Now that the unofficial start of summer has begun, we have lots of news to report. First, we urge you to mark your calendars for the summer meetings in Chicago. With the ASA meeting highlighting “Sexualities in the Social World” and the SSSP theme of “Removing the Mask, Lifting the Veil: Race, Class, and Gender in the 21st Century,” there will be many sessions of interest to SWSers. The SWS events will begin on Saturday, August 22, and run through Monday, August 24. Although the emphasis will be on convening our many committees to conduct their important work, we want to urge everyone to attend the SWS Feminist Lecture. This year’s honoree, Manisha Desai, will speak about “Gendered Geographies of Global Justice,” so please stay tuned for details about the time and place of Manisha’s talk.

We are also quite excited about the banquet, which will take place on Monday evening, August 24, at the University Club of Chicago. Located on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Monroe Street and just a short walk from the Palmer House (where the SWS registration and meetings will be held), the University Club is a long-established gathering place for social and cultural events in the Chicago area. The evening will begin with a cash-bar reception beginning at 6:30, followed at 7:30 by dinner and our traditional summer festivities.

The banquet promises to be a great evening. As always, the space is limited, so please register for the meeting and buy your banquet tickets as soon as they are available. As is our tradition, banquet attendees must purchase their tickets in advance, not at the door, and each member can buy a ticket for one guest.)

On other matters, we are happy to report progress on a number of fronts. Our hard-working Council continues to work diligently on preparing the by-laws, and we hope to submit a completed document for a vote by the SWS membership in the not-too-distant future. As co-presidents, we have also been working to constitute a media committee, which will focus its efforts on filling the vacancy in our Media Outreach position and developing a set of goals to guide our media efforts. SWSers are increasingly in the news and quite sophisticated about the mores of old and new media alike, so please pass along any ideas or suggestions you may have.

Finally, we want to thank everyone who participated in the recent vote to update the organization’s dues structure. We are delighted to report that the voting members overwhelmingly approved the new dues structure (with 88% in favor and 12% opposed). This structure, with three tiers and rates that vary accordingly, contains a more appropriate set of categories that takes account of our members’ varying resources while also safeguarding the financial health of the organization. The first tier, for example, is a fixed category with dues of $20 for all student and retired members regardless of income. The newly approved dues structure will take effect for the 2016 membership renewal period, which begins on November 1, 2015. We appreciate your support of this change and are confident that it will help SWS continue to thrive.

Thanks for your enthusiasm and commitment to SWS.
We’re looking forward to seeing you in Chicago in August!
Kathleen and Jerry
I was recently copied on an email in which one member commiserated with another member that “it’s too bad it’s so hard to find out who belongs to SWS.” I was happy to have the opportunity to let both members know about the exact place on our website where our directory of members is always available.

I can see where the misunderstanding comes from. When I came on board as EO a couple years ago, our website was a total disaster and I’m told it had not been very functional for some time. It’s not surprising that some members had given up thinking of our website as a first stop for what they needed.

But times have changed! Our Administrative Officer, Jazmyne Washington, our student employee, Lucie Costanza, and I have worked hard to make the information you need and want just a click or two away from you. Please follow along on the webpage as you read this and see what riches await.

Some information we want to broadcast far and wide so you’ll see links to that right on the homepage, including:

About Us: our current and past officers, our committees, our Global Feminist Partners, our chapters, our awards, our history, and much more.

Meetings: the latest information on our meetings and some important meeting-related policy information

On the Issues: Fact Sheets giving an overview of the scholarship on important topics commissioned by the Social Action Committee and Press Releases and guest articles on feminist sociological research addressing issues in current public debates

Breaking News: The latest scoop on SWS activities, academic or organizational.

On our Bookshelf: Recently published books by SWS members.

Other resources are benefits of membership. Just log on as a member in the box on the right of the homepage and you’ll see the links on the first page you land that will get you to:

The Directory of SWS Members

Access to Gender & Society articles and the G&S blog

The Wiki with which members share teaching and research advice

Hey Jane! A powerhouse of feminist career advice.

