President’s Message

Reflecting & (Re)imagining SWS

by Tracy E. Ore, SWS President

The Winter Meetings in San Antonio reminded me of why I am so proud to be a member of this wonderful organization. From the resiliency and creativity demonstrated by those who managed to arrive despite the travel difficulties of rain, sleet, snow, and ice, to the wealth of knowledge shared in formal and informal settings, the Sociologists for Women in Society is truly a priceless organization. And oh, can some of you women dance!

It was my honor to accept the presidency from Denise Segura and feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from her leadership. Her meetings last year focusing on antiracist feminisms (continued on next page)

Interning with the UN Gender Analysis Unit

by Daniela Jauk, University of Akron

Some of my American friends shook their heads when I said I’d fly to NYC on 9/11/2010, but my reason was good enough. Two days later I had my first day of a 9-week internship at the UN Headquarters which is offered three times a year to enrolled grad students. Although it may sound a bit competitive (281 grad students from more than 40 countries were accepted out of the 2500 applicants for the Fall 2010 term), and is unpaid, I would recommend and do it again.

The application is fairly easy and it is an invaluable experience to be in the middle of international diplomacy. The fall term is particularly interesting because every September the UN holds its General Assembly meetings, where presidents and high officials from its 192 member States come together. The whole UN district around 45th avenue then resembles a high security district, and if you are lucky you can see polit-celebrities from around the globe (surrounded by an abundance of ridiculously cinematic looking bodyguards).

I had the opportunity to work for the Gender Analysis Unit which is one of four sub-units in Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW). Since January 1st 2011 this unit as well as DAW do not exist anymore and “UNWomen,” the new gender architecture in the UN has become operational. Michelle Bachelet, the former president of Chile, was appointed as head of this new unit on the second day of my internship, September (continued on page 6)
with regard to immigration, racial struggle and the resistance of youth of color, communities of color, and immigrants from the Global South certainly taught me a great deal and set a standard for me in planning this year’s meetings that I did my best to live up to. Denise’s leadership was evident not only at the meetings but throughout the year as we entered into the often cumbersome process of strategic planning. She was continuously mindful of making certain that the process was inclusive and would enable SWS to be a more effective and welcoming organization. I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with Denise and am very happy that we will continue to be able to do so.

The theme of this year’s meeting was “Reflecting & (Re)imagining SWS,” which afforded us the opportunity to pause and reflect on the path that we have taken to become this well-established organization and to (re)imagine our future both inside and outside of the academy. One of the key components of this process was a conversation on Friday with our external strategic planning consultants from Boffo Productions, Evy Smith and Jaleesa Hazzard (like many, Janiece Evans-Page was unable to make it to San Antonio due to weather).

Together, they walked us through their process and findings and facilitated a very necessary conversation about where we might go next. Please see the slides in this issue for a summary; the entire presentation is available online to logged-in members.

An additional key event in this process was the plenary on Saturday morning featuring founders and other members of Sister to Sister: Barbara Risman, Corinne Castro, Kristy Shih, Shirley Hill, Denise Segura, and Bandana Purkayastha. The reflections and insights they offered will be very helpful in identifying ways to move SWS towards becoming a fully inclusive organization.

There were many opportunities throughout the meetings for attendees to benefit from the wealth of knowledge of our colleagues. There were over 40 presentations of emerging and continuing work at the research roundtables, workshops and conversations on topics such as mentoring, securing employment in applied settings, navigating the academy at various career stages, getting published, translating academic research to non-academic audiences, navigating the job market in the midst of the economic crisis, and even yoga and self-defense. I am very appreciative of the individuals and committees who organized these sessions and was so pleased to see packed rooms—even when the sun finally decided to come out!

A particular highlight of the meetings was the session organized by Katja Guenther and sponsored by the Discrimination Committee on working with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Commissioner Chai Feldblum, along with panelists Pat Martin and Sheryl Skaggs, shared rich information regarding EEOC policy and practice, resources, changes in discrimination law, and avenues for seeking assistance for those who have experienced discrimination. In addition, we had the opportunity to learn how sociological research can help inform equal employment opportunity policy and implementation.

