



Nancy Naples accepts, from the award chair Lisa Brush, the 2011 SWS Feminist Lecturer Award, to present her Lecture in Summer 2011.

## Announcement of 2011 SWS Distinguished Feminist Lecturer

by Lisa D. Brush, Chair of the SWS Distinguished Feminist Lecture Award

The 2011 SWS Distinguished Feminist Lecture Award goes to Professor Nancy Naples of the University of Connecticut.

Dr. Naples's work has been substantial in both extent and impact, running

the gamut of scholarship from research on low income mothers in New York neighborhoods to American rural sociology to studies of transnational feminist praxis to comparative analysis of national regimes of regulation of sexuality. Where many feminist scholars can be said to have contributed to studies of work or sexuality, there are few who are leading figures in both domains, as Dr. Naples is. Her contributions to scholarship are also notable in tackling hard

*(continued on page 14)*

## President's Message

by Denise Segura, SWS President



As you read this column, I hope you are all reinvigorated from the summer meetings in Atlanta. This year was particularly momentous with the installment

of longtime SWS member Evelyn Nakano Glenn as the ASA President! Her address on citizenship was complemented in our program with featured lectures by Carolle Charles and Akosua Adomako Ampofo.

Professor Carolle Charles, a scholar on Haitian identities and communities is a founding member and current chair of Dwa Fanm, lectured "On doing politics differently: The Haitian women feminist organizations their complex relationship to the Haitian State." Her lecture gave us new insight regarding the challenges of developing women-centered agendas in areas undergoing economic change. Professor Ampofo, the recipient of this year's SWS Feminist Activist Award, discussed the ways in which popular music both contributes to women's objectification in Ghana and is being re-tuned to voice resistance and empowerment among women. Professor Ampofo was the first feminist scholar-activist from the Global South. In an email to me on July 20, SWSer Josephine Beoku-Betts wrote, "This is a proud moment for all of us that feminist activism internationally, and particularly from the global South has been recognized in this way by SWS and is a path breaking moment for the

*(continued on page 12)*

1	President's Message	7	Chapters
1	Distinguished Feminist Lecturer	7	SWS New Website
2	African Voices	8	Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship
3	SWS Planning and Governance	10	People's...
4	2010 SWS Awards	13	Jobs
5	Lecturer Carolle Charles	15	SWS Factsheet
5	SWS Panel on Open Access		
6	Call for Applications		

# “Doing and Undoing Gender: African Voices Inside and Outside the Academy”

*SWS Feminist Activism Lecture—  
Akosua Adomako Ampofo*

by Mary Johnson Osirim

At the recent SWS Summer Meetings, Professor Akosua Adomako Ampofo, the 2010 Feminist Activist Award recipient, gave a very engaging and inspiring lecture, “Doing and Undoing Gender: African Voices Inside and Outside the Academy.” Prof. Adomako Ampofo is the Director of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon, a 2004 Fulbright New Century Scholar and the first international recipient of the SWS Feminist Activism Award. In 2005, she was appointed the first head of the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA) at the University of Ghana.

She began her talk with acknowledging her position of privilege as a middle class academic woman in Africa and her collaborations with scholars and activists on both sides of the Atlantic. She explored how her work, as well as that of her sister scholars on the continent, emanates from the realities of socio-economic and political development in Africa – from the effects of the imposition of structural adjustment programs in the 1980s and 90s to the continuation of the neo-liberal agenda fostered by the Global North. These policies have taken an especially harsh toll on women and thus, many African gender studies scholars believe they have no choice but to approach their work with a strong commitment to activism. In “doing and undoing” gender in the academy and beyond, they have not shied away from controversies and contestations around gender. Historically, African gender scholars have been active agents in the early nationalist struggles, in the



*Akosua Adomako Ampofo accepts the 2010 SWS Feminist Activism Award*

formation of feminist organizations, as well as in the UN Conferences on Women. In these activities and more, these researchers have recognized the diversity of feminisms across the continent while seeking an African-centeredness in contemporary scholarship.

Adomako Ampofo noted the critical need to recognize the dominance of particular approaches in gender studies as well as who produces knowledge and whose voices are privileged in its dissemination. Thus, for example, partly because traditional disciplines have largely failed to consider local explanations for issues that affect Global South populations, “ ‘culture’ has (re)emerged as the place where gender is most passionately contested and (re)invented in oppressive forms.” Women thus remain oppressed in the name of culture and often much attention to African women’s lives in the classrooms of the Global North focuses on such issues as female genital cutting to the exclusion of other major concerns.

One of the most exciting features of Adomako Ampofo’s talk was her discussion of her personal journey towards activism. She considers herself a Christian Feminist and one who traveled a very interdisciplinary road towards feminist sociology with previous degrees in architecture and development planning. Her early work in sociology employed

quantitative methods in studying women’s reproductive health, although she soon became frustrated with this more instrumental approach. Since then, she has engaged in more qualitative studies in a wide-range of areas including: a comparative study of sex workers in Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire; socialization and bi-racial identity among Ghanaians; the social movement that resulted in the passage of the Domestic Violence Act in Ghana; sexualities and the construction of masculinities and the objectification of women in Ghanaian popular music.

In her leadership of CEGENSA, she worked with faculty from many disciplines to promote women’s and gender studies through curriculum development, mentoring, research and outreach. Carrying forward the aims of the Gender and Women’s Studies for Africa’s Transformation Project based at the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town, CEGENSA held two curriculum development workshops that brought together faculty from several tertiary-level institutions in Ghana. During her tenure, CEGENSA also created a sexual assault crisis unit.

One of her major efforts outside of the academy was working with the social movement that resulted in the passage of the Domestic Violence Act in Ghana.

*(continued on page 9)*

# SWS, Approaching Her 40th, Gets Serious About Planning and Governance

by Jessica Holden Sherwood

When I became SWS Executive Officer in 2006, I did my best to get up to speed on all of the details of SWS operations. Conferences, committees, awards, website, database, membership—I've been trying (and trying and trying) to "make the trains run on time."

Four years have passed and I know that SWS needs more than just a diligent executive officer. Where are those trains headed anyway, and why?

I am very pleased to report that at the Summer business meeting in Atlanta, SWS members approved new spending on consultants to help us with strategic planning and reviewing our operations and governance. I thank the executive council and everyone else who supported the proposal, which requests up to \$40,000 for the project, to be spent in 2010 and 2011.

In the prior meeting, Winter 2010 in Santa Barbara, executive council agreed that we should explore working with nonprofit consultants. In the months between the Winter and Summer meetings, I spent hours talking to consultants about how these processes usually work.



The executive council appointed a small consultant selection taskforce: Marcia Hernandez (Sister to Sister committee co-chair), Tracy Ore (President Elect), and me.

The three of us reviewed four proposals from select consultants, which helped us arrive at the \$40,000 cost estimate. During the Atlanta meeting, we made the proposal to the EOB—Executive Office and Budget committee—the executive council and then to the

members at the business meeting. Our final task will be to select a consultant to recommend for the council's approval.

Meantime, SWS President Denise Segura is consulting with committee chairs to form a Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF). Vice President Susan Farrell has graciously agreed to chair the SPTF. Its charge is to:

- keep SWS members informed about the planning process
- identify a broad range of SWS members to provide input into planning needs and goals
- finalize planning goals, process, and timeline
- adjust or confirm the consultant's analysis
- draft plans for member feedback

I am very pleased that this is getting underway. SWS members, expect announcements and inquiries from the SPTF this Fall. Again, thanks to all of the SWS members and leaders who supported the idea, and thanks in advance for participating in the process.

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## Announcing Winners of 2010 SWS Awards

The Sister-to-Sister Committee is pleased to announce that Veronica Montes is the 2010 recipient of the Chow-Green Dissertation Scholarship. Ms. Montes is pursuing her graduate work at the University of California-Santa Barbara. Her dissertation examines the household social and economic strategies developed by transnational Mexican families in their sending and receiving communities, and builds a new conceptual framework for analyzing how these strategies are simultaneously developed, maintained or transformed as families stretch across national borders. This is an ambitious,

multi-method project that will bridge the gap between micro- and macro-level understandings of the dynamics in transnational communities.

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The 2010 SWS Feminist Mentoring Award goes to Professor Joya Misra from the University of Massachusetts. Among a pool of more than a dozen incredibly strong candidates, Joya Misra stood out as a mentor beyond mentors. She is what one letter writer calls a "champion" of people's work. She helps people do good work, and to feel good about the work they do. And she spreads the word about her students and colleagues work at every opportunity. The breadth of her generosity is inspiring. Letters of support

came from students whom she first mentored when she was an Assistant Professor, now tenured faculty themselves, and from what seemed to be an entire department full of graduate students at University of Massachusetts. Her supporter included scholars at every stage of career, Black, Latino/a, Indian-Americans, whites, gay and straight, parents, women and men.