Network News issues and policies

Minutes of meetings

We do our best to keep things up to date but the value of our website increases the more you participate in constructing it.
SWS Supports the Work of our Partners in Nepal

After the first of two major earthquakes hit Nepal, Dr. Chandra Bhada of our Global Feminist Partner, the Women’s and Gender Studies Program at the Padma Kanya Campus of Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu posted an urgent request to the listserv. Dr. Bhada (in the black and white sari in the photo) let us know that relief agencies were not providing menstrual supplies for girls and women. She asked for help and SWS quickly responded by wiring $1000, which Dr. Bhada says will meet the needs of 400 girls and women for a year. It took a lot of people—including our leaders, members of the International Committee, our accountant and our bank—working together in unconventional ways to make this happen as quickly as possible in a context in which communication has not been easy. GO SWS!

Have ideas of other material you think we should be making more readily available or suggestions for how to better organize what’s there? Email swseo@ku.edu and let’s see what we can do.

Want to contribute to the Wiki but not sure how to work it? Email swshelp@ku.edu and we’ll walk you through it.

Need help accessing member’s only content? Email swshelp@ku.edu for assistance.

Want your latest book showcased? Email swsao@ku.edu with your book information and an image of the book cover.

Or, whenever, just email swshelp@ku.edu and your message will get to the right place promptly.
March 30, 2015

Ms. Joey Sprague  
Sociologists for Women in Society  
University of Kansas  
1415 Jayhawk Blvd., Room 716  
Lawrence, KS 66049

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the families we serve, staff and Board of Directors here at My Sister’s Place; I would like to thank you for your generous tax deductible contribution of $3229.30 on 3/13/2015. Your financial support helps My Sister’s Place continue in its mission to assist survivors of domestic violence here in the Nation’s Capital.

The generous support of individuals like you, make it possible for our organization to serve those most in need throughout the year.

Your support has brought joy to the women and children in our programs.

Sincerely,

Valerie Graff  
Interim Executive Director

My Sister’s Place is a 501(c) 3 organization. Federal Tax ID: 52-1263236. No goods or services were given in exchange for this contribution. Your contribution is tax deductible. Please retain this letter for your tax records.
CONTACT INFORMATION

Please print legibly

Name: ________________________________

Address: ________________________________

Email: ________________________________

Phone: ________________________________

Occupation/Rank: ___________________________

MEMBERSHIP DUES

New□ Renewal□ Gift□

$14 □ Income less than $15,000
$21 □ Income $15,000-$19,999
$21 □ Income $20,000-$29,999
$41 □ Income $30,000-$39,999
$46 □ Income $40,000-$49,999
$56 □ Income $50,000+
$1800 □ Life Membership*

*Payable in equal installments over 1-4 years.

GIFT MEMBERSHIP RECIPIENT DATA

Name: ________________________________

Email Address: ________________________________

CONTRIBUTION OPTIONS (enter amount)

$___ SWS operations
$___ Natalie Allon fund for discrimination support
$___ Rosenblum award fund
$___ Beth B. Hess Scholarship Award
$___ Feminist Activism Award
$___ Distinguished Feminist Lectureship Award
$___ Mentoring Award
$___ Undergraduate Social Action Award
$___ Chow-Green Dissertation Scholarship Award
$___ SWS-MFP ASA Minority Fellowship Program

PUBLICATIONS PREFERENCES

Gender & Society □ Hard copy □ Digital
Network News □ Hard copy □ Digital

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US?

For data purposes only—optional

Gender (please specify):

Racial/Ethnic Identification

American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black or African American
Hispanic or Latino
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
White
Other (please specify):

Which of the following match your interests?

□ Application and Practice
□ Comparative and Historical Approaches
□ Family, Life Course, and Society
□ Gender and Sexuality
□ Inequalities and Stratification
□ Medicine and Health
□ Place and Environment
□ Politics and Social Change
□ Population and Ecology
□ Race and Ethnicity
□ Social Control, Law, Crime, and Deviance
□ Social Psychology and Interaction
□ Sociology of Culture
□ Theory, Knowledge, Science
□ Work, Economy and Organizations
□ Qualitative Approaches
□ Quantitative Approaches

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Contributions $_______
Total $_______

Visa, MasterCard, and Discover only

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Card Number _______________________________________
Billing Address _______________________________________
City/State/ZIP _______________________________________
Expiration Date _______________________
Signature _______________________________________

Fax or mail, DO NOT EMAIL 785-864-5280

CHECKS MUST BE IN USD ONLY

Make checks payable and mail to:
Sociologists for Women in Society
1415 Jayhawk Blvd. Rm. 716
Lawrence, KS 66045
Welcome to Column 31 of *Hey Jane!* This is a project of the SWS Career Development Committee.

