

Congratulations to Laura Adler, the 2021 SWS Cheryl Allyn Miller Award Winner, and to Sidra Kamran, the 2021 Cheryl Allyn Miller Honorable Mention Awardee!

Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS) established The Cheryl Allyn Miller Award for graduate students and recent PhDs. working in the area of women and paid work: employment and self-employment, informal market work, illegal work. The award honors the late Cheryl Allyn Miller, a sociologist and feminist who studied women and paid work.

The 2021 Cheryl Allyn Miller Award Winner is Laura Adler.



Laura Adler is a PhD candidate in sociology at Harvard University, where she works on topics at the intersection of economic sociology, organizations, gender, and cultural sociology. Her dissertation, “What’s a Job Candidate Worth? Pay-Setting, Gender Inequality, and the Changing Understanding of Fair Pay,” investigates how employers set pay and how organizations respond to pay equity laws. She uses multiple methods including in-depth interviews, archival research, and survey experiments to provide insight into pay-setting as an organizational practice and site for the reproduction of inequality. In new work, she is looking at the phenomenon of retaliation, proposing that instances of discrimination and harassment are only the beginning of a longer struggle over whether, when, and how to respond to the abuse of power.

Laura is a 2020-21 American Association of University Women Dissertation Fellow. Prior to her time at Harvard, she worked as an urban planner in New York City. She holds a Masters in City Planning from UC Berkeley and a BA in the Humanities from Yale University.

Laura’s article, “From the Job’s Worth to the Person’s Price: The Evolution of Pay-setting Practices since the 1950s” focuses on how the pay-setting process changed over time. She documents a major shift from the 1950s, when employers determined pay using precise measures of the internal value of each job, to today, when employers rely almost exclusively on data from the external labor market including the candidate’s own past salary, viewed as their individual market price.

Drawing on a new database of 982 pay-related articles from the Society of Human Resources Management and 75 interviews with people who set pay, she first describes these two pay-setting practices. She then provides a historical account of the shift, in which one period served as a catalyst. Between 1980 and 1985, American courts concluded that pay inequality arising in response to market conditions was not discriminatory, even if the market systematically undervalued women’s jobs. She shows that human resources practitioners strategically adopted market-based practices to reduce their legal liability. She uses the case to suggest a new pathway

for the expansion of market processes: professional groups shift controversial responsibilities onto the impersonal market, using the market as a responsibility abdication machine to distance themselves from discriminatory outcomes.

Sidra Kamran, the 2021 Honorable Mention Awardee, is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at The New School for Social Research in New York. Her research and teaching interests include gender and sexuality, labor, economic sociology, social class, urban life, and global social theory. Her dissertation draws on interviews and ethnography in a women-only marketplace and a mixed-gender department store in Karachi to investigate why some occupations are associated with contradictory moral and economic statuses for women workers. She argues that working-class beauty and retail workers in Pakistan occupy a position of gendered status ambiguity and demonstrates how these workers leverage this ambiguity to maximize their economic and social status in different ways. Her other research uses digital ethnography and semi-structured interviews to explore emerging digital cultures among working-class women in Pakistan, with a special focus on TikTok. Her research has been funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation, American Institute of Pakistan Studies, and The New School. Prior to beginning her doctoral studies, she was a Fulbright Scholar at The New School and researcher at the Collective for Social Science Research in Karachi. Sidra's submitted article "*A Patchwork of Femininities: Fluctuating Gender Performances in a Women-only Marketplace in Pakistan*" is currently under revision at a peer-reviewed journal. In this article, Sidra examines gender performances in the context of social stratification and develops an account of working-class women's gendered struggles for class distinction.



Special thanks to the Cheryl Allyn Miller Award Subcommittee Members: Tre Wentling (Chair), Suki Xiao, Rianka Roy, Sarah A. Robert, Lisa Dilks and Maria Cecilia Hwang.

We hope you will join us in congratulating Laura and Sidra, and that you will make plans to join us for the 2021 Winter SWS Awards Reception to be held on Saturday, January 30, 2021. Please register [here](#) for the 2021 Winter Meeting.