Dear Members,

Excitement is building for the Winter Meeting. I am really looking forward to seeing what Josephine and the Planning Committee have in store for us. As my tenure as President winds down, I have reflected on the goals I had coming into this position. I wanted to grow SWS’s membership – and we did. I wanted to improve the relations between SWS National and our regional chapters – and we have. I wanted to solidify our operations and procedures to prepare us for our future – and we have. It has taken a lot of work from a lot of people to achieve these goals. We’re not done yet, and I have some goals that still need work. We continue important initiatives that I hope we can complete in the coming months. Of course, some of the work will be ongoing.

As you all know, we have a task force examining ways we can lessen inequalities within our organization and better fulfill our feminist mission. We have conducted a survey of members (thanks to all who responded!) and the task force is analyzing that data. We have an upcoming conference call to discuss the task force’s progress. Our goal is to better meet the needs of our members and the task force hopes to make recommendations to Council at the 2020 Winter Meeting. We know this work is ongoing and SWS as an organization needs to continuously be reflective of ways we can better serve and empower members.

It is critical that a feminist organization have an anti-harassment policy. We are getting closer to completing work on developing a policy modeled after the Study of Social Problem’s (SSSP) new comprehensive anti-harassment policy. We have also been in touch with SSSP and several organizations about sharing an ombudsperson. Additionally, we are working with these organizations to form a more united front, so to speak, that proactively works to lessen harassment in our discipline. This inter-organizational collaboration offers a great deal of potential and we will
continue our efforts here.

Finally, we have a task force working on improving our “mentoring” programs to more broadly encompass approaches to understanding our individual needs and connecting to people who can help. The task force has planned a workshop for the 2020 Winter Meeting and has developed some short-term and long-term action plans.

Interested in starting a chapter of SWS? Contact me and SWS Executive Officer, Barret Katuna, and we’ll talk you through it. And, we can also put you in touch with existing chapter leaders for encouragement and advice. We’ve really been working on strengthening the relationship between the national SWS and our regional chapters. Our work will continue and my hope is that every regional sociological organization and more and more campuses will continue to start chapters. I know I have personally found my involvement in my department chapter at Kent State and in SWS-S to be very rewarding. We do good work for marginalized people in society.

As you all know we have made a few changes to our organization and our Bylaws to help improve SWS. Council has a few other things in the works, so please stay tuned. For instance, we have made some minor modifications to the configuration of the Investment Committee and we’ll continue to work with our attorney, accountants, and financial advisors to make sure our Bylaws are as clear as possible and that our operations and our organization are financially and legally sound and consistent with our feminist values.

Finally, we have a task force that is examining ways we can make our meetings more financially accessible. We put out the call for volunteers and you all delivered! Josephine and I have consistently discussed all these initiatives, and I know we will have a smooth transition into her tenure as SWS President.

I always like to end with a hearty thanks to the numerous people working hard behind the scenes for SWS. As I said above, it takes a lot of people to make SWS what it is today and to help SWS improve and prepare for the future. I have asked a LOT of people. I have sent quite a few emails asking for volunteers for one thing or another. And people have responded again and again. Words cannot relay my gratitude. Let’s continue to build and improve our organization and empower our members. Strength in numbers y’all!

In solidarity,

Greetings from President-Elect, Josephine Beoku-Betts

Greetings SWSers!

I can’t believe the year has gone so fast and that my apprenticeship as President-Elect is coming to the end. While learning the ropes of what it takes to be SWS President, and I have very big shoes to fill (thank you President Tiffany Taylor for your demonstrated leadership and untiring commitment to making SWS a more sustainable and inclusive organization as we face the future). My primary role over the past year has been to organize the 2020 Winter Meeting which will be taking place at Paradise Point Hotel and Resort in San Diego, California. The meeting dates are January 30th to February 2, 2020. Please click
HERE to access the 2020 Winter Meeting website. I am very excited about this meeting and hope that all of you attending will have an amazing experience while you engage in scholarly discourses in a relaxing atmosphere. Given my African origins (Sierra Leone, West Africa) and scholarly background in global and transnational feminisms, my chosen theme for the 2020 meeting is “Feminist Futures in the Global South: Visions, Scholarship, Activism and Creativity.”