This column was guest written by **Mindy Fried**, Visiting Lecturer, Boston College Sociology Department

The *Hey Jane!* series editor is Andrea Miller.

**HEY JANE! Do I need the SWS Professional Needs Mentoring Program? How do I get involved?**

**JANE SAYS:**

For many years, SWS members have benefited from the Career Development Committee’s Professional Needs Mentoring Program, which helps to match individuals who need support with SWS mentors. Mentors can support “mentees” in many ways, from surviving and thriving in graduate school, searching for a job, developing a new course, writing/publishing an article or book, dealing with work and family issues, getting tenure, strategizing retirement and more!

**Finding an SWS mentor versus finding a mentor from your institution:** If you are considering whether you’re a candidate for this program, please think first about potential mentors in your midst. This is especially important for graduate students who would benefit greatly by selecting a mentor at her/his home institution. These institutional relationships are critical to your steady movement through the process of completing your degree. Having a local mentor may also be useful for those currently working at an institution, although there are certainly important reasons why individuals may need to step outside of the home institution for support. Also, you may have a local mentor, but still want another mentor, and that’s great too! If you do determine that you’d like a mentor outside of your home institution, we will do all that we can to help you find that person.

**How do you access this service?** The professional needs mentoring process begins when the applicant approaches me (friedmin@mit.edu) with a filled-out application form from the SWS website: [https://www.socwomen.org/mentoring-program/](https://www.socwomen.org/mentoring-program/) This must be accompanied by your most updated CV. Please identify up to 3 SWS members you would like to work with, and those are the people I will initially contact on your behalf to see if they are available. You will see on the form that you can also request a mentor through “Sister-to-Sister”, an open committee of SWS that focuses on networking and mentoring relationships across race/ethnic lines for women within the academy (see more details below).

**Once an application is received:**

Once I receive your application, I will get in touch with you. Given your needs and current situation, I may want to first clarify whether your needs can be met by more local institutional supports. But assuming that it’s “a go”, I will review your application in a timely fashion and get in touch with you to discuss whether/how the program can meet your needs.
JANE still has you stumped? Don’t worry. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

Mentors are often very busy people; therefore, they are more able to provide support in areas that don’t require a great deal of time. For example, the hardest request to match is when a mentee/applicant needs substantial help with writing and/or publishing. Nonetheless, this shouldn’t stop you from asking for this help! We’ll do our best.

Collaboration with Sister-to-Sister:

This past year, the Professional Needs Mentoring Program has formally established a partnership with Sister-to-Sister, an open committee that focuses on networking and mentoring relationships across race/ethnic lines for women within the academy. This committee and its meetings are open to all.

One of the key interests guiding this committee’s initial formation was to be attentive to the experiences and needs of women of color within SWS as well as outside of SWS. Additionally, STS was developed with the intention of offering a space for any SWS members, regardless of racial/ethnic self-identification, to dialogue and/or collaborate on matters related to the intersections of gender and race/ethnicity, as well as other connected dimensions of privilege and penalty, such as class, sexuality, and ability. While Sister-to-Sister (STS) does not just focus exclusively on the experiences of women of color, given the presence of women of color in SWS and consistent discussions at STS committee meetings about the needs of women of color, the Sister-to-Sister Committee is committed to ensuring that such needs and responses remain as an important feature of the work of Sister-to-Sister within the SWS organization.

Depending on match and mentor availability, Sister-to-Sister committee members may be available to serve as a mentor to individuals seeking guidance and support related to issues relevant to the work of Sister-to-Sister, such as (though not limited to) research and publishing, teaching challenges and strategies related to particular topics and/or classroom dynamics, professional service work, job market concerns and questions, and career advice at various stages. In addition, STS welcomes other SWS members to assist in mentoring the next generation of scholars who critically analyze the reality of intersecting identities and social categories (even as those categories change). The Co-Chairs of STS are Lorena Garcia and Chandra Waring.