The weekend was also marked by opportunities for celebration. At lunch on Friday we recognized the recipients of the Undergraduate Social Action Awards. [See related article.] The projects of Abigail LeMay, Stephanie Elwood, and Jess Acosta were inspiring and very much in keeping with the work that SWS has supported over the years. On Friday evening we had a somewhat impromptu Happy Hour for Dana Britton to recognize her leadership as Editor of Gender & Society. Finally, on Saturday
we spent some time reflecting as we honored some of our founders at a lunch celebration. Words were offered by Pauline Bart, Judith Lorber, Helen Raisz, and Gaye Tuchman and I shared some notes sent in by those unable to attend as well as some memories from archives shared by Laura Kramer, another of our fantastic founders. All together, these celebrations provided even further evidence of the strength of our organization.

The creativity, commitment, and talent of the membership was ultimately exhibited at the banquet and silent auction on Saturday. With uplifted spirits resulting from the satisfaction that comes from doing hard work, as well as the arrival of normal temperatures, members arrived at Pearl Stable ready to get down to some serious fun. Margaret Vitullo was particularly industrious and creative as she worked to raise $1,000.00 for a single auction item (donated by our caterer) and get the auction off to a rousing start. Our tag-team of auctioneers (including MaryBeth Stalp, Adina Nack, Trina Smith, Heather Laube, Michael Ramirez, Georgianne Davis, and Tamara Smith) used humor, guilt, and any other tactic they could conjure to keep people laughing while writing out checks. Members even offered to auction off their own personal talents, such as Stephanie Nawyn who demonstrated her kickboxing skills on the dance floor (thanks, Heather Laube for being willing to be her subject)! All together, we were successful in raising over $4,100 for The Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. Executive Director Graciela Sánchez, along with several other members of The Esperanza’s staff, expressed appreciation for the contribution and admiration for the fundraising talents of our members. As an added bonus, they all stayed with us after dinner, dancing and laughing and enjoying the company of good feminists.

I would like to thank everyone who helped make the Winter Meetings so successful. I have been so fortunate to work with such a wonderful group of people, including a long-time group of friends and wise advisors, committee members and chairs, and even new members of SWS. I also want to especially thank Executive Officer Jessica Holden Sherwood and her assistant Rachel Weisz-Smith who worked tirelessly— and sometimes in front of—the scenes to make everything run smoothly despite the loops that were often thrown at them by nature and other forces. Finally, I want to express appreciation for the work of the staff of El Tropicano, particularly Angela Alvarado and Miguel Perez. They took care of our every need and request, making the home of our meetings warm and comfortable. The generosity of time and creativity on the part of all involved in the Winter Meetings is something that I am so thankful for, and I look forward to collaborating together again.

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**Mission**
SWS is a non-profit, scientific and educational organization of sociologists and others dedicated to:
- Maximizing the effectiveness of and professional opportunities for women in sociology
- Exploring the contributions which sociology can, does and should make to the investigation and humanization of current gender arrangements
- Improving women’s lives and creating feminist social change

**Vision**
Professional global organization of feminist sociologists who actively advance feminist scholarship, gender equality, and social justice.

**Values**
We are dedicated to feminist scholarly excellence
We are supportive of feminist community-building
We are committed to professional development and advancement
We promote gender equality through activism and advocacy
We embrace diversity and inclusion, collaboration, mutual respect, and support

**Voice**
Supportive Feminist Sociologists and Activists

**Goals**

**Organization**
- Increase organizational inclusiveness and active participation

**Programs & Services**
- Build strength, increase influence in discipline, on campus for feminist scholarship & activism
- Foster activism for women

**Outreach**
- Raise SWS visibility outside those who study gender
- Promote org position as thought leader

**Strategies:**
- Design, approve and implement governance structure and decision-making process and procedures, committee & nominating structure
- Determine level of support/staff needed to meet goals (capacity building)
- Define and implement process for active participation for meeting, etc.
- Research practitioners, international orgs, design outreach, implement (RECOMMEND delay expansion strategy)
- Formalize regional and local chapter structures to engage membership
- Design a program that will actively engage & promote, recruit and develop diverse feminist sociologists

**Strategies:**
- Design and implement a mentoring and professional development program, allocate resources and capacity to effort
- For feminist activism, identify a SWS platform with national scope, develop program and implement
- Investigate opportunities to monetize capabilities that are inherent in organization, i.e. social entrepreneurship (like the Journal)
- Formalize Journal research process and make available to membership