Professor Misra mentors more individuals than most of us know in our daily lives. She helps students and colleagues sharpen their own work, and figure out where to present and publish it. But she does more. At least 23 of her current publications are coauthored. Many of those who have worked with Joya Misra

*(continued on page 4)*



Left: Joya Misra accepts, from the award chair Barbara Risman, the 2010 SWS Feminist Mentoring Award. Right: Gladys García-López accepts, from the award chair Laura West Steck, the 2010 SWS Cheryl Allyn Miller Award.

(SWS Awards continued from page 3)  
 write that that she has voluntarily for-  
 gone many a single-authored article to  
 help them learn how to publish, giving  
 graduate students experience and credit  
 for assisting with her work. Her mentor-  
 ship is holistic, critiquing and support-  
 ing good sociological writing and teach-  
 ing, while also supporting family/work  
 balance decisions, and throwing baby  
 showers. Many a letter writer mentioned  
 how Joya Misra had opened up her fam-  
 ily and brought students and colleagues  
 inside of it.

While Joya Misra mentors individu-  
 als, she also mentors whole communi-  
 ties, and uses her sociological skills to  
 improve the academic climate in feminist  
 directions. At the University of Geor-  
 gia she organized a womanist group, in  
 which professors of color at the universi-  
 ty were able to come together over meals  
 at her house to share experiences and  
 strengthen their networks. As somebody  
 who believes that social scientific evi-  
 dence really does help solve problems,  
 Professor Misra has worked with the fac-  
 ulty union at the University of Massa-  
 chusetts’ to study the gender-, race-, and  
 family-related patterns among faculty  
 members’ work activities. Their findings  
 about associate professors’ service obli-  
 gations, in particular, have proven to be  
 very important in efforts to restructure

the disproportionate demands faced by  
 women. We all benefit as that scholar-  
 ship adds to the professional literature  
 on workplace issues.

Joya Misra also serves on the SWS  
 Career Development Committee, where  
 she has provided resources and un-  
 matched guidance to scholars who are  
 moving through the rank. When Pro-  
 fessor Misra finds a departmental level  
 problem, she steps in and fixes it, even  
 when that means running workshops all  
 by herself. It is hard to imagine how Joya  
 Misra has time to sleep.

SWS should be honored to have  
 Joya Misra as one of our own.



The Cheryl Allyn Miller Award was es-  
 tablished to recognize graduate students  
 and recent Ph.D.s working in the area  
 of women and paid work—employment  
 and self-employment, informal market  
 work, illegal work. The award is support-  
 ed by a bequest from the family of the  
 late Cheryl Allyn Miller, a sociologist and  
 feminist who studied women and paid  
 work. The purpose of the award is to  
 recognize a graduate student or a recent  
 doctorate in sociology whose research  
 or activism constitutes an outstanding  
 contribution to the field of women and  
 work.

The 2010 recipient of the Cheryl Al-  
 lyn Miller Award is Gladys Garcia Lopez,  
 author of “Nunca Te Toman En Cuenta  
 [They Never Take You Into Account]’:  
 The Challenges of Inclusion and Strate-  
 gies for Success of Chicana Attorneys.”  
 Her work examines the professional  
 experiences of Chicana attorneys in  
 the male-dominated occupation of law.  
 Through an analysis in-depth interviews  
 with 15 Chicana lawyers, Garcia-Lopez  
 discusses the ways in which persisting  
 racist, sexist, classist, and homophobic  
 practices embedded in the organiza-  
 tional structure of law firms limit oppor-  
 tunities for Chicana attorneys and render  
 their successes invisible. Her analysis  
 also reveals the innovative strategies her  
 respondents have adopted for redefining  
 measures of professional success and for  
 challenging discriminatory organiza-  
 tional practices.

Garcia-Lopez is currently a Ph.D.  
 candidate at the University of California  
 Santa Barbara completing a dissertation  
 entitled *Lawyering from the Margins:  
 The Challenges of Inclusion and Strate-  
 gies for Success of Chicana/o Lawyers.*  
 “Nunca Te Toman En Cuenta [They Nev-  
 er Take You Into Account],” a manuscript  
 developed from her dissertation work,  
 was recently published in *Gender & Soci-  
 ety* in July 2008.

## Featured Lecturer Carolle Charles on Feminism in Haiti

by Kristen E. Baxter

“Haitian women are traders and sellers of commodities, and are commodities themselves.” Myriam Merlet gave her simple and strong opinion on what it is to become a woman in Haiti, and that subject is one of the last recalled conversations she shared with close friend and comrade Dr. Carolle Charles.

Dr. Charles recalls Myriam as a “Lost National Treasure” to the nation of Haiti, now strictly spoken of in “Pre” and “Post” Quake terms. The tragedy in Haiti robbed the nation of three progressive feminist activists, all friends of Dr. Charles: Myriam Merlet, Magali Marcelin, and Ann Marie Coriolan.

Dr. Charles spoke fondly of these

fallen women in her featured lecture entitled “Doing Politics Differently: Haitian Women, Feminist Organizations, and Their Complex Relationship to the Haitian State.” Dr. Charles, a Fulbright recipient in 2001 for Haiti, was introduced with a barrage of accomplishments, organizations and publications, all speaking to her tremendous contributions in feminist studies. These include her work on processes and agencies in Haitian society as well as in Haitian immigrant communities in North America.

The initial focus of Dr. Charles’ lecture was an introductory outline of her three main areas of research: Labor Migration and Transnational Pattern of Migrants’ Identities; The Dynamic of Race, Culture, and History; and Gender and Empowerment.

The lecture explored the development and shift of feminist organizations in the past 15 years: Dr. Charles pointed

out that in 1986 the fall of the dictatorship gave way to the emergence of feminist organizations, which culminated in the 1990’s and again in 2002. In 2002, 12 organizations came together to form CONAP, Haiti’s National Coordination for Advocacy on Women’s Rights. Dr. Charles explained that CONAP “is and was the result of the work of those three women” citing the tireless work that Myriam, Magali and Ann Marie did with CONAP. With slow progress and many set-backs in women’s rights throughout the years, it seemed to some that CONAP was the start of the women’s movement in Haiti. According to Dr. Charles this was simply not the case, as she suggested that “the formation of CONAP didn’t come from the sky, these women existed and were working previously.”

“Haiti’s a small country but a big nation” she said, explaining that this

*(continued on page 9)*

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## SWS Panel on Open Access and Technological Change in Publishing

by Heather Macpherson Parrott

For the Atlanta SWS meeting, the SWS publications committee organized an informative panel on open access publishing, which included Julie Speer (librarian at Georgia Institute of Technology), Eric Moran (journal editor at Sage Publication), Jerry Jacobs (University of Pennsylvania), and Pam Oliver (University of Wisconsin). The presentations and discussions at this session highlighted the complexities of open access publishing as researchers, publishers, and granting agencies seek to satisfy both practical and ethical concerns related to the dissemination of academic research.

The goal of open access (OA) publishing is to remove existing barriers to

accessing scholarly research by making the results of such research freely available to the public online. Granting agencies are increasingly requiring researchers to comply with this goal and many ask applicants to include a plan for how they intend to share their research. While there are two main ways to share OA research—OA journals and OA repositories—and OA policies differ with regard to time regulations, OA policies generally require that research be deposited in a repository, such as NIH’s PubMed Central, within 12 months of publication. However, if passed, the Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA) would require that all non-classified research from 11 U.S. government agencies, including NSF and DoE, with annual research expenditures of over \$100 million make manuscripts stemming from that research publically available in a repository within six months of being published in a peer-reviewed journal ([www.arl.org/sparc/advocacy/frpaa/](http://www.arl.org/sparc/advocacy/frpaa/)

[index.shtml](#)). Thus, rather than keep research results contained within academic journals and communities, taxpayers will have full and relatively prompt access to publically funded research.