For a list of SWS local and regional chapters, SWS committee chairs, and current officers of SWS, please visit the SWS website:

www.socwomen.org
Muslim Family Laws and CEDAW: A Fact Sheet

by Özlem Altıok

April 2015

Muslim family laws and discrimination against women

The terms Shari'a and Islamic law are often used interchangeably, but more precisely, Islamic law is a product of human understanding of the revealed text and the prophetic tradition (Sidebar). Muslim family laws (also known as personal status laws) govern issues such as inheritance, marriage, polygyny, divorce, custody and reciprocal obligations of spouses, parents and children (Table 1). Male jurists in deeply patriarchal societies codified much of Islamic law between the 8th and 10th centuries in what is today Iraq and Saudi Arabia (Imam 2004, Ahmed 1992). These laws discriminate against women and girls living under Muslim family laws (An Na'im 1990), but the level of hardship faced by individual women and girls varies by their class position, ethnic, religious and national context (Jalal 1991). Discriminatory family laws run counter to the objective of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which nearly all Muslim-majority countries have ratified (UN Women 2015).

Islamic norms may be more influential at the informal, and almost subconscious psychological level than they are at the official or legal level. Conversely, one should not overestimate the importance of legal codes as the underlying social and political

At the root of the unequal treatment of Muslim women are the twin concepts of qiwamah and wilayah, which Muslim jurists have commonly interpreted to mean that men have authority over women. The term qiwamah appears, albeit in a different form, only once in the Qur’an, which says “Men are qawwamun [protectors/maintainers] in relation to women, according to what God has favored some over others and according to what they spend from their wealth” (Qur’an 4:34). Wilayah appears several times in the Qur’an, and refers either to “authority/guardianship” or “friendship and mutual support” (Mir-Hosseini 2015). Self-ascribed Muslim feminists Zainah Anwar and Ziba Mir-Hosseini (2012) argue that in the context of marriage, the term refers to mutual support and friendship – not authority.

The dominant orthodox interpretation of the terms qiwamah and wilayah animates the letter and spirit of contemporary Muslim family laws, which prescribe the husband’s obligation to financially provide for his wife and the wife’s corresponding duty to obey him (Welchman 2015). From this central premise follow other laws that discriminate against women. For example, laws that give daughters half of sons’ share of their inheritance are often justified on grounds that men, and not women, are obligated to spend out of their wealth to provide for their families.

Diversity in Islamic law today

There is no single code that applies to the more than one billion Muslims in the world today. Variations exist among the laws in effect in Muslim societies and communities due to (a) significant theological and legal differences between different schools or legal traditions (mazhabs) and (b) the fact that Islamic law has been modified by customary practices and as a matter of state policy (Imam 2004). In addition, within each legal tradition, there are differing interpretations of divine revelation. Polygyny, the prevalence of which varies by region and socio-economic status, is a
good example. The Qur’an permits men to marry up to four wives, with the proviso that each wife be treated “justly” (Qur’an 4:3; see also 4:129). The historical context in which this permission was revealed (after a battle that left many women widowed), and whether it is possible for any man to meet the condition of treating each wife justly have long been, and continue to be, debated.

Muslim family laws have been reformed in various national contexts and vary across countries (Htun and Weldon 2011, Kandiyoti 1991). The British in India, the French in North Africa and the Dutch in Indonesia have all utilized juridical and social tensions between customary law and Islamic law, and codified both to consolidate their rule (Roff 2010, Charrad 2001).

In addition to shaping the legal landscape, European colonial rule had political consequences as well. Starting in the 19th century, many countries in the Middle East and North Africa had adopted European administrative and commercial codes. In the tug of war between different approaches to “modernization,” between nationalist reformers and their opponents, women came to be identified with an “authentic culture” (Ahmed 1992), and the family came to be seen, particularly by conservative religious scholars and jurists, as the last bastion of a dismantled Islamic legal system (Lama Abu Odeh 2004). To this day, the efforts to reform discriminatory family laws are caught up in contemporary variations of these political rifts.