**Strategies:**
- Investigate virtual solutions for meeting and networking as alternatives, i.e. streaming, own social network, mentor-matching, other P&S solutions.
- Investigate cloud and SaaS solutions for document library, virtual Organization
- Cause marketing opportunities identified and implemented at meetings
- Capacity to hire full-time PR expert, for placement of thought leadership and expert articles/quotes and messaging; provide ongoing media training
- Design Message Platform
- Digital media; utilize website, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. & integrate with new messaging
**Mission**

**Vision**

**Values**

(see above)

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**Goals**

**Finance**
- Assure financial future & investigate new/ additional revenue streams
- Allocate financial resources to best support the organization’s mission & vision, and to implement the strategies

**Culture**
- Manage transition from where you are to where we want to go; shared values and shared behaviors
- Retain and engage members

**Strategies:**
- Investigate opportunities to monetize capabilities that are inherent in organization, i.e. social entrepreneurship (like Journal)
- After completing the organization, culture, programs and services and marketing structure, design financial framework necessary to support each accordingly.

**Strategies:**
- At Winter Meeting 2011, identify & internalize shared values and shared behaviors necessary to fuel and embrace transition of organization

**NOTE** that this Plan is the recommendation of our consultants, and is under review within SWS.
have enjoyed the mentoring of Dr. Sarah Swider and Dr. Susan Lee within the context of the International Committee of SWS. So this was actually not completely new to me and I have been visiting the CSW 53 already as representative for SWS and teaching assistant for a global sociology class Dr. Swider had designed. My advisor Dr. Feltey and my sisterfriend Jodi Ross from the local SWS chapter in Akron offered all time email support.

I also got the chance to observe and take analytical notes about the Third Commission (Social, Humanitarian Cultural Affairs Committee) meeting of the General Assembly which has been discussing advancement of women for more than three days. In fact, due to SWS networking from Barret Katuna, I actually got to see president Obama! It was tremendously interesting how important specific language is in the context of diplomatic discussion and comments from members States. An unequivocal and cautious use of language was also important in my major assignment of the internship. Several weeks I worked on the annual report of the Secretary General on the situation of Palestine women. This is a complex, highly politicized topic, thus only UN reports and sources could be used and many critical NGO sources had to be ignored.

I really enjoyed the international atmosphere created by my very diverse colleagues. I also was given the opportunity to attend the gazillion of events happening in the UN celebrating 10 year anniversary of “Resolution 1325,” the first resolution ever by the Security Council to stress women as active participants in peace building processes. My supervisor Sylvia Hordosch (who is not only feminist and supercool, but also an Austrian like me) really gave me the feeling that my work is appreciated and was very supportive of my attempt to get inspiration for a dissertation topic during my internship.

A first idea is to look at the evolution of the concept of gender, and different gender policies which have been shaped by the effort to find the common denominator across all world regions. I had the honor to brunch with Dr. Judith Lorber who encouraged me to even get

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some first exploratory interviews in my last weeks here.

What remains to be said? Thank you, SWS, for being the inspiring and supportive network you are. If you have any suggestions for my dissertation work or are a grad student and want more info or some tips for crafting your own application, please don’t hesitate to email me da18@zips.uakron.edu.

Further resources:

CSW: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/
UNWomen: http://www.unwomen.org/

SWS Membership:
Like Being on a Roller Derby Team?
by Kylie Parrotta

Editor’s Note: In San Antonio, Kylie mentioned to me that the SWS meeting reminded her of her dissertation research. We discussed it and I requested a newsletter article. Kylie is a doctoral candidate at North Carolina State University.

As social scientists, we are often struck by the connections between our research and our real world experiences. While I sat in the meeting in San Antonio about the organizational identity and goals of SWS, I couldn’t stop thinking about my research on roller derby.

I spent two and a half years in the field studying a roller derby league and have been a member of SWS since 2006. What, do you ask, do SWS and modern roller derby have in common? Both are endeavors started by women to give women an empowerment opportunity in male dominated arenas (academia and sport).

In San Antonio I saw the early exchanges between SWS founders, and learned about these women setting up an organization to strengthen and promote feminist scholarship and scholars. According to the SWS website, in 1969 a large group of women attended a “counter-convention” instead of the ASA meetings to discuss their experiences as women in academia and twenty of these women founded SWS as a result.

Derby has a shockingly similar foundation. Although it was revived in Austin, Texas in the early 2000’s by a man, derby was eventually taken over by four women known as the Bad Girl Good Women Productions. Skaters became frustrated with their lack of say in the organization and split to form a more democratically organized alternative. This split ignited modern flat-track roller derby, making it a grassroots effort, spawning from feeling alienated from owner controlled derby.