The three plenary sessions will (1) explore ways in which young feminists envision, organize, and strategize to promote social justice and advance gender equality in their respective regions in the Global South, (2) address the politics of border migration that is a critical issue of global concern, even in San Diego where this meeting will take place, (3) celebrate 50 years of the discipline of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (San Diego State University was the first Women’s Studies program in the United States), and also acknowledge and honor the upcoming 50th anniversary of our beloved SWS.

We have an excellent line up of plenary speakers from Ghana (Dr. Akosua Darkwah, University of Ghana), Iran (Dr. Kristin Soraya Batmanghelichi, Oslo University), Colombia (Dr. Erika Marquez), and Trinidad and Tobago (Dr. Sue Anne Barratt, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. Other visiting speakers include Professor Doreen Mattingly, Chair of the Department of Women’s Studies at San Diego State University, Dr. Joanna Brooks, Co-Founder of Detainee Allies in San Diego and Dr. Shereen Siddiqui, Assistant Professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies at Santiago Canyon College in Orange County. We will also be showcasing our own star scholars, including Marlese Durr, Melanie Heath, Bandana Purkayastha, Manisha Desai, Sara Crawley, Veronica Montes, Roberta Villalón, Minjeong Kim, and Manashi Ray. All of the plenary sessions will include an activist speaking about their work on the subject under discussion. Plenary sessions will be chaired by renowned SWS scholars Chris Bose, Margaret Abraham, and Mary Osirim.

In addition to the plenaries, SWSers responded very well to the call for proposals for sessions, workshops, and roundtables, and you should look forward to a wide selection of topics for discussion and dialogue. As usual, the program will include our regular activities such as the Welcome Reception, Breakfast with Scholars, the Hand Program, our Banquet and Silent Auction, hosted dinners, as well as committee meetings, and opportunities to network and catch up with colleagues and friends in a very pleasant and relaxing atmosphere. We will have child care facilities available during the day on Friday and Saturday, and Minjeong Kim and the Local Arrangements Committee are preparing a list of kid-friendly places to visit for those interested as well as information on local museums and exhibits, outdoor cultural activities, and local restaurants.

Proceeds from the Silent Auction will go to two local organizations working on social justice issues in the community. These are Detainee Allies which is a San Diego based organization working on family separation and refugee detention and License to Freedom, which is a grassroots organization working to stop domestic violence in refugee and immigrant communities in San Diego County. A representative from each organization will speak briefly at the Banquet and Silent Auction. Please remember to bring items for the Silent Auction and money to buy these items so that we can raise a good amount to present to both organizations who are doing such good work.

Finally, I can’t wait to see and share with you our Augmented Reality Comic Book Exhibit based on Priya’s Shakti’s Indian Comic Book Series. Reuters describes Priya’s Shakti as “the first Indian comic book of its kind—not only confronting teenagers with the sensitive issue of sexual violence, but also engaging young people through its innovative use of augmented reality technology.” The comic book on which the exhibit is based features India’s first female superhero who is a rape survivor and was named by UN Women as a “Gender Equality Champion”.

Before concluding, I wish to thank Barret Katu-
As you can see from SWS President, Tiffany Taylor’s report and SWS President-Elect, Josephine Beoku-Betts’ reports, it’s been quite a busy fall with many ongoing projects and time spent coordinating the 2019 Election, Executive Office Site Visit here in the Hartford area of Connecticut, 2020 Winter Meeting Program, 2020 Membership Renewal, and 2020 Winter Meeting Registration. Thank you for your continued engagement with the SWS communications that the Executive Office sends out to keep you informed and aware of important information and opportunities.

For those of you who are going to be attending the 2020 Winter Meeting in San Diego, please note that the arrangement of this hotel is quite different from what we are used to for SWS Meetings. Before you arrive at the hotel, I do encourage you to take a look at a map of the hotel that will help you get your bearings once you arrive. There is one central conference center where most of the SWS meetings will be taking place. Your hotel rooms will be located throughout the resort. There are staffed golf carts available for rides to get to events throughout the resort, and you should plan for a little bit of extra time if you will be in need of a ride during peak meeting times. The SWS Executive Office will do our best to communicate information with you to make your meeting experience comfortable and I do ask that you engage with these communications.

As we close 2019, I would like to thank all of the elected officers within SWS and the entire membership for their service and commitment throughout the past year. We have had quite a productive 2019 and I look forward to what lies ahead for SWS as we celebrate our 50th anniversary starting in 2020 and continuing through the end of 2021.