As stressed by Julie Speer, OA is intended to affect access, not quality control. OA is considered compatible with peer review, copyrighting, revenue, and print journals. However, Eric Moran discussed ways in which OA publishing stands to conflict with traditional print journals. The main concern from a publisher’s standpoint is that free public access will erode journal subscriptions, the primary source of income needed to publish journals like *Gender & Society* and, in turn, support organizations like SWS. The hope is that libraries will continue their subscriptions because academics will demand more immediate access to academic articles than the lag time allotted under OA policies. However, it is unclear whether libraries will in fact

*(continued on page 6)*

(Open Access continued from page 5)

continue to pay these steep subscription costs. Publishers are thus left with two main challenges: figuring out how to distinguish what their journals do from everyone else and finding other ways that they can fund the publication process. Different approaches to these challenges are reflected in different copyright regulations across journals.

Libraries and universities are currently working to raise awareness about OA publishing and to provide copyright assistance to researchers. The SHERPA/RoMEO database ([www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo](http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo)) is a key source of information

on publisher copyrighting policies and self-archiving, including which versions of the manuscript (pre-print, post-print, and/or publishers formatted pdf) are and are not permitted for archiving. Though these guidelines exist, researchers wishing to make their manuscripts more widely available can negotiate copyrights with publishers. Researchers can attach an addendum to their copyright transfer agreement (see [scholars.schiencecommons.org](http://scholars.schiencecommons.org) for addendum options) to retain rights to self-archive their materials, whether on their personal website or in an OA repository. In some cases, authors may need to pay a

high fee (~\$2,000-\$3,000) to keep their article open and help fund the cost of publishing. This fee can be budgeted for in large grants, but remains problematic for many social science researchers who desire open access and do not have such funding.

In short, OA publishing is an issue that researchers and publishers are increasingly going to be grappling with, as granting agencies, federal laws, and even universities increasingly require public access to research output. For more information, you can access Julie Speer's presentation and resources on OA at: <http://hdl.handle.net/1853/34503>.

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## Call for Applications for Campus Visits of 2011 Distinguished Feminist Lecturer Nancy Naples, and 2010 Feminist Activism Winner Akosua Adomako Ampofo

*Due March 1, 2011*

During the 2011-2012 academic year, each award winner will visit two campuses. These campus visits are intended to celebrate and enhance feminist scholarship and social activism on college campuses.

The **Distinguished Feminist Lecturer** visits campuses that are isolated, rural, located away from major metropolitan areas, bereft of the resources needed to invite guest speakers, and/or are characterized by hostility to feminist scholarship.

The **Feminist Activism Awardee** visits campuses with departments with a focus on feminist activism, social movements, sociological practice, and/or activist research.

The selection committee will look especially favorably on campuses that are committed to gaining the widest possible audience for these visits. This may be demonstrated by evidence of

- collaboration with other departments and programs on campus
- multiple-campus cooperation
- community partnerships

SWS will pay at least a portion of the expenses for the two site visits; institutions should not let resource scarcity prevent them from applying. (Detailed reimbursement levels and guidelines are pending approval by SWS Executive Council and will be made available when finalized.) SWS awards the Distinguished Feminist Lecturer and the Feminist Activism Awardee a one-time honorarium of \$1000.

If you are interested in hosting a campus visit send your application by **March 1, 2011** to:

### **Distinguished Feminist Lecturer**

Committee Chair Lisa D. Brush  
email: [lbrush@pitt.edu](mailto:lbrush@pitt.edu);  
phone: 412-648-7595

### **Feminist Activism Award**

Committee Chair Andrea Miller  
email: [andreamiller31@webster.edu](mailto:andreamiller31@webster.edu);  
phone: 314-246-8698

The application should include the following information:

An explanation of your interest in

hosting a campus visit and the merits of awarding a campus visitation to your school.

1. A description of the type of presentation you are interested in hosting (this is particularly important in the case of the Feminist Activist).
2. The number of days you will ask the awardee to stay.
3. The audience to which the presentation will be targeted.
4. A description of how local costs will be met.
5. Tentative dates.\*

\*NOTE: The two campuses who host the 2010 Feminist Activist, Dr. Ampofo, will need to coordinate dates as she is based in Ghana and should only make the international trip once.

# Chapters

## Announcement:

A new SWS chapter has been founded in the Bay Area and seeks members. We hope to build relationships among scholars, hold receptions and events to showcase members' work, and offer mentoring opportunities to scholars at all stages of their careers. If you live in the Greater Bay Area and are interested in becoming a member of this local chapter, please email Katrina Kimport: kimportk@obgyn.ucsf.edu.

## Contacts:

### Arizona: Tucson

Cindy Cain (ccain@u.arizona.edu)  
Jason Crockett (jlc76@u.arizona.edu)  
Karen Gordon (kegordon@u.arizona.edu)  
Monika J. Ulrich (mjulrich@u.arizona.edu)  
Megan Wright

(mswright@u.arizona.edu)

### California: Bay Area

Katrina Kimport (kimportk@obgyn.ucsf.edu)  
Lori Freedman (freedmanl@obgyn.ucsf.edu)  
Signy Judd (signyjudd@gmail.com)

### Florida: Tallahassee

Janice McCabe (jmccabe@fsu.edu)  
Erica Toothman (elt03c@fsu.edu)

### Illinois: Chicago

Alison Moss (amoss4@uic.edu)

### Iowa: Iowa State University

Molly Sween (moll15@iastate.edu)  
Anna Kosloski (kos10021@iastate.edu)  
Anastasia Prokos (aprokos@iastate.edu)

### Michigan:

Michigan State University, Lansing  
Linda Gjakaj (gjakajli@msu.edu)

Minnesota: University of Minnesota  
Teresa Toguchi Swartz (tswartz@umn.edu)

### Nevada: UNLV

Jennifer Reid Keene (jkeene@unlv.nevada.edu)

### Ohio: University of Akron

Kathy Feltey (felteyk@uakron.edu)  
Jennyerin Steele-Stats (jes91@zips.uakron.edu)

### Ohio: Kent State University

Kelly MacArthur (kmacart1@kent.edu)

### North Carolina:

#### North Carolina State University

Alison Buck (arbuck@sa.ncsu.edu)  
Abigail Cameron (abby\_cameron@ncsu.edu)  
Kylie Parrotta (klparrot@sa.ncsu.edu)  
Elizabeth Seale (ekseale@sa.ncsu.edu)

(continued on page 14)

## Looking Forward to the Launch: SWS Plans New Website

by Jessica Holden Sherwood

The project entailed months of painstaking work. There was excavating, reorganizing, updating and building. If it sounds like we've been busy on an archeological dig, that's no accident.

SWS Media Specialist Theta Pavis and

I have been working to redesign and overhaul the SWS website. Our main goals are to improve navigation, so it's easier for members to find what they are looking for, and to be more current and enticing to the media and public. We also plan on updating the site's content more regularly.

Those present at the SWS Business Meeting in Atlanta this summer received a "sneak peek" at the working draft (or Beta version) of the new site, whose header is pictured here.

Overhauling the look and navigation of a website is a big job on its own. Unfortunately we have had two additional hurdles. As we explored our existing



webpages, we saw just how much updating was required. Much of the site was static and many documents are at least 10 years old. Theta and I have been poring through every page, which number around 300, deciding what to discard, what to preserve, what to update, and what to create from scratch.

The second hurdle is our online membership database, which launched in 2008. The work of the database is normally invisible behind the website, but what's been going on in the background has been dysfunctional. We now have an excellent programmer who is rebuilding the database to make it functional, adaptive and easy to use for members, as well as for the staff that has to work with it behind the scenes.

We aren't sure when the site will be fully ready to launch. Certainly the new database needs to be finalized and tested before we do this. In addition, while we have accomplished a lot, many pages of the site remain under construction. Reaction to the Beta site in Atlanta was very positive, and we share members' eagerness to have the new site go live as soon as possible.

## 2010 Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship Winners

The Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship is given annually to a graduate student in sociology who began her or his college career at a two-year community or technical college. This year's committee had an especially difficult time selecting from the many excellent candidates. Each possessed qualities that Beth embodied, including: excellent scholarship and overall academic potential, especially in the areas of gender, aging, and social inequality; and a commitment to teaching, mentoring and social activism, especially in a community college setting. As a result, in addition to our scholarship winner, we also selected two honorable mentions.

Our honorable mention winners receive complimentary membership in Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS), and registration and banquet tickets for the SWS, the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP), and the American Sociological Association (ASA) summer meetings in Atlanta, GA.