This similarly in early organizational trajectory makes the comparison between SWS and derby a fascinating mental exercise.

In the strategic planning meeting (and conversations during the meeting), consultants presented data indicating that members have differing opinions regarding the goals of SWS and the organization’s effectiveness of meeting those goals. The presenters informed us that SWS, a democratic organization meant to improve the lives of both academic and non-academic women, was really only fulfilling the needs and meeting the expectations of some members. The survey results conveyed a split between the members, disagreements on organizational values, and feelings that not all members were equally valued. How could members of an organization meant to be inclusive, welcoming, and supportive of all women, leave some feeling voiceless?

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Through my dissertation research, I have explored this same set of problems in a parallel organization. Most Women’s Flat-Track Derby Association (WFTDA) leagues are non-profit organizations that are “by the skaters, for the skaters.” In other words, the skaters do the work to make the league run, but they also control the fruits of their labors. The WFTDA mandates that all member leagues are owned and operated by women (two thirds of board of directors must be women skaters). Just as the Strategic Planning survey results showed that some members felt that SWS was exclusionary and cliquish, my interviews with skaters revealed these same feelings.

The voting practices and hierarchies of SWS and the Star Killer Rollergirls (SKRG) (pseudonym) are similar. Both organizations grant members a vote, both have committees with directors, and both have an executive council or board of directors. Although all skaters are ensured a voice and a vote through the bylaws, SKRG members discussed a “culture of fear” that kept them from speaking up regarding league issues. Because skaters within the league compete with one another for spots on the team roster, much like SWS members compete with one another for jobs and awards, the egalitarian principles are often undermined by competitiveness.

It is important to remember that both of these organizations are attempting to be democratic and egalitarian within the larger contexts of academia and sport, both of which are shaped by capitalism and competition (see Kleinman 1996 for an analysis of the struggles that members of an alternative health organization faced).

Both SWS and the Star Killer Rollergirls are democratic organizations at transition points. The survey suggested that veteran SWSers, much like “granny” skaters, are advanced in their careers, often feel comfortable voicing their concerns, and may have different ideas about the organizational goals. Similarly, the responses of newer SWS members, much like “freshmeat” skaters, suggest that how integrated they feel may depend on whether they were brought in under a mentor (The Hand Program parallels the Big Sister Skater program), and that this has consequences for their willingness to join committees or speak out.

As one member mentioned during the SWS meeting, the veteran members cannot bear the brunt of responsibility of making new members feel included. As I learned through my experiences gaining access to my field site, skaters who have a well-established “big sister” and skaters who get involved with committees are the ones who feel incorporated. Just as I started going to different committee meetings for derby and started feeling like I understood the league and began feeling included, I have taken that route for getting involved with SWS. My Hand Mentor welcomed me to join her at meetings and encouraged me to get involved on a committee. After joining the Social Action committee, I met a welcoming bunch of members, and began feeling comfortable expressing my ideas and concerns.

My advice to other “newbies” is to take advantage of the mentoring opportunities that are in place, like the Hand Program and the Sister to Sister program, and to join a committee (students could start by attending the student concerns committee).

How can women forming alternative organizations work against reproducing the same structures that they initially were resisting? How can we ensure participation in a volunteer organization and ensure that all voices are being heard as we move forward?

Neither organization has yet found the answer, but the fact that the groups are asking these questions provides some optimism for positive change. Let us continue -- along with Roller Derby teams -- to ask how we can become an organization that is more fully inclusive.

Reference

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**STUDENTS:**

There is a new SWS student listserv!

To join, students should send their preferred email address and institutional affiliation to Laura Logan at loganls@k-state.edu. A Google email address (gmail) is NOT required.

All students are welcome and encouraged to join! If you have any questions, please contact Laura Logan at loganls@k-state.edu.
**People’s…**

Note: after this issue, this feature moves from the newsletter to the website. Find "People’s” activities:

➔ at http://www.socwomen.org/web/media/sws-newsmakers.html
➔ as the “SWS Newsmakers” drop-down under "Media" at the top level menu.

**AWARDS**

Maxine Atkinson is recipient of the 2011 Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award from the American Sociological Association.

Sheri Kunovich was named the Golden Mustang of 2010, a teaching award at Southern Methodist University.