The Executive Office is preparing to head into a very busy season now as we make final preparations for the 2020 Winter Meeting and I am truly excited to see so many of you in San Diego to kickoff 2020!
Sister to Sister Committee Report: November 2019
Co-Chairs: Andrea (Drea) S. Boyles and Sasha Drummond-Lewis

The Sister to Sister (S2S) Committee is busily preparing for the Winter Meeting in San Diego. We are excited to organize a session uniting the theme of the conference and scholar-activism, entitled “Transformative Sociology: Highlighting Transnational/Global Feminists’ and Black Feminists’ Contributions through Scholar Activism.” Panelists will discuss the histories, experiences, challenges and contributions of Transnational/Global and Black feminist sociologists engaging in teaching, research, and activism. As a joint effort with the Social Action Committee, we are also co-organizing a workshop for “how-to” get involved and support efforts that center and progress platforms/agendas and issues for women of color and their communities in the upcoming 2020 elections. The workshop is called “The Squad’ Workshop: The Political Mobilization of Women of Color and Preparation for the 2020 Elections.” Additionally, we are partnering with the Mentoring Task Force and the Career Development Committee to provide a workshop that advances mentoring: so bring questions about your challenges with mentoring and be prepared to discuss useful strategies. We are planning and looking forward to the first Feminists of Color Reception as well, scheduled for the evening of Friday, January 31st—instead of the traditional S2S host dinner. We hope all women and non-binary feminists of color will join us for a chance to mingle and network. We would like to formally congratulate and welcome our incoming co-chair, LaTonya Trotter. We look forward to working with her and utilizing her experiences with SWS to move S2S forward! As always, those desiring mentoring, have suggestions or general inquiries, we encourage you to email us at sister2sistersws@gmail.com. We eagerly await to connect with you!
CFPs and Announcements

**Join the SWS New Member Orientation**  
**Wednesday, January 8, 2020**  
Time: Jan 8, 2020 01:00 PM EDT, 12 PM CDT, 11AM MDT, 10 AM PDT (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting  
https://zoom.us/j/413605955?pwd=c2tib3RDZERncGNjVWJqTlJBWmVxZz09  
Meeting ID: 413 605 955  
Password: 483517  
One tap mobile  
+16468769923,,413605955# US (New York)  
+16699006833,,413605955# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location  
+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)  
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)  
+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)  
Meeting ID: 413 605 955  
Find your local number: https://zoom.us/u/acoCqEphE8

**SWS-S News and Membership Announcement**

After much consideration and discussion, we the Executive Committee of SWS-S, with support from SWS are now going to offer a bundle membership package. We have decided upon this option because of the opportunities that come from both memberships. We, SWS-S are aware of limitations when it comes to traveling to national conferences, which is why the Southern Regional Chapter of SWS does so well. As such, we want our members to have the opportunity to join nationals in an easy and effective way.

SWS-S costs will remain the same; $5 for undergraduate and graduate students, $15 for new faculty, and $20 for returning faculty. Our fees will remain the same but membership renewal will now align with the SWS national organization in which renewing will occur on November 1. We are hoping that by aligning our membership renewal it will provide SWS-S with a larger operating budget going into the SSS meeting in the spring. Please know that you are not required to join SWS national organization, but we do encourage it because of what a wonderful organization it is and the amazing opportunities provided through membership.

We appreciate your support in expanding our regional relationship with the SWS national organization. If you have any questions please let us know, Marni Brown SWS-S President or Barret Katuna SWS Executive Officer.

For those traveling to Jacksonville, FL in the spring for the Southern Sociological Meeting (SSS) meetings, SWS-S would love to see you. We will have various sessions on the program, networking opportunities, and philanthropy for the local LGBCT non-profit JASMYN. Stop by our table for your ribbon!

In solidarity,

Marni Brown  
Chair of Faculty for Human Development and Aging Services  
SWS-S President  
Vice President of GGC Faculty Senate

**Call for Papers: Ethnographies of the Global South**  
https://contexts.org/blog/call-for-papers.ethnographies-of-the-global-south/

Contexts is a quarterly magazine that makes cutting-edge social research accessible to general readers. The magazine is issuing a call for papers for its Winter 2021 issue, dedicated to “Ethnographies of the Global South.” This special issue will be guest edited by Victoria.
Reyes, assistant professor of sociology at the University of California-Riverside, and Marco Garrido, assistant professor of sociology at the University of Chicago.