The first honorable mention winner is **Emir Estrada-Loy**. Emir is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Southern California. After immigrating to the US from Mexico after completing high school, Emir worked alongside her mother cleaning houses. She enrolled in an English as a Second Language course at Long Beach City College where she also took her first sociology course. Seeing parallels between her life and those of other domestics discussed in works like *Domestica* by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo motivated Emir to pursue sociology as a career. After receiving her Associate's degree, Emir transferred to UCLA where she graduated cum laude with majors in Sociology and Chicana/o Studies. As a graduate student at USC, she now works

closely with her mentor Hondagneu-Sotelo studying the children of immigrant street vendors and domestics who also work alongside their parents in these two informal occupations.

The second honorable mention is awarded to **Miho Iwata**. While living in Japan Miho earned her first A.A. degree in English. She worked fulltime for five years to pay off her student debt and save money to immigrate to the US to continue her education. She attended Chaffey Community College in



*Sarah K. Bruch accepts the 2010 Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship*

CA where, after enrolling in her first sociology course, she switched her major from psychology to sociology. She completed her B.A. in sociology at CSU San Bernardino, and with strong support and encouragements from her advisors, decided to pursue graduate training to contribute to the alleviation of social inequalities. Miho is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Connecticut, where she completed a graduate certificate in Women's Studies in 2009. Like much of Beth's own work, Miho's research examines the intersections of multiple social inequalities. For her master's thesis, she examined the process of ethno-racialization and gendering among Brazilian migrants

in Japan. Her dissertation explores Japanese conceptualizations of race and contemporary racism experienced by foreign populations living in Japan. She is also engaged in a collaborative book project with Dr. Bandanya Purkayastha and others exploring the unique aging experiences of Asian-Americans.

The 2010 Scholarship carries a stipend of \$3500 from SWS, to be used to support the pursuit of graduate studies, as well as one-year student memberships in SWS, SSSP, and ASA. Additionally, the winner receives travel support and complimentary registration and banquet/reception tickets for the summer meetings of each sponsoring organization.

We are delighted to award the 2010 Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship to **Sarah Bruch**. Sarah was motivated to study sociology based largely on the experience of being a single teen parent on welfare during the early 1990s, an experience that continues to inform her research interests. She wrote in her application essay that after graduating from high school as a junior, she essentially gave up on her dream of attending college. However, one day she found herself on a bus driving past North Seattle Community College when she decided to get off the bus to check it out. She enrolled in her first course when her daughter was four months old. At NSCC she found supportive instructors willing to bend the rules to allow her to bring her daughter to class. Unfortunately, government support was not nearly as forthcoming and Sarah was kicked off welfare for enrolling in classes that were not part of an approved work training program. Sarah persevered, however, taking multiple part-time jobs to support herself and her daughter as she earned her Associate's degree. She transferred to the University of Washington where she received her BA in political science and later her Master's in public administration. She began graduate studies in sociology at

*(continued on back cover)*



*(Charles continued from page 5)*

is a popular saying in Haiti. The nation emerged from a successful slave revolution, and the common known label or poorest nation in the western hemisphere does not give credit to the complexity of Haiti. In a nation where 5 to 10% of the population controls over 40% of the wealth, the life expectancy in Haiti was a low 49 years just before the quake. Haiti has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the world. Dr. Charles suggests that this is due to the degrading way in which women are forced to get abortions, which are illegal in Haiti. She also noted that at this time, conditions are not good for pushing this issue.

The conditions in Haiti “pre-earthquake” were less than progressive. Up until quite recently, adultery was a crime: penalized for most males with a fine, and with jail time for a woman, that is if her husband didn’t murder her. Women’s organizations became subject to rape, a widely used “gender based instrument of violence.” The first organization against gender violence held its first conference in 1991, which Dr. Charles recognized as a “very bold” form of activism for the nation at the time.

CONAP has been the most crucial women’s organization in Haiti, and its 2002 formation broke some barriers with its collaborations. “Haiti has had a culture of intolerance,” Dr. Charles

explained; “CONAP represents what it is to be a feminist organization in Haiti, it targets all forms of discrimination against women, giving services as well as advocacy.” Though CONAP was a great movement for Haiti, it “represents something but has no budget, can’t exercise power without money, and they know it’s only about symbol.” She continued, “so women began to wonder, is it better to have an office close to the President?”

The Ministry of Women was made up mostly of members of CONAP, and a part of the government. One of the main strategies women use to gain power is through election, which has not been successful. Less than 5% of officeholders were women before the earthquake. Offering perspective, however, Dr. Charles pointed out that this can be compared to the U.S. Haiti is not individual in its troubles whether it be women’s rights, social movement or development issues. The conversation turned to “post-quake” Haiti, and as Dr. Charles describes the loss her home has endured, the tone changes. “The Ministry has completely disappeared. The director died and 2 important figures have died.” She continued by saying that so far, CONAP has been silent. “Organizations are busy dealing with relief,” she explained, a reminder of the immediacy of care needed in Haiti right now. Women’s organizations have been mostly absent from plans of

development and reconstruction.

In the wake of the disaster, gender violence has intensified and rapes are high. The government’s response has been slow and degrading. Government reports have stated that the rape reports are untrue. “Police told women to prove you were raped, and that this is not our problem, this is the government’s problem.” Trafficking, homelessness, and prostitution have all intensified since the quake. Women continue to fight however, organizing vigilante activity with men to prevent assaults on women in the tent cities.

Haiti faces a great challenge in its efforts to rebuild as a nation, and Haitian women face a struggle of their own in rebuilding what they have worked so tirelessly to gain. This past International Women’s Day represented a day of mourning for activists in Haiti. An event memorializing Myriam Merlet, Magalie Marcelin and Ann Marie Coriolan was held and organized by CONAP on March 8th, 2010 dedicated to recapturing the Haitian women’s movement. As for Dr. Charles, she says she will return to Haiti, for one particularly strong and present reason; to show herself, and to prove to her mind that her friends will no longer be there when she visits. “I have to go there to see, to know, that they are no longer there and that when I go to Haiti they will not be there. That is important.”

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*(African Voices continued from page 2)*

She worked tirelessly in demonstrations with many civil society organizations that formed the Domestic Violence Coalition and stemming from her scholarly interests in gender-based violence, she drafted press releases, served as a resource person for the Coalition and also represented the group in meetings with members of Parliament.

Her most recent activities as a scholar-activist focus on the representation of women in Ghanaian contemporary

music. She and her research team have collected over 300 songs from the 1950s to the present and embarked on a textual analysis of this music. She developed workshops that brought together musicians, radio personalities and researchers to explore the position of women in popular music and held a national song competition to support the development of empowering songs. These efforts have led to a larger project linking women’s associations, policy makers and international scholars committed to developing

new programs showcasing positive images of women.

In these efforts and more, Adomako Ampofo truly exemplifies what it means to be a feminist scholar-activist and part of a global sisterhood. She is an inspiration to us all!

## PEOPLE'S...

### ACTIVITIES

Margaret Abraham, Hofstra University, was elected to be the Vice-President, Research Councils, of the International Sociological Association.

Carrie Smith is the new chair of the "Teaching Social Problems" section of the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

Barb Brents was interviewed by L.A. Weekly about the recession driving women to working in Nevada brothels. <http://www.laweekly.com/2010-09-02/news/the-family-prostitute/>

### AWARDS

Bandana Purkayastha won the UCONN Alumni Association's Graduate Teaching Award.

Shobha Hamal Gurung was designated as one of the two Service Learning Fellows for the University of Southern Utah.

Corinne Reczek won the Louise Johnson Scholar Award, for best graduate student paper, from the ASA Medical Sociology Section.

C.J. Pascoe received, for *Dude, You're A Fag*, Honorable Mention in Distinguished Book Award of the ASA Sex & Gender Section.

Chardie Baird won the Best Publication Award from the ASA Sociology of Mental Health Section for: "Is there a Downside to Shooting for the Stars? Unrealized Educational Expectations and Symptoms of Depression" (Reynolds & Baird 2010), published in the *American Sociological Review*.

Verta Taylor, Katrina Kimport, Nella Van

Dyke and Ellen Ann Andersen received the 2010 Best Published Article Award from the ASA Section on Collective Behavior and Social Movements, for: "Culture and Mobilization: Tactical Repertoires, Same-Sex Weddings, and the Impact on Gay Activism," published in the *American Sociological Review*.

Nancy Whittier received the 2010 Outstanding Book Award from the ASA Section on Collective Behavior and Social Movements for: *The Politics of Child Sexual Abuse: Emotions, Social Movements, and the State* (New York: Oxford University Press).

### JOBS/MOVES

Stephanie Jaros is a Behavioral Research Specialist for US Customs & Border Protection.

Debra Guckenheimer and Wendy Christensen are now both Visiting Assistant Professors at Bowdoin College.