Turkey is an exception in the Muslim-majority world in many ways. The country was not colonized, but the Turkish Civil Code (1926), adopted from the Swiss Civil Code, supplanted Islamic law altogether, ending men's right to unilateral divorce, expanding women's custody rights, making polygyny illegal, and instituting equal inheritance rights. Similarly, Tunisia's Code of Personal Status (1956) instituted the earliest and most far-reaching legal changes to family laws in the Arab world. As in Turkey, reforms in Tunisia came from above, not from a well-organized women's movement.

Table 1. Some contemporary issues concerning Muslim-majority countries' compliance with CEDAW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Select Issues</th>
<th>Prevalence and Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child marriage</td>
<td>Many countries (e.g. Turkey, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Bangladesh) have minimum marriage age requirements (16 or 18), but child marriage in these and other countries is still common. No legislated minimum age requirement in some Gulf countries (e.g. Yemen, Saudi Arabia).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage and consent</td>
<td>Women who have reached legal majority have the right to contract their own marriage, but many delegate this right. Many countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Nigeria) require the consent of the wali (guardian) to a woman's marriage. Islam prohibits forcing someone into a marriage. It also gives women the right to stipulate a marriage contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>Muslim law makes it easy for men, and difficult for women, to initiate and get divorce. There have been recent changes or proposed changes (e.g. Egypt and Jordan) for judicial khul, which makes it easier for women to initiate divorce without showing fault on the part of the husband.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custody</td>
<td>Generally favors men. In most countries women can have custody only up to a certain age (varies by country, dominant mazhab, and sometimes by the sex of the child) after which time the father has automatic custody. Recent reforms in Iran and Egypt's expanded women's custody rights (to ages 7 and 15, respectively).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inheritance</td>
<td>Generally favors boys and men (e.g. Iran and most Arab countries). Some families (e.g. in Iran) write wills that give daughters more than what the law would entitle them to.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


More recently, feminists, and their main ally, King Muhammad VI of Morocco, amended that country's Code of Personal Status (Mudawwanah). The reformed Code (2004) does not end men's right to unilateral divorce (talaq), but makes it subject to court review. It does not abolish polygyny, but makes it subject to the first wife's permission (Charrad 2014). Moroccan reforms have been the most far-reaching reforms to Muslim family laws in the twenty-first century. Following these three countries, in terms of the expansion of women's rights within the family, are Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt,
Jordan, Palestine, Kuwait, Bahrain, Syria, Libya, the UAE, Iraq, Qatar, Oman, and Iran. Yemen and Saudi Arabia lag significantly behind (Kelly and Breslin 2010: 4 cited in Charrad 2014). In many Gulf countries, Shari'a courts – separate for Shi'as and Sunnis – rule based on the individual judges' interpretation of Islamic law (Home Truths 2009).

CEDAW and Muslim-majority states: ratifications and reservations

Feminist efforts to end discrimination against women have registered many successes since the 1970s including CEDAW, which the UN adopted in 1979. Ratified by 187 states, CEDAW defines discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination (UN Women 2015). Despite the near-universal ratification of the Convention (the U.S. has also not ratified CEDAW), and despite sustained lobbying and activism by women's groups in many countries, discrimination against women is still a legal and practical reality around the world. It is a particularly unique challenge in Muslim-majority countries.

Of the fifty-seven members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, all but Iran, Sudan and Somalia have signed and ratified CEDAW, which has been called “an international bill of rights for women” (UN Human Rights 2015). However, many Muslim-majority state parties to CEDAW entered reservations on key articles (Table 2), citing the supremacy of Shari'a law (UN Women 2015, Freeman 2009).

Table 2. CEDAW articles to parts or all of which many Muslim-majority states maintain reservations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article 2</td>
<td>Change discriminatory laws, policies &amp; institutions to implement the Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 9</td>
<td>Ensure women's right to acquire, change &amp; retain their nationality, and transfer it to their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 15</td>
<td>Ensure women have full legal capacity, right to freedom of movement &amp; choice of their domicile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 16</td>
<td>Eliminate discrimination against women with respect to marriage, divorce, custody &amp; inheritance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UN Women 2015

Women's activism for legal reform and CEDAW

The primary mechanism monitoring states' compliance with the Convention is the CEDAW Committee comprising 23 experts from a variety of countries (UN Human Rights 2015). This independent body periodically reviews “progress reports” submitted by state parties as well as “shadow reports” submitted by nongovernmental organizations. Women's organizations participate in the implementation of CEDAW in two ways. First, they monitor their respective states' compliance with CEDAW, and submit “shadow reports” that highlight ongoing discrimination against women. Secondly, as women’s rights activists work to reform discriminatory laws on the ground in their countries, they make reference to CEDAW and hold their governments accountable.