In recent years, there has been a blossoming of ethnographies on the Global South within sociology; this represents something new. Historically, American ethnographers within the discipline have plied their trade almost exclusively within the U.S. context. Casting our eye south has produced a vivid description of “foreign” social worlds.

These descriptions have proven to be a goldmine theoretically. They challenge and compel us to revise many of the analytical categories we largely take for granted, from race and segregation, to state and civil society. In making “foreign” contexts familiar, the new ethnographies of the Global South are expanding our sociological imagination in exciting ways.

We are looking for papers that embody a deeper engagement with Southern contexts. We are seeking robust descriptions of everyday life rooted in these contexts. The papers should demonstrate how detailed descriptions serve to extend not only just the empirical but also the conceptual boundaries of sociology.

We are asking that potential authors submit a two-page proposal by March 1, 2020. The editorial team will notify all authors of our decision by April 2, 2020. Authors whose proposals are accepted will need to return a full submission of approximately 3,000 words by June 1, 2020 for peer review. Articles that pass peer review will be further revised by the editorial team with final text due by September 1, 2020. Authors interested in submitting a piece are highly encouraged to read our submission guidelines.

Pacific Sociological Association’s 91st Annual Meetings/Conference.

The Thirteenth Global Studies Conference.
June 4–5, 2020, Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. The conference features research addressing the annual themes and 2020 Special Focus: Globalization and Social Movements: Familiar Patterns, New Constellations?

Call for papers: “Family and Kinship”
Please submit papers to a Regular Session on "Family and Kinship" for the ASA 2020 meetings. These submissions are not part of the Family Section Paper Submissions. All topics will be considered but I am especially interested in papers on immigrant families, same sex-families, families of color, single mother families, reimagining kinship, new forms of kinship. Submissions are open, PLEASE CONTACT ME WITH ANY QUESTIONS. ROSANNA HERTZ, (rhertz@wellesley.edu)
Giving the Gift of SWS Membership

If you would like to purchase a gift membership for 2020, please let us know and we will create an invoice for you. Then, please send us the recipient’s name and email address and we will create a membership profile for the recipient.

Gift Membership Pricing:
Student Recipient: $25.00
Professional Recipient: $55.00

Visit sws.memberclicks.net/
Click the button that labeled Contact SWS.
Members' publications


Written for a general readership and easily accessible for classroom use, *Getting Smart about Race* is an overview of what we know about racial inequality—what race is (and is not); the impact of racism on people's daily lives; how our attitudes and beliefs are shaped by prejudice and racism; how racism is manifested in every social institution (workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, health care, the criminal justice system, and more). A central theme is that, as important as attitudes are, racial inequality is built into U.S. society yet, popular ideas about race continue to blame those most victimized by it—ideas the book debunks. The book will be especially useful in classrooms and in settings where discussions about racism can guide more inclusive work practices, such as in community organizations, schools, and nonprofit organizations. Available February 15, 2020.


How do you go about caregiving for an ill and elderly parent with a lifelong history of abuse and control, intertwined with expressions of intense love and adoration? How do you reconcile the resulting ambiv-
alence, fear, and anger?

*Welcome to Wherever We Are* is a meditation on what we hold onto, what we let go of, how we remember others and ultimately how we’re remembered. Deborah Cohan shares her story of caring for her father, a man who was simultaneously loud, gentle, loving and cruel and whose brilliant career as an advertising executive included creating slogans like “Hey, how ’bout a nice Hawaiian punch?” Wrestling with emotional extremes that characterize abusive relationships, Cohan shows how she navigated life with a man who was at once generous and affectionate, creating magical coat pockets filled with chocolate kisses when she was a little girl, yet who was also prone to searing, vicious remarks like “You’d make my life easier if you’d commit suicide.”

In this gripping memoir, Cohan tells her unique personal story while also weaving in her expertise as a sociologist and domestic abuse counselor to address broader questions related to marriage, violence, divorce, only children, intimacy and loss. A story most of us can relate to as we reckon with past and future choices against the backdrop of complicated family dynamics, *Welcome to Wherever We Are* is about how we might come to live our own lives better amidst unpredictable changes through grief and healing.

**Marisela Martinez-Cola.** 2019. “Collectors, Nightlights, and Allies, Oh My! White Mentors in the Academy,” *Understanding and Dismantling Privilege* (forthcoming December 2019) [Early copy can be provided by the author].