Julie Wiest is Assistant Professor of Strategic Communication (joint appointment in sociology) at High Point University in North Carolina.

Bandana Purkayastha has been promoted to Full Professor at the University of Connecticut.

Joanna Hunter received her Ph.D. from Florida State University, and is now Assistant Professor at Saint Joseph's College.

### BOOKS

By Jocelyn A. Hollander, Daniel G. Renfrow, and Judith A. Howard: *Gendered Situations, Gendered Selves: A Gender Lens on Social Psychology*, revised edition, in Rowman & Littlefield's Gender Lens series.

By Judith Lorber and Lisa Jean Moore: *Gendered Bodies: Feminist Perspectives*, second edition.

Edited by Vasilikie Demos and Marcia Segal: *Interactions and Intersections of Gendered Bodies at Work, at Home, and at Play* – Advances in Gender Research vol. 14.

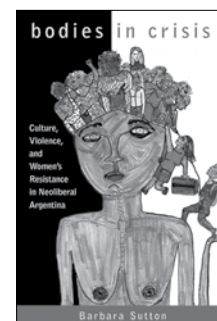
<http://bit.ly/GenderdBodies>

By Gayle Sulik: *Pink Ribbon Blues: How Breast Cancer Culture Undermines Women's Health*.

"Based on eight years of research, analysis of advertisements and breast cancer awareness campaigns, and hundreds of interviews with those affected by the disease, *Pink Ribbon Blues* highlights the hidden costs of the pink ribbon as an industry, one in which breast cancer has become merely a brand name with a pink logo. Indeed, while survivors and supporters walk, run, and purchase ribbons for a cure, cancer rates rise, the cancer industry thrives, corporations claim responsible citizenship while profiting from the disease, and breast cancer is stigmatized anew for those who reject the pink ribbon model. But Sulik also outlines alternative organizations that make a real difference, highlights what they do differently, and presents a new agenda for the future."

[www.pinkribbonblues.org](http://www.pinkribbonblues.org)

By Barbara Sutton: *Bodies in Crisis: Violence, Culture, and Women's Resistance in Neoliberal Argentina*.



"Born and raised in Argentina and still maintaining significant ties to the area, Barbara Sutton examines the complex, and often hidden, bodily worlds of diverse women in that country during a period of profound social upheaval. Based

primarily on women's experiential narratives and set against the backdrop of a severe economic crisis and intensified social movement activism post-2001, *Bodies in Crisis* illuminates how multiple forms of injustice converge in and are contested through women's bodies. Sutton reveals the bodily scars of neoliberal globalization; women's negotiation of cultural norms of femininity and beauty; experiences with clandestine, illegal, and unsafe abortions; exposure to and resistance against interpersonal and structural violence; and the role of bodies as tools and vehicles of political action. Through the lens of women's body consciousness in a Global South country, and drawing on multifaceted stories and a politically embedded approach, *Bodies in Crisis* suggests that social policy, economic systems, cultural ideologies, and political resistance are ultimately fleshly matters."

[http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu/acatalog/Bodies\\_in\\_Crisis.html](http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu/acatalog/Bodies_in_Crisis.html)

By Katja Guenther: *Making Their Place: Feminism after Socialism in Eastern Germany* (Stanford University Press) brings to light how feminist movements utilize local understandings of politics and gender to enhance their possibilities for meaningful social change. Through a rich ethnographic account of the feminist movements in two cities in eastern Germany since the end of state socialism in 1989, the book chronicles the specific reasons why place matters, the importance of localized experiences during the socialist era, and how history shapes contemporary identities, cultures, and politics. What emerges is a fascinating analysis of the different ways people have struggled to define themselves, their values, and their understandings of gender during the period of monumental social, economic, and political upheaval accompanying the collapse of East German socialism.

<http://www.sup.org/book.cgi?id=18396>

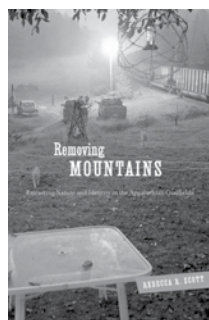
By Miliann Kang: *The Managed Hand: Race, Gender and the Body in Beauty Service Work*.

"Two women, virtual strangers, sit hand-in-hand across a narrow table, both intent on the same thing—achieving the perfect manicure. Encounters like this occur thousands of times across the United States in nail salons increasingly owned and operated by Asian immigrants.

This study looks closely for the first time at these intimate encounters, focusing on New York City, where such nail salons have become ubiquitous. Drawing from rich and compelling interviews, Miliann Kang takes us inside the nail industry, asking such questions as: Why have nail salons become so popular? Why do so many Asian women, and Korean women in particular, provide these services? Kang discovers multiple motivations for the manicure—from the pampering of white middle class women to the artistic self-expression of working class African American women to the mass consumption of body-related services. Contrary to notions of beauty service establishments as spaces for building community among women, *The Managed Hand* finds that while tentative and fragile solidarities can emerge across the manicure table, they generally give way to even more powerful divisions of race, class, and immigration."

<http://www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520262607>

By Rebecca Scott: *Removing Mountains: Extracting Nature and Identity in the Appalachian Coalfields*.



are flattened and valleys are filled as

the coal industry levels thousands of acres of forest to access the coal, in the process turning the forest into scrubby shrublands and poisoning the water. This is dangerous and environmentally devastating work, but as Rebecca R. Scott argues in *Removing Mountains*, the issues at play are vastly complicated.

In this rich ethnography of life in Appalachia, Scott examines mountaintop removal in light of controversy and protests from environmental groups calling for its abolishment. But *Removing Mountains* takes the conversation in a new direction, telling the stories of the businesspeople, miners, and families who believe they depend on the industry to survive. Scott reveals these southern Appalachian coalfields as a meaningful landscape where everyday practices and representations help shape a community's relationship to the environment.

*Removing Mountains* demonstrates that the paradox that faces this community—forced to destroy their land to make a wage—raises important questions related not only to the environment but also to American national identity, place, and white working-class masculinity."

[http://www.upress.umn.edu/Books/S/scott\\_removing.html](http://www.upress.umn.edu/Books/S/scott_removing.html)

By Kelley Massoni: *Fashioning Teenagers: A Cultural History of Seventeen Magazine*.

"Kelley Massoni has written the first cultural history of the origins of *Seventeen* and its role in shaping the modern teen girl ideal. Using content analysis, interviews, oral histories, and promotional materials, she shows how *Seventeen* helped create the concept of the modern "teenager." *Fashioning Teenagers* will be of interest to students of gender studies, popular culture, sociology, mass media, journalism, business, and American studies."

<http://www.lcoastpress.com/book.php?id=300>

*(President's Column, continued from page 1)*  
organization itself and for that we are extremely proud." I am indeed proud that SWS continues to recognize the important work of scholar-activists in all areas of the globe. Both of our featured lecturers demonstrate the critical need for a feminist analysis attentive to the nuances of culture, class, sexuality and race in areas in the midst of economic and social change.

While our featured lectures presented rigorous analyses of social change in different areas of the globe, our SWS committees engaged in intensive discussions of both local and international issues concerning our communities, in particular questions of "belonging," well-being and ultimately "citizenship" construed in the broadest sense. Sister-to-Sister's panel discussion, "Making SWS Ours" provided a space for members and officers to explore some ideas to promote greater inclusion by historically underrepresented groups in SWS. This theme was also taken up by the Career Development Committee (CDC) who discussed developing a mentoring workshop for the Winter Meetings on navigating the discipline, including how to become embedded in networks, and in mutual mentoring to expand the access of diverse constituencies to SWS.

I encourage both Sister-to-Sister and CDC, among others, to solidify these discussions into concrete proposals. I hope these committees will bring specific items for us to consider at the Winter meeting or to the Executive Committee for inclusion onto one of the Winter meeting's business meetings. For example, one of the ideas discussed in the Sister-to-Sister workshop was to begin regularly scheduling a panel presentation of the research of past recipients of the Chow-Green dissertation fellowship. A compatible idea emerged from the Awards Committee to regularly invite past recipients of different awards, in particular the Cheryl Miller award

and the Feminist Activist award to present their research at either the Winter or Summer meeting. These are just a couple of the excellent ideas that I had the opportunity to hear. Since I could not attend every meeting, I encourage you to craft specific recommendations from your meetings and send them to President-Elect Tracy Ore and myself for discussion by the Executive Committee and possible inclusion onto the agenda of the Winter business meeting as either a discussion or action item.

