serving over 10,000 women and children. Tenant housing coops were developed by over 100 quake-affected women who also conducted their own post-disaster impact assessment research for the benefit of local government.

WOMEN ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE AFTER DISASTERS

The women’s caucus of the Common Ground Collective organized a women’s room and advocated for the needs and interests of women and children while the newly formed group Women of The Storm lobbied Congressional leaders. Many African-American women worked through ACORN for their right of return. Websites: http://www.commongroundrelief.org/taxonomy/term/216; Women of the Storm: http://www.womenofthestorm.net; Acorn Katrina Organizing Update: http://www.acorn.org/fileadmin/KatrinaRelief/Cleanout/KatrinaOrganizing_PDF_06.pdf.

Over 40 women’s organizations formed the cross-cultural coalition Women Will Rebuild Miami to help direct external disaster recovery funds toward child care and youth recreation, antiviolence services, renters as well as home owners, and the health care needs of women. See Elaine Enarson and Betty Hearn Morrow, 1998, Women will rebuild Miami: a case study of feminist response to disaster. The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women’s Eyes.

In the wake of hurricane Mitch, 8 women and 4 men formed the Comité de Emergencia Garifuna to pool resources, first to rescue stranded residents and then to jointly replant flooded lands, rebuild homes together, and in some cases relocate to higher ground. Working with the Jamaican Women’s Construction Collective they helped other women learn to build hurricane-safe roofing. The Comité produced a videotape about their experience and continues to meet today. See Ayse Yonder with Sengul Akcar and Prema Gopalan, 2005, Women’s Participation in Disaster Relief and Recovery: http://www.pcouncil.org/pdfs/seeds/seeds22.pdf.

The Coalition of War-Affected Women in Sri Lanka mobilized to create the Coalition of Tsunami Affected Women, echoing the concerns of the post-tsunami women’s coalition that emerged in Indonesia. Activities included policy statements organizing women displaced into “temporary” shelters not meeting women’s needs, and action research to document the overlooked economic impacts on women and other concerns. Website: http://www.iwhc.org/programs/asia/inform.cfm.

Swayam Shikshan Prayog [SSP] built on decades of work to help rural women respond to a devastating 1993 earthquake in Latur, India. Despite efforts to exclude them from repairing, planning, and designing their homes and communities, some 500 women’s groups united through mahila mandals (government initiated groups) for training and information about reconstruction. The state eventually negotiated a formal agreement with SSP to recognize the work of these women’s groups as community educators and monitors of housing reconstruction programmes. Described by Ayse Yonder with Sengul Akcar and Prema Gopalan, 2005, op. cit., and see SSP website: http://www.sspindia.org.

Disaster Watch is an international partnership of grassroots women’s groups that builds on cross-national peer learning exchanges to empower women, first in India and Turkey following major earthquakes and then following the Bam Iran quake and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and earthquake in Pakistan. Disaster Watch members also initiated a documentation project in New Orleans to capture women’s experiences. An initiative of Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS) formed after the 1995 women’s world conference. Disaster Watch posts an electronic newsletter by and about the activities of women in disasters on its website and advocates for structural and policy change empowering grassroots women in disasters: Website: http://www.disasterwatch.net/.

Women are not the passive victims represented by the media but step in as first responders helping to search out and rescue survivors. Later, women who are able will help replace disrupted services (e.g., safe spaces for abused women, child care, peer support), host displaced women and families, meet broader community needs as volunteers, use established and emergent women’s organizations to fund raise and
advocate for the needs of vulnerable people at risk of being overlooked, and in other ways work through and outside of traditionally gendered jobs, occupations, and social roles to help move their communities forward. 25