**Adelle Dora Monteblanco** (Middle Tennessee State University) and **Ophra Leyser-Whalen** (University of Texas at El Paso announce a documentary by El Jardín Birth and Family Resource Center, featuring interviews with El Paso-based mothers, clinicians, and sociologists. The documentary, *Birth in Pieces*, explores the U.S. hospital birth system (trailer: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKa4Oyer_ZQ&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKa4Oyer_ZQ&feature=youtu.be)). Two Intro to Sociology classes also helped analyze the data. The authors hope to screen the film at upcoming conferences.

**Susan Hagood Lee.** 2019. "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: CEDAW and Women’s Human Rights in San Francisco." *Societies Without Borders* 13 (1). Available at: [https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/swb/vol13/iss1/6](https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/swb/vol13/iss1/6)

The international women's rights treaty, CEDAW, has never been ratified by the US Senate despite US leadership in developing the treaty. In response to Senate negligence towards women's human rights, women in San Francisco engaged in a vigorous campaign to enact the principles of CEDAW in their city. This article explains the background of the treaty and how women in San Francisco persuaded city officials to adopt its principles. San Francisco was the first "city for CEDAW" and provides a valuable example in advancing women's human rights.


This article is based on an evaluation of a Sociology middle years, major-based peer-mentoring program at a small public university in northern California. Most students had met with their major peer mentors and reported positive outcomes with academic success, major integration, and career planning. Students of color were significantly more likely than white students to have met with their peer mentors. First-generation students were significantly more likely than students whose parents had a college degree to have met with their peer mentors. Additionally, students of color were more likely than white students to report that a major peer mentor helped them attend a department event, a measure of academic integration.

News & Career Announcements

Mangala Subramaniam (LEFT) (Purdue University) was elected Co-Chair, American Council on Education-Women's Network-Indiana (ACE-WN-IN).

Thanks to a Social Action Committee grant, Susan Lee (BELOW) was able to purchase books for an elementary school library where she volunteers. The William S. Greene Elementary School is located in a low-income neighborhood of Fall River, Massachusetts where many students have limited access to books. The school library was closed for many years due to a lack of staff. The Greene Library Volunteers organized piles of books, labelled shelves, and now staff the library two days a week. Over 350 students in grades K-5 have weekly access to books. Here Susan and the other volunteers present the SWS books to school principal Kim Luca, including books with diverse role models, local interest subjects, and bilingual books. The Kiwanis Club donated colorful book bags for students to store their books safely.
Christine Williams and Joya Misra are SWS long-timers and both served as Editors of *Gender & Society*. This year, they lead the American Sociological Association (ASA) as President and Vice-President. *Network News* was curious about how their background in feminist sociology and involvement with SWS are shaping their work in ASA.

*It’s fabulous that we have two SWSers leading the American Sociological Association this year; we are so proud of your accomplishments. What are your thoughts about leading ASA?*

CW: I could not have succeeded without the support of SWS! I owe so much to the organization, which has been my intellectual home since 1986. As ASA President, my primary role is to organize the annual program, which will be held in San Francisco in August 2020. I chose my theme—Power, Inequality, and Resistance at Work—to highlight the work of feminist scholars and activists who promote social justice in employment settings. This will also be the topic of my presidential address.

JM: I feel enormously grateful to both SWS and ASA; SWS is where I found my place as a feminist sociologist, in an era when feminist work was much less visible, ASA has given me opportunities to push that feminist agenda into the discipline more broadly. It’s been incredibly exciting to me that Christine’s vision for the meeting addresses so many of the topics that I think are most important for sociology to address in the 21st century.

*What leadership experiences in your career do you see as valuable to draw from as you lead the ASA?*

CW: In addition to editing *Gender & Society*, I served as Sociology Department Chair at The University of Texas at Austin, Chair of the ASA Sex and Gender Section, and Chair of the ASA Occupations, Organizations, and Work Section.
These leadership positions gave me opportunities to mentor junior scholars, promote equality and diversity, and encourage and champion alternative forms of academic excellence.

JM: I have a history of leading at a variety of levels in my universities as well as in the discipline, including serving previously on ASA Council and chairing the Race, Gender, and Class section. But the most important work of my lifetime has been mentoring work – Christine and I both were awarded the SWS Feminist Mentoring Award, and this is so meaningful to me. My goal is to use leadership to provide resources, develop relationships, and recognize the contributions of the many amazing sociologists working toward social justice.