The challenge of expanding meaningful access and a sense of belonging to diverse constituencies is not just an issue for SWS but for the nation as a whole. How many of us were appalled by the state of Arizona's passage of SB 1070 ("Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act") that would criminalize undocumented entry into the United States and authorize and in some cases require local police to probe the immigration status of people they stop for other legal reasons, including violations of municipal ordinances? The Obama administration has filed suit to challenge the Arizona law and a federal judge issued a temporary injunction that halted implementation of its key provisions. But we need more than a reaction to a reactive law. We need proactive leadership to carve a path to legal citizenship for the thousands of people whose labor contributes to the overall well-being of the nation. While immigration reform legislation faces an uphill battle in Congress, at least one element of this legislation, the bipartisan "Dream Act" (The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act) appears to have significant, broad support.

If passed and signed into law, the Dream Act would provide a pathway for citizenship for undocumented youth who were brought to the U.S. at a young age by their parents and attended most of their schooling here. The Dream Act would provide a 6 year long conditional

path to citizenship for undocumented youth that requires either completion of a college degree or two years of military service. Undocumented youth could access financial aid to attend college which, at present, is rarely permitted. Currently most undocumented students who wish to attend college must pay out-of-state fees which are significantly higher than resident fees. Only 11 states have passed legislation that to offer in-state tuition to immigrants if they meet certain requirements. Even so, few states allow undocumented students access to financial aid. Essentially this makes the cost of attending college prohibitive for the approximately 65,000 undocumented students who graduate each year, many at the top of their class, which is a waste of talent as well as a violation of their human rights.

The Dream Act enjoys broad support among lawmakers, educators, and the general population. Many university presidents have come out publicly in support of the Dream Act including SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher, UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau, Harvard's Drew Gilpin Faust, and the heads of the University of Houston, Eastern Washington University, and Northern Virginia Community College, among others. A June 2010 poll commissioned by the family advocacy group, First Focus, indicates that 70 percent of people in the U.S. are in favor of the legislation.<sup>1</sup> Despite this support, the likelihood of the Dream Act being passed is slim since it is currently attached to a larger comprehensive immigration reform bill that does not enjoy broad bipartisan support. So, it is critical for those of us who support the Dream Act to advocate with our federal legislators to disengage the Dream Act from broader immigration reform and act on it when Congress comes back into session in September. It is particularly urgent that the Dream Act become a standalone bill before the  
*(President's Column, continued on next page)*

*(President's Column, continued from page 12)*

November midterm elections that may elect congressmen and women who do not support this bill. I urge each of you to write to your congressperson to urge her or him to make the Dream Act a standalone bill! It is critical for us to support the educational dreams of our young sisters and brothers. Diversifying access to higher education is a feminist issue and one that speaks to our core mission and is an issue of social justice!

1. First Focus, "Public Support for the Dream Act," June 2010, [http://www.firstfocus.net/sites/default/files/dreampollbreakdown\\_0.pdf](http://www.firstfocus.net/sites/default/files/dreampollbreakdown_0.pdf)

## **JOB POSTING**

### **Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, SUNY**

Criminal Justice: The Criminal Justice Program in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice at SUNY Fredonia invites applications for the position of Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, tenure-track, beginning fall 2011, contingent upon state funding. The successful candidate will have a Ph.D. by 9/1/11 in criminal justice, sociology, or other relevant field. We are looking for a generalist who should be prepared to teach from among the following: Corrections,

Criminology, and Judicial Process. Review of applications will commence on November 1, 2010 and continue until the position is filled. To apply, consult the specific guidelines for this position on the Human Resources page of the SUNY Fredonia website: <https://careers.fredonia.edu/applicants/Central?quickFind=50699>

SUNY Fredonia prides itself on an outstanding workforce. To continually support organizational excellence, the university conducts background screens on applicants. An affirmative action/equal opportunity employer, SUNY Fredonia encourages and actively seeks applications from minorities, women, and people with disabilities.

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## **JOB POSTING**

### **Faculty Position in the Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, UCSD**

The Department of Sociology within the Division of Social Sciences at the University of California, San Diego (<http://sociology.ucsd.edu>) is committed to academic excellence and diversity within the faculty, staff, and student body. In that commitment, we seek candidates for a faculty position in the Sociology of Race and Ethnicity whose research, teaching, or service has prepared them to contribute to our commitment to diversity and inclusion in higher education. We are open to a wide variety of theoretical and methodological approaches. Preference will be given to scholars at the Assistant Professor level, but excellent candidates in other areas or at other levels will also be seriously considered. Applicants are asked to submit a cv and samples of their written work, and should ask three referees

to send letters of reference. Because a primary consideration for this position will be strong demonstrated accomplishments and a desire to play a leadership role contributing to diversity, equity, and inclusion, applicants are asked to summarize in a personal statement their past experiences and leadership in equity and diversity, or their plans to make contributions in the field. For applicants interested in spousal/partner employment, please visit the UCSD Partner Opportunities Program website <http://academicaffairs.ucsd.edu/offices/partneropp>.

Salary is commensurate with qualifications and based on University of California pay scales.

Review of applications will begin October 1, 2010, and continue until the position is filled.

Applicants should submit all application materials electronically via UCSD's Academic Personnel On-Line RECRUIT (<https://apol-recruit.ucsd.edu>) (Preferred method). Please select the following recruitment: SOCIOLOGY Assistant Professor (10-175) JPF00021. If you

wish to send hard copies of original publications, please mail to: Richard Madson, Chair, Department of Sociology-MC 0533, University of California, San Diego, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093-0533.

UCSD is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer with a strong institutional commitment to excellence through diversity (<http://diversity.ucsd.edu>).

(Feminist Lecturer continued from page 1)

questions about feminist activism and feminist pedagogy, setting herself the challenge of being an feminist activist scholar whose activism also encompasses the classroom.

Between 1998 and 2003, Dr. Naples published five books that both display her



skill as an ethnographer and discourse analyst and also show her commitment to making a difference in women's lives through scholarship. Her work is multi-leveled in its contributions, combining research with activism, writing with editing, as means of conveying her points.

In addition to the books, Dr. Naples has written numerous articles that articulate the central themes of her

scholarship: standpoint epistemology in relation to political praxis, ethnography as a way into the practical intersectionality of women's struggles, the tensions between regulatory texts and the opportunities for political praxis.

Her research always puts social justice in central position and works out from there, bringing in issues of poverty, migration, race, sexuality, and nation as fully intertwined with gender in women's lives and thus as essential aspects of any efforts to contribute to their empowerment. Crucially, Dr. Naples's approach to scholarship demands that one not merely try to understand the exclusions and marginalizations facing women, but also their struggles to overcome the forces arrayed against them, and to do research as an ally who can contribute to their odds of success.

Please see the accompanying Call for Campus Visits for details on having Dr. Naples visit your campus. Deadline for submission is March 1, 2011.

(Chapters continued from page 7)

Stephanie Teixeira-Poit

(stephanie\_teixeira@ncsu.edu)

Lisa Tichavsky (lptichav@sa.ncsu.edu)

Kendra Jason (kjjason@ncsu.edu)

North Carolina: Southeastern

Jean-Anne Sutherland

(Sutherlandj@uncw.edu)

North Carolina:

University of North Carolina

Mairead Eastin Moloney

(moloney@email.unc.edu)

Cathy Zimmer (cathy\_zimmer@unc.edu)

### Regional Chapters

These meet at the annual meetings of regional sociology associations.

SWS Midwest

Sue Wortmann

(swortmann2@gmail.com)

SWS East

Laura West Steck (lsteck@ycp.edu)

SWS South

Kris DeWelde (kdewelde@fgcu.edu)

Shannon Davis (sdaviso@gmu.edu)

SWS NCSA

Natalie Haber-Barker - nhaber@luc.edu

Kathy Feltey - felteyk@uakron.edu

SWS West

Audrey Devine-Eller, Rutgers, auderey@rutgers.edu

Patti Donze, UCLA, pdonze@ucla.edu

Evren Savci, USC, savci@usc.edu

Chapters in formation or interested:

New York - Albany/Tri-Cities - Sally

Dear (sdear@binghamton.edu)

### SWS Network News

Published and distributed by Sociologists for Women in Society, an international organization of more than 1,000 social scientists, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, sociology practitioners and independent scholars who share a dedication to social equality.

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Designer . . . . . Debra Yoo

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. . . . . Joan Spade

Material for publication (including advertisements) should be submitted to SWS at the below email/address.