Disasters as windows of opportunity for women

Traditional gender relations are often reinforced as disasters unfold and existing inequalities exacerbated, leaving women even more vulnerable to subsequent disasters. 26 There are also moments of opportunity for women to challenge prevailing gender norms, e.g. using relief funds to leave an abusive relationship, developing new job skills through reconstruction work, and gaining self-confidence and leadership skills through collective action to meet women’s needs and interests. The skills and knowledge of women as providers, caregivers, community organizers and volunteers, informal neighborhood leaders, family managers, and advocates for those who are socially marginalized make them key partners in disaster management. Policy makers and practitioners increasingly see that gender sensitivity is not a luxury but an essential quality of effective disaster risk management. The scarce resources made available to mitigate hazardous living conditions, provide emergency relief and recovery assistance and rebuild in ways that increase community resilience to hazards and disasters must reach those who are most at need. The mobilization of women around the world after disasters is not, however, based on efficiency values or practical relief and recovery concerns but on moral claims to women’s fundamental human rights in disasters and the need for women’s leadership before, during and after disasters. Safer, more just, sustainable and disaster-resilient communities cannot be built without the full and equal participation of women and men alike.

RESOURCES ON WOMEN AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Gender and Disaster Sourcebook: http://www.gdnonline.org/sourcebook/index.htm. Developed by an international team 2004-2005 to compile English language materials for practitioners, policy makers and academics, including:
- Videos and photo essay
- Bibliography updated annually, conference proceedings
- Practice and policy guide, fact sheets
- Academic case studies in disaster social science

A CD “Sampler” of these materials is available for postage costs from the Public Entity Risk Institute Contact them at: http://www.rariskinstitute.org/

Disaster Watch: http://www.disasterwatch.net/. Web forum designed to support the growth and development of women-centered community-based, post-disaster initiatives. Joint effort of the Huairou Commission, GROOTS International and Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) in India. Newsletter, advocacy, action research, international collaboration for peer learning among disaster-impacted women working through women’s grassroots organizations.

Gender broadsheet: six principles for engendered relief and reconstruction:
http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/genderbroadsheet.doc. Developed on behalf of the Gender and Disaster Network in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.


Social Vulnerability Approach to Disaster: http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/women-and-disaster-syllabus-ee2001.doc. FEMA’s Higher Education Project supported this on-line college course which includes free chapter guides for instructors, sample syllabus, exam questions, bibliography, and slides. Enasorn’s sessions on gender and Morrow’s sessions on households and families are of special interest.

Women and Disaster syllabus (August 2001): http://www.gdnonline.org/sourcebook/index.htm. Lower-division college class developed by E. Enasorn for the women’s studies program at Metropolitan State College of Denver.

Gender and Disaster Network: http://www.gdnonline.org. International website, network and listserv for resource sharing, advocacy and dialogue.


6 Bateman, Julie and Robert Edwards, 2002. Gender and evacuation: a closer look at why women are more likely to evacuate for hurricanes. Natural Hazards Review 3 (3).
16 Buvnir, Maya, 1999, op. cit.
18 For a discussion from the US, see Fothergill, 2004, op. cit.
22 Good practices and practical guidelines for gendering disaster risk management are referenced in the on-line Gender and Disaster Sourcebook: www.gdsonline.org/sourcebook/index.htm.
Film Review

Lesbian Feminists Camp on Brokeback Mountain?

By: Jane Ward

University of California Riverside

It's been several months now since Brokeback Mountain received its original whirlwind of attention and accolades from both straight and gay audiences alike. However, as my students continue to sing the film's praises and invoke Jack and Ennis' story to describe the dangers of the closet, I can't seem to leave Brokeback Mountain behind me. The latest in a series of experiences of feminist alienation from queer culture, the story made me yawn, and then it made me angry.

In those glorious and timeless mountains with Ennis and Jack, it's easy to forget that their tale begins in 1965. Aside from brief glimpses of women's feathered hair and blue eye shadow, the film reads as a contemporary saga of love wrecked by homophobia. Surely there are still countless men who fall in love while in close quarters in fraternities or the military, but who can't endure the consequences of a "gay life." As my students point out, "this could be their story too!"