From where you stand, what is the current state of sociology in general and feminist sociology, in particular? What should we celebrate and what challenges do you see for the near future?

CW: From my perspective, sociology in general and feminist sociology in particular are extremely vibrant and urgently necessary. Sociological perspectives are critical to explain the rise of global populism, renewed attacks on LGBTQ rights, and the resurgence of white supremacy. I am hopeful because many excellent scholars are addressing these social problems in fresh ways. The challenges for professional societies are to publicize this work and to garner continued support for higher education and for research funding.

JM: Feminist sociology is so much more influential than I could have ever imagined when I started my career, in ways that are enormously exciting. At the recent conference for NSF ADVANCE grantees, I heard chemists, engineers, and computer scientists referring to feminist sociology to explain how to make universities more inclusive and equitable. At the same time, I am frightened by growing inequality and the wave of nationalist, White supremacist, and right-wing movements around the globe suggesting a need to returning to the “good old days” for certain groups. Sociological research suggests another more inclusive approach to solving inequality.

What is the role of the ASA President/Vice-President in addressing the challenges you mentioned?

CW: The ASA, like SWS, strives to promote sociological research by offering our members a number of communication tools to amplify their critical work. Through policy papers, Amicus briefs, and published statements, we provide research-based perspectives to shape current public debates. As ASA President, I work with the executive team—consisting of the ASA Executive Officer, Past-President, President-Elect, and Secretary—to decide how to address public issues of concern to our membership. I also work with elected Council members and ASA staff to continually assess and enhance the well-being of the Association.

JM: The Vice Presidency offers me an opportunity to work with Christine and Council, in making policy decisions and push for approaches that can strengthen our discipline, and address public issues such as growing inequality. One of the things I have enjoyed on Council, both this time and previously, is how incredibly diverse our leadership is, and how many agree on the importance of using sociology to address inequality. Through my work chairing some committees that nominate people for leadership roles, I also have the chance to encourage a wider perspective on how we should consider diversity in terms of global location and type of work.

What advice would you give a junior sociologist for a long-term career plan to become active in a professional organization—and perhaps even a President eventually?

CW: I encourage new scholars to volunteer for committee assignments; accept invitations to review a journal article, organize a panel, or serve as a discussant; attend the annual meetings; and send your newly published articles to the scholars you cite. Doing these things will build your scholarly network, help you identify potential
new mentors, and enhance your understanding of how professional organizations are run.

JM: In my first issue of editing Gender & Society, I quoted the Talking Heads – “how did I get here?” I am introverted. I am not someone who blossoms at social events. But I am not afraid of work, and feel entirely comfortable working alongside other people, and getting to know them in that way. And I love reading and commenting on people’s work. Doing some of the things that Christine mentions were ways that I got to know other sociologists, and led me to where I am today.

Is there anything else you wish to add and/or share with SWS members?

CW: It is an honor to represent SWS and feminist sociology at the ASA.

JM: You gave me a community, and you trusted me to lead. Thank you so much for your support.

Good luck. SWS is rooting for you.

A group of SWSers all working on NSF ADVANCE grants in their respective institutions attended a recent conference, “Equity in STEM Community Convening.” The conference was organized by the NSF and ARC Network and took place in Cleveland, Ohio, October 6-8, 2019.
In the context of the United Nations III World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, young feminist activist lawyers identified the need to organize regionally in order to improve women’s social and juridical condition. Women had played a big role in bringing down authoritarian regimes in Latin America; however, existing civil society organizations regarded women’s demands for rights as “superfluous” and disconnected from the fight for democracy, citizenship, and social justice (Chiarotti 2006, 380). In addition to the historical institutionalization of heteropatriarchy and racism in law and public policies, economic instability, the rise of neoliberalism, new armed conflicts and ongoing corruption in the region constituted other important obstacles for the promotion of gender equality (Chiarotti 2006). After Nairobi, these feminists joined efforts and founded the CLADEM in 1987, in San José, Costa Rica. The legal foundation of CLADEM took place in Peru in 1989 as a network that “uses law as a tool for change.”