Deadlines for submission:

Summer-May 15

Fall-September 15

Winter-November 15

Spring-March 15

Fee schedule for advertisements (invoices will be sent after announcements appear):

Full page-\$200

Half-page-\$100

Quarter-page or less-\$50

Job announcements-\$25

Change of Address? Members, please log on at [www.socwomen.org/members](http://www.socwomen.org/members) to update your address

SWS Executive Office

URI Sociology, 10 Chafee Rd.

Kingston, RI 02881

Office: 401.874.9510

Fax: 401.874.2588

[swseo@socwomen.org](mailto:swseo@socwomen.org)

# SWS Factsheet: Oppression Without Bigots

by Abby L. Ferber, PhD and Dena R. Samuels, PhD

**Introduction: Examining Oppression:** This factsheet examines the seemingly paradoxical problem that despite decreasing levels of overt bigotry and prejudice, oppression and inequality remain enduring features of US society. In this factsheet we examine the concept of oppression, provide a brief snapshot of contemporary inequality in the US., introduce the concept of privilege, and provide a theoretical model for understanding the matrix of privilege and oppression. Finally, we examine some of the common forms of resistance to advancing social equity and justice, and provide suggestions for individuals to begin to work for social change.

Oppression is the systematic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identity groups in contrast to a privileged norm. Oppression exists when some people are denied something of value (such as access to resources, opportunities, and networks; legal protections and rights; inclusion and acceptance, etc.) based on their social group memberships. Key to an understanding of oppression is recognizing that it is based on membership in socially constructed subordinate identity categories; it is *not* based on individual characteristics. Sociologists have long focused on inequality based on class, race, and gender. In recent decades, significant research has examined inequity facing LGBT people, and we are now seeing growing bodies of literature examining religion, ability, and age.

Marilyn Frye (2003) describes oppression as a birdcage: an interlocking network of institutional barriers that prevents escape. While any individual may experience isolated instances of discrimination or prejudice, oppression refers to this mutually reinforcing system of barriers. Joe Feagin, whose work examines racism in the U.S., emphasizes its systemic nature: "Systemic here means that the core racist realities are manifested in each of society's major parts...[with] a centuries-old foundation" (2001, p. 6). Sociologists have documented historical and ongoing inequality in every major social institution, including education, employment, government, healthcare, family, criminal justice, sport and leisure, etc.

## A Snapshot of Contemporary Inequality

- Between 1984 and 2007, the wealth gap between whites and African Americans more than quadrupled, from \$20,000 to \$95,000. <http://contexts.org/socimages/2010/06/08/the-growing-wealth-gap-between-blacks-and-whites-2/>
- In 2007, 86% of LGBT middle and high school students report experiencing harassment at school in the past year, 61% felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation and 33% skipped a day of school in the past month due to safety concerns.
- <http://www.glsen.org/cgibin/iowa/all/library/record/2340.html?state=research&type=research>
- While 1 in 100 U.S. adults are behind bars, in 2007, the number was 1 in 36 for adult Hispanic men and 1 in 15 for adult black men. <http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/One%20in%20100.pdf>
- The percentage of high-poverty schools (at least ¾ of students are on free or reduced fee lunch) increased from 12% to 17% in the past decade. Children at these schools receive a lower quality education, their teachers have less education, and they face decreasing chances for graduating (U.S. Dept of Education).
- In 2008, 39.8 million people were living in poverty, up from 37.3 million in 2007. The numbers vary by race (whites: 8.6%; Asian Americans: 11.8%; Hispanics: 23.2%; and blacks: 24.7%). <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/incpovhlth/2008/highlights.html>
- Women-owned businesses are underrepresented in government contracts in 87% of all industries (U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce 2007).
- In 2009, for full-time employees, women's weekly earnings were 80% of men's; African-American women earned 69% of white men, and Latina women only 60% (Institute for Women's Policy Research).
- More than half of all women with disabilities experience sexual or physical abuse in their lifetime (SWS factsheet "Violence Against Women"). <http://www.socwomen.org/index.php?ss=25>
- 16.7 percent of hate crimes are based on religious intolerance. Of those, in 2004, 67.8 percent were perpetrated against Jews, and 12.7 percent targeted Muslims.
- [http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius\\_04/offenses\\_reported/hate\\_crime/index.html](http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius_04/offenses_reported/hate_crime/index.html)

**Seeing Privilege:** Historically, most research on inequality has focused on oppression, ignoring the other half of the picture, privilege. Privilege confers power, dominance, resources and rewards. Because they exist in relation to each other, oppression and privilege operate hand in hand; one cannot exist without the other. Privilege is derived from one's group membership, or social location. It is not the result of anything that one has done as an individual.

Peggy McIntosh's (1988) "White Privilege and Male Privilege" offers a long list of examples of white privilege she experiences. She noted, for example, that white privilege includes being able to assume that most of the people you or your children study in school will be of the same race; being able to go shopping without being followed; never being called a credit to one's race, or having to represent one's entire race; as well as simple details like finding flesh colored bandages to match one's skin color. These examples highlight the unearned nature of privilege.

People of privilege often do not realize the extent to which inequality is still pervasive. Looking at life from their own narrow experience, they fail to recognize that their experiences are not universal nor simply the result of their own hard work, but instead the result of their privileged status. For example, many white people believe that discrimination has been outlawed and equality has been achieved (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010; Gallagher, 2009; Pincus, 2003; Steinberg, 2001). Central to this assumption is the belief in a color-blind society (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Collins, 2004). This approach argues that we should simply treat people as human beings, rather than as racialized beings. While many people naively embrace this view as non-racist, by ignoring the extent to which race still shapes people's life chances and opportunities, even life span, color-blindness actually reinforces and reproduces contemporary racial inequality. The reality of inequality today is subtle and institutional, rather than the overt gestures and legal discrimination of the past. Sociologists call this "the new racism." (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Collins, 2004). Despite entrenched gender inequality, we also see the rise of a new discourse around gender, remarkably similar to color-blind racism. This ideology assumes that the law and society are now "gender-blind" in their treatment of men and women. It assumes that the women's movement has accomplished its goals, and barriers facing women have been removed (Ferber, 2003, 2007; Faludi, 2006; McRobbie, 2009). This perspective ignores the reality of continued gender inequality, and also ignores some of the real differences in men and women's needs, including the need for pre-natal health care, lactation rooms, etc.

Contemporary ideologies of racism and sexism are part of a broad discourse on inequality that we call "oppression-blindness" (Ferber, 2007). Oppression-blind perspectives start with the assumption that the U.S. has created a level playing field for all, and thus, any inequality today is the result of individual or cultural differences and failures. Oppression-blind ideology informs other systems of inequality as well. For example:

- **Classism:** The media promotes the myth of the U.S. as a "classless" society, despite growing class inequality (Kendall, 2009; Mantsios, 2003). In 1978, corporate CEOs in the U.S. earned, on average, 35 times more than the average worker. Today, they earn 320 times more than the average worker ([www.edchange.com/handouts/corporatization.pdf](http://www.edchange.com/handouts/corporatization.pdf)). Further, as of 2007, the top 20% of households owned 85% of the country's non-government wealth; the remaining 15% of the wealth was held by the bottom 80% of the population (Domhoff, 2010).
- **Heterosexism:** Scholars studying LGBT inequality have found that efforts to gain equal rights under the law have faced a backlash that has attempted to rearticulate their goal as seeking "special rights." This claim can only be made if one starts with the assumption that gay and lesbian citizens already share the same rights as heterosexuals (Dudas, 2005; Stein, 2002). We know this is not the case, however. LGBT people face inequality in schools, religious institutions, healthcare, the workplace, and families, and lack many of the legal rights granted to heterosexuals through the institution of marriage (Herd and Howe, 2007; Udis-Kessler, 2008).
- **Ableism:** According to Clare (2009), our dominant frameworks "all turn disability into problems faced by individual people." In response, "disability activists fiercely declare that it is not our bodies that need curing. Rather it is ableism—disability oppression, as reflected in high unemployment rates, lack of access, gawking, substandard education, being forced to live in nursing homes and back rooms, being childlike and asexual—that needs changing" (p. 604).

The enduring myth of America as a meritocracy makes it exceedingly difficult for us to see inequality as institutionalized. Each one of these systems of injustice are maintained by an oppression-blind belief system that ignores the reality of inequality based on social groups memberships and sees the U.S. as the land of equal opportunity where anyone who tries hard enough can succeed. Social problems are thus reduced to individual problems.