Yet our ability to imagine the particularly violent homophobia of 1970s Wyoming is crucial to the viability of the story line, allowing viewers to suspend disbelief, and to not ask questions like, "why is gay sex only available in Mexico?" or, "why don't our protagonists figure out a way to be together and be honest with their wives—even though it's really, really, really hard to do so?" Yet, the era in which the film is set—along with Ennis' traumatic story about his father showing him what happens to faggots—provides the audience with ample evidence of the fate of Ennis and Jack's relationship. As I watched the tragic story unfold, I knew that nothing else was possible. Few words could be said, but more importantly, someone had to die (as Vito Russo's book *The Celluloid Closet* reminds us).

While the film has been repeatedly described as "groundbreaking," it tells an old and familiar story of the love that has no name; it's the story of homosexual love without words. Few words, no labels, just hot sex in the open wilderness. As butch/trans writer Willy Wilkinson describes the film, it's the new "Well of Loneliness," repackaged for the times. Yet little critical attention has been paid to this repackaging, or to why we're still telling this story at all.

To my surprise, Melissa, a queer slash-writer friend of mine (who eats up anything with hot men having sex) told me she found the film boring. She explained that the "wordless fuck" was the first convention of slash-writing, popular in the late 1970s. Then came the "fuck or die" tradition (two men must fuck or someone will kill them), then came tropes of disease and recovery (think HIV). Now, decades later, anything goes in slash writing, but the "wordless fuck" is considered passé.

On the one hand, we might view the wordless fuck as the sad and inevitable result of homophobia in 1970s Wyoming. They love each other, but they can't say it. They want to be together, but doing so requires "coming out," and the consequences are too dangerous. Homophobia is too much to bear. Gay liberation is raging in "the city" by this point in the film's timeline, but we imagine that it certainly isn't available in Wyoming. If only they had lived in San Francisco, they'd be wearing nipple clamps by now.

On the other hand, my sense is that the wordless fuck is exactly what viewers have found so appealing about the film. The simplicity, the nature, the quiet, the tent, the grunting... the pure, raw sex. No words. No gay culture. No nelly stuff. No femininity. Perhaps we are all a little nostalgic for a time before Queer Eye and the mass commodification of queer culture. As I'm sure Ang Lee intended, I was anxious and tense in those moments when we were back in Ennis' dingy apartment, in the midst of the soul-killing domesticity, or, at the mercy of Jack's ultra-
blonde, greedy, and neurotic wife. The film made me beg to return to the mountains… when WILL they get back to those mountains? The apartment is so depressing. The sex with the wife is so depressing. Please, get us to the mountains!

From a feminist perspective, I am wary of romanticizing sex without words. Women are so frequently associated with "too much talking" and accused of being "high maintenance" when it comes to sex. We are told that women want discussion, deliberation, connection, romance; whereas men, and especially gay men, know how to "just fuck." Brokeback Mountain certainly makes use of these stereotypes, and the film's depiction of women is questionable. Desperate, unsexy, boring, catty, cold, and easily-duped, the women in the film would make anyone yearn for a grunty tumble in a tent with a dude who just wants to fuck and ride horses. While I don't doubt Ennis and Jack's authentic desire for one another, it's also important to note that part of what makes them (and their sex) so hot is the film's contrasting depiction of how unsexy women and femininity are.

This is not to reproduce an essentialist idea of what women and femininity are "really" about. Many (in fact, most) dykes I know are into uncomplicated, unprocessed, nonmonogamous sex these days. What I feel irked about is that many dykes seem to think the primary way to achieve "hot sex" is to expel anything that could be perceived as 1970s lesbian-ish (throw out your candles!!), and embrace all things 1970s Castro gay. It was a novel development for a minute, but now I'm just bored. It makes me want to rub placenta or menstrual blood on my face - that's raw, right?