Barbara Risman is recipient of the 2011 Award for the Public Understanding of Sociology from the American Sociological Association.

Verta Taylor is recipient of the 2011 Jessie Bernard Award from the American Sociological Association.

Miranda Waggoner received the Rose Laub Coser Dissertation Proposal Award, which recognizes "an outstanding doctoral dissertation proposal in the area of the family or gender and society." Her proposal title was "Anticipating Motherhood and Medicalization: The Emergence of Preconception Care, 1980-2010."

**JOBS**

Hae Yeon Choo accepted the position of Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto.

Sonya Conner accepted the position of Assistant Professor of Sociology at Worcester State University.

Julie Shayne, Lecturer in Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington Bothell, has joined the Latin American and Caribbean Studies department at UW Seattle as an Affiliate Associate Professor. She was also promoted to Affiliate Associate Professor in the Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies (formerly Women Studies) department at UW Seattle.

Linda Treiber received tenure and promotion to Associate Professor of Sociology at Kennesaw State University. She is also Assistant Chair of the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice.

Note: after this issue, this feature moves from the newsletter to the website. Find "People’s” activities:

➔ at http://www.socwomen.org/web/media/sws-newsmakers.html
➔ as the “SWS Newsmakers” drop-down under "Media" at the top level menu.

**BOOKS**

These now appear on the SWS Members’ Bookshelf online. Find it:

➔ at http://www.socwomen.org/web/resources/members-bookshelf.html
➔ as a drop-down under "Resources" at the top level menu.

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**SWS: Making Change with Investment Dollars**

SWS is committed to Socially Responsible Investing (SRI), and our advisors and our portfolio reflect that commitment. This space spotlights some of the companies in our investment portfolio.

Clean energy is an obvious choice for us, and SWS recently invested $25,000 in the Berkshire Wind Power Cooperative. The co-op recently installed ten wind turbines on a hill in Western Massachusetts. Together, the turbines can provide electricity for six thousand homes annually. If that electricity were instead produced the old fashioned way, it would add thousands of metric tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

For more information, see http://berkshirewindcoop.com.
From her earliest days on the Colby College campus, Jess Acosta felt a need to get involved to address the chilly climate she saw around her. “The lack of visible diversity on the campus struck me almost immediately” she wrote, and inspired her to work to reinvigorate that campus’ LGBTQI-Ally group, that was nearly inactive her first year. She quickly took over leadership of this organization, organizing and reinstating a yearly pride celebration.

This was but the beginning of Jess’ activism on campus. She went on not only to grow her own campus organization, but helped organize a New-England wide conference with 150 attendees, and lobbied to create a new, institutionally-funded position in the Dean of Student’s office to advocate for LGBTQI students and work with student leaders.

In addition to these campus leadership roles, Jess helped facilitate statewide political activism as well. Connecting the students in her organization with the local chapter of Equality Maine, she coordinated student volunteers to fight for Marriage equality in the 2009 election. One of her proudest accomplishments however, is simply the increased visibility of LGBTQ issues on campus that now exists as a result of her work, combating the social isolation she initially experienced, and creating an environment in which students feel safe coming out.

Jess’ current projects include lobbying the board of trustees to build a women’s and gender and sexual diversity center on campus, and working to train younger peers in campus activism and organizational leadership, providing guidance and mentorship as they find their way. Overall, Jess is committed to creating ongoing and sustainable change as a result of her work, writing, “I believe that my work at Colby has excited younger students and leaders to continue moving Colby in the direction of building a more intelligent and welcoming community.” At the conference, Jess shared her newly developing passion fostered through a winter break program that gave her the opportunity to teach elementary school children in Louisiana. Jess is considering a variety of paths after she graduates, from teaching, to graduate school, to law school. Whatever path she takes, however, she is certain that activism and a commitment to social change will remain central.

Abigail LeMay, a soon-to-be graduate of Stetson University in DeLand, Florida, has a passion for pay equity and it shows. This talented young woman was awarded one of this year’s SWS Social Action Awards for her commitment to activism on behalf of women in the workforce. During her junior year, Abigail founded an affiliate of the National Organization for Women on her university campus. Her devotion to eradicating the gendered wage gap led her to develop a project that would impact an audience much wider than her university colleagues. Abigail helped organize DeLand’s first ever “Equal Pay Day.” According to Abigail, “[t]he goal was simple: to initiate conversation about pay equity amongst individuals who may not have even known that women are paid less.” Abigail approached downtown DeLand business owners, providing them with information about the gendered wage gap and asking them to participate in her educational campaign. Despite being called a “liar” and a “socialist” by several hostile business owners, Abigail persisted. Ultimately, she was able to persuade five businesses to get involved. During Equal Pay Day 2010, these businesses offered 20% discounts to women customers while Abigail and other NOW members distributed information about the wage gap on the streets of downtown DeLand. This experience was “humbling” for Abigail, who explained, “I felt like I was finally completely immersed in something bigger than myself.”