The CLADEM has representation in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, making it one of the largest transnational feminist networks in the Americas. The national chapters of the CLADEM are themselves networks of different feminist and human rights civil society organizations or individuals committed to its mission to pursue societal transformation and the construction of radical democracies from a feminist intersectional perspective that recognizes cultural, ethnic-racial, sexual, intergenerational, and social diversity as necessary for women and girls’ exercise of their human rights. This mission guides the CLADEM’s internal organization as well as its strategies for action and areas of work. There are four strategies, all of which adopt an interdisciplinary focus that is embedded in an approach that is “intersectorial” (i.e. the representation of different sectors of society) and pursues the mainstreaming of an ethnic-racial and diversity perspective: (a) professional development within and outside of the network; (b) the monitoring of international and regional human rights treaties; (c) strategic litigation; and (d) campaigns. Mapping onto these strategies are the areas of work on (a) a right to a life free of violence; (b) sexual and reproductive rights; and (c) economic, social, and cultural rights.

The first strategy focuses on supporting and training public servants, justice operators, and community leaders, as well as the development of human resources. The second strategy involves the articulation of alliances and different forms of advocacy in international or national arenas of power responsible for enforcing women’s rights. As part of this strategy, the CLADEM engages in knowledge production through research and the elaboration of documents or reports, including shadow reports. Representatives of the national CLADEMs regularly attend CSW meetings at the UN, since the CLADEM holds consultative status (category II).

Strategic litigation has allowed the CLADEM to be at the forefront of developing new standards for women’s human rights. The CLADEM has litigated several cases before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR), the two bodies for the protection of human rights of the Organization of American
States (OAS) as well as various UN monitoring Committees. The aim has not been to resolve an individual case, but rather to achieve structural and cultural changes to prevent the future violation of women’s rights. Some of the cases have involved forced sterilization targeting primarily Indigenous and impoverished women in Peru (Mamérita Mastanza Chávez v. Peru), access to therapeutic abortion in a context where abortion is criminalized (KLL v. Peru; LMR v. Argentina), domestic violence in Brazil (Maria Da Penha v. Brazil), and the killing of women and its impunity (feminicidio, or femicide) in Mexico (González and Others “Cotton Field” v. Mexico). The last two cases have contributed to the creation of revolutionary legislation and policies from a feminist perspective in Latin America and the Caribbean, like the Maria Da Penha Fernandez Law in Brazil on domestic violence, and more recent legislation to combat the killing of women as femicide or femicide in Mexico and other 17 states, which identify the role of the state as a perpetrator of violence.

The CLADEM has four different campaigns: Por una educación no sexista (Towards a non-sexist education); #Y aeshora (#Itistime), which focuses on states’ compliance with international treaties on women’s human rights; Por una Convención Interamericana de Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos (Towards the creation of an Inter-American Convention on Sexual and Reproductive Rights), and El embarazo infantil es tortura (Child pregnancy is torture).

The campaign against child pregnancy is the main priority for Julia, who recently became the CLADEM’s regional coordinator. This campaign was launched in response to and to raise awareness of the prevalence of the forced pregnancy of girls, often as a result incest. The case of 10-year old Mainumby (Paraguay, 2015) is emblematic of this problem. This girl was denied access to abortion. By order of local authorities, she was detained in a Red Cross shelter so that she would carry her pregnancy to term against her will and the will of her mother. The authorities never investigated or prosecuted the case of incest, arresting the girl’s mother instead for seeking an abortion for her daughter. According to the World Health Organization, girls between the ages of 10 and 14 years face a higher risk of complications and death as a result of pregnancy than other women. In Mexico alone, more than 30 girls become pregnant per day through sexual violence, often at the hands of relatives. When access to abortion is criminalized or when abortion is legal but nonetheless access to it is hindered, forced pregnancy results in forced motherhood for girls, putting their physical, psychological, and emotional health at risk as well as interrupting their childhood and studies. The CLADEM has engaged in different actions in the Inter-American and UN Human Rights systems in order to challenge the response of states to girls’ unwanted pregnancies as a result of sexual violence and incest.

**CLADEM & SWS**

Like SWS, the CLADEM is committed to promoting feminist activism and knowledge production for societal transformation and social justice. One of the CLADEM’s strengths is the ability to work transnationally to foster dialogues between different feminisms and feminist perspectives on the various forms of inequalities that shape and affect women’s lives in the Americas. Partnering with SWS strengthens this transnational work, and also provides a valuable space for developing feminist solidarity between the Global South and the Global North.

**Bibliography**


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