I couldn't help view this film in the context of the growing dyke obsession with fag porn and fag culture. Every dyke I know loves Brokeback Mountain and has nearly purchased chaps (if she didn't own them already). At one level, I too was drawn into the filmic beauty (the mountains were majestic, and the cowboy aesthetic was appealing, I admit). But the subcultural context of glorifying gay male erotics and rejecting "lesbian sex" as outmoded is also important. The hipster dyke night in LA is now held at a seedy gay male leather bar, where dykes play pool while watching gay porn. On Our Backs, the "lesbian sex" magazine, regularly gives instruction about how to have sex "just like" gay men. And we all know the story now about how cheesy, weird, and "not hot" lesbian porn is (all that plot and talking… and too many femmes with long nails?). Gay male porn, on the other hand, gets right to the fuck.

The dyke obsession with all things male, faggy, and "raw" (and the often corresponding rejection of lesbian culture and lesbian sex as boring and passé) may be productive at some level, but the disparities are also worth noting. Can we imagine the counter-universe in which gay men agree that lesbian porn is the new hot thing, or in which a film about closeted lesbians camping together in the late 1960s spawns a gay male obsession? It doesn't happen.

While I felt sad for our repressed, self-centered, abusive, non-communicative protagonist Ennis who left behind him a trail of damaged women, I also noted how much he reminded me of my own alcoholic, emotionally absent, and heterosexual father. Had my father been queer and closeted, would our distant relationship be explained and forgiven? Would he be brave, rebellious and sexy?

Ennis and Jack's story is a tale of the costs of heteronormative masculinity, of which homophobia is almost always one component. Yet stories of the painful loss of intimacy and love that men experience as a result of hegemonic masculinity too often rely on positioning women as the primary symbol of the burdens of manhood.

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List three numerical areas in order of importance: #1  #2  #3

Please list the names and addresses of friends and colleagues to whom you wish us to send information and a membership form. Please print complete addresses:

SWS President (2006): Christine E. Bose

Make check or money order (in U.S. currency) payable to:
Sociologists For Women in Society
Send to:
SWS Executive Office
URI Sociology
Chafee Social Science Center
Kingston, RI 02881
Office: 401.874.9510
Fax: 401.874.2588
Email: sws@etal.uri.edu
Local and Regional Chapters

**ACTIVE STATUS**
*(Meet on a regular basis)*

**TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA**
Irene Padavic (ipadavic@fsu.edu)
Pat Martin (pmartin@fsu.edu)

**LANNING, MICHIGAN**
Julie Hartman (hartma75@msu.edu)
Lori Baralt (baraltlo@msu.edu)

**LAS VEGAS, NEVADA**
(http://www.unlv.edu/faculty2/jkeene/SWS/)
Jennifer Keene (jkeene@unlv.nevada.edu)
Anastasia Prokos (prokosa@unlv.nevada.edu)

**NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK**
Jackie Skiles (jsnyc@yahoo.com)

**NORTH CAROLINA**
Southeastern: Leslie Hossfeld (HossfeldL@uncw.edu)

**AKRON, OHIO**
Elizabeth Grossman (eg12@uakron.edu)

**POINEER VALLEY, WESTERN MASSACHUSSETS**
Kat Jones (kjones@soc.umass.edu)

**REGIONAL**

**MIDWEST (MSWS)**
Heather Laube (hlaube@umflint.edu)

**SOUTH (SWS-SOUTH)**
Michelle Emerson (memerson@kennesaw.edu)

**WEST (SWS-WEST)**
Anastasia Prokos (prokosa@unlv.nevada.edu)

**EAST (SWS-EAST)**
Laura Steck (laurawestck@yahoo.com)

**INTERESTED IN FORMING CHAPTER**

**ALBANY/TRI-CITIES, NEW YORK**
Sally Dear (sdear@binghamton.edu)

**MINNESOTA**
Teresa Swartz (tswartz@umn.edu)

Please send chapter updates to Mary Virnocne (MV23@humboldt.edu)

Sociologists for Women in Society
Leslie Hossfeld, Editor
Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice
University of North Carolina Wilmington
601 South College Road
Wilmington, North Carolina 28403

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