Many activists in Muslim-majority countries argue for gender equality within a secular discourse of human rights. Others argue within the framework of “Islamic feminism,” which advocates women's rights, gender equality and social justice within a framework that advocates the compatibility of the ethical message of Islam with human rights principles (Rinaldo 2014, Badran 2002). Islamic or Muslim feminists – both contested terms – argue that gender inequality results not from the Qur'an per se, but from patriarchal interpretations of Islam.
Table 3. State justifications for noncompliance with CEDAW and Muslim feminists' critique

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State party justifications for non-compliance</th>
<th>Muslim feminists’ critiques of justifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Shari'a</em> is the principal source of law, and defines the rights and responsibilities of men and women</td>
<td><em>Shari'a</em> is divine in origin. What is called “Islamic law” (and what should be called the “Islamic legal tradition”) is really <em>fiqh</em>, a product of human (until recently only men’s) engagement with the revealed text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot implement changes that are inconsistent or in conflict with <em>Shari'a</em></td>
<td>Islamic law is not monolithic, unitary, fixed or unchangeable. Disagreement or diversity of opinions (<em>ikhtilaf</em>) among different <em>mazhabs</em> is widely recognized and respected in the Islamic tradition. If Islam is to be relevant for all times, Muslims must take account of the disconnect between lived realities of men and women, and what Islamic law considers “settled matters.” Classical jurists lived in vastly different social and economic contexts than the ones Muslims live in today. Human understanding of <em>Shari'a</em> is an ongoing process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam emphasizes complementarity, and provides sufficient or superior justice for women</td>
<td>For 7th century Arabia, Islam was revolutionary in expanding women’s rights, but classical jurists lived in deeply patriarchal societies and allowed many pre-Islamic customs to continue. Many Muslim activists today advocate rights-based interpretations of Islamic principles, but others (e.g. Ali 2003) have argued for a whole-sale engagement with Islamic law of marriage, which was, from the beginning, modeled after a contract of sale (of a woman’s sexual services to her husband).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture, customs and traditions, including respect for minority rights, prevent full implementation</td>
<td>Addressing women’s rights in contexts where cultural rights are being articulated seems to pit individual rights against collective rights. Islam is interpreted differently according to local customs, and at any one time, and in any one context, there exist multiple interpretations of religion and culture. Women’s voices, and not just the voices of authorities representing a community, should be heard in the search for a more just and compassionate society.</td>
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</table>

Synthesized from the Musawah report (2011)

The future of discriminatory family laws

In the past half a century, most Muslim-majority countries have curtailed men's right to unilateral divorce, required registration of marriages in state courts, expanded the grounds on which women may seek divorce, and restricted men's right to polygyny (Welchman 2015, Home Truths 2009). In the past three decades, in particular, women's activists have taken advantage of political opportunity structures to reform discriminatory laws in their respective national contexts (Welchman 2015, Htun and Weldon 2011). There seems to be a trend in favor of more egalitarian laws despite some movement in the other direction – notably in Iran and Pakistan in 1979, and in Indonesia in 1991 (Htun and Weldon 2011).

Egalitarian reforms are not secure in conventional politics that marginalize women and gender issues. In war-torn countries they are even less secure as the US-led “war on terror” contributes to the rise of extremist movements that are anchored in a misogynist politics of gender. There is little doubt that these movements in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere will seek to reverse gender egalitarian reforms if and when in power.
RESOURCES

Women Living Under Muslim Laws  http://www.wluml.org/
Sisters in Islam  http://www.sistersinislam.org.my/
Musawah  http://www.musawah.org/
Women's Learning Partnership  http://www.learningpartnership.org/

REFERENCES


Local & Regional Chapters in Action!

SWS-South has several exciting announcements following our March gathering at the Southerns in New Orleans.