Abigail’s commitment to social action on behalf of women did not end with Equal Pay Day. Her successful organizing attracted the attention of campus officials, who invited her to develop a workshop for Stetson University’s “Town Hall Meeting on Diversity.” This invitation provided her with the opportunity to educate approximately 130 students, faculty, and staff about “Pay (continued on next page)
Inequity in the Workplace.” Moreover, Abigail has vowed that Equal Pay Day 2011 will make an even bigger impact on the DeLand community than the first. Among other events, Abigail has planned a panel discussion on the gendered wage gap that will be open to all citizens of DeLand and she has invited a representative from The Wage Project to host a workshop for female undergraduate students on salary negotiation and, according to Abigail, “why it is so important that women stand up for their right to equal pay in the workplace.”

In addition to her work with NOW on the Stetson University campus, Abigail represents the American Association of University Women as a Student Advisory Council member. She has acted in and produced Stetson University’s performance of The Vagina Monologues and she has represented Stetson’s student body on the university’s Gender Equity Council and Women and Gender Studies Committee. Furthermore, Abigail has been awarded numerous university honors for her social justice advocacy, activism, and research. This spring, in her last semester at Stetson, Abigail is working with university faculty and administrators to conduct research and perform a needs assessment for the development of a Women’s Center on campus. After graduating this May, Abigail hopes to attend graduate school in women’s studies. Abigail, who resolutely declares – “I want to be the person who inspires others to take action, to get other women motivated to realize their worth in society, and to actively pursue it” – credits her undergraduate training in sociology for inspiring her feminist activism.

Stephanie Elwood planted the seeds for her SWS Action Award winning experiences in the summer of 2008. She participated in a formal Louisiana State University program that linked her with low-income local high school students developing life and career skills. The program paid the high school students to harvest, sell and cook produce grown by LSU students.

“The program was wonderful — so much so that I decided to take an administrative position the following year in order to keep it running,” wrote Stephanie. Yet those plans changed quickly when LSU dismantled the program because of resource issues.

Stephanie turned what could have been a dead end into a challenging passage. Inspired by an interdisciplinary intellectual outlook and a passion for the “forgotten” neighborhoods of Baton Rouge, she decided to tend the gardens anyway — on her own. She wrote:

I’ll never forget the first day I met the young people who eventually became my first Garden Leaders. They were walking home from school and I was working in the garden. They took a short cut through the garden and we began to chat. I asked them if they wanted to work there and told them I could pay them in produce. That’s when 7-year-old Joseph looked me in the eyes and said enthusiastically, “Hey, just today I was thinking, ‘man, I need a job!’”

From there she grew her gardening network. In the summer months, when local kids had little to do, 20 to 30 kids joined Stephanie in the garden each week. Adults in the community started to provide snacks and community organizations took notice.

There are stores on every corner in “The South” where you can easily purchase alcohol or candy, but not fresh, healthy produce. This community garden provided us with more than we knew what to do with!

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Yet Stephanie worked with the kids and the community to figure out a plan to do plenty with the food and experiences they were developing.

During the following months Stephanie involved her friend, Marguerite in formalizing “The South Garden Project” and establishing these goals:

1. To work with adults and children who live in food deserts, or areas without fresh produce, to help implement community gardens;
2. To teach basic organic gardening and leadership skills to the youth involved; and
3. To make sure the gardens we build are sustainable.

She also used grassroots organizing to involve existing community organizations in planning and developing the Garden Project. For example, she and Marguerite began work with the New Ark Baptist church. This organization had a large senior presence in their congregation. With that organization they established garden #2 and laid the foundation for intergenerational gardening and relationships, while identifying small grants in the community to help support their work. At the same time, they initiated relationships with local farmers and secured commitments to supplement garden produce with other locally grown produce at regular farmers markets. Regular access to fresh local produce began to take root in The South.