**The Matrix of Oppression and Privilege:** Understanding how systems of difference and inequality interact and operate to shape everyone's lives is essential to the struggle for social justice. We all have multiple social group identities that define who we are and how others view us. Based on one's social location, a person can be oppressed in some ways and privileged in others. Patricia Hill-Collins (2000) refers to this as a matrix of domination. Racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc. are mutually reinforcing systems that intersect in shaping our lives.

## Key Characteristics of the Matrix of Oppression and Privilege

**Classifications of difference are socially constructed:** recognizes that race, gender, sexuality, disability, class, etc. are socially constructed classification systems. Social constructs vary cross-culturally and historically and biology and culture interact (Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Ferber, Holcomb & Wentling, 2008)

**Privilege and oppression go hand in hand:** privilege and oppression are two sides of the same coin; you cannot have one without the other. When we bring privilege into the picture, we see that everyone has a racial identity, a gender identity, etc. White people have a race, and men have a gender and these affect their life experiences and opportunities.

**Inequality is harmful to all:** narrow group identities can be harmful to everyone, even those in the privileged group. For example, boys experience many negative effects from our culture's narrow definition of masculinity which contributes to adolescent boys' bullying (Kimmel, 2008).

**Intersectional:** emphasizes that forms of privilege and oppression interact and intersect, so it emphasizes diversity within groups. For example, no one has just a racial identity. This approach emphasizes that rather than seeing African Americans as a homogenous group, the experiences of African Americans vary depending upon other important social classification such as gender, class and sexual orientation (Collins, 2004).

**Inequality is an institutional problem:** privilege and oppression are not characteristics of people, but of society. According to Allan Johnson (2006), "Oppression and dominance name social realities that we can participate in without being oppressive or dominating people" (p. 13). Thus, we can understand how even the best-intentioned individuals may unknowingly contribute to reinforcing inequality.

**We are all responsible for social change:** We are all implicated in systems of inequality, and must accept responsibility for working for change. Racism is not a people of color problem; sexism should not be seen as a women's issue. We must all work together as allies to create social change (Ferber, Jimenez, O'Reilly Herrera and Samuels, 2008).

**Resistance to Acknowledging One's Privilege:** It is no wonder that individuals, especially those who are most privileged, often resist acknowledging the reality of ongoing inequality. We are immersed in a culture where the ideology of oppression-blindness is pervasive. The ubiquitous social institution of mass media bombards us with "depictions of race relations that suggest that discriminatory racial barriers have been dismantled" (Gallagher 2009, p. 548). However, it is clear that these institutionalized barriers still exist. For example, most history textbooks today revolve around white male history and do not adequately address racism (Brown & Brown, 2010). According to Gary Howard (2006): "[Whites] have been able to determine the structure and content of schooling and in this way have institutionalized our ignorance in the name of education" (p. 63).

Individuals often experience some cognitive dissonance, then, when they start to learn that the values they had previously been taught as truth are in fact ideologies. Mezirow (1994) calls this experience a *disorienting dilemma*. Coming face to face with one's privilege may produce a flood of emotion, including anger, guilt, shame and sadness (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Allen, 2004; Goodman, 2001; Johnson, 2006; Samuels, 2009). Social Identity Development Models have been advanced to explain the process individuals follow as they engage conflicting analyses of their own and others' social identities, and grapple with the reality of inequality (Cross 1978; Hardiman and Jackson 1997; Helms 1984; McAllister 2000). Some of the **common responses** to learning about privilege include:

- “I don’t feel privileged, my life is hard too!” This is an example of minimizing or denying privilege (Johnson, 2006). We often focus on oppressed identities as a means of ignoring our privilege.
- “My family didn’t own slaves!” This is a way to excuse oneself, but as historians have documented, “Into the mid-nineteenth century, the majority of whites-- in the elites and among ordinary folk-- either participated directly in slavery or in trade around slavery, or did not object to those who did” (Feagin, 2001, p. 15). The economies of many Northern cities were based almost entirely on the slave trade (see *Traces of the Trade*); and generations of whites have reaped “undeserved enrichment” from the forced labor of slaves, the cheap labor of other minority group members, and the land and resources taken, often violently, from Native Americans and Mexicans. These practices contribute directly to today’s tremendous racial wealth gap.
- “I treat everyone the same!” This type of response shifts the focus to prejudiced and bigoted individuals and allows us to ignore systemic oppression and privilege.
- “Anyone could succeed if they would just try harder!” This adherence to the myth of meritocracy attributes the failures of an individual solely to that individual without taking into account systemic inequalities that create an unfair system. It is a form of blaming the victim (Johnson, 2006).
- “We need to move on! If we would just stop talking about it, it wouldn’t be such a big problem!” Systemic inequalities exist and ignoring them will not make them go away. As Justice Blackmun stated in his Supreme Court decision in *University of California v. Bakke* (1978) more than thirty years ago, “In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way” (para. 14).
- “Stop being so sensitive! I didn’t mean it.” Speaking in a derogatory manner about a person or group of people based on social group memberships can, cumulatively, have a devastating impact (Sue, 2010). Disconnecting our own language or action is another form of resistance because it minimizes the indiscretion and sends the message that anyone who challenges the language or behavior is simply being overly sensitive.
- “I am just one person, I can’t change anything!” Seeing oneself as incapable of creating change is a means of excusing oneself from accepting any responsibility. Individuals often conceive of social inequalities as too large to tackle, and thus rationalize their lack of action.

**Taking Action:** Systems of oppression and privilege are interacting and mutually constitutive and reinforcing; we cannot oppose only one system of inequality and meet with any success. We must work to undermine all forms of inequality simultaneously.

Individuals cannot “opt out” of systems of privilege; rather these systems are deeply interwoven into society. Systems, however, are made up of people. While oppression is systemic, it is reproduced by each one of us on a daily basis. We have the choice of whether or not to acknowledge privilege as it operates in our lives and to use our privilege as a means of creating social change. This requires that we “begin with personal investigation...if we are going to take a stand, we need to feel prepared to deal with our own sense of discomfort and potential resistance or rejection from others” (Tochluk 2008, pp. 249-250). Anyone who experiences privilege has the potential to be an ally (Ayvazian, 1995; Kendall 2006).

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## Become an Ally:

- Take responsibility for learning about how oppression and privilege work, and teach others. Do not expect others to teach you.
  - Seek community: there are many websites, organizations, and social movements out there working for social justice that you can join.
  - Assume that inequality and oppression are everywhere, all the time, even when not visible to you.
  - Work continuously to be aware of your own privilege and the way privilege operates. Notice who the center of attention is, who has access to power, and whose voices are missing.
  - Notice the ways in which oppression and privilege are denied, ignored, minimized, or justified.
  - Learn from history: from both the history of specific forms of inequality as well as from social movements that have worked for change and social justice.
  - Speak out! Take a stand against injustice. Take risks and be willing to act in spite of your own fear and the resistance you face from others.
  - Recognize that learning to see oppression and privilege is an ongoing, lifelong process.
  - Recognize that you will make mistakes, and approach them as learning opportunities. It is okay to be uncomfortable; it is a sign that you are learning!
  - Listen to, respect, and support the leadership, perspectives, and experiences of members of oppressed groups.
  - Mobilize and organize to respond to inequality without being prompted by members of oppressed groups.
- (Some items adapted from Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Kivel, 2002; Wong (n.d.)).

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### Recommended Organizations and Websites:

- **The White Privilege Conference:** an interdisciplinary and intersectional conference consisting of institutes and workshops examining privilege and oppression, DVDs available. [www.uccs.edu/wpc](http://www.uccs.edu/wpc)
- **Southern Poverty Law Center and Teaching Tolerance:** Many free resources and curriculum for addressing a wide range of diversity issues at all educational levels. [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)
- [www.paulkivel.com](http://www.paulkivel.com): website of educator and activist Paul Kivel, with many activities and curricular sessions
- **www.edchange.org:** website started by educator and activist Paul Gorski, with many activities and curricular sessions, with links to the Multicultural Pavilion.
- **Media Education Foundation:** produced many excellent films for high school age students and above [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org)



*(Hess continued from page 8)*

the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2007. Her master's thesis explored how social policies affect levels of civic and political engagement among the poor, with a special focus on the disempowering paternalism of welfare. Her current dissertation work explores how school contexts affect various mechanisms of difference and exclusion. While pursuing her Ph.D. Sarah has begun teaching at Madison Area Technical College, in part, because she views this as an opportunity to "pass on the encouragement I got." For her outstanding research and mentoring in these and other pursuits, we are pleased to recognize Sarah Bruch as the 2010 Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship recipient.

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