First, we are pleased to give New Orleans community health organization, The Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies, a donation of $615. Funds were raised during our annual silent auction, made possible by members’ generous donations and the efforts of our Vision and Membership Committees. We had wonderful attendance and enjoyed treats from a local woman-owned bakery. A few lucky bidders also won photographs with former SWS Feminist Lecturer Michael Messner. Now that we know how successful this strategy is, we will be looking for more feminist sociologist celebrities for future auction photos (feel free to volunteer!). Thank you to all who donated items, purchased items, and gave money!

We also celebrated the accomplishments of outgoing officers Marni Brown (Vice President), Sancha Medwinter (Vision Chair), and Claudia Youakim (Awards Chair).

Newly elected officers are:

- Vice President: Stephanie Gonzalez Guittar, Valdosta State University
- Vision Committee Chair: Denise Bissler, Randolph-Macon College
- Awards Committee Chair: Tiffany Taylor, Kent State University
- National Liaison: Jill Yavorsky, The Ohio State University

Our continuing officers are:

- President: Emily Fairchild, New College of Florida
- Secretary: Kylie Parrotta, Delaware State University
- Membership Chair/Treasurer: Lanier Basenberg, Georgia State University
- Newsletter Editor: Regina Baker, Duke University
Members Bookshelf


‘Call Me Confused, Please’ requests one of the stories in this insightful and engaging collection from women of South Asian origin living in North America. ‘Made in the USA?’ wonders another.

Through poems, short stories and scholarly pieces, writers who are in their twenties, thirties and forties share what it is to live and grow up in a country that is your home and yet alien to you. They touch upon issues of culture, belonging, romance, body, race, ethnicity and the notion of ‘home’. Moving beyond the idea of ABCDs (America-Born confused Desi) and the ‘identity crisis’, the writers grapple with the richness of their diverse inheritances to produce a more nuanced understanding of self.

Conflicting notions of one’s identity are an important element in the makeup of critical consciousness. After all, to look in the mirror is to invite questions. The point, however, is not to dwell on the forms of these questions but to dive in. As the writers in this anthology show, what matters is not identity, but intimacy; not the barrage of queries, but the vulnerability and depth that such queries expose. What magic of language/idea/relationship can happen when we enter the interstice, the liminal space, what Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa called *nepantla* and what grammarians call the hyphen?

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*Women without Men* illuminates Russia's "quiet revolution" in family life through the lens of single motherhood. Drawing on extensive ethnographic and interview data, the book focuses on the puzzle of how single motherhood—frequently seen as a social problem in other contexts—became taken for granted in the New Russia. While most Russians, including single mothers, believe that two-parent families are preferable, many also contend that single motherhood is an inevitable byproduct of two intractable problems: “weak men” (reflected, they argue, in the country’s widespread, chronic male alcoholism) and a “weak state” (considered so because of Russia’s unequal economy and poor social services). Among the daily struggles to get by and get ahead, single motherhood, Utrata finds, is seldom considered a tragedy.

The book begins by taking the reader through the history that brought Russian families to where they are today; it presents evidence of their current state; and it arrives at fascinating conclusions that compare the United States’ postindustrial family with that of the new Russia. Providing a vivid narrative of the experiences not only of single mothers themselves but also of the grandmothers, other family members, and nonresident fathers who play roles in their lives, *Women without Men* maps the Russian family against the country’s profound postwar social disruptions and dislocations.
Announcements, Celebrations, Accomplishments, etc!

Julie Winterich, Associate Professor of Sociology and Chair of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Guilford College, won the Bruce B. Stewart Award for Teaching Excellence for a tenured faculty member. Guilford gives two teaching awards a year, one for a tenure faculty member and one for an untenured faculty—not sure if you need that info or not!

Anne Esacove, Muhlenberg College, was awarded an ASA Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline Grant for her new research: The Natural Death Movement: Re-enchanting Death, Revitalizing Life, and Preserving the Planet. The project explores the gendering of death care and the role of the corporal body in the production of an authentic, moral self.

Recent Publications:


Roberta Villalón, edited a Special Issue on “The Resurgence of Collective Memory, Truth and Justice Mobilizations” in Latin American Perspectives now available at http://lap.sagepub.com/content/current

Krishnan, Preethi and Mangala Subramaniam. “Domestic Violence and Intra-family Dynamics: Analysis of India’s Supreme Court Rulings.” Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research, forthcoming 2015


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