At the SWS Winter meeting in San Antonio, Stephanie shared plans for launching a fourth garden and movement toward applying for non-profit status. She also reported on her work linking the new program back to the university by involving LSU students in formal service learning experiences in the gardens. Stephanie wrote: “Community gardens are a win-win situation, and give everyone involved an opportunity to bloom.”

In December 2010 Stephanie graduated from Louisiana State University. She earned a Bachelor’s degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with minors in Horticulture, Women’s and Gender Studies, and Sociology. Sarah Becker, Assistant Professor of Sociology & Women’s and Gender Studies, nominated Stephanie for the SWS Undergraduate Social Activism Award.
Guide to the new SWS Website

by Jessica Holden Sherwood and Theta Pavis

Good news: after months of work, our new website is live. (The bad news is that a valuable website is never truly finished – some of the below pages still need attention.) Here is the layout of SWS’s new online home. Redundancy in the sitemap – things appearing in more than one place – is deliberate.

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Feminist Mobilization for Peace—Fact Sheet
Naama Nagar for Sociologists for Women in Society
Spring 2011

Feminist peace movements are a global phenomenon encompassing a plethora of groups with varying forms of organizations, degrees of institutionalization, agendas, strategies and modes of action.

Motivations and Explanations
Most explanations for the formation of feminist peace movements point to the masculine–feminine dichotomy between militarism and wars as masculinist institutions performed as against feminine imagery (e.g. objects of protection, helpless victims, the country, the nation, etc.) while exclusive of women. Women are therefore seen as either structurally or behaviorally more likely to take on anti-bellicist positions (see Elshtain 1987, Hartsock 1989, Ruddick 1989). Corresponding to these explanations, a major critique of feminist peace groups is that they reinforce, rather than challenge, the above patriarchal dichotomy and that they cannot, consequentially, successfully challenge the institutions of war. Other explanations for the mobilization of feminists separately from other peace movements focus on resources that feminist organizations can provide, including: safe spaces for activists, a chance to explore and promote feminist dynamics within the movement, the opportunity to pursue a joint (feminist and peace) agenda fully without compromising either claim, and the potential to leverage peace activity to further feminist claims (Cockburn, 2007). Last but not least, feminist peace mobilization follows from the understanding that warfare and militarization are gendered phenomena and hence require responses that adequately address them as such, through movements that incorporate feminist and peace analysis and agenda (see Enloe, 2007, 2000a, 2000b).

Agendas and Issues
Four general issues characterize feminist mobilization for peace:

• **Resistance to warfare and militarism** takes a central stage in feminist peace mobilization. It focuses primarily on opposition to ongoing wars, invasions, military attacks and colonial occupations, as well as on demilitarization and building a culture of peace. While some movements work within their societies, there is also cooperation between movements from occupying and occupied nations, although that remains a contentious issue (see Cockburn, ibid.). Within this broad spectrum, **Motherhood**, in particular, is continually a major focus and channel for mobilization the world over, and a topic for much research. At the same time, the framing of much feminist mobilization around motherhood has also been problematized (See for example, the *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative*).

• Over the past decades, new topics and emphases have sprung. For one, more and more attention is drawn also to the issue of **gendered aspects of warfare** and in particular to the topic of **women as victims of armed conflict**. For example, feminist peace movements mobilize around gender-based violence during wars, such as Femicide/gendercide, rape or trafficking (for more details on this topic please refer to a previous SWS fact sheet: Kutz-Flamenbaum 2006).

• To address this problem, **participation of women in peace and justice efforts** has become a global priority, emphasizing the links between gender equality, development and peace. Some of these efforts led, in 2000, to *UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325*, which recognizes the gendered aspects of armed conflict and calls for the inclusion (mainstreaming) of gender perspective and of women in peacekeeping efforts and post-conflict negotiation, repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and reconstruction. A decade later, various obstacles still hinder the successful implementation of the resolution. Critiques claim that the inherent logic of the resolution cannot challenge war-waging institutions and warfare. Nevertheless the resolution remains a major avenue for mobilization and draws continuous support, efforts and resources from politicians and activists (Anderlini et al., 2010).

• Another important contemporary trend in feminist mobilization is the development of broad and holistic **re-definitions of peace and security** to include personal, environmental, economic and political security, security from gender-based-violence, nuclear disarmament and even democracy and full citizenship. A concept widely used today in relation to these types of redefinitions is **Human Security**, first coined in the UNDP’s 1994 Human Development Report. The UN has continued to promote this concept through the work of various agencies, mainly the Human Security Unit. This notion also enjoys

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growing interest among academic circles, expressed in the number of published works, research grants, scholarships and conferences. Feminist peace organizations, on their part, have taken on themselves the monitoring of the status of threats to Human Security and its advancement using public advocacy, outreach and education to raise awareness and by promoting “freedom from want and freedom from fear” on the ground (Kaldor and Beebe 2011, Sutton et al. 2008).

Channels for Mobilization
There is a plethora of channels for feminist peace mobilization, including: Non-Governmental Organizations, activist groups, local, regional and global networks and coalitions and more.

A relatively overlooked area of feminist peace mobilization is financing. Feminist grant making agencies have a pivotal influence on – often through dialogical relations with – activist organizations, expressed in the latter's priorities, agendas and choice of discursive frameworks. Several big feminist foundations have an enduring commitment to supporting feminist peace initiatives, and through their own grantees networks they build ties among activists and organizations. Importantly, most grants flow from the global North to the global South. There are also important Southern foundations invested in this area, however even some of their own resources are donated by Northern funds.

New media offer various opportunities and tools for exchanging information and open up new options for researchers (see Christensen 2009). These developments further foster more communication across regions as well as greater visibility to voices from the world’s periphery on the one hand, but at the same time persistent inequalities of infrastructure and the cultural hegemony of the Net (mainly the prevalent use of English as well as other colonial languages) reinforce global gaps in accessibility to resources and representation (Scott 2001).

The UN has responded to and driven much of the processes of feminist peace mobilization in the past decades. The launching, in January 2011, of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or UN-Women, opens new channels for mobilization and alters others. As this new development is still under way, its anticipated global effect is yet to be studied and discussed.

Strategies
Feminist peace strategies range from direct action through humanitarian and relief work, to research, education and advocacy. Several current trends in mobilization worth noting. First, perhaps, is the growing cooperation among feminist peace movements from across the globe through coalition building, joint campaigns and conferences. Second, feminist peace organizers work closely in cooperation with various other movements: feminist, peace, social justice, LGBTQIA, environmental, religious movements and others. Third, while some groups work towards specific policy goals, many others try to highlight issues of symbolic reproduction by focusing on research, outreach, education, media and art. Lastly, there are also trends that appear contradictory, such as working with military organizations, on the one hand, versus conscientious and political objection to military conscription, on the other (see Elster and Sørensen, 2010). These demonstrate the diversity in ideological visions and interpretations of feminisms and of ‘peace’.

Political responses to the work of feminist peace movements
Few women politicians’ careers evolved directly out of involvement with feminist peace movements or the latter’s support for them. Probably the most notable is Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Various international organizations, as well as national and local initiatives make constant efforts to bring together feminists from civil-society movements and organizations with women in political office in order to create an affinity of interests among them. Once in office, however, many women politicians, regardless of their background, express sympathy to and support for the work of feminist peace activists and try to collaborate with them on some level.

There are many success stories of feminists mobilizing movements for peace. Several of those have received world recognition as Nobel Peace Prize Awardees. Yet many feminist peace movements the world over face repression by different regimes, governments and other military and political organizations. It is sometimes difficult for activists and for researchers to know whether feminist peace movements are threatened because of their feminist agenda, or owing to their work against war and militarism; are these activists persecuted qua feminist activists, or qua peace activists? Either way, the fact remains that feminist peace activists are subjected to legal and physical persecution and to public demise. This is true for activists working within their own societies and especially so for those working against foreign political entity, under conditions of colonialism and occupations.
References: Books and Articles

Motivations and Explanations for Feminist Peace Mobilization


Issues: resistance to war, motherhood, gendered aspects of warfare, UN1325 and Human Security.


Channels for Mobilization: New Media

Christensen, Wendy. 2009. “Technological boundaries: Defining the personal and the political in military mothers’ online support forums.”, *Women's Studies Quarterly: Special Issue on Technology*, Spring/Summer, 37:1&2, pp 146-166


Other Teaching Resources

Course Material: These links provide syllabi, teaching materials, reports and analysis.


International Agencies, Think Tanks, Research Institutions dedicated to Human Security:

These links provide databases, reports and information on the state of human security around the world.


International Organizations and Feminist Foundations: links to global feminist peace initiatives
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